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Ethical Formation in the Works and Life of 'Brug smyon Kun dga' legs pa

A dissertation presented

by

Elizabeth Louisa Monson

to

The Committee on the Study of Religion

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

In the subject of

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Ethical Formation in the Life and Works of the Crazy Yogi of the Drukpa:

'Brug smyon Kun dga' Legs pa

Abstract

This dissertation explores the ethical formation of persons depicted by the 15th century text entitled the *Liberation Life Story of Drukpa Kunley* (*'Brug pa kun legs kyi rnam thar).* My analysis examines the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* from a perspective that considers writing as a spiritual discipline akin to other practices of spiritual formation such as prayer, meditation and confession. Drawing on the work of such theorists as Paul Ricoeur, Michel Foucault and Alasdair McIntyre, I argue for a position whereby life-writing functions to form ethical persons. Using Drukpa Kunley's *namthar* as an outstanding example of this ethically-formative function of literary activity, I examine the text's presentation of what it means to be an ethical person and how such persons arise through a particular way of interacting with the world.

In considering the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, I explore questions about authorial intent, textual agency, and the readers imagined by the text. In addition, I highlight three principal themes developed within the text: exposure of hypocrisy, joyful acceptance of truth, and an unstinting examination of authority. These themes are expressed through both content and form: the narrator openly discusses them, and the text itself creates an experience for the reader that resonates with these themes through its repeated shifting among diverse literary forms and genres. I refer to this strategy as a *cacophony of genres*, and my assertion is that this

effects an *ethic of disruption*, a condition that challenges the reader and draws into question conventional ways of seeing and being in the world.

Finally, this dissertation explores and advocates for a model of scholarship that approaches the study of a text as an ethnographic encounter. This model, which draws on the work of anthropologist Michael D. Jackson, considers the usefulness of intersubjective practice for scholars of religion and other fields. I propose that this model for studying texts, which engages with a wide range of agents and influences—including our own—can yield deeper and more relevant insights into our objects of study.

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Dedication

Dedication Prayer

May the pure, brilliant sun of bodhicitta
Dawn in each and every heart and mind,
Dispelling the darkness of suffering and confusion, unstoppably
Until all are fully illumined and awakened.

Translated by Willa Miller

Introduction

Forming Ethical Persons

In the study of religion, and particularly in Buddhist Studies, there has been much discussion concerning the disciplines in which religious practitioners engage, such as prayer, ritual and meditation, in order to transform themselves.[1] There has, however, been less discussion of how writing and reading may also function as transformative practices within religious contexts. Some studies of Tibetan Buddhist spiritual autobiographies and life writing have explored the interweaving of narrative and rhetorical strategies and semantic content in such works and how they may serve a more intentional process of ethical formation beyond their more commonly recognized function as exemplary models for disciples.[2] This thesis studies the collected autobiographical writings of the fifteenth-century Tibetan Buddhist saint Drukpa Kunley ('Brug pa Kun dga' legs pa, 1455-1529) as an outstanding example of how life-writing functions to create ethical persons - both the narrator portrayed within the text and readers who encounter the text.

Drukpa Kunley – more popularly known as "the crazy yogi of the Drukpa" or even more widely as "the divine madman,"- is the purported author of the *Liberation Life Story of Drukpa Kunley* (*'Brug pa kun legs kyi rnam thar*)[3]—referred to from here on as the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*—a collection of distinct compositions in diverse literary genres. Up until the study of

[1] In Buddhist studies see: Kapstein 1996, 275-289, Dreyfus 1995. Some Euro-American religious studies scholars who have explored these issues include: Booy 2004, Bacon 1898, Bowman 1976, Stachniewski 1998, Caldwell 1983, Bercovitch 1975, and Watkins 1972, among many others.

[2] Gyatso 1998, Schaeffer 2004, Yamamoto 2012, Quintman 2014, Jacoby 2014.

[3] 'Brug pa Kun dga' legs pa. *'Brug pa kun dga' legs pa'i rnam thar dang nyams mgur dang zhal gdams sogs.* A reproduction of a clear print from the 1892 blocks carved at gNyal dre'u lhas. Darjeeling: Kargyud sungrab nyamso khang, 1978. TBRC Work # W1KG10253.

and translation into French of the first volume of this collection (Volume Ka) by R.A. Stein in 1972 and an immediately subsequent study of the second volume of the collection (Volume Kha) by John Ardussi for his 1972 M.A. Thesis, very little was known about the writings of this unique individual.[4]

The entire *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* collection is arranged in four volumes. The compiler, the Mad Monk of Mon, himself an incarnation of Drukpa Kunley, writes in the colophon to the first volume (Volume Ka) that its contents were already arranged in their present configuration at the time he began the project of compiling and printing the four-volume collection. Due to Volume Ka being written in the first person, it is generally referred to as the autobiography (*rang rnam*). He compiled the remaining volumes – Kha, Ga, and possibly Nga - from stories about Drukpa Kunley told by his patrons and disciples, from teachings he had given, from songs, and from various handwritten notes by those who had interacted with him.[5] The colophon to Volume Ka is discussed in detail in Chapter One on pp. 81-91. For the purposes of this dissertation, I have relied primarily on the compositions in Volume Ka and secondarily on the compositions in the other three volumes.

This dissertation argues that the compositions in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar,* and specifically in Volume Ka, function to fully and humorously expose a fundamental, albeit unexpected truth—the truth of the depth of human self-deception and hypocrisy—and to represent the understanding and acceptance of this truth as a necessary ingredient for

[4] Stein 1972. Ardussi 1972. See also DiValerio 2011. See Chapter I, Section VI for in-depth discussion of scholarship on Drukpa Kunley.

[5] DK1 Vol. Ka 1978, 167b.5-169a.6.

becoming an ethical or enlightened person. By "ethical" here, I appeal to the approach of scholars, such as Charles Hallisey and Jay Garfield, who have highlighted an important methodological issue in the study of Buddhist ethics.[6] In an article entitled "Ethical Particularism in Theravāda Buddhism," Hallisey questions the value of seeking to discover a single moral theory that would best describe Buddhism and suggests that such a quest is misleading. Instead, rather than looking for consistency in Buddhist morality, he proposes that Buddhist ethics is pluralist in that it draws on various kinds of moral considerations in different cases, including drawing from narratives, texts and different thinkers.[7] Buddhist ethics is also particularist, in that it rejects the entire enterprise of formulating general moral principles to cover all cases.[8] Additionally, from Hallisey's view, the diversity of moral theories and approaches in some Theravāda texts is not arbitrary, but intentional in that different moral issues arise in different contexts. This view is especially illuminating when applied to texts such as the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar,* where the narrator depicted by the text is complex in his modeling of a variety of moral stances and reasonings, and in his discernment of how best to respond in contextualized, particular, moral landscapes.

As created by the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, an ethical person is one who has developed an uncompromising intention to examine, uncover and reveal his or her own layers of self-deception and hypocrisy. Thus ethical action is understood primarily as an activity and as an

[6] Hallisey 1996, 2-5. Garfield 2006.

[7] Hallisey 1996, 37.

[8] Hallisey 1996, 5. Hallisey and Hansen 1996.

intent to truthfulness that one performs upon oneself. To be sure, the narrator within the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* is just as uncompromising in his exposure of self-deception and hypocrisy in others, but he begins the endeavor with a piercing investigation of himself. In this view, the basis for ethical action in the world rests in developing our own understanding of how we fool ourselves about who we are and how we interact with others. The practice of exposing self-hypocrisy and deception is therefore represented as a means to forming ethical persons.

The *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* works to create ethical persons through two principal means: form and content. The most obvious element here is the content of the texts. The narrator within the text, who identifies himself as Drukpa Kunley, writes explicitly about hypocrisy and self-deception and demonstrates a variety of means to expose and accept this fundamental truth about the world he inhabits. In this way, the narrator models a practice of ethical formation based on seeing through appearances to the real nature of things as they are. This process, manifested through writing, by which the narrator forms himself ethically within the text, works in concert with the ethically formative processes that the literary and rhetorical strategies of the text, by their nature, stimulate in the reader.

The *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* employs a constantly shifting mixture of distinct genres, rhetorical strategies, and narrative techniques. This jumbled diversity of styles and genres, which I refer to as a *textual cacophony,* confounds expectations and keeps the reader off balance, promoting a state of mind that is receptive to the content aspects that explicitly expose hypocrisy. I will argue that the *Namthar*'s frequent shifting from one subject to another, from one genre to another, from one tone to another, functions as an *ethic of disruption* that

serves to undermine the habitual human tendency to see things only on the surface, and to narrate a cohesive story of the self that obscures a true perception of who we are.

Scholars of ethics such as Alastair MacIntyre and Paul Ricoeur have theorized the primacy of the activity of self-narration in processes of ethical formation. MacIntyre's work examines the tradition of Greek heroic culture and its virtues in order to locate a foundation for the classical tradition of moral thought, and indeed, all of modern European moral thought. For MacIntyre, the bringing together of life in the form of a narrative is the primary means by which it can be ethically evaluated. If life cannot be brought together in the form of a narrative, as human beings we are bereft of the transformative templates through which to organize the fundamental ingredients of social and moral life. Not only this but, more importantly, without a sense of individual narrative unity, we are robbed of meaningful frameworks for ethical action. Thus, for MacIntyre, the use of narrative to create at least the illusion of self-unity is seen as a critical component in our formation as ethical beings.[9]

Ricoeur, in basic agreement with MacIntyre, takes this notion of the narrative unity of a life a step further by exploring the ethical conundrum that arises when life narratives enter, as they inevitably do, into the realm of fiction. Any iteration or "telling" of a narrative cannot help but leave certain things out, while including others. Such narratives inevitably inflect facts a certain way, thereby creating a fiction within the text. For Ricoeur, the problem consists in how the imaginative variations to which the subject is submitted in narrative fiction can contribute to self-examination in real life. In other words, how do acts of reading and writing, by

[9] MacIntyre 1981, 123.

submitting the subject to a vast range of possible avenues for making sense of ethical action, function in self-formation?[10]

MacIntyre and Ricoeur's questions and assertions about the human tendency to narrate our lives and the potential for such narrations to be vehicles for ethical formation and transformation are usefully applied to the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar.* From the point of view of this *namthar,* the narrative extension of any life story over time is a fiction that tends to obscure the truth of our experience as momentary and fragmented. It is not that such narratives have no use – indeed, without some degree of narrative cohesion it is impossible to communicate – but from the perspective presented in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar,* engaging in self-narration is only ethically viable when it simultaneously and self-reflexively takes into account the subtle self-deception and hypocrisy such narration entails. This approach results in an increased focus on the moment-to-moment nature of self-construction, and on its context-specific formation. It also promotes a radical acceptance of exactly who and what we are in the moment, from moment to moment.

As we will see, the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* both mirrors and enacts this momentary specificity, deliberately suggesting a various, contradictory, and complex picture of what a person on the spiritual path looks like compared with those found in many Tibetan Buddhist auto/biographical or hagiographical works. A *namthar* is a life story – hence a narration – yet the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* confounds, questions and plays with standard narrative tropes and conventions. As a result of encountering the world of such a text, the subject self (whether the

[10] Ricoeur 1992, 159.

narrator within the world of the text or the reader who encounters the text) is shaken out of deceptive habit of narrative self-construction. Thus transformed by their experience of the text's content and cacophony of literary styles, readers are introduced to the possibility of spontaneously encountering themselves, and responding to the events of life, as they arise from moment to moment.

I. Three Themes: Hypocrisy, Delight, and the Breakdown of Authority

This thesis examines three main themes that animate the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar.* The first, as mentioned above, is the exposure and acceptance of hypocrisy and self-deception. Few of the individual compositions that make up the *namthar* neglect to address this issue in some fashion. Whether the narrator, Drukpa Kunley, sings a spontaneous song, responds to the questions of patrons or disciples, or makes up soliloquies to explain himself and his position in the world, the twin issues of self-deception and social and religious hypocrisy consistently inform his writings. He makes comments such as, "Regarding those fakes who have not realized the way things actually are, they are like donkeys covered over with leopards' skins," referring to yogis who have no realization. Speaking of monastics who disregard discipline he says, "Those yellow-robed fellows who don't adhere to any vows, they really make me want to vomit!" Again and again, he consistently points to the complexities of the social and religious

world around him, in which appearances and essences are rarely in harmony.[11] Chapter Three of this dissertation tracks the narrator's expressions of this theme, both through content and through the use of different literary styles and genres. The chapter focuses on how style and content work together to reveal hypocrisy, at the same time as they stimulate the reader to engage in the operations of self-exposure modeled in the text.

This thesis also examines the characteristics and dimensions of hypocrisy as represented in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*. The *Namthar* views human beings as marked by perpetual and irresolvable entanglements in the deception of both self and others. Such persons cannot and should not attempt either to transcend or to reject this basic state of being. Instead, according to the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, the transformative journey consists in reconciling oneself to this condition, to coming closer and closer to fully embodying it, by means of refining one's ability to observe and tell the truth. If, as I will argue here, the intention of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* is the formation of persons who have processed and become aware of the different ways they deceive themselves and others; and if the ability to self-diagnose is part and parcel the text's root teaching, then attending to the diverse ways that hypocrisy is expressed, revealed, and accepted via the medium of the literary is essential to understanding the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*'s overall project of ethical formation.

For the reader, reading or hearing about the truth of imperfection creates a space for reflection on the transformative power of this kind of self-transparency. This transparency

[11] *Ser gzugs sdom pa med pa 'di ni tshad las skyug bro bas byed snying mi 'dod/ rtog ldan byed pa la ni gnas lugs rtogs dgos/ gnas lugs ma rtogs pa'i gzugs brnyan 'di ni/ bong bu la gzig lpags bkab pa dang 'dra,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 24b.6-25a.1.

forms the basis both for proper advancement on the spiritual path, as well as for an ethical and pragmatic engagement in the mundane world. In this way, the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* calls into question and redefines the very notion of "perfection," at least in how it has commonly been conceived within the Buddhist tradition. The traditional understanding of the early Buddhist view of enlightenment entails the complete eradication of ignorance, desire, and aversion. But the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* seeks to express a different view of perfection – a view more often expressed in the Vajrayana traditions of Buddhism – as an ongoing, continually evolving process that emerges only out of a deep personal engagement with imperfection. For the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, imperfection is best represented by the many levels of hypocrisy, both seen and unseen, that permeate human experience.

*

A second theme for the thesis, expressed differently but consistently through numerous compositions and across genres in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar,* is that of pleasure, delight, and humor. In spite of, or perhaps because of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*'s emphasis on self-deception and hypocrisy, many of its compositions package their message of self-exposure joyfully, even gleefully. Even as the text reminds us that as human beings we are mired in myriad layers of self-deception that cause us suffering and pain, the narrator delights in exposing these layers – one after another. This is evident from the *Namthar's* first sentence*,* where, after stating that this autobiography will "expose his faults," Drukpa Kunley says, "If my

words are seen as wanton gossip, may they at least cause delight."[12] For the narrator, self-examination and self-exposure are most effective when accompanied by a sense of humor. When Drukpa Kunley satirizes and mocks the strategies and facades people hide behind, when he finds humor in revealing the habit of turning away from truth, he acknowledges the possibility of both insight into these patterns and freedom from their seduction. Throughout the *Namthar,* he demonstrates how reliance on an honest and penetrating knowledge of one's own hypocrisy accomplishes liberation from the self-deception that causes confusion and suffering. The inevitable result of this self-reliance is joy – a joy powerful enough to become an enduring state of being.

The delight that suffuses the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* is not limited to the styles and choices of language the narrator makes. The content of the different compositions also reflects this joyfully humorous ethos in their orientation towards spiritual states of bliss, along with the simple pleasures of everyday experiences and encounters with others. This verse from a spontaneous song employs both content and the rhetorical device of onomatopoeisis to express and evoke Drukpa Kunley's joy at recognizing his own self-nature:

> Due to knowing the authentic guru is my own mind itself, I have no need to meditate on the conceptual teacher. Now, I'm happy no matter what else appears. I sing a song of joy! Tse-re-re![13]

[12] *Zab mo bsgrags pa byung na mthol zhing bshags/ 'chal gtam sna tshogs 'dug na nyams dga' mdzod,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, pp. 2b.5-2b.6.

[13] *Mtshan ldan gyi bla ma rang sems su shes pas/gzugs brnyan gyi bla ma sgom ma dgos/ da lta gang shar gyi steng na bde ba/ bde ba'i rgyang glu ce re rang re na,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 120b.4-5.

In Tibetan, the phrase translated here as "I'm happy no matter what else appears" is *gang shar gyi steng na bde ba*. "*Gang shar"* means "whatever arises" and "*steng na bde ba*" implies a kind of condition or way of being – in this case a context of bliss. Having attained the state of ultimate self-acceptance, whatever thoughts or emotions arise in his mind, whatever events occur in his life, Drukpa Kunley delights in their arising. The onomatopoetic phrase *tse re re* expresses the visceral feeling quality of this joyful condition. This general ethos of taking pleasure in all dimensions of human experience and the potential of the literary to transmit and instantiate this joy will be traced out in detail through the analyses in Chapter Three.

*

A third theme for this thesis that suffuses many of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar's* compositions is the examination, and most frequently the destabilization, of commonly accepted sources of authority. Throughout the *Namthar*, Drukpa Kunley pointedly and consistently questions the presumed authority of persons, institutions, and traditions. Only two sources remain intact – the ultimate authority of the Buddha and his teachings, and one's own self, awoken to its condition of hypocrisy and delusion. While certain other forms of authority are also valorized, such as the Drukpa Kagyü teachings, secret oral instructions, and Drukpa Kunley's own teachers, these sources are portrayed as a mixture of both perfect and imperfect. See, for example, Drukpa Kunley's reflections after spending time in retreat memorizing texts:

> Nowadays, practitioners generally set aside the Buddha's teachings as philosophical books, and most practice as if the oral teachings of the guru are more profound, but if the guru teaches what the Buddha did not teach, then what is so wonderful about that? There is nothing to add [to the Buddha's teachings]. It is taught that too much faith is a fault! If one understands the view that the Buddha and the guru are indivisible, that is quite enough. Nothing is

necessary other than the good qualities of the Buddha. We should all recognize this![14]

The explicit content of the text demonstrates that not only is it the reader's responsibility to undertake the project of investigating and revealing her own hypocrisies, it is also up to her to recognize which authoritative figures are advantageous and which are injurious. Within this world of conflicting messages and appearances, the Buddha and his teachings remain beyond reproach.

This theme of questioning authority is also expressed through the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar's* use of multiple literary forms. Not only do the different literary forms work strategically to destabilize the different authoritative voices or stances that appear in the *Namthar*, but their multiplicity is psychologically astute in representing the human tendency to seek for sources of reliance outside of one's self. Urging both reader and narrator to question every teaching, every character, every literary genre, and every possible assumption about self or other, the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* presents and then strips away one possible refuge after another. No other choice remains to the reader than to return to herself, just as the Buddha himself was compelled to do after years of seeking the path to enlightenment from other teachers and teachings.

[14] *Da lta'i chos pa phal cher sangs rgyas kyi gsung gzhung lugs su bzhag/ bla ma'i gsung zab mor mdzad kyi 'dug ste/ sangs rgyas kyis ma gsungs ba cig/ bla mas gsungs na ya mi mtshan zhing/ gsung rgyu yang med dam bsam pa shar/ lhag dad che drags ba la skyon yod par gsungs/ bla ma dang sangs rgyas dbyer med pa la blta shes na/ des ma chog dgur chog/ sangs rgyas kyi yon tan las lhag pa dgos kyang mi dgos,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 4b.1-2.

II. Agency, Intent, and Recipients

In addition to exploring these three themes of exposure of self-hypocrisy, joyful acceptance of truth, and examination of authority, this dissertation investigates questions about authorial intent, textual agency, and the readers imagined by the text. Because a number of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar's* compositions specifically discuss the form and purpose of autobiographical as well as other kinds of writing, we can identify an explicit set of authorial intentions. It is important to note that these must be attributed to the text's construction of a "model author" and model intentions, and not in any specific way to the historical author as such. We further have a few writings by the disciples and descendants of Drukpa Kunley that are included in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* in the form of correspondences, short biographies, and colophons. These works provide further fuel for analysis regarding the "model readers" of the *Namthar.*[15]

Most of this thesis however, will focus on the methods employed by the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* to impart its messages (i.e., its combined use of explicit content and literary/rhetorical strategies) as well as how these are intimately interwoven with the issues of human hypocrisy, joy, and the question of authority. In other words, I contend that through a range of narrative strategies the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* enacts the type of ethical formation expressed overtly by the narrator, and refigures the way that its readers see and relate to the world. The truth of the existence of hypocrisy as an intimate part of human experience involves a new orientation to both oneself and to the world, an orientation that is profoundly ethical in nature. It is ethical in

[15] The terms "model author" and "model reader" are explained below on pp. 43-45.

that it views the exposure of faults and self-deception as incumbent upon the good person. This process includes a continuous striving to uncover the increasingly subtle layers of hypocrisy that form the basis for the unenlightened person's ideas of who and what they are. In order to discover this, the dissertation explores both how the narrator engages with others inside the text as well as how the *Namthar's* narrative strategies work on readers by drawing them into the world of the text. In this I will sometimes be referring to the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* itself as an agent. What this means is that this dissertation will treat the *Namthar* as a complex literary object whose literary techniques and aesthetic features function to ethically transform readers by expressing meaning not only through content, but also through the interaction of content, form, and receiver.[16] (I discuss the function of narrative strategies below on p. 42).

This thesis also suggests that not only can we discern the internal logic of a text and gain a sense of its intentions, but also that it is incumbent upon us as scholars to do so – especially if we want to read in such a way that makes it possible to be transformed by our own encounter with the moral lessons of the text and its narrative strategies. This in turn allows us to participate in the text's larger aspirations to address an unlimited audience that may even transcend its cultural and historical boundaries. In considering these factors, I will also argue that the narratives strategies employed by the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* and its characters work to transform their ideal audiences by configuring their emotions, stimulating their imaginations, and challenging them to reconsider their relationships and understandings of themselves – to

[16] Ricoeur 1985, 163; Hudson 2012, 6-9.

see themselves as they are, without the overlay of conceptual ideas of who they want or imagine themselves to be.

III. The Study of Tibetan Buddhist Namthar

Based on examples of other autobiographies written before and during Drukpa Kunley's lifetime, we might ask: How unique is the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*? How does this work significantly re-imagine the function of the Tibetan genre of *namthar,* transforming it from a record of religious deeds, accomplishments and reflection on meditative experiences, into an intentional vehicle for ethical formation and transformation? What sort of literary world was operating during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in Tibet and how might we reconstruct the possible influences that may have given rise to this *namthar*?

The fourteenth to sixteenth centuries in Central Tibet was a prolific period in the production of religious literature.[17] Among the kinds of writing being elaborated at this time were stories of individuals' journeys to enlightenment. In Tibetan, the term most commonly used for these is *rnam par thar pa,* or *rnam thar* ("*namthar*") for short, which translates as "way" or "ways" of "liberation." *Namthar* translates Sanskrit *vimokśa,* which did not signify a literary genre but instead the Buddhist ideal of liberation.[18] The clear implication of the genre label is that these works were understood within the conceptual universe of the Buddhist path of ethical transformation and liberation. An assumption was that the protagonist of such works

[17] Quintman 2008, 2014. Schaeffer 2010. Cabezon 2005, 236; Jackson 1983, 5.

[18] Gyatso 1998, 281 n8.

had achieved full liberation and his or her story of this achievement functioned as a model for others to emulate. A sub-group of the genre is the *namthar* written by the protagonist him – or herself, the *rang gi rnam thar* (*rangnam*) or self-written biography. In this case, the account was thought to be composed by the protagonist him- or herself to both represent and articulate the complex processes involved in attaining liberation, and the human effort required to integrate and actualize these.[19]

Scholars have generally understood the *namthar* to be akin to those genres identified by Western literary criticism as "biography," "autobiography," as well as "hagiography." However, as more and more *namthar* have been identified and studied, any easy association between these categories fades into an ever-receding horizon. This complication has to do with a number of factors including issues regarding function, authorship, and readership. This is not to say that fields of western literary criticism and Tibetan literary studies have nothing in common. Instead, as Janet Gyatso has clearly shown, placing close analyses of the genres of biography and autobiography from both fields in communication with each other helps broaden and expand our notion of the meaning and purpose of religious life-writing across time and place.[20]

In order to understand the genre of Tibetan *namthar* it is necessary to grapple with the notion of "complete liberation" in the term itself. A general consensus is that *namthar* present both positive proof of the efficacy of the Buddhist path, as well as provide disciples with an exemplary model whose example should and could be followed. Andrew Quintman notes that

[19] Gyatso 1998, 102-109.

[20] Gyatso 1998, 101-123.

the *namthar* is a Tibetan Buddhist literary genre that specifically focuses its narration on the process of liberation of human beings from cyclic existence. The Tibetan *namthar* may represent a confluence of Chinese historiographical influences, Indian Buddhist traditions of life stories of different saints, and indigenous Tibetan epic narrative traditions, such as the well-known *Epic of King Gesar*. Quintman remarks how "the *namthar* is a composite genre with a thoroughly Tibetan imprint."[21] Peter Alan Roberts discusses how Tibetan religious biographies are normally called *namthar* ('liberation'), due to the fact that the primary subject matter concerns a person's attainment of liberation. As mentioned above, the term *namthar* is derived from the Sanskrit *vimokṣa,* meaning "release" or "emancipation." This term was used extensively in the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra,* first translated into Tibetan in the eighth century by Paltsek (Ska ba dpal brtsegs, eighth century) and revised in the eleventh century by the great translators, Rinchen Zangpo (Rin chen bzang po, 958-1055) and Ngok Loden Sherab (Rngog blo ldan shes rab, 1059-1109). The compound *bodhisattva-vimokṣa* is used throughout the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* to describe the practices, each of which has a specific name, by means of which a bodhisattva moves along the path to complete liberation.[22] In some cases, Tibetan *namthar* also contain direct practice instructions, spoken from the mouth of the autobiographical or biographical subject (the lama) to his or her disciples. Jan Willis discusses this particular function of *namthar* when she compares the content of the sacred biographies of

[21] Quintman 2014. Goss 1993, 15.

[22] Roberts 2007, 4.

Indian *siddhas* with the *tantras* and their commentaries, demonstrating the ways in which these two genres complement each other.[23]

In this view, one function of *namthar* is to impart descriptions of tantric practices. *Namthar* are not simply inspirational models, but vehicles for providing detailed practice instructions to persons seeking to put the teachings of a given *siddha* into practice. Such texts represented the intimacy and direct transmission potential of face-to-face interaction between teacher and disciple that lies at the heart of the Tibetan Buddhist path.[24] From this point of view, the function of writing *namthar* may also have been to positively transform and mature the mind of the disciple as preparation and support along the soteriological path even when access to the living teacher was no longer possible.

It follows from the proposition that *namthar* aspired to provide direct instruction that any study of the genre must also examine the audience for whom such texts are written. If, in fact, such texts were written primarily to benefit the author's disciples, it is clear that these individuals would play a strong role in determining how the author represented himself in the *namthar.* Gyatso describes how within the context of the teacher-disciple relationship, the desire to present oneself as an exemplary role model for disciples is, "at least theoretically, the only reason why autobiography is written at all. The disciple's presence is to be felt throughout the text."[25] If this is true, we might wonder why it is often the case that the subjects of *namthar*

[23] Willis 1985, 311.

[24] Goss 1993, 26.

[25] Gyatso 1989, 469.

are portrayed as nearly super-human in their achievements and exertions? In the lists of the miracles such persons performed and the qualities of their enlightened activities, we find descriptions of human actions that transcend the boundaries of what most of us would consider possible. Do such descriptions serve to make the subject an object of veneration and thereby to increase the authority of the text as well as to provide examples for disciples of how to succeed on the Buddhist path to liberation?

If it is indeed the case that such portrayals of the miraculous deeds of the master or mistress are meant to provide disciples with models for emulation, we are faced with a challenge. How do such exalted models practically serve as inspiration for disciples on the path? If the presentation of the teacher in the text appears identical to ideal representations of enlightened Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, how does the ordinary practitioner reconcile her own unenlightened state with such a lofty figure? Might not such an intention backfire and, rather than providing inspiration, instead present the disciple with a seemingly unrealizable goal? Might this not lead to a feeling of profound discouragement? Such questions will bear directly on my analysis of some of Drukpa Kunley's representations in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, where he appears to be self-consciously presenting a far more realistic and humanely accessible view of a so-called "realized" person's journey.

Scholars have also theorized that in addition to the heroes of *namthar* serving as exemplars for their audience, these works provide written records of the achievements of superior individuals so that these would not be lost and so that the protagonist could maintain his or her place in the lineage of those who came before. Robert Goss suggests that as

Buddhism expanded into Tibet, the life stories of the Indian *mahāsiddhas* (*grub thob* or *grub chen*) "greatly realized ones," may have provided a tangible sense of connection between Indian and Tibetan Buddhism since they provided living examples of the potency and power of the Vajrayana. As a result, the genre of *namthar* in Tibet*,* building on the examples of the life stories of the *mahāsiddhas,* could function at least partially to establish a demonstrable lineage of successful masters for each new Tibetan Buddhist school established. This resulted in a rapid proliferation of these sorts of sacred life stories.[26]

Gyatso has noted that another function of *namthar* in Tibet can be found in a long tradition of record keeping—as Tibetan autobiographies are often filled with the list of lineages, teachers, and teachings received (*thob yig* or *gsan yig*)."[27] Beyond filling out catalogues and lists of lineages, record keeping serves to authenticate the master within the lineage of previous masters of which he or she is a part. Proof of participation in the same series of teachings as those received by other masters in the lineage legitimates the master for future disciples. This characteristic of *namthar* also suggests that the intended audience would likely be the master's disciples as well as, perhaps, historical record-keepers.

In addition to *namthar* serving to legitimate masters who traversed the path from suffering to liberation, closer examination suggests that these texts may have served other, subtler functions relating to the subject's experience and development of subjectivity. In this view, a reader of *namthar* could be the subject him/herself. This is particularly the case when

[26] Goss 1993; Willis 1985, 305.

[27] Gyatso 1998, 103-104.

we consider the function of autobiography (*rangnam*). Gyatso, citing James Olney, describes how the kind of writing in which the author uses his or her own present self-awareness to explore a past self being recollected in the text can be considered a "duplex" autobiography. In contrast to a "simplex" autobiography, in which the author reflects objectively on her past self as if this past self belonged to someone else, in a duplex autobiography, the author demonstrates a vivid awareness of "the very ambiguity of the autobiographer's task: when the self writes about the self, which, the writing or the written-about, is the real self?"[28] In this view, then, the purpose of writing *namthar* is to explore or think through the slipperiness of self-perception and identity. As Gyatso theorizes, the presence of this level of self-awareness in a Tibetan *namthar* allows us to move beyond the "reader-determined self-presentation" that is generally presumed to be the norm for such texts, to a sense that at least in some Tibetan *namthars*, the authors also seem to be writing for themselves. This line of thought takes on another level of complexity with the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* in that we must take into account those intentions that are represented by the narrator, who enumerates various reasons for the nature and purpose of writing *namthar*. The compositions in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* that discuss the reasons for writing *namthar* are analyzed in Chapter Two.

A further complication arises in any attempt to associate *namthar* with Western literary models concerning the role of the author. As many scholars of Tibetan literature have noted, the idea of authorship in Tibetan literature generally, and in *namthar* literature more specifically, is complex and raises interesting questions concerning the nature and function of

[28] Gyatso 1989, 475.

the "self" that either is written about, or performs the writing. Authorship in the Tibetan literary tradition has a wide range of meanings, one of which includes the broader role of the believing community in the composition of *namthar.*[29] This meaning has been discussed in detail in western literary theory and, in particular, in studies of Native American autobiographical literature, such as *Black Elk Speaks.*[30]

Heather Stoddard lists two factors that make difficult any attempt to definitively identify the author of a Tibetan biography or autobiography. The first is the practice of encouragement (*bskul ba*) by a patron or disciple who exhorts the subject to describe his or her life for the benefit of others. As a result of this kind of exhortation, *namthar* writing takes place in an atmosphere of conflicting impulses—one, the requirement that the person refer to her/himself with humility and diffidence, the other, that she present herself as a worthy exemplar, thereby claiming authorship for herself.[31] The second factor is the common request by disciples to teachers at the end of their lives to recount their personal meditative experiences.[32] In this oral *cum* written practice, the teacher describes his experiences while one or more scribes write down his words. In these cases then, we can view the writing of *namthar* and *rangnam* as a joint venture between lama and disciple. Authorship is thus perceived as a collective lineage enterprise extending beyond the individual teacher who is the subject of the biography and beyond the disciple who writes the *namthar.* Goss makes the claim that, in this sense, all

[29] Goss 1993, 28.

[30] Krupat 1985. Castro 1975.

[31] Gyatso 1998, 105.

[32] Stoddard 1985, 115.

namthars are autobiographies (*rangnam*) as authorship also includes the particular practice lineage and particular audience addressed.[33] Put together with the practice of assimilating the words of *sūtras* or *tantras* as if they were one's own, (also a very common practice of authors of spiritual autobiographies in the West with regard to Protestant and Reformation doctrine) this presents a complex and multi-faceted view of the nature of authorship, and indeed, the interwoven nature of selfhood altogether in the Tibetan Buddhist worldview.

These factors of purpose, readership, and author are only three elements within which to explore the ways in which Tibetan *namthar* can provide insight into the more subtle functions of spiritual autobiographical writing. These elements also complicate a simple conflation of Tibetan *namthar* with the genres of spiritual biography and autobiography as defined and analyzed by Western literary criticism, although these diverse literary traditions share the problem (among others) of the precise identification of authorship. We may recall here Teresa of Avila's claims for the divine authorship of her texts.[34] However, even within Tibetan literature itself, the genre of *namthar* evades simple definition. Orna Almogi, in an article that analyzes how Tibetans create titles for literary works, notes that in a single text we may find a number of "genre" designations. For example, a work classified as *namthar* may also be designated as *rtogs brjod* (biography, autobiography, history)*, mdzad rnam* (honorific for biography)*,* or *rnam mgur* (autobiographical song).[35]

[33] Goss 1993, 31.

[34] Carrera 2005, 163-190.

[35] Almogi 2005, 27-58.

IV. The Extensiveness of *Namthar* Writing in Tibet

The prevalence of *namthar* writing beginning around the eleventh century in Tibet testifies that many educated persons were engaging this medium as part of their religious life. The publication of these texts in block print versions also demonstrates that their value was recognized and supported by institutional and private patronage. The questions as to why and how we find such an extensive tradition of biographical and autobiographical writing in Tibet from the beginning of the eleventh century has been explored by a number of scholars, most notably by Janet Gyatso.[36] Gyatso suggests that a primary reason why autobiography appeared in Tibet when it did has to do with the country's assimilation of Buddhist ideas, doctrines, practices, and culture over the period of time stretching from the seventh through the thirteenth centuries. In particular, from the period known to Tibetan scholarship as the "second transmission" (*phyi dar*) of Buddhism at the beginning of the tenth century, Tibet's re-identification of itself as "Buddhist" involved various religious reconfigurations as new doctrines, practices, and teachers poured in from India.[37]

Given that the political climate of the time consisted in numerous decentralized principalities all in competition for power, prestige, and wealth, the ground was laid for the creation of new individualistic identities by charismatic teachers who found it necessary to

[36] Gyatso 1998.

[37] Yamamoto 2009, 264. "[T]he radical overthrowing of the past and the construction of a new cultural identity that occurred with the introduction of Buddhism in Tibet was the principal factor that made for the development and flourishing of autobiography."

authorize themselves within an ever more competitive religious environment. Such figures had to find creative ways to represent themselves as spiritual adepts of special achievements, astonishing individuals deserving of legitimation, disciples, and patronage.[38] Gyatso emphasizes that the rise of these charismatic teachers and the gatherings of disciples who flocked to them within a competitive religious environment in which practitioners vied for resources may explain why autobiography emerged.[39]

Another relevant discussion concerning the rise and proliferation of texts designated with the title *namthar* in Tibet seeks to uncover their genealogy as a literary form. This is particularly pertinent to a study of the autobiography of Drukpa Kunley in that, more than many Tibetan Buddhist saints, depictions of his life-story consistently alternate between oral and literary traditions. Scholars have speculated on a number of possible antecedents to the rise of the *namthar* genre as a stand-alone category. In his book on the twelfth-century Lama Zhang, Carl Yamamoto identifies multiple genres contained within texts labeled as *namthar,* including short eulogistic-supplicatory works, question and answer texts (*'dri lan*), and even liturgical texts. Describing the evolution of textual forms through a conceptual tool he terms "textual economies" to describe the fluidity and interactive nature of literary forms, Yamamoto proposes a possible genealogy for the development of the *namthar* genre in which short eulogies written to teachers evolved into *namthar* proper. Yamamoto explains how sections in such texts dedicated to description, originally through epithets, gradually stretched out into

[38] Yamamoto 2009, 269.

[39] Gyatso 1998, 103.

short descriptive phrases, then short life-narratives, then longer narratives, and so forth, until what might originally have been no more than a brief liturgical or supplicatory prayer was transformed into an independent biographical work.

Citing Gene Smith, Yamamoto suggests that the writing of the early Kagyü biographical anthologies known as the Golden Rosaries (*gser phreng ba*) may have originated as commentarial extensions of shorter lineage supplications to particular teachers.[40] But Yamamoto is circumspect in applying this scheme to all *namthar*, noting that further detailed studies of the genre are necessary before we can say definitely how it may have evolved from other genres. The *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* also contains a variety of different literary forms and while I agree with Yamamoto that some of these may represent earlier *namthar*-like elements, part of the focus of this study concerns the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*'s self-conscious use of multiple literary forms as part of a project of ethical formation. In this sense, then, the use of a variety of literary styles and forms is far from arbitrary, but instead provides insight into the function of *namthar* as envisioned by the author and expressed through the text.

Another provocative possibility for the evolution of the *namthar* genre and one that has particular relevance for this study of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* is the notion, mentioned above, that this genre developed out of the Tibetan Buddhist oral traditions of the transmission of practice instructions from master to disciples. Even today, the prevalence of this kind of firsthand oral transmission of Buddhist teachings cannot be underestimated. This, in addition to the practice described above of the oral narration of the master's life at the time of his or her

[40] Yamamoto 2009, 289.

impending death, suggests that the orally transmitted teachings eventually became fixed in language as scribes sought to preserve these exchanges and narrations. As *namthar* incorporated the transmissions of master to disciples, these teachings became transmittable through time and space, no longer dependent on the physical presence of the teacher.[41] Goss explains how the transcription of oral instructions as a means by which to preserve such instructions may form the basis for the later composition of free-standing biographies and autobiographies.[42]

Yamamoto proposes two other possibilities for the evolution of the *namthar* genre. The first sees this literary form developing from supplications and eulogies to different masters. In this view, texts of devotional practices, lineage prayers, supplications for blessings, and eulogies, which contained short biographical passages, saw the elaboration of such passages over time. Ultimately, these passages evolved into self-standing biographical works, capable of providing inspirational and devotional material for disciples.[43] The other possibility views *namthar* as the end result of the evolution of personal instructions given by guru to the student. Within this context, autobiographical material was introduced by the teacher in order to enhance his or her personal instructions. As this material became more elaborate it took on a life of its own, resulting in a new independent genre of autobiography arising from the

[41] Goss 1993, 31. "The Tibetan idea of lineage practice crosses the lines of biographical and autobiographical genres. Both biographies and autobiographies are frequently written by disciples. Lineage practice reinforces the notion that autobiography exists in the oral and written tradition. A teaching transmitted across the lineage practice of disciples from generation to generation is considered the authentic word of the first teacher."

[42] Goss 1993, 31.

[43] Yamamoto 2009, 309.

context of close teacher-disciple interactions. While these possibilities for the evolution of the *namthar* have yet to be explored in great detail, Yamamoto outlines them in his study of Lama Zhang.[44] Quintman mentions similar trajectories of genre development in his study of the evolution of the Milarepa *namthar* tradition through the writings of the mad yogi of Tsang, Tsang Myön Heruka (Gtsang smyon He ru ka, 1452-1507). In the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar,* many of the individual compositions make use the form of an oral exchange between the narrator, Drukpa Kunley, and another person—a disciple, other religious practitioners, a consort, or an ordinary person. This format challenges the reader, affectively and psychologically, to imaginatively participate in and become a recipient of the points of view and instructions narrated in the text.

In general, while a *namthar* may provide a life-like impression of the subject, as mentioned above, often the subject's personality is subsumed within representations of his or her extraordinary and even supernatural activities, such as for example, Milarepa's ability to soar through the sky or shrink himself down small enough to fit inside a yak's horn. As a result, the reader is faced with a more fantastical or even mythic presentation of the subject that seems more like an ideal type than a real human being. Problems arise, then, if the value of such works is thought to lie primarily in their historical importance and not in their value as works of literature per se. For example, A.I. Vostrikov, in an earlier study of Tibetan literature still useful but somewhat outdated, makes a distinction between biographical works that are "really useful" for understanding a person's personal history or the history of that time and the

[44] Yamamoto 2009.

life-histories of saints, "which are full of legends and are interesting not from the historical but only or almost only from the folkloristic and literary standpoint."[45] Into this latter category he places such works as the biographies of the Buddha and his disciples, of the Dharma king Songtsen Gampo (Srong btsan sgam po, 569-650 or 617-650), and of the Indian *siddha* Padmasambhava. He remarks how in these kinds of biographical works, the narrative and didactic material trumps their historical import to such an extent that such works should not be understood as biographies "in the proper sense of this word as literary works."[46] Vostrikov never explains exactly what he means by "in the proper sense of the word," but we can speculate that he might agree with Gyatso's statement concerning Western literary criticism's definition of autobiography: "One of the crucial features of what characterizes a text as autobiography proper is the degree of the sense of individual selfhood that the author displays."[47]

The *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* disdains to follow many of the literary conventions commonly associated with Tibetan life writing Schaeffer describes in his book on the life writings of the Himalayan hermitess Orgyan Chökyi (1675-1729), such as a great moment of definitive renunciation when young, a central moment of realization, or the casting of one's life into the narrative frame of the twelve acts of Śākyamuṇi Buddha.[48] Beyond a bare sketch, the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* also does not present a chronological record of its subject's life, lists of

[45] Vostrikov 1994.

[46] Vostrikov 1994, 188-189.

[47] Gyatso 1989, 468.

[48] Schaeffer 2004, 7-8.

teachings received, religious activities performed, or disciples gathered. Kurtis Schaeffer's examination of Tibetan literary criticism directed at the *namthar* genre reveals a concern with the style in which a biography ought to be composed as well as the contents appropriate to the genre. While Schaeffer's study focuses on the literary criticisms expressed by Tibetan composers after Drukpa Kunley's time, such as those of the Fifth Dalai Lama (Ngag dbang Blo bzang rgya mtsho, 1617-1682) and of the prolific nineteenth-century biographer, Lobsang Trinley Namgyal (Blo bzang 'phrin las rnam rgyal), many of the topics covered by these writers are also applicable to *namthar* writing during the fifteenth century. For example, in his biography of Tsongkhapa (Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa, 1357-1419), Lobsang Trinley Namgyal considers the contents most common to a biographical work, including the subject's previous lives, descriptions of his or her superiority to others, excellent qualities of body, speech, and mind, the ways in which he or she engaged in studying, contemplating and meditating on the Buddhist teachings, her monastic vows and levels of realization attained, and finally an account of the subject's teaching activities and services for the benefit of others. In addition to content of this sort, the style in which these contents are communicated is equally determinant in promoting the excellence of the subject. Thus, a mere listing of these activities fails to fulfill what Lobsang Trinley Namgyal believes to be the principle function of biography—to generate faith and devotion in the subject's followers. Not only this, but also such a lack of imagination in stylistic presentation would have the unfortunate result of failing to induce the audience to make efforts for their own spiritual development. As Schaeffer states, "Poorly written biographies are not simply aesthetically deficient; they are ethically and soteriologically

harmful."[49] Here we might also consider the Fifth Dalai Lama's view that many life stories of past masters were unsuccessful due to rhetorical failings, such as including numerous ornate verses and commentaries, so that while the connoisseur might be delighted, both ordinary readers and scholars would find them difficult to follow. Schaeffer quotes, and Drukpa Kunley might likely agree, that the Fifth Dalai Lama believed autobiography should be "'easy to understand for scholar, fool, and in-between.' It must be a feast for eye and ear, 'a cause to make the spring sun stay long.'"[50]

While we cannot directly attribute the same characteristics discussed by the Fifth Dalai Lama and Lobsang Trinley Namgyal to *namthar* composed in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, we can imagine that some of the same issues were likely under consideration. Certainly, the views expressed by Drukpa Kunley, the narrator, suggest that he had a clear, if idiosyncratic vision of the purpose for *namthar* writing. Additionally, the challenges posed to Drukpa Kunley by the various interlocutors within the narrative world of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* suggest that at least some people had specific ideas about the purpose and form a *namthar* should take that Drukpa Kunley's *namthar* disregards. How and why Drukpa Kunley resists these ideas is explored in Chapter Two in detail, so I will only note here that these compositions demonstrate that there may have existed an ideal or idea of *namthar* that the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* is at pains to distance itself from.

[49] Schaeffer 2010, 278.

[50] Schaeffer 2010, 275.

V. Precedents in Tibetan Biographical Literature

Focusing on the genre of autobiography (*rangnam*) before and during the fifteenth century, we find few examples that rival the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* in terms of their self-reflexivity and creativity. However, some early examples of autobiographical writing in Tibet do demonstrate how this kind of self-writing could provide a literary arena for experimentation and originality, as well as a sense in which *namthar* was already subject to parody and subversion. Take, for example, the autobiography of the early Nyingma tertön Guru Chöwang (Chos kyi dbang phyug, 1212-1270), which consists of a stream of dream narratives in which the protagonist engages in sustained discussions concerning his fears and insecurities with such exalted figures as Guru Padmasambhava. The autobiography reads more like a confessional dream journal than a straight up *rangnam* and provides a venue within which Guru Chöwang can safely air his fears, reflect on his own affective and psychological states, and receive comfort from his true inner self-nature (modeled by Padmasambhava).[51]

We can also look at the slightly earlier, self-ironic secret autobiography of Lama Zhang (Zhang g.yu brag pa brtson 'grus grags pa, 1123-1193), founder of the Tshalpa Kagyü (Tshal pa Bka' bgyud pa) sub sect. Lama Zhang's three autobiographies cover a range of topics and styles, including, like Guru Chöwang's, a series of dream narratives in which Lama Zhang describes his encounters with wisdom *ḍākinīs* who impart to him a ritual practice with himself as the tutelary deity. Yamamoto, whose book on Lama Zhang represents the only comprehensive study of the saint's writings to date, discusses the texts' unusual use of second-person voice in which Lama

[51] Gyatso 1998, 104, 113; 1994, 275-287; 1993, 117. Dowman 2003, 39-45.

Zhang appears to be composing eulogies to himself to provide examples for his disciples on how to perform the devotional practice of guru yoga. Thus according to Yamamoto, we find in Lama Zhang's writings an enormous variety of literary styles together with a strong thread of self-reflexivity regarding the process of composition itself. This is similar to the range of literary styles and genres taken up by the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, a process that, as we will see in Chapter Two, includes a remarkably self-aware sense of the act of composition.[52]

It is important to mention two more examples of creative and experimental autobiographical writing in circulation during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. While neither of these two figures wrote autobiographies per se, their specific attention to written literary forms as mediums for self-expression and communication makes them possible influences on the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*. Both of these purported authors also participated in the practices and modes of social interaction characterized by the figure of the *smyon pa* or "crazy yogi", and this characterization allows us to consider that there might have been a possible literary practice associated with the Tibetan mad yogis. The first example is the writings of Thangtong Gyalpo (Thang stong rgyal po, 1385-1464) or, to use the name he was given in a vision, the "Divine Madman of the Empty Plain" (Lung stong smyon pa).[53] Thangtong Gyalpo did not write an autobiography, but instead expressed himself through a variety of

[52] Yamamoto 2009.

[53] Stearns 2007.

literary and oral forms, many of which have been included in biographies of him composed by his disciples.[54]

For our purposes, the most interesting of these literary forms consist of the edicts (*bka' shog*), or declarations Thangtong Gyalpo made to various personages including kings, monks, gods, demons, patrons and consorts. Cyrus Stearns notes that these edicts make up the largest collection of Thangtong's writings and include not only information about his life, travels, and building activities, but also his ruminations about the difficult times in which he lived and his various thoughts about human nature and the Buddhist teachings.[55] The edicts likely performed a range of functions. Biographies of Thangtong describe how many of them were delivered accompanied by material objects such as statues, images of Thangtong Gyalpo himself, copies of prayers, jewels, and so forth suggesting that Thangtong Gyalpo may have considered written literary forms as existing on a spectrum of modes of communication and transmission, some of which included a kind of knowledge and wisdom transferred through material objects. The use of material objects to house and communicate certain kinds of knowledge recalls the different kinds of treasure revelations (*gter ma*), such as "earth treasures" (*sa gter*), where physical objects are used to awaken the treasure in the mind of the tertön, as a way to consider how Thangtong Gyalpo may have envisioned the transmissible force of his edicts. Consider, for example, the edict written to his consort Chökyi Drönmé (Chos kyi sgron ma, 1422-1455/1467), which, in addition to being written in Thangtong Gyalpo's own hand included pieces of

[54] Stearns 2007, 2-5.

[55] Stearns 2007, 4-5.

turquoise, gold, and coral attached to the bottom of the sheet of paper. According to Chökyi Drönmé's biography,[56] the edict came to her wrapped in a silk scarf, together with a blessed iron link that Thangtong had forged from the large quantity of needles he had gathered and carried around with him on pilgrimage through Kongpo. The combination of these items together with Thangtong's personal message communicated clearly his sense of Chökyi Drönmé's symbolic importance to him in embodying, as she did, the monetary means by which he could continue his meritorious iron bridge-building activities.[57] While Thangtong's edicts are obviously not autobiographies in a strict sense, they perform the autobiographical activity of presenting the narrator's inner world of thoughts and emotions to the reader. However, similar to declarative speech acts,[58] they also use language to perform the function of bringing a particular view of reality into being. For Thangtong Gyalpo, this reality included the role of his consort in continuing to support his bridge-building activities. In the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, we will see many different compositions that function similarly to create a particular view of the way things are.

The second person, whose creative literary activities appear to have been known to Drukpa Kunley, is the aforementioned Madman of Tsang, Tsang Myön Heruka. While Thangtong Gyalpo was nearing the end of his life at the time of the dates given for Drukpa Kunley's birth, in contrast, Tsang Myön was his contemporary. Although no mention of Drukpa Kunley is to be

[56] *Chos kyi sgron ma'i rnam thar*, TBRC Work #W2CZ7892, ff. 127a-128a, author unknown.

[57] Diemberger 2007.

[58] Searle 1975, 344-69.

found in any of the biographies of Tsang Myön, the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* is replete with comments, mostly critical, mocking, or satirical about Tsang Myön. Since in this introduction I am only interested in Tsang Myön's literary activities, I will address the subject of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*'s opinions of him in Chapter Three. Like Thangtong Gyalpo, Tsang Myön did not write an autobiography (*rangnam*), but instead revisioned and in some sense recreated himself through compiling, editing, and rewriting the different life stories of Milarepa, whose incarnation he characterized himself as being. Quintman's study of Tsang Myön's literary corpus reveals how the writing of Milarepa's biography became for Tsang Myön a self-reflexive and even autobiographical process, within which he created a vision of Milarepa from the point of view of his own orientation and situation.[59] Quintman also highlights the influence Tsang Myön's writings left on the larger biographical tradition in Tibet, whereby the voice of the subject is sometimes appropriated and becomes nearly indistinguishable from that of the biographer.

The four above-mentioned individuals provide evidence that both during and before the fifteenth century, writing could be used as a medium for self-reflection, creativity, and self-formation. It is within this general ethos that the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* appears although, as mentioned above, there also existed more conventional and systematic ideas about what should make up the form and content of a *namthar* against which Drukpa Kunley's *namthar* rebels. Some examples include two biographies of Atiśa (A ti sha mar me mdzad dpal ye shes, 982-1054), both of which contain descriptions of Atiśa's departure from wife and children in

[59] Quintman 2013, 155-175.

order to become a monk as akin to Prince Siddhārtha's abandonment of his wife and son before going on to become the Buddha, as well as descriptions of teachings received, vows taken, and disciples gathered.[60] Other earlier examples that also follow this pattern, which includes descriptions of prophecies surrounding the figure's birth, his or her unusual early childhood qualities and activities, and events surrounding death, all arranged chronologically, can be found in the biographies of the thirteenth-century polymath, Sakya Paṇḍita Kunga Gyaltsen (Sa skya Paṇḍita Kun 'dga rgyal mtshan, 1182-1251)[61] and of the great Gelugpa scholar/practitioner, Tsongkhapa.[62]

The *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* does not follow this relatively standard topos and, in fact, the protagonist of the text, Drukpa Kunley, delights in scorning these kinds of *namthar*: As he avers, "...the *namthar* of gurus that are arranged in order and which praise them are like credit agreements with debtors. They write, "In this year, on this day of the month, this security for a loan was obtained and I received this bushel of barley or peas." He goes on to ridicule those "great" teachers who record the large donations they received as well as the lesser teachers who record even the smallest items their disciples offer to them as proof to themselves and others of their importance. Drukpa Kunley mocks, "How narrow-minded!"[63]

[60] Eimer 1977.

[61] Scott & Rhoton 2002.

[62] Ary 2007.

[63] *Lar gyis sgrig dam rang drags pa'i bla ma'i rnam thar la/ bu lon pa'i bcug yig bzhin/lo 'di dang zla ba 'di/ tshes grangs 'di 'i nyin mo gte ma 'di btsugs nas/nas sran khal 'di blangs bris pa 'di yang gu dog drags,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 31b.3-4.

In addition to disregarding the chronological order that is so common in biography and autobiography and ignoring the practice of recording meditative experiences and or offerings made, the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* also does not employ the tripartite classification scheme of outer, inner, and secret *namthar* often found in categorizing Tibetan life writing.[64] This threefold scheme can refer both to different styles of *namthar* as well as to different levels of meaning within a particular *namthar.* However, as Gyatso has noted, these label distinctions between increasingly esoteric types of discourse are often more a matter of rhetoric than an accurate account in terms of a *namthar's* content.[65] In theory, the outer *namthar* (*phyi'i rnam thar*) concerns public and visible aspects of the subject's life such as family lineage, birth place, education, teachers, vows taken, teachings received, names of disciples, and death. Such a *namthar* depicts the external events of the subject's life in everyday terms. In contrast, both the inner (*nang gi rnam thar*) and the secret (*gsang ba'i rnam thar*) *namthar* describe dreams, initiations, and meditative or visionary experiences as the central dimension of the subject's life. The inner *namthar* focuses on specific meditative experiences, initiations into tantric practices, stages along the path, tutelary deities, *ḍākinīs*, Bodhisattvas, Buddhas, and so forth. It may also utilize the language of the tantric subtle body in terms of channels, winds, and drops (*rtsa, rlung, thig le*) to describe the subject's transformations.[66] The secret *namthar* is also concerned to express the subject's dreams and visions. It may also coach these events or

[64] Gyatso 1998.

[65] Gyatso 1998, 103.

[66] Dowman 1980, 20-21.

experiences in the language of the tantric initiate as a means by which to encode the essential meaning so that it is not easily accessible to the ordinary person. Such *namthar* are considered "self-secret," to inform the reader that their essential meaning remains incomprehensible to anyone who has not embarked on the same path or received the same meditative instructions as the subject.[67]

The *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* appears to pay no attention to these categorical distinctions. As discussed above, the *Namthar* also does not pay more than lip service to events such as a miraculous or unusual birth, a childhood marked by astonishing activities, catalogues of teachings received, disciples gathered, teachings imparted and fantastical events surrounding the protagonist's death. It does not set up its protagonist as the ideal Buddhist master to be emulated and praised. Not only does the *Namthar* resist these tropes, it often satirizes and mocks them.

VI. Conversation Partners and Methodologies

This thesis engages in dialogue with a number of modern literary theorists in order to help nuance and reveal the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*'s literary strategies, both implicit and explicit. In the analyses that follow, I explore the world configured in the text and the world refigured by the text to reveal how the *Namthar's* textual cacophony and its ethic of disruption work to bring into view a particular kind of ethical person – a person whose ethics consists in seeing

[67] Dowman 1984, xiii and 1996. For a discussion of the structure of Tibetan biographies including outer, inner, and secret (*phyi, nang, gsang*) sections, see Gyatso 1998, 101-114; 1992, 476; as well as Quintman 2008, 2013, 2014, Yamamoto 2012, Schaeffer 2009.

through the subtleties of self-deception. Defining the characteristics of the narrator as he is constituted within the world of the text allows me to also analyze the reader who is ethically refigured by his or her journey through the world of the text – who emerges transformed from the world of the text. To describe these persons, I interpret both the content of the *Namthar's* compositions as well as the narrative strategies they employ. I consider how distinct genres and the *Namthar* as a whole function aesthetically in the formation of a particular kind of ethical person. I trace the development of the three primary themes discussed above as they appear in and animate the different genres within the work. To reiterate, these themes consist of 1) acknowledgment and acceptance of self-deception and hypocrisy as essential to the formation of the ethical person and his or her success on the spiritual path; 2) the necessity of developing such self-awareness within an ethos of delight and pleasure in everyday life; and 3) the examination of in whom or in what ultimate authority lies, including the proposition that, stripped of self-deception, there is no higher authority than one's own self and the Buddha. These three themes appear in a variety of configurations, are often specific to contexts, and form the contours of the ethical person as imagined by the *Namthar* and embodied by its narrator and main protagonist, Drukpa Kunley.

When I speak of the "world configured by the text," I refer to the mimetic theory of narrative developed by Paul Ricoeur. Ricoeur uses the term "mimesis" to explore the interpretive strategies at work in narrative texts. Mimesis refers to the activity of narrative to effect a mediating function by which the reader is moved into the world of the text, emerging transformed in her ethical understanding and orientation. For Ricoeur, the action of mimesis

performs the function of "produc[ing] the "literariness" of the work of literature." In other words, it functions to produce the *qua*-world, the "as-if" world of the text – the imaginary world into which the reader enters.[68] Ricoeur identifies three moments of mimesis in relation to narrative texts: $Mimesis_1$, $Mimesis_2$, and $Mimesis_3$. $Mimesis_1$ refers to the world outside the text, the world of "real" historical persons whose lives unfold in time. This is the world presented and analyzed in Chapter One of this dissertation. $Mimesis_2$ is the world inside the text, the world "configured by the narrative," the "as-if" world. $Mimesis_2$ includes everything that unfolds within the world of the text, its content and the narrative variations that the protagonist, Drukpa Kunley, is subjected to, as well as how these work to form him as a certain kind of ethical person. Finally, $Mimesis_3$ is the world to which the reader returns, the world "refigured" and transformed by the reader's journey through the landscape of the text.[69]

In my analysis of $Mimesis_2$, I show how the many genres employed by the *Namthar* function differently to evoke the themes of self-deception, delight, and investigation of authority, to activate the ethic of disruption inside the world of the text, and to form the narrator as a particular kind of ethical person. The role of the narrator within the world of the text is twofold. He is a protagonist who is acted upon by the persons and situations he encounters. At the same time, he is also the orchestrator who self-reflexively directs, organizes, and explores those encounters. His story is not just a story *about;* it is also a story *with.* In other words, the narrator does not only describe events that happened *to* him, he also acts as the

[68] Ricoeur 1983, 45-46.

[69] Ricoeur 1983, 71.

agent who puts into motion the dynamics of self-reflection and action necessary to ethical transformation. Drukpa Kunley's dual status within the world of the text highlights the formation of an ethical person as consisting in two intersecting processes – one in which a person is acted *on,* and the other in which a person *acts.* The ethical person, envisioned in the world of the text is patient and agent, subject and object.

As noted above, Ricoeur's concept of $Mimesis_3$ refers to the world seen differently as a result of allowing the text's strategies to perform their transformative work. Ricoeur's description of narrative as "a vast laboratory for thought experiments in which the resources of variation encompassed by narrative identity are put to the test of narration" helps to provide a vocabulary for thinking through the narrative strategies which the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* employs. This activated view of narrative clarifies both the truth-telling practices within the world of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* as well as the text's overall transformative project for its readers.[70] Ricoeur's theory of "character emplotment" supplies a context within which to explicate how ethical meaning is generated in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* by means of the process of "refiguration."[71] This idea of refiguration becomes particularly pertinent for the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, where the potential of literary texts to transmit truths that can form ethical persons is a central concern.

[70] Ricoeur 1988 and 1992, 148.

[71] Ricoeur 1992, 164. "Because of these exercises in evaluating in the dimension of fiction, the narrative can finally perform its functions of discovery and transformation with respect to the reader's feelings and actions, in the phase of refiguration of action by the narrative."

However, the process of truth-transmission is not a one-way street. Emily Hudson, in her study of the Indian epic, the *Mahābhārata,* defines the term "narrative strategy" as "a set of instructions that a text deploys to guide its audiences. 'Instructions' are those features in a text's literary landscape that 'reach out' from the world of the text to the world of the audience in order to effect some transformation."[72] Although I agree in principle with Hudson's definition, for the purposes of this dissertation I expand her sense of the reaching out of narrative strategies and propose, in addition, that such textually embedded instructions work to draw the reader *into* the world of the text itself where she is subsequently transformed. To my mind, this dual function is important in that it emphasizes what I understand to be an essential element, not only of a person's ethical interaction with a text, but also of the Buddhist disciple's interaction with the teacher – the willingness to surrender, to leave behind the familiar and the comfortable in order to be genuinely transformed by the other. This kind of "radical disorientation"[73] in the model reader and the "rupturing [of] conceptual categories that are used to order and comprehend the world"[74] has ethical implications in that it may result in the individual's ability, not only to re-comprehend the world but also, I would emphasize, to re-imagine it.

To aid in exploring the *Namthar's* narrative strategies and to help clarify the notion of the reader here, I also invoke Umberto Eco's notion of the "model reader."[75] This kind of reader

[72] Hudson 2006, 7-8.

[73] Both Hudson and I draw on Umberto Eco's development of the 'model reader.' See discussion below.

[74] Hudson 2006, 7-8.

[75] Eco 1994.

is willing and eager to play the game of the text, and more importantly, to be changed by interaction with the text – to become someone new. In this collaboration, she is the text's interactant and cooperator as well as the ideal reader imagined by the text. "He or she is born with [the text], being the sinews of its interpretive strategy. Thus the competence of Model Readers is determined by the kind of genetic imprinting that the text has transmitted to them…Created with – and imprisoned within – the text, they enjoy as much freedom as the text is willing to grant them."[76] This statement suggests that the literary strategies embedded in the text envision a very particular kind of reader – one who is ethically bound to adhere to the limits of interpretation set by the text. In the case of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, the model reader consists of the reader who engages in the practices of self-exposure and acknowledgement of hypocrisy described by the texts.

Additionally, with the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar,* it is difficult to definitively identify a single author. Historical author, model author, the narrator within the world of the text, as well as Drukpa Kunley's disciples, and the editor of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* as these are represented by the text, all work to complicate an easy identification of the processes of writing and compilation that formed the collection. In order to simplify this issue, I refer to what Michel Foucault describes as the "author function."[77] Foucault theorizes that an author's name, for example, "Drukpa Kunley," has no direct or simple reference. Rather, the name signifies a range of possibilities, only one of which is the connection between the proper name and a particular

[76] Eco 1994, 5-6.

[77] Foucault 1994, 377-391.

individual. Another is how the author's name performs an organizational function by allowing us "to group together a certain number of texts, define them, differentiate them from and contrast them to others."[78] This is important because the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*'s structure requires that we view it as a compilation of individual compositions, each of which functions separately, but all of which participate simultaneously in the text's overall project of ethical instruction. Furthermore, Foucault describes how the author's name establishes an active relationship between texts by which something new – a specific discourse with a specific mode of being that must be received in a specific way – is brought into view. If we view the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* as a conglomeration of diverse compositions, we can suppose that their deliberate dis-organization, their haphazard arrangement itself creates a particular kind of discourse that seeks to be received in a particular way. The *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*'s deliberate *dis*-organization of texts allows for a fresh orientation to the world and oneself that is central to the formation of ethical persons the text envisions.

While it is not unimportant to consider the historical identity of the one or ones who wrote, compiled, edited, and printed these writings, as well as to consider the time period during which they were written, it is also less pertinent to the central aim of this thesis, which is to characterize and explicate the means and modalities by which the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* acts to produce ethical persons. Thus, for the purposes of this thesis, I take the narrator within the world of the text as bearing only a nominal relation to a possible historical figure of the same name who may have lived in the fifteenth century in south-central Tibet. Along with other

[78] Foucault 1994, 377-391.

theorists of autobiographical studies such as Micaela Maftei (2013), I question the assumption that the author of a work shares an identity, complete or even partial, with the work's narrator/subject. Contemporary studies of autobiography concur that there is "no such thing as an unambiguous connection between writer and central character." However, further complicating matters in the present case, the narrator Drukpa Kunley within the world of the text represents himself as a writer – as an author of many different forms of literature, including the *Namthar* itself. Thus for purposes of clarity, when I use the name "Drukpa Kunley" in my analyses in Chapters Two and Three, I refer to the narrator *within the world of the text*.

Because this dissertation explores the way in which writing such as that found in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* may have been conceived of as a literary practice that works to create an ethical person, I also draw on Foucault's genealogical study of "technologies of the self." Foucault defines these as "practices which permit agents, with the help of others, to effect certain operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct and way of being so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state."[79] This concept provides me with a field of discourse in which others (notably, Pierre Hadot) have attempted to think through the means and modalities by which the construction of a transformed self can take place.[80] the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, by engaging with diverse literary forms, uses autobiography – and here I recall Foucault's notion of ascesis – to "think differently and thereby *become* different."[81]

[79] Foucault 1994b, 225.

[80] Hadot 1995.

[81] McGushin 2007, XIV.

In addition, I will suggest, readers of these texts are also induced to engage in the processes of ethical formation that the narrator "exercises" through acts of telling the truth.

These formational processes recall Foucault's analyses of the figure of the Greek *parrhesiastes* – the ethical truth-teller – as this figure has been interpreted in his late work on technologies of the self.[82] I argue that the model of the ethical truth teller found in and formed by the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* shares some characteristics with this figure as explored by Foucault. Examining Drukpa Kunley's writings in light of the late Antiquity practice of *parrhesia* helps us to see how the different compositions in Drukpa Kunley's *namthar* work together to constitute a particular kind of ethical person who has realized a particular kind of truth. This truth exposes the problem of how ideal representations of what the ethical person *should be* continuously rub up against the reality of, and our unwillingness to acknowledge, how such people actually *are*.

As discussed at the beginning of this introduction, one of my overarching goals for the dissertation is to reveal the intentional ethical particularities of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* – the various ways it demonstrates a complex and various vision of what it means to be an ethical person. I hope to show how an investigation of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*'s narrative strategies is productive for considering the location of ethics in these texts, as well as their production by the texts.[83] This also includes understanding how the *Namthar,* and the contemporary tradition of Drukpa Kunley in Bhutan (See Chapter Four), articulate their moral

[82] Foucault 2010, Vol. 3. Foucault 1986; *Fearless Speech*, Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext(e), 2001.

[83] Charles Hallisey, Janet Gyatso, and Anne Monius have ingrained this particular orientation into my own work. Cf. Hallisey and Hansen 1996, Monius 2000, 195-223.

discourse. Because the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* delivers much of its ethical instruction primarily through its narrative strategies, we see that meaning in these texts is expressed not only through content, but also through the intricate communication taking place between content, form, and receiver.

Analysis of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar's* narrative strategies helps to illuminate the many ways that the truth-telling displayed in and modeled by the texts requires the presence of an "other" (an interlocutor within the text and/or the reader herself) upon whom the narrated self is dependent for the creation of the conditions under which the truth can be told. This dependency on an "other" suggests that, at least within the Tibetan Buddhist soteriological framework as it is conceived of by the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, it is an ethical responsibility for a person to become transparent, both to herself and to others. In fact, the development of this transparency is the path itself. The degree to which the attainment of transparency is possible is entirely dependent on the subject's willingness to recognize and acknowledge the layers of self-deception and hypocrisy within which he operates at the instigation of the requests of other people.

As it is conceived in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, truth-telling occurs, not as an act of penance or as a means to expiate one's sins in order to become freed from guilt or shame (as is most commonly seen in Judeo-Christian practices of confession),[84] nor as a means by which to acknowledge the general ignorance and confusion of human existence in samsara (as is often

[84] It is this kind of movement that Foucault examines at the base of the development of the practice of confession in early Christian monasticism. Foucault 1988, 16-50.

the case in Buddhist confessional practices),[85] but as a practice designed to develop curiosity and awareness of the myriad layers of hypocrisy and deception. The *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* conceives of the Buddhist path as including, among other practices, truth-telling as the practice of a certain kind of curiosity – a curiosity that, to call again on Foucault, "enables one to get free of oneself." This curiosity emerges in and through the autobiography's diverse compositions. These may be said to take the form of philosophical activity in which thought is brought "to bear on itself."[86] In this way, the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* constitutes an example of "confession... [used] without renunciation of the self but to constitute, positively, a new self."[87]

VII. Chapter Outline

A. Chapter One

Chapter One traces what can be known of the historical person Drukpa Kunley based on the textual sources that mention him, including short biographies of him written by his disciples and incarnations. At the same time, this chapter problematizes any easy identification of Drukpa Kunley as a real person by addressing the dearth of reliable historical or biographical information concerning him in Tibetan literature and demonstrating how it is rather the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar's* literary representations of Drukpa Kunley that form the basis for the vision of

[85] Faure, 1996, 243-269; 1998: 64-98. Dumoulin 1967 (1997), 395-416. Malcolm Voyce, 2009. Pei-Yi Wu (June, 1979), 5-38. Makransky 2000, 54-59. Attwood 1997, 55-62. Havens 1970, 20-26. Marran 2012.

[86] Foucault 1990, 8-9.

[87] Foucault 1988, 49.

him that flourishes today in contemporary Bhutanese folklore and oral traditions. The chapter also introduces the subject matter of this dissertation: the autobiographical writings contained in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* and the various extant versions of this text. Finally, this chapter examines the history of scholarship on Drukpa Kunley and his writings in order to highlight how the particular focus of this thesis adds to and enhances our understanding of this religious figure and his efforts to reconcile the split between ordinary human experience and spiritual perfection as articulated in doctrinal sources.

B. Chapter Two

Chapter Two begins the exploration of the world inside the text through analyses of the various compositions in which the narrator specifically discusses practices of writing. Drukpa Kunley displays a high degree of self-reflexivity and intentionality regarding the uses of literary forms of expression and their application to enacting a practice of ethical formation. He talks about the writing of specific genres such as *namthar* and poetry: what makes them good or bad, how his own style differs from others and why, and what kind of effects various types of writing can elicit in readers. It is this overt discussion of authorial intention and the consideration of reception by presumed readers – by the narrator within the text – that provides insight into how the text was designed to communicate a literary practice of ethical formation. Drukpa Kunley openly examines the practice of writing and how it affects both writers and readers. In particular, he is concerned to demonstrate how writing grounded in an unflinching willingness to examine our own self-hypocrisy and delusion can be used as a conscious practice that contributes to success on the Tibetan Buddhist spiritual path.

C. Chapter Three

This chapter explores the various genres, rhetorical devices, and narrative strategies found in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* and the characteristics of the person that is envisioned and constructed therein. Primarily the text describes the narrator – who calls himself Drukpa Kunley, and who is actively engaged in an ongoing effort to examine and reveal the truth about himself and others. These truth-seeking and truth-telling characteristics are frequently combined with an imaginative and counter-intuitive engagement with normative Buddhist ideals. Through the shrewd application of various literary forms, the text paints a picture of the narrator that is complex and multifaceted.

Interestingly, one of the chief characteristics of Drukpa Kunley created within the text is that he is engaged in a self-conscious process of ethical-construction. This process is enacted through a literary practice of engagement: writing about, responding to, and reflecting on his experiences and his interactions with others. Each of the various literary forms employed in the text (poetry, song, didactic exposition, storytelling, etc.) illuminates different aspects of this multifaceted Drukpa Kunley. By virtue of these representations, Drukpa Kunley is presented by the texts as an example for others to follow. The narrator himself – as he is created within the text – constitutes a model for ethical living and a demonstration of the processes a person needs to go through in order to realize the truth of who they are.

Chapter Three also explores what kinds of model readers the *Namthar* envisions through its narrative strategies. To illustrate this, I examine how these strategies work in two ways: to induce the reader to take up the practices of telling the truth about oneself the

narrator performs; and to confound the reader's expectations concerning what the perfected human being should look like. Ricoeur's theoretical approach to how narratives effect ethical transformation in readers helps nuance my analysis of reading Drukpa Kunley's autobiography as a spiritual practice of transformation. I show how the narrative strategies work to construct an alternative vision of the perfected person whose awareness and willingness to exposure of his own faults functions to liberate him from hypocritical self-representations. The narrative strategies employed by the text demonstrate multiple ways in which telling the truth about oneself and others forms a practice that leads to ethical 'perfection' even as it advocates a vision of the perfected self who is always and still imperfect.

D. Chapter Four

Chapter Four explores and compares the myriad representations of Drukpa Kunley that are formed by the narrative strategies of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* and by the larger nexus of contemporary biographical materials located in Bhutan, where Drukpa Kunley is particularly important and alive in the popular imagination, such as oral tales, rituals, sacred places and storytellers. In this chapter I present and advocate for a model of scholarship that approaches the scholarly study of a text as an ethnographic encounter. I propose that this model for studying texts, which engages a wide range of agents and influences – including our own can yield deeper and more relevant insights into our objects of study. The chapter explores the different representations of Drukpa Kunley, which do not present a fixed, independent entity. Rather, multiple manifestations of the saint arise through interactions of the text, oral stories, rituals, places associated with Drukpa Kunley, and with persons (readers, pilgrims, researchers,

storytellers, etc.). Each new or fresh version of Drukpa Kunley reveals the context-specific nature of self-identity and ethical formation. Ultimately, the chapter considers the usefulness of intersubjective practice for scholars of religion and other fields to consider their own experience within the processes of investigation and analysis in which they engage. Espousing a notion of an expanded ethnography, the chapter considers the researcher's personal experience with objects – both discursive (oral tales, written texts, inscriptions) and material (images, structures, places, symbols) as well as with places, as valuable material for critical thought.

Chapter 1

Who was 'Brug pa Kun dga' Legs pa (1455-1529)?

I. Tibet's Divine Madmen

Reconstructing an historical context for Drukpa Kunley would be impossible without taking into account the emergence of a particular development in the fifteenth century coined by E. Gene Smith as "the *smyon pa* phenomenon."[1] Smith notes that while the tradition of saintly madmen may be quite old in Tibet, it is a phenomenon that emerged during the fifteenth century in an age of impassioned doctrinal and religious reform.[2] The term *smyon pa* can be translated as "mad," "crazy," or "insane." Scholars have identified three main representatives of the *smyon pa* tradition in Tibet during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries: Tsang Myön Heruka (Gtsang smyon he ru ka, 1452-1507); Drukpa Kunley ('Brug pa Kun dga' legs pa, or 'Brug smyon pa, 1455-1529); and Ü Myön (Dbus smyon Kun dga' bzang po, 1458-1532). These three may have lived and travelled in roughly the same areas and there are tantalizing depictions in the *namthars* of different ways in which these individuals experienced and related to each other.[3]

Multiple mentions of both Ü Myön and Tsang Myön appear in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar,* at least two of which are attested to in the biographies of these other two mad yogis. In the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar,* Drukpa Kunley is represented as being familiar with both Tsang Myön and Ü Myön and he is even shown to have had some personal interaction at least with Ü

[1] Smith 2001, 59-62.

[2] Smith 2001, 59, *The Life of the Saint of Gtsang*.

[3] DiValerio 2011.

Myön. In Volume Ga of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* there is a supplication prayer (*gsol 'debs bstod pa gcig*) composed by Drukpa Kunley on behalf of Ü Myön's teachings on the Aural Transmission lineage (*snyan brgyud*).[4] This event also appears in Ü Myön's *namthar* where we find mention of a meeting between Drukpa Kunley and himself. "At that time, the secret yogi Drukpa Kunley arrived. He gave limitless clouds of offerings and a supplication for the Aural Transmission, which he had composed. This deeply pleased [Ü Myön] who, later on that occasion, gave return gifts and discourses on the profound meaning."[5] While this particular event represents a cordial and respectful relationship between Drukpa Kunley and Ü Myön, the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* also represents Drukpa Kunley as harboring strong criticisms against Ü Myön as well as other practitioners associated with the *smyon pa* practices.

This is most evident in Drukpa Kunley's critical comments about Tsang Myön, whose name appears more often than Ü Myön's in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*. Various compositions represent Drukpa Kunley and Tsang Myön as knowing about each other, even though there is no description of a face-to-face meeting. The best example is the aforementioned "letter of safe passage." In this long parody, Drukpa Kunley's disciples bring him a letter of safe passage (*lam yig*) written by Tsang Myön for his students. After quoting the letter in full, Drukpa Kunley

[4] "In the presence of Ü Myön Heruka, Drukpa Kunley composed this praise/supplication to the genuine Aural Transmission teachings." *ces pa 'di yang dbus smyon he ru ka'i zhal snga nas snyan brgyud nges phyogs la brgyud pa la gsol 'debs bstod pa gcig gyis dang gsungs pa la/ 'brug pa kun legs kyis sbyar ba'o* Volume Ga, 2005, 414.11-13. The madman of Ü wrote and published a 12-volume collection of teachings on the Aural Transmission.

[5] See *bKa' brgyud pa'i skyes chen dam pa rnams kyi rnam thar*, Volume Kha, pp. 561-660, Sungrab nyamso gyunphel parkhang: Palampur, H.P. (1972-1976). *De dus sbas pa'i rnal 'byor 'brug smyon kun dga' legs pa yang phyags phebs te/ mchod sprin dpag tu med pa dang/ snyan rgyud kyi gsol 'debs shig kyang brtsams nas phug bas shin tu mnyes te/ gsung chos zab don kyi skor rnams gnang nas thugs kyi 'dod pa 'jo bar mdzad de/slar gnang sbyin gyi skyes dang bcas phyir thegs yang skabs shig gi tshe* (ff. 21a.2-5).

proceeds to compose an ironic and humorous parody of it in which he satirizes and mocks the pretentiousness and seriousness of Tsang Myön's letter. Since we will examine this letter and its implications in detail in Chapter Three, I will not describe it further here. However, a paraphrase of Tsang Myön's letter is also found in the biography of him written by Götsang Repa (Rgod gtsang ras pa, 1482-1559) in his version of *The Life of the Madman of Tsang*.[6] While it is only a paraphrase, much of the language is identical, raising interesting questions concerning the intertextuality between these *namthars.*

These three mad yogis are also represented as sharing some of the same teachers including the seventh Karmapa Chödrag Gyatso (Chos grags rgya mtsho, 1454-1506) and the then abbot of Ralung, Kunga Paljor (Kun dga' dpal 'byor, 1428-1476). Historically, we also hear of numerous other individuals who either self identified as *smyon pa* or who were accorded the title by others. Some of these other crazy yogis include: Taglung Myön (Stag lung smyon pa, fourteenth century), the father of the famous treasure revealer Sangye Lingpa (Sangs rgyas gling pa, 1340-1396), is mentioned as a disciple of Tsang Myön;[7] Phag Myön (Phag smyon pa) of Kyishod is listed as a member of the regency council of 1491 at the Phagmodru (Phag mo gru) capital of Ne'u Dong (Sne'u gdong).[8] Earlier than either of these is the Nyingma treasure revealer, Nyang Nyima Öser (Nyang ral Nyima 'od ser, 1136−1204), who, following a vision of

[6] Rgod tshang ras pa, *The Life of the Madman of Tsang, the Heruka, Who is Victorious in All Directions: the Essence of the Sun that Elucidates the Vajrayana* (*gtsang smyon he ru ka phyogs thams cad las rnam par rgyal ba'i rnam thar rdo rje theg pa'i gsal byed nyi ma'i snying po*), edited by Lokesh Chandra (New Delhi: Sharada Rani, 1969), 191.3-192.5. Written in 1547.

[7] Smith 2001, 61. Dargyay 1979, 133.

[8] Smith 2001, 61.

Padmasambhava in his youth, was called insane because of his subsequent strange behavior. The treasure revealer Kunkyong Lingpa (Kun skyong gling pa, 1396−1477) was said to be thirteen when a *ḍākinī* revealed the hiding place of a treasure text to him. His father called him crazy when he danced about ecstatically. The discoverer of the *Five Chronicles (Bka' thang sde lnga),* Orgyan Lingpa (O rgyan gling pa, 1323-ca.-1360), was known as a "madman of the treasures" *(gter smyon)*. The Bhutanese treasure-revealer, Pema Lingpa (Padma gling pa, 1450−1521), sometimes referred to himself as "Pema Lingpa, the crazy revealer of treasures."[9]

While mad yogis are thus known in many Tibetan Buddhist traditions, most of them are associated with traditions that focus on meditation rather than scholastic studies. The famous mad yogis mentioned above belonged to or had affiliations with the Nyingma and Kagyü branches and to the Drukpa Kagyü branch in particular to which Drukpa Kunley belonged. Stefan Larsson notes that we also find mad yogins in the Zhi byed/gCod tradition.[10] Nevertheless, despite the fact that Drukpa Kunley stands out as the most infamously popular of all the Tibetan crazy yogis, just how and why he was considered "mad" is unclear. David DiValerio has explored the origins and configurations of the notion of religious madness of the Tibetan crazy yogis.[11] In a chapter dedicated to Drukpa Kunley, he suggests that Drukpa Kunley's renown as a "crazy yogi" was due not to any form of antinomian or iconoclastic behavior, but instead arose as the result of his scathing social critiques and his attempt to find a

[9] Stearns 2007, 62.

[10] Larsson (2009) 2012, 21.

[11] DiValerio 2011.

place for himself "as a wandering outsider who refused to conform to the categories presented to him by the culture in which he lived."[12]

Tibetan medicine recognizes numerous causes for *smyo ba* or "madness." These include insanities brought on by illnesses, by demon or spirit possession, and by physiological or psychological stresses.[13] In addition, some Tibetans also recognize a form of *smyo ba* that is called "religious madness" or *chos smyo ba*, whose cause is considered to be a mistaken understanding and realization of one's yogic practices.[14] Tantric practice involves the engagement with and manipulation of various extremely powerful deities. If the practitioner does not understand how to properly engage in this mental process and her mind is not stable enough to handle the difficulties, *chos smyo ba* can result.[15]

Finally there is also the form of *smyo ba* that signifies the type of crazy wisdom the great madmen of Tibet were imagined to embody. This notion of madness presumes a religious model that assigns saintliness to reversing normative or prescriptive behavior for the purposes of exhibiting power and the attainment of liberation.[16] In other words, what appears to be mad is in fact the highest state of spiritual achievement.[17] The present Dalai Lama explains *smyon pa*

[12] DiValerio 2011, 469.

[13] Ardussi 1972.

[14] Ardussi and Epstein 1978, 330-331.

[15] Epstein and Ardussi 1978, 327-339. The authors list eight categories of *smyo ba* of which *chos smyo ba* is the seventh. The authors label this "Dharma madness" and say that it may occur to a practitioner of meditation who exhibits self-doubt, thereby leaving himself open to demonic attack. Aberle 1961, Dasgupta 1969, Dpal sprul 1971. See also Vargas 2009, 367-385.

[16] Ardussi 1972, 22-23.

[17] Ardussi 1972, 33.

in the following manner: “The implication of “mad” here is that when a person gains experience of emptiness, the ultimate mode of existence of all phenomena, his perception is as different from that of ordinary people as a madman’s. Due to his or her realization of emptiness, a practitioner completely transcends the conventional way of viewing the world.”[18] Thus, according to this cultural model, we might say that *smyon pa* is a term applied to individuals whose spiritual and contemplative power is visibly transcendent and whose goals are pure, with the result that they are often believed to be beyond dualistic notions of good and bad, permitted and prohibited. Such individuals were inclined to follow a peripatetic lifestyle and to be of the solitary yogi type, rather than living as ordained monastics, though they would likely have been such at one time in their earlier careers.

Smyon pa also set themselves apart from other practitioners in the realm of behavior (*spyod pa*). Through ongoing violation of common sense rules and ethical and societal norms, these were groups of wandering Tantric yogis who dressed strangely, declined to live in any sort of fixed dwelling, who asserted their ability to perform “miracles” and cures for illnesses, and whose eccentric and even antinomian behavior caused them to stand out among the varieties of religious practitioners who populated the Tibetan landscape.

The question of the models for these saintly madmen has yet to be adequately explored, although DiValerio attempts to trace possible influences in the example of the Indian *siddhas*,[19] long recognized in Tantric history as persons whose realization of yogic practices

[18] Larsson 2012, 13.

[19] DiValerio 2011, 176-181. Sanderson 1988, 649-660. Lorenzen 1972, 4, 20. Samuel 2008, 243-6.

largely independent of institutional affiliations led to unusual and even shocking behavior as a tool by which to cause awakening to arise in their disciples.[20] He hypothesizes that some main sources for the practices of antinomianism practiced by some Tibetan *smyon pa* may have included the Pasupatas,[21] who practiced a non-tantric form of Saivism and *Kāpālika*-style practitioners.[22]

An important principle of behavior for these saintly madmen was considered to be the practice of reversal (Tib. *bzlog pa'i sgom pa*, Skt. *viparīta-bhāvanā*) whereby the meditator uses various antinomian techniques to "reverse" the process of becoming that takes place due to the ignorance of one's true nature. Through such "reversals," practitioners recognize their original, unborn nature and learn how to stabilize that realization.[23] Ardussi in particular mentions the Nath siddhas, who made use of these practices to actualize their sense of the ultimate nature as a state of divine being by withdrawing from the everyday processes of becoming ignorantly engaged in by most persons.[24] Additionally, the yogi may employ forms of behavior that are considered impure or otherwise ritually proscribed due to having the appearance or form of causing contamination. By acting contrary to social norms, the *smyon pas* transcend all conceptual distinctions between good and bad in order to recognize that everything is of one "taste" (*ro snyoms*). In his *namthar,* Drukpa Kunley is represented as being

[20] Ray 1985, 183-185 and 2001, 2002, Dasgupta (1946) 1995.

[21] Sanderson 1988.

[22] Lorenzen 1972, 4, 20; Samuel 2008, 243-6.

[23] Ardussi 1972, 36, Dasgupta 1969, 229-230. Stearns 2007, 61-63.

[24] Ardussi 1972, 37, Snellgrove 1959, 93.

clearly aware of these practices and their pitfalls. We see this from how often he comments on them, criticizing those who, without having realized the nature, engage in these practices merely to show off their yogic powers and impress people.

> If they do not join all activities with the four stages of yogic behavior,[25] who are those [who call themselves] crazy madmen? If they do not know that the view is beyond imputation, those who focus one-pointedly, what can they do?[26]

Drukpa Kunley also often quotes from the *Hevajra Tantra* where the practice of using reversals to overcome the distinction between "good" and "bad" in order to arrive at the experience of one taste is described. Cyrus Stearns notes that many of Thangtong Gyalpo's actions also represented the pragmatic application of these kinds of theories,[27] while DiValerio, Larsson, and Quintman all describe how depictions of Tsang Myön's literal enactment of antinomian activities adhered to the ethos expressed particularly in verses 46-51 from the *Hevajratantra*.[28] I quote only the final two verses as example:

> Those things by which men of evil conduct are bound, others turn into means and gain thereby release from the bond of existence. By passion the world is bound, by passion too it is released, but by the heretical Buddhists this practice of reversals is not know.[29]

Another possible reason for the emergence of this view of a realized practitioner is proposed by Smith, who speculates that the ideal of the *smyon pa* arose as a protest against

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[25] *spyod pa dus tshod bzhi*, the four two-hour periods of the day for the practice of meditation.

[26] *Sbyod pa dus tshod bzhi dang ma 'brel na/ smyon sbyod hur langs 'di tsho su yin pa/ lta ba ngos bzung med par ma shes na/ phyog lhung dmigs gtod mkhan 'dis gang byed ba,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 10a.2-3.

[27] Stearns 2006, 77.

[28] DiValerio 2011, Larsson 2012, Quintman 2006.

[29] *Hevajra Tantra* (*Hevajratantrarājanāma*. *Kye rdo rje zhes bya ba rgyud kyi rgyal po/ Kye'i rdo rje mkha' 'gro ma dra ba'i sdom pa'i rgyud kyi rgyal po*), Toh 418, Kangyur, rgyud 'bum, nga, 16a.

the increasing systematization and scholasticism of the Tibetan Buddhist schools as quintessentially modeled by the newly arising Gelugpa. He suggests that the crazy yogis represented the opposite of scholastic monks in addition to representing a voice for reform—an attempt to return the Kagyü sects to original truths and insights that were vanishing. These included the Kagyü emphasis on oral transmission, individual solitary contemplation, and the deep personal bond formed between gurus and disciples. The crazy yogi movement could thus function as a means by which to re-invest the Kagyü tradition with some of its former religious fervor, to, as Smith says, "re-kindle the incandescent spirituality of the early yogis." The chief symbol for this movement was Milarepa (Mi la ras pa, c.1052-c.1135).[30]

DiValerio further nuances this explanation by suggesting that in addition to attempting to reimagine and redefine the Kagyü sect through modeling their behavior on a literal reading of certain Tantric teachings, the "holy madmen" took up various antinomian behaviors as "strategic performances" which enabled them to exert control, achieve worldly success (including the acquisition of wealth and patronage), and shore up their own sense of self and accomplishment.[31] DiValerio dismisses Tibetan Buddhist claims that the attainment of the expression of *smyo ba* (madness) was indicative of progress on the Buddhist path of realization as he states was asserted by many of his interlocutors. Instead, he asserts that there is no instance where an individual achieves a different ontological state as either a *siddha* or a

[30] Smith 2001, 59-60. Also Ardussi 1972, 39 for a similar point of view on why the *smyon pa* should have flourished when they did: "The expression of saintly madness in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries of Tibet should not be viewed, however, as being merely a literal interpretation and public exhibition of the tenets of the standard Tantric texts. What seems to have motivated these men was a sense of duty to restore the tradition of the solitary, wandering yogi to the level of its former greatness in India."

[31] DiValerio 2011, 8-9.

Buddha. In fact, it is only for the purposes of academic study that the researcher assumes that such categories exist and are differently employed "within the understandable realm of human culture and history."[32] DiValerio makes the point that the *smyon pas* were "hyperaware" of the dynamics of their real-world situations and circumstances and "took on" identities as *smyon pa* as "purposeful, strategic decision[s] made amidst real-world circumstances at a specific moment in history."[33] As a result of this interpretation of *smyo ba,* DiValerio argues that a person does not become a holy madman due to having achieved an exalted state as a religious practitioner. The achievement of *smyo ba* is the end result of a strategic social process whereby holy madness is best be understood as a form or rhetoric.[34]

In this thesis, I neither wish to confirm nor deny these explanations for and approaches to the *smyon pa*. Certainly there is much value in points of view that seek to situate and thereby explain these practices and persons from an historical perspective—which, indeed, I briefly do here. However, two factors mitigate against my sense that these explanations are entirely adequate to investigate a way of being in the world for which we find few equivalents in western history. Note, for example, that while Drukpa Kunley was a contemporary of the madmen of Ü and Tsang, in his writing, he is represented quite differently from the figures of these other madmen in their own biographies. Rather than engaging in outrageous and exhibitory activities, Drukpa Kunley is instead depicted as using sharp, penetrating social and

[32] DiValerio 2011, 10.

[33] DiValerio 2011, 10.

[34] DiValerio 2011, 11.

religious critiques of self and other and seems bent on breaking down the false impressions given by religious practitioners as a result of their ignorance and hypocrisy. We can also note that other *smyon pa* such as Milarepa himself or the well-known fifteenth-century master Thangtong Gyalpo, were also depicted as manifesting similar sorts of unusual behaviors, but without the same social, religious, or environmental conditions to justify reducing an explanation solely to these factors. Stein mentions that two generations before Drukpa Kunley's birth, there was a member of the Ralung lineage called Ra Myön, the Madman of Ralung, whose primary name was Nam mkha' dpal bzang (1398-1425). According to Stein, this figure was an ambiguous individual (*rten nyes med*) who acted like a layperson despite his particular place in the Bar Drug lineage. Apparently, he lived as a hunter. It is also said that he killed many people and then revived them. As far as his epithet of 'mad yogi', his appearance was similar to that of Drukpa Kunley who carried a bow and arrows, and was accompanied by a hunting dog. Like Drukpa Kunley, he was considered to be an incarnation of *Śāvaripa* – one of the eighty-four *mahāsiddhas* of India.[35]

Secondly, to reduce the beliefs of self-transformation that lie at the basis of the rationale for advanced yogic practices within the traditions of the Tibetan Buddhist soteriological path to mere rhetoric is to miss part of what I see as the scholar of religion's ethical responsibility to her objects of study. It is incumbent upon us to approach these objects with openness and respect for ways of being and responding to the environment that challenge

[35] Stein 1972, 10.

our own preconceptions and ideas about what is "true" or factual.[36] Such a reductionist view also precludes the possibility that by studying aspects of human experience that do not conform to familiar models we might become different to ourselves, thereby learning something new and essential about what it means to be a human being. Surrendering to our subjects of investigation and allowing them to perform their unique functions means suspending our disbelief and allowing for the possibility of new and unfamiliar approaches to the processes of being human that we might not have noticed or taken seriously had we not permitted ourselves to encounter them directly. Without approaching Drukpa Kunley's writings with a degree of subtlety and openness to being changed, I believe it would be next to impossible to discern the internal logic and project of these compositions, never mind find creative and responsive ways to communicate those.

An article by Ardussi and Epstein lists some of the common characteristics assigned to the *smyon pa*.[37] One of these is the creation of an outrageous public image as a front or disguise that could enable one to act outside of commonly accepted moral boundaries. This includes engaging in antinomian actions such as stripping naked, drunken-type chattering, drinking copious amounts of alcohol, and acting out outrageous and socially challenging behaviors, such as smearing oneself with feces or conversing freely with supernatural beings. That Drukpa Kunley became associated with this kind of image is evident when we examine the oral traditions of Tibet and Bhutan as well as the later biographies of him, where he is

[36] Orsi 2004, 178-204.

[37] Arduss and Epstein 1972, 332-334.

renowned as the demon-tamer par excellence whose main weapon is his "thunderbolt of wisdom" (his penis). This later image of Drukpa Kunley stands in sharp contrast to his presentation in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* where he comes across as a learned, deeply perceptive, and sophisticated person. (This dichotomy is explored in detail in Chapter Four.) Both the antinomian figure of Drukpa Kunley so popular in contemporary Bhutan and the less overtly flamboyant figure to be found in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* embrace the idea that the best instruction was not to be had from studying books or even from a personal teacher, but rather from one's own self – or from all phenomena, including the natural world.

The characterization of Drukpa Kunley as someone who engages the entire world as his guru can be seen in the following quote: "Who or whatever appears becomes my fundamental guru (*bla ma*)."[38] This means that once a person has become able to recognize the nature of all phenomena, including the self, as empty, then everything that appears serves to remind the practitioner of that realization. The attainment of such a view could lead to the practitioner taking up the activities of the *smyon pa* – whether such activities manifested overtly (as in wandering around naked or shouting obscenities) or less obviously (as in the willingness to expose the truth of one's own and others' hypocrisies), such as we see in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*.

Another characteristic of *smyon pa* listed by Ardussi and Epstein is that they are renowned for their use of vulgarity in speech and writing. Drukpa Kunley does occasionally uses this kind of language. For example, in the beginning of Volume Kha, the second volume of the

[38] *Cir snang rtsa ba'i bla mar 'dug pa,* Volume Kha 1978, 6a.4.

Drukpa Kunley Namthar, he says: "Do not show this biography in remote lands where the Dharma has not flourished! If it is shown to those people, they may misunderstand my use of words such as "vagina" and "cock," which have good meaning of the Dharma itself. They will see them simply as "cunt" and "cock" and lose their faith."[39] However, it is actually rare to find explicitly vulgar language used in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*. This raises the question of just how and why the figure of Drukpa Kunley became known as a *smyon pa*. That the narrator in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* occasionally refers to himself as "Druk Myön" complicates the question still further, but since the few self-references of this nature appear in compositions in which he is overtly parodying other mad yogis, such as in the section where he writes the parody of a letter of safe passage composed by Tsang Myön mentioned above, it is unclear just how tongue-in-cheek this kind of self-appellation is meant to be.

Based on the examples of behavior set by Tsang Myön and Ü Myön, and the ways we see Drukpa Kunley reacting to these, we can speculate that there may have existed a trope of yogic madness toward which Drukpa Kunley is represented as having a particular relationship. That this relationship is complicated, from the point of view of his own self-identification in the *Namthar* as a *smyon pa*, to the attribution of this label to him by his disciples and descendants over time and space, cannot be denied. Indeed, while certain aspects of his character appear to be nominally in line with the some of the qualities often associated with the *smyon pas,* in

[39] *Yang chos ma dar ba'i sa phyogs mtha' 'khob kyi yul rnams su ma ston cig / de rnams la bstan na ni/ chos nyid kyi go rgyu bzang po yod pa de mi go bar stu mje la sogs pa'i tshig rigs la dad pa log yong bas,* DK1 Vol. Kha 1978, 2a.5-2b.1.

other significant ways, Drukpa Kunley's self-representations in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* either do not line up with or re-configure them.

We are still left with the question of whether the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* is telling us that our narrator endorses the kind of freedom from all norms endorsed by such figures as Ü Myön and Tsang Myön. Given the plethora of critical comments regarding unexamined "crazy" yogic behavior to be found in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, there is no clear answer to this question. It might be more accurate to say that the narrator effectively creates a new norm, which is also an anti-norm, but at a higher level of abstraction, and which dismisses all representations of the religious person as deluded except for those that have willingly exposed the truth of their own hypocrisies. We will continue to examine this possibility as we move into the analyses of the different compositions that make up the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*.

II. Religious Affiliation

Drukpa Kunley belongs to the religious lineage of the Kagyü (Bka' brgyud), or "spoken" lineage, specifically within the sub-sect of the Drukpa Kagyü ('Brug pa Bka' brgyud). The Kagyü lineage hearkens back to the Indian siddha Tilopa (Tilopada, 988-1096) and his disciple, Naropā (Nāropadā, 1012-1100), as the progenitors of the primary doctrines that comprise their teachings. From Naropā, the Tibetan disciple Marpa (Mar pa Chos kyi blo gros, 1012-1097) is attributed with having carried the principal teachings and decisive texts of the Kagyü doctrines back to Tibet. Marpa's main Tibetan disciple, the yogi Milarepa, (Rje btsun Mi la ras pa, 1052-1135) deserves special mention here, as it is his example of the quintessential wandering yogi

that likely lays the foundation for the attitudes, practices, lifestyles, and literary productions that came to characterize the Drukpa Kagyü sect and sub-sect of the Bar 'Brug. It is his example too that some consider to rest at the root of the characterization of the Tibetan "crazy yogis" (*smyon pa*).[40]

After Milarepa, of particular importance for Drukpa Kunley is Gampopa (Sgam po pa Bsod nams rin chen, 1079-1153/9). It is with Gampopa that we find a comprehensive synthesis of the Kadampa emphasis on scholastic monastic discipline and Buddhist ethics with the Kagyü meditative and yogic traditions, particularly the yogic Mahāmudrā tradition. This combination of religious values permeates Drukpa Kunley's writings.[41] Some of these values include an emphasis on the equal importance of ordinary or everyday wisdom with the truths taught by the Buddha. This focus highlights the Kadampa/Drukpa Kagyü interest in the liberative nature of the all experiences—things *as they are* without conceptual elaboration or embellishment. Witness, for example, this comment by Drukpa Kunley on how to relate to the common meditative obstacles of mental laxity or elation:

> As Milarepa said to Dakpo Lhaje (Dvags-po lha-rje, a.k.a. Gampopa): "If he is truly a meditator, he should not eliminate the faults of laxity and elation! If the meditator eliminates these, is it not like lighting a lamp in full daylight, master Lhaje?"
>
> If you realize mind, then that is Buddha. Then you have overcome the need to seek the Buddha elsewhere. Practice and experience on the nature of laxity and elation is greatly valued by the Drukpa lineage.[42]

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[40] Smith 2001, 60. Larrson 2009, 2012. DiValerio 2011. Quintman 2013, 122-124, 259.

[41] Yamamoto 2009, 89.

[42] *Mi las dwags po la gsungs pa na/ sgom pa yin par nges so bying rgod skyon ma sel/ sgom pa bying rgod skyon ni bsal ba na/ nyin par sgron me spor ba 'dra'o ang gi lha rje ston pa ba/ gsungs/ sems rtogs na sangs rgyas*

The point here is that any experience of mind contains within it the seeds of liberation. Therefore, no matter what experience the meditator has in meditation, whether an experience of dullness and sleepiness or of excitement and energy, such experiences should be observed but not altered. Each, seen in its nature as impermanent, changing, and without essence, is identical to the nature of the mind itself and can lead the meditator to Buddhahood. This same ethos is evident in Drukpa Kunley's quotation of a song (*mgur*) of Yangönpa:

> I think there is no more profound technique than this method of placing the mind in meditation: For primordial meditation[43] do not meditate with concepts! Relax completely without mental fabrication in the natural state.[44] If you desire to meditate, is this because it seems like you are not meditating?[45] Remain in the ordinary nature, don't break up your meditation into pieces.
>
> This means that you should meditate naturally without mental fabrication in primordial purity. This is as is said, relax continuously and without fabrication in the absence of non-meditation.[46]

These two examples demonstrate the Kadampa/Drukpa Kagyü synthesis, strongly advocated in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar,* that ultimate realization takes place only when all mental and conceptual efforting ceases and the mind fundamentally relaxes into its own state. This view,

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yin pas/ sangs rgyas gzhan nas btsal du med pa dang 'dra/ nyams dang myong ba 'di la gcis su rang byed pa cig 'brug pa 'di la 'dug byas so, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 16b.4-5.

[43] *ye-sgom*—a state of meditation without object, equivalent to emptiness.

[44] Translation of *rang babs*-'letting fall all alone, spontaneously;' corresponding to equanimity (*mnyam bzhag*): leaving phenomena spontaneously "in their place" (*rang sar zhog*).

[45] The point here is that if one has a desire to be meditating, one has fallen out of the natural flow of "things as they are."

[46] *Yang dgon pa'i mgur 'bum nyan pas/ sgom gyi 'jog thabs rang 'di las zab rgyu mi 'dug bsam/ ye sgom la blo yis ma sgom pa mdzod la/ rang babs la bzo yis ma bcos par zhog dang/ sgom 'dod na sgom min gyi snang ba 'dug ge/ sgom dum bu ru ma gcod phyal pa ru zhog dang gsung,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 16a.1-2.

which relies on adherence to the disciplines of the Vinaya together with the meditative practices of the main Drukpa Kagyü teachings of Mahāmudrā, pervades the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar.* Together with this, we also find an emphasis on joining all actions with an acute awareness of the laws of cause and effect. No activity, from the most commonplace to the most esoteric yogic practices of mountain hermits, should be undertaken without a keen sense of their karmic ripples. Witness the following:

> There are three Dharmas that I, Drukpa Kunley, have fallen in love with: One is the generation of the mind of bodhicitta; the second is the perfection of meditative equipoise; and the third is the secret mantra, which does not ignore the laws of cause and effect. These are the three that I love. Other [Tantras] permit killing, beating, or binding. Whatever is done, it is all said to be "Dharma." While some Tantras might use these as examples, they are certainly not true![47]

The Drukpa Kagyü sect traces its lineage to the disciple of Gampopa, Phagmo Drupa (Phag mo gru pa Rdo rje rgyal po, 1110-1170). While his disciple, Lingrepa (Gling ras pa Padma rdo rje, 1128-1188) continued the lineage, it was his chief disciple, Tsangpa Gyare, (Gtsang pa rgya ras Ye shes rdo rje, 1161-1211), who is considered the official founder of the Drukpa sect. Like Gampopa, Tsangpa Gyare is thought to have synthesized the teachings of multiple schools, including those of the Kadampa and Dzogchen. Because of this, some consider the Drukpa Kagyü sect to be quite heterogeneous in its religious doctrines. Ardussi, in the introduction to his translation of the first half of Volume Kha of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar,* states that this eclecticism may have been one of the leading elements in the emergence of the "mad yogis"

[47] *'brug pa kun legs sems shor ba'i chos gsum yod do lags/ byang chub kyi sems 'di dang gcig/ mnyam gzhag tshad ldan 'di dang gnyis/ rgyu 'bras khyad du mi gsod pa'i gsang sngags 'di gsum la sems shor/ gzhan bsad chod/ brdungs chog/ bkyigs chog/ gang byas tshad chos yin zer ba 'di tso/ la la bden pa yang dpe/ gzhan mi bden thag chod do zhus,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 14a.5-14b.1.

(*smyon pa*). Tsangpa Gyare is also attributed with the discovery as treasure (*gter ma*) of the most important collection of Tantric practices in the Drukpa Kagyü lineage, a set of meditative techniques known as *The Six Practices of One Taste*,[48] intimately related to the main practices of the *Six Yogas of* Naropā. This treasure text was supposedly concealed by one of Milarepa's main disciples, Rechungpa.[49] The *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* is replete with discussions and inferences to the practices contained in these sets of yogic techniques.[50] See, for example, the following:

> He [Sonam Chogden] then said to me, "Consider in what way one directly experiences the Six Yogas of Naropā?"[51]
>
> I replied, "By keeping awareness in its natural state, the karmic winds will stop by themselves--this is the practice of Inner Heat. Because the karmic winds have stopped, then the body appears like a reflection in a mirror--this is the second yoga, the Illusory Body. When all phenomena appear as non-established, that is the third, the Dream Yoga. When the body and appearances are vividly clear unceasing luminosity, then this is the fourth, Clear Light. When realization is not established either in samsara or in nirvana that is the fifth, the Intermediate State. When realization moves beyond grasping either subject or object, that is the sixth, Transference."[52]

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[48] These are the *Ro snyoms skor drug*.

[49] Ras chung Rdo rje grags pa, 1038-1161.

[50] On fundamental teachings for the Drukpa Kagyü: *Mahāmudrā*, *Ro snyoms skor drug*, see Karmapa Wangchuk Dorje, 2001.

[51] *Chos drug* here refers to the *Naro Chos Drug*, the Six Doctrines of Naropā --'inner heat' (*gtum mo*), 'illusory body' (*sgyu lus*), 'dream' (*rmi-lam*), 'luminosity' *('od gsal*), 'intermediate state' (*bar do*) and 'transference of consciousness into another being' *('pho ba*).

[52] *chos drug 'di rig thog tu nyams su ji ltar bzhed gsung/ de la ngas 'di zhus/ rang rig pa so mar bzhag pas/ las rlung rang 'gags su 'gro bar 'dug pas gtum mo/ las rlung 'gags pas lus me long nang gi gzugs brnyan ltar snang bas sgyu lus/ snang bzhin du ma grub pas rmi lam/ gsal bya mi 'gags par hrig ge 'dug pas 'od gsal/ 'khor 'das gang du yang ma grub pas bar do/ gsung 'dzin thams cad 'dzin med du 'phos pas 'pho ba yin par 'dug zhus,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 11a.3-5.

Here Drukpa Kunley's teacher asks him to discuss the realization of the Six Yogas. Drukpa Kunley present a condensed and consecutive account of the processes to be experienced as the practitioner moves through each of the six practices. Ultimately, the six are designed to bring the practitioner from the confused and obscured ordinary perception of self and other (produced by the karmic winds) to the realization of her body, speech, and mind as the body of the Buddha, whose essence involves freedom from the reifying experience of conceptual orientations. Such a person becomes able to transcend all dualities of samsara and nirvana, subject and object, through recognizing the all-pervading essence of the body/mind's warmth, clarity, and cognizance.

Tsangpa Gyare also founded the monasteries of Longdol (Klong rdol), Ralung (Rwa lung) and Namdruk (Gnam 'brug). Regarding the name of this last, one story relates that while on pilgrimage, Tsangpa Gyare and his disciples observed nine roaring dragons leap from a crack in the earth and soar up into the sky as a rain of flowers fell down around them. As a result, they named their sect Druk ('Brug), the order of the dragon, and gave the same name to their monastery. As for Ralung, it became the seat of the Gya (Rgya) abbatial lineage, the lineage into which Drukpa Kunley tells us he was born and the most powerful Drukpa succession in Tibet, flourishing from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries.[53]

Under Tsangpa Gyare the Drukpa Kagyü sect grew dramatically in fame and membership. According to Thu'u bkwan III, Blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma (1732-1802): "The disciples in his lineage came to extend as far as an eagle (could fly) in eighteen days travel. So it

[53] For the origins of the Rgya clan, and its relation to the Drukpa lineage, see Vitali 2004, 6-20. See also Aris 1980, 177.

became known to everyone, like the wind, that 'half the people are 'Brug pa, half of the 'Brug pa are beggars, and half of the beggars are *sgrub thob*."[54] The term *sgrub thob*, which recalls the Sanskrit word *siddha* or 'realized one,' suggests a person who has achieved realization through renunciation and yogic practice. This is important because it highlights the Drukpa Kagyü emphasis on realization through meditation. Drukpa Kunley clearly represents himself as participating in this tradition. This is evident when we encounter his knowledgeable discussion of various meditation techniques as well as his scathing critiques of those who misunderstand them.

Tsangpa Gyare's two main disciples were Lorepa (Rgyal ba Lo ras pa, 1187-1250) and Götsangpa (Rgod tshang pa Mgon po rdo rje, 1189-1258), the founders, respectively, of the "Lower" (Smad) and the "Upper" (Stod) branches of the Drukpa sect. The Lower Druk flourished primarily in Bhutan, imported there by Ngawang Namgyal (Ngag dbang rnam rgyal, 1594-1651) in 1616.[55] Finally, Tsangpa Gyare's nephew, Dharma Senge (Sangs rgyas dbon, Dbon ras Dharma seng ge, 1177-1237), took over his abbatial seat of Ralung in south-central Tibet and this became the location of the "Middle" (*Bar*) branch of the Drukpa Kagyü sect. Thus, from the

[54] This was said by Thu'u bkwan III Blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma (*Grub mtha' shel kyi me long,* folio 12b).

[55] Ardussi 2000, 12-15: Ngag dbang rnam rgyal (1594-1651) was one of two competing candidates for recognition as the fifth Rgyal dbang 'Brug pa (or *'brug chen*) incarnation at Ralung Monastery. He lost and in 1616 left Tibet. He traveled to and settled in Bhutan where his fortunes rapidly changed as he ascended in both political and religious power. He is widely revered as the founder of the Drukpa Kagyü religious state there, and his lineage is referred to as the Lho 'brug (the Southern Druk). The other candidate, Rgyal dbang 'brug pa Dpag bsam dbang po (1593-1641), was recognized as the fifth 'Brug chen incarnation. From him, a lineage descended that is referred to as the *gzhung 'brug* (Central Druk) lineage. These two candidates for recognition were later viewed as "two nirmanakaya forms" of Pad ma dkar po, the fourth 'Brug chen incarnation, whose diverse activities allowed the 'Brug pa teachings to spread in different locations."

time of Tsangpa Gyare until the middle of the fifteenth century, when Drukpa Kunley was born, the Drukpa Kagyü sect was centered at Druk and Ralung monasteries.

III. The *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*

A. Editions of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*

I have been able to discover three different editions of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* collection.

(1) (**DK1**) **'Brug pa Kun dga' legs pa.** ***'Brug pa kun dga' legs pa'i rnam thar dang nyams mgur dang zhal gdams sogs.*** (*The Life Story, Songs, and Advice of 'Brug pa Kun dga' Legs pa*.) A reproduction of a clear print from the 1892 blocks carved at Gnyal dre'u lhas. 705 folio pages in four volumes, Ka, Kha, Ga, Nga. Darjeeling: Kargyud Sungrab Nyamso Khang, 1978. TBRC Work # W1KG10253.

> **Volume Ka:** *Rnal 'byor pa'i ming can kun dga' legs pa'i rnam thar byung tshul lhug par smras pa zhib mo'i rtsing mo ha le ho le sna zin spu zin nas bkod pa*, (The Story of the Liberation of the Yogi Named Kunga Lekpa: The Finest of Crude Memoirs, Spoken Casually, and Slapped Together Willy-nilly), 1-337.
>
> **Volume Kha**: *Rnal 'byor gyi dbang phyug chen po kun dga' legs pa'i rnam thar gsung 'bum rgya mtsho las dad pa'i ku shas thigs tsam blangs pa ngo mtshar bdud rtsi'i mngar*, (The Nectar of Marvelous Amrita; Only a Few Drops From the Grass of Faith Drawn From the Ocean of the Life-story Collection of Kunga Legpa, the Lord of Yogins), 339-499.
>
> **Volume Ga**: *Rnal 'byor pa'i ming can kun dga' legs pa'i nyams la shar ba'i phral gyi chos spyod 'dra dang nyams 'char ci byung ma byung bris skyag gtad gang yang mad pa 'ga' zhig*, (Some Experiences, Written Exactly as They Occurred, Without any Bullshit, and Some Momentary Dharmic Activities that Arose in the Experience of Kunga Lekpa, the One Who is Called "Yogi), 501-647.
>
> **Volume Nga**: *Rnal 'byor pa'i ming can kun dga' legs pa'i gsung 'bum thor bu*, (Fragments of Collected Writings of the Yogi Kunga Legpa), 649-705.

(2) (**DK2**) **'Brug pa Kun dga' legs pa.** ***Rnal 'byor pa'i ming can kun dga' legs pa'i rnam thar byung tshul lhug par smras pa zhib mo'i rtsing mo ha la ho le sna zin spu zin nas bkod pa zhes bya ba bzhugs so,*** (*The Story of the Liberation of the Yogi Named Kun dga' Legs pa: The Finest of Crude Memoirs, Spoken Casually, and Slapped Together in Any Which Way*). Ed. Yeshe Chodar. 2 Volumes (Ka) and (Kha, Ga, Nga). Sarnath, Varanasi: Legs Bshad Gter Mdzod Khang, Sarnath. 1972. TBRC Work # W2CZ8023.

Volume Ka (same title as above): Vol. I.
Volume Kha (same title as above): Vol II, pp. 1-174.
Volume Ga (same title as above): Vol II, pp. 175-340.
Volume Nga (same title as above): Vol II, pp. 341-392.

(3) (**DK3**) **'Brug pa Kun dga' legs pa.** ***'Brug pa kun legs kyi rnam thar.*** (*The Biography of 'Brug pa Kun legs*.) Beijing: Bod Ljongs Mi Dmangs Dpe Skrun Khang, 2005. This is the most recent edition of the 'Brug pa Kun legs rnam thar.

Volume Ka (same title as above): pp. 1-272.
Volume Kha (same title as above): pp.273-400.
Volume Ga (same title as above): pp. 401-522.
Volume Nga (same title as above): pp.523-559.

Each edition contains all four volumes, Ka-Nga. From among the three editions, DK1 represents the oldest due to its having been reproduced from a clear print of the 1892 blocks carved at Dre'u lhas in the Gnyal region of southern Tibet. This region is in Lhun rtse rdzong near the border of Bhutan. It is considered to be the location for an incarnation lineage of Drukpa Kunley.[56] For the purposes of this thesis, DK1 is the primary edition that I have relied on although, while I was doing fieldwork in Bhutan on Drukpa Kunley and working on translating Volume Ka into English from 2011-2013, I only had access to DK2 and DK3. I have since compared all three editions. Based on this comparison, I can say that DK1 and DK2 are identical in terms of content. They are reprinted in modern bookstyle format. The main difference

[56] Ardussi 1972, 8. Smith 1969, 3n.4.

between them is that sometimes they mark the breaks between different compositions in different places. DK2 also adds breaks that are not represented in DK1. I have shown where each edition includes breaks between compositions in Appendix I. The breaks between compositions in DK3 often allign with those in DK1 and DK2, but just as often it appears as if the editor of DK3 paid little attention to where breaks were in his sources. DK3 also contains many spelling errors and some sections where entire lines of text have been left out. These are noted in Appendix I. In Volume Nga - *Fragments of Collected Writings of the Yogi Kunga Legpa* – DK1, DK2, and DK3 mark very few breaks between compositions, which seems strange considering that the 'fragments' are quite different in content.

As noted above in the introduction, in the colophon to Volume Ka, the editor, the Mad Monk of Mon (*Mon ban Smyon ba*), relates that the *namthar* was reproduced from woodblocks carved at Dre'u Lhe Monastery in Tibet in 1892. This detail is included in DK1 and DK2, but is missing from the colophon of Volume Ka of DK3, the most recent 2005 Beijing edition. It is to be wondered for what reasons, other than careless copying or editing, these details were left out. The colophon to Volume Ka also states that the woodblocks used to make the prints for DK1 were copies of a previous set of woodblocks. This detail is important for dating the compilation of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* into the four-volume collection in which it currently appears. If a previous set of woodblocks existed, then the 1892 DK1 edition is not the oldest. However, I have been unable to locate another earlier edition. This is also important in considering the dates of the editor, the Mad Monk of Mon. (See below: Section IV. Colophons, Authors, Editors,

and Compilers.) For a complete list of the compositions in the different editions of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, including page and line numbers, see Appendix I.

IV. Colophons, Authors, Editors, and Compilers

Understanding how the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*'s narrative strategies work to create ethical persons not only requires a discussion of the structure and content of the texts, but also some further thought concerning the author who wrote, the editor who compiled, and the scribes who transcribed these writings as well as the readers for whom they were intended. As I discussed in the introduction, the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*'s four volumes are a compilation of individual compositions in a range of different genres with diverse subject matters. This is different from other biographies and autobiographies, which include many different episodes arranged in a temporal sequence. Only the very first part of Volume Ka of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* gives the impression of a partially linear sequence of events, each one connected to the previous by the phrase *yang skabs cig na* (at one time) or merely by the connectors *yang* (again) or *de nas* (then). Even so, no dates are provided for the events described and there is no continuity in subject matter from one section to the next.

In order to consider the general lack of organization in the four volumes of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar,* I will discuss here what we know about how these texts were compiled and arranged as well as my hypothesis that the haphazard and random arrangement of at least Volume Ka was both intentional and directed. This hypothesis will be further explored in

Chapters Two and Three, where we will look closely at what Drukpa Kunley has to say about writing – both the writing of a *namthar* and other kinds of writing.

I will first examine four independently-authored compositions found at the end of Volume Ka in all editions (DK1, DK2, and DK3). These four are:

> 1) A eulogy in the form of a brief biography. This eulogy has no title. At the beginning, there is a description of how "the prefect Bashaney (*Ba sha nas*), while residing at Ri bo brag in the nomads' lands, composed this prayer for the *namthar* of Drukpa Kunley."[57]
> 2) A longer biography entitled: *The Short Biography of Drukpa Kunley*. This includes a description of Drukpa Kunley's death and the miracles that accompanied his cremation. At the end, the composer names himself as "the disciple Dorje."[58]
> 3) A short supplication without a title. The author names himself as Pekar (*Pad dkar*).[59]
> 4) A colophon composed by the Mad Monk of Mon (*Mon ban Smyon ba*), who refers to himself as the reincarnation of Drukpa Kunley.[60]

DiValerio believes the first three compositions listed here to have been written by the same person (albeit with different names). He considers that together with the final colophon by the Mad Monk, these three comprise one entire colophon with four parts. The use of colophons in Tibetan literature covers a broad range of functions. José Cabezón describes how colophons are usually appended to the end of a text to explain and/or discuss any of the following subjects: the author or authors' reasons for composing or redacting the word; the process and reasons

[57] DK1: 164a.3-165a.3, DK2: 347.2-349.5, DK3: 262.17-264.9. *Nang so ba sha nas 'brog ri bo brag tu bzhugs pa gnang dus/ rnal 'byor gyi dbang phyug kun dga' legs pa la rnam thar gsol 'debs zhig bkod pa gnang 'dug pa 'di ltar ro.*

[58] DK1: 165a.3-167a.3, DK2: 349.6-353.18, DK3: 264.10-267.16.

[59] DK1: 167a.3-167b.5, DK2: 353.18-355.9, DK3: 267.17-268.20.

[60] DK1: 167b.5-169a.6, DK2: 355.9-359.7, DK3: 268.21-271.18.

for printing it; those who carved the woodblocks; the location of the printing and carving of the blocks; a list of sponsors; explanations of corrections made to the text or the rationale for compiling it in a certain manner; and dates for the printing and consecration of the work.[61] While DiValerio had his reasons for supposing that the first three compositions may have had the same author,[62] I feel more evidence suggests that each of the four was independently authored. As an obvious example, there is the fact that each composition supplies a different name for its author, which, while not a definite indication of independent authorship, does suggest the possibility. Regardless, it is useful to examine each composition separately in order to describe its specific contours and functions as well as to ascertain something about how all four compositions may function in conjunction with the rest of Volume Ka, and indeed, with Volumes Kha through Nga of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*.

The first composition is a prayer to Drukpa Kunley composed by the *nang so* or governor, Bashaney. In this prayer, Bashaney often refers to Drukpa Kunley's hidden good qualities. He says such things as: "Although the multitudes do not understand you in the appearance of a man of this world, you delight the minds of those who have faith in you," and "Since those with shortsighted vision cannot see your good qualities, I am roughly expressing them here for the benefit of devoted ones."[63] Bashaney also describes how Drukpa Kunley perfectly conforms to the teachings and trainings of all three vehicles of the Buddhist path,

[61] Schaeffer 2014, 60. Cabezón 2001, 233-264.

[62] DiValerio 2011, 414-432.

[63] *Kun kyis mi rtogs 'jig rten skye bo'i tshul/ dad can ma lus kun gyi yid 'phrog pa/ log pa'i mig gis legs par mthong min pas/ dad pa'i snang ngor che long tsam zhig brjod,* DK1 1978, Vol. Ka, 164a.5-164b.3.

beginning with complete renunciation of attachments, leaving behind homeland and family, becoming a monastic, generating the mind of bodhicitta, and realizing the essence of the four empowerments of the Vajrayana. A full paragraph is dedicated to the various miracles Drukpa Kunley is considered to have performed in Tibet and in Bhutan. Bashaney concludes by saying:

> To tame beings of various dispositions, you demonstrated various forms. You gave wealth to the poor and created water where there was none. You taught Dharma to those who did not have any. You bestowed children on those women without any. While so many other good qualities could be told, these will remain hidden.[64]

In summary, this short biography reads very much like many other Tibetan biographies in terms of its contents. However, based on its listing of different miracles associated with Drukpa Kunley, the biography reveals a shift from Drukpa Kunley's soberer and more intellectual orientations in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar,* to the wild, crazy yogi stories of him that have taken such a firm hold in the popular imagination. This shift is discussed in detail in Chapter Four. This shift alone suggests that Bashaney wrote this short biography after a significant period of time had passed since Drukpa Kunley's death, as time would be needed in order for the embellishments and transformations of the saint's character to have taken place. This fact, plus the biography's prologue in which Bashaney agrees to write it for Drukpa Kunley's *namthar,* proves that there was some form of the *namthar* in existence – likely a later form, since the miraculous activities would have had to be included.

[64] *Sna tshogs 'gro ba 'dul phyir cir yang ston/ chu med chu dang nor med nor dang sprad/ chos med chos dang bu med bu dang sprad/ de la sogs te legs pa'i yon tan 'ga'/ 'chad du 'dug kyang sbas pa'i tshul du bzhag,* DK1 1978 Vol. Ka, 165a.2-165a.3.

The second composition consists of a short supplication to and biography of Drukpa Kunley which states that it is arranged in the manner of a supplication (*gsol 'debs su bkod pa*), written during the festival of Śakyamuni, in the first month of the earth-female-ox year (*sa mo glang*) by one possessing the name of Dorje (*rdo rje'i ming can*).[65] DiValerio, basing his assertion on "the grammar and context,"[66] reads this statement of composition or compilation as referring to the entirety of Volume Ka, and not merely to the short supplication/biography itself, whereas both Stein and Ardussi read it as referring only to the supplication/biography. I am inclined to agree with Stein and Ardussi as this supplication/biography appears intact in itself, complete with initial verses of praise, a detailed description of the death of Drukpa Kunley, expressions of sadness and longing at his loss, as well as its own short colophon as to who wrote it (Dorje), and when (in the first month of the female ox year during the festival of Sakyamuni). While it could be the case that the Dorje who wrote this short biography wrote it at the same time that the compilation of Volume Ka was progressing, we have no way of knowing for certain.

It is also difficult to determine which earth-female-ox year is referred to here. Given that most sources cite the year of Drukpa Kunley's death as the female ox year, 1529, it seems possible that this is the year referred to since the content of the supplication primarily concerns

[65] *Rdo rje'i ming can gyis sa mo glang lo'i zla ba dang po sangs rgyas shakya thub pa'i dus chen gza' skar 'phrod sbyor bzang po'i nyin rang nyid gsol ba 'debs pa'i dad pa'i gsol 'debs su bkod pa yin pas,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 167a.1-2.

[66] Divalerio 2011, 414-415.

Drukpa Kunley's death, the miracles that accompanied his passing, the cremation of his body, and the storing of his relics by his son, Zhingkyong Drukdrak (Zhing skyong 'brug grags) in Tolung (*stod lung*) at Lampar Gonpa (*lam 'phar dgon pa*) inside of a large silver stupa. Dorje also represents himself as a deeply devoted disciple of Drukpa Kunley, who says about himself that, when "I remember the enlightened mandala of his body, I burst into tears."[67] The expression of this kind of longing, while not uncommon to supplicatory prayers, does not mirror the tone or expression of the author of the colophon, the Mad Monk of Mon. But we will come to that in a moment. For now, suffice it to say that this supplication/biography has its own integrity, separate from the rest of Volume Ka, as well as from the prayer and colophon that follow it. Preliminarily, we might consider that this short biography represents the devoted disciple Dorje's reception of Drukpa Kunley's life story. In spite of or perhaps due to Drukpa Kunley's unusual self-presentation in Volume Ka, this disciple's reaction and response to Drukpa Kunley's life and death represents the kind of longing and emotional yearning we would expect to see when a devoted disciple loses his teacher. That this short biography is included as part of Volume Ka suggests that the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* anticipated and participated in a larger intersubjective world of interaction between various kinds of people (teachers and disciples, writer and compilers, etc.) – of which Dorje is but one member.

The third discrete composition at the end of Volume Ka is a supplication (*gsol 'debs*) to Drukpa Kunley that begins each line with the semantic elements of his name (*kun dga' legs pa*) before continuing with a series of verses ending in variations of "I prostrate to that one who..."

[67] *Sku'i dkyil 'khor yid la dran pas mig gnyis mchi mas gang ste,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 166b.6.

(*der phyag 'tshal*). It concludes with the statement: "These words of the hermit Kunley are useless for fools, but a joy for sages. I, Pema Karpo, wrote them at the request of Gogkarwa at Ralung Til."[68] We may assume that the Pema Karpo here refers to the famous Drukpa Kagyü scholar (1527-1592).[69] If this assumption is correct, then, given the dates, Pema Karpo would have had to have written this prayer some years after 1529. No date, however, is mentioned for the composition of the prayer. The other possibility, of course, is that the author of this prayer was a different Pema Karpo. In any event, neither Stein, nor Ardussi, nor DiValerio have been able to determine the author of this work. Ardussi accepts the attribution of the prayer to the famous Pema Karpo,[70] while the other two demur.

The final composition at the end of Volume Ka is the colophon proper. It describes the compilation and arrangement of the first three volumes of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, here referred to as the "Collected Speech, Instructions and Liberation Story."[71] Note that the fourth volume of the collection, Volume Nga, is not specifically mentioned in this colophon. Because this colophon provides much valuable information concerning the composition, compilation, and dating of DK1, I include a full translation of it here:

> Here are the collected writings and oral advice, together with the biography, of the one known as Kunga Lekpa, the great lord of yogis, the renowned one

[68] *Bstod zhes smras pa'i sgog mkhar bar/ blon po'i khrod du mi mkho ba/ mkhas rnams dga' ba'i pad dkar gyis/ ra lung thel du bris pa yin,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 167b.4-5.

[69] DiValerio, 2011, 415. The prayer by Pema Karpo is found in DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 167a.3—167b.5.

[70] "Such was the respect that his own sect had for him that Padma-dkar-po, the greatest scholar of the 'Brug pa Bka'-brgyud-pa sect, composed a reverential petition (*gsol-'debs*) to 'Brug-pa Kun-legs, shortly after his death." Ardussi 1972, iv.

[71] *Rnam par thar pa dang zhal gdams bka' 'bum rnams* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 167b.6.

himself. Previously, the bursar of the monastery thought to bring these [disparate writings] together and print them. He had already successfully made some wood blocks. But after some time, the blocks were misused and lost. The project, which had begun, was abandoned on the path, and therefore the project was lying around suspended.

As for myself, from a young age, I said all kinds of various things. Whatever arose, whether I was induced to speak by demons or not, I spoke different types of random bits of speech and my character was similar to that of a crazy person. It became like the saying that "such stories, if they are whispered into a mouse hole, spread even into remote places."[72] In this same way, stories of me spread to the ears of Drukpa Kunley's disciples. Because of that, they performed various investigations concerning my rebirth as Drukpa Kunley with good results. Thus they believed in and confirmed my rebirth. As is said in *Lankāvatāra Sūtra*: "If something is not named, all the world is confused. Therefore, in order to clear away that confusion, our savior has given names." But similarly to this saying, I wonder how I could be an incarnation of all his naughty activities, (*kun nyed*) never mind all his good ones (*kun legs*, all good)! Nevertheless, as it seems that I have taken rebirth as that sublime master, I depend on the imputation of Drukpa Kunley.[73] I, the mad monk of Mon,[74] in order to return Drukpa Kunley's kindness in teaching the two ways of living, and due to my disciples dependence on me, I desired to put these sayings of the great mad siddha into print. [This was also because] some faithful and devoted disciples of the previous Drukpa Kunley entreated me and [because] it seems to me that his sayings are uniquely profound instructions with significant signs of benefit for all kinds of people. Thus, I made an effort to obtain original copies of his biography from many different places. I thought to bring these altogether into one completely perfect copy and print them, but as the saying goes: "Biographies that are the same are not in the character of a *siddha.*"

[72] Chorten Tshering told me that two idioms used in both Bhutan and Tibet, are being invoked here. First, he told me, if one whispers into the ear of a child, everyone will know what was said, and second, if one whispers into a mouse hole, that information will spread across the world, even into remote places. Thus in Bhutan and Tibet "every wall has ears and every mountain has eyes."

[73] Chorten Tshering explained the term *"sgro btags*" as an imputation—a name given to something or superimposed upon something, but that something is not the name itself. Here, Drukpa Kunley's rebirth is acknowledging that some consider him an incarnation and he goes along with this only because one must be named something, and not because he himself believes he is Drukpa Kunley's reincarnation (Personal communication, 2013).

[74] Aris 1979, XI-XXVIII. Chorten Tshering notes that most Bhutanese do not believe that the name "Mon" refers to Bhutan. For them, the old name of Bhutan was Lhö, while Mon referred to border areas into which the Buddhadharma had not spread. However, he has also read that Mon may have referred to the present-day area of Bumthang in Bhutan, while Lho referred to the western parts of Bhutan. (Personal communication, 2013)

When he was alive, in deference to his devotees and patrons, Drukpa Kunley told his life story and his oral instructions in many different ways; he taught according to each person's capacity and to the time and place. But since then, no one has come forward to bring all these teachings together into one source. The notes to his petitioners are scattered all over the place, and there are also letters, both long and short as well as some oral teachings given to worldly elders and others spoken to a few noblemen. In all of these, Drukpa Kunley's playful teaching of his realization is evident. This is evident also in the stanzas of his songs of realization and in many of his writings, some of which have been repeated correctly and others incorrectly.

I discovered an endless array of types and branches of outer, inner, and secret biographies, but there are so many that we could not print them all and, early on, I was not even able to attain them all. Later, I did obtain them and I had hoped to put them together and print them, but again that did not take place. Finding myself in this position, I feared that I would have to abandon the project. So this year, we began with what we had. In this way, whatever stories are not included in this edition, when we get them later, we will include them then. But, it is important not to construct something like the example of the *Vajracchedikā* of Paro in Mon.

These days, at the time of the actual printing, I have in hand twenty different copies [of the biography] that we have been comparing with each other. The Ka autobiography contains only Drukpa Kunley's own sayings, whose order is uncertain from one perspective. The others, [Kha, Ga, Nga] were written down by Drukpa Kunley's disciples through their powers of non-forgetting recollection. We cannot find any definite relatedness in these sections. In these three other sections, all his teachings are aimed at both worldly pleasures in this life and at the ultimate good meaning in future lives. Monks and laymen, highborn or low, all will enjoy both the playfulness and profound meanings found in these writings. As a result, they will spread everywhere.

However, there are various problems such as different spelling errors mixed with correct spellings all put together in disordered sentences. But these types of small mistakes have been cleared up based on the authentic original (*ma dpe dag pa*). Colophons of each fragment, which were actually the original speech (*gsung ngo ma*) [of Drukpa Kunley], have been gathered together in the Ga section. There are various dialects and languages [in the biographies] and the language patterns from the different places where Drukpa Kunley traveled. We brought these together and tried to clarify them. Comparing the different originals, we saw their similarity and tried to connect them together. Working this in this way, we got rid of the corruptions. At this point, we feel no hesitation in this matter—there is no longer any room for doubt concerning corruption of the texts.

> In this way, these three sections [Kha, Ga, Nga] have been compiled. In order not to waste the worth of everything that has been included, I have dedicated [the merit of] all of them. The compilers, who have done the work in accord with the way I wanted it to be done, and the bursar who undertook the project, and all those who helped maintain the vows, have done this work. The disciple who had great faith in me, Artha-siddhi Dharma-vardha, has made inexhaustible Dharma offerings [for the project]. There were fifteen scholar-monks from E who carved the woodblocks and the scribe who did the printing was Indrajaya from Snyi in Tibet. The work began in the waxing moon period of the fourth month of the water-dragon year (1592?, 1652?). We finished without obstacle in the waxing moon period of the eighth month at the great monastic complex of Dre'u Lhas. May this be of great benefit for the Dharma and for all sentient beings! May all those beings, limitless as the sky, who contributed to the completion of the printing of this autobiography of the great saint, Kunga Lekpa, swiftly attain complete omniscience! May virtue increase![75]

The Mad Monk of Mon opens the colophon with a description of how a previous attempt to bring together Drukpa Kunley's teachings and liberation story for printing was unsuccessful. This first sentence provides some important information. First, we learn that there existed a collected works (*bka' 'bum rnams*) of Drukpa Kunley's writings. While it is not clear what form this collection took, the term suggests that there was a pre-existing compilation of Drukpa Kunley's writings. We also learn that woodblocks for printing had been made from this even before the Mad Monk began to gather all the writings together. But, due to the fact that some of the woodblocks were spoiled (*chud zos*) and others lost (*gyag shor*) the project was delayed. The Mad Monk then segues into telling his own story, where we learn that from a young age he spoke random bits of speech (*kha col*) and his behavior was incongruous (*ya ma zung*). As a result, tales of him spread to the ears of Drukpa Kunley's disciples, who tested him and determined him to be the rebirth of the saint. Because of this, due to his sense of respect for

[75] DK1: 167b.5-169a.6, DK2: 355.9-359.7, DK3: 268.21-271.18. See Appendix II for Tibetan of this colophon.

his previous incarnation as Drukpa Kunley, and as a result of being entreated by faithful disciples, he decided to take up the project of printing Drukpa Kunley's blend of worldly and religious teachings with benefit for various types of persons.[76]

This information requires us to further consider both the form and the function of the "author" in a work of this nature. That the Mad Monk of Mon includes this information about himself at this point suggests an attempt both to authorize and to justify the work of compiling and editing Drukpa Kunley's works. Because he himself is recognized as Drukpa Kunley's rebirth, as he gathers his predecessor's writings together, edits them, and compiles the *namthar* collection, in an odd sense he is revisiting material he wrote himself in a previous life. The Mad Monk of Mon comments on the ultimately indeterminate nature of his incarnate status when, using a play on words, he says, "Like this saying, I wonder how I could be an incarnation of all his [Drukpa Kunley] naughty activities (*kun nyed*), never mind all his good qualities (*kun legs*)! Nevertheless, as it seems that I have taken rebirth as that sublime master, I depend on the "name only" (*sgro btags*) of Drukpa Kunley."[77]

While I have translated the term *sgro btags* as "name only," its literal translation is "superimposition" or "reification" or "exaggerated title." The use of this term here might suggest that the Mad Monk of Mon was somewhat reluctant to fully take on the identity of Drukpa Kunley (whether out of humility or for other reasons) at the same time as he had to assume that role. For the Mad Monk of Mon, as the reincarnation of Drukpa Kunley, a

[76] DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 168a.5-6.

[77] *Ces pa ltar rang nyid 'brug pa kun legs mi dgos kun nyes kyi skye ba yang ga la yin mod kyang/ dam pa de'i skye ba yin par sgro btags la 'chel ba'i rnyed pas,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 168a.3-4.

particular kind of ownership of these writings is undeniable. At the same time, as he himself maintains, there is a sense of respect and accommodation to Drukpa Kunley that keeps him from having an uncomplicated relationship to these writings. A mixed tone of veneration and ironic humor reverberates through the Mad Monk of Mon's colophon.

The Mad Monk of Mon next relates how he gathered original manuscripts (*ma dpe*) of Drukpa Kunley's biography from many different places. He wished to bring them together into one completely perfect copy (*yongs rdzogs gungs gcig tu bsgrigs*) and print them, but, as he ironically quotes from a popular saying: "Biographies that are the same are not in the character of a siddha!"[78] What he means is that the idiosyncratic nature of the behavior and speech of realized persons easily lends itself to expression via a variety of modalities in order to appeal to persons of varying dispositions. The Mad Monk even comments on how Drukpa Kunley "told his life story and his oral instructions in many different ways" as well as on his tendency to teach "according to each person's capacity, time, and place."[79] These comments highlight the context-specific nature of Drukpa Kunley's compositions—an orientation that will become clearer as we examine several examples in Chapter Three.

Instead of one single reliable manuscript, the Mad Monk of Mon's search for Drukpa Kunley's works turned up a variety of stories and teachings, given at different times and in different places, to a range of different kinds of persons in accord with their individual capacities (*so so'i blo*), such that he found it impossible to include them all in a single volume.

[78] *Rnam thar gcig na grub thob mi zer ba ltar*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 168a.6-168b.1.

[79] *Rnam thar dang zhal gdams sogs mi 'dra ba du ma yul phyogs dang gnas dus ma nges par so so'i blo dang 'tshams par gsungs rnams* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 168b.1-2.

He notes how there were scattered notes and so on by those who had requested [particular works] (*zhu ba po'i zin bris kha 'thor sogs*); oral teachings for certain members of the nobility and others for worldly elderly people (*dam pa 'ga'i zhal rgyun dang 'jig rten rgan po'i ngag rgyun la*); and all manner of playful teachings of a siddha (*grub pa'i rol rtsed bstan tshul sogs*); all of which were certain and to be explained (*nges dag mang po bshad rgyu 'dug*). While he had wished to obtain all the original texts (*ma dpe*), due to there being so many, he decided to go ahead with the printing, since he feared that otherwise it would be impossible to accomplish it. Later he would add the others as he acquired them. However, he cautions himself that it is important not to construct something like the *Rdor gcod* of Paro in Mon.[80] It is difficult to determine what text the Mad Monk is referring to here. Stein suggests that this refers to a text found in a *Mdo mang* collection published at Spungs tang bde chen by Kun mkhyen 'Brug-pa, also known as Ngag dbang rnam gyal (1594-1651). Stein notes that "Gene Smith thinks that its date is 1640. He also told me the following story: An ignorant monk of Mon Spa gro, who had found a very beautiful, but inaccurate, manuscript of the *Vajracchedikā*, proclaimed that all the other editions were corrupt and corrected them according to his erroneous fine manuscript."[81] The point of the example, however, is clear. The Mad Monk hopes to avoid using one erroneous version of Drukpa Kunley's *namthar* while claiming that it represents the most authentic account.

[80] *Mon spa gro'i rdor gcod kyi dpe rang mi yong las che ba bcas,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 168b.4.

[81] My translation. Stein 1972, p. 420, fn. 3.

At the time of the printing, the Mad Monk relates that he had obtained about twenty different manuscripts that he was comparing (*dpe tshan mi 'dra ba nyi shu tsam lag tu 'byor pa rnams dag bsdur byas pa*). Among these was Volume Ka, the *Namthar*, which contains Drukpa Kunley's own unadulterated speech, arranged in a unified order (*rnam thar ka 'di gsung gtsang mar go rim gcig pa mang*), and the "others" (it is unclear whether he is referring to Volumes Kha, Ga, and Nga, or only to Volumes Kha and Ga), which contain the notes and recordings of Drukpa Kunley's disciples, who jotted them down through theirs powers of "non-forgetting recollection" (*mi brjed pa'i gzungs thob pa*). He says their order is "uncertain from one perspective" (*go rim sogs mtha' gcig tu ma nges pa*).

For the purposes of this thesis, the Mad Monk's description of Volume Ka as "arranged in a unified order" (*go rim gcig pa*) is particularly interesting. It allows for at least the supposition that, in gathering together all of Drukpa Kunley's writings, the Mad Monk discovered a previously arranged life story of Drukpa Kunley (now designated as Volume Ka). This possibility is further strengthened by Drukpa Kunley's statements in Volume Ka regarding his reasons for writing his life story in the order and in the ways that he does. We will examine these statements carefully in Chapter Two.

The Mad Monk's description of Volume Ka as being previously arranged also allows for the reasonable supposition, as we will see in Chapter Two, that when Drukpa Kunley, the narrator, describes the haphazard nature of his *namthar*, that there was a clear intention behind writing the life story in such a way. Since the Mad Monk specifically refers to Volume Ka as the *namthar,* this also suggests that, prior to his editorial efforts, a *namthar* of Drukpa

Kunley existed. The Mad Monk's own work then, consisted in comparing different versions of this original until he felt confident that he had the most authentic version. This version became Volume Ka. He then compiled Volumes Kha, Ga, and perhaps Nga from the leftover materials, stories, letters, and other writings by the saint or his disciples. The Mad Monk makes specific mention of Volume Ga. He states, "I set aside whatever indexes and genuine words [of Drukpa Kunley himself] were there and then gathered them together into Volume Ga."[82] However, he makes no specific mention of the arrangement of Volume Kha, the second volume. While it is impossible to say what this really signifies, perhaps we are meant to infer that when the Mad Monk mentions the "other materials that were written down by Drukpa Kunley's disciples through their powers of non-forgetting recollection" whose order is "uncertain from a certain perspective" (*go rim sogs mtha' gcig tu ma nges pa*), but which have "excellent sense" (*phugs don bzang ba*)—that it was these that he compiled into Volume Kha. It is only after this sentence that he describes what materials he included in Volume Ga. A bit further on he notes that when "these three volumes were finished, I shared them in the *gaṇacakra* ritual so as not to waste all my supplies."[83] Altogether, the Mad Monk only makes specific mention of the first three volumes of the collection (Ka, Kha, Ga) in the colophon. We can assume that Volume Nga was appended to the collection at a later date.

[82] *Kha thor rnams so so'i gzhug byang gsung ngo ma yod pa rnams mtshams su bkod nas dpe tshan ga par phyogs gcig tu bsgril*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 169a.1-2.

[83] *De ltar legs par grub pa'i dpe tshan gsum po 'di yang rang nyid kyis rgyu dngos mthun rkyen rnams chud mi 'dza' ba'i phyir de'i rgyu tshogs su bsngos,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 169a.3-4.

The Mad Monk states that Drukpa Kunley's teachings are aimed at both worldly activities in this life and at explaining the ultimate good for the benefit of future lives. Everyone, high or low, monastic or lay, will enjoy the playfulness and the profound teachings found in these writings. However, due to Drukpa Kunley's use of multiple dialects and colloquialisms from the places through which he traveled, not to mention his use of profoundly secret Vajra speech (*rdo rje'i gsung gi gsang ba zab mo*) the Mad Monk found many misspellings and mistakes. Bringing all the manuscripts together and comparing the originals, he was able to clear up textual corruptions. He states that there is "no room for doubt in the minds of all, high or low."[84]

The final paragraph of the colophon describes the carving of the wood blocks for the first three volumes at Dre'u Lhas Monastery (*dre'u lhas*) in southeastern Tibet in a water dragon year. Dre'u Lhas monastery was located in Lho of Gnyal, east-southeast of Yar-lung, near the border of present-day Bhutan.[85] Ardussi confirms that the Dre'u Lhas monastic complex is included in a catalogue of Tibetan printing establishments "recently reprinted in India. Entry number fifty-one says, 'near Lhun-rtse, in the monastic establishment of Dre'u-lhas, are the collected works and biography of 'Brug pa Kun legs; from *Ka* through *Nga* there is total of 353 pages.'"[86] While it is not clear which water dragon year is meant here, given that the Mad Monk has been recognized as Drukpa Kunley's incarnation and that at least some of Drukpa

[84] *Mchog dman kun gyi thugs la som nyi 'jug pa'i gnas med do,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 169a.3.

[85] Stein 1972, 25.

[86] Ardussi 1972, 73-4.

Kunley's disciples are still living, this year is likely to be 1592, some sixty-three years or so after the saint's death.[87] As mentioned above, the DK3 edition of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* does not include this detail in the colophon to Volume Ka.[88] The Mad Monk of Mon reports that he employed a scribe and fifteen monastic wood-carvers to begin the project in the fourth month of the water-dragon-year (*chu 'brug*) and finished in the first half of the eighth month—probably early September of 1592.

Before leaving behind the subject of colophons, we must address one more complication. At the end of Volume Kha, the second volume of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, is another colophon in which the compiler identifies himself as "the non-Dharmic one who possesses the name Vajra Dhiggribhadra (*chos med pa badz+ra d+hi g+gri b+ha dra'i ming can*) or Dorje. This Dorje says that he edited Volume Kha at Lhomo Rabten (*lho mo rab brtan*) in the valley of Dokde (*dogs sde*). This area is north of Lhasa.[89] Since Dre'u Lhas is located in southeastern Tibet in the Nyal valley (*gnyal*), this colophon provides a different account of the compilation of Volume Kha than that implied by the Mad Monk of Mon. We are left to wonder if Dorje is the same person as the Mad Monk of Mon and if he worked on Volume Kha either prior to or after the compilation of volumes Kha and Ga? We have no way to know for certain.

[87] DiValerio 2011, 418: notes that Dre'u Lhas is in the Nyel (*gnyal*) valley in southeastern Tibet. He also suggests that the fact that this detail of the location of the printing is not mentioned in every version of the text might "suggest that there were multiple Tibetan printings of this collection even before recent decades."

[88] The 2005 Beijing version does not mention Dre'u Lhas Monastery.

[89] *Chos med pa bdzra d+hi g+gri b+ha dra'i ming can gyis/ dogs sde lho mos brtan gyi sa ru phyogs gcig tu bsgrigs pa dge legs 'phel,* Volume Kha 1978, 81a.3.

Seeking to answer this question, Stein concludes that the Mad Monk of Mon is the same person as the two Dorjes mentioned above--the one who composed the supplication/biography at the end of Volume Ka and the one who claims to have compiled Volume Kha and written its colophon. Stein bases his assertion on an oral communication he received from E. Gene Smith, in which Smith mentioned a lineage of Drukpa Kunley incarnations at Dre'u Lhas Monastery. Smith also notes that in the biography of Drukpa Kunley's grandson, Mipham Tshewang Tendzin (1574-1643) there is a mention of a "Drub thob Rinpoche, the incarnation of my grandfather." Smith told Stein about two or three incarnations of Drukpa Kunley in this lineage, one of who was named Drupa Dorje (Grub pa'i rdo rje). Based on this information, as well as on a section from the autobiography of the famous Padma Karpo in which he describes "the chief Drub thob Rinpoche, the incarnation of Kunga Lekpa, in 1591," Stein concludes that the Mad Monk of Mon is Dorje.[90] Ardussi agrees and observes that it is certainly possible that the compilation of the texts and their printing need not have occurred at the same place.

V. The Contents of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*

The literary analyses found below in Chapters Two and Three are based on the diverse compositions contained within the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar.* Since I have already discussed the colophons above, in this section, I give an overview of the contents and compositions contained

[90] Stein, 1972, 25.

in each of the four volumes of the *namthar* in order to provide the foundation for the in-depth analyses of these compositions to follow.

A. Volume Ka

The first volume, Volume Ka, consists of multiple discrete compositions without any specific narrative thread connecting them. Because there is no obvious narrative or chronological connection between one composition and the next, I feel it is inaccurate to call these compositions "episodes" in the sense that some other *namthars* have been composed. Rather, in harmony with Drukpa Kunley's rationale for composing a *namthar* (see Chapter Two), the different compositions reflect different means by which the text communicates its messages. Editions DK1, DK2, and DK3 all include clear breaks between the majority of the compositions in Volume Ka (See Appendix I). Volume Ka is entitled: *The Story of the Liberation of the Yogi Named Kunga Lekpa: The Finest of Crude Memoirs, Spoken Casually, and Slapped Together in Any Which Way*.[91]

The volume represents itself as having been written in the first person, and is therefore considered to be the autobiography (*rangnam*) of Drukpa Kunley, though scholars disagree as to the degree to which we can safely assume an historical person either wrote himself, or recited for a scribe, the contents found therein. In his review of Stein's French translation of Volume Ka, Smith, writing under the pseudonym of Jamyang Namgyal, refers to Volume Ka as Drukpa Kunley's "autobiographical reminiscences." He describes how, in considering this

[91] *Rnal 'byor pa'i ming can kun dga' legs pa'i rnam thar byung tshul lhug par snras pa zhib mo'i rtsing mo ha la sna zin spu zin nas bkod pa*. DK1, Vol. Ka of *'Brug pa Kun legs kyi rnam thar,* (1978), f. Title page.

question with Tibetan scholars, that he encountered a range of responses. Some felt that the *namthar* represented Drukpa Kunley's own work and that we must take it literally as an autobiography, while others believed it to be a compilation of his disciples.[92] Ardussi asserts that there is no reason to doubt that Volume Ka contains a collection of oral songs and narratives, written down mostly by Drukpa Kunley's disciples and patrons.[93] However, Ardussi also notes that the four-volume *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* is probably the work of more than one editor. He reiterates that Volume Ka is by itself occasionally referred to as the "autobiography," due to the fact that it is written in the first person, and also because it contains a post-face in which Drukpa Kunley summarizes the events of his life and hints at the reasons for his having written it. Larsson notes that the biographical material contained in Volume Ka is written in the form of an autobiography (*rangnam*), but this does not necessarily reflect the actual way it was composed .[94] In DiValerio's view, the question of whether or not the compositions in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* should be considered to actually represent the words of Drukpa Kunley himself is a fraught one.[95] While Volume Ka contains some of the characteristics of a Tibetan biography (*namthar*), it is very different from "what we usually expect from the genre, because of its episodic nature and its lack of a coherent narrative."[96]

[92] Namgyal 1972.

[93] Arudssi 1972, 1.

[94] Larrson 2009.

[95] DiValerio 2011.

[96] DiValerio 2011, 414.

Regardless of these varying points of view, the episodes in Volume Ka do maintain a consistent first-person narration that certainly intends to represent the different compositions as having been written by a single author who styles himself as Drukpa Kunley, whether or not he was indeed the "historical" Drukpa Kunley. For the purposes of this dissertation, due to the consistency in tone, structure, grammar and vocabulary that make up the compositions found in Volume Ka, I will assume that they were likely composed by a single individual.

While there is no obvious connective thread between the different compositions in Volume Ka, some effort has been made to frame the compositions it contains within bookends that describe Drukpa Kunley's birth and death. There is a brief description of Drukpa Kunley's birth and early life in the narrator's own words at the beginning of the Volume Ka and a long description of his death and cremation at the end contained in the short biography of him composed by the disciple named "Dorje" (discussed above). However, in between these bookends, a long series of disjointed compositions including songs, poems, didactic expositions and anecdotes make up the bulk of the volume. Sometimes there appears to be some sort of minimal order to this collage, as when a series of compositions includes the same personages and their journeys to and from a particular place, but other times no narrative connection between one section and the next can be discerned. Most compositions contain mini-frames in which Drukpa Kunley narrates how he traveled to such-and-such a place where such-and-such a person or persons approaches him and asks a question.

These questions of persons with whom Drukpa Kunley meets open up imaginative spaces in which the narrator addresses a large number of topics, ranging from his perception of

the writing of auto/biography; to defenses of the merits of women; to critiques of monastics, yogis, 'enlightened' masters, poor people, and rich people; to discussions of Tantric practice; retreat practice, etc. A major theme is the discussion of various precepts, practices, and views of the Kagyü schools' doctrines, as well as Drukpa Kunley's perception that most practitioners merely pretend to embody the meaning of these. Throughout these compositions, the narrator maintains a constant thread of truth telling even when it often seems as if he is writing down thoughts he had that day or a song he just spontaneously composed. There is a marked sense of self-consciousness in these sections, as if he is writing to himself. There is also a strong self-mocking tone at times. He tells many stories, often in the form of verse. These sections are marked by a sense of a penetrating social critique blended with humor, parody, light-heartedness, and satire.

Some compositions contain visionary elements, such as a series of letters exchanged with the Lord of Death in which Drukpa Kunley considers the karmic repercussions of giving the people of the village of Gadra (*Sga 'dra*) supernatural power over the fish of the lake (in order to eat them). Other visionary compositions are in the form of letters Drukpa Kunley claims to have received in dreams from the Buddha in the realm of the Dharmadhatu Akaniṣṭha, brought to him by Nagarjuna, which exhort him to chastise the hypocritical behaviors of deviant groups of tantrikas. There are some call and response songs where disciples sing songs to Drukpa Kunley and he responds by singing in response. One literary form that occurs multiple times throughout the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* is a poetic style in which verses alternate between examples (usually ornate descriptions of one or more aspects of nature) and meaning (in which

the metaphors used in the example are given ideological explanations.) In these poems, Drukpa Kunley often adopts the ornate use of metaphor and simile discussed in the Sanskrit *Kāvyādarśa* by Daṇḍin, which had wide influence on Tibetan writing since Sakya Paṇḍita's famous work *The Gateway of the Learned* was produced in the thirteenth century.[97] (See discussion of Daṇḍin in Chapter Two.) Certainly, Drukpa Kunley is deeply interested in the use of metaphorical examples to express deeper Buddhist truths.[98]

Throughout Volume Ka, there are also a number of compositions that discuss the practice of writing itself. These compositions are analyzed in Chapter Two below.

B. Volume Kha

The second volume of the collection, Volume Kha, is entitled, *The Nectar of Marvelous Amṛita, Only a Few Drops from the Grass of Faith Drawn From the Ocean of the Life-story Collection of Kunga Legpa, the Lord of Yogins*. It contains a collection of songs, letters, and anecdotes strung one after the other. There are section breaks between the different compositions, but none of them provide titles. These compositions are similar to those found in Volume Ka. The Mad Monk of Mon (discussed above), the compiler, states that the compositions included in Volumes Kha-Nga are less reliably those of Drukpa Kunley than those contained in Volume Ka since they were transcribed by disciples who have attained the *dhāraṇī* of perfect recall (*gshan 'di dag chos rje nyid kyi bu slob mi brjed pa'i gzungs thob pa 'gas zin bris su mdzad pa yin 'dug*

[97] *Mkhas pa rnams 'jug pa'i sgo*. Gold 2007, 117-141. Schaeffer, Kapstein, Tuttle 2013.

[98] See Part III in Chapter Three for examples of this style of poetic composition.

gshis).[99] However, the basic grammar and vocabularies of the compositions in Volume Kha are similar to those in Volume Ka, even though some individual compositions use third-person voice rather than first-person.

Some different elements in Volume Kha from those in Volume Ka concern the narrator's interactions with ordinary people and his use of long story narratives to express particular ethical or moral lessons. The stories in Volume Kha are longer and more involved than those in Volume Ka. They tend to follow an interaction with an interlocutor and serve primarily to illustrate particular points Drukpa Kunley has previously made. Also in Volume Kha are stories about the various inns Drukpa Kunley stays in and the women innkeepers with whom he has conversations, usually about greed and stinginess. He relates stories about the karmic repercussions of human faults such as greed, miserliness, and dissatisfaction with one's lot in life. There is a long composition in which some practitioners ask Drukpa Kunley why he does not dress in a particular style that would render him and his disciples recognizable. In response, he enumerates a range of Tibetan Buddhist practitioners and describes their individual dress in great detail.[100] Generally, in these compositions, Drukpa Kunley acts in contradiction to whatever anyone wants him to do. There is no clear chronological arrangement of these stories.

In the first episode of Volume Kha, an unnamed disciple describes Drukpa Kunley as "a manifestation of Saraha...who is without hypocrisy and behaves naturally, unrestrainedly, and

[99] DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 98b.5-6.

[100] See Part V in Chapter Three for an analysis of this composition.

as he pleases."[101] The disciple claims that he will write down "the pronouncements of this great *siddha* (*grub chen*), Kunga Lekpa, the crazy Drukpa (*'brug smyon*)." What follows is a more detailed and self-reflexive commentary on the purposes for writing a life story than that found at the beginning of Volume Ka. In it, among other things, the narrator comments on what should and should not be included in the writing of a biography.[102] This discussion is interesting due to its conflation of authorial voices. First is the voice of the disciple, the transcriber, who claims to record exactly what Drukpa Kunley said to him. Next is the voice of the narrator, Drukpa Kunley, who talks about writing a *namthar.* These two voices become indistinguishable in the text that follows. This composition is explored in detail in Chapter Two.

Such confusion continues when we consider the placement of this composition. Why, given that it presents a more detailed rationale for the writing of a *namthar*, wasn't it included at the beginning of Volume Ka? Was this due to the fact that the disciple/transcriber clearly states that he wrote down this episode "in the words of the *siddha* himself" (*grub thob rang gi gsung*) and hence the Mad Monk of Mon suspected there might be mistakes in the transcription? Given that this first composition in Volume Kha conveys even more strongly the intentions and rationales for the writing of a *namthar* than those expressed throughout Volume Ka, its placement here, which gives the impression that we are beginning an entirely new *namthar,* is puzzling.

[101] *Sa ra ha'i rnam sprul...tshul chos dang bral zhing spyod pa gang shar shugs 'byung 'gag med du lhug par spyod pa*, Volume Kha 1978, 1a.

[102] See Part VI in Chapter One for an analysis of this composition.

Another difference between Volumes Ka and Kha is that the anecdotes in the latter tend to provide more commentary by Drukpa Kunley's interlocutors, who reflect on his advice or remark on his appearance or call him "Crazy Drukpa Kunley" (an appellation rarely used in Volume Ka). As described above, this volume concludes with a short colophon. Ardussi translated the first half of Volume Kha into English for his Master's thesis at the University of Washington in 1972.[103]

C. Volume Ga

Volume *Ga* is entitled: *Some Experiences, Written Exactly as They Occurred, Without any Bullshit, and Some Momentary Dharmic Activities that Arose in the Experience of Kunga Lekpa, the One Who is Called "Yogi."*[104] It includes an eclectic mix of compositions in a variety of literary genres, including songs, letters by and to Drukpa Kunley, verses of praise to various teachers, prayers invoking him, three alphabet poems (*ka bshad*), expositions on the Dharma, a long section on the practice and realization of *Mahāmudrā* in the form of a question and answer session (*'dri lan*) and very short biographies of Drukpa Kunley's life. There is a supplication to the oral lineage (*snyan brgyud*) that Drukpa Kunley wrote in response to a request from the Mad Yogi of Ü. As discussed above, this supplication is also included in the

[103] Ardussi 1972.

[104] *Rnal 'byor pa'i ming chan kun dga' legs pa'i rnams la shar ba'i phral gyi chos spyod 'dra dang rnams 'char chi byung bris pa, skyag gtad gang yang med pa 'ga zhig*, Volume *Ga* of *'Brug pa Kun legs kyi rnam thar*, 2005.

biography of Ü Myon.[105] Another composition consists of a long letter describing the political situation of the fifteenth-century between the ruling families of the Phagmodru (Phag mo gru pa) and the Rinpung (Rin chen spungs pa). While the letter begins as a prose description, it quickly shifts to a list of short aphoristic statements of advice on how to live one's life properly directed to various types of people. There are also compositions that describe Drukpa Kunley's interactions with different people (see Appendix I) using the same format as the compositions contained in volumes Ka and Kha. To my knowledge, no one has yet produced a translation of any part of this volume.

D. Volume Nga

The fourth volume, Volume *Nga*, is entitled: *Fragments of the Collected Writings of Kunga Legpa*.[106] This is the shortest volume of the four volumes. It contains various songs (including a handful of alphabet songs), and a few stories, including one about Drukpa Kunley performing a ritual in Ralung, which leads Ngawang Chögyal to call him a madman (*smyon pa*). To date Volume Nga has not been translated into any other language.[107] See Appendix I for a full list of this volume's contents.

[105] See more detailed discussion of this supplication in Chapter One, Section III on *Smyon pa.*

[106] DK1. *Gsung 'bum thor bu*. Volume Nga (1978), 649-705.

[107] I have completed a translation into English of Volume Ka. (Monson and Tshering 2014) and am currently working on a translation into English of Volumes Kha-Nga.

VI. The Life of Drukpa Kunley

To historically situate a person by the name of Drukpa Kunley as well as to reconstruct the conditions--social, historical, religious, and literary--within which he would have composed his autobiography in fifteenth to sixteenth century Tibet is not an easy matter. We possess next to no historically reliable evidence that someone named Drukpa Kunley existed. This is not to definitively claim that he did not, but the fact that he is barely mentioned in so few historical sources forces us to look for most of our information about him within the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* itself. That we must turn to what appears to be a deliberately crafted and crafty collection of diverse compositions for historical facts raises interesting questions concerning textual and authorial intention and suggests that for Drukpa Kunley it may not be possible to make definitive claims about him apart from the representations of him put forward by the *Namthar*.

For many Tibetan Buddhist masters, it is often the case that a variety of textual sources (historical, biographical, liturgical, etc.) make substantial mention of them. These references function to provide evidence for the lives and activities of these individuals such that some historical reconstruction is possible. With Drukpa Kunley we have far less of this sort of information to go on. We are left almost solely with the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* for details of the saint's life, and since the text represents itself as having been written by Drukpa Kunley, we are at the mercy of the representations of the saint put forth by the narrative. The other historical sources for Drukpa Kunley are local representations of the saint's presence and his activities in Tibet, and especially in Bhutan, where stories, songs, prayers, and rituals to him

comprise a veritable cultic nexus of happenings. Thus, accounting for Drukpa Kunley's tangibly powerful impact on the minds and hearts of the people of Tibet, Bhutan, and even these days, Western Buddhists and scholars, requires not only mining the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* for its representations of the saint, but also delving into the morass of fantastical and continually changing descriptions of him that can readily be found in the oral traditions and recently composed biographies of his life, most of which are themselves based on oral traditions.

This next section focuses on the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* and the history of modern scholarship on it. It will also describe a range of oral and folkloric sources discussing Drukpa Kunley in Bhutan. It is as interested in the ways that Drukpa Kunley has been constructed as a saint as it is in the historical events of his life. Thus the section explores what we can know about Drukpa Kunley, the purported author of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, from the *namthar* itself and from the contemporary oral traditions of the saint in Bhutan. The final part of this section reconstructs an outline of events of the life of Drukpa Kunley drawn largely from the information found in Volumes Ka and Kha of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* collection.

A. Biographical Sources for Drukpa Kunley's Life

Tibetan biographical sources for Drukpa Kunley's life are slim. R.A. Stein, whose *La Vie et Chants de 'Brug pa Kun-legs* (1972), represents a translation into French of the first volume (Volume Ka) of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, describes how his efforts to discover Tibetan biographical

sources of Drukpa Kunley yielded little fruition.[108] Corroborating Stein's statements, we find no information on Drukpa Kunley's life, for example, in the *Golden Rosary of the Ralung Kagyü*, a collection of short biographies of the central figures of Ralung Monastery, the monastery where Drukpa Kunley was born, even though a short biography of the individual considered to be Drukpa Kunley's cousin, Ngawang Chökyi Gyalpo (Ngag dbang Chos kyi rgyal po, 1465-1540) is included in this collection.[109] Nor is there mention of Drukpa Kunley in *The Golden Rosary of the Kagyü,* another collection of short biographies illuminating the lives and transmission lineage of central religious figures in the Drukpa Kagyü,[110] the sub sect to which Drukpa Kunley is depicted as belonging. The historian Thu'u bkwan III Chökyi Nyima mentions three "mad yogis" (*smyon pa*), one of who is named Druk Myön, or the Crazy Yogi of the Drukpa, in *The Crystal Mirror of Philosophical Systems*, but gives no additional information.[111] Gö Lotsāwa Zhonnu Pel ('Gos Lo tsa ba Gzhon nu dpal, 1392-1481), who was Drukpa Kunley's contemporary and the author of *The Blue Annals* (1476)--an important survey of Tibetan history that includes a long section on the abbots of the great Kagyü monasteries and the lives and disciples of their founders - never

[108] R.A. Stein 1972, 3-4, "Et pourtant, jusqu'a tout recemment on ne savait rien de sa vie et de ses oeuvres. Les ouvrages relatifs au Tibet, qu'ils soient populaires ou savants, l'ignorent Presque totalement. Tout au plus trouve-t-on, tres rarement, la mention isolee de son nom, sans plus. C'est que les documents faisaient defaut. On le verra un peu plus loin, c'est a peine si les chroniques tibetaines ells-memes lui consacrent quelques mots, meme quand leurs auteurs se montrent par ailleurs tres bien informes."

[109] *Rwa lung dkar brgyud gser 'phreng.* Reproduced from a set of block prints from the 1771-1772 Spuns-thang xylographic blocks. Palampur: Sungrab nyamso gyunphel parkhang, 1975-1978, Volume Ga, ff. 215-306.

[110] Mon rtse pa Kun dga' dpal ldan (1408-1475?), compiler and Kun dga' 'Brug dpal (15th cent.), editor. (1970) *Dkar brgyud gser 'phreng*, Leh: Sonam W. Tashigang, f. 592.

[111] Thu'u bkwan III Chos kyi nyi ma, *Grub mtha' shel kyi me long*, Vol. Ka, f. 12b. These are the Madman of gTsang (gTsang-smyon), the madman of dBus and the madman of 'Brug. These siddhas and others of their type are attached particularly to the Bar-'Brug school..."

mentions him.[112] The famous Drukpa Kagyü scholar/practitioner, Pema Karpo (Pad ma dkar po, 1527-1592), who dedicates a long passage to the religious history of the Drukpa Kagyü lineage at Ralung Monastery in his historical chronicle of the Kagyü schools, is silent about anyone named Drukpa Kunley.[113] Pawo Tsuglag Trengwa (Dpa' bo Gtsug lag phreng ba, 1504-1566), in his history of Buddhism in India and its spread into Tibet, *A Scholar's Feast*, merely mentions Drukpa Kunley as one of the students of the seventh Karmapa Chödrag Gyatso (1454-1506) along with the mad yogis of Ü and Tsang.[114]

As for biographies of Drukpa Kunley or those that mention him that were composed during or directly after his lifetime, there is only the biography of him arranged by his grandson, Mipham Tsewang Tendzin (Mi pham Tshe dbang bstan 'dzin, 1574-1643), which primarily consists of selections drawn from the saint's writings in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* concerning his travels in Lho Mon.[115] There is also a brief partial biography of Drukpa Kunley included at the end of Volume Ka of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* (Discussed above in Section IV, pp. 61-62). In the eighteenth century we find two more sources that mention Drukpa Kunley. The first is a

[112] Gö Lotsawa Zhonnu Pel ('Gos Lo tsa ba Gzhon nu dpal, 1392-1481) completed the *Blue Annals* (*Deb ther sngon po*) in 1476. Given that Drukpa Kunley was only 22 at this time, it's not so unusual that he would only barely be mentioned in connection with the Drukpa sect. This history of Tibet was translated into English by George Roerich and Gendun Choepel. Cf. *The Blue Annals*, Motilal Banarsidass: Delhi, 1976.

[113] Pad ma dkar po, (1527-1592), *Chos 'byung bstan pa'i padma rgyas pa'i nyin byed*, Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, Sata-Pitaka Series, 1968. This edition contains a foreward by E. Gene Smith discussing Pema Karpo's place in the 'Brug pa lineage and the importance of this work.

[114] Dpa' bo Gtsug lag phreng ba (1504-1566), *Chos 'byung mkhas pa'i dga' ston gyi yan lag gsum pa bod kyi skabs las bdun pa bka' brgyud spyi'i chos 'byung bzhugs so*, ed. Lokesh Chandra, *Mkhas pa'i dga' ston*, Part 2, Delhi: International Academy of Indian culture, 1961, chapter *Pa*, f. 136.b.

[115] According to Stein, this biography is part of a collection of texts. It bears the title *Chos kyi sprin chen po'i dbyang kyi yan lag rnam 'byor gyi dbang phyug dpal rdo rje gdan pa'i rnam par thar pa*, pp. 10, fn.1, 16-17. Cited in Stein on p. X. Like Ardussi and DiValerio, I have been unable to locate this text.

biography of him composed by a Ke'u tshang of Kun gling Monastery and published in 1786.[116] This biography represents itself as having been compiled from previous biographies of Drukpa Kunley, but does not identify them. The second source is the *History of Bhutan*, composed by Tendzin Chögyal (Bstan 'dzin chos rgyal, 1700-1767) and published in Bhutan in 1759. This historical survey consists in a collection of disparate biographies of important figures in the founding of Buddhism and the religious government in Bhutan. In it, we find a short passage: "The great *siddha*, 'Brug pa Kun dga' legs pa, in order to benefit sentient beings, came to the southern mountains. In the icy forest regions of the upper Thed, he took as consort a woman with the marks of a *ḍākinī* named Nor bu 'dzom. From their union was born Ngag dbang bstan 'dzin, the rebirth of Gsang bdag gar ston, the son of Pha jo."[117] As is discussed below, the importance of Drukpa Kunley as the progenitor for some of the most prestigious Bhutanese lineages is undeniable, regardless of the historical factuality of these reports.

Later biographies of the saint largely consist of fantastical tales that follow Drukpa Kunley in his travels from Tibet into Bhutan, highlighting his miraculous and supernatural activities, such as subduing demons with his "thunderbolt of wisdom," seducing women on their doorsteps as a way to awaken their Dharmic potential, and drinking copious amounts of alcohol. While such stories are a rich source of information for thinking about the construction of the saint as a semi-mythical and other worldly yogic madman, they do not present us with

[116] *'Gro ba'i mgo po chos rje kun dga' legs pa'i rnam thar rgya mtsho'i snying po mthong ba don ldan,* 129 folio pages.

[117] *Grub thob chen po 'brug pa kun legs lha rgyud du gzhan don la byon pa las/ thed yul gzhung stod pa khyags nags nang du mkha' 'gro'i mtshan ldan gyi bu med nor bu 'dzom zer ba de phyag rgyar bzhas pa las/ pha jo'i sras/ gsang bdag gar ston gyi sprul pa ngag dbang bstan 'dzin 'khrung,* 54.b-55.a, *Lho'i chos 'byung.*

historically reliable information. Nonetheless, they are useful for this thesis on other registers, such as for the many ways they reveal the changing depictions of the saint's persona and activities. (See Appendix II for a list of these biographies.)

B. Oral Traditions of Drukpa Kunley: The Divine Madman

Faced with this dearth of biographical information on Drukpa Kunley, we still find valuable information on his received image in the Himalayan Buddhist world from oral traditions of him. The bulk of my research on oral traditions of Drukpa Kunley was carried out in Bhutan. In the following, I rely on the stories of him that circulate around rituals, sacred sites, and other stories associated with the saint. Certainly if asked, any Bhutanese person can recite one or another tale of Drukpa Kunley, usually with a broad smile on his or her face. This tradition represents Drukpa Kunley as a classic trickster figure who prowls about from place to place creating mischief, and as a realized yogic practitioner who occasionally deigns to prove his status by various kinds of magical activities such as reviving corpses and subduing demons.[118] The story of the origins of the takin, the national animal of Bhutan, demonstrates this mix of qualities.[119]

[118] Hoshi, ed. 1985, 149-204 for a collection of oral tales of Drukpa Kunley from Tibet. DiValerio 2011, 399-403, for a discussion of stories told to him by Tibetans. Kun mchog dge Legs, Dpal ldan bkra shis, and Kevin Stuart 1999, 5-30 discusses Drukpa Kunley as a trickster.

[119] In Dzong kha, 'takin' is *dong gyem tsey*. This story is posted on a sign post at the entrance to the Takin Reserve in Thimphu, Bhutan.

Drukpa Kunley traveled to Bhutan to receive teachings from a popular saint. At the end of the ceremonies, the local people asked Drukpa Kunley to perform a miracle for them. Drukpa Kunley requested a cow and a goat. He roasted and then devoured both beasts, leaving nothing but bones. Having finished, he placed the goat's head next to the cow's bones. Snapping his greasy fingers, he ordered the assortment of bones to rise up and graze on the mountain slopes. Immediately, an animal with the head of a goat and the body of a cow arose and wandered off while everyone stared in amazement. This animal has subsequently become the national animal of Bhutan—the takin.

To this day, visitors to the Takin Reserve in Thimphu are treated to a large signpost upon which they can read this same story, as well as view a rough drawing of Drukpa Kunley's act of creation, attesting to the ongoing relevance and popularity of the tale in Bhutanese oral culture. The oral stories of Drukpa Kunley have taken such a strong hold on the Bhutanese imagination that even when I related information from the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* that directly contradicted that of a popular oral tale, I was met with good-humored, but dismissive disbelief.

Many of these Bhutanese oral tales, such as the story of the creation of the takin, can be found in a printed collection that has been available for some time and which has been published under a number of different titles including, *The Southern Cycle of the Extensive Life Story of the Dharma Lord Drukpa Kunley*;[120] *The Life Story of the Protector of Beings, Kunga*

[120] *Chos rje 'brug pa kun legs kyi rnam par thar pa rgyas pa'i lho'i bskor*. The German scholar and translator Andreas Kretschmar was working with a photocopy of a handwritten manuscript in 36 folios.

Lekpa, Telling of his Activities in Mon, Paro, and so on;[121] or *The Autobiography of Drukpa Kunley*.[122] At the beginning of this collection (in some editions) is a note stating that the Dharmalord [Mipham] Tsewang Tenzin compiled it at Tago Monastery (Rta mgo chos dbyings kyi pho brang) in Bhutan.[123] As mentioned above, this individual is considered to be the grandson of Drukpa Kunley.[124] In my discussions with the current incarnation of Gyalsey Tsewang Tendzin, who is the head abbot of Tago Monastery, it was clear that both the attribution of the collection to his predecessor and his predecessor's identity as Drukpa Kunley's great grandson is considered historical fact in Bhutan. The lineage trees that accompany both Stein's and John Ardussi's works also attest to this.[125] David DiValerio, whose study of the Tibetan yogic madmen includes a chapter on Drukpa Kunley, is more circumspect, suggesting that until a study of the printings and history of this text has been undertaken, we should withhold a definite attribution of it to Tsewang Tendzin, since the "text is unlikely to be so old."[126] He does not say why he feels the collection must be more recent.

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[121] In *'Gro ba'i mgon po kun dga' legs pa'i rnam thar mon spa gro sogs kyi mdzad spyod rnams*, Dharamsala: Tibetan Cultural Printing Press, 1981; 128 pages.

[122] 'Brug pa Kun dga' legs pa (1455-1529), *'Brug pa kun legs kyi rang rnam* (this printing also bears the longer title *Grub pa'i dbang phyug chen po rnal 'byor kun dga' legs pa'i dpal gyi rnam par thar pa*); recent Chinese print, orange cover, 83 pages. Since the text does not include a publication date, TBRC suggests 2000.

[123] DK1, Vol. Ka, 1978, pp 3-4. See Kretschmar 1981, 4-5. 'Brug pa kun legs: Das wundersame Leben eines verrückten Heiligen. Sankt Augustin: VGH Wissenschattsverlag.

[124] Mi pham Tshe dbang bstan 'dzin (1574-1643), also known as Rdo rje Gdan pa Pha jo Rta mgrin rgyal mtshan. He revealed as *gter ma* the biography of Pha jo 'Brug sgom zhig po, the twelfth-century 'Brug pa Dkar brgyud pa from Khams who spread his meditative techniques and teaching in Bhutan.

[125] Stein 1972, 10-11, Ardussi 1972, 204.

[126] DiValerio 2011, 401.

Like most of the sources for information on Drukpa Kunley, this collection of oral stories into a biography is little more than a series of anecdotes. There is no noticeable effort to bring them together in a linear or chronological fashion, though attempts have been made to group different stories together based on the geographical area in which they take place. There is no information on Drukpa Kunley's birth, family, childhood, or Dharma history and he appears to arise like a mythical figure from the mountains of Tibet. I follow Divalerio's lead in calling this collection of oral stories *The Southern Collection* since many of the stories concern Drukpa Kunley's exploits and adventures in Bhutan.

Both Ardussi and DiValerio remark that Tibetans refer to the oral tales in *The Southern Collection* as, to use a particularly popular Bhutanese adjective, the "naughty tales" (*gtsog gtam*).[127] Since Bhutanese particularly love tales of Drukpa Kunley's licentious activities and this term "naughty" (*gtsog*) is a very common adjective in Bhutanese parlance in regard both to Drukpa Kunley as well as to any sort of mischievous activity, this distinction seems accurate. In short, the written "naughty tales," which appear to derive primarily from the oral tradition, describe Drukpa Kunley in an array of sexual adventures or drinking copious quantities of alcohol or some combination of the two. This tendency contrasts interestingly with the contents of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* where, as we will see in detail, he is represented as a far more sophisticated and erudite personage, whose penetrating insights work to reveal the subtle levels of hypocrisy that pervade his social and religious landscapes. Ardussi explains that this discrepancy between the "naughty" and "clean" tales is likely due to hundreds of years of

[127] DiValerio 2011, 402; Ardussi 1972, 18.

embellishment in the naughty tales as such stories were passed down orally from person to person. He also notes that of the small collection of oral tales that he was been able to compile, most are not found in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* .[128] I will discuss the significance of this discrepancy between the content and style of the oral traditions and the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* in more detail in Chapter Four.

In addition to the oral tales of Drukpa Kunley that circulate throughout Bhutan, there are Bhutanese literary sources for his life. The Bhutanese biography of Drukpa Kunley that has had the most impact on both the modern Bhutanese and the non-Himalayan Buddhist world's perception of him was compiled by the 69th Chief Abbot (*rje khen po*) of Bhutan, Dge shes brag phug Dge 'dun rin chen (1926-1997) or Je Gendun Rinchen. This biography was first published in 1966 in Bhutan,[129] and has been translated into English by Keith Dowman as *The Divine Madman: The Sublime Life and Songs of Drukpa Kunley*.[130] This book was widely disseminated both in Dzong kha (*rdzong kha*) and in English. Due to the fact that the primary medium for instruction in Bhutanese primary and secondary schools was changed to English in the 1950's whole generations of Bhutanese gained access to the stories through the English translation.

[128] When asked if he would let me see this collection of oral tales, Ardussi was unable to locate it (personal communication, Spring 2014).

[129] The full title of this work is *'Gro ba'i mgon po chos rje kun dga' legs pa'i rnam thar rgya mtsho'i snying po mthong ba don ldan* (*The Essence of the Ocean of Stories About the Protector of Beings, the Dharma Lord Kunga Lekpa, which is Meaningful to Behold*). First published in Thimphu, Bhutan, 1966. Second edition at Kalimpong, printed at the Mani Printing Works, 1971.

[130] First published by Rider & Co, London, 1982; Dawn Horse Press, Middletown, California, 1983; second edition by Dawn Horse Press, 1998; published by Pilgrims Publishing (Varanasi and Kathmandu), 2000. Published in German as *Der Heilige Narr* (Barth, 1983); reprinted by Barth in 2005. Published in Spanish as *La Divina Locura Drukpa Kunley: Andanzas de un Yogui Tántrico Tibetano del siglo XVI*, Miraguano Ediciones, Madrid, 1988 and 2001. Published in French as *Le Fou Divin* (Albin Michel, Paris, 1984). Published in Romanian as *Nebunul Divin: viaţa sublimă a marelui maestru tantric Drukpa Kunley*, translated by Octavian Creţ (Firul Ariadnei, 2006).

The popularity of this modern biography in Bhutan may also be due to the fact that copies of the fifteenth-century *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* collection are not readily available. I could find only two of the four volumes in National Library of Bhutan and no editions in any of the many bookstores in Thimphu. This plus the fact that the text is written in Chö skyed (*chos skyad*) or Tibetan, which most Bhutanese do not read, contains many different dialects, instances of slang, and idiomatic phrases makes it notoriously difficult to read. I can attest to this through my own experience translating it and both Ardussi and Stein also concur on this subject.[131] Even when I asked the head abbot of the main temple dedicated to Drukpa Kunley in Bhutan, the Chime Lhakang (*Khyi med lha khang*) about this *namthar*, he somewhat sheepishly confessed that while he had a copy and had tried to read it, he found it to be too difficult and stopped.

The Divine Madman refers to itself as a secret biography (*gsang ba'i rnam thar*) of Drukpa Kunley. Its influence has been important for popular conceptions of Drukpa Kunley both within Bhutan and outside. My own experience in Bhutan over a two-year period attests to the influence of *The Divine Madman*. In almost all situations in Bhutan where I found myself in discussion concerning this saint and his activities, everyone, nearly without exception, referred only to the stories found in it. Even when I explained how the fifteenth-century *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* collection directly contradicts some of the details found in the newer biography, the power of the more recent stories trumped any older information for my interlocutors.

[131] Stein 1972, 30; Ardussi 1972, 76-80.

For example, there is a well-known story in *The Divine Madman* that Drukpa Kunley refused to travel further east in Bhutan than what are known as "the Three Ji's." These refer, respectively, to three villages that lie directly east of the Pele Lha, Chendebji, Rukubji, and Tangdibji on the road to central Bhutan. As the story goes, Drukpa Kunley arrived at the top of the Pele Lha pass and looking down into the valleys beyond saw an old man carrying a heavy load. He asked, "What is in your load?" "Barley," came the reply. And the lama thought, "There's no prophecy concerning my coming here." And then aloud, "What villages will I find down in the valley?" "First, Rukhupee, then Chandenpee, and then Tangsepee," the old man told him. "I don't think I will go to the valley of the three ji's, " Drukpa Kunley said, and returned the way he had come.[132]

This story has become ingrained in the Bhutanese cultural imagination. In fall 2012, when I remarked to a group of Bhutanese friends that in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, Drukpa Kunley mentions on more than one occasion how he traveled into Bumthang, in central Bhutan, far further east than the valley of the Three Ji's, or that I myself visited sacred sites dedicated to and recorded stories of Drukpa Kunley at the sacred pilgrimage site of Aja ney (A rgya gnas) in the eastern province of Mongar, they just shook their heads at me or politely nodded while it was abundantly clear that they did not believe a word I was saying.

In the Western Buddhist world, Keith Dowman's introduction and translation of *The Divine Madman* have had a significant influence in determining contemporary views of crazy wisdom yogis in general and Drukpa Kunley in particular. These views perceive Drukpa Kunley

[132] My paraphrase from Dowman. For a full version of this episode, see Dowman 1980, 145-146.

(and all crazy wisdom masters) as Tantric yogis schooled in the use of sexual techniques as tools to effect liberation among disciples. Such masters are renowned for their unorthodox and antinomian actions designed to shock disciples and others out of conventional and habitual ways of perceiving and acting.

For example, a recent article found online states, "Drukpa Kunley pioneered an unorthodox branch of Buddhism based on enlightening the common folk, mostly women. He also offered blessings in the form of sex…He spent his days singing and drinking with the ladies and deflowering virgins. His sexual escapades are legendary, so much so that a monastery in the Punakha valley was built in his honor after he subdued the cannibal demon goddess of the area with his "magic thunderbolt of wisdom." "He was a great womanizer," said Karma Lethö, a tourist guide, as he points proudly to a wooden effigy of Kunley's thunderbolt, today preserved in the monastery."[133]

The views expressed in this article are based on the content of the stories themselves which describe Drukpa Kunley in an array of sexual conquests and engaged in subduing the various demons and demonesses of Bhutan primarily by means of wielding his "thunderbolt of wisdom" (his penis). They are also indebted to Dowman's introduction to *The Divine Madman*, which explicates Drukpa Kunley's outrageous actions as expressions of enlightenment that are designed to shock recipients out of their ordinary states of consciousness.[134]

[133] See article by Iva R. Skoch, "Wanderlust: Penis Worship in Bhutan," created January 4, 2011, and published on GlobelPost, (http://www.globelpost.com).

[134] "His sexual activity is only a part of his craft of releasing people from ignorance...and eradicating the fixed notions of who we are and what we should and should not do. The genius of his therapeutic craft lies in spontaneous speech and action that awakens awareness of an authentic existential reality...All of Drukpa Kunley's

A further factor in the sexualization of the Drukpa Kunley legacy is the current association of Drukpa Kunley with the multiple representations of phalluses found across the Bhutanese landscape in the form of large wall murals or carvings. In a recent piece of collaborative scholarship, Francoise Pommaret and Tashi Tobgay ask the question, "Bhutan's pervasive phallus: Is Drukpa Kunley really responsible?"[135] This article explores possible reasons for how Drukpa Kunley has become indelibly associated with phallic representations in modern-day Bhutan. One of these has to do with the ways in which the influence of the tales found in Je Gendun Rinchen's biography have merged with a prevailing sense of Drukpa Kunley's ongoing presence in the Bhutanese cultural imagination. The authors note that Drukpa Kunley has become dissociated from historical and religious contexts, except among scholars. Indeed, indications of his activities are to be found in the landscape itself, including, according to one of my informants at the sacred site of Aja ney in eastern Bhutan where a cave of Drukpa Kunley contains stones perceived to be shaped as bow, arrow and dog."[136] Having made the pilgrimage to Ajaney myself, I can confirm the presence of this cave, as well as the existence of an oral narrative associated with it in the area that is not found in any literary representation of Drukpa Kunley's life.[137]

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relationships are determined by the craft of his desire to attain his own and others' simultaneous and continuous enlightenment." Dowman 1980, 27.

[135] Pommaret and Tobgay 2011, 59-81.

[136] Francoise Pommaret: Oral communication of Lam Kunzang Chhoephel. 11.05.09. Thimphu.

[137] The story, as told to me by the youngest daughter of Dechen, the 98 year-old woman who has guided pilgrims through Ajaney her entire life, goes as follows: While on pilgrimage at Paro, Taktsang, Drukpa Kunley caught sight a huge reindeer with a giant rack of antlers. He pursued the deer over high mountains passes and through dense Himalayan jungle valleys until they reached the sacred site of Ajaney. There, Drukpa Kunley shot the

Pommaret and Tobgay stress how, in Bhutan, in spite of his semi-mythic status, Drukpa Kunley, unlike popular trickster figures such as the Tibetan Aku Ton pa, is accepted as having played a tangible role in the historical development of some of Bhutan's most famous personages. For example, as mentioned above, there is no question in most Bhutanese minds that Drukpa Kunley was the biological great grandfather of Gyalsey Tsewang Tendzin Rabgye (Rgyal sras Bstan 'dzin rab rgyas, 1638-1696), the famous personage who became the fourth temporal ruler of Bhutan and who was a famous Drukpa Kagyü hierarch. A prophecy in an oral story predicts Drukpa Kunley's role in establishing this lineage in Bhutan. As the story goes, at the command of a yellow-robed *ḍākinī*, Drukpa Kunley shot an arrow from the border of Tibet into Bhutan. The arrow embedded itself in the ladder of a house in Toeb Changdana in the Punakha valley. When Drukpa Kunley went to retrieve it, he fathered a son with the lady of the house, Norbu 'dzom (Nor bu 'dzom), known also as Pelzang Bhuti (Dpal bzang bu khrid). This son, Ngawang Tendzin (Ngag dbang bstan 'dzin, 1520-1590), became the father of Mipham Tsewang Tendzin (Mi pham Tshe dbang bstan 'dzin, 1574-1643), who fathered Gyalsey Tenzin Rabgye (Rgyal sras Bstan 'dzin rab rgyas, 1638-1696). Bhutanese history describes how Tenzin Rabgye ruled Bhutan in the second half of the seventeenth century, after the death of his relative, the Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal,[138] the unifier of Bhutan as a nation-state in the

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deer with his bow and arrows. The reindeer's body had so much fat that Drukpa Kunley smeared layers of it across the rocks below the cave in which he meditated. He set the antlers atop a mountain peak adjacent to the river, where they can still be seen to this day. He then hollowed out a cave for his hunting dog and established himself in a cave higher up. Today, one can still see the places where his bow and arrows were placed and where he himself sat and meditated for a three-month period.

[138] Zhabs drung Ngag dbang rnam rgyal, 1594-1651.

seventeenth century.[139] As is evidenced by these two examples, in Bhutan, the figure of Drukpa Kunley unites religious, historical, and folkloric elements, thereby illustrating his position at the center of a combination of powerful historical and religious forces.

An in-depth discussion of the lineages of Drukpa Kunley in Bhutan is not pertinent to this dissertation, although there are numerous Bhutanese who trace their family lineages back to the saint and who enjoy a certain kind of status as a result. Aris notes that for the Bhutanese, Drukpa Kunley stands for those unorthodox and nonconformist orientations to life that call into question accepted ways of being and acting. The shocking irregularity of his conduct is generally considered the representation of the unbound, yet disciplined, spirit that encompasses the very essence of their religion.[140] The development of the Bhutanese folk tradition around Drukpa Kunley with its emphasis on sexual humor and village bawdiness signifies a significant shift from the more sober picture conveyed by the saint's own memoirs. “It was an unconscious selective process,” Aris says, “which enabled him [Drukpa Kunley] to fill the role of cultural hero. That process was certainly assisted on a formal level by his descendants in the 17th century who rose to positions of great favor and importance in the new state.

Another recent publication in Bhutan contains a large collection of Drukpa Kunley stories translated into Dzong kha, the national language of Bhutan.[141] It was compiled by Orgyan bstan ‘dzin (O rgyan bstan ‘dzin Sha si tra) and was published in Thimphu in 2001. It

[139] Pommaret and Tobgay 2011, 59-81.

[140] Pommaret and Tobgay, 2011, 62. Aris 1980, 179.

[141] O rgyan bstan ‘dzin Sha si tra, *Chos rje ‘brug pa kun legs kyi rnam thar mthong thos ‘dzum shor dad pas grol ba*, 2001, Thimphu, Bhutan.

includes a number of short tales concerning Drukpa Kunley's antics in Bhutan. Many of the stories appear to be transcribed loosely from oral tales. They are not directly attributed to any one source, but have clearly been re-written by Orgyan Tendzin to have a similar style.

C. Historical Setting and the Life of Drukpa Kunley

Based on all of the biographical sources discussed in the foregoing, what kind of reconstruction of Drukpa Kunley's life is possible? The following section proposes what can be pieced together regarding a basic outline of Drukpa Kunley's life. It draws from Volume Ka and the other smatterings of information found throughout the four volumes of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*[142] as well as from the biographies discussed above. As noted, there is little here that could be considered genuine biographical information in the form of historical or empirical facts. No dates are included for the events described and the order in which events are presented may be random.

In Volume Ka, Drukpa Kunley, the narrator, represents himself as having taken birth in the region of Kyishod (*skyid shod* – an old term for the Lhasa region), at the monastic complex of Ralung in south-central Tibet.[143] He provides no specific date given for his birth in Volume Ka, but modern Tibetan sources agree on the Earth Pig year of 1455.[144]

[142] DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 2b and 163a-164b.

[143] DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 2b. On Skyid shod, see Wylie 1962, 74 and 150.

[144] Dudjom Rinpoche, 1991, 797-798. Also, T.G. Dhongthog Rinpoche 1968.

It is interesting that Drukpa Kunley now includes a relatively straightforward, if brief, description of his early life. This contrasts with the haphazard nature of the compositions that follow, where there is little to no ostensible narrative thread of connection. This straightforward description is far more in harmony with standard narrative structures found in Tibetan biographical writing. Drukpa Kunley relates that his paternal clan was that of the Gya (*Rgya*) family,[145] whom he describes as a clan of nomadic herdsmen in the lineage of Tsangpa Gyare, the founder of the Drukpa Kagyü sect (See Section I of this chapter for more information), although not directly descended from Tsangpa Gyare himself, since the latter was a celibate monk who sired no offspring.[146] Drukpa Kunley relates that his family line descended from the middle brother of Tsangpa Gyare's family, Latsun (Lha btsan, dates unknown). He mentions nine individuals in the line after Tsangpa Gyare each bearing the name of "Lion" (*seng ge*) who held the abbatial seat at Ralung.

As mentioned above, Ralung monastery was both the place of Drukpa Kunley's birth and also the seat of the Gya abbots whose influence flourished from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries.[147] Ralung Monastery was traditionally associated with the Pagmodru noble family in

[145] Stein 1972, 10: "According to one tradition, this clan descended from two heroes, Lha-dga' and Klu-dga' ('Beloved by the gods' and 'Beloved by the *nāgas*'), who had brought from China a statue of the Buddha on the command of the king Srong btsan sgam po (before 650 CE). It is thought that this deed earned the clan name of Rgya (China) for one of them, for the tradition in question considers as their descendants (*dbon sras*) two important individuals of the time of Khri srong lde bstan (755-797), Sang shi of the Rgya clan and Gsal snang of the Sbas clan. The second became the abbot of Bsam yas and the king's chaplain." (My translation from Stein's French). Another good reference for the origins of the rGya clan can be found in Vitali 2004, 6-20.

[146] Smith 2001, 44-45. Miller 2005, 376-380, 389-396. Snellgrove 1987.

[147] Ardussi 2000, 12: "From the time of gTsang-pa rGya-ras (1161-1211) until the 14th Ra-lung hierarch rGyal-dbang Kun-dga' dPal-'byor (1428-1476), the 'Brug-pa sect had been centered at 'Brug and Ra-lung monasteries under the control of a single family, a branch of the ancient rGya clan. Although Ra-lung was one of the major family religious establishments (*gdan sa*) in central Tibet, at one time granted the control of some 1,900 tax-paying

the province of Ü, but during the martial conflicts of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries it found itself aligned politically and territorially with the upcoming Rinpung power in Tsang and the influence of the Karma Kagyü sect under the leadership of the Karmapas. Although they managed to consolidate power by the end of the fourteenth century, the Pagmodru family's control of central Tibet was short-lived. As the empire declined over the course of the fifteenth century, many small regions and principalities surrounding Ü attempted to assert their independence. Others competed for influence with the growing power of the Rinpung family in Tsang.

This brief historical reconstruction shows that at the time of Drukpa Kunley's birth in 1455, various kinds of social, political, and religious conflicts were actively taking place. These conflicts were intimately interwoven by virtue of the patron/priest system in which various noble families supported and aligned themselves with specific religious lineages and vice versa.[148] As mentioned above, the reigning family of the Pagmodru, based in the province of Ü, was on the decline and found itself in opposition to the growing influence and power of the Rinpung family in Tsang – a noble family that had at one time been granted its fiefs and lands by the Pagmodrupas themselves. Fourteenth and early fifteenth-century Pagmodrupa rulers of Ü, such as Gongma Drakpa Gyaltsen (Gong ma Grags pa rgyal mtshan, 1385-1432), a Kagyü monk, were also faithful supporters of the growing power of the newly emerging Gelugpa

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estates by the emperor Yesun Temur, it never achieved the formal status of a myriarchy (*khri-skor*) within the Mongol classification, and much of its erstwhile political authority fell away by 1360, allegedly out of the abbots' disinterest in secular affairs."

[148] Goldstein 1991. Ruegg 1995, 1997, 2014, 67-80.

school[149] while the Rinpung princes remained strong advocates of the Karma Kagyü school headed by the two figures of the Karmapa and the Shamar.[150]

The history of these relationships is complicated and will not be explored in detail in this dissertation. Nevertheless, I have presented enough of it to lay the ground for describing the religious environment in which Drukpa Kunley would have lived and written. This is particularly pertinent when we look at how the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* represents the narrator as negotiating with some of the main religious figures of this period, including both the Seventh Karmapa, Chödrag Gyatso, and the second Dalai Lama, Gendun Gyatso (Dge 'dun rgya mtsho, 1476-1542), as is evidenced in the anecdotes concerning his interactions and letters written both to and by him. For example, one story relates how Drukpa Kunley was invited to attend a New Year's ceremony hosted by the Second Dalai Lama and his retinue. While there, the Dalai Lama's minister requests him to sing a song to commemorate the occasion. His song offensively reveals the self-deceptions and hypocrisies of a number of different religious and secular groups. Each verse targets a certain type of person or behavior and each ends with the refrain that such a person should "get on out of here!" By the end, even the Second Dalai Lama can't help but laugh. But in his usual fashion, Drukpa Kunley does not rest on his laurels but turns his critique on himself stating, "This song does not comprehend the real truth and I myself am no

[149] Wylie 2003, 483-491; See also Sperling 2003, 473-482, article concerning the Fifth Karmapa, Bde bzhin gshegs pa, who visited the court of the early Ming dynasty in 1407 and departed in 1408 for a further sense of the developments taking place in Tibetan/Chinese political and religious relations during the period directly before Drukpa Kunley was born. "Political, religious and commercial activities all played a part in his mission to the court of Ming Ch'eng-tsu, and all were important in the relationship between Tibet and China during this period. This new Ming-Tibetan relationship accorded with the fresh circumstances of both countries following the collapse of Mongol power."

[150] Van Schaik 2011, 112.

more than a bag of lies!"[151] Chapter Three examines many more examples of Drukpa Kunley's various skillful means for exposing hypocrisy, examples in which he retains the self-reflexive critiques and self-denigrating humor that mark this story.

Giuseppe Tucci eloquently describes the turmoil of the period during Drukpa Kunley's life in the second half of the fifteenth century. He notes that Tibet was replete with battles between sects and contrasting religious groups. Various Buddhist factions oriented themselves around the noble families' rivalries and fostered their quarrels. On one side were the Karmapas, who had become chaplains of the Rinpung princes. On the other side, the emerging Gelugpa sect, founded by Tsongkhapa, focused on the Ü aristocracy, who felt threatened by the Rinpung's expansion.[152] From the beginning of the fifteenth century Tucci maintains, the emphasis began to shift from struggles between rival noble families to an opposition between the Karmapas and the Karma Kagyü lineage, supported by the Rinpung noble family of Tsang, and the newly arising Gelugpa, more and more supported by the remnants of the Phagmodru family of Ü.[153]

The difficult position of Ralung Monastery, caught between these two competing powers, likely lies at the root of the internal quarreling that led, early in Drukpa Kunley's life, to a series of events that forever marked him and which likely changed the course of his life. In Volume Ka of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* Drukpa Kunley says:

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[151] DK1, Vol. Kha 1978, 10b.4-13b.3.

[152] Tucci 1999, 30. *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, Vol. I.

[153] Tucci 1999, 39. *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, Vol. I.

> My father, Rinchen Zangpo, was the "official" [*nang so*] of Ralung. My mother's name was Lady Gonmo Kyi. From a young age, their oldest son [myself], was said to be one who played jokes and who imitated the activities of the hermit ascetics. When he was young, he was very happy. But because the monastic property of the Drukpa order was, at that time, very extensive and difficult to maintain, many coveted it. And so, because my paternal uncle had an intense desire for this property, he stirred up trouble and caused my old father to be murdered by a faction from Nel.[154]

Rinchen Zangpo (Rin chen bzang po) was the son of Trung Dorwa (Drung rdor ba), younger brother of Namkai Palzang (Nam mkha' dpal bzang, 1398-1425) and Sherap Zangpo (Shes rab bzang po, 1400-1438). Drukpa Kunley's mother, the Lady Gonmo Kyi (Mgon mo skyid), seems to have been of high or noble blood. Drukpa Kunley does not specifically mention a younger sister, but an episode that occurs later in Volume Ka recounts that she became a nun.[155] Drukpa Kunley only terms himself "the eldest" (*bu rgan*). Drukpa Kunley represents himself as a happy child who delighted in playing jokes by imitating the hermits.

The passage tell us that Drukpa Kunley was born into a powerful and well-established family that found itself on precarious ground due to the political, religious, and cultural changes taking place at that time. That these events strongly influenced Drukpa Kunley's life choices emerges in his description of his father's murder by a paternal uncle and is reinforced as a

[154] Snel is a variant of Sne'u. The fief (*gzhis ka*) of this name had been given by Byang chub rgyal mtsan (1302-1364) of the house of the Phag mo gru pa to his minister Rin chen bzang po. It was usually called Sne'u rdzong, fortress of the Sne'u, situated near Lhasa on the eastern shore of the Skyid chu. These monastic lands and castle should be distinguished from the palace of Sne'u gdong (rtse), seat of the lay power of the Phag mo gru pa, which was coupled with the abbatial seat of Gdan sa Mthil or Thel. Cf. Stein 1972, 3-27. *Pha'i ming nang so rin chen bzang po/ ma'i ming dpon mo mgon mo skyid/ de'i bu rgan pa chung chung nas bya bral gyi lad mo rkyang byed pa'i phra chal cig yod ces grag go/ chung dus shin tu skyid pa zhig yod pa la/ 'brug pa'i dang po'i mchod gzhis rnams rgya che zhing 'dzin dka' bar yod pa'i zhen rus dang/ a khu gdung tshab pas dkrugs pa la brten pas/ pha rgan de snel pa phyogs kyis bskums.* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 3b.3-4

[155] DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 81b.6.

significant event in other compositions throughout Volume Ka of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*.[156] After his father's death, Drukpa Kunley relates that:

> I myself was taken away by Zangpo (Bzang po), the attendant of the chieftain of Gongkar (Gong dkar), who was the husband of my aunt, Arinma (A rin ma). Thus I found myself as the servant of Kuntu Zangpo,[157] the lord of the domain of Rinpung (Rin spung), who took me to heart.[158]

He notes that he was thirteen at this time and that although he was close with the Lord of the Rinpungs, Kuntu Zangpo, he was generally unhappy. Nevertheless, he served as his attendant for the next six years. It is likely that these events together with the six subsequent years of indentured servitude under Kuntu Zangpo comprised the prime motivating factors in Drukpa Kunley's decision to take up the life of a wandering yogi. At about nineteen years of age, he appears to have come to a decision.

> Thinking, "There is no point in anything if I cannot practice the Dharma," I journeyed to Ü. At that time, my mother had become the wife of my paternal uncle. Therefore, I gave my sister a valuable rosary of fifty pieces of amber, which had been given to me by the Lord Kuntu Zangpo, as well as my valuable turquoise earring. I gave the horse that I had, a fine yellow Canard, to Zangpo, the tea-pourer, and I set off to wander through the lands.[159]

This decision to give away all his belongings and to set off wandering led to the lifestyle and events that have renowned Drukpa Kunley throughout the Tibetan Buddhist world and beyond.

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[156] DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 82a.3-4.

[157] Kun tu bzang po (r. 1466-1479) was the second Rin spungs hierarch and the second son of Nor bu bzang po (1433-1483).

[158] *Nga rang a ne a rin ma'i bza' rogs gong dkar nas kyi gsol ja ba bzang pos khrid nas/ gzhis ka rin spungs pa'i mi dbang kun tu bzang po'i phyag phyir slebs/ thugs la btags.* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 3b.5-6.

[159] *De nas da chos shig ma nus na gang la'ang snying po mi 'dug bsams nas dbus phyogs la yong dus/ a ma ni a khu'i chung ma byas 'dug/ de nas sde pa ku tu bzang pos gnang ba'i spos shel lnga bcu phreng legs pos yod pa de dang/ rna g.yu legs po yod pa de sring mo rgan pa de la byin/rta ngang pa bzang ba cig yod pa gsol ja ba bzang po la byin nas/nga rang rgyal khams bskor ba la chas dus.* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 3b.6-3a.2.

While he returns to the murder of his father and loss of his homeland in subsequent compositions in Volume Ka, the passage above represents the first description of the impact these events had on him in his early life. At the time he was giving away his possessions and preparing to set off, Drukpa Kunley received an order from his cousin, Ngawang Chöje,[160] the then abbot of Ralung Monastery, to go to Druk Monastery and remain there. Drukpa Kunley responds:

> I told him, "In this decadent age, clinging to estates leads to nothing other than suffering in the present and being cast into hell in the end. In the past, it was because of land that my old father was murdered. I will not now take lands upon myself![161]

This emphasis on the pitfalls of attachment and clinging associated with living in one place recurs thematically throughout the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, highlighting both Drukpa Kunley's sense of having avoided a certain kind of samsaric entrapment, as well as his lingering sorrow over the loss of his father. This is a grief that never seems to leave him completely as is evidenced by the first two lines of each verse from a song he sings later on in life upon hearing of his mother's death:

> The ten-pointed antlered stag was murdered and
> My mother, the doe, she too is dead....
> My golden-eyed and aged father was killed and
> My aged mother too has passed away...
> My aged father Rinchen Zangpo was slain,

[160] This individual is referred to as both Ngawang Chöje in *The Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, but as Ngawang Chögyal in oral stories and contemporary collections of Drukpa Kunley stories. In Bhutan, he is thought to be Drukpa Kunley's brother.

[161] *Bskal pa snyigs ma'i yul gzhis 'dzin pa 'di 'phral sdug la phugs dmyal bar bskyur ba las med/ sngar yang sa chas pha rgan yang gum pa de yin/ da sa cha mi 'dzin zhus pa,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 4a.3-4.

My aged mother Gonmo Skyi has also passed away...![162]

Having refused the lands and monastic property offered to him by Ngawang Chöje, Drukpa Kunley embarks on the peripatetic wanderings that characterized the rest of his life.

From this point on, the narrative of Volume Ka takes on the form of short, discrete compositions. But we still can glean a few more historical details. Drukpa Kunley portrays himself as traveling from one monastery and place in south-central Tibet to another with the intention of visiting and receiving teachings from well-known teachers. In particular, he mentions "the great enlightened Lha btsun pa (Kun dga' chos kyi rgya mtsho, 1473-1557), who had come to Ralung."[163] This person said to Drukpa Kunley, "All Dharma teachings must be meditated on. If you only recite [the texts] without meditating, your mind will become rigid."[164] After hearing this, Drukpa Kunley says that he practiced the *Mahāmudrā* teachings as well as *The Six Yogas of One Taste* concealed by Rechungpa (Ras chung Rdo rje grags pa, 1083/4-1161) and revealed as *gter ma* by Tsangpa Gyare, which were given to him by the master Sonam Chogden. He describes taking his monastic novice vows (*dge tshul*) in front of the abbot of Nenying (Gnas rnying) at a place called Nyingro Menchuka (Nying ro sman chu kha), near to Gyantse in south Tibet. Later on, he took the full ordination vows (*dge slong*) before a

[162] *Sha ba rwa bcu de ni bsad song/ a ma yu mo de yang 'das song/ gser mig pha rgan de ni bsad song/ a ma rgan mo de yang 'das song/ pha rgan rin chen bzang po de ni bsad song/ ma rgan mgon mo skyid de yang 'das song,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 82a.3-4.

[163] Namgyal 1973, 97: remarks that, in the attempt to identify this individual, he discovered "an interesting manuscript biography of 'Brug pa Kun legs' teacher, Lha btsun Kun dga' chos kyi rgya mtsho (1432-1505)... This work bears the title *Grub pa'i dbang phyug ('Brug smyon Kun dga' legs pa'i rtsa ba'i bla ma) Lha btsun Kun dga' chos kyi rgya mtsho'i rnam par thar pa mdo tsam brjod pa rmad byung yon tan rgya mtsho 'jigs zab skal bzang dga' ba bkyed pa'i dod 'jo* and appears to be compiled or written by Kun dga' mi 'gyur rdo rje *alias* G.yung mgon rdo rje (b. 1721), regarded to be the 4th or 5th in the series of 'Brug pa Kun legs incarnations of Gnyal Dre'u lhas."

[164] DK1, Vol. Ka 1978.

prominent member of Zhalu Monastery, Khen Rabpa (Zhwa lu Rje Mkhyen rab pa, 1436-1497),[165] and was given the name: Kunga Lekpa Paljor Zangpo (Kun dga' legs pa'i dpal 'byor bzang po). He also received the name King of Long Life, (Tshe dbang rgyal po).[166]

Initially, the compositions following the descriptions of Drukpa Kunley's early life are short, some as short as a line or two of text. For example, Drukpa Kunley relates such events as, "then, from the lama known as Balu Metogpa, I requested a *lung* (reading transmission) on the art of elixir extraction from flowers," or "on the return way, we came to Sgo mo. Since the chieftain of Dwags po, Shes Dbang po was also the Lama of Sgo mo, I requested the spiritual connection of Zhi Byed. There was plenty of food."[167] But as Volume Ka continues, these compositions become longer and more detailed. Some are composed entirely of spontaneous songs (*mgur*), question and answer sessions (*dri lan*), discourses on Buddhist teachings, poems, letters, or compositions in which Drukpa Kunley imitates examples of melodies or uses of metaphor from other sources. Others include combinations of these various genres. This subject of the use of multiple genres and the mixing together of different genres will be discussed in detail in Chapter Three.

In terms of what we can know about the external events of Drukpa Kunley's life, two final areas to explore concern the identity of his wife (or wives) as well as that of his son (or sons) and accounts of his death. In Volume Ka of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, Drukpa Kunley

[165] This could be the same individual, who also goes by name of Rin chen Mkhyen rab mchog grub, but I am not certain.

[166] DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 2b.6-5a.4.

[167] Both episodes are included on the same page in DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 5a.4-6b.2.

gives his wife's name as Tsewang Dzom (Tshe dbang 'dzom) and his son's name as Zhingkyong Drukdrak (Zhing skyong 'brug grags).[168] Bhutanese sources, including the biography of Drukpa Kunley compiled by Je Gendun Rinchen, also mention the name of another wife (or consort) by the name of Pelzang Buti (Dpal bzang bu khrid) or alternatively, Norbu Dzom (Nor bu 'dzom), the woman with whom Drukpa Kunley had a son by the name of Ngawang Tendzin. Ardussi describes how Norbu Dzom was probably one of Drukpa Kunley's Tantric consorts, and not a wife in the strict sense of the word. For Stein, however, the mention of Norbu 'Dzom encouraged him to seek in Volume Ka hints of Drukpa Kunley's having had a second wife. For this reason, he interprets Drukpa Kunley's reference to Tsewang Dzom as *yum chen* to mean "femme principale," or main wife. From this he draws the conclusion that Drukpa Kunley had more than one wife. Ardussi disagrees, stating that *yum chen* almost certainly does not mean "principal wife"…[but] "the highest honorific term for mother." For the present we shall have to suspend judgment and yield to the full weight of Bhutanese tradition which affords the son of Drukpa Kunley and Norbu 'Dzom, Ngawang Tendzin, pride of place as the sire of a long family of influential religious figures, including some of the most important in the history of Bhutan.[169]

[168] DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 48a.5-49b.5. These names are also mentioned in the "History of Bhutan," (*Lho'i chos 'byung*) by Bstan 'dzin chos rgyal, Thimphu, Bhutan, 1759. Bstan 'dzin chos rgyal was the 10th Rje mkhan po of Bhutan (1700-1767). This work was compiled in the earth-female-rabbit year (*sa mo yos*), 1759.

[169] Ardussi 1972, 7. Drukpa Kunley was considered to be the head of a series of recognized rebirths with their seat at Dre'u lhas. Ardussi 1972 mentions that one such rebirth was named Rdo rje, the editor of volumes Ka, Kha, and Ga of the collection. Little information exists about this line of rebirths. Stein 1972, 25-26 reports that E. Gene Smith informed him that in the biography of Tshe dbang bstan 'dzin, the grandson of Drukpa Kunley, mention is made of a Grub thob Rin po che as being an incarnation of the saint. Stein also cites a supplement to the autobiography of Padma dkar po, where is mentioned Grub thob Rin po che as the incarnation of Drukpa Kunley in 1591. E. Gene Smith 1969, 3 n4, "the incarnations of this famed madman were to be found until 1959 at the Dre'u lhas Monastery in Gnyal (Southern Tibet)."

In regards to Drukpa Kunley's death, there are competing accounts. The short biography included at the end of Volume Ka describes his death and cremation in the area of Nakartse (Sna dkar rtse) in southeast Tibet. The event is peppered with miraculous occurrences such as a five-colored rainbow piercing Drukpa Kunley's foot as he rides toward Nakartse. There are also accounts of thunder, earthquakes, rains of flowers and five-colored rainbows in the heart of winter at the time of his actual death. After his cremation, his disciples find his skull filled with *amrita*, his bones in the shape of small statues of Śakyamuni, Avalokiteśvara, and Tārā, and many other sorts of relics (*ring bsrel*). These "flew up from the door of the cremation hut in the direction of his heart son Zhing skyong 'brug grags," were wrapped in silk and "stored inside of a large silver stupa in Stod Lung at Lam 'phar dgon pa. Those faithful ones with suitable karma can meet with and receive blessings from his body and relics, which were given to glorious Zhing skyong 'brug grags, through a secret door. On auspicious days, *ring bsrel* still emerge from that stupa."[170] In contrast, Bhutanese oral traditions of Drukpa Kunley maintain that he did not actually die, but instead, for the benefit of beings, traveled up to the Jokang Temple in Lhasa and entered into the side of Jowo Śakyamuni statue. There he resides to this day. Many Bhutanese people believe that at some future time, much like the "once and future king" of Camelot, King Arthur, Drukpa Kunley will return to the world of the living in order to help

[170] *Zhing skyong 'brug grags bzhugs pa'i phyogs su thog mar me sgo nas 'phar byung ba/ 'phral la dar zab kyis dril te/ thugs kyi sras dam pa'i sku pang du bcangs pa gnang zhing...byin rlabs kyi rten de rnams da lta stod lung lam 'phar dgon pa'i dngul 'bum chen po'i nang na bzhugs yod pa/ las dang skal bar ldan pa'i dad ldan kyi skye bo rnams la gsang sgo zhig yod pa nas rten mjal dang byin rlabs sogs dpal ldan zhing skyong 'brug grags kyis gnang zhing/ dus bzang la ring bsrel sogs mang bar phebs kyis yod na'ang,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 166a.5-166b.4.

people on the path to nirvana.[171] Most modern biographies of Drukpa Kunley agree on the date of his death as 1529.[172]

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Based on all of the above information, Foucault's notion of the "author function" is suggestive as a way to understand that, in the end, "Drukpa Kunley," the putative author of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* has no direct or simple reference.[173] Rather, the name signifies a range of possibilities, only one of which is the connection between the proper name and a particular individual. In this case, the author's name also performs an organizational function by allowing us "to group together a certain number of texts, define them, differentiate them from and contrast them to others."[174] This is important because the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*'s structure demands that it be viewed as a collection of individual compositions, each of which functions separately, but all of which simultaneously participate in the text's overall project of presenting of the life and words of a saint. Foucault's idea of authorial function – in which several persons may participate and whereby both the organization and even the possibly deliberate *dis*-organization of a body of texts, as will be explored in Chapter Three, allow for a fresh orientation to the world and oneself – is central to the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar.* In what follows I will argue that it is central to the formation of ethical persons the text envisions.

[171] Oral communication with numerous Bhutanese friends.

[172] Dargey 2001, 91-110. Stein 1972.

[173] Foucault 1994, 377-391.

[174] Foucault 1994, 381.

While it is important to consider the historical identities of those who wrote, compiled, edited, and printed these writings, as well as to consider the times when they were written, this thesis is also concerned to characterize and explicate the means and modalities by which the entire *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* collection can be considered an "act" in the sense articulated by Foucault vis-a-vis authorial function. The fact that the information found in the colophon at the end of Volume Ka does not permit us to fix either the identities of its authors, compilers, or scribes or the exact chronological time periods in which the sections were composed lends itself to the view of disorder the entire textual corpus creates. Given the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar's* self-avowed haphazard nature as well as the plethora of representations over time and space of Drukpa Kunley as a trickster-like figure who continuously eschews moral, social and religious norms, it may be fruitful to view the final compositions of Volume Ka (the supplication/biography, the independent biography, the short supplication, and the long colophon) as extending the ethos of disruption generated by the rest of Volume Ka's contents into the world outside the text.

Thus in this case, the purported author's name, "Drukpa Kunley," in addition to possibly referring to an empirical author, also signifies the status of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* discourse within its society and culture. In other words, it is readers who construct authors, who attempt to assign a "realistic status" to what Foucault terms "a certain being of reason," i.e., those ideas we ascribe to, or wish to see represented by, the individual's motives for writing in the first place. With a collection of textual compositions such as those found in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, rather than seeking to identify a specific individual upon whom we can

pin the designation of "author," the texts themselves push us in a different direction by destabilizing such an impulse and forcing us to approach the texts from the point of view of their function.

For the purposes of this thesis, I take the protagonist/narrator within the world of the text as bearing only a nominal relation to an historical figure of the same name who lived in the fifteenth century in south-central Tibet and whose life was discussed in at the beginning of this chapter. As mentioned in the Introduction, along with theorists of autobiographical studies, I question the assumption that the author of a work shares an identity, complete or even partial, with the work's narrator/subject.[175] For purposes of clarity then, when I use the name "Drukpa Kunley" in my analyses in Chapters Two and Three, I refer to the narrator *within the world of the text.* When I wish to refer to the work or intention of the *namthar's* narrative strategies, I refer to the *namthar* itself as the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*.

[175] Maftei 2013. Bedford et al., 2006. Adams 1990, 9-16.

Chapter 2

Drukpa Kunley's Practice Of Writing

This chapter further explores the hypothesis put forth in the Introduction that the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* uses multiple literary styles and genres to create an ethic of disruption that creates a certain kind of ethical person. This exploration will proceed through analyses of compositions in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* where the narrator specifically discusses the nature and purpose of writing *namthar* and more generally, of composing other sorts of texts. In Chapter One, I identified some of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*'s salient features, such as its lack of cohesive narrative, its resistance to temporal sequencing, and its desire to capture distinct moments of experience through the medium of the literary. I acknowledged that although Volume Ka contains an inner frame of narrative "bookends" where Drukpa Kunley describes his birth and a disciple describes his death, the bulk of the *namthar* consists in a random assortment of compositions that employ a range of genres from travel narratives, to poems, spontaneous songs, stories, dreams, letters, question and answer dialogues, and prose didactic sermons. Many of these genres make use of rhetorical devices such as parody, allusion, hyperbole, multiple shifts in tone or mood, anecdotes, amplification, and onomatopoeisis, among others.

Taking these characteristics into account, I ask: Why call this a *namthar* at all? What does the narrator intend about the nature and function of this text when he begins it with the statement: "This autobiography that was written by itself..."?[1] From the outset, it seems that this collection of texts deliberately and self-consciously plays with expectations and

[1] *Rang gi rnam thar rang gis 'bri ba 'di...* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 2b.4.

assumptions regarding the genre of *namthar*. If readers of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* – disciples, descendants and contemporary scholars alike – expect that *namthar* generally function to narrate the story of an individual's journey to liberation as well as to inspire those who hear or read it to emulate that person's example, then encountering the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* compels us to reevaluate the means and modalities of how this works. It is not that this *namthar's* narratives and depictions of a certain kind of life have no interest in inspiring emulation, but their unusual nature changes the rules by which such functions occur. The *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* forces us to reexamine and expand our sense of the horizon of possible actions such a text can and should perform. It transforms the role of the reader from passive recipient to active contributor. It challenges the way we think about the literary, and its purpose and potential in Buddhist literature and practice. I begin to explore these questions with first, a close examination of the title of Volume Ka*,* and second, by analyzing four different compositions in which Drukpa Kunley writes about the purpose and form a *namthar* should embody.

*

The title of Volume Ka provides some clues as to how the autobiography intends itself to be received. As described above in Chapter One, Volume Ka is the longest volume of the four volumes in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, and represents the *rangnam* or self-written autobiographical narrative of Drukpa Kunley. I should note, however, that in each composition where Drukpa Kunley discusses this kind of writing, he refers to his own writings as a *namthar.* Hence, I will use the term *namthar* to designate this collection of texts. To reiterate, Volume Ka

bears the title: "The Manner of Complete Liberation of the One with the Label of Yogi, Kun dga' Legs pa: With Coarse Events Told in Detail and Spoken Freely, Arranged Randomly From Beginning to End."[2] The phrase, "The Manner of Complete Liberation" (*rnam thar byung tshul*), informs us that we will be exposed to a particular style of living or manner of "coming into being" (*byung tshul*). Whatever that style may be, it will lead to liberation (*thar pa*). The title next provides a few hints as to the particular style the text will take up. It will speak freely (*lhug par smras pa*) and in detail (*zhib mo*) about the coarse events (*rtsing mo*) of the protagonist.

The first hint as to how the text intends itself to be read lies in the title's claim that the text will speak freely, without censoring or constraint. This statement suggests that writers of *namthar* at this time may have recognized implicit or explicit literary parameters within which the content and structure of a *namthar* were expected to conform, and in relation to which the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* is concerned to assert its own independence. *Lhug par,* which I have translated here as "freely" also has the meaning of "spontaneously," "effortlessly," or "in a relaxed manner" and can refer to a mental and/or physical state of utter and complete relaxation in which a person's relationship to reality is not dictated by conceptual dualistic orientations, but arises spontaneously and accurately in response to the situation at hand.[3] A synonym for *lhug par* is the term *ma bcos pa*, which means, "unfabricated" or "unmodified." Thus we might say that the title of the *namthar* announces that the text will represent a kind of expression in literary form that arises effortlessly. The text regards itself as modeling a way of

[2] *Rnal 'byor pa'i ming can kun dga' legs pa'i rnam thar byung tshul lhug par smras pa zhib mo'i rtsing mo ha le ho le sna zin spu zin nas bkod pa zhes bya ba bzhugs so,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 1.

[3] Thondup, Tulku 1989, 365.

writing, and by extension, a way of being in the world that is not constrained by anything at all. Of what does this way of writing consist? It consists in an account of "details coarsely expressed" (*zhib mo'i rtsing po*). While we might suppose that this self-description of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* as "crudely detailed" functions to undercut any idea of the author's self-promotion, at the same time the title consciously expresses a way of being that is both down-to-earth and grounded in the real life of individuals. This is evident in the next two phrases – "grasped by the nose, grasped by the tail" (*sna zin spu zin*) and "carelessly" (*ha le ho le*) – which I have translated in the title as "randomly from beginning to end."

The first phrase, "grasped by the nose, grasped by the tail" (*sna zin spu zin*) may obliquely refer to the practice in village life of grasping a cow by the nose or by the tail, whichever works best, in order to lead the animal into the first floor of the dwelling. The point is to get the entire cow into the dwelling and nothing is left out if both nose and tail are used.[4] The second phrase, *ha le ho le* (pronounced *ha ley ho ley*) is an onomatopoeic phrase that means "carelessly," "freely," or "randomly." *Ha le ho le* evokes the sound of the random arising of this or that. This kind of phrase, whereby language functions to evoke the sound and feeling of a particular experience, such as rain falling or the wind blowing, is encountered many times in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*. It represents a crossover point between language and mental and emotional experience and serves to generate a feeling or experience in the reader. The use of such phrases reveals how written signs can generate different kinds of experiences.[5]

[4] Personal communication, Lopen Chorten Tsering, Institute of Language and Cultural Studies, Royal University of Bhutan, Taktse, Trongsa.

[5] Stein 1972, 252-253.

Put together, these two phrases suggest that the *namthar's* compositions are both deliberately *dis*arranged and practically applicable – a *namthar* should be relatable to ordinary life – it should serve to "bring the cow into the barn" in any way possible, so to speak. At the same time, a *namthar* should be composed spontaneously, in reaction to the world, as it is, in any given moment. Reading between the lines, we see the text represents a particular way of writing as well as generates and encourages certain kinds of experiences and ways of being. The narrative is written to reflect the way things really are, without pretense or contrivance. It contains no normative values except to reflect and confirm the truth of life as it is, in all its coarse, gritty realism. The phrases in the title also suggest intent on the part of the author to resist the impulse toward narrative coherence and order that so often dictates autobiographical and biographical writing. As we will see in Chapter Three, this resistance toward narrative order functions as an ethic of disruption whereby the human propensity to narrate the story of the self is overturned in favor of the moment-to-moment arising of that self in response to different circumstances.

I. How to Write a *Namthar*

There are four compositions located in different places in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* in which the narrator responds to questions and self-consciously reflects on the process and purpose of writing *namthar*. None of these compositions have titles.[6] In the first, Drukpa Kunley's

[6] In the order discussed here: DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 31a.6-31b.6; 69a.5-69b.2; 49b.6-50a.4; and Volume Kha 1978, 1b.2-2b.1.

interlocutor is a "writer of *namthar*" (*rnam thar mdzad mkhan cig*), who arranges in chronological order each action of his subject by writing "these deeds were done in this year, etc..." This sentence shows that the world of the text imagines at least two different ways to write a *namthar* – with chronological or sequential order and without. The description of the *namthar* writer himself as someone who "put deeds into chronological order," suggests that a commonly understood set of expectations and guidelines for the writing of *namthar* may have existed and it is in response to these that the narrator describes his own writing process. This person says to Drukpa Kunley, "In your biography, Dharma Lord Kunley, other than writing about whatever comes to mind, there does not seem to be any order."[7] The term for "order" used here is *go rim.* This Tibetan term refers to the notion of the sequential, proper, or progressive arrangement of a series. Because the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* does not fall within these parameters, it is a subject of curiosity and questioning.

These questions also imply that within the world of the text there is a perception of the narrator as a writer who engages in writing with a different and perhaps unusual understanding of the purpose and function of writing a *namthar*. The composer who questions Drukpa Kunley classifies the writing found in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* as "random stuff that arises" (*gang thod thod*).[8] *Gang thod thod* is a colloquial phrase indicating that a person is merely blathering out anything that comes to mind, without any logical or sequential connection between

[7] *Chos rje kun legs pa'i rnam par thar pa 'di la/ gang thod thod nas mdzad pa ma gtogs/ go rim zhig med pa 'dra zer*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 31a.6-31b.1.

[8] Lopen Chorten explained to me that this phrase is commonly used to suggest disconnected and haphazard sorts of thoughts or activities. The sense is that there isn't any connection between things that would provide a logical foundation for understanding.

thoughts or their expression. This kind of informal speech, which arises in many places throughout the *namthar,* insists on the reader's collusion in engaging in the real world of everyday human interactions. So, in this case, the very first sentence of this composition highlights a contrast between a liberation story narrative that follows a precise, chronological order and a narrative that is entirely random, that arises any which way. Drukpa Kunley responds to this question with the following statements that address the intriguing notion that all things must come forth in order:

> That's true. Of course, when things arise, they must indeed arise in a certain sequence. Even though whatever the Buddha did was right, he first arrived from the land of the gods [and so on], and even with regard to the Dharma, he presented three Turnings of the Wheel [of Dharma] in order. It is like a dance performance in which the dancer has to do this first [movement], etc.[9]

While it is impossible to say for certain what Drukpa Kunley means by the first sentence here, he may be referring to the doctrine of *pratītyasamutpāda,* the idea of dependent co-arising that includes the fact that although impermanence is real and pervasive, it is masked by the appearance of continuity. Joanna Macy describes how nothing in our experience is exempt from change. In fact, change - the continual arising and passing away of events - constitutes our existence. She notes that within this realm of flux "the causal orderliness which the Buddha taught inheres."[10] Because no unchanging essence can be found from which *pratītyasamutpāda* arises, instead, it is the pattern of change itself that lies at the foundation of our experience.

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[9] *De thugs bden/ byung na go rim dang bcas pa cis kyang dgos te/ bcom ldan 'das gang mdzad kyang chog pa de la'ang/ dang por dga' ldan lha'i yul nas byon pa dang/ chos la'ang 'khor lo rim pa gsum dang bcas go rim 'dug/ bro pa'i rtsed mo 'dra ba la'ang sngon la 'di byed re 'dug ste,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 31b.1-2.

[10] Macy 1991, 34-36.

Macy asserts that this pattern of change contains a dual assertion "of change *and* order, or order within change. In the linear view of causality, order requires permanence...but here order and impermanence go hand in hand."[11] This is evident when we look at the conditionality – the order within the flow of existence - that inheres between the twelve factors of conditioned existence.[12] From this point of view, Drukpa Kunley's assertion that "when things arise they must indeed arise in a certain sequence" places value squarely on the realization of a spontaneously arising "order" at the basis of the human experience. Recognizing this requires that one develop the insight into the nature of phenomena as co-dependent, co-arising and impermanent.

From this point of view, using the life story of the Buddha as an example, Drukpa Kunley states that while whatever the Bhagavat did would have been right or "acceptable" (*chog pa*), his life arose and played out within the context of a specific sequence of events—all of which were co-dependent. Drukpa Kunley evokes the example of the Twelve Deeds of the Buddha, the first of which is to come down from the God's Realm, in order to illustrate that for such a being as the Buddha, his actions always arise naturally, spontaneously, and in an order which it is possible to identify.[13]

[11] Macy 1991, 35.

[12] Makransky 1997, 321-322.

[13] *Mdzad pa bcu gnyis,* the Twelve Deeds of the Buddha in the following order are: 1) the Buddha's descent from the Tushita heaven, 2) entering his mother's womb, 3) taking birth, 4) becoming learned in various arts, 5) enjoying the company of his royal consorts, 6) giving rise to genuine renunciation and self-ordaining, 7) practicing austerities for six years, 8) coming to the foot of the Bodhi tree, 9) overcoming the obstacles of Mara, 10) attaining fully enlightenment, 11) turning the Wheel of Dharma, and 12) passing into nivana.

We can add that this idea of order may also be related to two other factors. First, note that it is cosmically or universally organized. Yael Bentor, in a discussion concerning three possible types of emanation bodies (*sprul sku gsum*) into the *saṃsâric* world, quotes Guru Tashi (18^{th}-19^{th} c.) in order to describe how, of the thousand buddhas who will appear in our universe during the fortunate eon, all are representations of "supreme emanation bodies" (*mchog gi sprul sku*). Each of these buddhas appears in the world in the manner of the twelve deeds.[14] Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey describes how the buddhas appear simultaneously in each of the billion world-systems and how they simultaneously enact "the twelve enlightening deeds of a triumphant one. Each Buddha enacts the same series of Twelve Deeds in the same order.[15] Thus, this narrative framework of the lives of the Buddhas has soteriological power. The twelve deeds function in two ways. First, they are descriptive. They give shape and color to the kinds of activities performed by enlightened Buddhas so that others can recognize them for who they are. They provide a way of identifying and authenticating a genuine Buddha. Second, descriptions of the twelve deeds possess an agency that transcends narrative in the way that they evoke feelings or wonder or awe in readers. Such states of being are more available to genuine transformation. These deeds are sometimes referred to as the "Twelve *Enlightening* Deeds of a Buddha."[16]

[14] Bentor 1996, 5.

[15] Dhargyey 1982, 292-293.

[16] Powers 2004. Blumenthal 2008.

The first deed, which is the one that Drukpa Kunley invokes, is the Buddha's descent from the Tushita Heaven (*dga' ldan lha'i yul*) to the southern island continent of sentient beings. Referring to this first deed, Drukpa Kunley suggests that the order (*go rim*) represented by the events of the Buddha's life arises naturally. Here, order takes on an element of intentionality when we consider the order by which the Buddha presented his teachings, the Three Turnings of the Wheel of Dharma. Each series of teachings arose in response to the particular needs and capacities of the audience. From the Mahāyāna point of view, the Three Turnings are both co-depedent and successive, serving to introduce the audience to more and more subtle levels of understanding and practice.[17]

The second factor is that some kinds of activities, such as the performance of a dance, appear completely spontaneous and natural. Watching the movements of the dancers, the audience becomes caught up in the beauty and emotional tenor of the performance. But, Drukpa Kunley reminds us, such performances rely on a naturally arising sequence of movements, the one following from and originating with the previous movement. In this way, a kind of continuity and coherence seem to make up the dance as a whole. The movements, which are aimed at producing certain effects, when viewed from the point of view of coherence, lose their individual momentariness in the illusion of the whole. In using the example of a dancer, Drukpa Kunley invokes a common Buddhist notion of appearance versus reality. Situations and activities that appear unified on the surface, are based on a mutiplicity of causes and conditions. When we view them as distinct, independent wholes, we lose

[17] Dudjom 2005, 291-364.

awareness of the spontaneous and natural flux from which they arise and within which they dwell and pass away. It is recognizing this notion of spontaneity that Drukpa Kunley advocates for as a method by which to compose his *namthar*.[18]

Having referenced both of these examples, Drukpa Kunley describes his own writings in the following manner:

> However, in regard to my own life writings, I wrote about my activities randomly as they arose in my mind. I did not write to show that my way of living was worthwhile. I wrote whatever I could imagine that would expose my humiliations.[19]

Repeating the same phrases from the title of the *namthar*, Drukpa Kunley states that he wrote randomly (*ha le ho le*) and in any which way (*sna zin nas spu zin nas*). This repetition stresses how intentionally he meant the title of his work. He notes that he specifically did not write in order to show that his way of attaining liberation was worthwhile. The term used to express the notion of worthiness in Tibetan is *rin chog*. Translated very literally, it means "worth the price:" *rin* meaning "price" or "value" and *chog* meaning "enough" or "sufficient." Instead, he says, his intention in writing was to convey whatever would "expose" or "hold up to view" (*'phyar 'phyar*) his "disgraces" or "humiliations" (*sngo lo*).

Why does the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* insist on writing a liberation life story that will reveal the subject's faults and humiliations? What purpose is served by this function? If, as many *namthars* were intended to do, we assume that this text was also designed to inspire and

[18] Johnston (1936) 2004.

[19] *Ngas 'di/ ha le ho le/sna zin nas spu zin nas byas bris pa yin/ rnam thar ston rin chog nas bris pa min/ sngo lo 'phyar 'phyar la/ gang dran dran bris pa lags,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 31b.2-3.

guide the narrator's disciples, how does this inversion serve such a goal? Does the *namthar* provide a model in spite of the narrator's statements to the contrary? What kind of example or guidance does the text provide? In discussing why a Tibetan author might employ self-denigrating language, Janet Gyatso writes, "...autobiographers will employ impolite or even self-deprecatory phrasing when talking about themselves, reflecting as a matter of course the basic conventions of Tibetan speech and writing."[20] While Drukpa Kunley does use self-deprecatory language, I would argue that such language serves a different purpose in this particular text than that seen more generically in Tibetan Buddhist *namthar* of fulfilling the obligation of the Tibetan master to devalue his life so as not to appear to be egoistically oriented.

Using the writing of a *namthar* as vehicle for expressing the truth of his "disgraces" and "humiliations," Drukpa Kunley implies that such experiences or states of being are critical to the project of perfection. A *namthar* that functions to expose the basic human tendency of hypocrisy – the profession to be one thing through appearance, while instead harboring a different and contradictory set of intentions and desires – enables us to recognize that hypocrisy, rather than being a fault to overcome or transform, instead provides the ingredients necessary for realization. I will continue to explore this hypothesis throughout the dissertation as it causes us to rethink both the function of liberation life story writing as well as the vision of the enlightened or perfected self. Drukpa Kunley's writing has a story to tell about how the "perfected" self is produced and what it looks like.

[20] Gyatso 1992, 469, "The desire to create an exemplary self in Tibetan religious autobiography stands in profound contradiction with the powerful socially and linguistically constructed diffidence already mentioned..."

At this point, the composition moves to address another aspect of *namthar* composition, the use of examples, while continuing its discussion of chronological order. In an effort to reveal how most *namthar* collude in hypocritical practices, the narrator uses the literary devices of metaphor and parody to make his point.

> Generally, the biographies of gurus that are arranged in order and which praise them are like the notations entered by a debtor. 'In this year, on the day of this consecutive month, this security for a loan was obtained.' They write, 'I received a bushel of barley or peas.' This is extremely narrow-minded! If he is a great guru, [he writes,] 'In this year, when this disciple arrived, he offered this horse.' If he is a lesser guru [he writes], 'My disciple offered one wool hat and these amounts.'[21]

Comparing the biographies of renowned Buddhist teachers to the loan record-keeping documents of debtors, Drukpa Kunley implies that most Buddhist teachers are concerned with keeping track of the wealth they accumulated through gifts offered to them by disciples. In this view, writing a *namthar*, rather than serving to provide an exemplar for aspiring disciples, becomes one way to assert a teacher's value by means of his monetary wealth. The greater the guru, the greater the gifts received or vice versa. Drukpa Kunley specifically compares the carefully ordered and self-aggrandizing *namthar* of some teachers to "notations entered by a debtor" (*bu lon pa'i bcug yig*). Such writings function to provide records of what is "owed" to the teacher. Drukpa Kunley comments, "How terribly petty!" (*gu dog drags*) and then briefly parodies this kind of writing.

[21] *lar gyis sgrigs dam rang drags pa'i bla ma'i rnam thar la/ bu lon pa'i bcug yig bzhin/ lo 'di dang zla ba 'di/ tshes grangs 'di'i nyin mo gte ma 'di bcugs nas/ nas sran khal 'di blangs bris pa 'di yang gu dog drags/ dgung lo 'di la gdul bya la phyin pas/ bla chen yin na rta 'di phul dang/ bla chung yin na zhwa phrug dang/ bre grangs 'di byung rang bris nas dgos pa ci yod,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 31b.3-4.

> If he is a great guru, [he will write,] 'In this year, when this disciple arrived, he offered this horse.' If he is a lesser guru [he will write], 'My disciple offered one wool hat and this amount of money.' What point is there to write [these things] about oneself?[22]

Far from providing unbiased and inspiring examples to readers of the teacher's journey to enlightenment, this kind of *namthar* functions as a self-serving record of the teacher's wealth and hence value in the religious world. In this way, writing a *namthar* represents another facet of the human propensity for hypocrisy. Drukpa Kunley continues:

> What need is there to write, "At this time of day, I ate this meal and at night I shit it out?" If I wrote things like this, wouldn't it just be laughable?[23]

For the narrator, attention to these kinds of insignificant details misses the point of writing a *namthar.* In fact, to use the genre as a way to record the kinds and values of offerings received from one's disciples is no better than describing the workings of one's bowels over the course of a day. In either case it is the triviality and irrelevance of such events that makes them not only unworthy of recording but also ludicrous. Such writings are "laughable, aren't they" (*gad mo e 'chor*)? It is interesting to see the kind of self-awareness the narrator demonstrates here concerning both the act of writing as well as the purpose of writing this kind of text. As is clearly evident in this example, Drukpa Kunley is enormously self-reflexive about the use of writing as a means by which to make transparent not only the topic but also the composer's underlying motivations. In the example, the recording of such minute and insignificant details as what one

[22] *Bla chen yin na rta 'di phul dang / bla chung yin na zhwa phrug dang/ bre grangs 'di byung rang bris nas dgos pa ci yod,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 31b.4.

[23] *Rang bris nas dgos pa ci yod/ de lta yin na nyi ma bro ran tsa na lto 'di bzas dang/ dgongs kha brun 'di 'dras btang byung rang bris pa gad mo e 'cher yin byas so,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 31b.4-5

has eaten over the course of the day reveals the small-mindedness of writer. As we will see below, for Drukpa Kunley, any content included in a *namthar* should be aimed at producing benefit and not towards the more prosaic practice of recording every detail of one's life.[24]

Before concluding this composition, Drukpa Kunley describes the proper subjects to be included in a *namthar*.

> But, if the discussion will yield benefit and if it is necessary for oneself and others, then it is like a heap of precious Dharma jewels. Even if it uses analogies with little that are wondrous about them, it is still acceptable to write these.[25]

This statement clearly demarcates the point of writing a *namthar.* Some discussions or accounts (*gtam*) may be necessary to give rise to benefit (*phan pa*) both for oneself and for others. If benefit arises, then the discourse, even if it makes use of debased examples and meanings, is like a heap of precious Dharma jewels. Recalling the title of Volume Ka, we might suppose that while the discussion may appear disorderly or crude, if it augments the welfare of others or of oneself, its value is priceless. To express this idea of debased or crude discussion, the narrator uses the expression "*g.yas chung*," which is short for a longer expression, "*snang chung ngam mthong chung,*" where "*snang chung*" refers to something that is unimportant or that has little esteem and "*mthong chung*" means debased or contemptuous. Regardless of how the discourse or discussion appears in its surface value, what is important is its effect in the world.

[24] While such self-reflexivity about the process of writing is not exactly unusual (Cf. Yamamoto 2009; Gyatso 1998) what stands out is the direct critique of the more common practice of using *namthar* as a means by which to make a detailed and comprehensive recording of the protagonist's life.

[25] *de yang rang gzhan la dgos pa dang/ phan pa 'byung ba'i gtam 'dug na/ dpe chos rin chen spungs pa bzhin/ g.yas chung gi dpe don 'dug na'ang bris chog par 'dug go,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 31b.5-6.

Any discussion used should have the capacity to cause benefit for oneself or others. Regardless of external appearance, the function of such communication is critical.

This composition on writing a *namthar* expresses two critical elements that an author should attend to. The first is the propensity for most *namthar* to focus on insignificant details. For Drukpa Kunley, such *namthar* are hypocritical in their function. Purporting to tell the liberation stories of realized masters they are instead self-serving reminders for such teachers of their own importance. As such, they prevent honest or genuine self-representation. Used to record either meaningless information, such as what kind of food a teacher ate and shat over the course of the day, or to keep an accounting of the teacher's monetary value, such narratives have little or nothing to do with benefiting others.

The second element for the writer to hold in mind is that while a *namthar* may require the use of particular stories or discussions, how these *appear* is far less important than the work they do to benefit beings. A story can appear crude or debased, but as long as its function is beneficial, it is useful and even desirable to write about it. As we will see in the next example, the key is that the author must know in advance that the discussions she includes will be beneficial. This point is emphasized in this episode where Drukpa Kunley discusses further the form and function of *namthar.* Some people say to Drukpa Kunley:

> In your biography, Dharma Lord, you appear to be scorning others. When we examine it, we see that your biography is too direct and honest – it ignores all the curves! When your biography is seen by those who don't understand its point of view, it is similar to the thorny club of the *Domsum Rabgye.*[26]

[26] *Chos rje'i rnam thar rnams na/ gzhan la zur 'tshag pa dra ba re 'dug ste/ nged kyis brtags shing dpyad pas/ ha cang rang drang drags pas sgur po ras su bor ba'i rnam pa cig 'dug/ bzhan ma go bas bltas na/ sdom gsum rab dbye gze ma ra mag 'dra zer ba dang 'dra*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 69a.5-69b.1.

The concern voiced by the interlocutors is that Drukpa Kunley has been too direct and honest (*ha cang rang drang drags pas*) in his pointing out of the faults of others. He has "ignored," "neglected," or "stripped away" (*ras su bor ba*) all the "curves" or "crooked angles" (*sgur po*). The term *sgur po* actually refers to a hunchback or stooped over person, someone who cannot stand up straight. This metaphor, applied to the use of language, implies that writing should communicate its meaning via "crooked" language – it should skirt the edges of a topic rather than hitting it straight on. Rather than directly criticizing others, the interlocutors feel that Drukpa Kunley's *namthar* should find more palatable ways to communicate its perception of truth. For those who do not understand its point of view (*ma go bas bltas na*), the *namthar* comes across similarly to a text written by Sakya Pandita Kunga Gyaltsen (1182-1251), the *Domsum Rabchey*, in that it is like a thorny club (*gze ma ra mgo*).[27] In other words, the *namthar* communicates its messages in such a painful way that they are difficult to absorb.

Drukpa Kunley responds to this critique as follows:

> I have no intention to strike anyone. Generally, we live in a degenerate time, and I don't see anyone that is in accord with the teachings of the Buddha. I don't have anything to hide, so I write whatever arises in my mind. I don't describe anything that people are not doing, and I also do not say that what they do do isn't done. According to the art of poetry, what I write is like the first simile of naturally arising expression. I don't think there is anything wrong with whatever arises in my mind.[28]

[27] The *Domsum Rabchey* (*sdom gsum rab dbye*), *Differentiating the Three Precepts* is one of the major works of Sakya Pandita Kunga Gyaltsen (Sa skya Paṇḍita, Kun dga' rgyal tshan, 1182-1251).

[28] *Ngas 'di skad byas/ mi la 'phog bsam pa ni ma shar/ spyir yang snyigs dus su song/ thub pa'i gsung bzhin bltas bas de dang mthun pa rang ni ma mthong/ rang la yang khyer 'khos med pas/ blo la gang shar bris pa lag/ mi mi byed pa cig byed kyi 'dug kyang ma byas/ byed pa cig mi byed par 'dug kyang ma byas/ snyan ngag gi yin na/ rang bzhin brjod pa'i rgyan lta bu lags pas skyon med dam bsam pa ni shar byas so,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 69b.1-2.

Due to the fact that sentient beings live in a time when the teachings of the Buddha have degenerated, the narrator sees few individuals whose minds are in accord with the Dharma. As a result and perhaps in response, he feels entitled to express himself, but only if, as expressed above, his intention is to benefit beings and to lead their minds to the Dharma. He makes the caveat that he does not make things up. If people have not done something, he does not say that they have. In the same way, he does not deny what people actually are doing – in fact, he points out the very nature of what they are doing. Finally, he relates that his writing activities are similar to the poetic ornament (Tib. *rgyan*. Skt. *alaṃkāra*) that straightforwardly expresses the nature of how things actually are (*rang bzhin brjod pa'i rgyan lta bu*).[29]

Drukpa Kunley's mention of the similarity in his writings to the poetic ornament of straightforward expression suggests how the use of metaphor and simile in the writing of a *namthar* functions to effect changes in our understanding and vision of the world and how it works. But Drukpa Kunley extends the use of metaphor by equating the arising of his thoughts to the function of a particular kind of ornament in the writing of poetry. Drukpa Kunley appears to be referring here to the expositions and description of poetry found in the famous treatise on this subject, Daṇḍin's *Kāvyadarśa*. Briefly, this text contains three chapters, the first of which identifies the main characteristics of *kāvya* (poetry) and describes the distinguishing features between the southern and eastern schools of Indian literary composition. The second chapter creates a catalogue and explains the relationships between semantic meaning and poetic

[29] Cf. Daṇḍin's *Kāvyākarśa*.

ornamentation within a verse. The third chapter repeats this process for poetic figures that arise from the relationship between sound and meaning in a verse.[30]

Daṇḍin's *Kāvyādarśa* recognizes ten "uncommon" attributes (Tib. *thun mong min pa'i yon tan bcu,* Skt. *asādhāraṇadaśaguṇalakṣaṇa*) of poetic style and three divisions of common ornaments: those of sense (Tib. *don rgyan,* Skt. *arthālaṃkāra*), the phonetic ornaments (Tib. *sgra rgyan,* Skt. *śabdālaṃkāra*), and those of inscrutable insinuation (Tib. *gab tshig,* Skt. *prahelikā*) as indications of both the beauty and effectiveness of a poetic composition in producing its effects.[31] By likening whatever arises in his mind to the poetic ornament of "straightforward expression" (Tib. *rang bzhin brjod*, Skt. *svabhāvokti*), the first of the thirty-five ornaments of sense, the ornament used to describe the nature or character of something, Drukpa Kunley asserts that the spontaneous arising of his own thoughts is synonymous with the nature of things as they are. Such insights are errorless (*skyon med*) and well thought (*bsam pa*).

By using this example, Drukpa Kunley suggests that the affective power of a *namthar* may reside in the text's ability to express poetically, but directly, the truth of both self and other. Writing can and should function to clearly state the nature of how things are without becoming seduced by the temptation to soften or pad its message so as to make it more palatable. "Poetry" (Tibetan *snyan ngag*; Sanskrit *kāvya*) in this sense is not used to tone down the truth, but as a suitable vehicle for evoking the character or nature of what is being talked

[30] Van der Kuijp 1996, 395-401.

[31] Kongtrul, Jamgon 2012, 359-366.

about. Such a text is uncompromising in both its system of delivery and in its content. The likening of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* to a "thorny club" (*ze ma ra mgo*) provides us with a visceral sense of the experience generated through the reading of the text, which may prove to be both painful and shocking. Truth, when expressed directly, transcends socially acceptable and expected ways of communicating in order to jolt the recipient into a new or different state of being, one that is more straightforwardly in harmony with the way things are.

In this next composition, the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* reveals a further dimension of its primary hermeneutic – the exposure of hypocrisy. Some people say to Drukpa Kunley:

> A biography that is written like yours, Dharma Lord, which contains many scriptural citations, appears to have the form of a religious commentary. Aren't you thereby proclaiming that you are a learned scholar?[32]

These interlocutors describe the texts as containing many "scriptural citations" (*lung mang po*). Generally, it is the case that, in both oral and written explanation of Buddhist doctrine, Buddhist thinkers cite Buddhist *sūtras* or other authoritative sources in order to give weight to their arguments or illustrate particular points.[33] Cabezón notes that we often find one or more scriptural citations used as a means by which to refute the views of an opponent whose position is contradicted by the passages. In this sense, scriptural citation is used more to disprove the assertions of an opponent than to shore up one's own doctrinal position.[34]

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[32] *chos rje'i rnam thar 'di 'dra bstan bcos kyi bzo 'dra ba lung mang po yod pa cig 'dug/ mkhas pa yin pa cig bzhed pa e yin zer ba la*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 49b.5-6.

[33] Hopkins 2003, 34. Cabezón 1994.

[34] Cabezón 1994, 109-111.

In the case of the example above, Drukpa Kunley's interlocutors above assert that because his *namthar* contains numerous scriptural citations surrounded by Drukpa Kunley's own words, it appears to take the form of a "religious commentary" (*bstan bcos*). Thus, for these readers, what stands out are not, or not primarily, the ordinary tropes found in a *namthar* such as a description of the narrator's deeds – his birth, childhood escapades, the teachings he received and the teachers he received them from, his meditative experiences and difficulties along the path, and his eventual overcoming of such obstacles to attain a realized state of being. Instead, what stands out is Drukpa Kunley's citation of many authoritative sources as indicative of his erudition and skill in exposition. As a result, his *namthar* appears like a religious commentary – the expression of a highly learned person's knowledge about particular religious topics. "Aren't you," the interlocutors ask, "thereby proclaiming yourself as a learned person?"

This seemingly innocent question challenges the basic premise upon which a wandering mendicant such as Drukpa Kunley based his life. The question suggests that, contrary to a general expectation by which wandering yogis (such as Drukpa Kunley) were thought to be mostly unlearned in the scriptures and philosophies of the Dharma, but possessed of deep realization into the nature of reality by virtue of their intensive and solitary meditative practices, instead many such figures could also claim to have profound learning. The interlocutors want to know if, by writing a *namthar* like this, Drukpa Kunley wishes to prove to others that he is, in fact, a highly learned person (*mkhas pa*). Drukpa Kunley's response helps us to further understand his vision of the purpose and function for the writing of a *namthar.* Since his response is somewhat lengthy, it is examined in stages.

> Generally speaking, if one claims to be a religious practitioner, it is necessary to have a few scattered connections with the teachings of the Bhagavan. If you consider carefully Niguma's *Advice Manual for the Six Yogas*, there is little need for an extensive explanation of the advice and guidance given there.[35]

Drukpa Kunley first describes the basic requirements necessary for the person who claims to be a "religious practitioner" (*chos pa*): such a person must have at least a few scattered (*tho re ba*) associations with the teachings of the Buddha. Any religious practitioner should be able to demonstrate the ways in which he or she has these tangible threads of connection to the Buddha's teachings. If this cannot be demonstrated, there is no certainty that the person is not making up a personal expression and understanding of "Dharma." The narrator then refers to a text composed by the *yoginī* Niguma, entitled *Advice Manual for the Six Yogas*,[36] noting that this composition supports the view that teachings should be backed up with a clear connection to the words of the Buddha. If the example of this text is not enough and if one requires further explanation, Drukpa Kunley refers to the Niguma's verse summaries of essential teachings of the Shangpa transmission, known as the *Vajra Verses*.[37]

> But if you think more explanation is needed, then the *Vajra Verses* state: 'At the time of the degenerate age, when wrong views disturb the mental continuum, genuine Dharma is as rare as daytime stars or the hairs of a tortoise, but the practice of heresy is as common as milk sold in the market place. Meditative

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[35] *Spyir gyis chos pa yin na/ bcom ldan 'das kyi gsung tho re ba dang 'brel ba a'u tsi/ dgos rgyu yang yin/ ni gu ma'i khrid yid na/de tsam gyi khrid la lung 'dren rgyas bshad mi dgos sam snyam na*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 49b.6-50a.1.

[36] Niguma (Ni gu ma, b. 10th century) was an Indian yogini whose realization gave rise to a treatise known as the *Six Yogas of Niguma* (*ni gu chos drug*). While these six doctrines have the same titles as the *Six Yogas of Naropā*, they present different details regarding their practice.

[37] This may be a reference to Niguma's *Rdo rje'i tshig rkang,* verse summaries of the crucial teachings of the Shangpa transmission. Cf. Stearns 2007. Stein is of a different opinion and suggests that the *Vajra Verses* referred to here may be the *Vajrapada* of the Tanjur (cat. Tohoku No. 2255).

> experiences, authentic explanations, and sealed commands become nothing more than (empty) adornments.'[38]

In this text it is explained that due to the degenerate age, most human beings have developed "wrong views" (*log ltas*), and their minds are "confused" and "disturbed" (*rgyud dkrug*). As a result, "authentic Dharma" (*yang dag chos*) is very rare, while the practices of hypocrisy or heresy (*log chos*) are as common as "milk sold in the marketplace" (*tshong 'dus 'o ma'i chos spyod tshe*).[39] Meditative experiences (*nyams myong*) and "scriptural transmissions" (*lung*) are like the lettered decorations carved above a doorway (*them yig rgyan par bya*) – in other words, they are nothing more than empty labels. They look beautiful, but have no essential meaning. This explanation supports the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*'s premise that the central problem facing a writer of *namthar* is the genuine representation of the Dharma without corruption by the author's ideas of what might sound impressive, interesting, and self-promoting.

Drukpa Kunley continues: "If teachings are not adorned with quotations from the Buddha, no matter how profound the Dharma, there will be doubt."[40] From the point of view of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar,* the only adornment necessary for a teaching is that it should be connected in some essential way with the Dharma as taught by the Buddha. If the teachings are not related to the words of the Buddha, there will always be doubt that they are actually

[38] *Rdo rje'i tshig rkang na/ log ltas rgyud dkrugs rtsod ldan snyigs ma'i dus/ yang dag chos 'di nyin skar rus sbal sbu/ log chos tshong 'dus 'o ma'i chos spyod tshe/ nyams myong lung dang them yig brgyan par bya/ gsungs pas*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 50a.1-2.

[39] The Tibetan reads: *log chos tshong 'dus 'o ma'i chos spyod tshe*. I have paraphrased this to get to the essence of the meaning

[40] *Rgyal ba'i lung gis ma brgyan pa'i chos zab zab 'dra rung the tshom za*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 50a.2.

genuine Buddhist teachings, even if they appear to be quite profound. Drukpa Kunley next discusses what a *namthar* should and should not contain. He says:

> Indeed, although there is a need for *namthars* with meaning, calling it a "namthar," and writing about many things that may or may not have happened – for example, writing about receiving alms from various places or about how someone took care of his family in the monastery. There is no need to write about this! All the Dharma of the sutras and tantras are contained in the biography of the Bhagavan.[41]

First, a liberation life story should contain some genuine meaning. If, as the narrator expresses, the *namthar* only describes trivial events such as in which country a person received alms or how he raised a family in the monastery, then there is little to recommend that text. Little benefit can come from such small and unimportant details. As the narrator exclaims, "All the Dharmas of the sūtras and tantras are contained within the biography of the Buddha!"[42] The idea here is that the Buddha's biography was composed in such a way that every event of the Buddha's life illustrates some aspect of his teachings. There is nothing superfluous or gratuitous to be found in the text. A *namthar* should be a vehicle for Dharma and it should authenticate itself through using the teachings of the Buddha as the primary reference for the truths it indicates. This then, is the narrator's answer to the unspoken question as to why he employs so many scriptural citations in his own autobiography. Such citations, while they may serve to highlight Drukpa Kunley's status as a "scholar" (*mkhas pa*), even more importantly, they work to connect the genuine nature of the teachings that are voiced throughout the text

[41] *Rnam thar de ka don du yod pa cig dgos rgyu yin mod/ rnam thar yin zer/ ma byas dgu byas mang po cig bris/ rgyal khams la slongs byas pa dang/ dgon par bu med gsos pa rang bris pa la dgos pa med/ mdo sngags kyi chos thams cad bcom ldan 'das kyi rnam thar du 'dug pa byas pas*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 50a.3-4.

[42] *Mdo sngags kyi chos thams cad bcom ldan 'das kyi rnam thar du 'dug pa byas pas*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 50a.4.

by demonstrating their harmony with the words of the Buddha himself. In this way, the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* uses the teachings of the Buddha as its touchstone for truth.

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Before considering the final composition in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* in which the writing of *namthar* is discussed, I wish to briefly examine how Volume Ka introduces itself. In the first lines there is a clear and condensed statement of how Drukpa Kunley conceives of its purpose. Volume Ka opens with the following statement: "Although this autobiography that I wrote myself may seem amazing to shortsighted ordinary people, it is an explanation that will expose my faults to those who are not aware of them and obscure my talents."[43] In this statement, the narrator reverses what is usually considered the *raison d'etre* for the writing of a religious autobiography in Himalayan Buddhist society – to create an exemplary story of a person's journey to enlightenment. Instead, Drukpa Kunley states that he will use the medium of *namthar* to expose his faults (*skyon bton*). The verb *bton* means "to elicit," "to draw forth," or "to reveal." Using writing to expose his faults or defects renders them visible to everyone. Simultaneously, the narrative will work to conceal or hide (*sbed pa*) his good qualities (*yon tan*).[44] The two verbs, "to reveal" and "to conceal" are in direct opposition to each other, yet their proximity in the text conveys the sense that there is a simultaneous enactment of both.

[43] *Rang gi rnam thar rang gis 'bri ba 'di/ tshur mthong skyes bus ya mtshan min na'ang/ gzhan gyis bdag gi skyon yon mi rtogs pas/ skyon bton yon tan sbed pa'i byung tshul bshad*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 2b.4-5. My sister, Christina Monson, was extremely helpful in rendering a satisfactory translation of this sentence.

[44] Interestingly, the desire to fully reveal one's faults through the writing of spiritual autobiography was considered one of the key characteristics marking the genuine portrayal of the religious self in the spiritual autobiographical writings of seventeenth and eighteenth-century English and American Puritan and Protestant writers.

The result is that at the same instant that the narrator's faults are revealed and his good qualities are hidden, the text opens up a space in which both faults and qualities can exist concurrently even if they are hidden.

While this statement of concealing his qualities and revealing his faults could be merely another example of the humility with which many Tibetan Buddhist masters felt obliged to begin their biographies, like so much of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, behind the statement lies a clear directive. In fact, each part of this opening statement can be viewed as an articulation of the *Namthar's* intention writ large – a purpose that is aimed at the ethical formation of both self and others. The goal is to use the medium of writing, specifically the writing of a liberation life story, to express the truth about the self, and in particular, the truth of one's own faults. Such writing also functions to hide one's virtues, thereby highlighting the quality of humility. Gyatso notes that generally, within the context of the teacher-disciple relationship, the impulse to supply a self that can "be an exemplary role model is, at least theoretically, the only reason why autobiography is written at all. The disciple's presence is to be felt throughout the text."[45] However, she also suggests that this kind of writing takes place in an atmosphere of conflicting impulses – one, the requirement that the person refer to herself with humility and diffidence, such that she may actually attribute the work to the person who encouraged her to write it, the other, that she present herself as a worthy exemplar, thereby claiming authorship for herself.[46] The writings contained in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* aim to stimulate the insight necessary to

[45] Gyatso 1992, 469.

[46] Gyatso 1998, 105.

recognize how both “qualities” and “faults” participate in the life of a person engaged on the spiritual path. Without revealing our faults to ourselves as well as developing the ability to see the faults of others beneath the veil of appearances we all present for general consumption, no genuine progress on a spiritual path can be made.

If we look more closely at the statement that “although this autobiography may seem amazing to short-sighted ordinary people...” Drukpa Kunley uses the phrase *tshur mthong skyes bu*, which I have translated as “shortsighted ordinary people.” Literally, this phrase can be translated as “those ordinary people who see this side only.” “This side” suggests that such people, due to their ignorance and fixation on a self, are incapable of seeing the deeper meanings in the *namthar.* Because they see only from the perspective of their own desires, they are prone to being influenced only by the surface appearance of things, their most superficial aspects. As a result, they are likely to find the contents of the *namthar* “shocking” (*ya mtshan*) since they are incapable of seeing it for what it is. The point of the writing is for the narrator to confess for himself as well as to reveal to others what is actually there beneath the surface – the “faults” or “mistakes” that undergird not only his own actions but also the actions of a range of religious and ordinary actors throughout the text. He claims that this autobiography will provide an accounting – literally an “explanation” (*bshad*) – of how it has come about (*byung tshul*) that his faults are demonstrated and his good qualities are hidden. The term *byung tshul* here suggests that it is through a kind of process, perhaps even a deliberate process, by which his faults have become visible and his good qualities are hidden.

The text continues:

> If I happen to reveal profound teachings, I confess and repent. If my words are seen as wanton gossip, may they at least cause delight![47]

Again, we see two registers operating simultaneously in this statement. The same writing may be understood either as profound teachings (*zab mo bsgrags*) or else as wanton gossip (*'chal gtam*), but ultimately, their purpose is to delight the mind of the reader. This statement reinforces the theme of pleasure and delight that suffuses the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* – writing (and reading) should be experienced as acts of pleasure. Writing provides an arena in which the writer can discover and create something new about him or herself. Especially in writing that is as self-conscious as Drukpa Kunley's, we see a process of active exploration of one's own way of being in the world. This is, in fact, one definition of the term *namthar* – one's "style" or "way" of living.[48] This initial opening statement can be read as an instruction manual to the reader on how to read the text that follows. From the very first moment, the reader must recognize that she is being invited into a playground of self-expression and, indeed, experimentation. Drukpa Kunley's statement that if he happens to reveal profound teachings, he will confess and repent reveals a belief in the power of confession to exonerate transgressions, but even though Drukpa Kunley seems to be apologizing for possibly revealing profound teachings, his wish that his writing will at least cause delight negates any enduring sense of remorse.

The final composition analyzed here is located at the beginning of the second volume of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar,* Volume Kha. It presents a detailed rationale for both why Drukpa

[47] *Zab mo bsgrags pa byung na mthol zhing bshags/ 'chal gtam sna tshogs 'dug na nyams dga' mdzod,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 2b.5-6. The term *'chal gtam* means language or speech that has no trace whatsoever of the Dharma in it.

[48] Quintman 2014 (2006).

Kunley decided to write his life story and for what purposes he intended it. As mentioned above, the editor of the the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar,* the Mad Monk of Mon, decided not to include this composition at the beginning of Volume Ka, but to use it to introduce the second volume of the *namthar* – the volume that the Mad Monk describes as "less reliably the work of Drukpa Kunley" due to the fact that it includes material transcribed by Drukpa Kunley's disciples. In spite of this, in addition to being in the first person, the composition contains much of the same ethos and tone to those analyzed above. In addition, in a short benedictory prayer to Drukpa Kunley, the scribe enumerates particular qualities of the saint that help to confirm the hypothesis of this thesis that the main theme of Drukpa Kunley's writings is the exposure and recognition of hypocrisy. The scribe writes:

> Manifestation of Saraha who attained the siddhi of Vajradhara; because he realized the deceptive nature of illusory appearances, he is free from hypocrisy and behaves spontaneously, unrestrainedly and exactly as he pleases. The sayings of the great siddha Kun dga' legs pa, the mad yogi of the 'Brug pa, which create merit for this life and the next and which benefit both worldly and spiritual circumstances, these I will record, exactly as they were spoken.[49]

The scribe uses the term for hypocrisy (*tshul 'chos*) to explain how, due Drukpa Kunley's ability to recognize how easily we are fooled by the appearances of phenomena, i.e., we believe them to be real in the sense of having an unchanging, independent status, he is able to overcome the deep-rooted habit of behaving hypocritically. Unlike most ordinary people, he has achieved insight into the nature of appearances as constantly changing, interdependent phenomena,

[49] *rdo rje 'chang dngos grub thob sa ra ha pa'i rnam sprul/ 'khrul snang bden med du rtogs pas tshul 'chos dang bral zhing/ spyod pa gang shar shugs 'byung 'gag med du lhug par spyod pa'i grub chen 'brug smyon kun dga' legs pa'i gsung sgros tshe 'di phyi'i so nam dang/ chos dang 'jig rten gnyis ka'i bya gzhag la phan pa rnams 'bri bar bya ste/ de la yang grub thob rang gi gsung ltar na,* Volume Kha 1978, 1b.2-3.

thereby freeing himself from fabricating a relationship to reality that is inherently false. Instead, he behaves in a manner that is relaxed (*lhug pa*), unimpeded (*'gag med*) and spontaneous (*shugs 'byung*). These three adverbs are commonly found in Mahāmudrā teachings on the conduct of the sage. They represent the state of being that arises as a result of having realized the innate nature.[50]

Ultimately, this is a simple formulation – Drukpa Kunley, having seen through the deceptive nature of appearances and the human habit of believing them to be something other than they are, has become capable of acting genuinely, in accord with the truth of how things are, and therefore without hypocrisy. This is the idea of avoiding hypocrisy on the deepest level, beyond the surface sense of the term as taking up the appearance of something without embodying it in intention or action. Instead, in addition to these surface hypocrisies, the kind of hypocrisy targeted here, and throughout the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, is that of the deepest level of human self-deception. This is a level that cannot even be noticed as exiting until and unless a person has entered the spiritual path and engaged in processes of developing insight into the true nature of self and phenomena – their inherent emptiness of all conceptual ideas imputed onto them.

With this introduction, the scribe begins his recording of Drukpa Kunley's speech, which reflects his frustration with the use of *namthar* to record insignificant and, for him, worthless information that ignores the power of life writing as a vehicle for self-examination and

[50] Dorje, Wangchuk Karmapa 2001, 114-119. Roberts trsl. 2010.

investigation. Note too, we leave behind the scribe's third person description of Drukpa Kunley in order to engage with the saint's first-person narration.

> An account of the periods of my life story, factual and correct, first from my birth to my present activities including the feasts offered at my death in the future, would be an insignificant [piece] of writing indeed! Except for the dried up words with which I exhort my disciples to the Dharma whenever they question me, and the importance [to communicate] the main points for performing spiritual practice these days, there is little need to write about the absurdities of my life, the food I ate this morning and where I shit it out in the evening.[51]

This statement sets the parameters for what should and should not be included in the writing of a life story. Note that this statement also includes many of the same elements as those examined above. None of the events associated with birth, daily activities, or death are useful or significant for others to read. In fact, recording such events is utterly insignificant (*zhan*), which also connotes inferiority or even weak-minded. Two subjects are worth recording—the words used to encourage disciples toward the Dharma, although even these are barren and dry, and the instructions necessary for practicing the Dharma. Drukpa Kunley mockingly relates that anything else is tantamount to discussing what food one ate for breakfast and where one shit it out that night. Given his strong language, we might suppose that Drukpa Kunley is characterizing what would normally go into his *namthar* with the contents of other *namthar* he has read in mind – although of course, we can't know this for certain. In any event, it is obvious that there must exist some model of life writing that Drukpa Kunley has been exposed to and with which he strongly disagrees. He explains his rationale further:

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[51] *nga'i rnam thar nges dag rang gi go rim/ dang por skyes pa nas/ da lta ci byed nam phugs 'chi ba dang ston mo btang ba yan chod ni bris zhan 'dra/ gal te 'dri na'ang slob ma chos la bskul ba'i tshig rigs skam po rnams dang/ 'phral gyi chos sbyod lag len nye bar mkho ba bzhin yin 'dug na ma gtogs/ gzhan da nang lto ci bzas dang/ do nub skyag pa 'di ru gtong rang gi lo rgyus skag sken bris pa la dgos pa chung,* Volume Kha 1978, 1b.5-6.

> I have been unable to stop patrons and high-level monastics from writing down the bits of senseless chatter [I may have spoken] wandering around the country. In this degenerate day and age, this is because people have turned their backs [on the Dharma]. The recording of worldly deeds has come [to be seen] as a superior project and no effort is put into [writing about] necessary religious activities. Since [most peoples'] sense faculties have become dulled, in order to even benefit others, it is necessary that scholars should teach the Dharma in accord with each individual's level of intellect.[52]

In addition to *namthar* being used for the wrong purposes, Drukpa Kunley expresses his frustration that most people would rather indulge in recording interesting tidbits of gossip about daily life activities than make the effort to record actions that focus on the practice of the Dharma. As a result, he iterates the point of view so often ascribed to him, as we saw in the Mad Monk of Mon's comments about him, that it is essential to teach the Dharma in accord with each individual person's capacity. This requires more from the teacher in that he or she must be able to recognize both what kind of teaching would be most useful for the audience as well as the audience's ability to absorb and understand what is taught. Enormous flexibility and adaptability to all kinds of situations is necessary for a teacher to operate on this level. That Drukpa Kunley is consciously aware of this situation and intends for his *namthar* to fulfill such a function become even clearer as he continues.

> As for those treatises and so forth written by others out of desire to be a scholar or merely to get a bit of food, I have little taste [for them]. This present [book of] mine, it is gathered a bit here and a bit there, haphazardly, without organization and other than being based on [beating the drum] a foundation of dirty talk, [this *namthar*] has nothing in it! Those who possess only a small bit of insight, but

[52] *nga rang rgyal khams bskor ba'i skad cha phra 'chal mtshon tsam re gra ba thogs cig dang sbyin bdag rnams kyis yi ger bkod 'dug pa ni bkag ma thub pa yin kyang/ ding sang snyigs ma'i dus 'dir mi rnams phyin kha log/ 'jig rten gyi bya ba'i bkod pa dang dran rgya mtho ru song/ dgos pa'i chos phyogs kyi bya ba la mi brtson zhing/ dbang po rtul la dran pa gsal du song nas 'dug pas 'gro don byed ba'ang so so'i blo dang bstun pa'i chos khrid mkhas pa ni dgos 'dug,* Volume Kha 1978, 2a.1-3.

> who do not know the main points, or wrong-viewed people who scorn the Vinaya as well as those who are mistaken with respect to the Secret Mantra, should not see it. Additionally, it should not be taught in borderlands where the Dharma has not spread. If it were shown to them, they would lose their faith from words such as "vagina," "penis," and so forth, not understanding that these have an innate good meaning. Let it be done like this! Regardless of whether he does good or bad, others do not scold the Buddha. As for the speech [about me] of ignorant beings, I say OM AH HUM.[53]

Now Drukpa Kunley comments on using the medium of *namthar* in order to showcase one's own talents or as a way to generate money to support oneself. Since both of these activities are oriented to the writer's needs, they do not have the benefit of others as their main intent. But then Drukpa Kunley comments on his own *namthar*, again iterating the haphazard and random nature of its organization. He uses some of the same phrases as those found in the title to Volume Ka, i.e., "taken by the tail, taken by the nose" as well as some different phrases expressing the same theme, such as "randomly" (*har ma hor ma*) and "irregular" (*lang ma long ma*). This sentence again goes some way towards suggesting the existence of a completed *namthar* manuscript intentionally arranged (or disarranged). At the very least this statement implies some intent on Drukpa Kunley's side to write, structure, and compile his *namthar* in a specific way – as put together a bit here and bit there, randomly, as he feels is necessary and appropriate in the moment.

[53] *Gzhan ma lto phyir tsam la mkhas 'dod la brtsoms pa'i bstan bcos la sogs pa ni kham chung/ nga'i 'di ni sna zin spu zin/ har ma hor ma/ lang ma long ma/ btsog gtam la gzhi brdungs se ba cig las med pas/ gnad 'kag mi shes pa'i shes rab dum tsam yod pa/ gsang sngags kyi chos la log par lta zhing/ 'dul ba khyad du sod pa'i gang zag log lta can rnams kyis ma gzigs shig/ yang chos ma dar ba'i sa phyogs mtha' 'khob kyi yul rnams su ma ston cig/ de rnams la bstan na ni/ chos nyid kyi go rgyu bzang po yod pa de mi go bar stu mje la sogs pa'i tshig rigs la dad pa log yong bas/ de bzhin du gyis shig gzhan sangs rgyas ni legs nyes gang min byas kyang bka' mi bkyon/ sems can ma rig pas labs pa ni om a hum,* Volume Kha 1978, 2a3-5-2b.1.

The next sentence reveals more of Drukpa Kunley's sense of the *namthar's* audience. He says that it should not be shown to anyone who has little understanding of the practices of the Secret Mantra and especially, it should not be shown to someone who is not in harmony with the Vinaya. Nor should it be shown to anyone who holds perverse views or who lives in places where the Buddhadharma has not spread. Why is this? Due to the fact that such people would misunderstand the *namthar's* contents and, in particular, they would misunderstand Drukpa Kunley's use of words such as "cock" (*mje*) and "cunt" (*stu*), as well as other words of this type (*tshig rigs*) not recognizing that these words contain "good innate meanings" (*chos nyid kyi go rgyu bzang po*). While it is difficult to know exactly what Drukpa Kunley means when he says this, the sentence conveys his sense of the power of language, when used in certain contexts, to communicate something more than its surface value might otherwise suggest. Words that appear vulgar or inappropriate can transmit a more profound and basically pure message (see Chapter Four for further discussion of this use of language).

That Drukpa Kunley states that his *namthar* should not be shown "especially to those who are contemptuous of the Vinaya" (*'dul ba khyad du gsod pa'i gang zag*), suggests an implicit connection between the ethics of self-discipline taught in the Vinaya and the use of profane or vulgar language to teach the Dharma or communicate a specific message. While it is difficult to ascertain exactly what Drukpa Kunley is suggesting here, we might infer that this restriction is meant for those hypocrites who take up monastic robes, receive the benefits of the monastic life, and trade on the honor and respect generally shown to monastics, without ever allowing themselves to be genuinely transformed by the disciplines and practices taught in

the Vinaya. Such a person would not be in harmony with the intent of the Vinaya as Drukpa Kunley understands it and would likely take at face value the use of language that intends a deeper and more profound understanding of what is being referred to.

This is also the case with those with mistaken views toward the Secret Mantra (*gsang sngags*), the essence of which is the union of wisdom and skillful means. This path is characterized particularly by its use of special methods and wisdom to bring about insight into the nature of reality and the realization of nature of mind.[54] In this sense, the skillful means of the Secret Mantra are geared towards protecting the practitioner's mind against impure perception. Someone with the wrong view (*log par lta ba*) of this path may misunderstand the deeper meanings communicated through language that might on the surface appear antinomian and contrary to appropriate action on the Buddhist path. In this sense, Drukpa Kunley implicitly compares the use of language in his *namthar* to the self-secret and controversial language used in the Tantras. A person requires insight and training in esoteric Buddhist teachings in order to avoid misunderstanding the meaning of what is being taught. Drukpa Kunley ends this section by stating, "As for the statements (about me) of ignorant people, (I say) "OM AH HUM!"" (*sems can ma rig pas lab pa ni om ah hum*). Ardussi suggests that Drukpa Kunley employs the OM AH HUM mantra here to dispel the criticisms of others from his mind. It is also possible that he uses the mantra as a demonstration of how certain kinds of linguistic forms can effect transformation, blessing those ignorant people and transforming their ordinary perceptions of him into a pure state.

[54] Kongtrul, Lodrö Thaye 2008, 5.

II. How to Write

There are also other ways in which Drukpa Kunley discusses the purpose and form of writing. Looking at these passages will help to flesh out our overall view of Drukpa Kunley's attentive attitude toward the power of language, when used properly, to transmit the truth. In this next composition, some people ask Drukpa Kunley to instruct them in the art of writing.[55] The questioners first remark that Drukpa Kunley himself is an excellent composer (*khyod rtsom pa bzang po 'dug*). The Tibetan term used here for "writer" or "composer" is *rtsom pa*, someone who writes texts. We can recall here that from among the three activities of the learned scholar (composition, debate and exposition), the art of composition reigns supreme.[56] As we have seen from the examples above, Drukpa Kunley appears to be known for his compositional efforts. His writing suggests that he possesses certain kinds of skills. It also provides other people with standards of excellence they wish to emulate. Drukpa Kunley responds to the request by making two specific moves. First, he equates the art of composition to the role of the spiritual master and, second, he quotes a metaphorical description of the "ideal" composer.

> I replied, "Generally, when acting as a spiritual mentor, if one does not possess the three skills of explanation, debate, and composition – what can be done?[57]

[55] *De nas yang rtsom pa byed pa'i mi rigs 'ga'/ nga la khyod rtsom pa bzang po 'dug pa/ rtsom pa zhig slobs dang zer,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 23a.4-5.

[56] Kongtrul 2012, 360.

[57] *Lar gyis dge ba'i bshes gnyen cig byed na/ 'chad rtsod rtsom gsum med na ci btub*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 23a.5.

Drukpa Kunley describes the qualities a spiritual master required to be effective in the world. Such a person must be able to explain the Dharma, to debate the Dharma, and to compose texts on the Dharma. These three skills form a trinity: explanation, debate, and composition (*'chad rtsod rtsom gsum*). Sakya Paṇḍita Kunga Gyaltsen classifies these as the three primary activities to be engaged in by the *paṇḍita* or scholar (*mkhas pa'i bya ba gsum*) in his treatise on the necessary characteristics of learned discourse, the *Gateway for the Learned* (*Mkhas pa rnams la 'jug pa'i sgo*), a text in which Sakya Paṇḍita also translated large sections of the first two chapters of Daṇḍin's *Kāvyādarśa* (see below).[58] Drukpa Kunley shifts this formulation from the "scholar" to the "spiritual friend" (Tib. *dge ba'i bshes gnyen*, Skt. *kalyāṇamitra*). Any person who seeks to act in the role of spiritual mentor should also possess these same three skills. Without them, "what else is fitting" (*ci btub*)? In this case, being able to compose (as well as being able to explain and debate the Dharma) and taking up the role of a spiritual master are elements in a person's formation that must come together in order for the master to be "appropriate" (*btub pa*) to the role.

Drukpa Kunley elaborates on the nature of these qualities by introducing a quotation from praises written to the Tibetan translator and commentator on Sanskrit poetics, Shongton Dorje Gyeltsen (Shong ston Rdo rje rgyal mtshan, 13th century) by a teacher named Gungthangpa Dewa Lodrö (Gung thang pa Bde ba'i blo gros, 13th century?).[59]

[58] Gold 2007, 117-139. Van der Kuijp 1996, 395-400. Braitstein 2004, 127-130

[59] According to the Treasury of Lives: A Biographical Encyclopedia of Himalayan Religion, Shongton Lotsawa Dorje Gyeltsen (*Shong ston Lo tsa ba Rdo rje rgyal mtshan*) was born in the fourth decade of the thirteenth century and was ordained into the Sakya lineage. At some point in his life, he traveled to Bodh Gaya where he met the Indian Paṇḍita Laksimakara, whom he brought back to Tibet. Together the two translators translated numerous

> In a hymn to Guru Shongton Gungthangpa, Dewa Lodrö wrote, "When the river of knowledge and wisdom runs deep and the thunder-roar of explanation and debate resounds; when lightening flashes of composition move everywhere in the sky of understanding, these are the sublime master who is like a summer-born cloud, heavy with rain." If you want to be a writer, you should be like this.[60]

Dewa Lodrö's hymn implies that a composer should make liberal use of metaphors, similes and other ornaments of poetic composition in order to communicate meaning. To demonstrate this, the hymn uses metaphors to evoke the tenor of the qualities that should be possessed by the Dharma master/composer. He or she is likened to a summer storm cloud, pregnant with rain (*dbyar skyes chu 'dzin 'dra*) whose knowledge and wisdom flow like a deep river. His speech roars like thunder as he both explains and debates the Dharma (*'chad rtsod 'brug sgrog*). And his compositions flash like lightening in the sky of his understanding (*rtsom pa'i glog 'gyu*). By collapsing images from the natural world into the activities of the enlightened master, the metaphors employed in this description describe in vivid detail the contours of the skills and activities of the Dharma master/composer. As mentioned above, this kind of metaphorical writing, taking its cues from the third chapter on poetic ornaments in Daṇḍin's *Kāvyadarśa,* was highly regarded in Tibetan literary composition from the time of the *Kāvyadarśa's* introduction to Tibet by Sakya Paṇḍita in the thirteenth century in his *Gateway for the Learned*. That Drukpa Kunley should quote Dewa Lodrö's hymn in order to explain his view of the qualities that an

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texts including Daṇḍin's *Kāvyadarśa*, (Tibetan *snyan ngag me long; Mirror of Poetics*). After this, Dorje Gyeltsen began an oral transmission tradition of teachings on Sanskrit and poetry. See: (http://www.treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Shongton-Dorje-Gyeltsen/2029) According to Drukpa Kunley a set of praises to Shongton Lotsawa was written by a teacher named Gungthangpa Dewa Lodro (*gung thang pa bde ba'i blo gros*) includes the passage quoted above. I have been unable to find any information on this individual.

[60] *gung thang pa bde ba'i blo gros kyis bla ma shong ston la bstod pa na/lung dang rigs pa'i chu yis rab lci ba/'chad rtsod 'brug sgrog brtsom pa'i klog 'gyu zhing/shes bya'i mkha' la khyab par rgyu bas na/bla ma dam pa dbyar skyes chu 'dzin 'dra/gsung nas de 'dra dgos par bzhad,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 23a.5-6.

excellent composer must possess seems oddly in opposition to his claim to compose spontaneously and haphazardly. However, if we also recall that Drukpa Kunley has likened the way his thoughts arise to the first of the poetic ornaments of sense, the ornament of natural expression (Tib. *rang bzhin brjod,* Skt. *svabhāvokti*), he appears to be making the rather startling claim that his own compositions arise both spontaneously and as fully ornamented poetic expressions. For him, the art of composition does not require extended reflection on which poetic ornaments to use or how to employ them. Such beauty is part and parcel of the natural arising of his thinking mind.

If we look more closely at the metaphor of compositions as flashes of lightening – a standard trope often used in *ālaṃkāra śāstra* theory to refer to the sudden experience of profound insight or even to the vivid beauty of a woman – we see that Dewa Lodrö's hymn considers the compositions of a Dharma master/composer to possess certain qualities. Such compositions illuminate the darkness in brilliant flashes; they are potentially lethal; they can cause the ignition of understanding; they come and go without any set order or planning; they are constantly in motion and nothing impedes them; and they are inseparable from their environment – the sky of understanding, the thunder of explanations and debate. Drukpa Kunley uses this metaphorical description of the nature and qualities of writing to further nuance our understanding of the function to be served by the composition of a *namthar.* Such a composition cannot be understood separate from the role of a spiritual master – it represents one aspect of who he is and it forms a critical element of how he brings truth into the world.

Such truths are unpredictable, spontaneous, constantly changing in response to the situation at hand and potentially dangerous to the egoistic mentality.

Paul Ricoeur's analysis of the use of imagination in metaphor can also help to illuminate the particular experience of truth generated by the use of metaphor in writing. Placing together two disparate items – writing and lightening, debate and thunder, scriptural understanding and the flow of a deep river – the text encourages the reader to relinquish her attachment to the literal meaning. Obviously, literary compositions are not the same as flashes of lightening. Once the literal meaning has collapsed, a new predicative meaning arises that can be assimilated and understood. Ricoeur describes how once literal lexical meaning has collapsed, a new semantic pertinence arises via the proximity of the two terms in the metaphorical phrase. Ricoeur terms this proximity a *rapprochement* – a shifting from far to near.

> Things or ideas which were remote now appear as close. Resemblance ultimately is nothing else than this rapprochement, which reveals a generic kinship between heterogeneous ideas. What Aristotle called the epiphora of the metaphor, that is, the transfer of meaning, is nothing else than this move or shift in the logical distance, from the far to the near.[61]

However, Ricoeur also notes that this *rapprochement* requires an explanation. He draws on Kant's theory of the productive imagination to describe an element of imagination in which the ability to visualize resemblance is simultaneously both a “seeing” and a “visualizing” that allows this shift in logical distance to take place. In other words, imagination allows for the proximity of two disparate items. It “images” similarity where there is none, thereby providing

[61] Ricoeur 1979, 145.

the poet or writer with an insight into likeness.[62] This work of resemblance represents the poet's imaginative ability to see similarity through difference. The notion of the poet as a "seer," as a person with special insight into what is not immediately obvious to the ordinary person, is not unique to Ricoeur and is, in fact, strongly emphasized in South Asian literary traditions.[63] Throughout the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, there are examples of the use of metaphor to generate imaginative experiences of truths that are not immediately apparent. These will be examined in more detail in Chapter Three. That Drukpa Kunley quotes Dewa Lodrö's use of metaphors to express what it means to be an accomplished writer raises questions regarding his earlier claims to spontaneity and the random expression of anything that comes to mind.

But Drukpa Kunley has not finished with his discussion of the qualities and function of writing:

> As for other qualities of composition, it has been said: "Those compositions that are meaningless or that have backward meaning should be abandoned. Retain only those that are meaningful. Write about those things that have taken great effort to master through practice and knowledge. Writing should not arouse sin, be hypocritical or without compassion. It should avoid the six negatives and possess the three good qualities. In contemporary poetry and so on, even in scandalous writing, if, in the final result it possesses excellent meaning that leads the mind to Dharma, it is faultless.[64]

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[62] Ricoeur 1979, 145-146.

[63] Pollock 2003, 39-131. Ingalls 1968. Lienhard 1984. Van der Kuijp 1996, 393-410. Vijayavardhana 1970, 35: "The poet with his super-normal insight sees beauty where others see nothing, and perceives details which are not perceived by the common eye. It is the function of the poet to reveal this extraordinary perception, and the reader whose mind is attuned to the beauty whereby he feels for subtleties which an ordinary man with his gross perception is bound to miss. "The poet, while under the finer influence of life feels so intensely and vividly that his feelings spontaneously find utterance…The poet is a seer."

[64] *Gzhan rtsom pa la/ don med don log don ldan dang/ thos rtsod sgrub pa lhur len dang/ ngan g.yo brtse bral sdug bsngal 'byin/ bstan bcos drug bral gsum du 'dod/ gsung ba yod/ de yang/ don med dang don log/ ngan g.yo*

Additional qualities of good compositions include the fact that they should be meaningful – i.e., they should not be in opposition to the Dharma or be meaningless. In this case, rather than referring to the reader as someone whose mind has turned away from the Dharma, as he did before, Drukpa Kunley refers to the composition itself. This means that no writing should take place unless it contains or produces "meaning" or "benefit" (*don*). The word *don* ranges in connotation from "object" to "benefit" to "essential truth," "actuality," or "reality." In this case, the narrative wants to avoid advocating compositions that are "senseless" or "meaningless" (*don med*) or that contain "backwards" or "reverse" meaning (*log don*). The sense of "backwards" or "reverse" suggested by the term *log* is nearly always related to the idea that genuine truth represents the teachings of the Buddha. Since *log* literally means "wrong," "to reverse" or "to turn around," the implication is that a text with reversed meaning turns its readers away from those truths that are essential, meaningful, and fundamentally in harmony with reality. In considering his readers, Drukpa Kunley recognizes two ways by which a discourse may be misunderstood. First, as we saw above, the person who reads it may have an obscured or mistaken view about what they are reading. Second, the discourse itself may communicate inappropriately due to its use of or inclusion of ideas that are contrary to genuinely benefitting others.

Therefore, a composer should only write about those things that have taken great effort (*sgrub pa lhur len*) to master through debate and study. He should rid himself of all deception,

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dang/ brtse bral sogs brtsams pa la dgos pa med/ snyan ngag sogs ki 'phral gtsog gtam 'dra na'ang/ phugs chos la blo 'khrid pa'i don bzang po 'dug na nyes pa med byas pas, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 23a.6-23b.1.

lack of kindness, and any examples that might cause suffering. There is no use in writing about these kinds of things (*ngan g.yo dang brtse bral sogs brtsams pa la dgos pa med*). Writing, instead, should be honest, filled with compassion and kindness, and produce pleasure. When writing poetry, even if the examples or the language used appear in the form of "dirty talk" (*btsog gtam 'dra na'ang*), the writing will be faultless if it leads the mind to excellent meanings in the innermost Dharma.[65] This is precisely the point that Drukpa Kunley makes in the last composition on *namthar* writing analyzed above. While all these characteristics make up Drukpa Kunley's fundamental theory of composition, this last point highlights one of the central themes of the *namthar*. Appearance matters far less than what the text produces. If it produces "excellent meaning" (*don bzang po*) that turns the mind toward the Dharma, it is "without fault" (*nyes pa med byas pa*).

However, a question arises: How does this theory of composition fit into Drukpa Kunley's avowed intention to compose spontaneously? It is possible to write spontaneously about "those things that have taken great effort to master through debate and study?" Or might the very fact of mastering a subject provide the rich foundation for linguistic expression due to the fact that the subject is known so well it no longer requires any kind of forethought or preparation? Such writing may arise spontaneously, effortlessly, and in harmony with the virtues of honesty, compassion, and pleasure. It would by its very nature produce benefit (*don*).

The value placed on *don* (in this case meaning "benefit," or "welfare for *others*") is central to the project of composition as described by the text. If a composition produces no

[65] *Snyan ngag sogs kyi 'phral btsog gtam 'dra na'ang/ phugs chos la blo 'khrid pa'i don bzang po 'dug na nyes pa med byas pas*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 23b.2.

"excellent benefit" (*don bzang po*), it is "unnecessary" (*dgos pa med*), and without purpose. No matter the shape or form or adornment of the composition, it should possess good intention *and* it should function to lead or guide the mind (*blo*) to the "innermost" (*phugs*) Dharma. Such texts function as agents of activity in the world. They are not passive, merely presenting themselves for consumption, but they enact certain kinds of agency – in this case, the agency that directly benefits others. The appearance of a "composition," whether "poetic" (*snyan ngag*) or dirty talk (*btsog gtam*) such as are found in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, is far less important than what such a text *does* in the world. The view that the written word can actively function as an agent of change or transformation is central to the *Namthar's* overall ethic in which a myriad of genres and styles of writing are brought to bear in order to leave no stone unturned regarding the possibilities for self formation through literary practices.

This point is demonstrated in the next part of this episode when his interlocutors ask Drukpa Kunley to explain a section from the first chapter from the *Kalacakra Tantra* on worldly systems that describes the use of weapons such as "catapults" (*sgyugs*) and "fire arrows" (*me mda'*). The interlocutors ask, "Isn't the mention of these both "deceptive" (*ngan g.yo*) and "merciless" (*brtse bral*)?"[66] In response, the Drukpa Kunley performs his own hermeneutics on the text for the benefit of his interlocutors. In fact, he says, the text makes use of such metaphors to point to something entirely different – catapults and fire arrows are martial metaphors employed to generate the attitude that should be taken by the practitioner who practices to subdue the arising of concepts due to afflictions. If the text is read literally, this will

[66] '*o na dus 'khor gyi 'jig rten khams le nas/ rgyugs dang/ me mda' sogs gsungs pa/ brtse bral dang ngan g.yor mi 'gro 'am zer*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 23b.2-3.

be a sure cause for misinterpretation. Such a composition should only be read for what it points to.[67]

This theme of seeing beneath the surface appearance to the essence of things is evident throughout the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*. Appearances of self, of others, and of phenomena are inherently deceptive. In this instance, deceptiveness operates on two registers. The first refers to the writer. If the writer does not have clear insight into the appropriate use of metaphors to communicate meaning and generate benefit for self and others, his compositions will be useless. At the same time, the reader who relies only on the literal meaning of the words, without the requisite ability to see through to their meaning, will be deceived as to what is true and what is false. Compositions of the sort envisioned here are never what they appear to be on the surface. Instead, they are doorways into something else. The truth or falsity of what is said in the text isn't as important as the direction in which the text is pointing. Drukpa Kunley instructs his interlocutors to direct their gaze beyond the surface appearance of the words and into the meaning they point to. At the same time, he confirms that the literary form used to direct their gaze is essential to the ability to gain insight into the meaning. Form and content cannot be separated.

[67] *de ni mi 'gro ste/ lus kyi rnam pa la brten bcas pa'i rtog pa'i rtsa gnas gzhom pa'i brda yin te/ dus 'khor nas 'di gsungs/ sems can rnams ni thar pa'i slad du mchog gi thugs rjes sna tshogs chad rnams dag kyang lus la'o/ gsungs pas/ mda' mkhan gzhu mkhan dang dpe mi mtshungs byas so*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 23b.3-5.

III. Conclusion

This chapter has provided evidence of Drukpa Kunley's deliberate resistance to the writing of his *namthar* within the conventions generally followed by Tibetan biographies, such as chronological order, linear arrangement, and narrative consistency. Instead, we have seen how Drukpa Kunley advocates instead for a spontaneous expression of things as they are, as they arise naturally, before the habitual tendency to organize and structure experience comes into play. This evidence strengthens the claims of this thesis that the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* uses a cacophony of diverse literary styles to effect an ethic of narrative disruption, thereby opening up a space for recognizing the moment-to-moment nature of human experience. We have seen too how part and parcel of recognizing the momentariness of experience is an acknowledgment that resisting this truth leads inevitably to self-deception, hypocrisy, and delusion. One way to counteract the subtlety of hypocrisy is to use writing as a means by which to expose one's faults both to oneself and to others.

We can guess that Drukpa Kunley might well agree with the aspect of the rationale behind Puritan conversion narrative life writings aimed at deliberate acknowledgement and exposure of one's faults. As Daniel Booy describes this, because human corruption could only be healed by God's grace, the only thing a sinner could legitimately do for himself was to examine the spiritual state of his body, speech and mind – to scrutinize obsessively the changing condition of his spiritual state. One of the best ways to do this was by representing it in writing. Spiritual self writing functioned in these cases as a means by which to show how the struggling soul bared itself to itself in an agonizing moment-to-moment recording of sins, both

perceived and suspected.[68] However, it is also clear that Drukpa Kunley would have had little interest in the tortured sense of guilt and sin with which many Puritans were also burdened. In addition, he would have little interest in the recording of sufferings and sorrows, such as those written about by the hermitess Orgyen Chökyi ('O rgyan chos kyi, 1675-1729)[69] or by Milarepa's biographers when describing the hardships the yogi endured.[70] Instead, as we have seen above and as will become more evident in the analyses below, Drukpa Kunley delights in the joy and freedom that results from disregarding fixed ideas of how things, such as a biography, *should* be. As one of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*'s main themes, this notion of carefree pleasure animates and shifts the habitual orientation towards the notion of acknowledging and exposing our faults. For Drukpa Kunley, exposing his faults is an exercise in liberation, in release from the grinding effort of maintaining false appearances that serve only to create suffering for oneself and others.

[68] Booy 2004.

[69] Schaeffer 2004, 7-8.

[70] Lhalungpa 1992.

Chapter 3

Uses Of The Literary In Ethical-Formation

A poet should learn with his eyes
the forms of leaves
he should know how to make
people laugh when they are together
he should get to see
what they are really like
he should know about oceans and mountains
in themselves and
the sun and the moon and the stars
his mind should enter into the seasons
he should go among many people
in many places and
learn their languages.[1]

This poem, written by a 12th century Kashmiri poet, resonates with the the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* narrator's representation of himself as a writer whose travels through the world and whose use of melodies and colloquialisms from different areas forms a foundation for poetic expression. Both in the poem and for Drukpa Kunley, a poet is one who uses the literary to engage with the world's diversity, to see what is really there, and to communicate these truths to others. While not all of the compositions included in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* are poems, the ethos expressed in Kşemendra's poem mirrors the telos and spirit of the various literary forms Drukpa Kunley employs.

The aim of this chapter is to examine and describe how the ethic of disruption created by the cacophony of literary styles functions in the formation of ethical persons. Here I explore the narrator's use of different literary forms to express and model an ethical way of being; one that is centered around a willingness to observe, examine, and reveal the depths of human hypocrisy and self-deception. This chapter also illustrates how these various and mixed literary

[1] 12th Century Kashmiri poet Kşemendra. Merwin and Moussaieff Masson 1981, 5-6.

forms all work together to disrupt and replace habitual processes of linear self-narration with a spontaneous and carefree response to the demands of particular situations.

In reading the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar,* we encounter a narrator who is engaged in writing, singing, and speaking the truth about himself and others, and as we have seen in Chapter Two, the Drukpa Kunley narrator explicitly intends his writing to be of benefit to others. This manner of intentionally truthful expression bears similarities to Edward McGushin's description of *askeses,* or "exercises of oneself in the activity of thought."[2] In their function of effecting ethical formation, Drukpa Kunley's writing practices also act similarly to those techniques described by Hadot as "spiritual exercises" – and by Foucault as "technologies of the self."[3] In particular, Foucault recalls the practice engaged in during the Hellenistic age, when taking care of oneself became intimately linked to continuous writing activity. One form this kind of writing took consisted in putting down on paper a list of one's faults at the end of each day so as to reflect on their results and recognize them clearly. This practice reflected a shift towards a more intensified concern with the self. A relation developed between practices of writing and attention to nuances of life, mood, and reading. Through these modalities, a person's experience of herself was intensified and broadened specifically through the act of writing.[4]

[2] McGushin 2007, xii.

[3] Hadot 1995, 79-126. Foucault 1988, 16-49.

[4] Foucault 1988, 16-49.

A further dimension of this practice was to develop truth as a force for ethical formation. As Foucault explains, "...if Seneca recalls every evening his mistakes, it is to memorize the moral precepts of the conduct, and memory is nothing else than the force of the truth when it is permanently present and active in the soul."[5] For Drukpa Kunley, the practice of putting into writing both his own and others faults participates in the ethos of truth telling Foucault describes. It functions to "make of the individual a place where truth can appear and act as a real force through the presence of memory and the efficacy of discourse."[6]

Drukpa Kunley's investment in telling the truth also recalls Foucault's analyses of the figure of the Greek *parrhesiastes* – the ethical truth-teller.[7] Such a person possesses two primary moral qualities. First, he has a particular understanding of truth that is based on honest self-examination. Second, he believes it is his duty to tell the truth to improve or help other people, including himself. In telling the truth, however, the Greek parrhesiates was willing to risk his life and to endure the criticism of others.[8] While in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* there is no sense that Drukpa Kunley is literally risking his life to tell the truth, he is often exposed to the criticisms of his interlocturs and peers. As we look at different compositions in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, we will see these qualities emerging: genuine self-knowledge and a keen wish to communicate the truth to others.

[5] Foucault 1993, 210.

[6] Foucault 1993, 210n.23.

[7] Foucault 2010, 1986, and 2001.

[8] Peters 2003, 207-223.

Drukpa Kunley's fearless declarations of the truth work as an incitement to his readers to take up the practice of telling the truth about themselves – a practice viewed as integral to the process of ethical formation.[9] At the same time, and similar to Seneca's willingness to expose his faults to himself through writing, acknowledging and exposing the truth about oneself in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* appears to create a different kind of ethical person than that which is imagined in ideal representations of Buddhist enlightenment.

In the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar,* the ideal of the fully perfected person is a facade, obstructing our ability to acknowledge the tenuousness of our self-narratives at any given moment. Drukpa Kunley insists that it is the hypocrisy that arises from clinging to fixed ideas of who we are that must be seen, examined, and accepted. Often stimulated by the questions asked of him by his interlocutors, Drukpa Kunley responds spontaneously using different literary styles and genres to reveal the multiple layers of the human propensity for hypocrisy and self-deception. This chapter describes how this process takes place by analyzing how the narrator's use of each literary form provides him with a different medium by which to expose this basic truth. His employment of these diverse literary forms permits him to "think differently and thereby *become* different."[10] When he tells the truth about himself and others, I will argue that he is intending to show how the project of ethical-formation must recognize the ways in which human life overflows the boundaries articulated in normative Buddhist accounts of enlightenment and includes an ongoing awareness of our imperfections and self-deceptions.

[9] Foucault 1986 and 2001.

[10] McGushin 2007, XIV.

As this chapter progresses it will become clear that the world represented in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* is one in which all forms of linguistic communication are valued and explored. The narrator, Drukpa Kunley, is a person who is fluent in each. He sings songs, writes letters and commentaries, dialogues and poems, his own autobiography and parodies. He quotes from scriptures, stories, song collections, and teachings. He reads across genres, from commentarial and scriptural literature, to collections of aphorisms and proverbs and lists of practical advice for the ordinary person. In spite of his claims to the contrary: "In this life I have not studied much..." it becomes clear just how learned and sophisticated our wandering yogi is.

As Drukpa Kunley engages in composing his own biography, recording his own spontaneous songs, writing his own poems, and transcribing his interactions with a vast range of others, he represents himself as a person who is deeply self-reflexive about the practices and processes of writing, as well as with linguistic expressions of many kinds. All these literarily oriented frames are visible to an attentive reader, who is implicitly challenged to receive the messages they impart.

Each section of this chapter analyzes a different literary form in order to show how each participates in enacting the ethic of narrative disruption that allows for a recognition of and reconciliation with self-hypocrisy. Each genre avails itself of both a sense of delight and humor as well as sharp critique as it works to reveal Drukpa Kunley's nature and that of his interlocutors within the text. Each literary form also points to the Buddha and his teachings as the ultimate source of authority. Recognizing that these literary forms do not work in isolation from each other, this chapter considers the overall strategically haphazard arrangement of the

Drukpa Kunley Namthar in order to reveal its tactical underpinnings in the project of ethical-formation.

In addition to examining how the cacophony of literary forms works to ethically form the narrator, this chapter equally considers the "model reader" who is formed as a result of reading this *namthar.* Here my reading is indebted to Paul Ricoeur's notion of $Mimesis_3$ (discussed above in the Introduction) – the idea that a model reader is one who is transformed by her engagement with a text and the imaginative variations to which she has been subjected as a result of reading or hearing it. This transformation is what Ricoeur terms "refiguration" – the effect the text has on the reader as "an intrinsic component of the present or actual meaning of the text."[11] The narrative strategies – constituted by the variety of literary forms and rhetorical devices found in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* - communicate the contours of a perfected person whose awareness of the different expressions of truth as revealed by the different literary genres is essential to ethical-formation. This is equally applicable to both narrator and reader. As discussed in the introduction, I define narrative strategies as the communications that take place between the form of the text and its content, as well as how these impact the reader.[12] This examination includes how such instructions highlight multiple means of knowing, accepting and exposing the truth of self-deception and hypocrisy as essential to attaining the state of the realized person on the Tibetan Buddhist path.

[11] Ricoeur 1983, 77.

[12] Hudson 2006, 4.

I. Self's Words

I am a feather on the bright sky
I am the blue horse that runs on the plain
I am the fish that rolls, shining, in the water
I am the shadow that follows a child
I am the evening light, the lustre of meadows
I am an eagle playing with the wind
I am a cluster of bright beads
I am the farthest star
I am the cold of dawn
I am the roaring of the rain
I am the glitter of the crust of the snow
I am the long track of the moon in a lake
I am a flame of four colors
I am a deer standing away in the dusk
I am a field of sumac and the pomme blanche
I am an angle of geese in the winter sky
I am the hunger of a young wolf
I am the whole dream of these things[13]

The first kind of composition I analyze in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* is a form of writing I term "personal testimony" or "self's words." These compositions speak in various ways about the kind of ethical person the texts envision. Like the poem by N. Scott Momaday quoted above, these compositions represent some of the most self-consciously reflective sections of the overall text, as well as those that speak most personally and evocatively to the reader. Many are framed as Drukpa Kunley's response to a question or comment put to him by various other people about his behavior, dress, or more general way of being. Some contain no narrative frame at all but appear to be soliloquies where Drukpa Kunley launches directly into an explanation of who he is and why he is that way. Because these compositions are so personal, they are also some of the most interesting in the *Namthar*. They are a clear

[13] N. Scott Momaday, a self-portrait poem, "The Delight Song of Tsoai-talee," in *The Gourd Dancer,* 1976.

demonstration of what it means to exercise oneself through acts of philosophical thought, contemplation, and literary expression.[14] The result is an attitude, not of self-renunciation as is so often seen in Himalayan Buddhist biography and autobiography, but rather of self-confession as truth-telling and affirmation – a "work of oneself upon oneself" – in order to transform positively and mature one's relationship to the self.[15] These episodes provide evidence of Foucault's notion that writing the self "transforms the familiar into something strange," and, in the process, reconfigures the relationship that one can have to idealized representations as well as to commonly accepted doctrinal stipulations. Using literary forms to express the truth about himself, Drukpa Kunley creates a different vision of what it means to be a perfected person, one that allows him to see both himself and others more clearly.[16]

In these next examples Drukpa Kunley comments on his physical appearance – one aspect of his way of being in the world. In a number of cases, these kinds of self-statements arise in response to accusations that criticize him for not presenting himself in a comfortable or easily understandable way. Drukpa Kunley travels to the country of Cha where a large group of people say to him, "Dharma Lord Kunley, you do not wear either the robes of a monastic or the robes of a realized yogi. In addition, you simply do whatever you want. These two things set a

[14] McGushin 2007, XI-XIII.

[15] McGushin 2007, XIV.

[16] McGushin 2007, XIV.

harmful example for most people. Whatever are you thinking?"[17] Drukpa Kunley first responds to the question concerning his style of dress:

> To be a monk, one should be in harmony with monastic discipline. As for that, it is something very difficult to attain. Those yellow-robed fellows without any vows—they make me want to vomit! I don't want to be like that! And to be a realized yogi, one must have realized the true nature of things. As for those fakes who have not realized how things actually are, they are like donkeys covered over with leopard skins. They have no inner essence! I myself, out of a sense of shame, cannot wear the yogi's garb.[18]

Then he addresses the question of his activities:

> Whether my example is harmful or not is determined primarily by the different types of human attitudes [at play]. If a person really wants to descend to the hell realms, whether or not he has been taught to imitate shit, he will still know about it! Whereas, if someone really wants to achieve Buddhahood, he will imitate the Bhagavan.[19]

For Drukpa Kunley, when a person represents him or herself *as* something (*as* a monk, *as* a yogi), his or her appearance should be "in harmony" (*mthun pa*) with the meanings and essences that their surface appearance signifies. Appearance, shape, and form communicate truths that lie beyond them. In particular, in the case of a monk or a yogi, appearance transmits a way of being connected to particular forms of truth. The monk's dress ideally functions as a visible sign that one is following the monastic rules of the Vinaya. The yogin's dress ideally

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[17] *Chos rje kun legs pa/ sku chas yang na rab byung dang/ yang na rtogs ldan gyi chas mi mdzad par/ ci byung ma byung mdzad pa 'di 'dra phal cher gyi mig ltos la'ang gnod/ thugs la ci 'dras dgongs,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 24b.5-6.

[18] *Rab byung byed pa la ni/ 'dul ba dang 'thun pa zhig byed dgos par 'dug/ de ni sgrub pa dka' mo rang cig 'dug/ ser gzugs sdom pa med pa 'di ni tshad las skyug bro bas byed snying mi 'dod/ rtog ldan byed pa la ni gnas lugs rtogs dgos/ gnas lugs ma rtogs pa'i gzugs brnyan 'di' ni/ bong bu la gzig lpags bkab pa dang 'dra/ nang na bsdu zums med pa'i rnal 'byor pa'i chas 'di ni/ nga ni ngo tsha nas byed mi nus,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 24b.6-25a.2.

[19] *Mig ltos la gnod mi gnod mi'i blo rags gtso/ dmyal bar 'gro snying 'dod na gang skyag pa'i lad mo ma bslabs rung shes yong/ sangs rgyas snying 'dod na bcom ldan 'das kyi lad mo byed yong byas,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 25b.2-3.

functions as a visible sign that one has understood the "fundamental nature" (*gnas lugs*). If the appearance and the truth to which such appearances point are not in harmony, the result is deception for oneself and for others. Those who wear yellow robes but who do not maintain monastic vows deceive themselves, deceive others, and effectively degrade the potentiality for truth inherent in the appearance. Likewise, those who dress as "realized ones" (*rtogs ldan*), without having realized the essential nature of mind, sabotage the power of the yogic appearance to perform its communicative potential. In essence, this mode of signification is identical to the function of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, whose form, using words as its primary modality, functions to communicate a way of being in the world that far exceeds its strictly linguistic messages.

This composition stresses the narrator's personal feelings. Monks who don't maintain their vows make him "want to vomit." He "doesn't want to be like that!" And as for pretending to be a realized practitioner, "out of a sense of shame" (*nga ni ngo tsha nas*) he is "unable to do it" (*byed mi nus*). There is long history of the importance of shame in the Buddhist moral and ethical context. In the Abhidharma teachings that discuss the unwholesome mental factors, shame and embarrassment represent, respectively, the personal and communal ramifications of engaging in nonvirtuous activities. In paticular, shame represents the moral value that arises from the subject's inner integrity. It prevents a person from engaging in wrongdoing by virtue of an inner moral compass that recognizes "right" from "wrong."[20] For Drukpa Kunley, the feelings of shame manifest as refraining from representing himself as something he feels he

[20] Wangchen 2009, 141. Engle 2009, 281-291.

isn't. However, this section also functions to remove Drukpa Kunley from a common frame of reference, thereby in some sense confirming his interlocutor's fear. If he's not a yogi and he's not a monk, what is he? Drukpa Kunley provides no answer to this question and he never explains or tries to deny the accusation that he "does whatever he wants."

In this composition, Drukpa Kunley points out that truth, free from self-deception and hypocrisy, is not only about what is *said*, but also about the way such things as personal appearance, gestures, body language also communicate. Recognizing these multiple levels of communication, we have a better chance of grasping how the kind of personal testimony Drukpa Kunley performs – testimony that unreservedly exposes his thoughts and feelings – *works* to encourage an ideal reader to emulate it. Providing both explicit commentary and implicit or indirect instructions on how to see beyond other people's surface appearances, this composition encourages readers to pay attention to situations as a whole – including both the obvious and the less obvious aspects of a person's character.

After enumerating the deceptive appearances and misrepresentations of underlying qualities he hopes to avoid, Drukpa Kunley states, "My best qualities are that I don't think malicious thoughts (*bsam ngan*) and I don't make future plans (*phyi tshis*)." These two orientations tell us something specific about how the narrator attempts to live his life. First, he works with what we might call the "judging mind" – the tendency to wish others ill or condemn them for different reasons. This is very interesting in light of Drukpa Kunley's persistent exposure of both his own and other people's faults. If he doesn't think maliciously, then he perhaps views these revelations as statements of fact – truths whose declaration arises from an

altruistic orientation and perhaps even imperative instinct, not from any desire to judge or condemn others for their faults. As we have seen him say above in Chapter Two, his purpose in writing and speaking is to help other beings, so that exposing deception in people's ways of being is deemed beneficial, not malicious. Indeed, if he were to condemn others maliciously, we would find it difficult to account for the persistent sense of humor and lightheartedness that permeates many of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*'s compositions.

In addition to this quality of non-maliciousness, Drukpa Kunley identifies 'not making future plans' as one of his best qualities. By consciously resisting projecting into an unknown future, he grounds himself in the present situation, whatever that may be. Hence his responses to various situations is always context-specific and never about the different kinds of hopes, fears or projections that might influence his thoughts or actions if he were to be planning for a future that might or might not manifest.

This quality of not planning for the future also helps to support Drukpa Kunley's self-statement (in the title of the *namthar*) that he has written the text freely, and that each of the compositions found in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* arises spontaneously, based on the immediate situation at hand. There is little feeling of the compositions being heavy-handed in their messages or overly conceptual and meticulously crafted. The next examples exemplify this light-hearted, carefree quality, the feeling the Drukpa Kunley is simply speaking out exactly what arises in his mind.

In the following composition, Drukpa Kunley again talks about how the appearances that people, including himself, present to the world communicate something beyond words

about their way of being. The question, however, is whether the appearances people present to the world are or are not in harmony with the truth of how such people are. Here, some people ask Drukpa Kunley, "Dharma Lord, there is no style of dress that you have not adopted. When you were young, did you have a particular yogic outfit that was very attractive?"[21] It is first interesting to note that Drukpa Kunley's interlocutors have a sense that he has appeared in a variety of appearances. Now, they specifically want to know how he appeared to others when he was young. The Tibetan term for "attractive" used here is *yid 'phrog pa*, which literally means, "to steal away the mind," or we could say, "to ravish away the mind." The implication is that particularly potent and pleasurable experiences can arise through the sensual medium of sight. This kind of communication extends beyond or outside of that which words alone can accomplish. Similar to the sensory experience of hearing a beautiful piece of music, seeing an alluring costume or appearance causes a somatic response in the body of the observer. Drukpa Kunley describes the felt experience his appearance evoked in more detail.

> When I was young, officials arrived to hassle us by gathering people to perform district labor taxes. But when they looked at me, their minds were captivated by my carefree and relaxed state.[22]

Drukpa Kunley remarks that his way of holding himself and the appearance he presented to others worked like a magnet for those who saw him, disrupting their ordinary patterns of thought and, presumably, causing them to abandon their agenda of conscripting Drukpa Kunley

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[21] *Chos rjes sku chas ma mdzad pa cig mi 'dug/ sku gzhon dus rnal 'byor pa'i chas mi yid 'phrog pa de 'dra e gnang zer,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 136b.2.

[22] *Gzhon dus mi khral chus mnar ba dang/ blo lad 'ga' res bltas na sems 'chor ba'i blo bde bde mo 'di 'dra yang byas,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 136b.2-3.

for work. The officials who found themselves unable to look away from Drukpa Kunley may not have had a clear idea of why this was the case. Drukpa Kunley describes how their minds were captivated by, or "fell under the sway of" (*'chor ba*) his "carefree and relaxed" state of being (*blo bde bde mo*). Lest we believe that it is only the relaxed and carefree way he appeared that attracted attention, Drukpa Kunley next provides the details of his appearance.

> Since I had attained easy power over breath, I dressed only in a simple garment of light cotton from Namthang. I made myself short loose pants of reddish-brown, coarse fabric and I put on canvas shoes that the dogs would not chew. I carried a small tent just big enough for me. In a triangular string-bag, I carried good quality materials for torma offerings, a sharp, iron flint and stone, two awls – one small and one large – four or five different size needles, a cotton bag capable of holding five measures of tsampa, four leather soles, a pair of gloves and a little book of oral instructions. I hung a small square cushion over my back and I carried a ritual khatvanga. I fastened a red wooden damaru at my side. I let my hair grow very long and messy and I hung medium-size rings of shell over my ears. I had a bowl with two loops attached, hanging form a larger ring on my belt. I didn't carry food for more than three or four days at the most.[23]

The first clause of this description of his appearance states that Drukpa Kunley had attained "easy power over breath" (*rlung nus dga' mos yod pas*). "Breath" (*rlung*) in this statement refers to the Sanskrit *prāṇa,* which signifies the subtlest moving energies of the body. Goeffrey Samuel describes how the extremely subtle nature of *rlung* "allows it to move through the body without being held up by firm visible structures."[24] *Rlung* is also said to carry the mind (*sems*) in

[23] *Rlung nus dga' mos yod pas/ nam thang gi ras gos rkyang cig gon/ pa ca rag smug po'i ang rag thung sbung pa cig byas/ lham kha sha khyis mi phed pa cig gon/ lcog bu rang shong srab la 'grig pa cig khyer/ dra ba zur gsum cig gi nang du/ gtor cha legs po gcig dang/ me lcags rnon po gcig/ snyung bu sbom phra gnyis/ khab sbom phra bzhi lnga cig/ ras sgye rtsam bre lnga tsam ldugs thub pa cig/ rdog pa krad mig bzhi tsam dang/ rgyun changs sbar gang/ gdams ngag pod chung gcig rnams bcug/ gdan chung gru bzhi cig dra ba la gzed/ kha tang ga legs po cig khyer/ seng ldeng gi da ma ru cig blo la btags/ ska sbom log ge ba zhig byas/ dung long 'khor ma che chung ran pos btags/ kha phor la a long yod pa'i che phyogs nas bzung/ zhag gsum tshun las lhag pa'i zas mi 'dzin,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 136b.3-6.

[24] Samuel and Johnston 2013, 87.

the sense that concepts and thoughts "ride on the currents of the wind." When *rlung* is disturbed, among other illnesses, a person may be overwhelmed with afflictive thoughts and emotions. The person who has achieved power (*nus pa*) over *rlung* is thought to have realized emptiness and overcome the deceptions of ordinary dualistic appearances.[25] The yogi Milarepa was considered to be such a person and it was his power over *prāṇa* that allowed him to fly through the air or shrink his body small enough to fit inside a yak's horn.[26]

Drukpa Kunley's comment that he has achieved this state of being, followed by a description of his physical appearance, suggests that for him there is a perceived sense of harmony between his manner of being and his appearance. Unlike the yogis garbed in leopard's skins mentioned above, there is no such dissonance in his self-perception, or it seems, in others perception of him. We should note that in the example above, Drukpa Kunley's appearance, the way he dresses, confounds his viewers. Since he does not appear to fit into any easily identified category, people don't know what to make of him. Whereas, in the current example, Drukpa Kunley's viewers are confounded by virtue of a different experience – an experience of astonishment and amazement that also renders them unable to conceptually make sense of what they see. In both cases, seeing Drukpa Kunley results in a suspension of the regular or habitual mental processes of categorization and reification that characterize unenlightened perception.

[25] Blezer 1992, 39-40.

[26] Urgyen 1994, 231. Norbu 2008, 353.

Drukpa Kunley next talks about the kinds of reaction his appearance and the appearance of his companions elicits.

> ...the women [weeding the fields] asked us, "Where do you yogis come from?
> Seeing how relaxed you are, we also feel so happy. We would like to follow you.
> Will you take us?" And they stared wide-eyed at us as if enchanted.[27]

The description of the girls staring at the yogis "wide-eyed as if enchanted," is reminiscent of the Indian religious concept of *darśana*, i.e., the exhilarating and transformative experience that arises for the disciple who really *sees* the Buddha, or another teacher.[28] Such seeing can only take place when the student drops his or her expectations and concepts about the teacher and instead engages in a direct experience of that person. Such an experience is augmented when the teacher presents or gives herself over to the view of others, who, confronted with the power of the visual transmission, relinquish some of their grasping hold on themselves.[29] This is not unlike our contemporary experience of watching a movie that is so well done that we are subsumed within it, forgetting ourselves and our real life situations until the reel has finished.[30]

However, *darśana* or the visual encounter with a saint includes another dimension of experience in that the truth embodied by the teacher is offered up to and communicated through the visual sensory medium to the disciple. The exchange has its fruition in the answering response that is involuntarily called up by the disciple's somatic and emotional

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[27] *Bla ma rnal 'byor pa khyed rnam pa ga nas byon/ khyed rnam pa'i blo yi bde bshad la/ gned 'di tsho phyag phyir khrid na e yong zer mig bya zlos nas ce re blta ba la,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 137a.2.

[28] Eck 1998.

[29] Rotman 2009, 179.

[30] Rotman 2009, 139-142.

recognition of truth. Harrison describes how the central act of Hindu worship, from the point of view of the layperson, is to stand in the presence of the deity and to behold this figure with one's own eyes, "to see and be seen by the deity..."[31] Thus, "seeing" in this religious sense is not an act initiated by the worshipper, but instead, the deity presents itself to be seen in its image, or the teacher gives himself to be seen by the people. Dejarlais notes that the way images are perceived, words are uttered, or touch engaged ties into how certain truths are established, "how certain social arrangements continue in time..."[32] The truthful nature of things embodied by the teacher and perceived by the disciple as an experience beyond intellectual ideation, stimulates the same inner, but unrecognized nature of the disciple. The disciple's own inner truth responds to its true self as seen in the body of the teacher. In this way, the disciple can directly experience her own true nature, without further need for mediation.[33] Thus, when the women in the fields and the tax collectors *see* Drukpa Kunley, their ideas about how things are or should be are confounded. The ordinary narrative patterns of thought by which we tell ourselves stories about other people based on their appearances is disrupted. Instead, they perceive a different kind of truth – a truth that is more in harmony with how things are.

This kind of truth transmission is reminiscent of the second of the three types of authoritative transmission theorized in one school of Tibetan Buddhism – transmission by way

[31] Harrison in Gyatso 1992, 223.

[32] Dejarlais 2003, 342.

[33] Eckel 1994. Eck 1998, 6.

of symbols (*rigs 'dzin brda rgyud*).[34] In her analysis of the legitimation of the Tibetan Treasure tradition, Gyatso identifies three types of signifiers that mark this form of transmission: "signs," "semiosis" and "signify." She notes how the semiosis of the transmission in symbols can take multiple forms, such as the singing of birds, in order to communicate truth by the barest degree of mediation in the form of an object that appears to the eye of the disciple.[35] A good example from another Buddhist tradition can be found in the Zen Buddhist *Flower Sermon*, where the Buddha holds up a flower before a vast assembly of his disciples. Only one disciple, Mahākāśyapa, smiles, signaling his understanding and reception of the Buddha's direct transmission of wisdom via the mediating image of the flower.[36]

Drukpa Kunley's description of his interaction with the young field workers in the section quoted above also contains a self-statement about his physical state of being utterly relaxed and blissful (*bde shas*). In that section, I translated *bde shas* as "relaxed." However, this term also suggests the pleasurable or blissful experience of such a state of being. For the young women who encounter Drukpa Kunley in the field, as well as for the tax enforcers who arrive to conscript the villagers, Drukpa Kunley's appearance generates a state of such amazement and awe that it becomes impossible for them to create a narratively coherent story about him. In this example, we see how the ethic of disruption functions in terms of the *namthar's* content to break up and confound the impulse to fix and identify reliable narratives about others. Drukpa

[34] Gyatso 1986, 13.

[35] Gyatso 1986, 13-15.

[36] Welter 2000, 75-109.

Kunley's bodily state of relaxation and bliss affects the young women in the fields to such a powerful extent that they wish to drop all their ideas of what they are doing and who they are and follow him wherever he goes.

This theme of relaxation which is inherently divorced from expectations and attachments is integral to the meditations of the Mahāmudrā tradition. Roberts' translation of a treatise composed by Lama Shang (1123-1193) contains the following description of the Mahāmudrā meditator:

> They do not deliberately do anything.
> They remain in a natural state of relaxation.
> They are never apart from the experience of the dharmakāya.
> They have no attachment to anything.[37]

The theme of disrupting narratives processes by using the *namthar's* content to demonstrate how this takes place, is elaborated in another composition in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* where, again questioned about his style of dress, Drukpa Kunley describes the appearances of and his responses to a range of different religious figures. Ultimately, he refuses to describe his own appearance, thereby thwarting the human habit of creating narratives about others based on their appearances. First, however, he describes his own emotional and somatic experiences at the moment when he sees these other persons.

> Another time, I arrived at Ongtod Zhingka in Lhasa. In the upper meadows, some authentic Dharma practitioners of different tenet systems had gathered. They asked me, "Dharma Lord Kunley, what system of dress do you and your disciples follow?"
> I replied:

[37] Roberts 2011, 110.

> "In the teachings of the Blessed One, it says that if one is a renunciant, than his dress is best...But these days, there is no Buddha. For every Lama, there is a system; for every system, there is a style of dress.[38]

In his response to the question, before describing anyone else, Drukpa Kunley appeals to the highest authority, the Buddha. From the view of the Buddhadharma, what matters is the actual condition, the state of being, of the person, not what he or she wears. The most worthy state of being is the state of being a genuine renunciant. But, Drukpa Kunley says, these days the renunciatory orientation has degraded into individual proclivities that may have little or nothing to do with renunciation, and everything to do with creating different impressions for those who view them.

> Look at the Dharma Lord Lhatsun Ponlop and his disciples. They wear thick, collarless gowns lined with fleece and meditation hats on their heads that make them look like the mouth of a wine jug anointed with red oche! This is a very astonishing sight!
>
> The Lord Tsang Myön and his followers wear long loincloths. When they gently blow their thighbone trumpets, it sounds like *sbu sbu*! This makes them seem especially noble and excellent figures.
>
> The Lord U Myön and his followers wear short loincloths. They plait their long hair down the back of their heads. Their thighbone trumpets make the abrupt sounds of *hod, hod, tshag, tshag, tsag, tsag*. Whenever I see this prickly appearance, I want to run away.
>
> Likewise, the Nyingma masters and their disciples wear upper garments with long sleeves. On their lower bodies, over short pants, they wear the monk's upper robe folded into eighteen pleats. On the top of their heads they wear the Guru's hat adorned with a mirror like a small door. The tips of their beards and

[38] *Yang lha sa 'ongs stod zhing khar/ grub mtha' mi gcig pa'i chos pa'i khungs 'ga' re tshogs nas/ nga la chos rje kun legs pa khyed dpon slob kyi cha lugs 'di 'dra su'i lugs yin zer ba la/ bcom ldan 'das kyi bstan pa la rab tu byung ba cig yin na khong gi cha lugs de kha legs pa yin... da lta bcom ldan 'das ni ma bzhugs/ bla ma re la chos lugs re/ chos lugs re la cha lugs re 'dug pas,* DK1, Vol. Kha 1978, 2b.5-6 .

their facial hair are braided into their locks of matted hair with tsampa and chang.

When those dressed in these different styles appear, I really enjoy them![39]

These four descriptions emphasize the power of appearances to transmit certain kinds of information. Drukpa Kunley's comment that upon seeing each group he feels (respectively) astonished, enobled, like running away, and suffused with pleasure reveals a receptivity to the affective states that arise for him when his eyes alight upon them. Just as in the first self-statement analyzed above, it is through the sense faculty of sight that these various somatic experiences are generated.

In the first example above, Drukpa Kunley describes the appearance of the Dharma Lord Lhatsun Ponlop and his disciples,[40] using the metaphor of a wine jug anointed with red oche to create an image for the reader of how these practitioners appear. With their fleece collars and red-rimmed hats, these figures are quite surpising, eliciting laughter we can imagine may or may not be exactly kind. Perhaps Drukpa Kunley means to clue us into how completely ridiculous these persons look or perhaps he means to suggest a feeling of awe or amazement at how wondrously they appear.

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[39] *Chos rje lha btsun pa dpon slob kyis/ bem po gong med re bzhes/ dbu la sgom zhu re bzhes pa 'di yang dam ba'i kha la btsag byugs pa 'dra ba tshad las ya mtshan pa cig 'dug/ rje gtsang smyon pa dpon slob kyis/ ang rag ring po re bzhes/ rkang dung drag po mi gtong/ sbu sbu zer ba 'di yang jo bzang mdog kha po khyad du 'phags pa 'dra 'dug yang/ rje dbus smyon pa dpon slob kyis/ ang rag thung thung bzhes/ ral pa zur yon mdzad/ rkang dung hod hod tshag tshag tsag tsag zer 'bud pa 'di yang tshad las skyen mdog rnam pa sems 'chor ba cig 'dug/ yang khong rnying ma dpon slob kyis na bza' stod ring mdzad/ gos thung gi khar shab thabs sul bco brgyad tsam dkris/ sma ra dang bya ru kha dang rgya sogs kyi rtse mo la chang dang rtsam pa'i ral pa khrol le byas pa/ 'oyan pan zhu'i rtse la me long sgo tsam rgyab pa gsol nas byung tsa na/ de kha rang sbom la brjid pa bag dro ba yin yin 'dra 'dug,* DK1, Vol. Kha 1978, 3a.1-5.

[40] I have been unable to determine the identity of this individual. Ardussi does not provide any information in his MA Thesis on Volume Kha where this composition is to be found.

In the second example, the disciples of Tsang Myön convey a sense of majesty and pomp, but we must wonder, based on Drukpa Kunley's often highly critical view of Tsang Myön, whether this is meant to be flattering or instead, to point out the arrogance and pretentiousness of this elite group. Likewise for U Myön and his disciples, Drukpa Kunley remarks on how everything about them – how they look, what they sound like – makes him feel so uncomfortable he just wants to run away. For the Nyingmas, rather than having an emotional reaction, Drukpa Kunley gives a detailed description of the various elements of their appearance, in essence painting a vivid and memorable picture of them. In general, we can see that each style of practitioner elicits a different emotional, somatic, or intellectual response from Drukpa Kunley. For each appearance he creates a certain kind of narrative about who such persons are and what qualities they have. Having created such ideas or narratives, he demonstrates how these invite him to play in the sensory and intellectual realms evoked by the different appearances. At the same time, we see that there is a danger that in creating stories about others, that are themselves connected to affective and emotional responses, one may forget that religious dress should mirror inner realization.

As the composition continues, Drukpa Kunley becomes more and more specific about the emotional and physical reactions he experiences when he sees the appearances of different kinds of practitioners.

> Also, the Kapopas wear their plaited hair in a fine-looking round ball. On the crown of their heads they have plaited tufts of hair, topknots, which make me want to laugh and which look like smiles. They wear a white monk's skirt folded into a hundred pleats. Hanging down their sides, they wear finger sheaths, Chinese inkpots in cases, and pens dangling down. On their chests they wear mirrors. Their pointed shoes with curled toes make a sound of *sil sil sprug sprug*

> when they walk. And there is a sound of *sho thab sho thab* as they lift their feet. These shoes are very eye-catching and highly valued.[41]

Drukpa Kunley's description of the Kapopas (*dkar po pa*), "white clad ones", emphasizes two further dimensions of visual and audial encounters with another person. Such encounters elicit a range of emotive experiences such as delight, humor, admiration, mockery, and irony. This is a further illustration that there is no denying the fascination that human beings have with the appearances of others. Contemporary global culture is a case in point where gossip and fashion magazines, beauty pageants, and television shows such as the popular "What Not to Wear"[42] flood the media and entertainment industry. Here, it is as if Drukpa Kunley presents the reader with his own pageant, a line-up of different kinds of persons and the effect on him that observing their appearances generates.

Another characteristic of these encounters is that they extend beyond the visual to a fully somatic experience. Each description includes a literary device often found in Tibetan religious writing, the use of onomatopoetic language to evoke the felt-sense of what is being discussed. In the current example, the shoes of the Kapopas must be heard as well as seen in order for the full impact of their dress to impress itself upon the viewer. The syllables *sil sil* and *sho thab sho thab* simultaneously describe and generate the experience of hearing the gait of the white clad ones as they walk. Jackson describes the use of onomatopoetic phrases in one of

[41] *Yang dkar po ba rnams kyis dbu skra la spa lo yags po rgyab/ spyi gtsug tu thor cog 'dzum mul le ba rgyab/ sham thabs dkar po sul brgya tsam yod pa dkris/ de'i logs la smyug krog dang snag bum shubs dang the'u shubs sogs phra le phru le btags/ brang la me long zhib ma tsam rgyab nas/ lham sna zhur ma sil sil sprug sprug byas/ sho thab sho thab zer thegs pa 'di yang dmigs rnam dod la bla gab che mdog kha ba 'dug*, DK1, Vol. Kha 1978, 3a.5-6.

[42] An American makeover reality TV show that ran from 2003-2013.

the oldest forms of Tibetan poetry, popular songs known as *glu,* usually set to specific melodies (*dbyangs*)[43] that provided an audial quality lacking in written poetry.[44] Stein remarks how this kind of phraseology is often found in the epic tradition of Tibet due to its ability, beyond evoking sound, to suggest dramatic or emotive situations.[45] Because hearing, much like seeing in the experience of *darśana* can be a powerful stimulator of emotional and somatic experience, the use of this kind of language functions to engage the reader in the visceral immediacy of Drukpa Kunley's experience.

> This is further explored in the next description—my favorite.
>
> As for the nuns from the nunnery of Ha Lung in Yarlung, they wear short pleated garments with blackish color pleats that make a sound like *trig, trig*. Over these, they put an over-garment with stripes of different colors. In the tradition of those who come from Western Tibet, these two garments overlap. They wear blue cloth tassels[46] on their heads and a flat hat made of a single piece of wool, like a sack. They wear small knives hanging by their sides with colorful handles. Each nun is adorned with a piece of amber [around her neck]. Because [they dress like this][47], I really feel boiling heat and fall under the sway of pain in my heart![48]

I wonder whether we can find a more detailed and richer description of nuns from fifteenth-century Tibet in any other piece of Tibetan literature. Drukpa Kunley's description directly

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[43] Ellingson 1979, 247.

[44] Jackson 1996, 368-392.

[45] Stein 1972, 252-253.

[46] *ka chi*—threadlike, tassle-like.

[47] Literally, "because it is done like this," (*de ka rang*).

[48] *Yang yar klungs ha lung gi chos mdzad ma tsho ni/ gos thung skyung nag ha mo che sul khrig khrig zhe gcig mdzad/ gos 'gag khra kha ma la/ stod ma lugs kyis zur rdzes byas/ ka chi sngon po'i thod byas pa'i rgyang snam gyi 'bar zhwa sge mo tsam leb zhwa byas/ gri mgo khra ma rgyang nga re gzer/ spos shel rdog po re btags byas byung tsa na/ nga de ka rang snying du sdug la sems 'chor ba yid tsha khol ba cig byung,* DK1, Vol. Kha 1978, 3b.1-2.

communicates the force of the visual to elicit an emotionally charged storyline in the viewer. Perhaps more than any other example from this section, the nuns' appearance powerfully effects the social and religious landscape through which they move. Affecting others, particularly Drukpa Kunley, away from any ideas they may have in terms of their renunciant or celibate status, the nuns' appearance erases any idea of renunciation from the realm of conceptual consideration and forces an emotional and visceral coming-to-terms with oneself. In Drukpa Kunley's experience, boiling with desire and longing, imagining one thing or another, it is an easy thing to forget the Buddha's injunction that the true renunciant's dress is best.

If we ask ourselves what message this episode most wants to share with its readers, it would seem to be the problem of our seduction by and fascination with using appearances to tell ourselves emotionally believable stories about others that allow us to locate and categorize them. When our senses are ravished and we experience feelings of pleasure, delight and even lust based on how we process, interpret and narrativize what we see, we become lost in a realm of sensual experience that removes us from realizing the empty and transient nature of these events.

Concomitant with this is the composition's description of Drukpa Kunley's forthright honesty concerning his seduction by the sight of the nuns. Implicitly, we may also wonder if there isn't a critique of the nuns for dressing in such a provocative way. Far from being immune to the basic human situation of attraction to the opposite sex, Drukpa Kunley expresses it fully, even joyfully. But this is not his last word on the subject. While acknowledging his vulnerability to the power of appearances as one side of the equation, he also does not forget to

contextualize this same power within a Buddhist soteriological framework. Having finished with his description of the nuns, Drukpa Kunley finally has something to say about his own style of dress and that of his disciples.

> Concerning my own style of dress and that of my disciples, I do not want to make a big statement. I will not brag about what my costume is, nor will I say what it is not. In this, I feel happy and free, A-ho! If whatever one does leads to the Dharma, then it is fine to wear whatever one likes. For example, if the goal is to be beautiful, then wear a woman's dress. But if you have negative thoughts, even wearing a gown made of pure gold will produce nothing but suffering.[49]

Drukpa Kunley refuses to pin himself down in any way that others could readily or simply form ideas or tell stories about. He refuses to reify his image in the eyes of others or in his own eyes. In this stance, he discovers and rejoices in a freedom from fixed notions of this or that. Keeping others in the state of inquisitiveness, in the state of being unable to form a coherent storyline is, for him, preferable to eliciting the kinds of emotions responses and sensual desires he describes himself having when he observes each group of religious persons. We begin to see how uninterested Drukpa Kunley is in presenting himself for public consumption in such clearly identifiable ways. He prefers for his own appearance and activities to elicit the same question that began this composition, "Whatever are you thinking?" We can suppose that this is because, by continuing to break up his interlocutors' habitual conceptual processes, he succeeds in keeping them in a state of consternation, questioning and perhaps even irritation.

[49] *Nged kun legs dpon slob kyi cha lugs 'di yang 'di yin zer ngo yang mi 'dod/ min zer ngo yang mi 'dod pa'i dga' mo cig yod pa Svooo! gyis dang/ ci byas chos su song na gyis dang/ cha lugs mo chas sprad kyang mdzes po yong gyis dang/ bsam ngan khong par bcug na cha lugs gser gyi ber yang sdug chas rang yin gyis dang byas pas thams cad cang zer rgyu ma byung,* DK1, Vol. Kha 1978, 3b.2-4.

In such a state, they remain receptive in a particular way to the truths he has to tell. This theme is explored further in Chapter Four.

Resisting the habit of definitively identifying himself through his appearance or dress, Drukpa Kunley keeps everyone off balance, curious, and wondering about who and what he is. In acknowledging his seduction by the various displays put on by others and by the phenomenal world, he demonstrates for his readers and interloctors the habitual processes by which all human beings continually attempt to contextualize and narrativize experience. Using his own vulnerability to the effects generated by others' appearances, he highlights the power and danger of appearances in self-deception. He thus argues that the appearance adopted must be made to serve a larger purpose. Otherwise, as he says, no matter what appearance is taken up, it will produce only more suffering.

We might note here that while Drukpa Kunley's description of the nuns' provocative appearance appears to contain an implied criticism that they may be deliberately distracting the men from the pure pursuit of liberation, this interpretation should be evaluated within the context of the larger composition. This is true especially in light of another composition in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* in which Drukpa Kunley specifically extols the superiority of women and all things feminine over men.[50] The view of women as dangerous temptresses in Buddhism is nothing new, but in this context Drukpa Kunley appears to suggest that the fault of giving rise to desire lies with the perceiver, whose habitual tendency to assign meaning based on surface

[50] DK1 Vol. Ka 1978, 40a.2-41a.1.

appearances creates problems. The entire composition reflects on the dangers of falling prey to the ideas and their concomitant feelings that arise for the unaware person.

We have seen how encountering Drukpa Kunley's different descriptions, the various stylistic features of his writing seek to evoke both visceral experience as well as recognition of the inescapably seductive power of appearances. However, here, the ethic of disruption is not only or not primarily effected by literary style – but through the compositions' content. Drukpa Kunley's self-statements about his appearance (and the appearances of others) – and his conscious rejection of customary conventions of dress and appearance – serve to disrupt standard ways of 'seeing' and thinking about people. Drukpa Kunley's own appearance confounds expectations and disrupts normal thought processes. This seems to be intentional on his part. It seems designed to stimulate others to question appearances and the associations that go with them in order to see more deeply into what is really going on. If anything, the literary style of straightforward description is used here (rather than some figuarative form like metaphor or parody) because the content itself is the thing that creates disruption.

As Drukpa Kunley comments in closing, "When I spoke like this, everyone was spellbound!"[51] Escape is possible only through acknowledging one's seduction, just as Drukpa Kunley does. But we also learn that this seduction is part of what it means to be a human being. What is important is to keep the larger goal in mind and to not forget that it alone provides the principle determining factor.

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[51] *Thams cad cang zer rgyu ma byung,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 3b.4.

Other kinds of self-expression compositions in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* include those in which Drukpa Kunley comments on his "way of being" (*gnas tshul*) or his "lifestyle" (*namthar*). In this next example, Drukpa Kunley's disciples tell him that since they are not free from karma, the teachings on emptiness aren't particularly helpful to them. Instead, they ask him to explain what kinds of delightful visions and experiences he has. Drukpa Kunley agrees to explain his own "way of being" (*ngas rang gi gnas tshul 'di bshad*) and it is interesting to note that, in doing so, he says nothing at all about visions or meditative experiences but focuses his discussion on far more mundane and ordinary activities.

> Even though I have broken some of the orders of the Precious Nephew [Ngawang Chöje], I have not diverged from the side of the Dharma! Therefore, I feel that these offenses are not such a big sin. As I have not killed humans or animals by bow and arrow, I think these mistakes are quite trivial.[52] Also, I haven't imitated great teachers by leading horses and mules and great men, nor have I harmed even a single sheep. That's why I feel carefree.[53]

The first part of this composition describes how the abbot of Drukpa Kunley's monastery, Ngawang Chöje, has made various requests to Drukpa Kunley to do certain things. For example, at one point Ngawang Chöje asks Drukpa Kunley to oversee the meditation progress of some members of their order. In another example, he asks Drukpa Kunley to take on the responsibilities of being the head abbot of Dechen Phuk Monastery in Bhutan. Regardless of the request, Drukpa Kunley consistently finds ways to justify not complying with these commands. He defends his noncompliance by explaining that in refusing, he has not diverged from the

[52] He does indeed carry bow and arrows, but he does not hunt.

[53] *Ngas dpon rin po che'i bka' bag re bcag na'ang/ chos phyogs nas bcag pa med pas nyes pa chung ngam bsam/ mda' gzhi bzhin khyer te mi dang srog chags bsad pa med bas a'u tsi bsam/ yang bla chen tsho'i lad mo byas rta drel sogs stobs can 'khrid/ tshag lug bzhin la gnod pa ma bskyal bas blo bde,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 162a.6-162b.

orientation of the Dharma (*chos phyogs nas bcag med pa*), and therefore he feels there is only a small fault (*nyes chung ngam bsam*). This is an interesting comment in that we must ask how Drukpa Kunley understands the difference between a small fault and no fault at all. Since he intends his *namthar* to reveal his faults, we can suppose that he is looking to even the slightest pricks of conscience as topics to be exposed. Had he felt no qualms about refusing Ngawang Chöje's requests, we would likely have heard nothing about this. More than this, however, is Drukpa Kunley's demonstration of the ways in which he appeals to his own ability to judge value and not be bound by superficial commands or instructions that do not measure up. The yardstick by which he measure such value is the Dharma. If refusing to comply with what has been asked of him does not contradict the Dharma, he is at ease. In this, we see again the theme of appealing to the ultimate authority of the Buddha and his teachings as a way to trump or overcome other lesser sources of authority. For Drukpa Kunley, as long as his actions are not in opposition to the basic ethos of the Buddhadharma or to his own innate sense of what is valuable for him, he is carefree. By explaining this to his disciples, Drukpa Kunley reveals the inner compass by which he navigates and by which he justifies separating himself from groups, locations, and practices that he has not directly validated for himself.

For example, in response to the request, mentioned above, that he take up the leadership of Dechen Phug in Bhutan, Drukpa Kunley discusses the qualities that a "virtuous person" would have to have in order to effectively run a monastery. While he appears to be stating that such a person should have mastered the skills of the six paramitas or practices of a bodhisattva, his description of such mastery goes beyond the conventional expression of these

qualities. In order to direct a monastery and nurture its monks and disciples, such a person should:

> ...be thrifty enough to gather together even the smallest items such as a needle and thread, while still having the generosity that desires nothing.[54] He should have the moral discipline to renounce his own needs like poison, while possessing the perseverance to smell only his own stink and not that of others. He should have enough patience to endure being beaten even by a nun, while having the meditative concentration to maintain the one-pointed concentration that renounces the duplicity that consists of thinking: "You'll see later!" From the depth of his mind he should concentrate on one point and see others later. And such a person should have enough wisdom to understand everything, religion as well as worldly affairs, for this current life as well as for future lives.[55]

If we examine each of the six paramitas described here in turn, first Drukpa Kunley comments on the paramita of generosity. Not only should the likely candidate express a generosity that expects nothing in return, but also, on top of that, generosity in this case means that such a person would have a broader awareness that includes understanding how to use money and resources carefully and without waste. Generosity here includes a keen eye for knowing how much to give and how much to preserve – the description highlights a need for business savvy not generally included in definitions of this paramita.

The next two paramitas, discipline and exertion, likewise emphasize traits not generally emphasized. For discipline, rather than or perhaps in addition to, cultivating mindfulness of body, speech, and mind, the virtuous person should abandon his or her own desires "like

[54] These phrases utilize the series of the six *pāramitās* – generosity, discipline, patience, effort, meditation, and wisdom.

[55] *Ser snas khab skud tshun gsog nus pa la/ gtong phod gang la yang ma chags pa cig dgos/ tshul khrims gzhan nor dug bzhin spong ba la/ brtson 'grus rang ma gtogs gzhan gyi dri mi mnam pa cig dgos/ bzod pa btsun ma mos brdung rung theg pa la/ bsam gtan khyod la cig rting la lta snyam pa'i kha zhe sprug pa cig dgos/ shes rab chos 'jig rten gang la'ang phral phugs thams cad go ba cig dgos/ phral du bu tsha dang yang mthun pa la 'u thug na gshin rje la'ang mi brtsi ba cig dgos,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 74b.2-4.

poison." The implication here is that the virtuous person uses her knowledge of discipline, of what is right (beneficial) or wrong (harmful), to expunge her own need and desires, since, by implication, these will only lead to harm. On top of this, the virtuous person also exerts continuous effort not to, as is more commonly understood, practice the Dharma and dedicate oneself to the benefit of others, but instead to maintain a constant and minute aware of her own limitations and faults. We begin to see Drukpa Kunley's themes of exposing one's faults and revealing hypocrisy emerging from this description.

The virtuous person also possesses the patience to endure being beaten by a nun. Again we might note here the thread of unconscious misogyny in Drukpa Kunley's metaphor. For a monk, to be beaten by a nun, would be the ultimate humiliation. But Drukpa Kunley asserts that whoever runs a monastery should have just this kind of willingness to be humbled. The implicit meaning behind this statement seems to refer to the problem of pride. If a monk can practice forbearance even while being beaten by a nun, he has the requisite humility for the job of abbot. Together with this kind of humility, he must also recognize when and if his patience is due only to secretly planning to exact revenge or "get even" later. Thus it is one thing to show patience on the outside, but another to possess the depth of forbearance that accepts completely a state of humiliation.

The virtuous person must also be able to remain one-pointed in his concentration on whatever item of business has come along, taking care of things one by one. This is, we may presume, in addition to possessing the one-pointed concentration in meditation to which the paramita of concentration ordinarily refers. Finally, the virtuous person must possess the

wisdom to understand everything included in both worldly and religious affairs, both for this life and for the next. It is to be wondered if Drukpa Kunley is secretly laughing to himself with this statement since it implies the kind of complete omniscience only a Buddha would possess!

However, there is also something else going on in this composition – something that returns us to the main theme of exposing hypocrisy. This long list of the qualities that the abbot of a religious institution should possess is aimed at Ngawang Chöje – the abbot of Ralung monastery. While Drukpa Kunley may in fact be enumerating these supreme qualities to prove to Ngawang Chöje that he feels he is not the right person to take up the job, implicitly the description functions as a critique of Ngawang Chöje. Is he such a person?

Popular tales of Drukpa Kunley include many examples of conflict and competition between Drukpa Kunley and Ngawang Chöje in which Drukpa Kunley always gains the upper hand by exposing Ngawang Chöje's pettiness and hypocrisy. It is to be wondered if here Drukpa Kunley is subtly, or not-so-subtly, holding up a mirror for the abbot. By expressing qualities that transcend the ordinary, Drukpa Kunley not only manufactures a foolproof excuse for himself, but he also forces a reconsideration of what are qualities and what are faults. Obviously, he cannot claim to have the qualities he describes without also professing a level of realization he has no desire to admit to, whether or not it might be true. But from a broader view, this section reveals another layer of Drukpa Kunley's "way of being," which involves an ongoing awareness of exactly what it does take to possess genuine qualities together with a sharp awareness of the truth of how far or near a person falls from that position. The description of virtuous qualities as a foil for exposing his faults (and the faults of others) is a trope that Drukpa

Kunley often makes use of together with another strategy, which we might call "description through negation." We see him using such description as he continues to explain his way of being to his disciples:

> I don't imitate lesser teachers who beat their drums outside and ring their bells inside. Nor do I carry away the offerings of the dried torma cakes. That is why my mind is peaceful. I don't imitate the realized ones[56] who feed the dogs with tormas and provoke the deities. I don't imitate the scholars who spill everything out their mouths. I don't imitate the nephews[57] who aren't strong either in observing their vows or in good qualities, but who speak dedication prayers, bestow empowerments, and create rituals for the dead in order to satisfy their bellies. And so my mind is peaceful.[58]

Presenting a description of hypocritical actions engaged in by religious practitioners, Drukpa Kunley opens up a discursive space within which to deny his own complicity in these attitudes and actions. In so doing, he continues to demarcate the boundaries between his vision of himself and others. In very few places does he present the reader with a clear description of who or what he is, but by generally saying what he is not or what he doesn't do, he carves out a space of freedom for himself that separates him from other people. He isn't one of those lesser teachers who create a noisy display to try to attract disciples, nor is he desperate enough to eat the offering cakes himself. He doesn't blather out all the teachings he has studied, nor does he fool himself, as to his actual qualities or his ability to adhere to the Vinaya disciplines, or others,

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[56] *rtogs-ldan* or "realized ones" are hermits. Near villages, the dogs attack them.

[57] A married tantrika.

[58] *Yang bla chung gi lad mo byas/ rnga'i phyi brdungs/ dril bu'i nang brdungs/ zhal zas skam po tshun ma khyer bas blo bde/ yang rtogs ldan gyi lad mo byas khyi za lha dkrog kyang ma byas/ yang dge bshes tsho'i lad mo byas thams cad kha la shor ba yang ma byas/ yang dpon po tsho'i lad mo byas nas bsrung sdom dang yon tan cher med pa'i bsngo ba yon bshad dang/ dbang chung re dang/ gshin po'i rjes 'dzin res lto 'byid pa yang ma byas pas blo bde,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 162b.2-4.

by giving blessings or performing rituals only to satisfy his needs. As a result of his honest self-awareness, Drukpa Kunley is not troubled by disturbing emotions or second thoughts. Instead, as the refrain to each stanza states, "I am carefree!"

This process of defining through saying what he is not continues through the first half of this song, each stanza ending with the same refrain. We learn that he does not make up false stories about what he will do with alms given to him; he does not lie, steal, or deceive others; and he pointedly does not involve himself in family disputes or violence. The list goes on and on. Ultimately, coming to the end of these statements of negation, Drukpa Kunley presents himself as standing outside of most of the complications that arise for those who have not carefully observed themselves. As a result, he is free from all cares, liberated from the afflictions that naturally arise when one is acting duplicitously. The phrase for "carefree" (*blo bde*) that forms the refrain for each stanza is a condensed formulation that, in Tibetan, serves to transmit a visceral sense of the state of being that results when one severs one's engagement in complicated, hypocritical, or deceptive states of mind. It is a mind (*blo*) established in peace (*bde ba*).

Having defined himself mostly through negation, Drukpa Kunley now takes a different tact. Instead of statements of denial, he affirms what he *has* done that has contributed to his carefree state of being.

> While I have no interest in serving the Precious Nephew [Ngawang Chöje], I don't disgrace him either; that's why my mind is peaceful. I haven't built many external Dharma supports,[59] but I have meditated on my own body as the body

[59] I.e., statues, images, etc.

of the deity; that's why my mind is peaceful. I haven't written many sacred books, but I have meditated on sound as an echo [of emptiness]; that's why my mind is peaceful.

I haven't copied the *Prajñāpāramitā*,[60] but I have meditated on mind free from imagination; that's why my mind is peaceful. I did not receive many initiations, but I have understood a little the meaning of abhisiñca;[61] that's why my mind is peaceful. I haven't studied a lot, but I have understood meanings everywhere; that's why my mind is peaceful.

I've had a few domestic quarrels, but I've meditated on patience and accepted defeat; that's why my mind is peaceful. I had a child, and as this was a son, my mind is peaceful. Although I can't see all beings as my mother and father, at least all phenomena do not arise as my enemies; that's why my mind is peaceful.[62]

The first two stanzas describe Drukpa Kunley the Buddhist practitioner. How does he practice his spiritual path? By not denigrating the name of his guru (although, as we just saw, he's not above some subtle criticisms); by performing the generation stage practices of the Vajrayana path in which the practitioner imagines his body to be the enlightened body of the deity; by meditating on the nature of sound as emptiness and on mind free from constructs; by understanding meanings over words; by cultivating patience in domestic interactions and by taking blame on himself, and so on. Most of these practices are subsumed within the umbrella of the main Drukpa Kagyü meditation practice of Mahāmudrā, or the Great Seal (*phyag rgya*

[60] Statues are the supports (*rten*) of the Body, books are the supports of the Speech, stupas are the supports of the Mind (of the buddhas).

[61] In Sanskrit in the text. The verb *abhi-sic* means 1) to anoint or consecrate (cf. *abhiṣeka*), and 2) reflexive verb: consecrate oneself by oneself.

[62] *Yang dpon rin po che la yang zhabs tog bsgrubs yus mi 'dug ste zhabs 'dren ma bsgrubs pas blo bde/ phyi'i rten bzheng mang po ma 'grub ste rang lus lha skur bsgoms pas blo bde/ gsung rab bzheng ba ma 'grub ste sgra brag char bsgom pas blo bde/ 'bum pa ma bzhengs te sems spros bral du bsgoms pas blo bde/ dbang bskur mang po ma zhus te a biha shi tse'i don gyi dgongs pa re lon pas blo bde/ slob gnyer mang po ma bslabs te kun la go rgyu re rnyed bas blo bde/ bza' 'thab dum ba re rgyab ste bzod pa bsgoms nas pham blangs pas blo bde/ phru gu gcig byung ste bu zhig skyes pas blo bde/ 'gro kun pha ma ru shes pa ma byung rung snang ba dgrar ma langs pas blo bde,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 162b.6-163a.3.

chen po), a series of meditative disciplines and a view that recognizes all phenomena as "sealed" by emptiness – by the realization of the inseparability of samsara and nirvana in their nature of emptiness. Such a realization permits the transcendence of duality, allowing the practitioner freedom from the limitations of conceptual complexities.[63] The fundamental premise is that through practicing the disciplines of Mahāmudrā, the meditator develops the ability to abide in the fundamental nature of mind, which is all-pervading, compassionate, and non-dwelling. Such abiding is experienced as being like the sky – it rests nowhere and is free from all concepts.[64] This freedom from ordinary limiting ways of perceiving reality results in a state of carefree delight.

In this passage, Drukpa Kunley also emphasizes that in spite of his obvious erudition, in this life he has not studied. We will see this statement again in the next example. Nevertheless, he understands the deeper meanings that lie behind words. We can guess that this may be one of the reasons for the fascination with language and its power to create ethical orientations illustrated by the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* as a whole. The *Namthar* continually points the reader beyond the surface meanings of works to a recognition of their wider context and a deeper realization of their essence.

All of the virtues just discussed may be said to be specifically Buddhist virtues in that they relate to the Buddhist spiritual path. But Drukpa Kunley also articulates another set of virtues – worldly ones – that highlight the *Namthar's* ongoing function of revealing his faults.

[63] Dorje, 2001, XXI-XXVIII.

[64] Kongtrul, 2001.

He notes that he's had domestic quarrels but handled these by meditating on patience and accepting defeat. It is interesting both to see his admission of family trouble and also his sense that taking the blame provided the antidote. From the worldly point of view, this kind of ordinary domestic situation seems quite commonplace. It is Drukpa Kunley's willingness to characterize himself so modestly that is, perhaps, somewhat unusual for the kinds of characterizations generally seen in Tibetan *namthar.* More perplexing and indeed, more disturbing for a contemporary audience is his admission that it is due to having a son, specifically, that his mind is peaceful. Finally, he mentions his ability to refrain from partiality in his view towards others. Having achieved this degree of equanimity, he is spared the cravings and aversions often experienced through biased views.

From here, the song again changes its orientation, swinging abruptly away from the causes and conditions for carefree mind and focusing in on those habits, practices, and states of mind that hold Drukpa Kunley back from full and complete relaxation into non-contrived being.

> However, I also experience much grief. Even though the authentic teachers teach that we should not do anything non-Dharmic, from within all sorts of things, I have committed worldly actions;[65] that's why my mind is anxious!
>
> It's true that I abandoned my homeland, but wherever I dwelled, I've gathered heaps and piles of goods; and so, even if I am happy on the surface, underneath my mind is anxious![66]
>
> Furthermore, I've closely examined the biographies of many teachers and seen some things that are in accord with Dharma and some things that aren't; so my mind is anxious!

[65] Lit. among mixed actions (half spiritual, half secular), I have done….

[66] After death (karma).

> Like that and so forth, many joys and doubts arise, and that's a sign that I haven't realized meditative equipoise.[67]

These kinds of self-statements demonstrate Drukpa Kunley's unwavering commitment to self-exposure and examination. While expressing what he perceives to be the causes of his difficult states of mind through self-denigrating expressions is not uncommon to the *namthar* genre, Drukpa Kunley precisely defines those activities that prevent him from perfection. In this example, these consist of his attachment to worldly activities; his propensity to gather material items; and his disillusionment upon reading the life stories of other teachers. All these keep his mind disturbed.

We might consider the implications of Drukpa Kunley's last comment since it bears directly on the hypothesis that part and parcel of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*'s goal is to enact an ethic of disruption into ordinary modes of self-narration. Drukpa Kunley remarks that although he enjoys reading the life stories of great masters, he feels disillusioned when he realizes that some of these stories appear out of harmony with the Dharma. Unfortunately, he does not elaborate on this point, so we can only guess that Drukpa Kunley's keen eye for hypocrisy has recognized how relating the narrative of one's life can easily become entangled in modes of expression and content that are inherently hypocritical or deceptive. We might speculate that this is one reason why Drukpa Kunley has resolved to compose a different kind of *namthar* – one that maintains the all-important harmony with the essence of the Dharma

[67] *Bla ma mtshan ldan gyi gsung nas chos min ma byed gsung ba la/ 'dres ma'i nang nas kyang 'jig rten mang ba byas blo ma bde/ pha yul spangs kyang gang sdod sar tshang tshang rub rub bsags pas 'phral skyid rung phugs blo ma bde/ gzhan yang bla ma rnam pa'i rnam thar la dbyed gzhig re btang bas chos dang mthun mi mthun sna tshogs 'dug pa mthong bas blo ma bde/ de la sogs te blo bde dog mang po 'phros pa 'di mnyam bzhag med pa'i rtags su 'dug byas so,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 163a.3-5.

(*chos dang mthun pa*) that is honest, that genuinely reveals his faults, and that proposes a different approach to being in the world that is context-specific and relational.

The last line encapsulates the essence of the song: "Like that and so forth, many joys and doubts arise, and that's a sign that I haven't realized meditative equipoise." The term Drukpa Kunley uses for "meditative equipoise" is *mnyam bzhag*, a term which suggests an experience of unwavering equanimity in which the mind abides peacefully without disturbance. Aware of the fluctuations of his mental and physical states, Drukpa Kunley does not hesitate to acknowledge his anxiety and lack of ease.

These kinds of detailed self-statements can also be seen to function as a guide for the reader in the ways that they model an approach to exploring one's own qualities and faults. The personal and confessional nature of these self-statements invites the reader to identify with the narrator in an intimate way. Certainly, his honesty and willingness to expose the different dimensions of his experience allow for a space of identification into which the reader can enter. In much the same way that the practice of confession includes a kind of intimacy difficult to find in other contexts, Drukpa Kunley's exposure of his faults invites his readers to do as he does – relax into the freedom that arises when an honest relationship to oneself and others is established.

Here is a final example of intimate self-exposure of Drukpa Kunley's thoughts and feelings. This spontaneously spoken soliloquy has is no narrative frame. Instead, Drukpa Kunley begins by paying homage to the master, Tsangpa Gyare, and enumerating the lineage of the Drukpa Kagyü down to "me," the "last and littlest" of them all, known as the yogi Kunga Lekpa

(*rnams kyi nang nas tha chung rnal 'byor kun dga' legs pa zhes bya ba bdag*). Having invoked the lineage, Drukpa Kunley sums up the purpose and meaning of his life.

> I, who am known as the yogi Kunga Lekpa, fell in love with the vajra songs arising from the realized experience of previous siddhas of long ago. Thus, I composed songs that give the illusion that I have attained realization and that imitate as well the melodies of the Kongpo, Bönpo, and the Tantrikas. And, like those songs sung by Geshe Nyamdro,[68] while these cause laughter in the moment, in the end, they contain many true meanings [of the Dharma].[69]

If there is one source for truth besides the teachings of the Buddha that Drukpa Kunley trusts, it is the spontaneous songs of the realized yogis of the Kagyü lineage. Throughout the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* we find mention of these songs, quotations of those songs the narrator loves, and descriptions of his transmission of the collections of these songs to his disciples. Something about this medium instinctively circumvents the traps of self-deception and hypocrisy that other literary forms are prone to. Such songs "arise from the heart experience" (*thugs nyams la 'khrungs pa*) of these realized ones. In imitating them, Drukpa Kunley understands that it is through the experience of delight and humor that arises when one hears these songs that the deeper meanings are revealed, assimilated, and understood. As the analyses in this dissertation seek to show, the experience of delight can function both as a sign of a person having transcended dualistic notions of good and bad, happy and sad, but it can also work as a powerful mode of transmission for truth because of its effectiveness in increasing the

[68] 'Brug pa Kun legs refers to one of his claimed previous lives as Dge bshes Nyams bro in Volume Kha (15b.1), but other than that, I could find no other information on this person.

[69] *Rnal 'byor kun dga' legs pa zhes bya ba bdag gis/ sngar gyi grub thob gong ma rnams kyi thugs nyams la 'khrungs pa'i rdo rje'i glu la sems shor nas/ go ba rtogs par brdzus pa'i mgur ma snang bsangs gang bde/ kong rta/ bon glu/ sngags pa'i dbyangs sogs gang dang yang bstun nas dge ba shes nyams bro ltar blangs pa 'di phral bgad mo bro/ phugs don chod pa re ni yod,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 163b.2-3.

receptivity of the recipient. For the person who laughs, even difficult truths are easier to ingest (See Chapter Four for further discussion of this theme).

> However, although in this life, I have not studied much or trained, yet, for many previous eons, I have performed actions for many Buddhas, and I have completely understood words and their ultimate meanings. With the teachings of the profound key points received from many wise, realized teachers, I have been liberated from blockages to the [understanding of] many Dharmas. I raised the tent of Milarepa on the enjoyment cakra of my throat. Whatever virtuous practice I do is rooted in the center point of love and compassion. I have understood the essential point – the all dharmas are unborn and unceasing.[70]

Having discussed his preferred mode of expression, Drukpa Kunley now describes how he has come to be the kind of person that he is. Some themes are familiar, such as his claim that unlike other Buddhist masters, he has not studied or trained in Buddhist teachings (*bslab sbyang sogs bros bsam mang po ma byas mod*), but due to the power of his past karma, he has attained the ability to see beyond words to the essential meanings they point to (*nges pa don gyi tshig don 'ga' khong du chud pa).* The phrase *khong du chud pa* means "to internalize," "to thoroughly realize" or "to completely understand." The implication is that by attending to the literal meaning of the words (*tshig*), it is possible to simultaneously recognize their essence or meaning (*don*) – in this case, an essence that is the true or "ultimate meaning" (*nges pa don*).

There are many instances in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* in which the narrator mentions the relationship between words and meaning, particularly in poetry. We can hypothesize that Drukpa Kunley considered the use of language to be a powerful and even essential medium for

[70] *Gang ltar tshe 'dir bslab sbyang sogs thos bsam mang po ma byas mod/ 'on kyang nga bskal pa mang po'i sngon rol nas sangs rgyas mang po la bya ba byas shing/ nges pa don gyi tshig don 'ga' khong du chud pa/ bla ma mkhas grub mang po las zab gnad kyi tshig res chos mang po'i 'gag khrol ba/ mgrin pa longs spyod kyi 'khor lo na mi la ras pa'i sgar byas pa/ byams pa dang snying rje kho na la dge sbyor gyi mthil gdod pa,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 163b.3-5.

realization of the nature of things as they are. Although language is necessarily conceptual, like the reflection of the moon in water, it is a powerful skillful means for awakening an inner, deeper, more somatic resonance that extends beyond intellectual or conceptual striving. Genuinely hearing the teachings of his teachers – by which I mean hearing the resonances behind such teachings – the blockages to his understanding (*'gag pa*) have become "free flowing" (*khrol la ba*). They are no longer impediments to entering into the essence of the instructions.

Drukpa Kunley metaphorically describes the implications of this kind of experience when he says that "I raised the tent of Milarepa on the enjoyment cakra of my throat" (*mgrin pa longs spyod kyi 'khor lo na ni la ras pa'i sgar byas pa*) to imply that speech now naturally arises for him. Using the metaphor of the "tent of Milarepa" signifies that, like Milarepa, Drukpa Kunley has achieved the *siddhi* (yogic power) of free-flowing speech, due to the loosening of the knots (obstructions and obscurations) of his throat cakra. As the quintessential poet/yogi, famed for his spontaneous songs of experience, Milarepa symbolizes the freedom, spontaneity, and ease Drukpa Kunley associates with his own singing abilities.

Now, in the habitually straightforward style Drukpa Kunley so often adopts, the narrative discusses his orientation in the world.

> As for my behavior, it has been [a mixture of right and wrong], but more wrong than right! In order to feed and clothe myself, I have sought out the most faithful and wealthy donors! Many wrathful deities surround me and Vajravarahi and

> Tārā have blessed me. By a great and unlearned insight, I have understood the hidden deceitful defects of samsara.[71]

Two kinds of claims are evident in this passage – claims of quite ordinary faults as well as claims for a far more exalted state of being. He offers no apology for behaviors that are less than ideal, or for his instinct to seek out sustenance and support from wealthy patrons. At the same time, however, Drukpa Kunley makes ideal claims for himself in his description of being surrounded by Buddhist deities and protectors. This is not to mention his claim to have understood the defects of samsara, not through learning but through direct insight. This mixture of faults and qualities creates a situation in which we are never sure which self-representation of Drukpa Kunley we are meant to trust. Is he liberated? Is he merely an ordinary struggling human being? Or is he modeling a state of being that recognizes the interweaving of both ordinary and extraordinary as the genuine ethical state?

At the end of this passage, Drukpa Kunley invokes some of the main events that shaped his life and his decision to take up the wandering, yogic lifestyle.

> Saddened by the aggression of my paternal relatives, I became for all devoted people the dear child who wanders aimlessly from country to country. I soared, without limit and without goal, like a piercing wind in the midst of space. Whatever arose was like the sun of delight shining in the window and in this state of carefree joy, I was freed from all activities. I did whatever I wanted and spoke whatever [arose in my mind] much like the saying: "Having abandoned deceiving sentient beings, there are no actions that can not be done." This kind of behavior, which has no aim whatsoever, is a laughing dance of delight!

[71] *Spyod lam yin min 'dres ma'i nang nas min pa mang la khad ba/ lto gos yon bdag nor dang dad pa gang che nas 'tshol ba drag po las kyi bsrung ma mang po 'khor ba/ rdo rje phag mo dang sgrol mas byin gyis brlabs pa/ ma slabs pa'i shes rab chen pos 'khor ba'i rdzun mtshang rig pa,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 163b.5-6.

> However, since other people do not understand my faults and qualities, I transmit my true nature, free from misconceptions, to my beloved son.[72]

Looking closely, we can notice a progression in development of states of mind. The grief and sadness of losing family (particularly his father), relatives, and homeland, due to the afflictive emotions of aggression, hatred, and possessiveness catapults Drukpa Kunley into the unknown. In such a groundless and tenuous position he yet endears himself to those "who have faith" (*dad pa can*). Perhaps it is only these people, whose faith in the Buddhadharma permits them to recognize authentic versus inauthentic persons, who recognize Drukpa Kunley's position and extend kindness to him. However, it is these exact difficult circumstances of being homeless and without resources that liberate Drukpa Kunley from any felt need to conform to standards of behavior or thought.

Using two beautiful metaphors to capture both the sense of expansive freedom and focused insight of the awakened person, Drukpa Kunley evokes the ease, power, beauty, and joy of liberation from all conceptual and limited ideas of who and how to be. Such a person is like "a piercing wind in the midst of space" (*bar snang gi rkyang ser rlung po ltar*)[73] for whom "everything that arises is like the sun of delight shining in the window" (*gang shar skyid pa'i nyi ma sgo khung du shar*). Having achieved this state, Drukpa Kunley draws a correlation between

[72] *Pha spun gyi chags sdang gis yid skyo nas yul khams phyogs med du dad pa can gyi gces phrug byas/ bar snang gi rkyang ser rlung po ltar gtad med du 'phyo ba'i gu yangs po/ gang shar skyid pa'i nyi ma sgo khung du shar nas nyams dga' blo bde skyong ba'i byar med pa chen pos mi zer dgu zer ci byed 'di byed med pa'i spyod pas/ sems can bslu ba spangs nas ni/ bya ba ma yin thams cad byed/ gsungs pa ltar 'zungs gtad gang yang med pa'i spyod pa 'di yang bgad mo bro dga' yo dga' yo/ zhes kyang bdag gi skyon yon gzhan gyis mi rtogs pas rang gi rang bzhin sgro btags med pa snying dang 'dra ba'i bu la gdams so*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 163b.5-6.

[73] Literally, "Like this kiang in a yellow robe." A kiang is a wild ass with golden fur (*Equus kiang).* This animal is often used as a metaphor for wind as it wanders about everywhere, but can run swift and straight as an arrow, (Personal communication, Chorten Tshering, 2012).

casting off the propensity to deceive others that inherently accompanies the deluded perspective and the natural appropriateness of any speech or activity that arises when the liberated person responds to situations that arise. Such behavior, he claims, is without calculation or pre-meditation but occurs spontaneously and precisely. This is the kind of behavior that is described in so many of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar's* compositions. However, as he demonstrates, Drukpa Kunley is far from naive in his recognition that many people, caught up in dualistic ideas of right and wrong, or good and bad, do not understand him. There is a sense of resigned sadness in his tone when he states that he will transmit the truth of his nature (*rang gi rang bzhin*) without any pretense (*sgro btags med pa*) to his dearest son, Zhing kyong Druk drag.

II. Mocking Words (Parody, Satire, Irony)

...he uses parody as much to resacralize as to desacralize, to signal the change in the locus of his allegiance.[74]

This section explores the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar's* use of parody in the project of ethical formation. In many ways, the *Namthar* as a whole could be characterized as a parody, if this is defined as a persistent use of the rhetorical devices of irony and repetition as a source of freedom.[75] Freedom, in this case, refers to the power of a parodic text to open up a space of critical distance between itself and the genre(s) or subject matter it sets itself to imitate, to mock, to mirror, or to comment on. When we look at examples from the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, many of the compositions repeat existing literary genres: *'dri lan* (question and answer); *mgur ma* (spontaneous song); *bstan chos* (treatise or commentary); *rmi lam* (dream narratives); *gtong yig* (letter); *rnam thar* (biography); and so forth. As they do so, however, their style and content frequently demonstrate both an awareness of the boundaries of the pre-existing forms as well as their departure from these in order to implicitly comment on prior usages and purposes and extend these. As we have seen, many of the compositions in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* portray a remarkable degree of self-reflexivity, whether their modes of discourse are ironic, satirical, sorrowful, playful, joyful, or downright critical.

In *A Theory of Parody* (1985), Linda Hutcheon explores how twentieth-century parodic art forms demand a new definition of parody that can account for their modes of self-reflexivity

[74] Hutcheon 1985, 14.

[75] Hutcheon 1985, 15.

and cultural sophistication. Because her definition helps to form the background for my analyses of the following compositions, I quote it in full:

> Parody, then, in its ironic "trans-contextualization" and inversion, is repetition with difference. A critical distance is implied between the backgrounded text being parodied and the new incorporating work, a distance usually signaled by irony. But this irony can be playful as well as belittling; it can be critically constructive as well as destructive. The pleasure of parody's irony comes not from humor in particular but from the degree of engagement of the reader in the intertextual "bouncing" (to use E.M. Forester's famous term) between complicity and distance.[76]

This definition of parody goes beyond the limitations of standard dictionary definitions, such as the Oxford Dictionary's: "An imitation of the style of a particular writer, artist, or genre with deliberate exaggeration for comic effect." Hutcheon's definition helps illuminate both how many of the individual compositions that comprise the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* may be viewed as parody. It also enables us to see how the *Namthar* as a whole may function as a parody of other *namthars* in order to generate an analytical and reflective space between the text and audience/reader. In this case, then, parody is not meant solely to satirize or to negatively criticize, but to model a process of reflection and close consideration of previous assumptions about the purpose and content of existing literary forms. Parody also functions to provide an arena for the reader in which self-exposure and revelation can be dispassionately observed and accepted.

Two elements of Hutcheon's definition are particularly relevant the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar's* project of ethical self-formation. The first is her emphasis on the function of parody

[76] Hutcheon 1985, 32.

to repeat an existing form (literary or artistic) with "critical difference." Usually, a parody has a clear prior referent – another specific text (or other object) that it remakes and that the audience recognizes. In the case of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, while it is sometimes the case that the parodied text is directly acknowledged, such as in the parody analyzed below where Drukpa Kunley parodies a letter of safe passage by Tsang Myön Heruka or in the parody of a praise song he sings in celebration of poor people,[77] more often parody functions to imitate or mock more generalized styles and genres of Tibetan Buddhist literature. Some compositions in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* also parody content, styles of interaction between people, Buddhist practice and practitioners, and the situations of ordinary life. In this sense then, the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* parodies both specific literary products and more generalized ways of being or living.

The second element of Hutcheon's definition of parody that has resonance for the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* is her emphasis on the "degree of engagement of the reader." This engagement occurs first in recognizing that a composition is a parody (hence, the "complicity" with the text), and second, in the distancing that is the natural result of such recognition. This distancing, which we discussed above with the help of Ricoeur's notion of sub-ethics, supplies the perspective necessary for ethical transformation and formation. The literary device of parody is particularly well suited to the project of ethical self-formation by virtue of its ability to foreground (through the text's example) the importance of the self's ability to reflect critically and honesty on itself.

[77] DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 51b.4-53a.3.

It should be noted that scholars of literary criticism consider parody and the use of irony in literature to be a highly sophisticated form of expression that expects a lot from its readers. As Hutcheon observes, "In some ways, parody might be said to resemble metaphor. Both require that the decoder construct a second meaning through inferences about surface statements and supplement the foreground with acknowledgment and knowledge of a backgrounded context."[78] The "decoder" – in this case the reader – is envisioned by and included in the text's overall strategy, but the texts themselves remain without meaning or purpose until they are noticed and understood. Thus, as many scholars have remarked, without the presence of an "implied" or "ideal" reader, such texts remain passive.[79] The implication of this for the current analysis is that the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* self-consciously understands itself to be an "enunciative act [that] includes an addresser of the utterance, a receiver of it, a time and a place, discourses that precede and follow – in short, an entire context."[80] As such, the truth telling and ethical formation strategies built into the text take on another dimension that includes the reader's simultaneous awareness of and ability to participate in the parody's *intention*.

While there has been little study of either the reception or production of parody in the study of Tibetan Buddhist literature, some scholars have proposed that different aspects of Tibetan Buddhist culture do evince elements of so-called "modernist" sensibilities. These

[78] Hutcheon 1985, 34.

[79] Eco, Iser, etc.

[80] See Todorov 1978a, 72 (Hutcheon 1985, 23).

studies refute claims that the characteristics we have come to expect from modern art and literature are *only* the products of particular historical, literary, religious, and cultural conditions. As Janet Gyatso in particular, has shown, many so-called "modernist" themes and orientations have long been operative in Tibetan Buddhist culture.[81] We see that this is also true in so far as it helps illuminate how the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar's* literary forms work on different registers to describe and form the realized person.

In this first example of parody, some of Drukpa Kunley's disciples bring him an "excellent letter" (*lam yig bzang po*) written by the Dharma Lord Tsang Myön Heruka. As mentioned in Chapter One, there is also mention of this same letter in a biography of Tsang Myön, which raises interesting questions of intertextuality in the production of these *namthar.*[82] Drukpa Kunley asks his disciples to read the letter to him. After hearing it, he remarks, "Well then! I will also write a passport like this for my own monks and give it to the best of my disciples so that the Dharma will spread and the bliss and clarity of my disciples will increase."[83] At first, the passport written by Drukpa Kunley appears to merely imitate the style of Tsang Myön's. In his letter, Tsang Myön writes:

> OM! By the command of the Kagyü master! AH! Through the oral transmission of Hevajra! HUM! By the speech of the ocean of Kagyü protectors! PHAT! By the word of the King of Herukas [Cakrasamvara], the yogi who wanders in charnel grounds! This letter comes from the three sacred places: from Tise—the sacred

[81] Gyatso 2015.

[82] Götsang Repa Natsok Rangdröl (*Rgod tshang ras pa sna tshogs rang grol*, 1494-1570), *Gtsang smyon he ru ka phyogs thams cad las rnam par rgyal ba'i rnam thar rdo rje theg pa'i gsal byed nyi ma'i snying po*, xylograph completed 1547, pp 191.3-192.5.

[83] *'o na nged rang gi gra pa rnams la yang lam yig byed byas/ chos dar ba dang/ bde gsal bas 'go byes rnams la yi ge 'di bzhin sbyin pa yin*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 51b.4.

> place of enlightened body, home of the snow lion; from Lapchi – the sacred place of the speech emanation, home of the striped tiger; and from Tsari – the sacred place of enlightened mind, home of the black boar!"[84]

Drukpa Kunley parodies:

> OM! By the command of the Jetsun Mother Tārā! AH! Through the intention of unborn mind! HUM! By the expression that is all pervading and unceasing! PHAT! I send this letter of the mad yogi of Druk, neither monk nor householder, who wanders aimlessly through the country, into the areas encompassed by Tise – the sacred place of the great arhat, Yanlag Chung (Yanlag 'byung); by Lapchi – the fabulous mansion of the Five Long-life Sisters; and by Tsari – the sacred place where the wrathful, sow-headed one subdued the eight classes of beings and bound them in servitude![85]

Both addresses follow an identical homage structure, a phrase naming and describing the author, and an evocative statement of the letter's origin, but there is a critical difference between the ways in which these subjects are addressed. While Tsang Myön pays homage to himself in a grandiose way as "the yogi who wanders through charnel grounds, the King of the Herukas" (*dur khrod nyul ba'i rnal 'byor pa khrag 'thung rgyal po*), Drukpa Kunley's moniker is far less impressive and almost self-deprecating. He merely names himself as "the mad yogi of Druk, neither monk nor householder, who wanders aimlessly through the country" (*rgyal khams phyogs med bskor ba'i ser khyim pa 'brug pa smyon pa*). The contrast between these two homages slyly hints at and mocks Tsang Myön's sense of his own self-importance, while contrasting this to Drukpa Kunley's condition as the homeless, label-less, crazy wanderer. This

[84] *om bka' brgyud bla ma'i bka'/ ah dgyes pa rdo rje'i lung/ hum bka' bsrung dam can rgya mtsho'i ngag/ phat dur khrod nyul ba'i rnal 'byor pa khrag 'thung rgyal po'i yi ge/ ti se seng gdong dkar mo sku'i gnas nas/ la phyi stag gdong khra mo gsung gi gnas dang/ tsa ri phag gdong nag mo thugs kyi gnas sogs,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 50b.5-6.

[85] *om rje btsun ma sgrol ma'i bka'/ ah skye med thugs kyi dgongs pa/ hum 'gag med kun 'dus kun khyab kyi gtam/ phat rgyal khams phyogs med bskor ba'i ser khyim pa 'brug pa smyon pa'i yi ge/ ti se dgra bcom chen po yan lag 'byung gi gnas dang/ la phyi tshe rings mched lnga'i gzhal yas khang/ tsa ri phag gdong khros pa sde brgyad bran du 'khol ba'i gnas kyi bar na 'khod pa'i,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 51b.5-6.

theme of contrast between self-importance and humility sets the tone for the rest of the parody. For example, Tsang Myön's second paragraph describes his disciples as "those who possess devotion/faith," who should be accommodated and protected by everyone they encounter when they travel to mountain retreats, charnel grounds, and sacred places. He barely names those whose help he solicits, but instead focuses on what such people should do. They should provide his disciples with beds and a place to stay overnight and with food and drink to ease their passage. They should help his disciples to cross over rivers and guide them onto good paths. They should provide his disciples with food and other necessities when they stay in retreat. Drukpa Kunley, in ironic contrast, describes his disciples as those who are "neither monks nor laymen...who hang out on the highway waiting for food...and take care of beggar women for their own pleasure...who spawn illegitimate children...and without any meditative experience, practice the yogic gaze of 'wide-open eyes.... Pretending to remain relaxed in the natural state, they drink sweet wine in the winter and honey beer in the summer."[86] He uses the vocative voice to call on everyone, from ordinary laborers to their overlords, from warriors to fishermen, from nomads to monks, to "the entire populace" (*mi dmangs dang bcas pa rnams*) to "take caution!" (*zon gyis*). When Drukpa Kunley's disciples come to their homes requesting alms and lodging, the people should "give them only a small

[86] *Nged gyi gra pa skya min ser min rnams...rgya lam du lam zan sgug pa...phang bcos nas sprang mo gso ba/ blo lad nas rgyags phrug 'chos pa...mnyam gzhag med rung mig hur re lta stangs byed pa...dbyar dkar sprang dang/ dgun skyur sprang,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 52a.2-6.

handful of tsampa and send them to cross the river at any place whatsoever!"[87] Drukpa Kunley warns,

> If you have any foresight, do not rely on them! When you consider the two issues of abortion and the care of young boys, do not send them in the direction of any nuns! Be cautious! Who is deceiving whom? Do not become intimate with these disciples and send them off as soon as you can![88]

What is going on in this ironic contrast between Tsang Myön's sparse description of his "faithful disciples" who should be afforded all comforts and benefits and Drukpa Kunley's lackadaisical and somewhat dangerous disciples whose mere presence causes alarm and distrust? We might first note the narrator's obvious parody on the trope of the "devoted disciple" – a larger trope in the Buddhist tradition and one that has particular resonance in Tibetan Buddhist culture. While Tsang Myön's letter takes the devout nature of the disciple for granted, Drukpa Kunley's letter uses multiple descriptions to create a different vision of a disrespectful, wandering yogin. One cannot help but snicker at the vision of such characters as opportunistic, hypocritical, and brazenly attached to and driven by their sensual desires. Rather than inspiring the average person on the Buddhist path, they are instead a cause for fear and caution. These contrasting visions force a re-evaluation of the reader's assumptions about the wandering yogin. As hinted at by the quotation at the beginning of this section, Drukpa Kunley's parody of Tsang Myön's "devout" followers, forces a desacrilization of a tradition that has perhaps been previously

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[87] *Khyed rnams kyis zhag bab sar zon gyis/ sgo rtsam mtshon pa re phral du byin/ chu rab gang 'gror thong,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 52b.1.

[88] *Pho tshod yod pa rnams kyis blo ma gtod/ btsun ma rnams kyis bu chung gso ba dang gsod pa gnyis ka la gsoms las phyogs su ma gtong/ gzhan yang sus su bslu mi shes pas de rnams la 'dris ma byed par kho rang tsho gang 'dod kyi gnas la thong byas yi ge spyin pa yin,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 52b.2-3.

unquestioned. Thus what is parodied here, in addition to the letter of safe passage itself, is the "faithful" condition of the wandering yogi, who is thoroughly removed from his spiritualized position and re-positioned in the most ordinary and common of orientations. Being a wandering yogi can be just like being anybody else.

In light of such a truth, we might also note here Drukpa Kunley's admonition to the people to remember the issues of abortion and the care of young boys. This comment highlights the complicated and very human problems associated with the yogic lifestyle, a way of being that must navigate the difficulties inherent in sexual attractions and their results, sexual proclivities, and the religious life. In what ways are these elements to be brought together? Drukpa Kunley's comment suggests an awareness of the very real consequences and complications that arise when the itinerant yogi comes into contact with other monastics (nuns), women, and boys. This is, again, in stark contrast to Tsang Myön's glowing representations of his disciples who we can do no wrong and his exhortations to the public to afford them every comfort they might desire.

Drukpa Kunley's parody of Tsang Myön's letter has another blow to deliver. After finishing his counsel to the local populace to care for his "faithful," Tsang Myön stresses the consequences that will come to the people if his disciples are not cared for appropriately.

> If, when you read this letter, you are in opposition to it, from my state of wrathful practice, I will invoke the ocean of Dharma protectors and the heavenly sages in all their wrathful manifestations. I will cast a curse so that at the bottom, your cattle will be destroyed, in the middle, your possessions will be destroyed, and at the top, your human lives will be destroyed. I will destroy

these three! Human life, possessions, and cattle will be cut off up to the ninth generation! Understand this![89]

Drukpa Kunley parodies:

> If you do help my disciples, I will arouse the mind-stream of the ocean of drunken behavior and remain in a state of fierce wrath! From within this state, I will meet your help with harm. Not caring about the consequences, I will lose my patience! I will cut off the roots of the lineage of anger above, the lineage of desire in the middle, and the lineage of bewilderment at the bottom. These lineages of the three poisons will be cut off up to the ninth generation! Understand this![90]

The two sections are exact inversions of each other. While Tsang Myön threatens to destroy the lives of those who do not comply with his instructions to aid his disciples (their cattle, possessions, and lives), Drukpa Kunley promises to destroy those who do help them. And yet, while the destruction threatened by Tsang Myön would wipe out not only the sources of livelihood but also human life, the destruction Drukpa Kunley threatens is, in fact, a great boon. For any individual to cut the roots of the three poisons of desire, aggression, and ignorance, is tantamount to enlightenment. We can almost hear Drukpa Kunley laughing here. He laughs at Tsang Myön for a variety of reasons, including his dramatic and arrogant statement of how he will punish those who do not comply with his requests. He laughs at his own disciples, whom he sends out to take their chances with a wary and suspicious populace who will likely choose *not*

[89] *Gal te yi ge mthong bzhin 'gal ba byed mi byung na/ mngon spyod drag po'i sgrub pa la zhugs/ khrag 'thung dam can rgya mtsho'i thugs rgyud bskul/ lha'i drang srong khros pa'i ngang nas/ bden tshig gi dmod pa bor te/ steng gi mi rabs/ 'og gi phyugs rabs/ bar gyi nor rabs te/ mi nor zas gsum gyi rabs rtsa ba dgu brgyud nas gcod par yod pas go ba gyis ces,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 51a.5-6-51b.1.

[90] *Phan 'dogs pa sogs byas pa byung na/ yi chad drag po'i sgrub pa la zhugs/ skyur 'gong rgya mtsho'i sems rgyud bskul/ phan lan gnod 'jal gyi drang srong khros pa'i ngang nas/ de yong byas zer ba'i dmod pa bor te/ steng zhe sdang gi rabs/ 'og 'dod chags kyi rabs/ bar gti mug gi rabs te/ dug gsum gyi rabs rtsa ba dgu brgyud nas gcod pa yod pas go dgos,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 52b.4-6.

to help them in order to bring down Drukpa Kunley's liberating wrath upon themselves. Drukpa Kunley prioritizes the well-being and liberation of the local populace over and above privilege for his students. More than either of these reasons, he seems to laugh out of sheer delight in playing with the structure and content of the passport letter itself. A final comment tacked onto the end of the episode states, "I wrote this letter of safe passage and a few of my disciples actually went!"[91]

Drukpa Kunley's parody of Tsang Myön's letter of safe passage embodies the comic or the ridiculous that is most often attributed to the literary device of parody. However, lest it appear that an enunciation of the absurd is the only ethos that parody serves to generate in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, we will look at another example. Hutcheon suggests that parody employs a range of pragmatic ethos (ruling intended effects), from the reverential to the playful to the scornful to the evaluative."[92] She notes also that irony, as the main rhetorical device used in parody, often functions to both to humorously mock as well as to assess the state of things in order to generate an intended response. This next example exemplifies this interpretation, using irony as it does to simultaneously ridicule, comment on, satirize, and valorize the hypocrisies and achievements of the main schools of Tibetan Buddhism.

In this composition, some philosophers (*mtshan nyid pa*) say disdainfully to Drukpa Kunley, [Since you great meditators don't know how to debate the Dharma], what else can you know? You can't even give a general premise and reasons for that "over your own heads,"

[91] *Lam yig byin pas 'ga' song*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 53a.3.

[92] Hutcheon 1985. "...many still feel that parody that does anything short of ridiculing its "target" is false parody... To argue this, of course, is to go against the entire tradition of the term's usage.

never mind anyone else's.[93] Drukpa Kunley responds that he knows how to perform the "general premises" and "particular reasons" (*khyab rtags*) and that he can demonstrate this by singing the following song:[94]

> NAMO KIRTI!
> In order to be a Kagyüpa guru, fact: You must be very rich!
> In order to be a Kagyüpa "great meditator," fact: You must have great endurance!
> In order to be a Kagyüpa patron, fact: You must be full of defilements!
> ...In order it to be a Kagyüpa feast, fact: There must be lots of liquor!
> In order for it to be the Kagyüpa view, fact: It must be beyond concept!
> In order for you to have the Kagyüpa character, fact: You must be without hypocrisy![95]

Next, he sings the "indicative signs:"

> Women living in the monastery: Sign that you are Kagyüpa!
> Monastic discipline ignored: Sign that you are Kagyüpa!
> ...Internal family quarrels: Sign that you are Kagyüpa!
> Unidentifiable view: Sign that you are Kagyüpa!
> Objectless meditation: Sign that you are Kagyüpa!
> Remembering only the guru: Sign that you are Kagyüpa![96]

[93] These philosophers accuse Drukpa Kunley and the Kagyüpas of being incapable of definitively establishing a major premise and supporting that with reasons, as is done in the traditional debate format. "Over the head" refers to the debate practice where one monk stands over the other and emphasizes his points by clapping his hands over the other monk's head/forehead. Cf. Dreyfus 2003.

[94] The following verses imitate the specific procedures used in debates. First one puts forth the general definitions (*khyab-pa*), then the particular signs (*rtags*). These are first given in the form of a positive definition, then in the form of a negative definition.

[95] *Dkar brgyud pa'i bla ma yin na longs spyod che bas khyab/ dkar brgyud pa'i sgom chen yin na sdug rus che bas khyab... dkar brgyud pa'i yon bdag yin na sdig pa che bas khyab/ dkar brgyud pa'i tshogs 'khor yin na sha chang mang bas khyab/ dkar brgyud pa'i lta ba yin na mtha' dang bral bas khyab...dkar brgyud pa'i spyod pa yin na ngo lkog med pas khyab,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 36b.3-4.

[96] *Dgon par bu med 'dug na dkar brgyud pa yin pa'i rtags/ 'dul ba khyad du gsod na dkar brgyud pa yin pa'i rtags...pha spun nang 'thab byed na dkar brgyud pa yin pa'i rtags/ lta ba ngos bzung med na dkar brgyud pa yin pa'i rtags/ sgom pa dmigs gtad med na dkar brgyud pa yin pa'i rtags...bla ma min pa bsam rgyu med na dkar brgyud pa yin pa'i rtags,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 36b.5-6; 37a.1.

"Well then," the philosophers respond, "sing that song again making the "negative general assertions" for us debaters!"

> If you do not think constantly about your worldly image, fact: You are not a debater!
> If you have lost your craving for tea, fact: You are not a debater!
> If your school is without hatred or passion, fact: It has no debaters!
> ...If you do not sell your robes for tea, fact: You are not a debater!
> If your lovers are not young novices, fact: You are not a debater!
> If you do not turn definitive meaning into conventional terms, fact: You are not a debater![97]

The indicative signs:

> Holding high the Dharma flag: Sign that you are a debater!
> Holding scriptures and vast knowledge: Sign that you are a debater!
> Holding the teachings of the Vinaya: Sign that you are a debater!
> Holding the view of the Abhidharma: Sign that you are a debater!
> ...Maintaining the oral tradition of the Buddha: Sign that you are debater![98]

And again for tantrikas (Nyingmas):

> Not having a beard or mustache, fact: You are not a tantrika!
> Not carrying a rakshasa mala, fact: You are not a tantrika!
> ...Not having a consort and family, fact: You are not a tantrika!
> ...Not performing empowerments for large crowds, fact: You are not a tantrika!
> ...Not performing black magic, fact: You are not a tantrika!
> Not mixing up Dharma and Adharma, fact: You are not a tantrika![99]

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[97] *'O na nged mtshan nyid pa la khyab pa cig phud dang zer/ nyin mtshan 'og rgyu mi gtong na mtshan nyid pa yin pa bud/ ja la sred pa spangs na mtshan nyid pa yin pa bud/ gra tshang chags sdang med na mtshan nyid pa yin pa bud...chos gos ja la ma btsongs na mtshan nyid pa yin pa bud/ skyo rogs btsun chung la ma bcol na mtshan nyid pa yin pa bud/ nges don tha snyad la ma bsgyur na mtshan nyid pa yin pa bud,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 37b.2-4.

[98] *Bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan 'dzin na mtshan nyid pa yin pa'i rtags/ lung dang rig pa 'dug na mtshan nyid pa yin pa'i rtags/ 'dul ba'i bslab bya 'dug na mtshan nyid pa yin pa'i rtags/ mngon pa'i lta ba 'dug na mtshan nyid pa yin pa'i rtags...ston pa'i gsung rgyun 'dug na mtshan nyid pa yin pa'i rtags,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 37b. 4-6.

[99] *Kha la sma ra med na sngags pa yin pa bud/ lag na rag sha med na sngags pa yin pa bud...jo mo dang gdung rgyud med na sngags pa yin pa bud/ zab dbang khrom la mi bskur na sngags pa yin pa bud/ mthu dang ngan sngags mi byed na sngags pa yin pa bud/ chos dang chos min ma bsres na sngags pa yin pa bud,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 37b.1-2.

And the definitive signs:

> "Knowing that all dharmas are primordially pure: Sign you are a tantrika!
> Having meditation like empty space: Sign you are a tantrika!
> Performing conduct that is "all good": Sign you are a tantrika!
> ...Knowing that samaya is always present: Sign you are a tantrika!
> ...Knowing that emptiness is primordially present: Sign you are tantrika![100]

Drukpa Kunley concludes: "When I sang this, they all laughed!"[101]

On the surface, what is being parodied in this episode is the format and content of a formal debate.[102] Traditional Tibetan debate practice is aimed at a range of objectives that centrally include learning by heart and understanding completely the Buddhist teachings and developing the ability to make use of "direct implications from the obvious in order to generate an inference of the non-obvious state of phenomena."[103] Or to put this in other words, the objective is to understand the profound emptiness/wisdom nature of reality through in-depth, on-the-spot critical analysis of the "true" state of being of ordinary appearances and experiences.[104] Understanding this, the debater understands as well the limits of conceptual reasoning and the power of direct perception, which is thought to dawn when conceptual mind

[100] *Chos kun ye rdzogs shes na sngags pa yin pa'i rtags/ sgom pa glong yangs 'dug na sngags pa yin pa'i rtags/ spyod pa kun bzang spyod na sngags pa yin pa'i rtags...dam tshig ye srung shes na sngags pa yin pa'i rtags/ khyab gdal lhun grub shes na sngags pa yin pa'i rtags,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 37b.3-4.

[101] *Byas pas khong tsho dga' song ngo*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 37b. 4-5.

[102] Dreyfus 2002, 211-217.

[103] Perdue 1992, 7.

[104] Dreyfus 2002, 244.

reaches exhaustion. Usually, two monks or two nuns face off with one posing a stream of questions or propositions, which the other must answer or directly refute.[105]

Here, Drukpa Kunley uses both negative and positive assertions about the true condition of the Kagyü School, the school of the debaters, and the Nyingma School (the tantrikas). His "facts" and "signs" are not, in fact, debatable in that they directly point of the true state of being of each group, both their positive attributes and their more laughable characteristics. For example, in his description of the negative general assertions for debaters, Drukpa Kunley first ironically lists assertions such as being concerned with how others see them, being attached to drinking copious amounts of tea, having an aggressive orientation to anyone else's doctrines, and taking novice monks as lovers. Having pointed out the avarice, licentiousness, and aggressiveness, he switches tact to highlight the group's positive qualities, such as holding high the Dharma flag, knowing numerous scriptures and Buddhist teachings, maintaining the disciplines of the Vinaya and holding the views of the Abhidharma. As in many of the compositions we have explored, this switching back and forth between faults and qualities forms the basis for Drukpa Kunley's discussions. As usual, he coaches his revelation of faults within a discourse both ironic and sarcastic, whether that discourse is aimed at others, such as the debaters, or at himself. As a result, listening to his song, the debaters (and the audience) can't help but laugh. (See discussion in Chapter Four for more on the use of humor to generate receptivity in the listener.)

[105] Perdue 1992.

As a rhetorical device, the use of parody is playful at the same time as it works both evaluatively and critically to bring home the truth of what is positive and beneficial about each group, as well as the hypocrisies and basic human foibles of each. So, while it is a fact that Kagyü gurus are wealthy, Kagyü patrons are out to benefit themselves, and Kagyü tantric feasts are primarily about drinking alcohol and eating meat, it is also true that, on the ideal side, the Kagyü view is beyond conceptual analysis; Kagyü meditation is objectless, and Kagyü behavior is without hypocrisy.

In the section called the "establishment of signs," like with the debaters, Drukpa Kunley pokes fun at the actual condition of the Kagyü order: some Kagyü monks live with their consorts in the monasteries while others wander about hoping for food; monastic discipline is ignored; and internal family quarrels are rampant. At the same time as he asserts this ordinary, human level of being, Drukpa Kunley counters this with a list of the ultimate or ideal signs: having objectless meditation; not being a hypocrite; having impartial pure vision and pure meditation without object; etc.

In parodying both the structure and the content of a formal debate and by including his own school among those debated, Drukpa Kunley's song fulfills the ostensible intent of a debate – to help others, including one's self, to overcome wrong views. At the very same time, it pokes fun at and satirizes the less desirable attitudes and activities of these three Tibetan Buddhist schools. By "desacralizing" the debate practice, the parody also serves to "resacralize" it in the direction of honest representation, not only of profound Buddhist truths on the ultimate nature of reality, but also of the basic, ordinary, conventional, human truths that

underlie any of the spiritual identities a person may dress up in. Multiple types of parody are taking place here at once – parody of debate practice itself; parody of the ideological content of debate; parody of the various practitioners of the different Buddhist Schools; as well as parody of the format of the debate practice – remember that Drukpa Kunley "debates" by singing a song. He does not deliver his debate in the manner of the philosophical schools. It becomes clear that, packaged and immersed in the playful and the comic, truth is easily communicated and received. As the narrator exclaims at the end of the episode: "When I finished, they all laughed!"

Another example of a parody is the following where Drukpa Kunley mocks the common trope of remembering past lives. Generally, in Tibetan Buddhist biographical literature, the remembrance of past lives involves the principle figure recalling his or her exalted status as this or that previous incarnation. But in this example, Drukpa Kunley targets this standard Tibetan Buddhist practice of placing oneself within a lineage of past sources of authority. In doing so, he implicitly questions the motivations that might prompt a person not only to "remember" his or her past lives as a great personage, but also the ability to recall past lives itself.

> Another time someone said to me, "Dharma lord, since you are a yogi, do you remember anything of your previous lives?" I replied, "They say that it is possible to recollect former lives if one is without any subtle karmic obscurations. And if one has the power of clairvoyance, one can definitely know them. As for me, I may know a few bits if I consider them in accord with my present character."[106]

[106] *Yang skabs cig na mi zhig na re/ chos rje rang rnal 'byor pa yin pa la/ sku skye ba snga phyi dum pa re e dgongs zer ba la 'di skad byas/ skye ba dran pa la sgrib pa phra mo las med pas dran zer ba'ang 'dug/ mngon shes yod pas ni los shes/ ngas kyang da ltar gyi sprod pa la dpags na dam dum tsam shes sam byas pas,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 41a.4-5.

It is interesting to note that the questioner uses Drukpa Kunley's position as a yogi as a basis upon which to imagine that he might have the power of clairvoyance. This opening suggests an expectation or assumption among ordinary people that anyone who takes up the yogic lifestyle will, by default, become possessed of unusual abilities indicative of advanced levels of realization. Drukpa Kunley's response presents both the actual reason why a person would develop such abilities and his own approach. As for the actual reason, when someone is without the subtle obscurations (*sgrib pa phra mo*), possibly he or she might be able to recall previous lives. But what is really necessary is that a person has attained the power of clairvoyance or higher perception (*mngon shes*). There are many lists of these super-knowledges, but most of them include the power to recollect former lives.[107] Drukpa Kunley does not deny that this may be possible, but he never claims such knowledge for himself. Instead, he remarks on how, according to his current dispositions, or how things have presently come together for him (*da ltar gyi sprod pa la dpags*), he might know a bit about his past lives. Playing with the law of karma, he imagines how his present condition must have resulted from causes in a precious life. It's not hard to imagine that an eager questioner might reply, "Well, please tell me!" But what follows quickly undercuts any expectation that Drukpa Kunley might answer seriously as we are taken on a playful jaunt through his various predilections and appetites.

> I replied, "Along the rosary of my numerous births, I have not taken a body, but instead I have taken up so many different activities! It is not completely clear but, if I can make a guess, this is how I think I was born:

[107] Kongtrul, Jamgön 2013, 40.

From the fact of my craving for alcohol, I might have had the life of a fly.
From the fact of my great lust, I might have had the life of a rooster.
From the fact of my propensity for anger, I might have had the life of a snake.
From the fact of my ongoing avarice, I might have been born as a rich man.
From the fact of my shameless behavior, I might have been born a poor man.
From the fact of my inclination for lies, I might have lived the life of a cheat.
From the fact of my desire to meditate on black magic, I might have taken birth as a mantrika.
From the fact of my great fixation on words, I might have lived the life of a debater.
From the fact of my shameless behavior, I might have lived the life of a realized one.
From the fact of my craving for raw meat, I might have lived the life of a wolf.
From the fact of my great discursiveness, I might have lived the life of a Brahmin.
From the fact of my distaste for order,[108] I might have lived the life of a child.
From the fact of my great desires, I might have lived the life of a "nephew."[109]
From the fact of my great jealousy, I might have taken birth as the guru of a small monastery.
From the fact that I eat the food given as offerings, I might have lived the life of a guru's bursar.
From the fact of my lack of courage, I might have lived the life of an old nun.
From the fact of my meanness in food and clothes, I might have lived the life of a newly rich person.
From the fact of my eating tsampa without any regard to propriety, I might have lived the life of a very poor person.
Because I don't consider myself at all, I might have lived the life of a madman.
Because of the depth of my vows, I might have lived the life of a longhaired monastic.
Because of my wandering through samsara, I might have lived the life of someone who didn't care about consequences.
From the fact of my great desire for enlightenment, I might have lived the life of a "solitary realizer."
From the fact of my empowering myself, I might have lived the life of a Sravaka.
From the fact of my custom of deceiving others, I might have lived the life of a merchant.

[108] *Mgo mjug*—literally "head/tail," meaning that he ignores ordinary order or hierarchy.

[109] *An dbon*—nephew. Here Drukpa Kunley is poking fun at the rather common situation of nuns becoming pregnant with a guru's children. Such children are then known as "nephews."

> From the fact of my love for the earth and the fields, I might have lived the life of a householder monk.[110]
> From the fact of my disregard of the monastic vows, I might have lived the life of a retainer monk.
> From the fact of my wandering through samsara, I might have lived the life of a shameless person.
> Not thinking of myself, but explaining the Dharma to others, I might have lived as a deceptive teacher.
> That is how the facts seem to me, but I am basically lying. It is not clear what is true and what is false! I have only conjectures and I confess them.[111]

Instead of describing his series of past lives as examples of progression along a trajectory to ultimate enlightenment (as found, for example, in the past life stories of the Buddha), Drukpa Kunley takes this opportunity both to parody that kind of laudatory story as well as to point out humorously and honestly his ordinary human qualities. We are informed that he harbors a craving for alcohol and for women. He has a bad temper and can be selfish. He acts shamelessly and lies. But something else is going on here as his writing begins to work on multiple levels

[110] *Ser khyim pa*, householder/ritualists who are able to carry out rituals on certain occasions in the communities where there are no monks.

[111] *Nga skye ba mang po'i phreng ba la/ lus ma blangs bya ba'i dgu cig blangs/ gsal gsal rang cig mi 'dug ste/ tshod byas na 'di ltar skyes sam snyam/ skyur dad 'di yi che lugs kyis/ sbrang ma'i skye ba yin pa 'dra/ 'dod chags 'di yi che lugs kyis/ bya pho'i skye ba yin pa 'dra/ zhe sdang 'di yi che lugs kyis/ sbrul gyi skye ba yin pa 'dra/ ser sna 'di yi che lugs kyis/ phyug po'i skye ba yin pa 'dra/ khrel med 'di yi byed lugs kyis/ mi ltogs skye ba yin pa 'dra/ skyag rdzun 'di yi che lugs kyis/ zog po'i skye ba yin pa 'dra/ ngan sngags sgom snying 'dod lugs kyis/ sngags pa'i skye ba yin pa 'dra/ tshig la zhen pa che lugs kyis/ mtshan nyid pa'i skye ba yin pa 'dra/ spyod pa 'di yi rtsing lugs kyis/ rtogs ldan gyi skye ba yin pa 'dra/ dmar dad 'di yi che lugs kyis spyang ki'i skye ba yin pa 'dra/ rtog pa 'di yi che lugs kyis/ bram ze'i skye ba yin pa 'dra/ mgo mjug 'di yi chung lugs kyis/ phu gu'i skye ba yin pa 'dra/ zhen chags 'di yi che lugs kyis/ an dbon gyi skye ba yin pa 'dra/ phrag dog 'di yi che lugs kyis dgon chung bla ma'i skye ba'ang yin pa 'dra/ dkor zas 'di yi za lugs kyis/ nye gnas kyi skye ba yin pa 'dra/ blo khog 'di yi dog lugs kyis/ btsun rgan ma'i skye ba yin pa 'dra/ lto gos 'di yi bsri lugs kyis/ phyug sar ba'i skye ba yin pa 'dra/ khrel med rtsam pa'i 'gam lugs kyis/ dbul po'i skye ba yin pa 'dra/ rang la gcig kyang mi bsam pas/ smyon pa'i skye ba yin pa 'dra/ sdom pa 'di yi rtsing lugs kyis/ sde zhol btsun pa'i skye ba yin pa 'dra/ 'khor ba 'di ru 'khyams lugs kyis/ khrel med po'i skye ba yin pa 'dra/ sangs rgyas 'di la zhen lugs kyis/ rang rgyal gyi skye ba yin pa 'dra/ rang mgo 'di yi 'don lugs kyis/ nyan thos kyi skye ba yin pa 'dra/ gzhan la mgo g.yogs gtong lugs kyis/ tshong pa'i skye ba yin pa 'dra/ sa zhing 'di la zhen lugs kyis/ ser khyim pa'i skye ba yin pa 'dra/ rang la mi bsam gzhan la dam chos 'chad/ zog rkyal slob dpon gyi skye ba yin pa 'dra/ de 'dra'i rdzun gyi gsal snang shar/ bden rdzun mngon du ma gyur pas/ rjes su dpags pa mthol lo bshags,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 41a.5-42a.3.

whereby, even as Drukpa Kunley notes certain qualities as his own, he simultaneously attributes these qualities to categories of other religious and ordinary actors.

Thus, we learn that in the world of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, at least some practitioners of the secret mantra use their meditatively acquired powers for negative purposes that serve their own desires. Debaters (*mtshan nyid pa*) sometimes forget that the purpose of religious debate is to stimulate a deeper penetration into the real essence of the Buddhist teachings, and instead become fixated on the surface meaning of the words themselves. Caught up in the competitive atmosphere of the debate, they lose the real point in their desire to come out on top.

Realized ones (*rtogs ldan*), likely referring here to yogic practitioners, are also criticized by Drukpa Kunley. He infers that they sometimes forget the precise disciplines of the Vinaya that serve to govern appropriate conduct in their haste to demonstrate their transcendence of all social and religious norms. Disregarding Padmasambhava's maxim that, "One's mind should be as vast and open as the sky, and one's actions as minute as sesame seeds," these practitioners act in any which way, causing problems for themselves and confusion for others. The song presents figure after figure, each of whose identity Drukpa Kunley claims for himself at the same time as he penetratingly reveals their hypocrisies. Rather than producing a list of past lives that would serve to promote his authority and status, he instead invites both his interlocutor and his readers to laugh delightedly at the same time as they cannot help but recognize themselves in at least a few of the hypocritical stances he describes. His final comment that "this is how the facts seem to me, but I am lying. It is not clear what is true and

what is false! I have only conjectures and I confess them,"[112] seals the deal on his refusal to participate in a deceptive practice designed only to raise up his status or confirm his importance both to himself and others. Like many of the parodies found throughout the *Namthar*, this one uses irony to simultaneously ridicule and satirize those who build themselves up with stories of their previous existences, while also providing a commentary on a range of deceptions that religious persons engage in.

At the same time, Drukpa Kunley is also parodying his own parody by calling even its criticisms of others into question. The final lines of the composition demonstrate this move when he says, "That is how the facts seem to me, but I am basically lying. It is not clear what is true and what is false! I have only conjectures and I confess them!" This double parody highlights the ironic fact of the indeterminate nature of truth and falsity and his recognition of the pompousness of any claim to know the truth. Not only does he expose the fault of his own tenuous conjectures, his commentary implicitly critiques any claim to inarguable truth. If we ask how parody functions as a literary practice of ethical formation, this particular composition demonstrates how Drukpa Kunley uses self-parody to open up a reflective space in which revealing his own foibles and hypocrisies as well as those of others causes him to have to question and re-question the truthfulness and factuality of his own perceptions. Rather than resting on an assumption of being right, he instead must cycle repeatedly through the processes of self-examination he models in this composition where no point of view can be taken for granted.

[112] *De 'dra'i rdzun gyi gsal snang shar/ bden rdzun mngon du ma gyur pas/ rjes su dpags pa mthol lo bshags,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 42a.3.

In performing an exaggerated imitation of the recognizable style of the liberated guru who recalls past lives or purports to possess other signs of realization, Drukpa Kunley appeals to the network of associations and beliefs shared by his interlocutors and the model reader imagined by the text. All equally participate in parody's ethos of humor and its critical performativity. All are also equally implicated in the parody's implicit acknowledgement of a community of receptive readers for its success. The presence of the interlocutor who queries Drukpa Kunley serves as the instigating spark for this process of ironic self-reflection, demonstrating the necessity of being seen by an other for genuine self awareness and representation.

III. Words From The Other Side—Buddhas, Diviners, Demons, And Dreams

On night, in a dream at Ebcho Gekung, I heard a radiant yogi, who said,
I'm the Great Brahmin," sing these words:

...Look at the truth of the way things really are! Look!
If you just look at the truth of the way things really are,
It's the primordial , naturally radiant, buddha body of reality.
Leave the mind in that unfabricated state![113]

The Yogi Godrakpa

This section analyzes the ways in which two literary styles – epistolary literature and divination – work side by side in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar's* project of ethical self-formation. While these two styles are quite different in terms of their structure and content, in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* they share certain characteristics and functions, such as providing a literary medium through which Drukpa Kunley sends and receives communication from the worlds of both people and Buddhas, oracles, and demons, as well as supplying an "other-worldly" authority to the content of the messages they contain.

A. Letters

Two main types of letter writing are included in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*. There are letters exchanged between the narrator and his human historical teachers, disciples, or other important figures of the time. These are primarily concerned with mundane events, expressions of devotion, and exchanges of spiritual advice. They are similar to the letters found in many

[113] Stearns 2000, 109.

other collections (*gsung 'bum*). A second category of letters are those transmitted through Drukpa Kunley from a range of other-worldly entities, such as Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and demons to one or another group of Buddhist practitioners. These letter exchanges take place not only across space, but also across time and different levels of reality.

Janet Altman has proposed that the formal and functional characteristics of the epistolary genre greatly impact the way meaning is transmitted. She terms the use of a letter's formal properties to create meaning, the work's "epistolarity" – it's ability to foster different patterns of emphasis, narrative action, types of characters, and narrative self-awareness.[114] In other words, when we look carefully at the formal aspects of a letter, we see that this form communicates in certain ways that other genres may not achieve. One way in which this communication occurs is described by Thomas Beebee, who emphasizes how the epistolary genre provides an opportunity for augmenting particular perspectives and thereby emphasizing certain points over others.[115] Bonnie Braendlin suggests another consideration when she notes that a letter comprises an "open-ended, interrupted, and interruptible form" – a freedom from structure that creates a new structure, thereby "engendering freshness, a generic honesty that doesn't feel constrained to plod on to the ending."[116] This way of interpreting the form of the letter is particularly useful to analyzing the letters found in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar,*

[114] Altman 1982, 4-9.

[115] Beebee 1999, 170.

[116] Braendlin 1996, 65-66.

because, as we will see, Drukpa Kunley uses letters as a particular way of authorizing his project of exposing the truth of hypocrisy.

The letter writing included in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* reveals a world where the exchange of information between different dimensions and orders of reality is a norm. That which it is important to know arises in a variety of manifestations. This is also a world where deities and demons avail themselves of the literary sophistication normally attributed to the human realm of scholars or educated persons. Both deities and demons use written linguistic forms to express and communicate their messages to others. Drukpa Kunley, engaging in this formal linguistic exchange, represents himself as a person who is adept in traversing these different levels of reality as well as in composing such missives himself. He possesses the capacity to receive and understand the messages he is meant to transmit.

Some scholars[117] have suggested that letter writing has three essential characteristics. The first is known as *philophronesis* – the expression of a friendly relationship between the writer and the recipient that retains a sense of conversation and dialogue. The second is that letters serve the purpose of *parousia* in that they function to extend the writer's presence even when he or she is physically absent. The final characteristic is that letters function as *homilia*. They express a dialogue or conversation in written form.

I suggest that communication through letter writing also possesses two other characteristics. First, it is formal, in that it involves a series of orchestrated activities to produce the finished product. While the compositions in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* do not overtly

[117] Thompson 2000, 63. Harding 2001, 67.

describe these activities (the arranging of the paper, the carving of the pen and the filling of it with ink, the careful arrangement of letters on paper, etc.), the ethos of letter-writing culture is evoked by his narration of the letter exchanges. Even in compositions that are not coached in the style of a letter, the narrative occasionally highlights writing as a recognized and valued activity. For example, in the composition discussed above in Part I, where Drukpa Kunley is asked to describe his style of dress, but instead describes the appearance of many others, he narrates how, hanging at their sides, the Kapoba (white clad ones) dangle finger sheaths, Chinese ink pots in cases, and pens from their belts.[118]

The second characteristic of letter writing is that in addition to being formal, it is also intimate. Letters form a direct address between two specifically targeted parties. They function as a connector between two distant points – as a bridge between a sender and a receiver. They "lie halfway between the possibility of total communication and the risk of no communication at all."[119] When I receive a letter addressed to me, it is impossible for me not to feel directly addressed. The letter makes me feel that some kind of relationship is assumed or desired. This is true even when I receive a formal letter, although it is also the case that such familiarity can feel abrasive and intrusive when the addresser represents some corporate or marketing entity with whom I have no wish to communicate. In the world of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, a world where modern forms of communication such as email or telephone do not exist, the

[118] *yang dkar po ba rnams kyis dbu skra la spa lo yags po rgyab/ spyi gtsug tu thor cog 'dzum mu le brgyab/ sham thabs dkar po sul brgya tsam yod pa dkris/ de'i logs la smyug krog dang snag bum shubs dang the'u shubs sogs phra le phru le btags*, Volume Kha 1978, 3a.5.

[119] Altman 1982, 43.

letter represents a particular mode of transmission – one that appreciates and utilizes symbols and semiotic forms to convey its messages. This is not the world of mind-to-mind transmission of teachings that has been examined by, for example, Janet Gyatso, in her analysis of the secret autobiography of the Tibetan yogi, Jigme Lingpa.[120]

As we will see below, the narrator's world is a place in which exchanging written forms of communication has a high level of social cache. When the loftiest deities in the Tibetan Buddhist pantheon, including the Buddha himself, and the most terrifying, such as demons, as well as high-ranking human lamas are all portrayed as using letter writing as a form of communication, the text's valuation and valorization of the potency of the literary form cannot be ignored. Drukpa Kunley, being on the receiving end of these written missives, has claim to a particular position. He has access to and is authorized to mediate between different levels of reality and between different kinds of beings. He represents himself as capable of hearing and communicating the letters' messages. We might speculate that it is due to his familiarity and dexterity with the literary that he is able to gain access to the highest authority (the Buddha) and he is in a position of trust in relation to the transmission of truth coming from that authority. In a very real way, Drukpa Kunley doubles as that authority by virtue of the access he has to these truths and his mediating role in communicating them.

In the following example, the monks of the Khampa Teng Monastery request Drukpa Kunley to compose a "letter of authority" (*bka' shog*) to the eight classes of demons berating them for damaging their fields with hail. Drukpa Kunley is about to compose this when a letter

[120] Gyatso 1998.

arrives from the eight classes of demons, brought by the goblin Yeshe Drakpa. This situation sets the narrative scene in which Drukpa Kunley is asked to mediate, via epistolary medium, the conflict that has arisen between the monks and the demons who appear to be unable to speak to each other directly without his intermediary role and the exchange of letters. The demons write:

> As long as you gurus have abandoned all partiality towards sentient beings, you should adhere to the indisputable evidence of the truth. As the worldly proverbs say: 'Truth on the right; falsehood on the left.' Therefore, you should abandon all partiality." In response, I (Drukpa Kunley) wrote: "Generally, it is inappropriate to harm the sacred objects of the Three Jewels and in particular, you should not harm the common lands of the Sangha![121]

In the midst of the narrative frame that sets up this letter exchange between monks and demons, a second letter exchange takes places between Drukpa Kunley and the demons where the demons challenge his ability to be an impartial judge between the two parties. So, here we see two letter exchanges taking place, one in which the two opposing parties present their argument for their actions, and another where the narrator establishes his skill in bearing witness to and mediating between them.

The demons present their side of the argument first. "Previously," they write, "the Buddha and his followers owned no lands," but "these days, under pretext of making offerings to the Three Jewels, the Sangha owns lands and fields." Due to this, they "cause the lay people to work extra hard" to support them; they "use a good harvest only to feed themselves"; they

[121] *Khyed bla ma rnam pa sems can la nye ring phyogs cha spangs pa yin dus/ bden gtan tshigs sor bzhag pa cig dgos shing/ 'jig rten kyi kha dpe la'ang bden pa g.yas dang/ brdzun pa g.yon zer ba gleng gi 'dug pa nye ring spangs pa cig dgos zer ba la/ nged kyis khong rnams la spyir dkon mchog yul gnyan pa dang/ khyad par dge 'dun gyi spyi zhing la gnod 'gal gtan nas mi btub byas pas,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 85b.3-4.

have “corrupted the offerings to be made to the protector deities” and they have “reduced the offerings of the leftovers.” “...The reality is that all your misfortunes arise due to these reasons!” However, they concede, if “the Dharma Lord wants us to stop our actions, we will do it, since he, himself, is never in contradiction to the Holy Dharma.”[122]

The monks respond with a litany of the problems that the eight classes of demons cause when they penetrate into the hearts of sentient beings.[123] This list includes such things as “disturbing the minds of the teachers”; “arousing desire in monks”; “opening the vaginas of nuns”; “causing children to be spoiled” and “old folks to turn away from the Dharma”. They end their letter with a plea to Drukpa Kunley: “Please be so kind as to examine which of us has the right of it! O Drukpa Kunley, please consider!”[124] The argument continues with the demons and the monks exchanging accusations and differing points of view of which Drukpa Kunley says that he will limit himself “by summarizing their overall meaning” (*don hril de bsgril ba la*). The demons tell the monks that, “the primary cause of harm is your own discursive thoughts.”[125] Since all beings are trapped by their karma, they themselves (the demons) are merely acting in

[122] The whole letter is as follows: *Sngon bcom ldan ‘das la nyan thos de tsam gyis bskor ba la spyi zhing e ‘dug/ rdo rje ‘chang la spyi zhing/ ba mdzo/ nang spyad ci ‘dras ‘dug/ bod kyi chos pa mi la la’ang zhing e ‘dug/ da lta dkon mchog mchod pa la snyad pa’i sa zhing/ de la brten pa’i ‘jig rten las las ka rems pa ‘di bzhin/ sde chen po thams cad du byas byung ba la brten/ khyod khams pa steng pa las drag pa rtses thang ser ‘bras rnams su’ang ‘brum pas chos mi byed tshad tshar bcad pa de yin mod/ ser ba phran tshegs gtong dgos byung ba/ lo legs rung dkon mchog gi mchod pa la rtsal ‘don med pa’i stengs su/ chos skyong gi gtor tshog la g.yo zol/ lhag la’ang ‘bri ba zhig rnam pa kun tu byas byung ba/ de don gyis gnod pa byas tshod du ‘dug lags/ da chos rjes mdzad nas/ dam pa’i chos las ‘gal ba’i las mi mdzad na/ bka’ gang gnang sgrub zhu bar ‘dug,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 85b.5-86a.3.

[123] *khyod sde brgyad dpon g.yog gis nged tsho’i snying la zhugs pa’i cho ‘phrul yin pas*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 86a.5-6.

[124] *bden dgongs pas dpyod pa mkhyen mkhyen zhu bar ‘dug,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 86a.6.

[125] *don khyed rang rnams kyi rnam rtog gi nyer len gyis mi gnod pa la dgrar bzung bas*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 86b.1-2.

accord with their situation. Although they have nothing to do with the teachings of the Buddha, they use these teachings to support their cause.[126] "Please, Dharma Lord Kunley," the demons write, "give a verdict!"[127]

Both the demons and the monks view Drukpa Kunley as a trustworthy person who can maintain the critical distance necessary to see both sides of the argument. But, he is also said to be trustworthy for two other important reasons. From the demons' point of view, he is a person who "never acts in contradiction to the Holy Dharma (*dam pa'i chos las 'gal ba'i las mi mdzad*)." From the monks' point of view, he has both the acuity and compassion to see the truth. These three characteristics of compassion, intelligence, and discipline add to Drukpa Kunley's trustworthiness, showing him as a person who can ascertain the truth. That he is able to negotiate between denizens of the seen and the unseen worlds is further testament to the Drukpa Kunley's powers of perception and insight. This becomes even more evident in Drukpa Kunley's response.

In the letter that contains his verdict, Drukpa Kunley demonstrates a playful, discriminating insight that works simultaneously to reveal the self-deceptions of both monks and demons while at the same time showing where ultimate authority lies in the situation between them. The letter opens with a three appositions. The first, "Hri! Order that cannot be defined in terms of concreteness, but which manifests everything, forever and always!" establishes the letter as an "order" (*bka'*). The second, "Transmission that is non-deluded in

[126] *bcom ldan 'das kyi bka' shog sde snod rnams kyang,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 86b.2-3.

[127] *de steng nas 'khrud sbyang zhu ba,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 86b.3.

relation to cause and effect!" nuances this by suggesting that such a command is also a "transmission" (*lung*). The third apposition, "Letter that must be borne by all those who reap the results of good and bad karma, except for the Buddha!" equates both "command" and "transmission" with "letter" (*yi ge*).[128] This epistolary opening that includes three appositions is the format that opens all the letters in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* exchanged between human and non-human beings. In this example, the three appositions also establish the letter's qualities: forever and always, it manifests everything (*ye gdod ma nas cir yang 'char*); it is not deceived in regards to cause and effect (*las rgyu 'bras mi bslu ba*); and it must be taken on by all beings except the fully enlightened Buddha (*sangs rgyas ma gtogs kun gyis 'khur dgos pa*). In the present situation, the letter represents a source of authority that none of those addressed can afford to ignore. The letter continues on to say that while it is true that all beings are to some degree governed by their karma, if, in previous lives, the monks and the demons had "offered victory to others and taken loss and defeat" on themselves, if they had "meditated on bodhicitta," they might have "reversed the twelve interdependent links and thereby been liberated." Instead, they "did what the people of Ü do when they fight with each other with sticks," i.e., they laid the seeds for repeating cycles of retribution.

Having explained the root cause of the problem between the two parties – the selfish consideration of one's own benefit and ignorance of the truth of cause and effect – Drukpa Kunley concludes with his verdict.

[128] *hri ye gdod ma nas cir yang 'char zhing cir yang ma grub pa'i bka'/ las rgyu 'bras mi bslu ba'i lung/ tha dad du las bzang ngan sangs rgyas ma gtogs kun gyis 'khur dgos pa'i yi ge*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 86b.4-5.

> ...within all the phenomena of samsara it is impossible to know if what somebody says is true or false, for true and false are only relative—they never come together in one point. Since that's true, you, the eight classes of demons, should not send hail to damage the common fields of the monks of Khampa Teng, or floods out of season. It is so that you will put this into practice that I have sent this letter. But you, monks of Khampa Teng, neither should you boast about this letter. You should, in accord with the Holy Dharma, make the sacrificial offering cakes as retribution for your karmic debts and consider the demons with compassion. Everyone should be in accord with the Holy Dharma!
>
> This letter was written in the year of the monkey, in the place where samsaric beings do not harm one another; in the month when there is payback for the harm done to others; on the eighth day when the stream of samsara is stopped; in the palace of the unborn.[129]

Rather than laying blame on the actions of one party or the other, Drukpa Kunley points to a wider view in which the real issue, the deception by and entrapment of all beings by their own actions in the quagmire of cause and results, is emphasized. Turning one's gaze back upon oneself and remaining in harmony with the teachings of the Holy Dharma reiterates the larger themes developed throughout the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*. Self-examination lies at the root of any ability to discern the truth about one's own actions and the actions of others. Self-examination conducted in harmony with the teachings of the Buddha leads to positive actions that overcome delusion and deceit and that may reverse the possibilities of suffering and conflict. In the final analysis, every being remains alone with the truth of who he or she is. Such individual truth is no different from the truths taught by the Buddha.

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[129] *'khor ba'i snang tshul 'di la tha dad nas bden pa dang/ tha dad nas rdzun pha ma gtogs/ gcig gis labs pa de bden pa dang brdzun pa gnyis gting go ba zhig ma byung/ da yin na khyed sde brgyad rnams kyis kyang/ khams pa steng pa'i chos sde ba dpon slob kyi spyi zhing la/ ser ba'i gnod pa/ gzhan yang dus min gyi shwa 'od sogs gang yang ma gtong/ de don du 'dzin rgyu'i yi ge sbyin pa yn/ yang khyed khams pa steng pas kyang yi ge yod zer ba'i shed ngom ma byed par las kyi lan chags 'khyer ba'i gtor ma/ snying rjes rjes su 'dzin pa'i byang sems sogs dam pa'i chos dang mthun pa bsgrubs/ spre'u lo 'khor ba gcig gis gcig la gnod pa mi skyel ba'i lo/ gnod lan phan pas 'jal ba'i zla ba/ 'khor ba rgyun gcod pa'i tshes brgyad la/ skye ba med pa'i pho brang nas bris,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 87a.2-6.

This analysis reveals another dimension of the function of the epistolary genre--its use in shaping the character of the recipient. This purpose of letter writing has been studied in relation to Paul's epistles. For example, Stowers describes how early Christian writers such as Paul used letters to form the character of the congregations to whom they wrote.[130] In the same way, Drukpa Kunley's letter emphasizes the qualities and faults of both of the groups it addresses. The letter's content projects, as Stowers says, the character of the writer as, in the case of Drukpa Kunley, invested in revealing the importance of critical self-examination and recognition of the truth of cause and effect.

At the end of the letter, Drukpa Kunley relates the date, place, and time of the letter's composition – in the monkey year, in the place where samsaric beings do not harm one another, in the month when there is payback for the harm done to others, on the eighth day when the stream of samsara is stopped, in the palace of the unborn. Evident in this stylistically characteristic closing is both humor and a gesture towards ultimate legitimation. If the letter was written in a place where sentient beings do not harm each other, in a month where karma ripens, on a day when the karmic stream of cause and result is brought to a standstill, in the palace of the unborn nature, who, among both demonic and monastic readers, could possible question its authority? Claiming this sphere of reality as the originating point for his letter, Drukpa Kunley places both himself and the contents of the letter beyond reproach. Since his goal is to mediate a conflict, this stance places his verdict outside the reach of either the

[130] Stowers [as quoted in Harding] 2001, 69.

demons or the monks. We might suppose that Drukpa Kunley is playing up the two parties' impressions of his skill in mediation, while simultaneously poking fun at the whole situation.

In another example, while seeking to correct the views of some monks concerning the use of valid cognition (*tshad ma*) and the practice of meditation, Drukpa Kunley receives a letter from the Buddha, delivered to him by Nāgārjuna. "The Buddha made Master Nāgārjuna, coming from Vulture Peak Mountain, carry this letter to me."[131] The section of the letter that discusses meditation reads as follows:

> You who practice view, meditation, and action, you promised [to have] a view free from extremes, but your meditation is done with an object and your practice is not joined to the four periods [of the day]. As for the appropriateness of this, there isn't any. However, even though I disapprove, only you know whether or not you will attain the Dharmakaya. Regarding this sort of activities, where the mind has not abandoned sensory desires, I, the great teacher, the Buddha, did not did not teach these as correct. It is just like the bee that gets drunk on the residue of the beer or like children mesmerized with play. Although you become old, you don't give it a thought. The essence of all phenomena is not being attached to anything at all. Keep this in your mind. If you complexify that, you will endure the great misfortune of sinning through Dharma. You will bear that sin in your deathless mind, as long as it continues. I have already told you this in my previous letters. May you understand this now!
>
> Written at the summit of the Akaniṣṭa domain, the eighth day of the eighth Mongol moon in the year of the Horse![132]

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[131] *bya rgod phung po'i ri nas bcom ldan 'das thub pa chen pos/ slob dpon klu sgrub la bka' shog 'di 'dra cig skyel bar gnang byung*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 88b.1.

[132] *khyod lta sgom spyod gsum nyams su len pa rnams kyis kyang lta ba mtha' bral khas blang/ sgom pa dmigs gtad la byed pa zhig dang/ spyod pa dus tshod bzhi dang ma 'brel ba'i bya ba 'di bzhin skabs su babs pa zhig ni mi 'dug/ gang ltar kyang 'bras bu chos kyi sku thob mi thob khyed rang tshos shes pa de yin/ 'dod yon blos ma thongs pa'i bya ba 'di bzhin la/ thub pa chen pos kyang yang dag tu ma gsung/ sbrang bu sbang mas bzi ba 'dra ba gcig dang/ byis pa rtsed mos mgo 'khor ba 'dra bcig ma gtogs/ bsam pa yod pa'i sems rgan 'khogs kyi thad na'ang mi 'dug/ chos thams cad kyi don dam pa gang la'ang ma chags pa der 'dug pa sems yul du zhog/ de las spros na chos la brten pa'i sdig pa'i nyes dmigs chen po sems 'chi med kyi stengs su 'khor dgos tshul sda sor kyang yi ge song yod pa bzhin/ da dung kyang sems 'chi med kyi stengs su 'khur dgos tshul snga sor kyang yi ge song yod pa bzhin/ da dung kyang sems kyis go bar gyis/ rta lo hor zla brgyad pa'i tshes brgyad la 'og min lhun po rtse nas bris,* DK1, Vol. Ka, 1978, 89a.4-89b.2.

In this example, the letter establishes the source of the critique as coming from the highest level of authorization in the Buddhist world, the Buddha himself. Placing the letter first in the hands of Nāgārjuna, the Buddhist master most famously known for his teachings on logic, and delivering them into the hands of Drukpa Kunley, the text illustrates a process of direct lineage transmission: Buddha, Nāgārjuna, Drukpa Kunley, monks. The teachings and the teachers, rather than being confined to the past are brought into the present moment via the medium of the letter. Refashioned in the moment to address those to whom they are directed, the teachings contained in the letter are made vital and relevant to the situation at hand. Both the transmission of teachings and the transmission of lineage take place in the present moment. This is reminiscent of the claim found famously in the *Lotus Sutra* that even after death the Buddha remains present in the world. As such, he is always accessible as a source for truth.[133] We might also recall of the second characteristic of letters discussed above – that they serve to extend the writer's presence such that the letter renders him or her present even though physically absent.[134] Harding describes how Paul's letters serve as "substitutes for his personal presence."[135]

Thus while one function of epistolary literature in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* is to bring truths that have their origin in a memoried, ahistorical, or even mythic past into present time, another function is to restate such truths, thereby making them relevant to the present

[133] Teiser and Stone 2009, 209-210. Williams 1989, 150.

[134] Thompson 2000, 63.

[135] Harding 2001, 69.

moment. In the example above, the Buddha describes his original teaching as the abandonment of all sensory desires as the basis for the correct practice of view, meditation, and conduct. By providing a series of metaphors to illustrate how attachment to sensory pleasures results in a dazed and befuddled state of mind (the drunken bee and the child fascinated by her games), the Buddha reinforces his main point – nonattachment to anything at all. To misunderstand this injunction is to become trapped in further and further dimensions of suffering and divergence from the genuine spiritual path.

The medieval studies scholar, Mary Carruthers, analyzing what she terms "the crafting of thought," theorizes that memories, when recalled to the present, create in that moment a new conjunction, a new situation, one that is both informed and formed by the creative activity of *re*-membering.[136] Since previous truths are necessarily stored in the mind of the recipient as memories, Carruther's theory helps us to envision how the recalling of such truths into the present by the Buddha though the epistolary medium generates a new framework within which previous memories and current truths come together. Not only this composition, but the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* as a whole represents this creative process as, in fact, most autobiographies do when they rework into literary form the events and situations remembered from the protagonists' lives.[137]

In this composition, the process of making old truths relevant and new in the present moment is critical to the action of self-examination and exposure of faults Drukpa Kunley

[136] Carruthers 1998, 7-16.

[137] Maftei 2013.

teaches. The epistolary form augments and reinforces this orientation by virtue of its ability to foster various thematic emphases through the sense that the recipient is being directly and personally addressed.

The format of the letter, written by the Buddha, provides Drukpa Kunley with a simultaneously casual yet authoritative venue by which to emphasize different aspects of the Buddhist path. The teachings of the Buddha are communicated in a newly relevant manner to each group of recipients. Upon reading the letter, each group, including Drukpa Kunley as the messenger, are compelled to recall their prior memories of the teaching under discussion. The letter bridges the gap between iterations of the teachings, between the previously absent composer (the Buddha himself), and the recipients. The letter format, including the force of its verbal decree and its function as a dialogue in written form, works to bind together the Buddha and his disciples "in the eschatological perspective of a new message" of which the Buddha and Drukpa Kunley are the couriers.[138]

B. Dreams

As a way to enhance the otherworldly or visionary authority of letters in remaking the Buddha's teachings, the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* sometimes uses an additional trope – dreams – as narrative frames for the reception and transmission of spiritual letters. In Tibetan literature, dreams serve a range of important functions, not the least of which is to provide a space for

[138] Harding 2001, 69.

communication with different kinds of beings and between different levels of reality. Many Tibetan Buddhist *namthar* recount the visionary dreams of the protagonist – dreams which often serve as catalysts for important events or shifts in orientation. Dreams may act as prophecies as in the famous story of Marpa of Lhodrak and his wife Dakmema's concurrent dreams prophesizing the arrival of Milarepa;[139] or Milarepa's dream of the four pillars signifying his four main disciples.[140] Particularly within the Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism, dreams also provide access to sources of supernatural authority, such as in the dream-record *namthar* of the early tertön, Guru Chöwang (1212-1270)[141] or as recorded by Jigme Lingpa in his secret autobiography.[142] In most of these dreams, the protagonist is visited by one or another Buddhist deity or *ḍākinī*, including such renowned figures as Guru Rinpoche or Longchenpa, who speaks directly to the dreamer whilst bestowing initiations and instructions. Sometimes these transmissions include fantastic journeys to Buddhist pure realms or other worldly locations where the dreamer is treated to views of gorgeous landscapes or jeweled palaces. Messages received from *ḍākinīs* in dreams may be communicated straightforwardly, but they may also be transmitted via an encoded format, typically written on scrolls in gold ink.

In the dreams in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, there are no fantastic journeys to other realms, although the letters Drukpa Kunley receives in dreams often do come from mythic

[139] See *The Life of Marpa the Translator*. 1982. Translated by the Nalanda Translation Committee, Shambhala Publications: Boston, MA.

[140] Evans-Wentz ed. 2000.

[141] Chos kyi dbang phyug. 1979. *Gu ru chos dbang gi rang rnam dang zhal gdams.* Paro: Ugyen Tempai Gyeltsen.

[142] Gyatso 1998.

places, such as the pure realm of Akaniṣṭha or from mythic figures, such as the Lord of Death or the primordial Buddha, Samantabhadra. In one dream narrative, Drukpa Kunley describes having three dreams in a row all of which contain letters. In the first dream, he receives a letter from Vajradhara, the primordial Buddha who is also considered to be the form taken by Śakyamuni Buddha when he taught the tantras.[143]

> One night, I had the following dream. Something that was like a rainbow in color but in shape like a man, who said that he came from the Akanistha heaven, spoke these words to me: "You followers of the new Tantras, your view and practice of meditation are wrong. Since Vajradhara is unhappy about this, from now on, please conform to the words of his letter." He gave me a letter. When I read it, I saw that this is what was written therein...[144]

Contrary to the symmetrical structure identified by studies of dream narratives, Drukpa Kunley recounts only the events that take place in the dream itself. He does not mention whatever takes place after he awakens and if or how the dream's message was implemented or communicated. As a result, we are forced to enter into the dreamworld with him, viewing and experiencing the dream's events. First, a rainbow-colored apparition in the shape of a man appears and speaks to Drukpa Kunley, informing him of Vajradhara's disappointment with the ways that he and other tantrikas understand and practice meditation. Beyond this, the apparition has no more to say, but instead hands over Vajradhara's letter. This simple format conforms to the definition of the "message-dream." Jaros (1982) loosely defines this category

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[143] Thurman 2011. Thrangu 2014, 163. Tshenshap, Kirti Rinpoche 2011, I.

[144] *Re zhig cig na nged kyi rmi lam du/ 'og min nas yin zer ba'i gzugs mi'i rnam pa la kha dog 'ja' lta bu cig gis/ khyod gsang sngags gsar ma bar gtogs pa rnams kyi lta spyod 'dzol ba zhig 'dug pa/ rdo rje 'chang gi dgongs par mi bde ba 'dug pas da phan bka' shog 'di las 'gal bar ma byed zer/ yi ge zhig gtad byung ba bltas pas 'di 'dras 'dug,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 84a.1-3.

as dreams that open up the real possibility of the transcendent in the world. Such dreams are characterized by their non-symbolic content and require no special interpretation. Reynolds describes their basic structure in the following manner: "The dreamer is said to be asleep, the apparition 'stands' before him, the message is delivered, and the dreamer wakes up in an anxious state of mind."[145] Drukpa Kunley's dreams may well be considered "proxy message dreams" in that they contain a message delivered to the dreamer, but intended not only for him, but also for someone else.[146] William Harris describes messenger dreams as "epiphany" dreams. Such dreams are characterized primarily by the pronouncement made by the authority figure. This information that serves to admonish the dreamer and to provide him or her with instructions or other important information.[147]

The letter itself begins with three appositions in the same opening style discussed above: "Order from Vajradhāra; Teaching from Saraha: Letter from Tilopa!" It then names those for whom it is intended: "Sent to those adepts of the new Tantras who have acquired a bit of heat!"[148] This refers to practitioners who have had some success in their meditation as evinced by their ability to generate heat in their bodies, likely through the practice of *tummo* (*gtum mo*), the first of the Six Yogas of Naropā, one of the core teachings of the Kagyü lineage.[149] The letter enumerates the faults and mistakes of these adepts – the admonition – claiming that

[145] Reynolds 2011, 72.

[146] Wray and Price 2005, 70.

[147] Harris 2009, 23-24.

[148] *Rdo rje 'chang gi bka'/ sa ra ha'i lung/ ti li li pa'i yi ge/ gsang sngags gsar ma bar gtogs pa'i cung zad drod thob pa rnams la springs pa,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 84a.3.

[149] Trangu, Rinpoche 2006, XIX. Barron 2003, 310. Ricard 2013,

although these yogis possess scant signs of success in practice, they have been seduced by pride and their afflictions and stained by breaking their tantric vows. In closing, the letter prescribes the correct course of action.

> Beginning right now, whatever vehicle you have chosen to follow, outwardly you should read the texts, mantras, and the Vinaya very closely. Inwardly, ask yourself whether or not you possess the good qualities discussed in these texts. It is of upmost importance that if you have not succeeded in becoming a yogi that you do not behave like one. If you do, you are like a donkey wearing the skin of a leopard.[150]

It appears that the faults of the tantrikas can be remedied only by the same kind of close self-examination Drukpa Kunley advocates in other compositions. In this case, however, self-examination must take place in conjunction with the description of virtuous qualities contained in the tantras and the Vinaya. The tantrika's good qualities must line up with those enumerated in the texts. Until and unless this occurs, the tantrika should refrain from any and all actions designed to promote himself as such. Otherwise, the fault of hypocrisy arises.

Drukpa Kunley relates that he had barely awoken when the thought arose in his mind that the letter was correct, but that the old tantrikas, the practitioners of the Nyingma tradition, were also in need of a letter.

> Without considering whether or not their disciples are worthy of receiving empowerments, those tantrikas bestow as many initiations as they can, even though these empowerments are as precious as the most profound heart's

[150] *da phan rang re tsho theg pa gang gi thad na 'dug/ phyi sngags dang 'dul ba la lta ba dang/ nang rang sems la yon tan 'dug mi 'dug bltas nas/ kha tshod la dpags pa'i lto za ba gal che/ ma grub pas grub pa'i spyod pa ma byed/ de bzhin byas na/ bong bu la gzig lpags bkab pa dang 'dra,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 84a.5-6.

> blood of Samantabhadra. While I was thinking in this way, I fell asleep and had the following dream.[151]

This time a man of "very terrifying form who seems to come from the top of Mt. Namchak Barwa"[152] asks Drukpa Kunley if he received the letter from Vajradhāra. Drukpa Kunley replies that he has and the man responds that he has brought a "letter from Samantabhadra to the old tantrikas who chant the secret practices in the marketplace." The letter repeats the same opening appositive formula albeit with a different textual reference (Samantabhadra's Intention; Garab Dorje's Instruction; Padmasambhava's Letter) and then enumerates the faults of the old tantrikas, finally exhorting them, "It is crucial that you reflect on this!"

For the third dream there is less narrative padding. The text briefly announces: "And again in another letter..." This time, the letter is the "Order" of the "Great Muni;" the "Instruction of Vajrapāni;" "the Letter of the two supreme ones of the six ornaments of the Sravakas." It is aimed at those "who practice the profound Mādhyamika" who adhere to "words and letters" without ever absorbing the meanings they point to. For them, the antidote is to "meditate a little on bodhicitta." It is only at the end of the episode that Drukpa Kunley relates the origin of the letter. "The Master of Oḍḍiyāna entrusted this letter in a dream to a daughter with blue-black hair that falls down to her heels." Coming at the end of the episode, this final sentence is odd, since Drukpa Kunley does not clearly say that he received the letter from the

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[151] *Rnying ma pa chos zab mo kun tu bzang po'i snying khrag lta bu tso/ snod dang snod min mi brtag par dbang bskur ci thub byed pa 'di rnams la'ang bka' shog cig byung na bsam pa'i ngang la yang gnyid du song nas 'dug pa'i rmi lam na,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 84b.3-4.

[152] *Ri ma'a la ya gnam lcags 'bar ba'i rtse mo nas yin yong snyam pa'i mi shin tu gtum pa'i gzugs 'chang ba zhig byung*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 84b.4.

dark-haired maiden.[153] However, given the formula of the two earlier dreams, it is probably safe to assume that is what we are meant to think.

All three dreams perform the same functions of first identifying, then admonishing, and then presenting the antidotes necessary to correct the mistaken ideas and approaches to understanding of the practitioners of a particular tradition. None of the three dream narratives include, nor do they seem to require, an interpretative phase such as is often found in the economy of the dream narrative.[154] The lack of this interpretative phase helps to confirm the fact that Drukpa Kunley's dreams are less symbolic dreams than message/epiphany-dreams. This is also confirmed by the sense, conveyed via the epistolary form, that Vajradhāra is speaking. His message is expressed in words rather than in images and these words are clear, easily understandable and in need of no interpretation.[155]

These epiphany dreams can also fruitfully be analyzed in terms of the role they play in healing practitioners' wrong views and behaviors.[156] This interpretative approach, which incorporates the idea of the dream as specifically aimed at healing a particular illness or problem, also allows me to also consider the dreamer, Drukpa Kunley's, role as the medium through whom both diagnosis and cure are expressed. The function of dreams in healing has been noticed cross-culturally, but perhaps most famously, in the dream journals of the Greek

[153] *Gsung ba 'di yang ti o'rgyen'i slob dpon gyis rmi lam du/ bu mo ral pa mthing kha rting par slebs pa cig la bskur byung*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 85a.6-85b.1.

[154] Husser 113.

[155] Husser 123-124.

[156] Young 1995, 208-209.

orator, Aelius Aristedes (b. 117 c.e.), which contain over two hundred of dreams he "incubated" as cures for the various illnesses he suffered. To incubate a dream is to prepare the body and mind through ritual processes to receive, remember, and integrate the healing messages of specific dreams. While Drukpa Kunley is not himself ill, his three dreams target the "illnesses" affecting Kagyü, Nyingma, and Mādhyamika practitioners. The narrative, which relates the dreams, suggests that it is his thoughts and concerns about these illnesses that "incubate" or prepare the ground for the dreams to arise.

Using the form of the dream narrative together with the epistolary form, the composition avails itself of incontestable modes of legitimation. First, the peculiar discourse of the epistolary genre – the way that this functions to close the gap between author and recipient, as well as to signify both the presence and the absence of the authoritative figures of Vajradhāra, Samantabhadra, and Padmasambhava – highlights the importance of the addressees as determinant of the letter's message.[157] By this I mean that the onus falls squarely on Drukpa Kunley as well as on the groups of practitioners the letters address to recognize their shortcomings and rectify them by means of the antidotes described in the letters. Second, by using the convention of the messenger/epiphany dream,[158] together with the dream narrative genre, the composition places itself outside of everyday criticisms or doubts by drawing on the authoritative presences of the primordial Buddhas and Padmasambhava as well as on the incontestable claim of having had a dream. Drukpa Kunley's assertion that he received these

[157] Altman 1982.

[158] Harris 2009, 4, 23-91.

letters from this triad eliminates the likelihood that their message can be contested. The *Namthar's* use of dream narratives removes the truths the letters reveal from the mundane world, relocating them in an ahistorical and atemporal dimension. In so doing it establishes the letters' truth of the revelation of the faults and self-deceptions of the practitioners and the antidotes for these as incontrovertible.

By identifying problems and prescribing antidotes, the letters aim to fulfill a "healing" function. This healing function is also incumbent in the role of the *parrhesiastes*, the truth teller whose primary aim is to teach others how to pay attention to themselves, care for themselves and not ignore themselves.[159] Foucault cites the chief example of the ethical truth teller in the Greek tradition, Socrates, to say, "The care of oneself is a sort of thorn which must be stuck in men's flesh, driven into their existence, and which is a principle of restlessness and movement, of continuous concern throughout life."[160] By decreeing the mistaken practices and self-deceptions of the practitioners, Drukpa Kunley's dream-letters emphasize the continuous practice of self-examination that the *Namthar* envisions as the basis for the spiritual journey. Capable both of dreaming the dreams as well as of receiving and communicating their messages, Drukpa Kunley stands with one foot in two worlds. On the one side, he dwells in the pure realms of Buddhas and bodhisattvas whose view, conduct, and practice are unquestionable. On the other, he is mired in the contradictions, hypocrisies, and self-

[159] Foucault 1981-1982: "to attend to themselves, take care of themselves and not neglect themselves."

[160] Foucault 1981-1982: 8.

deceptions of ordinary people – himself included – who, trapped by their pride or greed or misunderstanding, may have fallen away from the true meaning of the Buddhadharma.

C. Diviners

The final type of composition that I wish to analyze for this section represents one of the longest compositions in the entire *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*. It permits the narrator, Drukpa Kunley, to tap all three of the main themes enumerated at the beginning of this chapter: the exposure of hypocrisy; delight; and the investigation of authority. It also permits him to put into play the ethic of disruption that works to break up narrative continuity in favor of the power of condensed phraseology and constantly shifting content to situate the receiver in rapidly shifting contexts, each of which has a different truth to impart. Each truth imparted partakes of the same telos – the evocation and instillation of the three themes. The composition begins as follows:

> In the land of Yardrog Tsanyul,[161] I asked the great diviner Drolma Kyab to perform some divinations in order to discern [the truth of] the following affairs: In general—the advancement or decline of the Buddhist doctrine; in particular – the flourishing or deterioration of the reign of kings who protect the Dharma, including the prospering or degeneration of the general public; and specially – the import of the letter I received from the Precious Nephew requesting me to come to Ralung to attend his enthronement. I thought of going since we both belong to the line of the Drukpa.[162]

[161] Yar 'brog btsan yul is probably near Lake Yar 'brog g.yu mtsho, about one hundred kilometers southwest of Lhasa. *Bstan yul* likely serves as an epithet for the area meaning "powerful place" or even "demoniacal place."

[162] *Yang yar 'brog btsan yul na mo ston sgrol ma skyabs la mo tshugs 'ga' re btab ba'i don/ spyir sangs rgyas bstan pa'i dar gud/ khyad par chos skyong ba'i rgyal po rnams kyi bstan pa/ sems can sbyi'i 'dun ma/ khyad par ra lung phyogs su dbon rin po che'i che 'don la shog bka' phebs pa/ nged tsho yang 'brug pa'i char gtogs pa'i lugs byas 'gro bsam pa la*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 53b.6-54a.1.

This short scene sets up the narrative frame for the lengthy divination that follows, at the end of which, Drukpa Kunley closes the frame by stating, "Since these prophetic words had excellent meaning, I wrote them down in my book."[163] As in the use of dreams to transmit messages, this composition relies on a particular kind of authoritative voice – the prophetic speech of the diviner. Scholars of Tibetan cultural and religious history have remarked on the particular fascination Tibetans have for consulting oracles, requesting divinations (*mo*), and seeking other-worldly advice for activities ranging from selecting the best physician, to determining an auspicious time for a wedding, to seeking practices to be done in order to ward off calamities of all kinds.[164] Rene de Nebesky-Wojkowitz, in his classic study of Tibetan deities and demons, describes an array of different *mo* techniques including dice divination (*sho mo*), rosary divination (*'phreng mo*), pebble divination (*rdo mo*), drum divination (*rnga mo*) and book divination (*mo dpe*), to mention just a few.[165]

Drukpa Kunley does not describe which kind of *mo* divination the diviner performs. He states merely that he wishes the diviner to cast a few *mos*.[166] By the end of the divination, Drukpa Kunley is convinced that the diviner's words have excellent meaning (*don bzang po*) and he appropriates them for himself. Foucault's account of the use of *hypomnemata*, a sort of "book for life" or "guide for conduct" or even merely a "notebook," in ancient Greece helps

[163] *Zer ba'i mo ngag 'di don bzang po 'dug pas ngas dpe cha la bris pa yin*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 60b.4-5.

[164] Dotson 2007, 17-26. Macdonald 1971, 271-287. Gerke 2012, 207-221. Mipham, Jamgon (Goldberg, trns.) 1990.

[165] Gerke 2012, 220-221. Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956, 455-466.

[166] *Mo ston sgrol ma skyabs la mo tshugs 'ga' re btab ba'i don*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 53b.5.

theorize Drukpa Kunley's discipline of recording the diviner's words, a practice the *Namthar* describes him performing with many other texts, songs, poems or speeches he finds compelling.

Foucault describes the practice of *hypomnemata* as a discipline of entering quotations, excerpts from works, examples, aphorisms, reflections that come to mind, poems or reasonings that one has heard into a notebook*,* not as in diary-writing or confession, but as a practice by which the recollection of meaning and truth found in those literary forms becomes a significant factor in the "constitution of oneself."[167] Wisdom present "out there" participates in the ongoing process of ethical formation the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* advocates so long as the subject performs the activity of bringing [that wisdom] into his experience. Although the ethical person constituted through this practice may seem fragmentary and transient, due to the patchwork compilation of diverse truths, it is the quality and tenor of the "truths" to be integrated that are more important. The practice of ethical formation suggested by the diviner's speech involves actively working to remember, integrate, and absorb those meanings and truths which strike at the heart of what a person believes it is good to be. By copying down the diviner's words, Drukpa Kunley engages in rethinking and absorbing those truths.

Recording the truths and meanings he perceives in the diviner's words echoes the discipline Drukpa Kunley practices in the section on commentaries (See Part V, Mind's Words: Scriptures and Commentaries, p. 335) where we also observe him reinterpreting such truths

[167] "The point is...to make of the recollection of the fragmentary *logos* transmitted by teaching, listening, or reading a means to establish as adequate and as perfect a relationship of oneself to oneself as possible." Foucault 1984, 363-365.

within the specificity of his current situation. This discipline of recording truth, as conceived by Foucault, transforms the mind and being of the person who engages in it by showing alternatives to the mind's habitual perimeters of thought and action. Drukpa Kunley appears to be engaging in this type of activity.

The diviner's speech consists in a long song or chant. For ease of analysis I have isolated three main sections of this longer composition. These three sections are not marked in the composition itself. In the first section, Drolma Kyab responds to Drukpa Kunley's question as to whether or not he should make the journey to Ralung by invoking the astrological configurations that reveal the journey to be a risky venture. In the second section, the diviner coaches his advice within the language of the epistolary genre. In the third and longest section, he chants or sings about the proper and the improper disciplines to be engaged in by a range of persons. The diviner's list is similar in content to many "lists" in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* that target a variety of religious and secular people. However, in the diviner's list, we encounter the most detailed and comprehensive account of the hypocrisies and self-deceptions engaged in by the widest range of secular and religious persons. This section also strongly functions to bring into play the ethic of disruption by its rapid movement between one subject and another. Because this composition is so lengthy, I will limit my analysis to sections one, two, and a few verses from section three.

The diviner begins by addressing the question of whether or not Drukpa Kunley should undertake the journey to Ralung in order to attend his teacher's enthronement. He states, "Especially, this year of the Snake is a Five-Yellow, but for monks, it is a Two-Black! Rather than

going to Ralung, send your prayers from far away."[168] He follows this with the story of the yogi Milarepa's journey to Nepal, a journey during which Milarepa fell ill as the result of traveling during an inauspicious time. While the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* does not clarify whether the diviner makes use of cleromantic practices to answer Drukpa Kunley, Nebesky-Wojkowitz and others have noted the central importance given to astrological calculations in the practice of divination.[169] In order to accurately divine whether or not an action will yield benefit, the diviner relies on a complex system of mathematical linguistics – a mode of truth transmission that requires specific skills to decipher. By appealing to a mode of communication that relies on these esoteric means and whose messages arise from a different level of reality, this composition affirms that the message received cannot be contradicted in ordinary ways.

In the first line of the his speech, the diviner instructs Drukpa Kunley to "carry this letter/message to those who are yogis."

> Bring this message to those who are yogis! From a young age up until now, by wandering directionless, you have vanquished desire and aversion. Now that you are old, it will be your downfall if you generate desire for your father's lands and fields. Because of that, wander aimlessly![170]

The word for "letter" or "message" used here is *'phrin*, which can also mean "communication" and the verb "to carry" or "to bring" (*skyel ba*) is used in the imperative voice (*skyol*),

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[168] *Khyad par da lo sbrul gyi lo/ lnga ser bande'i gnyis nag yin/ da lan de phyogs 'gro ba las/ gsol ba rgyang nas btab na bzang/ ra lung spangs pa'i mi la khyod,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 54a.1-2.

[169] Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956, Ramble 1993, 2008, Walter 1995, Mortensen 2006, Dotson 2007, Gerke 2012, and Smith 2011.

[170] *Mi rnal 'byor cig la 'phrin de skyol/ chung ma la skyes nas ding sang bar/ yul phyogs med 'grims pas chags sdang stor/ de rgas khar pha tshan yul zhing la/ chags sdang 'gro 'dug mang na 'phung/ de bas rgyal khams phyogs med 'grims*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 54a.3-4.

commanding Drukpa Kunley to bring this message into the world. So although Drukpa Kunley asked for a divination pertinent to his own circumstances, he joins the diviner in being thrust into the role of transmitter of information aimed at others in the ordinary world around him. Like the Nechung oracle of the Dalai Lamas, Drukpa Kunley serves as the transmitter of the diviner's utterances. But he is not only a transmitter, he is also the scribe who, by setting the diviner's words down in writing, takes on both the glamour and the risk an oracle incurs. Not only can there be no denial of the authority of the diviner's message, but also, by virtue of his role as transmitter, Drukpa Kunley assumes a position in which there can be no denying the authority of those words.

The third part of the diviner's speech consists of a series of verses. Each verse concerns itself with one type of religious or secular group of actors. Each verse consists of two parallel stanzas in which the first stanza, containing either four or five lines of seven syllables each, describes the ideal or perfected version of those persons, while the second stanza, also containing four lines of seven syllables each, describes and thereby exposes their imperfect, hypocritical, and deluded states. Each verse ends with another seven-syllable line with the same refrain. When we look at different examples, each of which targets specific kinds of mental attitudes and actions considered good or virtuous as well as those considered deceitful or non-virtuous, it becomes clear that each situation is context-specific. Rules that apply for one person engaging in one type of activity are not the same as those that apply to others. But all persons, regardless of their place, appearance, or role in life are made aware of the dissonance

between appropriate and inappropriate thought and action. In this verse, the Diviner targets the hypocrisy of so-called "realized ones" (*rtogs ldan*).

> Arranging their bodies in yogic postures in solitary mountain retreats, they rest in meditative equipoise for the good of beings.
> Rising up, they dedicate the merit and make aspirations for sentient beings.
> Those secret sleepers who do the opposite erect their bamboo huts in populated areas.
> Without suppressing either aversion or desire, they claim to practice the Four Practices.
> Seeking out the bar maids, they overflow with drink and vomit! Abandon these enlightened ones![171]

This verse opposes the proper behavior for a realized one with the opposite (*de las log pa*). The juxtaposition of the good versus the bad is humorous in its exaggerated description of yogis who troll through drinking establishments "seeking out the bar maids" and "filled up with drink and vomit." But the deeper point is to expose the hypocrisy such yogis engaged in. These "reversed" yogis merely pretend to develop the Four Practices.[172] As far as ultimate authority goes, they rely neither on themselves as they really are nor on the Buddha, but twist the conditions enabled by their status as "realized ones" to suit their own desires. Revelations of hypocrisies such as these, while differing in character, appear regularly throughout the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar.* The diviner next targets scribes:

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[171] *ri khrod bas mthar lus gnad bcas/ 'gro ba'i don du mnyam par bzhag/ lang 'dug bsngo ba smon lam 'debs/ de las log pa'i lkog nyal ba/ 'du sa gang cher spyil chung bcos/ chags sdang mgo bo mi non par/ spyod pa bzhi la spyod do zer/ chang ma 'tshol zhing skyugs pas 'gengs/ rtogs ldan rnams la bya cig thong,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 54b.3-4.

[172] Meinert explains these four characteristics as taken from Bodhidharma's *Torch of Meditation.* The four are: the practice of giving a reply for injury; the practice of following conditions; the practice of having nothing to be sought; and the practice of being in harmony with the Dharma. *SM:* 173.5-6: *ma ha yan gyi bsam stan rgya lung chen po las/ spyod pa la 'jug pa ni spyod pa bzhi ste/ gcig ni 'khon la lan ldon pa'i spyod pa'o/ gnyis pa ni rkyen gyi rjes su spyod pa'o/ gsum pa ni ci yang tshal ba med pa'i spyod pa'o/ bzhi pa ni chos dang mthun pa'i spyod pa'o.* Meinert 2007, 254.

> Having accomplished their spelling and grammar, they make the Buddha's words bright as day.
> By means of their elegant handwriting, they offer a feast to the eyes that delights the heart.
> Although they write quickly, they require no erasures and their words adhere to the tradition of the writing doctrine.
> But others, writing quickly and greedy for payment, forget to align handwriting and paper. They must write and erase at the same time! Abandon these scribes![173]

The diviner describes the qualities possessed by a good scribe—she should have mastered spelling and grammar in such as way that her writing serves to clarify the teachings of the Buddha. A good scribe is someone who can use the medium of writing to make the Buddha's teachings as obvious as daylight makes all the appearances around us. The elegance of her handwriting appeals to the sense perception of sight. Seeing causes delight. But it is the quality of what is seen that makes the difference between the experience of delight and other states of being. Good handwriting should produce joy in the heart. Economy of transcription is the final quality possessed by the good scribe. Able to record words quickly, she yet makes no mistakes because she writes in harmony with "the tradition of the writing doctrine."

While Drukpa Kunley does not clarify what is meant by "the writing doctrine," we can infer from this verse that scribes trained in order to develop the skill of swiftly and accurately reproducing the speech or words of another. The diviner's words suggest that such a tradition, when properly accomplished, established a state of being where the scribe could remain in tune with the flow of the teachings she records. For the scribe who is properly trained, writing

[173] *Sdeb dang brda dag mthar phyin pas/ sangs rgyas gsung rab nyin mor byed/ bris yi gzugs legs sgros gtsang gis/ mig gi dga' ston snying la 'byin/ mgyogs shing bris bsub mi dgos pa'i/ yi ge bstan pa'i rgyun lam las/ phyir phyogs mgyogs rtsi yon la ham/ bris dang shog bu'i rtsi gad nyams/ zin dang bsub pa dus mnyam pa'i/ yig mkhan rnams la bya cig thong,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 55a.6-55b.2.

comes arises naturally, without effort or thought. But for those scribes who do not view their profession as sacred, writing is no more than a means to an end. Thinking only of how much money they might make, their attention cannot rest on the action of writing itself and they are out of harmony with the natural flow of the expression of things as they are. As a result, they write clumsily and carelessly and are required to back up to erase or rewrite whatever they attempt to record.

In this next verse, the diviner addresses those he terms "banterers" or "jesters" (*shags mkhan rnams*).

> By composing verses, they make offering to the Three Jewels.
> By their joyful nature, they cause others to laugh.
> Whatever they say is an expression of goodness.
> But those jesters who are opposite ultimately vilify all that is good and count for nothing the merits of others.
> Having excavated others' defects, they inspire not laughter, but rage.
> Saying such things as "cock-sucker," they create the causes for an ugly body [in the next life]. Cast out these kinds of "banterers"![174]

As for a realized meditator or a scribe, the jester's profession contains sets of social and moral rules and parameters that demarcate the boundaries of the beneficial or harmful observation of the craft. For the virtuous jester, every song or verse composed is identical to an offering to the Three Jewels, not necessarily because of its content, but because of its intent. Such humorous songs are meant to delight not only the common person, but also to resonate with the ethos of bliss and delight included in the Buddhist imaginaire. Having realized the

[174] *tshigs su bcad pas dkon mchog mchod/ rang nyams dga' la bzhad gad slong/ smra ba gang yin shis par brjod/ de las log pa'i log gshags mkhan/ bzang po thams cad mar la smod/ bsod nams can la cir mi brtsi/skyon gyi mtshang nas skyengs rung 'dru/ gad mo mi 'chor zhe sdang slong/kha nas sbra dag sbri dag zer/ gzugs ngan len pa'i rgyu gsog pa'i/ gshags mkhan rnams la bya cig thongs*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 59a.1-3.

playfulness of their basic nature, such jesters naturally evoke this joy and delight in others. But laughter is a two-edged sword and when wielded by the hand of a jester who finds his pleasure in deriding others, it causes pain, humiliation, and finally, rage. Not only are those who hear such unpleasant taunts disturbed, but the act of speaking them has a somatic effect on the teller, whose speech becomes the instrument of his physical transformation in a future life.

More than many of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar's* compositions, this divination goes beyond pointing out who is hypocritical and in what ways. Condensing into individual verses the entirety of actions, psychologies, consequences, and ethical orientations associated with different walks of life, the diviner's speech, and Drukpa Kunley's recording of it serve as an *askesis*, an exercise of oneself in the activity of speech that includes a progressive consideration of one's self through the acquisition and assimilation of truth. Its final goal is not preparation for another reality but access to the reality of this world, as it is.[175] A final example from the divination reveals the way in which this verbalization and transcription of truth is not a retrospection about past acts, but is demonstrated as an ongoing activity, as contemporaneous as possible with the stream of thoughts we regularly experience.

> Inserting needles into the napes of their necks, they intoxicate them.
> While [the animal's] awareness is lost, they cut the life artery.
> Not [seeing] the need to kill animals by torturing them, the manner of slaughtering them is like a magical illusion.
> But others, murderers, are avoided in this life by all human society.
> In future lives they are cast like stones into hell.
> As soon as they see animals, they pursue them like enemies.
> As soon as they catch them, they murder them, even if they are gentle.

[175] Michel Foucault, "About the Beginnings of the Hermeneutics of the Self: Two Lectures at Dartmouth," in *Political Theory*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (Sage Publications, Inc., May, 1993), 198-227.

> They bring suffering to themselves through their own actions. Abandon these kinds of "butchers"![176]

Not only is there an ethical way to joke with other people, but there is also a correct way to slaughter animals for meat. While this concept is not unusual, as can be seen in the orientations to hunting in many cultures such as those of American Indians and aboriginal Australians, it may be more unusual to find this kind of a clear statement acknowledging the correct method for killing animals for meat in a Tibetan Buddhist *namthar*. The first stanza of five lines describes the correct way to both kill the animal as well as the proper attitude one should have when doing so. Butchering animals is portrayed as an occupation that should take into account both the sacredness of life as well as the illusory nature of appearances. When not understood or practiced from within such a view, just as with the evil-minded jester, the butcher generates a toxic environment that extends beyond his present lifetime. He becomes the orchestrator of his own ongoing entrapment in confusion and suffering.

I could continue providing examples from the diviner's speech of the different kinds of persons he targets. To mention a few more, there are old mothers whose sexual appetites disturb their families; children who steal, cheat, and whine; daughters-in-law who chase single men; cobblers who make cheap boots; astrologers who can't tell auspicious from inauspicious days; physicians who make medicine without consulting the Four Tantras of medicine; the *Rgyud bzhi*, and gurus, disciples, mantrikas, hermits, philosophers and Bonpos who all act and

[176] *ltag rdo sprad nas bzi ru 'jug/ dran pa stor ring srog rtsa gcod/ sems can mnar gsod mi dgos par/ mig 'phrul lta bu'i gsod lugs shes/ de las log pa'i sdug gsod mkhan/ 'phral ni mi yi khyu nas bud/ phugs ni dmyal bar gting sdod byed/ sems can mthong tshad dgra bzhin 'ded/ zin na drin chen yin rung gsod/ rang gis rang la sdug gtong ba'i/ bshan pa rnams la bya cig thongs*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 58b.1-3.

think counter to the ethical perimeters established and described by the *Namthar*. In each example a different kind of truth and a different kind of self-delusion is described. Through these rapidly shifting contexts, different shadings and nuances of both what it is good to be and what it is not good to be are described. Bombarded by example after example, the ethic of disruption created by the text insists that we must finally turn back to examine ourselves. There is a sense that if all these others are confused and hypocritical, perhaps we too have not clearly understood or perceived our own layers of self-deception.

Taken as a whole, this composition, which includes both the diviner's speech and Drukpa Kunley's recording of that in writing, represents a form of textually oriented cleromancy for the reader. In order for the reader to form an interpretation of this composition, she must trust that the message she receives through reading possesses a supernatural authority. For the reader, the composition stands in the place of a diviner who relies on a divination manual. Just as the diviner, within the world of the text, relies on forces and powers outside of his own to form his divinations and to form his interpretations, so too the reader relies on the composition as the basis upon which to form her interpretations. In the same way that Drukpa Kunley mediated letters between Vajradhāra and Samantabhadra and different groups of religious practitioners, the diviner plays the role of mediator between an otherworldly form of knowledge and the recipient and the composition itself mediates between the reader and her interpretation of the work.

As viewed by the diviner and by Drukpa Kunley, all roles in life come complete with socially and ethically appropriate practices and modes of being. Whether these are meant to

adhere to the ultimate ethical purity embodied by the Buddha or simply to the commonsense wisdom of how to be a good human being in relation to others, they serve as methods for arousing introspection and honest evaluation of the degree to which a person lives in harmony with them. The juxtaposition of stanzas in each verse, the one revealing harmonies and the other discordances, works like a mirror for the reader who encounters them. The shift from one stanza to the next doubles as a metaphorical threshold over which the unwary practitioner of any walk of life might carelessly step. The final refrain in the verses in the form of a command to cast away the activities that run directly counter to an honest embodiment of one's place in life does not attempt to deny that self-delusion exists, but merely to take a strong linguistic stand in the face of the habitual slide into hypocrisy. While these examples of wrong-doing are not unique to the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, putting their description into the mouth of the diviner works to legitimize and underscore the *Namthar's* overall emphasis on the exposure of faults and hypocrisies as part of the project of ethical formation.

IV. Heart's Words--Spontaneous Songs And Poems

Each new composition assumes a special air,
But only through trying many shapes and changes,
Learning the art of the subtle.[177]

While letters, dreams, and divinations provide a way to examine how Drukpa Kunley positioned himself as an authoritative figure between the unseen world of Buddhas and other non-human entities and the mundane world of daily life, I turn now to analyze how a different mode of linguistic expression, the genre of "songs of experience" (*nyams mgur*), functions in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar's* project of ethical formation. From at least from the time of Milarepa, the Tibetan Buddhist poetic tradition has valued this form of song to communicate a felt, somatic or visceral sense of yogic experience along the Buddhist path. Arising spontaneously and naturally this kind of poetic song generally does not depend on or coincide with systematized theories of poetics such as those explored in the great treatise on Sanskrit poetics, Daṇḍin's *Kāvyādarśa*. In fact, many examples of Tibetan spiritual songs, such as those of Milarepa, flourished long before the introduction into Tibet of Indian poetics, appearing to rely instead on a richly developed tradition of folklore and oral expression. As I show below, if there is one genre that could be said to definitively characterize Drukpa Kunley and his writings, it is the tradition of *mgur*. The *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* is liberally peppered with examples of these ecstatic bursts of emotion, whether of delight, disdain, sorrow, humor, or devotion, in versified form, as well as with songs characterized principally by their ironic tone and directed social and

[177] Lu Chi, *Wen Fu*, translated by Sam Hamill, p. 38.

religious critique. In fact, so many songs and poems are included in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* that it has a lot in common with the *"mgur 'bum*," or "compendium of songs," such as those of Milarepa, Tsangpa Gyare, the Seventh Dalai Lama, the yogi Shabkar and many others.[178]

Not all the songs Drukpa Kunley sings in the text are designated as *mgur*. Many are *glu* (typically translated as "song" or "folksong" and considered by scholars to predate the arising of the *mgur* genre in Tibet), and a few are labeled *rdo rje glu* ("vajra song"). These songs are sung in a particular *dbyang rta* or "melody" from one or another different region in south-central Tibet or Mon. Since the content and form of both *mgur* and *glu* in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* appear to be interchangeable, I do not make a sharp distinction between these two genres in the analyses that follow. As the meaning of these song genre terms often shifts in conjunction with a text's particular aims, our understanding of them should be informed by a close reading of them within their specific textual frames. But before this, a more detailed understanding of how scholars of Tibetan poetry have defined these works within given literary contexts, and the terms they used to do so, will help bring these indistinct boundaries into sharper focus.

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While scholars do not know for certain, it is likely that the *mgur* or tradition of spontaneous religious song in Tibet was influenced by the *vajragīti* or Diamond Songs tradition (*doha* and

[178] Tibetan Sources: Milarepa, *rNal 'byor gyi dbang phyug Mi-la Ras-pa'i rnam mgur* (Dharmasala, India: Tibetan Cultural Printing Press, 1990); Tsangpa Gyare, *The Collected Songs of gTsang-pa rGya-ras,* (Darjeeling, India: Kagyüd Sungrab Nyamso Khang, 1972); Kelsang Gyatso, seventh Dalai Lama, *The Collected Works (gsung 'bum) of the Seventh Dalai Lama blo bzang bskal bzang rgya mtsho,* Vol. 1. (New Delhi, India: Dodrup Sangye, 1995); Shapkar Tsogdruk Rangdrol, *Gangs ljongs mkhas dbang rim byon gyi rtsom yig gser gyi shram bu,* Vol. 3 (Xining, China: Qingai Minorities Press, 1988.

caryāgīti) of the Indian *mahāsiddhas*.[179] Such figures as the Sahajiyā *siddhas*, together with the Jain Munis, may have originated this tradition of making use of everyday lyrical forms to express their experience of and insight into the teachings. These songs utilized easily accessible and pleasing melodies, metrical schemes and commonly recognized themes to communicate spiritual truths. Their form ensured that they could be memorized and that they would appeal to ordinary people. "...both the *caryāgīti* and the *dohā* were sung. They seem to have been adaptations from folk songs popular in form, and were aimed at instructing and pleasing a general audience."[180]

The concept and practice of composing spontaneous songs of personal experience is considered by scholars of Tibetan literature to have been transmitted to Tibet by the Kagyü master Marpa (Mar pa Chos kyi Blo gros, 1012?-1097), who received the transmission of the siddha Saraha's *dohās* from Maitripa at the monastery of Blazing Fire Mountain.[181] Marpa's example greatly influenced Milarepa (1028-1111) who, more than any other Tibetan Buddhist yogi/poet at that time, became responsible for popularizing both the form and the content of this kind of spontaneous spiritual song.[182] The term *dohā* refers to the ancient Indian tradition of lyrical writing to express spiritual experience that was developed by the Buddhist mahasiddhas or tantric adepts of India. Many Indian *dohā* have been translated into Tibetan

[179] Sujata 2004, 76.

[180] Sujata 2004, 79.

[181] See Schaeffer 2005. Schaeffer's study follows the movement of the *mgur* tradition to Tibet through a number of different individuals, including, but not limited to Marpa.

[182] Schaeffer 2005, 80. See also Jackson 1996, 372. "Singing a genre of song known as *mgur*, Mila is more or less single-handedly responsible for turning that genre into a vehicle for religious songs."

and preserved in the collections of writings by these Indian masters as well as in the Tibetan Tengyur.

That Drukpa Kunley considered himself to be within the tradition of *mgur* and *dohā* is evident from the number of times he quotes from or sings the songs of previous models such as Tsangpa Gyare, Götsangpa, Yangönpa and others.[183] Drukpa Kunley also seems to be particularly familiar with the collected songs of Saraha, whose name he often evokes. Prayers to Drukpa Kunley composed by his disciples included in *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* and the legends that have attached themselves to his name consistently describe him as an incarnation of Saraha.

Many songs of experience found in the collected works of Tibetan masters such as those composed by Milarepa, the Sakya master Jetsun Drakpa Gyaltsen (Grags pa rgyal mtshan, 1147-1216), and the Drukpa Kagyü master Tsangpa Gyare (1161-1211), reveal a kinship with Tibetan folksongs, suggesting that the spontaneous composition of songs of experience can understood to at least partial emerge from and partake in uniquely Tibetan styles of self expression, melody, and meter. We see reasons for this also in the fact that many famous Tibetan songs of experience predate by many years the translation of Daṇḍin's *Kāvyādarśa*, which while itself composed in the seventh century, was not translated into Tibetan until the thirteenth century.[184]

[183] Gtsang pa rgya ras Ye shes rdo rje, 1161-1211. Chos rje rin po che gstang pa rgya ras pa'i rnam thar mgur 'bum dang bcas shin tu rgyas pa, Thimphu: Kusang Tobgay, 1975;

[184] Jinpa and Elsner 2000.

While the premise upon which the *nyams mgur* tradition is based considers these song/poems to function similarly to acts of meditation—as means by which to crystallize or condense in a succinct and visceral way the essence of the personal experience gained through meditative practice – Drukpa Kunley expands on this function. His poem/songs cover a range of themes and encompass numerous subjects. While he certainly does sing songs evoking the main Buddhist themes of impermanence, emptiness, and the certainty of death, more often the poems we find in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* seek to inspire the reader to the same degree of self-inquiry and examination of the three themes of hypocrisy, delight, and authority that we have seen in the sections above.

A. Changing Rhetoric

In this section, I examine how some of the songs Drukpa Kunley sings work in depicting a more emotional and feeling-oriented dimension of what it is good to be than those examined in the sections above. However, it is problematic to analyze songs in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* as if their structure remained consistent throughout the *Namthar*. Sometimes the songs adhere to particular patterns, including the repetition of various phrases or themes – such as that of exposing hypocrisy or the spontaneous expression of joyful exuberance. Some songs and the narratives which frame them represent them as being spontaneously composed, often at the instigation of a question, comment, or accusation from another person. In other instances, the songs appear to be carefully crafted in their use of metaphors to communicate particular truths

related to both worldly and religious life. In spite of these differences, it is possible to identify several regular principles of structure in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*'s songs.

Many consist of various kinds of soliloquies, dialogues, unfolding claims or protracted metaphors. They include a range of moods from joyful to ironic to sorrowful. The notion that song-poems could be used to generate moods or tastes comes from the classical Indian aesthetic theory of the nine *rasas* (moods). A "mood" refers to the foremost emotional tone or sentiment that pervades the verse. The Sanskrit aesthetic tradition identifies nine primary moods (*nyams*), which have been defined by Sakya Pandita Kunga Gyaltsen in his famous treatise *Gateway of the Learned* as: passion (*sgeg pa'i nyams*), tranquility (*zhi ba'i nyams*), comedy (*dgod pa'i nyams*), heroism (*dpa' ba'i nyams*), repulsive (*mi sdug pa'i nyams*), wrathful (*drag shul gyi nyams*), horror (*jigs su rung gyi nyams*), compassionate (*snying rje'i nyams*), and awesomeness (*ngam kyi nyams*).[185] Drukpa Kunley makes most use of the ironic or humorous mood, although other sentiments such as longing, devotion, sorrow and joy also permeate his songs. While Drukpa Kunley's penchant for humor appears to be influenced by pre-existing folk song traditions, it may also be influenced by Daṇḍin's *Kāvyādarśa,* particularly when he employs poetic ornaments to evoke humor in different ways. Since Drukpa Kunley never mentions the *Kāvyādarśa* or Daṇḍin by name, it is impossible to know for certain. Yet, Drukpa Kunley was familiar with Sakya Paṇḍita, as is evident from different mentions of his works scattered through the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, and perhaps, then he was also familiar with the *Gateway to the Learned.*

[185] Gold 2008, 121.

Several other typical patterns of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*'s songs include repetition with variation. Many songs use the rhetorical device of anaphora—the repetition of a phrase or words at the beginning or end of each stanza. These repeated words, phrases, or explanations are found in various locations throughout the song. Anaphora in these cases consists of a grammatical structure, such as a question or a statement found at the beginning or the end of each verse, parallel sentences, and/or expressions of joy or delight. Other songs are structured around catalogues or lists of the range of religious and secular persons who populate the landscape of the narrator's world. Such catalogues, not unlike the diviner's list discussed above, provide the poet with a way to humorously and ironically highlight each group's hypocrisies and self-deceptions.

Many songs function as monologues or dialogues in which Drukpa Kunley addresses himself or a single individual or a group of persons with an agenda to reveal conduct or attitudes he sees as obviously false or self-deluded. These songs are often humorous. Perhaps the most commonly used structural device is the narrator's use of strong "opener" and "closer" lines that allow him to remain rhetorically in control. In these songs, we see how skillful he can be in drawing the audience into collusion with his point of view by use of humorous, challenging and even shocking statements, both at the beginning and at the end of his verses. These statements create a kind of intimacy with the audience that is not always obvious, particularly because the audience may not consciously wish to identify with Drukpa Kunley's addressees. Instead, they would rather identify with the narrator.

Another structural device found in Drukpa Kunley's song-poems is the use of a simple narrative frame that forms a "bookend." These frames provide the barest of contexts within which the song unfolds, but still manage to situate us, as readers/listeners, within the world of the text. These narrative frames rapidly shift from song to song, or from episode to episode, causing the reader to engage in an ongoing process of re-evaluation and re-positioning in order to adjust to each song's context-specific orientation. By compelling the reader to jump from situation to situation, these song-poems use both a sense of dislocation and a vacillating tone to generate the ethic of disruption that breaks up any sense of narrative cohesion in the work as a whole. We must also take into account the placement of these song-poems within the larger frame of the *Namthar*. In some cases, one song follows swiftly on the heel of a previous one in which the same subject is addressed. In other cases, a song-poem may be sandwiched between a story and a didactic prose piece, and all three kinds of compositions work to come at the same topic from different angles. At the end of this chapter, I will consider how this larger sequencing (or lack thereof) functions in the *Namthar's* goals.

Collections of yogic spontaneous songs in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, such as those found in *Songs of Spiritual Experience* (2000), Shabkar's (1781-1851) *The Life of Shabkar* (2001), or Gyalwa Godrakpa's (1170-1249) songs in *Hermit of Go Cliffs* (2000), suggest that they commonly arise as the result of an overflow of emotion (joy, sorrow, ecstasy, grief) resulting from meditative experience or insight. Often, however, as in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar,* as well as in the collections of songs mentioned above, such songs arise in direct response to the request or need of another person. When triggered by an external request, the appropriate

knowledge naturally or spontaneously emerges in the form of a spontaneous song from the mind/body of the singer. In this way, realization, knowledge, or insight is viewed as inherently communicable. In the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* many songs are attuned to and respond to the capacity and receptiveness of the person who requests them. Because each person's needs and aptitudes are different, each song's content and style is necessarily idiosyncratic. Each song works differently to evoke the experience it describes in the mind/heart of the listener. Thus the joy or sorrow, humor or irony that is embedded within the song's semantic content is transmitted via the tone, rhythm, meter, and metaphor. As I will show below, the desired result of this is the instillation experience, beyond intellectual understanding.

If we again consider the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*'s overall truth-telling project, this use of spontaneous song in the transmission a visceral experience of truth (the truth of grief, the truth of joy, the truth of irony) has a significant and transformative effect on the affective dimension of the person who hears it. Recent studies of translation and transmission in religious studies consider how knowledge is transmitted, as well as the ethics involved both in communicating and receiving knowledge.[186] Scholars have considered the nature of the commitments formed between texts, writer/speakers, and receivers, as well as what ingredients are necessary for the journey from the ignorant state to realization. How does the teacher transmit the ingredients necessary to actualize the perfected state? Are there particular forms of transmission that are more effective than others?[187]

[186] Crook 1996. Childers 2006.

[187] Gyatso 1986, 7-35. Howard 2011, 87-120. Hoover 2002, 1-7.

Thus, in analyzing the work of the song-poems in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar,* I also consider this issue of the transmission of truth. I ask both *what* truths are being transmitted and *how* that transmission takes place. How do these song-poems perform their work? Do they all function in the same way? What kind of transmission becomes possible via the medium of spontaneous songs that we do not find via other kinds of compositions?

In the following song, the narrative frame introduces a leading question that prompts Drukpa Kunley to sing a song. This use of the single question prompt is another structural device that appears in many of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*'s songs. In this case, the song that emerges is a study in humor and irony, accompanied an underlying thread of disappointment:

> Another time, wondering if truly pure Dharma was being practiced, and if so, where, I went to look. After seeing the conduct of people everywhere, I sang this song.[188]

These first two sentences set up the narrative context for the song in which the relationship that should ideally inhere between practicing "pure Dharma" (*chos rnam dag*) and the accompanying "conduct" or "behavior" (*spyod tshul*) that should go along with this, is brought into view. While pure Dharma and conduct should be in harmony, and particularly, they should be in harmony wherever people have dedicated themselves to practice the Buddha's teachings, the song exposes the true state of affairs as Drukpa Kunley has directly observed (*mthong nas*). The audience listens in dismay and perhaps, involuntary humor, as Drukpa Kunley sings:

> I, the yogi, did not stay. I, the yogi, went wandering. I, the yogi, went to the monastic schools of the Kagyüpa order. In these monasteries, each monk held a

[188] *Chos rnam dag cig byed na gang na dar bsam nas bltar phyin pas/ thams cad kyi spyod tshul mthong nas mgur 'di byas so,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 66a.6.

> pitcher of beer. I, the yogi, restrained myself, fearing that I would join the feasts of drunkards who hire singers![189]

This first verse sets the pattern followed by all subsequent verses by making use of the literary devices of anaphora and epiphora—the repetition of a phrase or words at the beginning or end of each stanza. In this case, the repeated word or phrase is found in various locations throughout the song. The repeated declarative phrase, "I, the yogi" (*rnam 'byor ngas*), set up in contrast to a range of deviant behaviors, reveals a tension in Drukpa Kunley between adhering to a set of disciplines and ethical parameters or succumbing to various sensory enticements. There is a sense, as the song goes on, that Drukpa Kunley barely escapes from giving in to indulgence and pleasure, hence the need to continuously reassert his identification as a yogi. These stanzas hammer home a contrast between "I, the yogi" and the behaviors he observes.

Each stanza also reminds us of Drukpa Kunley's awareness of his own vulnerability in the face of the actions he observes. Hearing how the adherents of the Kagyü School are prey to drinking excess alcohol, we see just how much self-awareness of his own weaknesses Drukpa Kunley has. His constant repetition of the phrase "controlled myself" (*rang tshod bzung ba*) reminds us over and over of the level of effort he requires to refrain. We see how tempted he is to join the Sakya School in expressing his contempt for others due to a subtle belief that his doctrines are supreme:

> I, the yogi, went to the monastic schools of the Sakyapa order. In these schools, the monks expressed contempt for all other doctrines. I, the yogi, controlled myself, fearing that I would join with those who forsake the Dharma.[190]

[189] *rnal 'byor ngas ma bsdad rnal 'byor ngas phyin/ rnal 'byor ngas bka' brgyud kyi grwa sa ru phyin/ bka' brgyud kyi grwa sa na mi res chang ban re bzung/ rnal 'byor nga glu mkhan nyo chang ba'i gral du tshud kyi dogs nas rang tshod bzung ba yin,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 66a.6-66b.1.

He is also vulnerable to the idea of promoting himself, just like the Chöd practitioners who practice in cemeteries and charnel grounds to glorify themselves rather than to give rise to genuine renunciation:

> I, the yogi, visited cemeteries and remote places. In these locations, the adepts of Chod meditate only for their own glorification. I, the yogi, controlled myself, fearing that I would become friends with worldly gods and demons.[191]

He sees himself too in the retreatants in life-long seclusion who spend their time counting the days past on the tips of their fingers.

> I, the yogi, visited the retreatants walled up for a year or for life. Impatiently, they were counting, 'How many days have I accomplished?' I, the yogi, controlled myself, fearing that I would become the caretaker of a hermit's little hut.[192]

Drukpa Kunley's journey reveals no religious specialist or group who is exempt from some style of self- and other-deception or from the subtle desire to aggrandize themselves. Faced with these tempting attitudes and activities, Drukpa Kunley repeatedly verbalizes his ironic antidote: "I, the yogi, controlled myself, fearing that I..."[193] This verbal phrase "to restrain oneself" or to be self-controlled is contrasted to each of the deviant behaviors performed by the various agents. The repeated emphasis on "I, the yogi" reminds us of the contrast the narrator hopes to

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[190] *rnal 'byor ngas sa skya pa'i grwa sa ru phyin pas/ sa skya pa'i gra pa tsho grub mtha' kun khyad du gsod kyi 'dug/ rnal 'byor nga chos spong gi las la 'byar gyi dogs nas rang tshod bzung ba yin,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 66b.1-2.

[191] *Rnal 'byor ngas dur khrod dang bas mtha' ru phyin pas/ dur khrod dang bas mtha' na gcod yul ba snyan grags bsgom/ rnal 'byor nga 'jig rten gyi lha 'dre dang grogs por song gi dogs nas rang tshod bzung ba yin,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 66b.6.

[192] *rnal 'byor ngas lo mtshams tshe mtshams mdzad sar phyin pas/ sku mtshams mdzad mkhan tsho ni nyi ma gang 'phyid mdzad/ rnal 'byor nga spyil chung bsrung cha bar song ga dogs nas rang tshod bzung ba yin,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 67a.3-4.

[193] *rnal 'byor ngas...rang tshod bzung ba yin*.

make between those "other" practitioners who cannot see their own hypocrisies and "the yogi" – the careful and critical observer Drukpa Kunley hopes to be, the one who can see what actually exists beneath the veneer of surface ideals, but who, at the same time is only just barely able to avoid participating in the same kinds of activities.

As has already become evident in other compositions in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, this type of social-satirical critique never draws the line at those who self-identify as Buddhist practitioners, but extends its narrative scope to take into account a variety of secular persons. In the case of the current song, this includes "rich people" (*phyug po*) whose "complaints are louder than the cries of hell beings"--

> I, the yogi, visited the wealthy people. Their complaints were louder than the cries of hell. I, the yogi, controlled myself, fearing that I would be reborn as an A-pa-ra yaksha.[194]

As well as "wives of shameless beggars" (*mi ltos khrel med gyi zla*) who "even pawn their own paternal estates"--

> I, the yogi, visited the consorts of shameless beggars. Brazenly, they pawned even their paternal estates for funds. I, the yogi, controlled myself, fearing that I would become an object of disgrace to all.[195]

If we consider how this litany of faults impacts the reader, we can imagine that initially she might be lulled into believing that she can remain on the sidelines observing, with Drukpa Kunley, this range of behaviors. But as the repetitiveness of the stanzas begins to drive home

[194] *Rnal 'byor ngas phyug po'i drung du phyin pas/ phyug po tsho sdug skad dmyal ba las che ba 'dug/ rnal 'byor nga gnod sbyin a pa rar skyes kyi dogs nas rang tshod bzung ba yin,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 67a.6-67b.1.

[195] *rnal 'byor ngas mi ltogs khrel med kyi zla la phyin pas/ mi ltogs ngo tsha med pha gzhis tshun'bun gter 'jug/ rnal 'byor nga thams cad kyi sngo lo 'phyar gyi dogs nas rang tshod bzung ba yin,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 67b.1-2.

the sense that, just as Drukpa Kunley is keenly aware of his vulnerability and his temptation to engage in what he sees, perhaps she too is susceptible. Gradually, the suspicion that no one, not herself, not the narrator, not the interlocutors within the world of the text, is exempt from the subtleties of self-deception and desire begins to dawn. Even the mere act of standing back and observing enmeshes the reader within the imaginative world described by the song. Inadvertently, the reader finds herself comparing her own behavior to that of those being observed.

Drukpa Kunley's first-person narration and his repetition of "I, the yogi" generates him as a kind of proxy, or stand-in, for the reader, who is, in essence, looking through his eyes at the array of actions, attitudes, and orientations each kind of person reveals. Drukpa Kunley's acknowledgement of his own vulnerability stimulates the reader to examine her own susceptibility, and such moments of self-examination represents a transformation in the practice of reading whereby, rather than allowing the reader to remain standing at an evaluative distance from the text, she becomes actively implicated within the world the text. She is stimulated to both be and act differently as a result of observing and engaging in the world of the text. Ricoeur describes this process when he discusses how certain "strategies of persuasion" undertaken by the narrator are designed to induce an ethically responsible vision of the world on the reader. Such a vision requires a new evaluation of both the world and the reader herself and positions the reader as the agent of her own transformation.[196] It becomes ethically incumbent upon the reader to choose whether to embrace the vision of the "good" to

[196] Ricoeur 1985, Vol.3, 249.

which she has been subjected by the act of reading or to reject it. In this case, the good action, the direction of greatest virtue, is that in which a back-and-forth takes places between the appearances one's sees and the evaluation of one's own behaviors in light of such appearances. While it is impossible to say for certain, this song, and indeed, the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* itself, may be designed to function in just this way.

If the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* insists on anything, it is the willingness to reveal every layer of self-deception and delusion. Thus, in this song, another function of the juxtaposition of the narrator's refrain, "I, the yogi, restrained myself, fearing that I would..." with the different spiritual others he encounters, is identification. The act of "refraining" and the "fear" that he could become just like them reveals a tension within the narrator, who both recognizes himself in and rejects the image held up to him by the mirrors of those he observes. This is where the song's most ironic tone emerges. In seeing these others, Drukpa Kunley sees no more and no less than himself.

Another ironic song that uses the trope of cataloguing the self-deceptions engaged in by "Buddhists" (both lay and monastic) begins with the following short narrative frame:

> Again I went to beg for alms.[197] A patron said to me, "Aren't you one of these three – a thief, a rapist, or a beggar? Aren't you a person who is full of desire, pretending to be a religious person? Aren't you mistaken about appearances and intentions? Are you a field where merit accumulates or are you like a debt collector who chases after the retribution of bad actions?" So saying, he picked a quarrel with me.[198]

[197] *bsod snyoms la phyin.*

[198] *Yang bsod snyoms la phyin pas/yon bdag cig na re/rku 'phrog slong gsum ma yin nam/chos pa ltar brdzus pa'i 'dod pa can ma yin nam/gzugs dang sems 'dzol ba ma yin nam/bsod nams gsog pa'i zhing yin nam/lan chags bsnyeg pa'i hor 'dra yin nam zer nas 'thab tu byung,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 13a.1-2.

When the narrator arrives at the patron's residence requesting alms, the patron asserts his right as a donor to question Drukpa Kunley's motives. His questions require Drukpa Kunley to supply a satisfactory "self" description. Instead of viewing the patron's questions as reasonable, Drukpa Kunley behaves as if the inquiry represents a challenge – a challenge that can only be answered by using the discursive space opened up by the patron's questions as an occasion to express his truth. The implicit message that is communicated through this narrative frame serves to remind us that sometimes the conditions within which we become able to both see and express our truth come to us from the outside.

Judith Butler observes that when a person is "held accountable through a framework of morality, such a framework is first addressed to me, first starts to act upon me, through the address and query of another."[199] Thus it is by means of being questioned about himself that Drukpa Kunley is brought into a moral framework. When he gives "an account" of himself in response to such an address or query, he becomes "implicated in a relation to the other" in front of and to whom he speaks. Drukpa Kunley's truth telling account to his patron is ethically responsible at the point where it uncompromisingly tells the truth, not only about situations and other persons, but also about himself.

In fact, we might speculate that it is due partially to this direct declaration of the truth that Drukpa Kunley gained his reputation as a *smyon pa* "crazy yogi." Consider, for example, the compositions, analyzed above in Chapter Two above, when his readers accuse Drukpa Kunley of

[199] Butler 2005.

writing an autobiography that is so direct and straightforward that it feels like being beaten with a thorny club.

Before examining Drukpa Kunley's response to the patron, we can look at the questions posed to him by the patron in order to demarcate the moral perimeters within which Drukpa Kunley is asked to respond. The patron asks the following questions: "Aren't you a person who is full of desire, pretending to be a religious person? Aren't you mistaken about appearances and intentions?[200] Are you a field where merit accumulates or are you like a debt collector who chases after the retribution of bad actions?"[201] With the first question, he wants to know if Drukpa Kunley is merely pretending to be religious, while in fact he is "filled with desires" (*'dod pa can*). The juxtaposition of these two qualities points to two seemingly very different kinds of persons—the religious person (*chos pa*) and the desirous person (*'dod pa can*). Is Drukpa Kunley a genuine religious person? Or, is he still trapped by desire? Is it appropriate for him to beg for alms if he has not overcome personal desires? The patron asks Drukpa Kunley to consider what kind of religious person he really is. As was illustrated in the song above, this juxtaposition of being filled with desire and being genuinely religious forms an ongoing challenge. The song forces a reconsideration of this condition by recognizing that being religious and having desires are not mutually exclusive. Instead, hypocrisy arises at the point where we deceive ourselves and others by pretending to be a religious person who is not filled with desires.

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[200] *gzugs dang sems 'dzol ba ma yin nam*. The idea here seems to be that one might be confused about what is body and what is mind—the implication being that one is a hypocrite.

[201] *Chos pa ltar brdzus pa'i 'dod pa can ma yin nam/gzugs dang sems 'dzol ba ma yin nam/bsod nams gsog pa'i zhing yin nam/lan chags bsnyeg pa'i hor 'dra yin zer nas 'thab tu byung,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 13a.1-2.

The next question the patron asks is "Are you mistaken about appearances and intentions?" Similar to the first, this question requires Drukpa Kunley to consider what motivations lie beneath his appearance as a yogi. Are the two—appearance and motivation—in harmony? The last questions the patron asks Drukpa Kunley are: "Are you a field where merit accumulates? Or are you like a bully who hastens to chase after debts?" These two questions are extensions of the previous question's injunction for Drukpa Kunley to examine his motivations. Two intentions are posed in opposition to each other. In the first, a person may be like a field (*zhing*) in which merit can accumulate. This is a common way to refer to Buddhist monastics meant to highlight their responsibility to adhere to the virtuous self-disciplines taught in by the Vinaya. If they can do so, their bodies and minds become physical locations for the pure conditions or virtuous environment in relation to which others can benefit and fulfill their own potential. From the Buddhist doctrinal point of view, becoming a genuine field of merit is synonymous with living a spotless life according to the rules of the Vinaya. Only when a person is genuinely free from non-virtue (*mi dge ba*), can she become a source of refuge and an agent of other people's merit.

Alternately, a person's intention may be closer to that of a bully (*hor 'dra*), someone with rough manners, who is rude and offensive to others without regard for them as human beings. Defined loosely, this term refers to Tibetan government or monastic officials charged with going from town to town to collect overdue debts from villagers. Such officials were renowned for exploiting their positions as much as possible to benefit themselves, even though the debts collected were meant to go to their employers. Thus they acquired a reputation for

their lack of manners, cheating, their general exploitation of anyone beneath them, and their ruthlessness in taking whatever they could get, often by force.[202] The patron's questions to Drukpa Kunley sketch out the contours of these two poles of behavior while inviting Drukpa Kunley to position himself within one or the other ideological realm.

Drukpa Kunley replies, "Don't talk like that and offer whatever you can."[203] At first, Drukpa Kunley seems reluctant to enter into the conversation or explain himself. But the patron isn't about to let him off without accounting for himself. He responds, "Well then, if you really are a yogi, sing a spontaneous song (*mgur ma*) that begins with the word "lama" (*bla ma*) at the top."[204] In Tibetan Buddhist religious society, many genuinely realized yogic practitioners have been represented as capable of spontaneously composing these kinds of songs. We see examples of such persons in the yogis Milarepa, Götsangpa, Yangonpa, Godrakpa, and Shabkar, to mention just a few. Such songs may serve to illustrate, in effect, the yogi's ability to respond spontaneously to their direct experience of *things as they are.* Viewed this way, the patron's request invites the transmission of a certain kind of truth – the truth known by a yogi – a person who has recognized reality *as it is* and who is capable of putting that realization into language. Drukpa Kunley proceeds to do exactly this. He sings about reality *as it is*.

[202] Gyatso, Lobsang 1998, 93-94.

[203] *de skad ma zer bar gang byung cig zhu byas pas*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 13a.2.

[204] *'o na khyed rnal 'byor par 'dug pas/ ya gi bla ma nas gzung ste thams cad la mgur ma cig gyis dang zer ba la,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 13a.2-3.

> You gurus! Your religious tradition is to teach the profound dharma to others without having any yourself! How wondrous! Braggarts who do not think about this lack![205]
>
> You monks! Your devotion is to fold your hands and close your eyes—how marvelous! Braggarts who deceive your gurus![206]

In each verse, the narrator uses the vocative voice to address different religious and secular actors. The first verse addresses itself to the highest figure in the Tibetan Buddhist religious hierarchy – the guru – whom it accuses of pretending to impart profound teachings without any understanding of their essence. The narrator sings that such teachers are "themselves without" (*rang la med par*) profundity (*zab mo*) even while they comment on and explain profundities to others. The song sarcastically exclaims, "How wonderful!" (*ngo mtshar che*). Here, the narrator uses it ironically to mock the false pretenses of Buddhist gurus. At the end of the verse, he sings, "Braggarts who don't consider this deficiency!" The Tibetan word for "braggart" is "*ham pa*," meaning a person who boasts about qualities he doesn't have, or someone who actively deceives others. Drukpa Kunley's point is that such teachers don't even have the intelligence to recognize their own ignorance.

The next verse targets the monk/disciple who deceives his guru. The verse implicitly suggests that communication between master and disciple is a two-way street. If a guru deceives the disciple, nothing is transmitted and if the disciple deceives the guru by only taking up an appearance of devotion, again, no genuine transmission of the teachings takes place. The

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[205] *khyed bla ma rnam kyi chos lugs 'di/ zab mo gzhan la 'chad 'chad nas/ rang la med par ngo mtshar che/ med bsam med pa'i ham pa la*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 13a.3.

[206] *khyed gra pa rnam pa'i mos gus de/ mig btsum thal mo sbyor sbyor nas/ sems la med pa ngo mtshar che/ bla ma mgo bo bskor ba'i ham pa la*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 13a.4.

song describes the false disciple as one who maintains the appearance of a monk by closing his eyes and folding his hands in *Anjali* – the traditional hand gesture of respect and devotion. Pretending to be filled with devotion and love, in fact he has nothing whatsoever in his mind at all (*sems la med pa*). Due to the extreme emphasis placed on devotion to the guru in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, a disciple/monk who only takes up the shape of devotion violates the fundamental conditions necessary for the effective transmission of the Buddhist teachings. This kind of disciple is incapable of progress on the path because he lacks the receptive state of mind produced by the transformative experience of devotion. This kind of deception "spins the heads" (*mgo ba bskor ba*) of the gurus. In Tibetan, to spin someone's head means to deliberately confuse or deceive them. Again in this verse, the refrain: "How wonderful, braggarts who deceive their teachers!" mocks the standard convention for this expression of religious awe and wonder.

As the song continues, it targets the hypocrisies of a range of religious actors. But lest we think that the narrator is only interested in revealing the self-deception of religious persons, this song also shifts its attention to the secular world.

> You Lords! This is your justice. You forcefully apply it to others without taking it as valid for yourselves. How wonderful! Braggarts proud of your judgments and truths![207]

In Tibet and Bhutan the word for a "chief" or "local lord" is *dpon po*. This person both generates the systems of laws the majority of the population must follow as well as directs those who enforce the observance of these laws. Drukpa Kunley attacks the chiefs' adherence to the

[207] *khyed dpon po rnam pa'i khrims lugs de/ gzhan la gcod pa'i snying kham la/ rang la med pa ngo mtshar che/ bden gtan tshigs 'dzin pa'i ham pa la,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 13b.2.

"systems of law" or "systems of ethics" (*khrims lugs*) that they have formulated. While such fellows impose strict limits on the obligation of others to follow these laws with great strength of mind and perseverance, when it comes to obeying the laws themselves, they feel no obligation. Instead, they rationalize their exemption using the laws themselves as supports. "Braggarts," Drukpa Kunley sings, "who hold up logical justifications and truths."

Finally, however, the narrator returns to the situation at hand. He sings: "You patrons, this is your generosity: hoping for a reward, you give to others. How wonderful! Braggarts thinking you will attain Buddhahood![208] These, he sings, are the conditions under which you give gifts or alms: you boast about your generosity, but in reality, you hope for something in return (*lan la re ba'i*). This verse represents the quintessential example of the reversal of the ideal practice of generosity in the Buddhist tradition, in which a patron should give whatever he has without hope or thought of return. The gift should be given freely and the recipient should be free from any obligation to respond. The ironic commentary here points to their conversation itself in which the patron has created a situation in which Drukpa Kunley must, literally, sing for his food. Drukpa Kunley states that patrons like this maintain a "sense of pride" (*yus lugs*) regarding their donations, which automatically includes the unspoken or unacknowledged desire for some kind of return. "Braggarts," he sings, "who think that you will attain Buddhahood through selfless giving!" From the narrator's point of view, the patrons' thought of attaining Buddhahood is a joke since such donors exchange goods for enlightenment, turning the path of Buddhism into a commercial exchange.

[208] Thanks to the merit acquired by the gift in a future existence. *Khyed sbyin bdag rnam pa'i sbyin pa 'di/ lan la re ba'i yus lugs la/ mi la ster ba ngo mtshar che/ sangs rgyas thob bsam ham pa la*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 13b.3.

In song's final verse, however, Drukpa Kunley is not content to expose the self-deceptions and hypocritical practices of others. He turns his penetrating eye on himself. The patron's questions bind him to a practice of truth telling in which he also is implicated. He sings,

> As for myself, the yogi Kunley, I wander in the kingdoms. Having left my homeland, what happened then? I did not abandon attachments. How wonderful! Braggart calling myself a renunciant![209]

If we paraphrase this verse, it might say, "Look at me! I am someone who supposedly abandoned home, family, relatives and all belongings in order to live the life of a true renunciant. But inside, I have been unable to abandon my desires or attachments." Although he has taken up the form of a wandering mendicant, inside he is consumed with longing and attachment (*zhen pa ma thongs*). "Braggart," he calls himself, who claims to be a genuine renunciant. The Tibetan word for renunciant is *bya btang*, which can be defined as a person who has given up all interest in and desire to perform actions (*bya ba*) in the world. This is a renunciation on every level of a person's being. It is giving up the activities of "doing" (*bya ba)* and realizing a way of "being" that is not affected by the momentum of everyday desires. The narrator is completely honest. "I might look like one thing, but underneath, I'm something else." It is in these moments of willing and even gleeful self-exposure that we see the uniqueness of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar's* project of ethical formation. It is one thing to point out the faults, self-deceptions, and hypocrisies of others, but another for Drukpa Kunley to use the model he has created as a means by which to both identify and expose those same faults inside himself. In so doing, Drukpa Kunley levels the playing field by situating himself within the

[209] *Nga rnal 'byor kun legs rgyal khams skor/ yul pha yul spangs pas ci yong ba/ zhen pa ma thongs ngo mtshar che/ bya btang zer ba'i ham pa la*, DK1, Vol. Ka, 1978, 13b.4-5.

same nexus of delusions, false ideas and deviant behaviors that he observes in others. The revelation that he is no different from others in terms of hypocrisy – he is not *more* realized or *more* virtuous – establishes him as a particular kind of ethical person. This kind of person identifies self-knowledge and the acceptance of exactly who and what one is as the final goal – the confession that, rather than condemning, instead liberates.

The narrative frame for this song allows a glimpse into how we might receive its message. The text informs us that, "The patron was delighted and gave me many alms. Moreover, to honor me, he offered cooked green leaves, had two fish roasted, and made me some noodle soup."[210] Rather than feel offended or depressed by the idea that almost everyone presents one face to the world, while secretly harboring another, the experience evoked in the patron is one of pleasure and joy (*dga' ba*). Hearing the truth and seeing how both he and Drukpa Kunley share the state of self-delusion seems to create a feeling of harmony and delight that entirely changes the patron's response to Drukpa Kunley's request for alms. The text provides a detailed list of what the patron offers to Drukpa Kunley. He "gives many alms" (*bsod snyoms mang po byin*), and, as a sign of respect, "out of reverence" (*bsnyen bkur*), he boils green vegetables and roasts two fish with great earnestness and seriousness. In addition to feeling delighted by the revelation of different kinds of hypocrisies, the patron is inspired to a feeling of reverence and respect. The exposure of what is true, of how people actually are, generates a genuine feeling of faith, respect, and delight. United through their

[210] *Kho dga' nas bsod snyoms mang po byin/ bsnyen bkur yang sngo tshod btsos/ nya khug gnyis bsregs/ bag tsha dang bcas gzabs byung*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 13b.5-6.

shared hypocrisy, they are also united through a communal experience of honesty. Hearing how things *actually are* confirms the bond of connection between patron and yogi.

The upshot of the song is the confirmation that the narrator's role as a truth-teller is uncontested, in a way that his appearance as a mendicant was not. The humor, irony and wry self-acceptance the song communicates enable the patron to accept the situation and even celebrate it. The situation depicted by the song speaks to the larger truth of human experience. Most people are often aware of when they are being duped by those around them. And most of the time, even though we may know or suspect that someone is not telling the whole truth, or is not genuinely representing his role, we conspire together in a kind of willful ignorance. We obey an unspoken social contract in which direct challenges to other people's integrity are rarely voiced. But, like this one, many of the songs and compositions included in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* insist on breaking this contract. Again and again, they open up discursive spaces within which the "truths" of self-deception and hypocrisy are brought into the foreground. Such compositions provide a medium within which to meditate on what it means to be genuinely human as well as how to bring such awareness onto the Buddhist path.

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Not all of Drukpa Kunley's songs are aimed at the overt exposure and ridicule of religious and/or secular hypocrisies. Another common assertion about the *mgur* genre is that affective states give rise to these spontaneous song/poems. This is also the case with Drukpa Kunley's songs. One state of being that regularly motivates his songs is that of joy or delight. Before looking at some of these songs, I make the caveat that while every kind of translation

has its challenges, translating poetic songs, particularly spiritual songs, brings into consideration a whole set of variables, including playfulness of language, various literary conventions, culturally specific referents, colloquialisms, rhythm, consonance, and puns, not to mention the intricacies of purposeful ambiguity, and an intentional toying with the limits of language. Drukpa Kunley's *mgur* can be seen to bring into being over and over again a particular kind of experience, or at the least, to point directly to such an experience. As we will see, the encounter with these poems is both intimate and seductive. For example, in following song, each stanza follows a consistent pattern that brings the reader into close intimacy with the content of the song.

> First, I trained in Prātimokṣa and the path of bodhicitta.
> Next, I set my mind in the state of naturalness.
> Finally, I mixed all phenomena into one state.
> Oh, oh! The attributes of self have gone, a'ho!
> Happy to experience the state of the natural flow, a'ho![211]

> First, I meditated on the guru with fabricated devotion.
> Next, limitless devotion naturally flowed.
> Finally, the guru arose as my own mind.
> Oh, oh! The attributes of self have gone, a'ho!
> Happy knowing that all phenomena are emanations of the guru, a'ho![212]

Although the translation above does not reflect this, in Tibetan each line of each stanza consists of eight syllables, eight beats per line, arranged in a meter of 2+2+2+2, while the refrain at the end of the stanzas consists in nine and eleven syllables respectively. Each stanza consists of five

[211] *Dang por so thar byang sems sbyangs pa/ bar du rang mdangs so mar bzhag pa/ tha mar thams cad gcig tu 'dres pa/ 'o 'o chas rang phyin pa yin a ho/ byar med lhug po'i rang nyams skyong ba 'di dga' 'o,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 110a.2-3.

[212] *Dang por bcos ma'i bla ma bsgoms pa/ bar du mos gus tshad med g.yos pa/ tha mar bla ma sems su shar ba/ 'o 'o chas rang phyin pa yin a ho/ cir snang bla ma'i sprul par shes pa 'di dga'o,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 110a.3-4.

lines. According to Victoria Sujata while many *mgur* and *glu* commonly use eight beats per line, the meter of 2+2+2+2 is unusual.[213] The result is a rhythmic verse structure that is pleasing both to recite/sing and to hear. The repetitive line structure of "first," "next," and "finally" invites the reader/listener to join with the singer on his personal journey on the Buddhist path. The ending of each stanza with an exuberant burst of delight in which the narrator calls out the fruition of his experience using exclamations with no semantic value evokes the powerful burst of joy that is the result of such training. The second to last line of each stanza, "Oh, oh! The attributes of self have gone, a'ho!" dissolves any attachment or clinging to the experience that has arisen, while the last line of each stanza, though varying in content, equates realization with the declarative exclamation, literally "this is joy!" (*'di dga' 'o*) though I have translated it as "Happy!"

The structure of this song comprises a condensed version of the tantric Buddhist path, complete with ground, path, and fruition. For the reader, the gradated movement from foundational training to the most profound, or along the common triad of progression used in Tibetan Buddhism of outer, inner, and secret, happens rapidly and each verse's repetition of a threefold formula culminates in the sense that all three – ground, path, and fruition – are, in fact, inseparable. Because the states of realization described by the song are understood to be naturally present in every sentient being, regardless of whether or not that being has realized them, the song speaks to the realization which is always present, but generally unrecognized or unawakened. The rapidity by which the progression takes place in each verse allows no room

[213] Sujata 2004, 134.

for conceptual consideration, but pops the listener into the final, animated experience of delight that results from such training.

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Another joyful *mgur* begins with a focused narrative, prose frame within which the song is situated. Here, Drukpa Kunley is challenged by one of his disciples, who says to him:

> When you speak to others, you are very assertive, but you don't assert yourself as a master of the Drukpa Kagyü lineage; even though Druk Ralung is ruined you don't act to renovate it; and also, you don't attend the Ralung Rinpoche. Instead, you rest at your ease wherever the sun shines! This isn't good![214]

This judgment sets the scene for the narrator's song through a series of negative statements that describe what Drukpa Kunley *doesn't* do. Although he is a high-ranking lama who could take advantage of the comforts and benefits of living at Ralung monastery, and although his lineage responsibilities include such things as engaging in the upkeep and repair of Ralung as well as attending the presiding abbot, he has turned away from these. Similarly to the song analyzed above, these disapproving sentences provide a platform from which Drukpa Kunley must explain himself and his behavior.

Drukpa Kunley first relates his vision of the yogi's outer way of being.

> Now, a beggar, I make butter and cheese in the summer. In the winter, I drink honey-wine. Wherever the drum resounds, I run! Wherever the smoke rises, I run! This is the way of life I love! Beyond this, I don't have to worry about a chief

[214] *Gzhan la gsungs na yong yong 'dra ba la/ chos rje rang 'brug pa'i sku ngo ma mdzad nas/ 'brug ra lung gi zhig gsos kyang ma mdzad/ ra lung rin po che'i phyag phyi yang mi mdzad/ nyi ma gang dro mdzad pa 'di 'dra ma bzang zer,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 28b.3-4.

on top or take care of houses and fields. Attaining just enough food and clothing,
I make my own joy![215]

This representation of the unencumbered beggar is not unique to Drukpa Kunley. More than a trope, the beggar-yogi's complete renunciation of the trappings and pitfalls of ordinary life was viewed as the necessary requisite for the genuine yogic life. Such self-descriptions can be seen in the *mgur* of two of Tibet's other famous wandering yogis, Milarepa and Godrakpa Sonam Gyaltsen (1170-1249).[216] However, Drukpa Kunley's version of the yogic lifestyle must be taken tongue-in-cheek, as, for him, rejecting the fame and comforts of the monastic life is not aimed at creating the conditions for self-realization, but instead to allow him the freedom and delight of seeking out food, liquor, and clothing. Such a lifestyle exempts him from the responsibilities and ordinary concerns of daily life, such as paying taxes to an overlord or working to take care of family, lands, and dwellings. This freedom represents simplicity – only the most basic concerns of livelihood are pursued. The result is a delight (*skyid*) that is self-arising, requiring nothing more of the narrator than that he settle himself in those conditions. There is no sense of apology in these lines, but only a sense of cheerful delight in the vagaries and pleasures of life.

In the song that follows this brief prose introduction, Drukpa Kunley reiterates the same theme of delight in simplicity and self-knowledge. Here, the song's structure functions to evoke the experience of delight through content, rhythm, repetition, and melody.

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[215] *Da sprang po nga/ dbyar dkar sbrang byed/ dgun skyur sbrang byed/ rnga rding rgyug/ du ba lang rgyug 'di rang skyid/ steng na dpon po'i khral ni med/ zhing khang gi gnyer med/ lto mod/ gos dro/ 'di 'dra rang skyid byas pas,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 28b.6-29a.1.

[216] Chang 1999, Stearns 2000.

So, I sang:
My own mind is the guru.
Experience is self-arising.
Everything is self-accomplished.
This is joy, is joy, is joy!
If there is bliss beyond this, what else to do? Just remain at ease, at ease, at ease...[217]

...Wherever there is peace is my homeland.
Whoever is kind are my parents.
Not clinging to a homeland with attachment or aversion—
This is joy, is joy, is joy!
Why get involved in family conflicts? Just remain at ease, at ease, at ease.[218]

I quote just enough of the song here to demonstrate how each verse works rhetorically to generate a particular state of mind in the listener. The repetition of "is joy, is joy, is joy (*'di dga' yin dga' yin dga' yin*) and "at ease, at ease, at ease" (*'bol le 'dzom 'dzom 'dzom*) highlights the experience of pleasure and relaxation at the same time as the sound of the words works somatically to generate a similar state of pleasure in the reader.[219] In this case, Drukpa Kunley uses the repetition of the words "joy" and "at ease" to transmit a soothing sense of the experience that arises when one has relinquished the complications of daily life and recognized one's own mind as the source for truth. The melodic repetition of the words functions to generate a felt experience, an experience of pleasure and relaxation, a receptive state of being that ultimately recognizes its own peace.

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[217] *Bla ma ni rang sems nyams len ni rang snang/ thams cad rang gis byas chog pa 'di dga' yin dga' yin dga' yin/ 'di las bde na ga tsug bya yin 'bol le 'dzom 'dzom 'dzom,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 29a.1-2.

[218] *Skyid tshad pha yul byams tshad pha ma yin/ chags sdang pha yul mi 'dzin pa 'di dga' yin dga' yin dga' yin/ pha spun nang 'thab rgyab nas ci tsug bya yin 'bol le 'dzom 'dzom 'dzom,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 29b.1-2.

[219] This refrain repeats itself throughout the song. 'Brug pa Kun legs uses the term *'bol le* (relaxation, to be relaxed, at ease), where *le* functions to accentuate the state of being relaxed, together with a trifold repetition of *'dzom* (come together, assembled, completed).

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While the experience of joy is fundamental to the Buddhist path, the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* places equal weight on affective experiences of sadness, grief, or sorrow. And yet, Drukpa Kunley plays with sadness as much as with any other emotion. For example, he prefaces the following satirical song with the comment that in his wanderings through the countries, he witnesses behaviors that greatly agitate his mind. Out of this agitation he sings the following sorrowful song (*skyos mo'i glu*).

> Homage to my great sorrow!
> If you want to practice the holy Dharma properly, you must consider death from the bottom of your heart.
> If you don't consider death from the bottom of your heart, then just go ahead and obtain food and clothes for this life![220]
>
> If you want to practice perfectly pure meditation, remain vividly clear and non-distracted.
> But if you want to fetter the nature of mind yourself, then just make a big deal out of the object of meditation.[221]
>
> If you want to be an authentic teacher, secure the enlightened state.
> But if you want to mislead both yourself and others, train yourself in the manner of those "important" men![222]

The song begins tongue-in-cheek by altering the traditional invocation of *Namo* ("Homage"). Normally, this introductory homage is followed by the name of a teacher, lineage holder, Buddha, Bodhisattva or merely the word *guru*. But here, Drukpa Kunley ironically pays homage

[220] *Na mo skyo mo drag/ dam chos tshul bzhin byed na snying nas 'cho ba gsos dang/ snying nas 'chi ba ma dran na tshe 'di'i lto rgyab cig bsgrubs shig,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 134b.3-4.

[221] *Sgom pa rnam dag cig byed na hrig ge ye re zhog cig/ rang sems rang gis 'ching na dmigs pa la ched du gzung zhig,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 135b.1.

[222] *Bla ma mtshan ldan zhig byed na rang nyid btsan sa gzung zhig/ rang gzhan gnyis ka bslu na mi mgo bskor lugs 'dra slobs zhig,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 135b.2-3.

to his own distressed state of mind. This homage sets the scene for the series of parallel verses that make up the rest of the song. In each of the above verses, Drukpa Kunley describes what is necessary in order to achieve the ideal state for respectively, Dharma practice, pure meditation, and being a teacher. These ideal conditions are contrasted to their opposites. Each verse concludes with Drukpa Kunley's sarcastic commentary on what people are doing instead.

Looking at the structure of the song more closely, there are seventeen verses, each of which is structured by two "if" – "then" clauses. Each half of a phrase contains seven syllables making for a total of fourteen syllables per line. For each verse, the first "if"/"then" phrase presents the narrator's opinion of an ideal – the ideal teacher, the ideal disciple, the ideal form of meditation, and so forth. The second phrase sarcastically describes what Drukpa Kunley sees instead. By sandwiching Drukpa Kunley's vision of the real state of things within the "if"/ "then" phrase, each verse functions simultaneously to inspire and admonish. Although the content of what should be done differs with each verse, the admonitions contain the same basic message – stop pretending to do one thing when you are doing something else. Each injunction to stop pretending reveals the hypocrisies people are engaged in at the same time as it imparts the proper conduct for each category. Each "if"/ "then" phrase tells the truth, though the truths told stand in opposition to each other. If you want to be like this, you must do this. But if what you *really* want is this, then just do that! Both kinds of truth are authentic. What is inauthentic is the person whose inner orientation to what she does is confused. Rather than sorrow, the song communicates more Drukpa Kunley's frustration and irritation with such activities.

For the reader who encounters this song, the abrupt shift in the verses orchestrated by the conditional clauses prevents any relaxation. If this, then that! If this, then that! There is no middle ground, no place to slide away from the black and white, back and forth, of the rhythm of the lines. The reader cannot escape from the injunction to face up to who/what she really wants. So, while ostensibly the song is about sorrow, in matter of fact, it performs the same function as so many of Drukpa Kunley's compositions – it tells the truth about how things actually are in such a way that those who listen are likewise implicated.

However, there are also songs included in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* that genuinely express and evoke the basic human emotion of sorrow. These songs take us away from Drukpa Kunley, the revealer of hypocrisy, the social satirist, and show us a side of the narrator that reflects a different and far more personal orientation. In the following song of sorrow (*skyo glu*), the narrator reflects on impermanence via the theme of the changing of the seasons.

> Homage to the teacher!
> My body feels the hot, penetrating wind. My eyes see the worn-out threads of my robe. This changing of the seasons, over and over, makes me sad. I send this message to the queen of the seasons: Can you prolong the seasons? Do you know any way by which they may be extended?[223]
>
> ...My ears hear the roar of the turquoise dragon. My eyes see the fall of the monsoon rains. When months, then years, pass by again and again, I feel so sad. I send this message to the blue cuckoo: Is there any way to cause the crops to ripen again?[224]

[223] *Na ma gu ru/ rkyang ser la tsha ba 'di lus kyis rang tshor/ snal gos la zad pa de mig gis rang mthong/ yang nas yang du nam zla 'gyur ba 'di skyo mo rang grag/ gsung 'phrin cig yod pa de nam zla'i rgyal mo la bskur yod/ da dung yin pas nam zla bsring ba'i bya thabs 'dra ye yod na*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 141b.6-142a.1.

[224] *G.yu 'brug la ldir ba 'di rna bas rang thos/ sbrang char la 'bab pa de mig gis rang mthong/ yang nas yang du lo zla 'dzad pa 'di skyo mo rang grag/ gsung 'phrin cig yod pa de khu byug sngon mo la bskur yod/ da dung yin pas 'bras bu smin pa'i bya thabs 'dra e yod na,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 142a.1-2.

Here, the homage follows the traditional format of invoking the composer's guru. Such an opening also suggests a sense of longing and melancholy due to the absence of the guru's physical presence.

One of the most notable elements of this song is its sensory and embodied quality. The narrator's eyes see, his ears hear, and his body feels. These sensory experiences accompany and even accentuate Drukpa Kunley's emotional state of sorrow. How do we know that time is passing, that the seasons are changing? We feel these changes with our entire being. The song evokes this experience in two ways. First it makes liberal use of verbs of sense – to hear, to feel, to see. Second, it employs metaphorical and ornate language to generate a felt sense of experience. For example, in Tibetan, the first line of the first verse literally says, "This body feels the hot, yellow-horse wind" (*rkyang ser la tsha ba 'di lus kis rang tshor*). When translating this song, my Bhutanese teacher Lopen Chorten explained to me how Tibetans identify different kinds of wind, assigning to them an ontological status in dependence on the season and the quality of the wind.[225] In this case, wind is likened to a yellow mule or horse, sharp, bony, dry, and worn out. It a wind that scrapes across the senses, a wind one can imagine sweeping mercilessly across the vast, stony expanses of the Tibetan plateau at the end of the dry season.

In a similarly evocative way, the second verse above uses the common metaphor of the roar of the turquoise dragon to signify the qualities of the thunder that accompanies the monsoon rains. Drukpa Kunley's plaintive request is sent to the sky blue cuckoo. The personification of summer in the form of the cuckoo is frequently analogized in Tibetan poetry

[225] Chorten Tshering, personal communication, 2012.

to a range of melancholy emotional states, including the heartfelt longing for the guru that lies at the root of a disciple's receptivity to the teachings. This verse from a song by the eighteenth-century yogi, Shabkar illustrates this longing:

> In summer, the blue cuckoo parades
> his beauty and voices his clear calls.
> Remembering the father guru
> One cannot help but weep.[226]

In a prose forward to this song, Shabkar expresses the role of the blue cuckoo in the emotional life of the yogi. He notes that in summer, between the fourth and fifth months, the blue cuckoo arrives and displays his beauty as he struts about, calling out so melodiously that he reminds people of the homelands they've left behind. Remembering home, they also think back to the love of their kind old parents. The cuckoo's poignant call causes meditators, who have renounced this life in order to wander through the mountain wilderness, recall vividly the dwelling of their root lama and the teachings he gave. Melancholy and sadness arises, and tears well up in their eyes.[227] While interpretations of the meaning of the blue cuckoo have likely shifted somewhat during the three hundred or so years intervening between Drukpa Kunley and Shabkar, the bird's frequent use as a metaphor by Tibetan yogis suggests that the characteristics attributed to it remained somewhat consistent. Certainly, both Shabkar and Drukpa Kunley see the bird as a catalyst for the particularly receptive state that comes from sorrow. That Shabkar was familiar with Drukpa Kunley's writings is evident in another section from Ricard's translation where Shabkar relates that he met Serkhang Rinpoche "and offered

[226] Ricard, 2001, 465.

[227] Ricard 2001, 464.

him, as a sign of homage, a statue of the Great Compassionate One and a copy of Drukpa Kunleg's life-story, together with two horse blankets."[228]

For Drukpa Kunley, sadness and melancholy arise together with his experience of change, his sense of the progression of life moving on inexorably on towards death, and with his recognition that nothing can be done to halt this. Nevertheless, it is only human to imagine, as his song does, some recourse to stopping or even turning back time, old age, and the progression towards death. Unless the practitioner's realization is nothing short of full enlightenment, human experience is permeated through and through with this kind of grief. At the same time, it is this ongoing experience of suffering as well as the perception of the suffering of many others that feeds the yogi's yearning for ultimate enlightenment. As the final verse of the song states:

> I, Kunley, the renunciant without Dharma, have squandered this human life.
> When sentient beings of this degenerate age are destroyed, I feel so sad. I have a message to send to great Vajradhara. When will be the time when I attain the fruition of Buddhahood?[229]

However, Drukpa Kunley ends his song with a characteristically abrupt change of mood, which undercuts the previous languishing in sorrow in favor of his more usual direct challenge both to himself and to his interlocutors. It's as if to remind himself that while some emotional indulgence in the face of life's suffering is natural, languishing in such states of mind must be cut through in order to practically address the reality of what is necessary to continue on the

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[228] Ricard 2001, 527.

[229] *Chos med po bya btang gi kun legs nga/ da lan gyi mi tshe stong zad la thal song/ dus ngan snyigs ma'i sems can 'jag tsho skyo mo rang grag go/ gsung 'phrin cig yod pa de rdo rje 'chang chen la bskur yod/ da dung yin pas 'bras bu sangs rgyas thob dus cig e yod na,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 142a.4-5.

path, i.e., continuing to recite the mantra: "Think about that! "OM" is excellent, but please also recite "Mani Padme!"[230]

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This next example also styles itself as a song of grief, but takes a different tack by employing a variety of metaphors to illustrate the different dimensions of entrapment to which the state of samsara conscripts the ordinary, unenlighted person. Drukpa Kunley uses each metaphor to create a contrast between the immediacy of danger and the condition of fear for the unaware, unenlightened person with his own release into a state of being that resists fear and the anxieties and tensions that otherwise accompany such bindings.

> One day at dawn, I had this thought: Sentient beings are each suffering from their own karma, and even the Buddhas of the past, present, and future can do nothing. A great grief arose in me and I improvised this song:[231]
>
> Namo! In the blue lake of Yardrog Yutsho, I saw many fish swimming. Listen well, fish! I have three instructions for you! Your fins are broad and strong as you swim around the empty lake. You seem very happy. But last night many fishermen carrying nets and other fishing gear came to the lake and you didn't understand the reason. It is time for you to find a safe place at the bottom of the lake! As for myself, since I am the queen of the mermaids, I appear to you as an auspicious omen.[232]

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[230] *De la soms la om bzang la yin pas ma ni padme rang grongs mdzod,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 142a.5.

[231] *Yang skabs shig na tho rangs kha zhig bsam blo la/ 'gro ba sems can rang rang gi las la spyod pa 'di la dus gsum sangs rgyas kyis kyang skyob par dka' 'dug bsam skyo ba tshad med pa skyes nas glu 'di 'then no,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 161b.1-2.

[232] Literally this final phrase, which forms the last line of each stanza, means "arises as the best omen/auspiciousness", but suggests that since Drukpa Kunley has become free from being enmeshed in karmic cause and results, his mere presence is an auspicious sign for those he addresses. *Na mo/ yar 'brog g.yu mtsho la 'gyur cam nya mo mang po 'khor zhing snang ngo/ nya mo tsho bslab bya yod pa tshig gsum rang nyon ang/ khyod gshog phrug rgyas nas mtsho stod 'grim pa de dga' mo cig snang ste/ mdang kha nub nya pa dol khyer mang po chas song ba de khyed tshos ma go/ btsan sa 'dzin rgyu rgya mtsho'i gting na yod kyang 'dzin ran 'dug go/ nga rang dang mtsho sman rgyal mo yin pas rten 'brel bzang po ru byung ngo,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 161b.2-3.

Two conditions are described through the analogy of sentient beings as being like fish swimming in a lake. First is the condition of strength, freedom, and carefreeness exhibited by the fish that swim happily through the lake's waters. The second is their true condition of blindness and ignorance, which prevents them from recognizing their peril even when it is at their doorstep. These two conditions represent the state of ignorant sentient beings, who nonchalantly go about their lives as if they are not constantly in mortal danger until the moment when death approaches – a moment that is always greeted by profound surprise and sense of betrayal. Like fish who do not recognize that the karmic circumstances which have resulted in being born as fish also include the impending danger of being caught and killed by fisherman, so too, by implication, sentient beings are unaware of their impending fates.

In contrast to these, Drukpa Kunley represents himself as arising as a good omen for the fish. This is symbolized by his identification with the queen of the lake spirits, herself an auspicious omen. To understand how the invocation of the *nāga* queen functions as an auspicious sign, we must consider the role of omens in Tibetan Buddhism. In the refrain to this song, Drukpa Kunley describes how both he and the *nāga* queen arise as a good omen (*rten 'drel bzang po ru byung*) for those he addresses. Samuel explains the word *rten 'drel* – "omen" or "sign" – as "connections that are not visible on the surface". But this word has further reaching connotations, specifically the notion of interdependence or *pratītyasamutpāda* – the Buddhist doctrinal theory of interdependence or interconnectivity of all things.[233] So, from this point of view, the fact that Drukpa Kunley appears in the guise of the *nāga* queen to warn the

[233] Samuel 1993, 191, 448. Sumegi 2008, 107-109.

fish of the fisherman means that he recognizes his involvement in the processes of liberation the extended metaphor of the fish in the lake signifies. As one who is already saved – Drukpa Kunley can manifest positively for those who are still entrapped and ignorant of their ongoing danger in samsara. Beer further describes the significance of the appearance of *nāgas* as omens when he remarks that *nāgas* can have beneficial, neutral, or harmful influences on human beings depending on the particular actions being engaged in by those persons.[234] This theme continues throughout the next stanzas.

> On the heights of the mountain pastures, many ten-antlered deer wander about.
> You deer, listen closely, I have three instructions for you! Having reached your full growth, you ramble in the alpine meadows and you seem peaceful.
> But you don't understand the reason that last night many hunters came with their dogs. It is time for you to find a safe place at the top of the hill. As for me, since I am a great meditator of the innate samadhi,[235] I appear to you as the best omen.[236]

Reading these stanzas we may wonder what has happened to the sadness Drukpa Kunley evoked at the beginning of the song. In the contrast the verses set up between the ignorance of sentient beings who are unaware of the danger their actions have produced for them and the narrator as the antidote, the wish-fulfilling charm, the "good omen," to guide them from their peril, there is less a sense of sadness than a sense of delight in the use of creative language to

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[234] Beer 2003, 73. See also Vargas 2009, 368.

[235] *Bsam gtan lhan cig gi sgom chen*; "coexistent" means a state in which one is simultaneously in the experience of this world and in the concentration of meditative absorption.

[236] *Spang stod kyi mthon po la sha ba rwa bcu mang po 'khor zhing snang ngo/ sha ba tsho bslab bya yod pa tshig gsum rang nyon ang/ khyod rwa bcu rdzogs nas spang stod 'grim pa 'di dga' mo cig snang ste/ mdang kha nub ling pa khyi 'khrid mang po chas song bde khyod tshos ma go/ btsan sa 'dzin rgyu ri bo'i rtse na yod kyang 'dzin ran 'dug go/ nga rang dang bsam gtan lhan cig gi sgom chen yin pas rten 'brel bzang por byung ngo,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 161b.3-5.

orchestrate an escape from the entrapment of ignorance and samsara. By providing practical information to guide the ignorant to safety, Drukpa Kunley simultaneously demonstrates how his own state of transcendence from the illusory dimension of ordinary appearances can be significant in its power to help those around him.

> An authentic teacher appears to be surrounded by many monks. You monks, listen! I have three instructions to teach you. Although you have been ordained, you still engage in the work of the ordinary layperson. You seem happy. But you didn't seem to notice that last night the messengers of the demon lord of death came. Now is the time to request the siddhi of long life and immortality! As for myself, as I am a yogi free from fixation on samsara or nirvana, I appear to you as the best omen.[237]

In each stanza, Drukpa Kunley represents himself in a different way. Each self description serves as another angle of vision into himself – in this case, a person whose mere being functions as an antidote and as a good omen for the different kinds of entrapment experienced by the various actors. In the first stanza, Drukpa Kunley identifies himself as the queen of the lake spirits (*gtsho sman rgyal mo*). In the second stanza, he is a great meditator of the innate samadhi (*bsam gtan lhan cig gi sgom chen*). We might speculate that the narrator's identification of himself as the queen of the water spirits suggests an act of transference whereby her allegiance shifts from the view of the world as separate and filled with threatening others to the genuine recognition of her nature as inseparable from its manifestations. Likewise, the yogi who is a great meditator of innate *samadhi* (*bsam gtan lhan cig*) rests at ease

[237] *Mtshan ldan gyi bla ma la rab byung btsun pa mang po 'khor zhing snang ngo/ rab byung tsho bslab bya tshig gsum yod pa de nyon ang/ khyed rab byung byas nas 'dzin rten mi nag pa'i las la 'jug pa 'di dga' mo 'dras snang ste/ mdang kha nub 'chi bdag bdud po'i pho nya sleb pa de khyed tshos ma tshor/ 'chi med tshe yi dngos grub zhu sa 'dra yod na zhu rang ran 'dug go/ nga rang dang 'khor 'das 'dzin med kyi rnal 'byor yin pas rten 'brel bzang por byung ngo,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 161b.5-162a.1.

in the spontaneously existing state of meditative equipoise, free from all effort or contrivance. The term "innate" (*lhan cig*), likely short for the longer phrase "spontaneously born" or "coemergent" (*lhan cig skyes pa*) conveys the sense of coemergence. In this case, the nature of mind itself is coemergent with meditative concentration (*bsam gtan*). Describing himself thusly, Drukpa Kunley highlights the fact that he has no need to seek out a safe place to hide since all experiences are equalized in the relaxation into mind's inherent state of co-emergent meditation. The next stanza describes another quality of the yogi who has escaped samsara's threats:

> Many ministers full of advice surround the great chief. You minsters, listen! I have three instructions to teach you! You look happy sitting on your thrones eating meat and drinking beer when the harvest has been bountiful and when you've been successful in trade. But you did not notice that last night your chieftain and all the other ministers were deceiving each other. It is time for you to find a safe place in the king's castle! As for myself, I'm a yogi without enemies or demons, and I appear to you as the best omen.[238]

This time Drukpa Kunley represents himself as a yogi who is without enemies or demons. Both enemies and demons likely refer to afflictive states of mind that lead to suffering, confusion and the perpetuation of these.[239] Unlike the back-biting, surreptitious deceptions engaged in by ministers who surround a chief – a metaphorical description of the kind of confusion caused in the mind when one is susceptible to one's mental and emotional afflictions, Drukpa Kunley's experience is free from deceit and misperception, allowing him a clear view into what the

[238] *Rgyal po chen po la blon chen gros yod mang po 'khor zhing snang ngo/ blon chen tsho bslab bya tshig gsum yod pa de nyon ang/ lo legs skya rgyal byung na sha chang gi khri thog la bzhugs pa 'di dga' mo 'dras snang ste/ mdang kha nub dpon g.yog gcig gis gcig bslus pa de khyod tshos ma go/ btsan sa 'dzin rgyu rgyal po'i pho brang na yod kyang 'dzin ran 'dug go/ nga rang dang dgra med 'dre med kyi rnal 'byor pa yin pas rten 'brel bzang por byung ngo,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 162b.1-3.

[239] Dowman 2003, 25.

ministers need to do to protect themselves. In each verse there are two levels—Drukpa Kunley's warnings and practical advice *and* the different descriptions of himself that serve to establish him in an omniscient view that transcends the entire situation.

The last stanza addresses a different quality of the practitioner who has broken free from the processes of proliferating confusion that characterize most peoples' experience of desire.

> I see you finely dressed, enlightened yogis surrounded by many nuns. You nuns, listen! I have three instructions to teach you! You look happy with your swollen bellies, with the sun shining, feeling loved by those finely dressed yogis! But you did not notice that last night many people, having broken their vows, went to hell. It is time for you to find a safe place in a solitary hermitage! As for myself, I'm a yogi who incites bliss as the path, and I appear to you as the best omen.[240]

This stanza describes how misconceptions of desire and craving lead to broken monastic vows and unwanted children. These misinterpretations can be overcome by the yogi, who "incites bliss as the path" (*'dzag bde lam slongs*). Drukpa Kunley refers here to a series of tantric practices that mobilize the ordinary experiences of desire and craving as a means by which to overcome subject/object duality and catapult the practitioner into resting in the mind's innate nature as great bliss.[241] These practices represent some of the most potent techniques on the Vajrayana path for realizing the nature of mind. The Kagyü tradition of Tibetan Buddhism is particularly known for its use of one set of techniques known as the Six Yogas of Naropā (*Na ro*

[240] *Rtogs ldan mtshar po la a ne btsun ma mang po 'khor zhing snang ngo/ a ne tsho bslab bya yod pa tshig gsum rang nyon ang/ lto mod nyi dro'i rtogs ldan mtshar po'i thugs 'dzin de dga' mo 'dras snang ste/ mdang kha nub dam nyams khrims 'chal mang po dmyal bar 'gro ba de khyod chos ma mthong/ btsan sa 'dzin rgyu dben pa'i ri khrod na yod kyang 'dzin ran 'dug go/ nga rang dang 'dzag bde lam slongs kyi rnal 'byor pa yin pas rten 'brel bzang por byung ngo,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 162b.3-5.

[241] Kongtrul, Jamgön 2010, 13, 81, 86.

chos drug).[242] However, as the stanza reminds us, in the monasteries, desire unrecognized and blindly followed results in the breaking of monastic vows and going to hell.

> A'o-ya'i! I set my mind at peace, but when I think of how beings suffer for their actions, sadness arises, isn't that so?[243]

As the song began, so it ends, with the narrator's cry of sorrow for suffering sentient beings. However, the song does not appear to evoke an experience of suffering for the listener. Rather, the structure of the song, complete with metaphors to illustrate the various kinds of confusions experienced by sentient beings, together with Drukpa Kunley's representation of himself as having transcended such ignorance, suggests that the song is intended to stimulate the readers' desire to imitate Drukpa Kunley. The song serves as a guide to the realm of safety away from the otherwise inescapable dangers of karmic events. In this way, the song jolts the reader from a state of complacence in which blind actions, actions that do not recognize the power of karmic cause and results, tumble onward with inexorable momentum. Drukpa Kunley's presence functions as a good omen in that it represents a break in the continuity of the karmic propensities. Possibly, following Drukpa Kunley's example, the reader may also find a way out of the repeating cycles of suffering.

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A final example of a spontaneous song from Drukpa Kunley rounds out the range of functions that these songs perform. We have looked at how songs work as truth-telling devices designed

[242] Thrangu, Khenchen 2006, XIX-XII. Ricard 2013, 265.

[243] *A'o ye'i blo bde thag chod cig byung ste bsam shes 'gro ba'i las la spyod pa 'di snang ba skyo yo ang,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 162a.5.

to both reveal hypocrisy as well as to implicate the listener in such self-deceptive attitudes and impel them to truth and self-consciousness. We have also looked at how songs work to instill emotional states in the listener – whether or joy, delight, sorrow, or frustration – with an implicit exhortation to accept and even celebrate the range of human emotions as both necessary and useful to the spiritual path. In this last song, Drukpa Kunley again turns his ever-watchful and critical eye back on himself.

The song begins with a simple sentence: "Drukpa Kunley sang this song of self-embarrassment to himself."[244] In Tibetan, the word for "embarrassment" (*khrel ba*) has two connotations. The first is similar to how the word "shame" is defined in English – as a painful emotion arising due to one's awareness of guilt, shortcomings, or negative actions. However, another meaning further nuances the use of the word here. In this case, rather than being just descriptive, the word takes on agency, as when a person is "shamed" into doing such-and-such a thing. That this meaning is intended in the sentence quoted above is evident from the formulation "*rang la rang khrel ba'i glu*" (a song shaming himself to himself). Additionally, a Tibetan audience would recognize the use of "*khrel ba*" as similar to or even identical to "*ngo tsha*", the "sense of shame" that makes up one of the seven noble qualities (*'phags pa'i nor bdun*) to be cultivated by the authentic spiritual person.[245] Moral shame (*ngo tsha shes pa*) is said to be "undeceiving like one's own parents."[246] All of this prepares the ground for a song

[244] *kun legs pa rang la rang khrel ba'i glu 'di 'then no,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 146b.5.

[245] Engle 2009, 281-291.

[246] Ricard 2001, 91n.13.

that both reveals the narrator's shortcomings at the same time as it simultaneously works to cultivate the virtuous state of "self-shame." *How* does this take place?

> Oh yogi who abandoned homeland and family! Because your renunciation isn't perfected, you have the food and lands of a chief, Kunley![247]

Even the supreme act of renunciation symbolized by abandoning one's homeland and family isn't enough to uproot the habits of seeking comfort and possessions through homeland and family. Using a very informal self-address, which serves to highlight his song's self-address, Drukpa Kunley notes that he has not had the strength of mind to separate himself from certain aspects of human life. He recognizes the ongoing attachment and desire for these that still direct his actions.

> Since you take no delight in performing service for the embodied, authentic teacher, meditate on your own mind as the guru, Kunley![248]

Here, acknowledging his lack of interest in serving a teacher, he incites himself to work to recognize his own mind as the ultimate teacher – a project far more challenging than serving a physical teacher.

> Since remaining in one place gives rise to attachment and aversion, I don't think peace will arise in your mind! So, wander south to Mon and Yardrog, Kunley![249]

Recognizing that the longer he remains in one place, the more likely it is that he will develop strong attachments and aversion to leaving drives Drukpa Kunley to exhort himself to continue

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[247] *Pha yul nye 'brel bskyur ba'i rnal 'byor pa/ thag chod mtha' ru phyin pa mi 'dug pas/ dpon sa'i sa cha zo cig kun legs pa,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 146b.5-6.

[248] B*rda mtshon gzugs sku'i bla ma dam pa la/ zhabs tog sgrubs pas mnyes pa mi 'dug bas/ rang sems bla mar bsgoms shig kun legs pa,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 146b.6-147a.1.

[249] *Sa gcig chags sdang gzung ba'i sa cha 'dis/ sems la bde ba yong bsam mi 'dug pas/ lho mon yar 'brog bskor cig kun legs pa,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 147a.1.

his wanderings through the southern lands of Tibet and Bhutan. But at the root of his exhortation is the recognition that so long as he is trapped in attachment, his mind will never be at peace.

> ...In short, whatever your method or practice may be, if you haven't abandoned your own faults from the root, ordinary phenomena will be of no help, Kunley!"[250]

This final stanza gets to the core of the song's meaning. Each of the previous stanzas allows Drukpa Kunley to expose a particular fault to himself – a fault which has persisted in spite of his sometimes dramatic actions to overcome it, such as abandoning his homeland and his family. But ultimately, even the most extreme acts of renunciation have not eradicated his habitual patterns of attachment and craving. Now, he realizes how true renunciation can only result from "abandoning your own faults from the root." This phrase suggests that it is only through the direct realization of the absence of a truly existing self that the deep-rooted habits of self-preservation and self-comfort can be discarded.

Each verse of this song consists of three lines, each line of nine syllables, the last line ending with the vocative "Kunley!" Perhaps the most striking element of the song is its calling out of the narrator's name at the end of the third line of each verse. This vocative voice sabotages passivity and creates a certain kind of intimacy from which there is no withdrawing. By calling himself out by name, the narrator makes himself into the main audience for the song and ensures that he is listening.

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[250] *Mdor na spyod lam bya ba gang byed kyang/ rang skyon rtsad nas spong sems ma byung na/ mtshan ma'i chos kyis mi phan kun legs pa,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 147a.5.

Hearing our name called, or being directly addressed with the use of our name, has a particular effect on us that is different from a non-specific address such as “Hey you!” We are all familiar with the way that hearing our name called wakes us up, where it forces us into a state of alert attentiveness. This is an experience of immediacy from which there is no hiding. For example, when the teacher calls on us by name in the classroom, “Jill, what do you think about that subject?” our first response is likely to be spontaneous, unpremeditated, and raw. We are placed on the spot and there is an immediate expectation that we will respond appropriately.

Applying this notion to Drukpa Kunley’s song, we see how the structure of the song plays the role of the “other” – it forces the narrator to face the situations articulated in each verse of the song without rationalizing or justifying himself. In this way, his self-deceptions are compelled out of hiding by his own voice externalized as an “other” who addresses him directly. The song supplies a context within which self-deception is no longer a possibility. Drukpa Kunley recognizes of the power of his own speech to expose and rectify his hypocrisy.

Over and over again we find Drukpa Kunley seeking to find new and innovative ways to communicate the potential for self-recognition, for undoing self-deception at a fundamental level, for genuine transformation that are integral to the Buddhist teachings. In the different songs we have examined above, we have seen how different kinds of emotional, intellectual, and somatic conditions are generated through different contents, structures and rhetorical devices deployed by the song. These various strategies are essential to the songs’ project of ethical self-formation. By targeting a variety of types of hypocrisies and states of deluded being,

the songs reveal different antidotes and methods for generating self-awareness. This process is identical to that which underlies and informs much of the *Namthar's* content and structure. In the final analysis, it is no single one technique that is promoted above any other, but instead the cacophony of different forms and contents, one or another of which just might resonate with the listener in the appropriate way.

V. Mind's Words—Scriptures And Commentaries

The poet stands at the center of the universe,
Contemplating the enigma,

Drawing sustenance
From masterpieces of the past.[251]

The third kind of composition I examine in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* is what I term a "commentary." By this, I loosely refer to the basic practice of literary exegesis as described by P.C. Verhagen. Verhagen notes that commentaries make up a significant portion of Buddhist scriptures. The author either comments a basic text proper, or on another commentary, or supplies a synopsis or survey of the contents of a basic text and/or its commentaries.[252] When I say "loosely" in the case of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, this is because in his commentaries, while Drukpa Kunley does comment on quotations from Buddhist scriptures, he also comments on and gives equal weight to oral instructions from Buddhist masters, Buddhist folklore, and story literature. This format – the quotation of scripture, the evocation of a story, or the quotation of a Buddhist master's oral teachings and instructions, together with the narrator's commentary on these – generates either new or freshly emphasized interpretations of the truth of what it is good to be that are pertinent to the discussion and/or context at hand. I propose that Drukpa Kunley's process of demonstrating what it means to be an ethical person functions in two ways: first, it reveals the creative, and even gymnastic, hermeneutical style his

[251] Hamill 1987, 29.

[252] Verhagen 2008, 233-234.

thought processes employ, and second, when observed by the reader, Drukpa Kunley's process functions to catalyze the reader's conversion to the *namthar's* project of ethical formation.

In the process of interpreting scripture and oral instructions, Drukpa Kunley weaves his own observations and examples through these teachings. This triad of quotation, commentary, and interpretation represents a common practice in the Buddhist commentarial tradition in which authors draw freely on other sources, often times without attributing them. But, in addition to demonstrating his own particular commentarial style, Drukpa Kunley also displays a practice of receptivity in his encounters with these other authoritative textual and oral sources. His receptivity to these sources works to expand and enrich the meanings and truths such sources transmit to reveal how meaning and truth can become personal and transformative when heard by individuals who make themselves available to be addressed. How a person learns to listen attentively to the range of meanings encompassed by the Buddha's words is shown to be synonymous with the willingness to become transparent to oneself.

Not only does Drukpa Kunley, like many Buddhist writers, feel free to pick and choose quotations that speak directly to him from an array of possibilities, but he also reflects freely upon what these mean for him. In the cavalier way in which he free-associates between one subject and another, we see that he is unconcerned about whether or not his interpretation aligns with what may have been originally intended by the texts he quotes. This process of creatively rethinking texts in order to appropriate their meanings has been theorized in various ways. Deutsch observes that this process is not about figuring out what the Buddha or an authoritative source *intended,* but instead, when the process of interpretation involves the

appropriation of knowledge, there is "a creative retaining and shaping of a content that is made one's own."[253] I suggest that this freedom and the pleasure that comes from making meaning for oneself from a plethora of authoritative truths represents one characteristic of how Drukpa Kunley envisions the practice of writing commentary.

Drukpa Kunley demonstrates the Pali scholar Buddhaghosa's interpretation of what is implicitly meant by the formula "*evam me sutam*," commonly translated as "Thus have I heard," but more innovatively as, "I am not self-become. This has not been first realized by me."[254] Other texts or realized persons provide the foundation from which I discover the truth about myself as a constantly emerging and continuously becoming. This orientation away from an understanding of truth as fixed also echoes Foucault's description of the truth told by the Greek *parrhesiastes*, the ethical truth-teller, whose truths activite an experience of oneself that is constantly in the process of becoming in relation to the truths told.

In the following composition from Volume Ka, while staying at a *stupa* in Mon, while reading the collected works of his teacher Gyalwang Je Kunga Paljor (Rgyal dbang rje kun dga' dpal 'byor, 1428-1476), Drukpa Kunley discovers a passage written by Gyalwang Je's teacher the yogi, Trulshik Namkhai Naljor ('Khrul zhig nam mkha'i rnal 'byor), which he cites as follows:

> If you succeed in not allowing your spiritual lineage to be broken, then also do not allow your mind to become enslaved to the eight worldly dharmas. In regard to offerings, above all make offerings to the guru; in regard to meditation, above all, meditate on the guru; in regard to supplications, above all, supplicate the

[253] Deutsch 1988, 172.

[254] I first heard this interpretation of *evam me sutam* in a classroom lecture by Charles Hallisey at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Similar interpretations are discussed by John Brough (1949-50, 424) and Frank Hoffman (1992, 195-219).

guru. If you do that, all phenomena of your mind, including your thoughts, through devotion, will dawn as the display of Mahāmudrā.

Drukpa Kunley says, "I reflected ardently on this."[255]

This first paragraph moves the reader through a series of different textual layers. Drukpa Kunley recounts how, while reading the writings of one of his teachers' he discovers a quotation by a yogi. He quotes the yogi and then reflects on the meaning of these words as an object of truth for himself. What comes next in this episode can be compared to a patchwork quilt – it represents a complex fabric woven together of oral, written, recorded, and contemplated words, all of which arise in Drukpa Kunley's mind when he encounters the yogi's words. The manner in which this composition is organized invites the reader to consider how knowledge is generated as well as how the diverse elements that make up the spiritual journey include these kinds of intertwined processes of thought and reflection. In this composition, much of the process occurs randomly, mimicking the way that thoughts follow one upon the other, often without any particular order, but resulting in fresh or changed understandings of the original material.

Having quoted the yogi's words, Drukpa Kunley conveys the reader through the landscape of his contemplative processes. His journey begins with the example of Angulimālā, the infamous disciple of the Buddha who made offerings of human bodies to his teacher before being converted to Buddhism. In Drukpa Kunley's interpretation of it, Angulimālā's story

[255] *Khyod brgyud pa 'di'i gdung mi gcod tsam zhig byed na/ sems chos brgyad kyi khol po ma byed/ mchod pa'i gtso bo bla ma mchod pa la gyis/ sgrub pa'i gtso bo bla ma bsgrub pa la gyis/ nyams len gyi gtso bo gsol ba 'debs pa la byas na/ snang ba thams cad mos gus phyag rgya chen po'i rtsal du 'char gsung ba 'dug pas/ ngas bsam mno cig btang bas*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 8a.5-6.

highlights the common mistake of not carefully examining whether or not a teacher has the distinctive signs (*bla ma mtshan ldan*) of a genuine guru. Angulimālā's example also illustrates the extremity of the misunderstandings that arise if a disciple blindly follows the instructions of a false teacher. Drukpa Kunley says, "Making offerings to the guru," does not imply that it is necessary to kill living beings (as Angulimālā did)... If the guru does not have the distinctive signs, we do not have to follow his instructions. As the proverb says, "Just toss the ladder away from the cliff!"[256]

The story of Angulimālā is found in two sources: the *Theragāthā* and the *Angulimālā Sutta* in the *Majjhima Nikāya*.[257] Commentaries on these sources by Buddhaghosa and Dhammapāla relate that Angulimālā fell prey to a common mistake of unquestioning obedience to the guru without having considered carefully whether or not the teacher possessed the ornaments of virtue by which a genuine teacher is marked, such as the correct view and genuine compassion for all beings.[258] Drukpa Kunley's invocation of this story functions as a snapshot vision into the pitfalls commonly experienced by disciples on the spiritual path. By invoking the story, he highlights the critical link between how a disciple is formed as a particular kind of subject vis a vis her relationship with others – in this case, a spiritual teacher.

Foucault describes this link to the other as fundamental to a person's ability to "bind herself to the truth internally" in such a way that she is changed by it. In order to do this, the

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[256] *Be sbrel g.yang la bskyur,* DK1, Vol. Ka, 1978, 8b2-3.

[257] *Elders' Verses*, Volume 1, translated K.R. Norman (Bristol: Pali Text Society, 1969). *The Book of Middle Length Sayings* 3 Volumes, translated by I.B. Horner (Bristol: Pali Text Society, 1954-9).

[258] Burlingame 1921, treats in detail the contents of these commentaries.

person must harmonize herself with the truth being expressed by the teacher. If the teacher does not embody the truth the student will not learn the correct process for ethical-formation.[259] He or she will end up like Angulimālā, adhering to the form of the practice without having assimilated its essence. If this is the case, the disciple's inner development and progress toward that which is seen as the best or highest good will fail. Drukpa Kunley's allusion to Angulimālā serves as a reminder that the onus for assimilating the truth and developing clear seeing lies with the student, not with the teacher or the teachings. This is borne out as the commentary continues.

Now, Drukpa Kunley proceeds to a line-by-line interpretation of Trulshik Namkhai Naljor's words. He re-quotes and interprets the yogi's words for his own purposes, "In regards to supplications, above all make supplications [to the guru]," does not mean that we should shout out prayers loudly, but that we should always keep the guru in our hearts, look at his mind, and mix it with our own minds."[260] Here, the narrator clarifies what Trulshik Namkhai Naljor means by the practice of offering supplications. To offer supplications does not simply mean to mindlessly recite devotional language. Most practitioners, he implies, believe that the mere recitation of devotional words is enough for such words to enact their transformative results. But Drukpa Kunley understands this practice differently. For him, the activity of supplicating has to do with a level of psychological and physical engagement that encompasses and transcends the verbal. A real practitioner is one who continuously exercises the faculty of

[259] Foucault 2010.

[260] *Nyams len gsol ba 'debs pa ni/ kha'i skad log thon zer ba min/ bla ma snying gi dkyil du zhog/ de yang thugs ga 'dras 'dug blta dgos/ yang rang gi sems dang bsres zer bar 'dug*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 8b.3.

mindfulness to maintain a sense of guru within her heart; who attempts to see her own heart/mind as constantly in relationship to that of the teacher; and who mixes this visceral sense of the teacher's mind and its good qualities into her own. Merely shouting out words to attest to devotion and longing is insufficient. Again here Drukpa Kunley's commentary reiterates the *namthar's* reliance on a person's capacity to, as Foucault says, subjectivate or deeply internalize and integrate the truth for oneself. Only when the activity of supplication itself begins to constitute the disciple's self has the practice fulfilled its potential.

This leads Drukpa Kunley to reflect, "Then I considered this. I thought, "If my own mind is pure, the guru will be beneficial to me even if he is a hell being. And if my own mind is not pure, I will never be in harmony with his merits, even if he is a Buddha."[261] Rather than the teacher's good or bad qualities being instrumental in the development of the disciple, the disciple's state of being lies at the root of the transformative path. Whether the teacher is beneficial or harmful is irrelevant. If the disciple's mind is good or pure, only then can she be in harmony (*mthun pa*) with the merits of the teacher. The principal message of the episode is encapsulated here – one must become aware of the state of purity/development of one's own mind in order to establish a beneficial relationship with another. One must develop the capacity and the insight to rely on one's self, stripped of its self-deceptions and confusions. Who the other is matters much less than the degree of one's own self-awareness. The adjective "pure" (*dag pa*) in Tibetan has connotations of "correct" or "true." A mind that is *dag pa* is in harmony with the good qualities of the Buddha. Buddha and one's self are only separate when the self

[261] *Ngas bltas pas/ rang sems dag na/ bla ma khong rang dmyal ba pa yin na'ang/ rang la phan nam bsam/ rang sems ma dag na khong sangs rgyas yin rung*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 8b.3-4.

disdains to engage in its own formation. The theme of "harmonization" (*mthun pa*) with the Buddha and his teachings constantly recurs throughout the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*. A person is either in harmony with the true nature of things, with the Buddha's truth, or she is not. The determining factor in this synchronization is the extent of the individual's self-awareness—a self-awareness that must be cultivated via the technologies described by the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* and modeled by its narrator.

Next, the narrator invokes the example of another monk named Lekpa Karma (Tib. Legs pa'i skar ma, Skt. Sunakṣatra).[262] He says, "This is similar to the way that the monk Legs pa'i skar ma viewed the Bhagavat. Nobody can make progress along the path if he does not have the capacity. If we don't practice ourselves, even the great gurus cannot help us, no matter how excellent they may be."[263] Although Lekpa Karma served the Buddha Śākyamuni for twenty-five years and learned by heart many of his teachings, he was never able to see the Buddha's qualities and developed wrong views towards him, treating him casually and even disrespectfully. As a result, he was born as *preta* (a hungry ghost) in his next life.[264]

As in many of the examples used in this commentary, the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* assumes a certain kind of knowledgeable reader, a reader who, upon hearing the name "Lekpa Karma," has immediate access to the story and its ramifications. Drukpa Kunley's comments on Lekpa Karma arouse a host of associations within the mind of the reader who, ideally, is

[262] See Eimer and Tsering 2012, 1-11.

[263] *Dge slong legs pa'i skar mas bcom ldan 'das mthong ba dang 'dra/ rang gis ma byung na/ sus kyang pho skyes brgyab pa mi 'dug/ des na nyams len rang gis ma byas na/ su bzang rung phan mi thogs,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 8b.4-5.

[264] A condensed version of the story can be found in Khyentse 2007, 250.

steeped in the canon of stories surrounding the life of the Buddha. When addressed to such a model reader, the text can perform its intended action of accentuating the importance of self-motivation on the path. But, while self-motivation is necessary, the model reader also recognizes that practice may not yield the wished-for results. Like Lekpa Karma, we are bound by the karma accumulated from previous lives that determines just how far or how effective any practice done will be. Drukpa Kunley's commentary suggests that this is the ongoing paradox of the Buddhist path – a person is free to the degree that she can choose to engage with the practices and views presented by the Buddha, but she is constrained and limited by the consequences of her previous views and actions – views and actions that she does not know and cannot control. The logic of the text both accepts this situation at the same time as it encourages the reader not to allow herself to be determined by these unknown and unknowable factors.[265]

The story of Lekpa Karma reminds Drukpa Kunley of a song from Mon. "Whoever wishes to attract the bow of another's mind, must tighten the bowstring of his own mind."[266] The meaning of this verse is that in order to attract another person's attention, one should have a disciplined and careful mind.[267] In this song from Mon, these qualities are metaphored to the

[265] Foucault 2010. This is also the case with the genuine practice of *parrhesia.* In order for *parrhesia* to be *parrhesia*, the truth told must spur the individual to enact her own transformation, to bind herself to the truth of what has been said, regardless of the extenuating circumstances.

[266] *Mon pa'i glu las/ mi sems gzhu mo 'gugs pa la/ rang sems gzhu rgyud sgrim dgos so*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 8b.5-6.

[267] Personal communication, Lopen Chorten Tshering, 2013.

example of a bow and the tautness of its string. Recalling one verse inspires Drukpa Kunley to write more of the song.

> In order to attain a free and well-favored human birth, you must protect your mind with good discipline. In order to acquire whatever you desire, you must have been generous in previous lives. If you wish the entire world to venerate you now, in previous lives you must have practiced patience. It is the same for [the rest of the paramitas]. But above all, whoever wants to grasp the Dharma must settle his own mind in the meditative equipoise.[268]

The content of the song concerns the main qualities to be cultivated by the virtuous practitioner – the six paramitas of generosity, patience, exertion, discipline, meditation and wisdom. These six trainings are described as a technology whose perfection requires multiple lifetimes. They are not practices limited to the present life. The song serves as a reminder that the project of ethical-formation is ongoing and continuously in process. The person we currently are may never, *will never*, see the results of it and in fact the very idea of "results" undermines the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar's* program of retraining the reader's sense of what it means to be an ethical person. Drukpa Kunley's uses his commentary on the song to drive this point home when he says, "As is implied in this song, if [good qualities] arise in you naturally, you will be Buddha in yourself. If they do not arise by themselves, no matter whom you rely on, you will strive in vain. What is said in this song is definitely true!"[269] Drukpa Kunley's implication

[268] *Dal 'byor mi lus len pa la/ rang sems tshul khrims bsrung dgos so/ nor rdzas bsam tshad 'grub pa la/ tshe sngon sbyin pa gtong dgos so/ da lta kun gyis bkur ba la/ sngon ma bzod pa bsgom dgos so/ gzhan yang thams cad de dang 'dra/ khyad par chos nyid rtogs 'dod na/ rang sems mnyam par 'jog dgos so*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 8b.6-9a.1.

[269] *rang gis byung na/ sangs rgyas rang la 'dug pa/ rang gis ma byung na/ su la re rung rdugs gsung ba de thugs bden,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 9a.1-2.

is that forcing or striving to attain good qualities occludes the recognition that due to training in the six paramitas, such qualities can and will arise naturally in their own time.

Each of the smaller commentaries encompassed within the larger commentary that began with Drukpa Kunley's quotation of Trukshik Namkhai Naljor expands on the yogi's words by connecting them to a larger corpus of Buddhist teachings and stories. These smaller commentaries also demonstrate how the commentarial process works to guide the reader from merely hearing the teachings to a recognition that hearing must lead to contemplation, which must lead to meditation. The entire program, which is illustrated through the narrator's musings, displays how spiritual insight is activated through the use of story, exposition, and free-association. While this composition does not exactly offer a line-by-line interpretation, the narrator's itinerary of thought is reminiscent of more formal commentaries. Drukpa Kunley's discussion of the qualities to be developed by the virtuous practitioner demonstrates how creativity in exposition of the truth resides, as José Cabezón has said in his study on Buddhism and language, "not in the novelty of the subject matter, but in the originality of exposition."[270] Drukpa Kunley's example also demonstrates Cabezón's description of Tibetan Buddhist scholarship as "a collective, corporate and collaborative enterprise, where words and texts circulated more freely, where the authorial persona is often purposely occluded, and where pastiche is the rule."[271] But what is different about Drukpa Kunley's commentary, in my

[270] Cabezon 1994, 83. In discussing the function of words both as used in scripture and in commentary, Cabezon notes: "...words are merely pragmatic tools, parables, that bring about spiritual realizations *indirectly*. A logical explanation is the *first step* in the generation of spiritual insight; it is not, nor was it ever claimed to be, the instantaneous cause of insight" (pp. 78).

[271] Cabezon 2001, 233-265.

reading, is the kind of relationship he reveals to the scriptures, authoritative oral instructions, and stories that he cites. As Miriam Levering has noted, even the term 'scripture' can be understood as a relational term that encourages a range of different relationships to it. She suggests that "'scriptures' are a special class of true and powerful words, a class formed by the ways in which these particular words are received by persons and communities in their common life."[272] Thus what is interesting to note in Drukpa Kunley's commentaries is both the choice he makes in terms of quoted texts as well as the kind of relationship to 'truth' his exegesis of these texts demonstrates – a relationship centered on how useful they are in encouraging self-examination and insight into the subtleties of hypocrisy.

At the end of this composition the narrator explicates his interpretation of Trulshik Namkhai Naljor's final statement: "Through devotion, everything dawns as the display of Mahāmudrā." In response, Drukpa Kunley contrasts this phrase to such activities as "offering service to your chieftain in order to gain lands and power" or "giving up your life and joining the military" or finally, "giving up food in order to pay your taxes." Although each case entails the fear of one's own defeat (*rang pham gyi dogs pa*) and of suffering (*sdug dogs*), the person who willingly engages in these activities does not blame the chieftain for his pains (*dpon la ma 'gel*), but accepts them as part of the transformative process that genuinely engaging in any activity in life can effect.[273]

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[272] Levering 1989, 7.

[273] *Dpon po la zhabs tog sgrub pa de kha drag dang/sa cha yong bsam/ tshe blos btang dmag bsgrubs/ lto blos btang khral gzhal/ thams cad rang pham gyi dogs pa'i sdug dogs su 'dug pas/ rang sdug gi dogs pa'i khag dpon la ma 'gel*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 9a.2-3.

Drukpa Kunley creates a metaphor between these examples from secular life and the nature of the relationship that takes places between disciple and guru. So, just like in the secular examples above, if the disciple practices devotion for the teacher with the expectation or hope (*re ba*) that her dedication will result in the realization of Mahāmudrā, she has placed conditions on her devotion. But, if genuine engagement with and integration of devotion causes the practitioner to realize Mahāmudrā, her mind will no longer wander in samsara (*sems 'khor bar mi 'khyam zhing*) and she will be able to benefit beings of the six realms (*'gro ba rigs drug la phan thogs*). In this case, relying on the teacher is worth whatever personal price she has to pay (*bla ma bsten rin chog*).[274] However, both teacher and disciple must possess certain qualities as a foundation for any further advancement on the path. As Drukpa Kunley says, "If the teacher does not himself consider sentient beings from the depths of his heart, what's the point of relying on him? At the same time, if the disciple is not devoted to the guru from the depths of his heart, what's the point of having devotion?"[275]

This kind of comparative structure, where the narrator uses examples from ordinary, secular life as metaphors for Buddhist practices and attitudes is found throughout the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* and represents one of the *Namthar's* primary modalities for addressing its readers in universally accessible ways. These comparative sections encourage the reader to recognize the sameness in the nature of the activities or attitudes that most people engage

[274] *Mos gus byas pas rang sems phyag rgya chen po'i don rtogs su re ba yin/ bla ma la gsol ba btab pas/ sems 'khor bar mi 'khyam zhing/ 'gro ba rigs drug la phan thogs na/ bla ma bsten rin chog*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 9a.3-4.

[275] *Snying nas sems can la mi sems pa'i bla mas kyang ci btub/ snying nas bla ma la mi bsam pa'i slob ma'ang ci btub*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 9a.4-5.

with in daily life to the seemingly esoteric and less-worldly orientations of the spiritual path. Through such metaphorical comparisons, ordinary life and spiritual life are shown to rely on the same kinds of human emotions, expectations, and ways of thinking. Continuously drawing the reader's attention to this conjunction, Drukpa Kunley shows the ordinariness of engaging on the Buddhist path. The person who knows what it is like to give up eating in order to save enough money to pay her taxes can also practice Buddhism. She does not have to be highborn or noble or a monastic or well learned. She merely has to have the practical experience of willingly giving up one thing in order to attain another. The formula works both ways. At the same time as the religious path serves as a metaphor for ordinary life, ordinary life serves as a metaphor for the religious path. Thus, for those who imagine they have managed to remove themselves from the activities and attitudes of everyday life, these sections serve as reminders of the human foundation for engaging on the Buddhist path.

Drukpa Kunley's final statement at the end of this episode provides another example of a common trope found throughout the *Namthar*. After commenting on the meanings and implications of the yogi Trulshik Namkhai Naljor's words, the narrator returns to himself. He discusses his own relationship to the interpretive processes that he has just engaged with. He reveals how he has been personally addressed by the truth that has emerged. When Drukpa Kunley makes these kinds of self-statements, they almost always begin with the preface, "As for me, the yogi Kunley..." (*nga rnal 'byor kun legs*). No matter what he has said before, these introductions direct the reader to understand that what follows is no longer speculative, nor didactic, nor expository. It is a statement of the narrator's personal opinion, as well as a

description of his state of mind and being. In what ways and whether what he writes in these epilogues aligns with what was discussed before is up to the reader to decipher. Here, Drukpa Kunley states:

> If I do not teach the Dharma, it's not that I don't want to teach and its not that I don't know how and it's not that no one would listen. But, these days, Dharma practitioners sell the Dharma for wealth. They teach only to acquire food and clothing without thinking of the benefit of others. If I acted like that, I would have to supplicate Śakyamuni to protect me with his kindness and penalize me only in my future lives![276]

Drukpa Kunley represents himself as someone who does not teach the Dharma. Why? Because he has seen how easily self-serving motives can highjack what appear to be the best intentions. But why else doesn't he teach? He knows he *can* teach. He wants to teach. He knows people would listen to him. We can infer from these statements that perhaps Drukpa Kunley doesn't teach first because he recognizes the danger of giving in to his baser instincts--the habitual tendency to turn whatever we do to take care of our own needs, often at the expense of others, would overcome him. Second, he doesn't teach because if he taught from such a selfish orientation, he would be in debt to the Buddha. The problem is the identical to that which has been stressed throughout this episode, both by its content and by its structure – once a disciple requires or expects intercession from the teacher she is no longer the instigator of her own liberation.

Reliance on the teacher mirrors the relationship of the self to the self as well as the relationship of the self to the phenomenal world. But a balance must be struck. Too much

[276] *Nga rnal 'byor kun legs chos mi 'chad pa 'di/ mi 'chad pa min/ mi shes pa min/ nyan mkhan ma byung ba yang min/ da lta'i chos 'chad pa 'di kun/ chos nor phyir 'tshong/ phan sems med pa'i lto gos kyi phyir chos shod pa la/ shakya thub pas bka' chad tshe phyi ma la bka' drin skyong ba zhu lags*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 9a.5-6.

reliance on the teacher, as would be the case if the disciple required the Buddha to save him from the karmic repercussions of his own actions, or as in the case of Angulimālā, doesn't work. Too little reliance on the teacher, as in the case of Lekpa Karma, also doesn't work. This problem of correctly navigating the relationship between self and other seems to lies at the root of the soteriological project as Drukpa Kunley sees it. Drukpa Kunley further discusses this conundrum in the following:

> If we do not do whatever the guru says – provided that he is authentic – we will not realize mind's nature. If we do not realize the mind's nature, we will lose the benefit for ourselves and for others. If we realize all phenomena as the nature of the guru, then everything is Mahāmudrā. But, if mind does not arise as the guru and the deities, because the external guru himself has many obligations, it is difficult for him to benefit us personally. Therefore, don't depend on the guru too much![277]

Drukpa Kunley's suggestion that he may be susceptible to a self-serving instinct draws the reader's attention to his willingness to allow the interpretive processes he has just engaged in, as well as the truth content of the sources he has employed, to affect him personally. He is willing and able to consider any kind of truth about himself. He does not pretend to be anything other than what he is. He is receptive to the truths he considers, allowing the messages and meanings they transmit to work on him. This receptivity allows the meanings contained in these truth sources to expand and enrich his relationship to himself. In this way, Drukpa Kunley illustrates how authoritative sources of truth can become personal and informative, if not transformative, if the individuals who hear them are willing to enter into the relationship with

[277] *Bla ma mtshan ldan gang gsungs ma bsgrubs na/ sems mi rtogs/ sems ma rtogs na/ rang don gzhan don gnyis ka stor/ des na snang ba dper shar na thams cad phyag chen yin par 'dug/ rang gi sems lha dang bla mar ma shar na/ phyi rol gyi bla ma khong rang la'ang mdzad dgos mang po 'dug pas/ nged rang gcig po la phan pa dka' mo 'dug na re go chen po rang ma mdzad*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 9a.6-9b.2.

themselves that truth demands. But, by the same token, and perhaps as a warning to his own students not to depend on him too much, he reveals the complex and ambiguous authority of the teacher who is himself susceptible to faults.

Note that this message puts the reader in a bind. There appears to be a discrepancy between what the narrator states about himself and what we may perceive to be the overall function of this composition. In this last statement, Drukpa Kunley declares his reluctance to teach the dharma and provides reasons for this decision. So what purpose is served by his engagement in the hermeneutical and narrative processes the reader has just encountered if it was not to teach the Dharma? Are we meant to infer that teaching the dharma by means of the literary is less prey to the selfish habits that undermine other modes of transmission? Does the narrator recognize a confessional dimension to the use of writing that subverts the habits of self-aggrandizement by eliciting a more truthful self-revelation? Or, is the entire commentary more designed to demonstrate, as mentioned above, a particular way of relating to scripture, instructions and Buddhist story literature? We might recall that the entire *namthar* begins with the narrator's statement that this autobiography "that I wrote myself...is an explanation that will expose my faults and obscure my talents to those who are not aware of them."[278] Perhaps it is in the acts of thinking, writing, and self-exposure by means of his interaction with and encounter with the authoritative statements of others that Drukpa Kunley feels best able to communicate the necessity for examining any possible self-serving motivations that may prompt teaching the Buddhadharma.

[278] *rang gi rnam thar rang gis bri ba 'di.../ gzhan gyis bdag gi skyon yon mi rtogs bas/ skyon bton yon tan sbed pa'i byung tshul bshad,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 2b.4-5.

The manner in which the narrator concludes this episode supports this speculation that Drukpa Kunley fears his own vulnerability to self-deception. He writes:

> I blame myself, Drukpa Kunley. I don't blame others. If we place our hopes in other people, only a very few are not self-deluded. But most others deceive themselves! It is important to understand this. If you cannot understand it, then you might as well just shut up![279]

The direct style of these sentences creates a different kind of intimacy between the narrator and the reader than what existed before. Previously, the narrator's exposure of others' selfish motivations for teaching the Dharma invited the reader to join with him in scorning them. But his bald revelation of his own hypocrisies undercuts this impulse. If the narrator too is also enmeshed in baser motives and if he freely admits this, where does this leave the reader? With whom should she identify? Which description is a description of or for *her*? What is *she* meant to learn? Having seduced the reader into identifying with the narrator's scorn for those foolish hypocrites that populate both the religious and secular worlds, the narrator pulls out the rug by adding himself and his own possible faults, which may be just as egregious. The reader must either go along with the narrator's uncompromising self-revelations or withdraw, thereby resisting the entire thrust of the text towards the revelation of self-deception and the development and increase of self-awareness.

Throughout this chapter we have seen how writing and the use of the literary provide a medium through which Drukpa Kunley can honestly reveal himself. With its built-in dimension of second-order reflection and the use of complex rhetorical devices, writing allows Drukpa

[279] *'brug pa kun legs rang la 'khang/ mi la ma 'khang/ mi la re na mi bslu ba re re tsam e srid/ gzhan bslu ba rang mang/ de tsam gyis go las che/ da rung ma go na kha rog sdod*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 9b.2.

Kunley a variety of self-presentations – from ideal visions of himself to the most honest confessions of the here-and-now of his state of being – through which he both articulates and views a myriad of self positions, both in relation to others as well as in relation to himself.

The structure of this commentary compels the reader to intellectually engage with the ideas and instructions presented in it. The compositions opens up an imaginative space in which the reader, like the narrator, feels directly and humorously addressed by the implications of the subjects being discussed. These commentaries show that one thing it is good to be is a person who engages in dialogue with truth as it has previously been expressed. Such a person does not take such truths as givens, or as facts that must be accepted at face value. Instead, the truth expressed in scriptures or by previous masters or evoked through stories is personal. It is addressed to me.

The scriptural quotations Drukpa Kunley utilizes bring the commentary to life as a continuously shifting method of making truth that offers itself to the reader. As Wilfred Cantwell Smith observed in his discussion of the nature of religious scriptures, such ongoing textual fluctuations are "responsible for this or that given text's being scripture; they...constitute scripture's essential character."[280] When Drukpa Kunley engages imaginatively with these textual others, when he thinks their truths and reworks their meanings, he subtly or, in some cases radically, interprets such meanings to suit his needs. This ongoing reworking of meaning communicates to the reader the possibility that truth is a malleable component of what makes up the good human being. Despite being quoted and re-quoted, truth cannot

[280] Smith 1993, 4. Li 2012.

ultimately be fixed or reified. It is always open to the subjective interpretation of the receiver. What is important is not an abstract truth out there but the process of, as Drukpa Kunley states, "reflecting ardently," of being receptive to the message that is transmitted. In Drukpa Kunley's hands, the experience of truth as an emerging process is accompanied by a feeling of delight and celebration. This delight is evident in the tone of the composition. Drukpa Kunley acknowledges his debt in becoming who he is to others while rejoicing in his freedom to make himself anew with each fresh encounter. By his own example, Drukpa Kunley demonstrates the intersubjective exchange of self and other through the medium of language – spoken, recorded, written, and contemplated.

VII. Conclusion: An Ethic Of Disruption

While this foray into the world of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*'s literary styles has by no means been exhaustive (I have not discussed the use of proverbs, stories, or prayers), it has served to provide some sense of the diversity of literary forms and devices brought to bear by the text in the project of ethical formation. Since the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* is not one text, but a long series of individual compositions, I have discussed these separately in terms of genre designations in order to reveal the different ways that each participates in enacting the ethic of disruption that is the *Namthar's* primary agenda. Having discussed them separately, I now wish to discuss how they work in unison.

In the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, the different compositions are strung together like beads on a string, one after another, without any seeming organizational plan. For example, a spontaneous song may be followed by a prayer to a deity, which is then followed by a didactic prose commentary, which is again followed by a song. The subject matter of each composition is distinct to that composition and does not follow through to the next composition in the *Namthar* collection either thematically or stylistically. In addition, within a single composition we can also find a range of literary styles, so that the narrative frame gives way to a spontaneous song that changes into a prose exhortation or a list of the proverbs. At the same time, as Drukpa Kunley avowed above in Chapter Two, when things arise, they usually arise in an order. How does this seeming lack of order that is an order function in the project of ethical formation?

I would argue that one primary way in which this cacophony of compositions, genres, and narrative strategies works is as a mirror for the mind's constant movement from thought to thought. All human beings are aware to some degree or another of the mind's spastic and often disorderly jumping from thought to thought, feeling to feeling, or emotion to emotion. For those who embark on meditative practices designed to train and tame this unruly mind, observing the barrage of concepts, feelings, and physical sensations that cascade through the mind is often an eye-opening and humbling experience. By virtue of the particular techniques of meditation employed, the meditator develops the ability to stand back from and observe the waterfall of shifting, changing, moving thoughts. He or she begins to recognize how much energy and effort is required to repeatedly sift, collate, and organize these thoughts into coherent narratives that can be used to explain one's self, both to oneself and to others.

The *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* seems to mirror this natural human experience in its continual shifting from one subject to another, from one genre to another, from one tone to another. When we add to this feature the text's frequently evident self-consciousness of its own tropes and methods, we might further suggest that the *Namthar* is deliberately employing these diverse forms to demonstrate how randomly and haphazardly thought takes place. We can say that the *Namthar* is performing an "ethic of disruption" to the mind's habitual narrative functions. An acknowledgement of mind's naturally haphazard activities is evident from Drukpa Kunley's continual shifting from one style of expression to another. In this jumbling together of literary forms, Drukpa Kunley explicitly refuses the conventional Tibetan tendency in biographical writing to narrate a cohesive story of the self. Implicit in this refusal is an

assumption that the tendency to continuously narrate the self to the self obstructs our ability to see ourselves clearly, honestly, as we are.

From the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar's* point of view, in order to become an ethical person, one must recognize the self-deception and hypocrisy inherent in the narrative project. Ethical formation includes seeing through the subtlest self-deceptions, recognizing how attachment to the stories we tell about ourselves leads to hypocrisy and delusion. If we cannot do this, we remain at the mercy of our worldly desires and attachments, afflictions that further obstruct and confuse us. Recognizing our entrapment, our faults, leads to an increased focus on the moment-to-moment nature of self-construction, on the context-specific nature of self-formation, and on the necessity for acceptance of exactly who and what we are. The entire *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* both mirrors and enacts this momentary specificity.

Thus, a plausible function or, at least, effect of the cacophony of genres and literary devices in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* and the ethic of disruption they create is to keep us focused on each immediate, constantly changing situation rather than on some imagined narrative arc that connects these discrete experiences. The narrator within the text models this orientation. Not dwelling in the past moments of his experience, Drukpa Kunley also never projects himself into the future. "My best qualities are that I am not mean and I don't make future plans!"[281] There is no mention in any composition of possible or probable futures. Instead, as we have seen, each composition represents Drukpa Kunley as a person who shapes himself moment-to-moment in response to different contexts and situations as they arise.

[281] *Nga rang gi yon tan drag shos phyi tshis dang bsam ngan med pa 'di yin,* DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 25a.3.

The point of view espoused by Drukpa Kunley includes the realization that while life ensues in individual moments of experience, it is a basic human tendency to strive to connect these moments into coherent narratives in order to make sense of ourselves as beings who exist in time and space. The use of diverse literary strategies and genres marks the distinctive attempt of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* to break down and confound the sense of self-cohesiveness over time. Instead, these strategies work to demonstrate a particular kind of momentarily arising self-awareness – one that responds to the moment-to-moment specificity of the situation without the necessity of building an illusion of continuity between one situation and the next. We have seen how the editor of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, the Mad Monk of Mon, also affirms this ethos of spontaneity in the colophon to Volume Ka when he states, "When he was alive, in deference to his devotees and patrons, Drukpa Kunley told his life story and his oral instructions in many different ways. He taught according to each person's capacity and to the time and place."[282]

This exploration of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*'s rejection of narrative unity was initiated in Chapter Two when we analyzed the narrator's reflections on the activity of writing. In Chapter Three this discussion has been continued by exploring how the multiplicity of literary forms in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar,* their content and their perceived resistance to narrative continuity work together to create a vision of the perfected person whose characteristics, like Drukpa Kunley, include continual self-examination and a sense of playfulness in revealing the

[282] *Chos rje nyid zhal bzhugs pa'i skabs dad ldan gyi slob ma dang yon bdag so sos bskul ba'i ngor/rnam thar dang zhal gdams sogs mi 'dra ba du ma yul phyogs dang gnas dus ma nges par so so'i blo dang mchams par gsungs pa rnams*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 168b.1-2.

truth of one's self to oneself and others. Ultimately there is the recognition that the good life, the genuine life, is measured by how close or far self-awareness comes to that displayed by the ultimate authority, the Buddha.

Chapter 4

Many Drukpa Kunleys

Following the previous chapters' discussion of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*'s function in the formation of ethical persons, this chapter considers the kind of person formed by the broad nexus of contemporary Bhutanese people, biographical materials, folktales, oral tales, rituals, and sacred places associated with Drukpa Kunley in Bhutan. The chapter does this in order to expand our understanding of the contours of the Drukpa Kunley ethical person by shifting from a strict analysis of narrative content and structure in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* toward an emphasis on how the interactive matrix of material objects, places, persons, and oral stories of Drukpa Kunley participate in shaping a vision of the Drukpa Kunley ethical person. Andrew Quintman describes a similar approach to the study of Tibetan biography, which he calls the study of Tibet's *biographical culture.*[1] This approach takes into consideration the analysis of narratives together with the examination of material and geographical sources, as well as an exploration of the practices within communities that produce them. Examining the stories of saint's lives in this manner, Quintman (and others) refer to the various modes through which the story of a life is imparted with meaning over time.[2]

In this chapter, I expand on this approach to biographical studies by seeking to encourage a model of academic scholarship that employs a phenomenological and intersubjective method, particularly as these are considered by the anthropologist, Michael D.

[1] Quintman 2013, 468-505.

[2] Gyatso 1999; Quintman 2008, 2015; Schaeffer 2004; Yamamoto 2012.

Jackson.[3] Jackson describes phenomenology as the scientific study of experience, as an attempt to describe human consciousness in its lived immediacy, before it is subject to theoretical elaboration or conceptual systematizing. In Jackson's view, phenomenology takes our own experience seriously and refuses to translate it into a superior language that judges it to be true or false. Instead, the focus lies on the tension that arises between the ways that we frame experience in thought and the ways which experience constantly overflows our categorical ways of organizing the world.[4]

Phenomenology as a methodology came into its own with the work of the philosopher Edmund Husserl. For Husserl, phenomenology studies the experience of an object from the first-person point of view. It is how I see or conceptualize or understand that object that defines its meaning in my current experience.[5] Phenomenology makes use of "epoche," the setting aside of *a priori* notions of good or true, in order to explore our immediate experiences with ourselves, with others, and with things. Epoche involves bracketing metaphysical questions in favor of observing phenomena in and of themselves. For early phenomenologists of religion such as Gerardus van der Leeuw, epoche resulted in the possibility of eidectic vision—the ability to observe without prior beliefs and interpretations influencing understanding and perception – the adoption of a neutral stance.[6] In the words of Paul Ricoeur, phenomenology is "an investigation into the structures of experience which precede connected expression in

[3] Jackson 1996, 2.

[4] Jackson 1996, 4-6.

[5] Husserl 2014, 55-58.

[6] Van der Leeuw 1986, 683-690.

language" (1979:127)." This possibility has been debated and even outright rejected as being useful or even possible.

In the field of ethnography, this practice takes place when the ethnographer does not seek to remove herself from the lifeworld that she examines, but instead seeks to become part of it, to experience it from the inside out, in as much as this is possible given the constraints and preconditions she brings to her practices of analysis. Unlike early phenomenologists, for Jackson, there is no such thing as pure unadulterated experience, or pure sensory experience that is untainted by conceptual consideration. Instead, what is important to explore is the tension between empirical experience and conceptualized experience since this points to the fact that even though we all possess preconceptions about the world and how it functions, the world is constantly confounding what we think, thereby transforming our preconceptions. Experience viewed from this point view becomes an experiment. Experience represents a trial or test in which the raw experience of say, encountering a new person for the first time, comes up against what we know from previous experience and formed an idea about, but which never fits exactly what our preconceptions are. Due to these factors, experience is by nature intersubjective in that it involves our own experience of our interrelatedness with our objects of experience. Such experience is by its nature intersubjective in that it includes our relationships with others.[7]

This approach highlights the usefulness of the notion of intersubjective experience in making sense of processes of transformation and continuity such as those observed in the

[7] Jackson 1996.

various manifestations of Drukpa Kunley over time and place. Intersubjectivity refers to the consideration of human experience as included in and constituted by our engagement with others and the world in all its various manifestations.[8] My claim is that applying an expanded sense of ethnography as an "intersubjective practice" to the various manifestations of the Drukpa Kunley across time and place may enable me to recognize the importance of my own participation in the relational dynamics between myself and my objects of study. In turn, I hope to show how such intersubjective awareness, when applied to literary and historical studies more broadly, may enable scholars of religion and other fields to identify the usefulness of this approach for considering their own experience within the processes of investigation and analysis in which they engage. This notion of an expanded ethnography, therefore, takes into account the researcher's personal experience with objects – both discursive (oral tales, written texts, inscriptions) and material (images, structures, places, symbols) as well as with places, as valuable material for critical thought.

In Bhutan today, Drukpa Kunley is a potent presence in the lives of ordinary people from all walks of life. Drawing on my two-year experience studying the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* and the many other manifestations of Drukpa Kunley in Bhutan, I argue that approaching the scholarly study of a text, a place, objects, or persons as an ethnographic encounter with a wide range of agents and influences – including our own – can provide deeper insights into our subjects of study.

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[8] James 1976.

We have seen how the ethical person modeled by Drukpa Kunley was foundationally formed through the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar's* content and narrative strategies. The text of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* works both to model and create a particular kind of ethical person. No matter who wrote the *Namthar*, within the text there is someone – the narrator – who calls himself Drukpa Kunley. This person is brought to view through the interaction of the text with readers. It is not a fixed, independent entity; it arises anew with every different reading, telling, and hearing of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*. This figure is also re-formed and re-experienced by individuals and communities who continue to encounter these and other diverse visions of the saint in their daily lives in Bhutan. The Drukpa Kunley who is part of the contemporary Bhutanese *imaginaire,* emerges dependent upon the tellers, hearers, locations and situations in which popular stories of Drukpa Kunley arise.[9]

These diverse visions of Drukpa Kunley are continuously being formed and reformed through time and across different mediums of expression. Like the context-specific ways in which Drukpa Kunley emerges in the *Namthar* itself*,* people's tellings and retellings of many different versions of Drukpa Kunley arise in response to myriad situations, each one painting a new or fresh picture of the saint. When we examine this phenomenon, we see how similar it is to the effect created by the cacophony of genres in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* - namely how it demonstrates the context-specific nature of self identity and ethical formation.

[9] Faure 2000, 10-13.

In Bhutan there is a perceived discrepancy between the Drukpa Kunley that emerges from the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* and the popular versions of the saint that appear in the contemporary world. I suggest that the gap between these different depictions of Drukpa Kunley is narrower than has been supposed. Key to understanding this is recognizing the elements of intersubjectivity continuously occurring among the different elements that create him, including the reader/audience who encounters him. In an expanded sense then, this chapter addresses Ricoeur's $Mimesis_3$, the world transformed as a result of encountering the saint, whether through reading or hearing the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* or through engaging with his many other manifestations in the contemporary world.

I. Drukpa Kunley in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*

What kind of ethical person is formed as a result of encountering the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*? This dissertation has shown that this is a person who has developed a subtle and penetrating awareness of different degrees and dimensions of hypocrisy – of the ways that the basic condition of not recognizing the truth of how things really are serves as a foundation for myriad forms of deception, both of oneself and of others. Such a person has also realized that the mere process of undertaking the journey to expose hypocrisy and develop awareness of its subtleties is inseparable from a certain kind of delight – the delight that is the natural byproduct of relaxing into a honest and clear recognition of just who and what one is. Finally, such a person has also learned that unless she can rely on the genuine relationship with herself as a basis for truth, no other source of authority can provide the necessary ingredients for realization. This

relationship with the self is no different from the self's relationship to the Buddha, who represents the embodiment of the truth of how things are. Thus the Drukpa Kunley who emerges from the pages of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* is simultaneously joyous, penetratingly and uncompromisingly straight-forward in his willingness to reveal the truth of how things are, regardless of the discomfort or irritation of anyone else involved, and genuine to himself to such a degree that he has recognized his inseparability from the Buddha and his teachings.

In this genuine relationship to himself, Drukpa Kunley is similar to the Greek *parrhesiates* – the ethical truth teller – who has thoroughly subjectivated the acts and expressions of truth he espouses. He has himself done the work necessary for access to the truth and he models these practices of transformation. He has engaged in multiple *asceses* – exercises of himself in the activity of thought as well as yogic practices. This process of thinking differently and thereby modifying oneself through the movements of thought requires a shift away from "already given systems, orders, doctrines, and codes in order for the subject to open up a new space in thought for exercises, techniques, tests, different attitudes, new *ethos*, the space of spirituality itself."[10] This movement away from established modes of thought and action and the opening up of a new and creative space for ethical formation is what the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* accomplishes.

The Drukpa Kunley who emerges from the pages of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* has been labeled an uncompromising and erudite social critic, and indeed, he is that.[11] But such

[10] Foucault 2005, xxviii.

[11] DiValerio 2011, 470-474. Ardussi 1972, 49.

labels risk overlooking the energy of playfulness and delight that accompanies his critical mode. They also risk missing how his moment-to-moment engagement with reality as it arises is effected through the *Namthar's* ethic of disruption, its content, and its deployment of literary styles. Together these qualities result in the vision of a person who veritably dances through the *Namthar's* world, unbounded by time or space, dropping in like a bolt of lightening to clarify the truth of a situation or to point out its hypocrisies. Drukpa Kunley is a person who is unencumbered by the project of artificially holding together a sense of self, but who relaxes into each moment and each interaction with others as if such interactions were occurring for the very first time. He demonstrates how it is possible to use the medium of writing, specifically the writing of a liberation life story, to express the truth about oneself in all the various dimensions of human experience.

The practices displayed by the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* also function to stimulate in the reader the insight necessary to recognize how both "qualities" and "faults" participate in the life of a person engaged on the spiritual path. Without revealing our faults to ourselves as well as developing the ability to see the faults of others beneath the veil of appearances we all present for general consumption, no genuine progress on a spiritual path can be made.

In what follows, drawing on my own intersubjective experiences with people, places, stories and objects associated with Drukpa Kunley, I will reflect upon how the practices of ethical formation modeled by the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* have been received and adapted in modern times. In particular, I will consider how my own experience of the diverse

manifestations of the figure of Drukpa Kunley, may provide insight into Bhutan's ongoing and vibrant relationship with this saint. I begin with an introduction to Drukpa Kunley in Bhutan.

II. Bhutan's Patron Saint

Many stories of Drukpa Kunley are not found in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar,* but exist in the oral traditions, folklore, sacred places, material objects and minds and hearts of the people of Tibet, Bhutan, and other Himalayan regions. However, particularly in Bhutan, stories of Drukpa Kunley's outrageous actions are everywhere. They appear in short collections of folktales in local bookshops. They are painted in bright murals on the walls of the Chimme Lhakang in Lobeysa in central Bhutan, the busy temple dedicated to Drukpa Kunley where barren women from around the world come to receive the blessing of his carved phallus on their heads. They lie embedded in the very landscape itself where numerous sites sacred to Drukpa Kunley commemorate the saint's outlandish and unusual actions (See Appendix III).

Bhutanese consider Drukpa Kunley to be a wandering yogi of the Drukpa Kagyü tradition, and more widely as representing the tradition of the Indian *mahāsiddhas*. He is recognized as such both in iconography (where he is generally depicted wearing tantric dress and holding a bow and arrow, much like representations of the *siddha* Saraha, whose incarnation he is considered to be) and also in literary and oral representations of him.[12] As mentioned in the Introduction, Drukpa Kunley has also become indelibly associated with the

[12] For representations of Saraha, see http://huntington.wmc.ohio-state.edu/public/index.cfm?listOfKeyWords=Saraha&fuseaction=getResults.

mythology of demon subjugation and as such he sometimes acts and appears in popular stories more like a protective deity than a yogi. Indeed, he is occasionally invoked as a protective figure, yet one whose own idiosyncrasies and outlandish actions make him a source for the delight that arises when rules are broken and new possibilities for human being-ness are revealed. He is considered to have great powers as a result of his tantric practice, powers that he puts to use to in humorous and outrageous ways, thereby forever imprinting himself into the hearts and minds of those who have intercourse with him in any way. The hundreds of paintings of phalluses that adorn the outer walls of many Bhutanese homes have become indelibly associated with Drukpa Kunley, participating in the nexus of antinomian and outrageous tales of him that seem to be ubiquitously known across the country.[13]

Michael Aris describes the power of these oral tales in an analogous situation in an insightful essay that analyzes the use of oral narratives, village rituals, and popular beliefs in Bhutan to set up a "voice" of alterity to existing religious norms. Aris highlights the notion of a so-called "nameless religion" embodied in the day-to-day lives of ordinary people in Bhutan and Tibet. He suggests that this vision of human religiosity has received far less attention than other forms of "Buddhist" narrative. Even today, in Bhutan, the voice of the Buddhist monk is heard everywhere, while the voices of the common people, those people with whom Drukpa Kunley most often aligns himself in popular stories and tales, often remain unnoticed and unheard.[14]

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[13] Cf. Pommaret and Tobgyay (2011) for reasons for this association.

[14] Aris 1987.

My research was conducted in Bhutan over a two-year period from 2011-2013. During that time I visited fourteen different sites sacred to Drukpa Kunley in order to examine the geographical locations, the objects (natural or manufactured) that signified one or another of his miraculous activities, and to interview the local people concerning their relationships to and understanding of the saint. I was accompanied and guided in these ethnographic excursions by Mr. Rinzin Dorji,[15] a longtime scholar, teacher of Bhutanese culture, and the director of RCS (Rigzin Consultancy Services), a private tutoring school located in downtown Thimphu. Due to Mr. Dorji's status in the communities we visited, we were welcomed and doors were opened that would otherwise have remained closed. Mr. Dorji served as a translator for me as many of the villagers we met spoke Bhutanese dialects unknown to me. In addition to Mr. Dorji, I was accompanied by his assistant Jigme Dorji, who provided details for each location and who collated and transcribed the villagers' stories and by my husband, Christopher Hall, who served as the group's photographer.

During these ethnographic excursions I repeatedly asked one simple question: Why is Drukpa Kunley loved so much? The overwhelming response to this question concerned the saint's down-to-earth, playful, and gritty self-presentation. In most peoples' responses, Drukpa Kunley does not engage with monks or nobility, but with the ordinary farmer in the fields. His interactions with these secular persons address their needs through two main means. The first is his use of subterfuge to challenge people's previously existing assumptions of realization and to propel them into the kind of self-examination that could not occur if Drukpa Kunley

[15] In Bhutan, "Dorje" is spelled "Dorji."

presented an uncomplicated view of himself. The second means operates by generating faith or devotion as a catalyst for personal transformation.

In nearly all the contemporary folktales of Drukpa Kunley, one or more people mistake him for a lowly beggar and abuse him. This requires that he prove himself, sometimes immediately, sometimes later. The existence of so many situations in which Drukpa Kunley's deceptive appearance masks the reality of who he really is forces us to consider the means by which this confusion is resolved. In most folktales, this confusion is resolved through a kind of shock therapy. Drukpa Kunley's outlandish actions produce states of mind in those that perceive them that are stripped of their ongoing conceptual frameworks. Into this mental space, free from conceptual complexities, a different kind of recognition of the truth takes place. When this occurs, peoples' view of Drukpa Kunley transforms and he appears to them as an entirely different kind of person. Recognizing this shift that has taken place in the relationship to reality works to generate the kind of devotion that leads to transformation. Genuine faith is shown to be the result of genuine misunderstanding and misperception that gets worked through.

For example, one popular oral tale in Bhutan concerns the realization of an old man named Ap Tendzin (A pa bstan 'dzin). As the story was related to me on a warm day in late October 2012 by the caretaker, Rinchen (Rin chen) of Ap Tendzin's home in the small village of Wolakha (Wo la kha) overlooking the Ma Chu Pa Chu river in central Bhutan, Ap Tendzin's children had grown up and left home, except for his youngest daughter. The old man was bored and lonely. Hearing stories of Drukpa Kunley, he decided to go to see him and request

instructions in the Dharma. When Drukpa Kunley heard Ap Tendzin's request, he taught him a refuge prayer filled with dirty words and carnal expressions. He gave the old man instructions to continuously repeat the prayer as loudly as he could at all times of the day. In delight, Ap Tendzin returned home. When his wife and daughter asked him about his visit with Drukpa Kunley, he recited the prayer. In embarrassment his daughter ran from the house while his wife informed him in shock that he must surely have misunderstood the Lama, since no real teacher would ever impart such obscene instructions. Nevertheless, the old man persevered, even after his wife confined him to the attic. One day, a strange sound of music was heard in the house, but the wife and daughter could no longer hear the sound of the old man's prayers. When the daughter went up to the attic to investigate, her father was nowhere to be seen. Instead, in the middle of his bed she saw a sphere of rainbow light with a large syllable AH – symbolizing the pure space from which everything has arisen – in the center of it.[16] As she watched, the sphere rose up into the sky trailing behind the sound of her father's voice. Assuming that Ap Tendzin had achieved the liberative state of rainbow body, both the daughter and the mother developed profound devotion in Drukpa Kunley and became devout practitioners of the Buddhist teachings.[17]

One remarkable aspect of the contemporarily circulating oral stories in Bhutan is that unlike the characters in the stories, people almost never evince any kind of disgust or shock at Drukpa Kunley's extravagent activities. If anything, the more outrageous he is, the more

[16] Simmer-Brown 2002, 101.

[17] Dowman 1980, 134-136.

delighted they are. Even such egregious behaviors as defecating or urinating on *thangkas* of the Buddha are greeted not only with delight, but also with reverence. For example, another famous story of Drukpa Kunley was related to me by Tsangkha Tulku, a young reincarnated lama currently living at Tango Monastery at the upper end of the Thimphu valley. Disguised as a beggar, Drukpa Kunley was traveling to Ralung Monastery in Tibet. On the way, he met an old man carrying a newly painted thangka of the Kagyü lineage. Drukpa Kunley asked the old man where he was going and what he was doing. The old man replied that he was bringing the thangka to be blessed by Ngawang Chöje, the abbot of Ralung. Drukpa Kunley asked to see the thangka and when the old man unrolled it, he took out his penis and urinated all over it. The old man was horrified and, calling Drukpa Kunley a crazy madman, he continued on his way to Ralung. But when he showed the thangkha to Ngawang Chöje, they both saw that wherever the urine had touched the painting had turned to pure gold. Both Ngawang Chöje and the old man realized that the beggar was none other than Drukpa Kunley. The old man developed great devotion for the lama and later achieved liberation. After relating this story to me, Tsangkha Tulku brought me into one of the main temple rooms at Tango Monastery. Pointing to a large golden statue of the Buddha, he told me that the very same thangka was rolled up inside the body of the Buddha.

In these kinds of stories, we see that Drukpa Kunley's skillful means being enacted first on the visceral, physical level (sexual encounters, drunken exploits) by appealing to the kinds of desires that everyone recognizes, and second by virtue of their shock value (mantras consisting of lewd words, urinating on images of Buddhas and so forth), in which listeners experience a

sense of surprise, a kind of gap in their ordinary thought processes, allowing them to perceive meanings and to make inferences that would otherwise remain opaque. In each situation, Drukpa Kunley's actions communicate delight and humor in human appetites and desires.

The shock value of these approaches serves another purpose as well. As Dashö Kenchö, a retired government servant in Bhutan whose wife is the daughter of the previous abbot of the Chimme Lhakhang in Lobeysa, replied in November 2012 in response to my question about what he thought was the purpose of Drukpa Kunley's lewd actions, "When the Lam acts in this way we can easily remember his teachings!"[18] As Gyatso and others have shown, and as I discuss in more detail below, beyond being merely the recall of past events, memory can function in a variety of ways, such as in the initial retention of experience or the embodiment of social memory in cultural processes, material media, and places, "in which the emphasis is put upon the performative function of memory in the present."[19] Studies of memory in Buddhist traditions have considered functions beyond its obvious mnemic principle, but specifically as a useful and deliberately cultivated tool for soteriological progress. In particular is the idea that certain "types of reminders, both linguistic and imagistic, can be cultivated in order to engender religiously valued realizations."[20] What this means for our purposes here is that Dashö's recollection of Drukpa Kunley's outrageous antics and their shock value simultaneously stimulates a recognition that such states of mind and being lie outside of the conceptual

[18] In Bhutan, Dukpa Kunley is always referred to as "Lam Drukpa Kunley." Bhutanese do not use the word "lama" (*bla ma*) when referring to him.

[19] Gyatso 1992, 2.

[20] Gyatso 1992, 3.

boundaries that restrict ultimate realization. The memorization of and the hearing of tales of Drukpa Kunley over and over again may then function to bring such states of being back into the present moment, allowing the listener multiple opportunities to recognize and remember such liberated states of being.[21] This is not dissimilar to what Gyatso terms an "event of evoking" the content of a Treasure by a tertön.[22] Such an event can and perhaps should function to actualize the liberative content of the material remembered.

III. Transformations and Continuities

What is the best way to consider the continuities of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar's* presentation of Drukpa Kunley over time as well as to account for its transformations? How do we make sense of and theorize the processes of reception that have taken place through time and place, processes that many feel have resulted in a de-emphasizing of Drukpa Kunley's more erudite and sophisticated self presentation in favor of an antinomian, often obscene and vulgar vision of the saint? While it is obviously the case that the oral traditions' representations of Drukpa Kunley pose distinct differences from representations of him in *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, yet I suggest that these views of the saint are highly resonant.

Stanley Tambiah's work on Thai Buddhism and its relation to spirit cults in northeast Thai village traditions is instructive here for exploring what Tambiah views as the interlocking notion of transformations and continuities as a means by which a single cultural and religious

[21] Harrison 1992, 215-238.

[22] Gyatso 1986, 10.

world is brought into focus. Tambiah terms this "a single total field" or a "total religious field" in order to stress its generative power as a placeholder for a diversity of social and religious activities and orientations. Presenting a synchronic view of religion as studied on the ground, Tambiah focuses on how four distinct "ritual complexes" are both different from each other and yet linked together through relations of "opposition, complementarity, linkage, and hierarchy."[23] This approach allows us to perceive the intimate interweaving between literary culture and its manifestations in peoples' daily lives. It also allows us to grasp both the theoretical and practical complexity inherent in any investigation into what we might wish to simplistically separate out as "continuities" or "transformations." I invoke Tambiah here to highlight the fact that while for purposes of viewing the larger complex of Drukpa Kunley in Bhutan it is helpful to identify distinct continuities and distinct transformations, in actual fact of experience these are not sharply delineated and often blur at the edges.

A. Transformations

The most seemingly obvious transformation of Drukpa Kunley's character that has occurred across time and place is the shift from a vision of the erudite social critic whose literary skills mark him as a person engaged in processes of self-expression, self-investigation, and penetratingly insightful interactions with others to a figure whose primary orientation is similar to that of the classic trickster figure. Dean Andrew Nicholas describes some of the trickster's most common characteristics, including living by one's own wits, breaking social and ethical

[23] Tambiah 1970, 2. The four ritual complexes identified by Tambiah are rites performed by Buddhist monks; *sukhwan* rituals performed by village elders to recall escaped spirit essences; the cult of village protector spirits or deities presided over by ritual specialists; and rituals having to do with illness and affliction.

boundaries, using trickery and deception to survive, looking like a fool or a beggar, and possessing a voracious appetite for sex, food, and liquor.[24] The trickster's overall character is almost always a mix of various contradictions. In the popular Drukpa Kunley's case, this often means using profanity and vulgar language to express the Buddhist teachings.

However, this contradictory trait is not entirely absent from Drukpa Kunley's representation in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar.* A number of compositions express sentiments designed to shock his listeners, such as Drukpa Kunley's sarcastic prayer to poor people in which he points out the uselessness of being kind to them due to their karmic propensities or the song he sings at the Second Dalai Lama's New Year's celebration where he condemns everyone for hypocrisy and bad behavior and then calls himself a liar.[25] He also says things such as the following: "When it was time to gather together, I left. If it was not time for gathering, I was there. When I thought to stay, I went and when I thought to go away, I remained. I never listened to anyone's words and never agreed with anyone. While many things I have said are not at all in harmony [with Dharma's meaning], perhaps a few things are."[26] Drukpa Kunley is frequently at pains to simultaneously set his behavior apart from the expected and blind habitual behaviors of most people while highlighting his own vulnerability to or temptation to indulge in just these kinds of behaviors. He even demonstrates a practice of contradicting his own thinking (as in the song to the Second Dalai Lama), thereby revealing a

[24] Nicholas 2009, 10.

[25] DK, Vol. Ka 1978, 76b.1-77b.1. DK, Vol. Kha 1978, 10b.4-13b.3.

[26] *'dzom tsa na cha ba/ ma 'dzom tsa na 'tshol ba/ sdad bsam tsa na 'gro ba/ 'gro bsam tsa na sdod pa/ su'i kha la yang mi nyan cing/ su dang yang mi mthun pa/ don dang mthun la khad la/ ma mthun pa mang ba*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 2b.6-3a.1.

method by which a person works to cut through his own expectations or actions that are the products of unexamined thinking.

Another transformation that requires some reflection is the shift from the rare mention of women depicted in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* to the over-sexed and voraciously sensual Drukpa Kunley described in most oral and popular tales. In my ethnographic research I was amazed by the number of sacred sites attributed to Drukpa Kunley that were concerned solely to celebrate his sexual conquests. This is without taking into account the daily fertility ritual that occurs at the Chime Lhakang, the main temple dedicated to Drukpa Kunley in the Punakha Valley of central Bhutan. As mentioned above in the introduction to this chapter, this temple has become world famous for barren women and their husbands who hope to conceive a child by spending one night on the temple grounds. But first, they must receive a blessing in the form of a large wooden phallus considered to have been carved by Drukpa Kunley himself. [27] (See Appendix III for a full list of articles on the "Temple of the Divine Madman.") I met many Bhutanese by name of "Chime" or "Kunley" who claimed to be products of this ritual process. While it is beyond the scope of this thesis to fully investigate the dimensions of this phenomenon, a few comments regarding a possible connection between these seemingly disparate visions of the saint are in order.[28]

[27] http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/01/fashion/a-forgotten-prayer-answered-modern-love.html. This New York Times article is testament to the widespread popularity of the temple. Cf. Orlean 2005, 167-171 for a description of a contemporary American and Japanese couples' success with becoming pregnant after visiting the Chime Lhakang.

[28] I hope to return to Bhutan in the near future to continue my research on this topic.

First, we may consider the notion of "potency." One possible reason for what appears to be such a difference in views of the saint has to do with the ways in which Drukpa Kunley's yogic powers are conceived and depicted. In the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar,* the narrator is most commonly represented as expressing his skillful means through various kinds of linguistic displays. In fact, the entire *Namthar* is expressive of these many means, each of which affects Drukpa Kunley's interlocutors within the world of the text in a different way. If, for example, a group of geshes are subjected to a didactic exposition on the difficulties of maintaining pure conduct or, alternatively, if instead of discoursing, Drukpa Kunley sings a spontaneous mocking song in which the geshes' predilection for homosexual relations is laughingly expressed, their responses and experiences to Drukpa Kunley's critiques will be quite different. But in the popular tales, Drukpa Kunley is far more likely to be depicted whipping out his penis to seduce a young woman into practicing the Dharma or to subdue a demoness and convert her into protecting the Buddhist teachings. In fact, it is the prevalence of Drukpa Kunley's sexual interactions with women that is most visible and through which we gain a further glimpse of the embodied and sensual nature of his skillful means in the popular tales. Rather than using speech or writing, Drukpa Kunley is depicted as using his body, and in particular, his penis, in a wide variety of ways, each of which serves to transform the interlocutor with whom he relates towards the truth of the Dharma. The story of his subjugation of the Longrong demoness is a case in point. The transformations effected by his penis are not merely physical, however. Drukpa Kunley's "thunderbolt of wisdom" has a symbolic function similar to the Buddhist tantric vajra – it is the ultimate skillful means of compassion for awakening a person to

recognition of her primordial wisdom nature.[29] However, recalling my comments above concerning the blurring of boundaries between continuities and transformations, we must also recognize that many contemporary tales of Drukpa Kunley also do emphasize his witty repartees and skillful use of even the most vulgar kinds of speech.

Another transformation can be found in the different kinds of persons with whom Drukpa Kunley most commonly relates. In the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, these interlocutors mostly consist of other religious or important figures – geshes, ngagpas, tantrikas, yogis, yoginis, lamas, lords and chieftains. In the popular tales, however, Drukpa Kunley is generally depicted in relationship to the ordinary peasant in the fields or to various young, beautiful women. Rarely, he is described in relationship to another religious person, but only in order, through ridicule or trickery, to bring that figure down a peg or two.

B. Continuities

While the figure of Drukpa Kunley seems to appear rather differently in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* than in popular oral tales of him, the intention of his actions is similar in both sources. As just discussed, in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar,* most of Drukpa Kunley's actions are linguistic or oral actions involving speech, the writing of poems, didactic treatises or letters, the recording of different interactions, or the spontaneous singing of songs of experience. In the oral tales, Drukpa Kunley's actions are almost entirely carried out on the physical plane. He has

[29] Beer 1999, 233-235.

sex with lots of different women. He drinks copious amounts of alcohol. He tricks farmers, monks, and demons with a range of different strategies of subterfuge and disguise. But the point of these two modes of action in the world is analogous – the exposure of hypocrisy and the criticism of social, ethical, and religious deceptions and the transformation of persons in the direction of the Dharma. Thus while the modalities he mobilizes appear quite differently to the person who encounters either the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* or the oral tales, their goal is the same.

Another continuity between the two modes of representation lies in their outrageousness. As has been discussed in Chapter Three, Drukpa Kunley is renowned for the startling directness and penetrating honesty of his speech. In fact, his speech is so direct and honest that it shocks or startles others, causing them to experience a sense of cognitive dissonance between their habitual social expectations and the kinds of self-expression Drukpa Kunley models. Recall the composition in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, discussed above in Chapter Two, when some readers describe Drukpa Kunley's *namthar* as similar in nature to a text of Sakya Pandita's, the *Domsum Rabgye*, which hits the reader "like a thorny club."[30]

This outrageous quality is even more egregious in the oral tales where Drukpa Kunley is described as subduing and transforming pesky demonesses by bashing them over the head with his engorged penis or having sex with his own mother. For example, a tale told in Je Gendun Rinchen's collection relates how, while making his way into Bhutan in order to recover the

[30] The *Domsum Rabchey* (*sdom gsum rab dbye*), *Differentiating the Three Precepts* is one of the major works of Sakya Pandita Kunga Gyaltsen (Sa skya pan di ta, kun dga' rgyal tshan, 1182-1251. See DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 69a.5-69b.1.

arrow he shot from Tibet, Drukpa Kunley encounters a group of travelers who supplicate him to protect them from a demon. Before sleeping, Drukpa Kunley recites a prayer in which he reminds himself to be compassionate. In the middle of the night, he is awakened by the demon, who challenges him regarding his methods of compassion. In response, Drukpa Kunley pulls out his erect penis. When the demon again challenges him, Drukpa Kunley swings his "thunderbolt of wisdom" at him, hitting him in the mouth and knocking his teeth back into his head. The demon flees but soon returns, ready and willing to hear the Buddhist teachings.[31]

Such behaviors and actions are clearly designed to induce a state of shock or astonishment in those who read or hear about them. But in both cases, in Drukpa Kunley's penetrating directness in speech in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* and in his outrageous actions in the popular tales, the method in the madness works to break open ingrained and habitual ways of thinking about the self, about others, and about the phenomenal world. In this space of shock, the activity of the conceptual mind is slowed or stopped and a person is presented with the opportunity to see things *as they are*, naked, stripped of the conceptual ideas or emotional hopes and fears that normally layer over raw experience. This is the state of being that Drukpa Kunley seeks to engender in those with whom he comes into contact because it is only in this state that hypocrisy is ultimately overcome, when the delusions that form a filter between the clarity, delight, and spaciousness of bare experience are exposed and dissolved.

Another continuity between representations of Drukpa Kunley in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* and in contemporary Bhutanese culture can be found in the theme of delight, joy and

[31] Dowman 1980, 120.

humor. In the *Namthar,* this joy often emerges in Drukpa Kunley's spontaneous songs whenever he is asked to comment on or explain his way of living. We see this in different refrains, such as in the song Drukpa Kunley sings after responding to a disciple's question about why he does not take up the care of Ralung monastery and the trappings of monastic life (See above, pp. 313-314). He ends each verse with the phrases, "...is joy, is joy, is joy!" and "at ease, at ease, at ease" – phrases which, in their repetitive rhythmic cadence, communicate a visceral sense of delight. In another song, in which he seeks to illustrate how *mgur* function effectively when they generate the experience of pleasure, he ends each verse with the phrase, "this is a joyful experience!"[32]

In the same composition, we also see Drukpa Kunley engaging in a discussion about the purpose of singing spontaneous songs. A disciple says to him, "Dharma Lord, it is true that all these songs have profound meanings and are easy to understand, but they are not really what is needed to make people weary of samsara and to encourage the certainty and the determination to leave it."[33] Drukpa Kunley replies, "The songs of joyful experience I sing are for making auspicious connections and to bring forth the understanding of the essence. When Dharma is preached only for the purpose of generating disgust for this world in peoples' minds, they don't retain anything."[34] It is impossible not to be reminded here of the first lines of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* where Drukpa Kunley explains his rationale for writing his life story, "If

[32] *'di nyams su dga',* DK1, Vol. Ka, 1978, 73b.1-74a.5.

[33] *Chos rje gsung mgur 'di kun don bzang po la go don phigs po/ bden po mang po 'dug ste/ skyo ba skye ba'i nges 'byung 'khul po de 'dra rang mi 'dug zer,* DK1, Vol. Ka, 1978, 72b.1.

[34] *Ngas 'di skad byas/ mgur nyams dga' la 'then pa 'di rten 'brel legs shing don go pa re ni yod/ mi skyo ba'i chos bshad pas sems la ni mi 'jog,* DK1, Vol. Ka, 1978, 72b.2.

I happen to reveal profound teachings, I confess and repent. If my words are seen as wanton gossip, may they at least cause delight!"[35] In these latter two examples, the relationship between the experience of pleasure or humor and the communication of Dharma is addressed. Similarly to the state of shock, the experience of joy or humor functions to augment or enhance receptivity in the listener. Generally, it is easier to recall a teaching or a treatise if it is conveyed with a sense of humor that allows the recipient to let down his/her guard and relax.

Laughter has been theorized in the study of religion as a means by which a person can become available to different forms of knowledge and being. Ingvild Gihus, in her study of laughter in the history of religion, remarks that for the Gnostics, "Laughter is a sign of receptivity; with it, the body literally speaking, opens up."[36] In this sense, laughter represents not only a mode for deeper intellectual understanding but also a visceral experience through which the entire organism of the listener is made malleable and transformed. Similarly, humor has been theorized in Buddhist studies as a method by which to overcome the serious and concentrated attachment we experience towards the belief in an enduring, independent, self. John Morreall describes how the Buddhist virtue of nonattachment is intimately connected to humor in that when we are able to laugh at ourselves and at our sufferings, we loosen the hold these have on us. We are able to step back, observe, and relax. Morreall notes that because humor functions to generate critical thinking and mental flexibility, it can get us out of destructive mental habits and negative emotions, "allowing us to face what might otherwise be

[35] *Zab mo bsgrags pa byung na mthol zhing bshags/ 'chal gtam sna tshogs 'dug na nyams dga' mdzod*, DK1, Vol. Ka 1978, 2b.4-5.

[36] Ghilus 1997, 80.

disconcerting truths, such as that there is no self."[37] This view nicely articulates the impulse we see in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*'s compositions to exhort people to practice self-examination. Drukpa Kunley's humorous descriptions of everyone's engagement in various types of hypocrisies allows his listeners to laugh at the same time as they are encouraged to turn a critical eye towards their own assumptions and behaviors. If we ask how humor functions both in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* to generate this effect, it does so by its role, as "a form of perception... The comic is perceived as the perception of an otherwise undisclosed dimension of reality – not just of its own reality, but of reality as such. The comic intrusion is the occurrence of this perception in every possible realm of experience."[38] In the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, this perception of reality is of the truth of how things are, how people are, when they are stripped of ideas and concepts and they emerge plainly, complete with both faults and virtues. Peter Berger considers Henri Bergson's insight that in order for a person to find something funny, she must curtail any strong emotions she might otherwise have in the situation. Berger notes that the experience of the comic necessitates a removal from the meanings that the same situations would otherwise have in everyday life. In other words, the experience of humor requires that an abstraction take place if one is to subject any phenomenon to intellectual analysis.[39] As Morreall succinctly states, "The basic Buddhist message is similar to the message of comedy: Step back emotionally from the world, and things

[37] Morreall 1999, 59.

[38] Berger 1997, 14.

[39] Berger 1997, 28-29.

get better."[40] In the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, we find ample evidence that Drukpa Kunley's humor does in fact generate both a receptive state and a shift in understanding for his interlocutors. Many of the more humorous compositions in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* end with a short statement that the interlocutor "burst out laughing," a statement that implies that he or she was, at the least, delighted, and at best, convinced of the truth of Drukpa Kunley's words.

Just as this sense of joyful exertion is evident in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* so too is it to be found throughout the oral tales. No matter what outrageous escapade Drukpa Kunley involves himself in it is impossible not to notice the tongue-in-cheek quality of his actions. And joy begets joy. This was nowhere so evident as in the numerous occasions during which I found myself in discussion of particular oral tales with local Bhutanese. Inevitably whomever I was speaking with would dissolve in peals of laughter as he or she recited the tales, along with any other listeners who happened to have joined our group. Even the mere mention of Drukpa Kunley's name brought smiles to peoples' faces, along with a wink, as if to say, "Yes, its pretty funny isn't it?" As an example, in a long conversation I had with Dashö Kenchö Tshering and his wife Aum Om, both of whom had lived and worked at the Chime Lhakhang, I asked them to comment on what they felt were the reasons for Drukpa Kunley's use of humor and sexualized language. Both became visibly excited and energetic. Aum Om, whose father served as the Lam of the Chime Lhakhang when she was a child, said:

[40] Morreall 1999, 57.

> That's the reason that Drukpa Kunley's life story is so famous! It's because he uses such funny, sexual language. Whenever there is this kind of language, whenever there are jokes being told or sexual innuendos, everybody becomes very alert, vigorous, and keen to hear more. It is in the nature of male gatherings for men to talk [sexually] about women and it is in the nature of female gatherings for women to talk [sexually] about men. But whenever they talk in these ways, there is also real meaning. On the other hand, if someone is just talking the truth and preaching the Dharma, no one is very keen or concentrated. But when there is fun, even illiterate people become curious and pay attention. For instance, when we see Ulab Leki or Phub Thinley[41] on television, the moment we see their faces, we know the kinds of things they will say. In the same way, Lam Drukpa Kunley used sexual and humorous language in order to make everyone aware of his teaching methods.[42]

Humor, delight, and laughter mark the most visible sign of continuity between the Drukpa Kunley of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* and the Drukpa Kunley of the oral tales.

IV. Intersubjectivity in the Formation of Ethical Persons and Stories

Having discussed some of the more obvious transformations and continuities between the Drukpa Kunley of the *Namthar* and the Drukpa Kunley of the oral tales, this chapter now returns to the consideration of the method of analysis (described at the beginning of this chapter) for examining how these different representations came and continue to come into being, as well as how this ongoing process of becoming has continued force and relevance for the contemporary world.

[41] Two famous Bhutanese comedians.

[42] Personal communication with Dashö Kenchö Tshering and his wife at their home in Wangdi district, November 2012.

I do not consider the life or being of an empirical person named Drukpa Kunley here, but rather the diverse representations of Drukpa Kunley created from the texts, stories, places, and rituals that have come to be associated with his name. Jackson's theory that the life of an individual cannot be accounted for without considering how that life joins together with and, "touches the lives of many others – predecessors, successors, contemporaries and consociates, as well as the overlapping worlds of nature, the cosmos and the divine" provides a provocative starting point for thinking about the different manifestations of Drukpa Kunley's ethical selves.[43] Considering the figure of Drukpa Kunley from the point of view of this interconnectedness reveals the importance of recognizing how the saint's life is integrated with and integral to a "wider field of being." Jackson describes this wider field of being as the recognition that human life is continuously engaged in seeking balance between individual and communal experiences, agency and being acted upon, subjectivity and objectivity. Acknowledgment of a person's intersubjectivity means recognizing his or her embeddedness in "a wider field of being of which he or she is vitally and necessarily a part."[44] We have already seen how Drukpa Kunley's life merges with that of many other people and other figures (the interlocutors within the world of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, his disciples, incarnations, and his multiple manifestations as trickster, madman, fertility cult figure, and demon subduer, present-day pilgrims, temple caretakers, translators of his tales, and even myself) on many different fronts, over time and across place, stretching up to the present day.

[43] Jackson 2002, 12.

[44] Jackson 2009, 60.

However, changes over time in the perceptions, expressions, and representations of a person or cultural figure like Drukpa Kunley can be explained in a variety of ways. These transformations can be explained, as Aris asserts, simply as mythic elaborations and embellishments, but approaching Drukpa Kunley from the angle of Jackson's sense of intersubjectivity allows me to move further in accounting for the relationship between the Drukpa Kunley of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* and the modern Drukpa Kunley in Bhutan. Investigating in this way helps us to see how the Drukpa Kunley created by the diverse literary strategies of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* has become liberated from the confines of time and place. He has been intimately absorbed into the Himalayan Buddhist imagination and has become available to continued and continuing ethical formation. This is the Drukpa Kunley who exists as a literary figure, a figure of the imagination who arises from both literary and oral sources and who yet maintains and practices both agency (in his effects on those who encounter him), as well as malleability in the transmutations to which his image is continually subjected.

To explore Drukpa Kunley's malleability, I draw on the theory of intersubjectivity as discussed at the beginning of this chapter. In particular, I consider Jackson's discussion of how an individual's being may be extended in time and space by virtue of the person's active and engaged participation in the lives of others. Drukpa Kunley's malleability recalls the notion that in so far as being is simultaneously "being-in-the-world" and thereby tied to situations of interaction with others, these representations of him symbolize the potentiality for self

transformation that "waxes and wanes, is augmented or diminished,"[45] depending on the circumstances in which we find ourselves. In just this same way, the different compositions in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* reveal how Drukpa Kunley manifests himself in specific ways for each different situation. It is in this spirit that this section seeks to theorize how the different representations of Drukpa Kunley continue to move through time and across place. This is not to create a definitive narrative that would explain continuity through time and place, but instead to tease out the fact that the ethical person Drukpa Kunley embodies is the result of the social relatedness between this and many other representations. As such, these multiple representations of Drukpa Kunley cannot and do not exist "outside of, or prior to" narrative processes, defined broadly as the telling of the saint's life story orally; its representations via the literary; and its embeddedness in physical places.[46]

In utilizing this intersubjective and phenomenological approach, I appeal to the interplay of diverse manifestations of the saint as they functioned in my own experience. Given that any act of interpretation must necessarily begin and end with the investigator's experience of her subject of study, I propose that a recognition of the relationships implicated in all acts of interpretation can enable scholars of the history and literature of religion to recognize how they already participate in acts of *re*-collection whereby cultural materials are *translated* (defined here from Latin: *translatus* 'to carry across') from one time and space to another. Considering our work through the lens of intersubjective relations may enable researchers to

[45] Jackson 2002, 12.

[46] Jackson 2002, 22 cf. Feldman 1991, 13.

recognize more clearly their own implication in the dynamics of human expression conveyed through the different cultural forms studied, whether these are discursive (oral tales, written texts, inscriptions) or material (images, structures, places, symbols).

When I took intersubjectivity into account, cultural "objects" - such as the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, physical places associated with Drukpa Kunley, story tellers and hearers, material objects, and painted murals of the saint's life, etc. – all appeared from an alternative point of view, one that included as axiomatic my own experience as a researcher as participatory in generating meaning and relevance for these diverse manifestations. Thus my intersubjective experience with cultural materials constituted the primary ingredients in the crafting of my products of analysis, better understood, I believe, as "processes" of analysis. Hence, using this model of intersubjectivity worked to stimulate active and ongoing *re*-collection by bringing to view the inherent interrelatedness between me and my objects of study. With this approach, it seems possible to me that we, as scholars, may succeed in including the meaning and essence of that which we seek to represent by, to quote Walter Benjamin, "giv[ing] voice to the *intentio* of the original not as a reproduction, but as harmony" extending through time and space.[47]

In my experience in Bhutan, intersubjectivity was present in every aspect of my work, from recording oral tales of Drukpa Kunley, to visiting sacred places associated with him, and to translating the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* from Tibetan into English with my Bhutanese teacher, Lopen Chorten Tshering. To illustrate how this functioned, I begin with a story about Drukpa

[47] Benjamin 2013, 13.

Kunley from the oral tradition that was first told to me by my ethnographic partner, Rinzin Dorji in early 2012.

> One night long ago in southern Tibet, the yogi, Drukpa Kunley, dreamt that a woman dressed in yellow and brandishing a flaming sword appeared to him. She instructed him to shoot an arrow into the country of Mon (as Bhutan was known then). Wherever the arrow landed, he should go. By doing this, he would fulfill a prophecy concerning the conversion of the people of Mon to Buddhism. Accordingly, upon awakening, Drukpa Kunley drew his bow and shot an arrow into Mon. Rushing through the air with the sound of a thousand thundering dragons, the arrow crossed the mountains and embedded itself in the wooden ladder of a house owned by a man named Toeb Tshewang and his wife, Pelzang Bhuti. Hearing the sound as the arrow struck the wood, Pelzang Bhuti ran outside, and seeing the arrow in the ladder, she removed it, wrapped it in silk, and placed it on the altar inside the house.
>
> A few weeks later, following his arrow, Drukpa Kunley arrived at the house, in the place called Toeb Changdana. As soon as he saw Pelzang Bhuti, he was determined to make her his consort. He ordered Tshewang to leave the house so that he could enjoy his time with Pelzang Bhuti. In anger, Tshewang drew his sword, threatening his unwelcome guest. Drukpa Kunley seized the sword and tied it in a knot. Recognizing that Drukpa Kunley was no ordinary person, Tshewang prostrated himself and begged the Lama to take his wife. As a result of their union, Pelzang Bhuti bore a son to Drukpa Kunley named Tshewang Tendzin. This son begins a long lineage of famous descendants in Bhutan, including the fourth temporal ruler, Gyalse Tendzin Rabgye.

Having told this story about Drukpa Kunley and his relationship to a place, I now relate my personal experience of that place. I first visited the house at Toeb Changdana in November 2012. In my notes, I wrote:

> Behind the original house, a small temple dedicated to Drukpa Kunley sits at the edge of the lawn surrounded by a garland of brilliant, blazing marigolds... Khandu, the caretaker, tells me that he and his elder sister, Zam, are the last in a long line of caretakers of the house and the temple. Khandu and Zam consider themselves direct descendants of the son of Drukpa Kunley and Pelzang Bhuti, but neither of them has married or produced any children. Although he has been encouraged to take a wife, Khandu says that he cannot bring himself to leave Changdana. Even when he travels to Thimphu to sell vegetables or to purchase supplies, the ladder and the statue of Drukpa Kunley on the main altar in the

> house haunt him and he feels compelled to return. After carefully composing himself, Khandu tells his version of the story of Drukpa Kunley's arrow and his seduction of Pelzang Bhuti.
>
> When he has finished, Khandu shows us through the house. The main shrine room has a large altar, to the right of which we see the famous ladder. Until about five years ago, the ladder was out in the open for anyone to touch. But since so many pilgrims were coming and some were chipping away pieces of the ladder to take home with them, Khandu encased it in glass behind the altar. It is still visible, fashioned out of the same dark wood as the floors. Khandu next leads the way to the small temple. Temporarily blinded by the transition from sunlight to temple darkness, I feel disoriented. The original temple is evident in its older style of construction and in the faded representations of the same story of the arrow painted on its crumbling walls. Appearing dimly from out of the temple's innermost shadows, these murals speak to me from across time. The muted colors stand in juxtaposition to the large, brightly colored mural depicting Drukpa Kunley's life that has just recently been painted on the interior wall of the newer part of the temple. It is as if the two visual representations of Drukpa Kunley's life whisper to each other across the interior of the temple, like interlaced memories passing back and forth through the twilit space. I am suspended between two worlds in a timeless space in which the saint's life history spins out its stories.

Now, I want to return to the moment when Khandu sat, eyes closed, lips moving, as he recollected Drukpa Kunley's story at Changdana. This story of Drukpa Kunley is also part of Khandu's story of his own life. It arises from the bits and pieces of the tale that lie scattered through his memories, told to him when he was a child by his grandmother, and absorbed into his own sense of self. Observing him that day, I noted how carefully he worked through those memories in his mind. When he finally spoke, he repeated patterns of speech and tropes embedded in Drukpa Kunley's story. Bringing them back out into the open air, he re-forged them in the space my questions had opened up. In this way, he invited me to experience the tale within the distinctive shape in which he remembered it as well as within my own memories of the story from having heard it told to me by Rinzin. In addition, the visual representation of

the same story on the walls of the temple recalls Quintman's observation that material objects, such as a mural, can serve to embody a special form of biography intended not to record a life through narrative, but to maintain the subject's living presence within a community of disciples and viewers.[48]

This shape of the story is the form in which it was told and is continuously retold. Each caretaker of the house and the temple understands the job as maintaining not only the sacred structures, but also the style, shape, and language of the story – its particular manifestation of the saint. But this shape is also malleable. It adjusts itself to each new context and time within which it is told and to each teller – as in the three contexts just described of Rinzin's telling, Khandu's telling, and the telling of the story on the temple wall. Rinzin told me that Khandu was deeply concerned to tell the story properly. This was also evident from witnessing his preparations – dressing himself formally and sitting silently and working through his memories of the story before he began to speak. Never mind that his audience already knew the tale, he still had to tell it formally, with great attention to the details that comprise the narrative.

Intersubjectivity extends beyond the narration of stories, however, and I turn now to my own experience with a particular physical object connected to the story of Drukpa Kunley at Changdana. In different places inside the temple, certain significant items were displayed, including a stone gaming board reportedly belonging to Drukpa Kunley. Upon seeing this board, I recalled an episode from the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* in which he represents the game of *Mi Mangs* (a game with characteristics similar to both Checkers and Chess) as an extended

[48] Quintman 2013, 470.

metaphor on how worldly activities, such as game playing, function as analogues to the Buddhist path.

This episode proved difficult for me to translate for various reasons. It was written with the assumption that anyone who read it had played and understood the rules and goal of the game. Without my Bhutanese teacher and translation partner, Lopen Chorten, I could not have understood how the moves described in the game mapped onto the Buddhist path. Translating with Lopen Chorten provided me access to *his* memories, from which he drew liberally, to help form my understanding of what was, at first, a foreign place. Lopen's thoughts and ideas, crafted from his memories of reading and hearing stories of Drukpa Kunley throughout his life, made available the treasure house of Drukpa Kunley's memories as these are represented in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*. Both for Lopen and for me, the *Namthar* served as a map, guiding us on a journey through Drukpa Kunley's inner landscape of remembered events and impressions.

As a result of my experience translating this episode, when I saw the physical game board in Drukpa Kunley's temple at Toeb Changdana, I felt a strong connection to the material object. I felt I had already "lived" an involvement in a game that I've never played. The board spoke to me on multiple registers, recalling all the associations I had to it. My memories of the episode were consolidated, affirmed, and expanded by the physical board itself--its shape, the intersecting lines carved into the stone to demarcate the playing spaces, and Khandu's recounting of how it had come to the temple at Changdana. Placed together, these elements demonstrated the impotency of the passage of chronological time to dilute the message, most

clearly encapsulated by the literary episode, that traveling the Buddhist path involves processes of strategic thought and practice.

My experience of the physical board, when brought together with the complexity of the literary language used to describe and enact the game in the autobiography, combined with Khandu's stories and memories of how the board came to be housed in the temple resulted in a matrix or inventory of items that I could gather together into ideas. To help explain this further, I refer to a theory of memory developed by medieval studies scholar, Mary Carruthers, in which she describes the practice of "the craft of thinking".[49] Carruthers focuses on the techniques by which persons "make" or "craft" ideas, interpretations, or thoughts. Such techniques are dependent, in her view, on an expanded definition of memory as a "matrix of a reminiscing cogitation – a *memory architecture* and a library built up during one's lifetime with the express intention that it be used inventively".[50] Memory is a storage-house for various kinds of "inventories." This includes the idea that "memory work is also process, like a journey" requiring the need for "place," because *re*-collecting includes the activity of "getting from one place to another" in the thinking mind.[51]

Thus, my *re*-membering of Drukpa Kunley's story from my translation work with Lopen Chorten, combined with Khandu's reciprocal *re*-membering of the oral stories of Drukpa Kunley, when shared together, created a common field of memory that we could all experience and, in

[49] Carruthers 1998, 3.

[50] Carruthers 1998, 4.

[51] Carruthers 1998, 23.

turn, remember. While it can be complicated to assign subjectivity to material objects, items – such as the *Mi Mangs* gaming board, and the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* – all actively participated in the intersubjective exchange that took place between Khandu, Lopen Chörten, Drukpa Kunley, and myself. Together, we engaged in a creative process by which something new, that was simultaneously old, was brought into the world – something that was both deeply personal and also, socially and ethically meaningful.

Another way to think of this is that when a pilgrim enters the main temple room at Changdana, he or she *sees* the saint's arrow embedded in the ladder, and reflecting a bit longer, again he or she *sees* Drukpa Kunley tying the house owner's sword in a knot. The images that the pilgrim sees are derived from memorized and recollected recent biographies and oral stories. My recounting of episodes from the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* merely increases the number and variety of these "things" for those with whom I interacted. Devotees come, not in search of something new, but to recollect things well known to them already. The past they seek *is* the narrative of the saint's life, the tangible proof of his passage in this world. Because the narrative and the sites work together to preserve and regenerate memories of Drukpa Kunley's life, the pilgrimage route has become a path in physical actuality for making one's way through the saint's biography.[52] Hence, the stories I recounted from the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* at each different Drukpa Kunley site I visited could be assimilated and absorbed into an existing store of memories creating another dimension to the memory-universe

[52] Carruthers 1989, 43. Carruthers says about the Bible, "The narrative of the Bible as a whole was conceived as a "way" among "places"--in short, as a map."

contemporarily associated with Drukpa Kunley for different people – the villagers, my co-workers, and readers of this thesis.

It is also interesting to consider *how* such materials cue memories, *how* they retain and extend their ability to be *re*-membered, to be put together again in ways that feel true and responsive to the changing situations in which they are crafted. For me, the process of translating a variety of stories of Drukpa Kunley's life; the vivid nature of the characters of Drukpa Kunley, Pelzang Bhuti, and Toeb Tshewang in Khandu's oral telling; the body images of Drukpa Kunley and Pelzang Bhuti on the altar surrounded by images of other more transcendent Buddhas and Bodhisattvas; the older, burned and blackened wall murals merging into the bright colors of the freshly painted story of the saint's life and its events; and the ladder itself; all of these elements gave rise to new perceptions and different understandings that intersected in my experience like a living collage of the saint. Carruthers notes in another context that when such remembering takes place, the words "begin to glow and reverberate in [a] person's associational networks."[53]

It is in this sense that I propose that the sources for *re*-membering the different selves of Drukpa Kunley, for forming his stories exist in a variety of mediums. These sources are literary, sensory and material. They consist of texts and stories, sounds and smells, temples and wall murals. Bringing them together forms compositions, collages or patterns of selves from the

[53] Carruthers 1998, 37. The way in which I describe the example above represents my attempt to demonstrate how, in reality, this kind of inter-subjective experience cannot be controlled or contained by any explanatory scheme or controlling vision or structure. As Michael Jackson says, "...the systematic and objective order which the ethnographer "uncovers" in the course of fieldwork may not mirror any external reality but function as a magical defense against the unsystematic, disorienting reality he or she encounters." (Cf. Jacson 1996, 3-4.)

past, gathered together in the present and available to be directed to the future.[54] To quote Michael Jackson: "For anthropology, ethnography remains vital, not because ethnographic methods guarantee certain knowledge of others, but because ethnographic fieldwork brings us into direct dialogue *with* others, affording us opportunities to explore knowledge not as something that grasps inherent and hidden truths but as an intersubjective process of sharing experience, comparing notes, exchanging ideas, and finding common ground."[55] This statement can be productively rephrased to read: "For historical or literary textual studies, ethnography remains vital..." for related reasons. By engaging in and acknowledging the intersubjective experiences that formed a background for my study of Drukpa Kunley, I encountered a "common ground" – an experience of the complexity of the living and vital relationships inhering between those aspects of him considered to be of the past and those proliferating into the present. By directly experiencing this complexity and seeking to find ways to represent it honestly, by avoiding the tendency to ontologize the results of my interpretive activities, I hope I have begun to do justice to the power and vitality of these objects for how we live today.

[54] Carruthers 1989, 69.

[55] Jackson 1996, 8.

Conclusion

Many Lives, Many Stories, Many Persons

Both the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* and the larger contemporary Drukpa Kunley matrix demonstrate that life writings and stories in all their diverse manifestations, can and do function to promote ethical formation for those who engage with them. In the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, the use of distinct genres, contents, and narrative strategies – the *namthar's* textual cacophony – stimulates the ethic of disruption that works to create persons who are keenly aware of how deeply imbedded human self-deception and hypocrisy are. Such persons are more willing and able to engage in the self-examination necessary to expose and accept this state of being. This process is not intended to represent the common understanding of confession of the truth of one's faults as a way to expiate one's guilt or shame, but instead to represent a method for liberation from the self-delusion that keeps us separate and disassociated from the way things actually are.

Certainly in the history of western literary criticism, the use of literature and the project of writing as a means by which to examine, interpret, and reveal the truth of the self to the self is well known. As discussed in the Introduction, in his genealogy of the formation of the modern subject, Foucault describes the use of writing in exactly this way when he uses examples from ancient Greek culture of the practice of writing out for oneself the fluctuations of thoughts, emotions, and actions that have accompanied one's day.[1] In both the case of the ancient

[1] Foucault 1988.

Greeks and in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar,* the expression, confession, and investigation of the truth of how things are through writing allows for the literary expression of truth as a transformative practice. By means of literary discourse, truth is allowed to appear and to act as a real force in the development of the ethical person.

However, as just noted, the exposure of truth in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* acts differently than the early Christian practices of confession explored by Foucault, in which the confession of truth was intended as a means by which to expose one's inner thoughts, feelings, and motivations so as to discard and reject those hidden faults and orientations that might obstruct salvation. In the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* and in the nexus of oral tales, places, and objects associated with the saint in Bhutan, the emphasis is on a positive, practical, and intimately interconnected development of an ethical person. Drukpa Kunley is nothing if not relaxed and at ease with exposing his own faults and vulnerabilities. In fact, as we have seen, writing a *namthar* is largely about just this kind of self-exposure. Once in tune or in harmony with how we actually are, it is possible to become attuned to how the ethical person is created moment-to-moment through interaction with others and in relationship to the contexts in which we find ourselves. Analogously, in Bhutan today, people's active and intersubjective involvement in the nexus of Drukpa Kunley manifestations continues their ongoing participation in the processes of ethical formation modeled by the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*'s fifteenth-century articulations.

Jackson's theory that the life of an individual cannot be accounted for without considering how that life joins together with and "touches the lives of many others –

predecessors, successors, contemporaries and consociates, as well as the overlapping worlds of nature, the cosmos and the divine" – reminds us of the importance of recognizing how Drukpa Kunley's life is integrated with and integral to a wider field of Being.[2] We have seen how Drukpa Kunley's life merges with that of many others (the interlocutors within the world of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, his disciples, incarnations, and his multiple manifestations as trickster, madman, fertility cult figure, demon subduer, present-day pilgrims, temple caretakers, translators of his tales, and even myself) on many different fronts, over time and across place, stretching up to the present day. Drukpa Kunley's malleability recalls the notion that in so far as being is simultaneously "being-in-the-world" and thereby tied to situations of interaction with others, these representations of him symbolize the potentiality for personal transformation that "waxes and wanes, is augmented or diminished,"[3] depending on the circumstances in which we find ourselves.

Taking all of these factors into account – the description of the Drukpa Kunley who emerges from the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* as well as the manifestations of Drukpa Kunley who still wander through the mountains, valleys and mind-scapes of Bhutan – I suggest that both the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* and the nexus of oral tales, places, and rituals associated with Drukpa Kunley create a fully malleable ethical person, a person who is constituted both collectively and discursively in the process of engaging with multiple others, including in particular, through the exchange of thoughts that exist as memories or recollections. For this reason it is not possible

[2] Jackson 2002, 12.

[3] Jackson 2002, 12.

to uncover a single, primary representation of Drukpa Kunley any more than it is possible to "step into the same river twice."[4] This is due to the ongoing transformations to which all representations are subjected as different persons tell, retell, and re-call them within the ongoing intersubjective relatedness of human life. Ultimately, there can be found no single kind of ethical person, but a plethora of tellings, constructings, and refigurings that function to shift our experience of the way things are. Our experience only becomes malleable enough to respond this ongoing reconfiguration when and if we comply with the imperative to examine and reveal the truths of who we are – our faults, self-delusions, hypocrisies, and the ways we consciously or unconsciously deceive others.

And for the narrator of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar,* the act of writing also functions as a practice for exploring the moment-to-moment arising of this ethical self, as it is, in relation to the particular circumstances it encounters. These circumstances nearly always involve interaction with and for others. At the core of these exchanges is the readiness and willingness to manifest with complete honesty, straightforwardness, and clarity. Only then is there a possibility of discovering and relaxing into the joy, humor, and delight by which such interaction becomes potent and transformative.

A. Narrative Dissolution

As has been mentioned many times, the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* is not one text, but a long series of individual compositions in different genres. Chapter Three explored how these various

[4] Jackson 2006, 23.

genres participate in multiple ways in enacting the ethic of disruption that is one of the *Namthar's* primary agendas. The chapter also discussed how this cacophony of genres functions as a whole to reveal a vision of ethical formation as a moment-to-moment arising that is context specific. Such arisings refuse the habitual tendency for consistent and continual self narration in favor of a recognition that who and how we are is contingent upon our constitution in relationship with multiple others and in specific contexts.

The process of piecing together a coherent and retrospective narrative of one's life has been recognized in Euro-American studies of spiritual autobiography as one of the most spiritually efficacious activities – a process that the good person strives to master. For example, if we examine some of the reasons why St. Augustine's *The Confessions* set the standard for the writing of a spiritual autobiography in Euro-American literary studies we immediately recognize the valorization of the process of narrative self-formation.

What was it about *The Confessions* that not only set the standard for the genre of spiritual autobiography during the Protestant Reformation and the Puritan developments of the seventeenth centuries in both England and America as well as beyond, but also generated a consistent body of scholarship revolving around this particular autobiographical form? Robert Bell, in an article exploring the proliferation of seventeenth-century Puritan conversion narratives in England states that, "*The Confessions* is designed to demonstrate the result of conversion, and to inspire others to emulate the example."[5] Written from the perspective of a

[5] Bell 1977, 108-126. "The massive influence of Augustine on the Reformation in general and Puritan theology in particular has been authoritatively established by several scholars, although no one has been able to connect Bunyan and Augustine's Confessions directly. My argument, however, is less concerned with what Mrs. Ramsay in To the Lighthouse witheringly terms "the influence of somebody upon something" than with how autobiographers

subject who has been redeemed and saved by his faith, *The Confessions* narratively tracks the life of a previously "fallen" self with a sense of irony and patience. By modeling his life story on the patterns of conversion found in the Bible stories of Christ, Paul, and so on, Augustine, the narrator, describes his process of conviction of sin, vocation, justification, sanctification, and finally, glorification. He represents his entire life as telescoping down to a single trajectory – his salvation – and that one-pointed directionality organizes into narrative coherence the various elements of the life he describes. As he does this, Augustine depicts particular experiences in the creation of a narrative in which the "real details of life are always subordinate to the narrative of redemption in God's grace."[6]

This self-conscious process of picking and choosing particular events from his life resulted in the creation of what has been seen in Euro-American studies of spiritual autobiography as the ideal narrative form for representing a sinner's journey to grace. As Sacvan Bercovitch states, "The "real facts" become a means to a higher end, a vehicle for laying bare the soul – essential landmarks in the soul's journey to God. And the journey of the soul thus abstracted provides a guide for every man – of any age, any culture, indifferently past, passing, or to come – in the choices he must face, the war he must engage in between the forces of evil and good in his heart."[7] Picking and choosing events, thoughts, emotions, and

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such as Bunyan imagined the shape and meaning of their lives. And here the Confessions is a crucial measure of what has been sustained and lost. For Augustine bequeathed both a rationale for first-person singular accounts of personal history, and a way of unifying it; he thus initiates the genre of spiritual autobiography. The Confessions is designed to demonstrate the result of conversion, and to inspire others to emulate the example."

[6] Bell 1977, 111. "The effect is to take his story out of time, and transform the history into myth, canonizing the hero."

[7] Bercovitch 1975, *The Puritan Origins of the American Self*, (6).

particularly formative experiences, "making experience conform to a teleology of grace," created not only a narrative of Augustine's life story, but also the narrative of the ideal spiritual journey. For the generations of religious writers who followed in Augustine's literary footsteps, the desire to reproduce in writing the story of one's life within the narrative model first illustrated by *The Confessions* provided visible proof of one's conversion or salvation. We can compare the influence of *The Confessions* on Christian spiritual autobiography to that of the life story of the Buddha, complete with its twelve defining events, or, for Tibetans, to the life story of the yogi Milarepa, with his journey of purification and trials from black magic practitioner and murderer to the achievement of full enlightenment in one lifetime.

Following from this view of spiritual autobiography, such works were oriented towards helping a person to recognize his or her life story as an imitation or "repetition of other selves"[8] – most desirably, other "saved" selves. Desiring to locate the narrative of one's life within this model, an author might find herself consciously or unconsciously representing events and interpretations of these in such a way that they fit the salvific mold. In other words, the person worked to gather together a cohesive vision of his or her life over time, thereby perceiving life as a whole and complete process, whether or not that process has come to its inevitable conclusion. Karl Weintraub notes that it is in the "particular form in which an author undertakes to formulate a retrospective vision over a significant portion of his life, perceiving his life as process of interaction with a co-existent world," that we find "the essence of autobiography."[9]

[8] Harpham 1988, 44.

[9] Hindmarsh 2005, 264.

Owen Watkins echoes this sentiment when he says that a valid spiritual autobiography should consist in a "narrative dealing primarily with the writer's religious experience…written sufficiently long after the events for a coherent view to have been possible."[10] Thus this process of collecting one's experiences into a coherent narrative has been viewed as critical to the success of the project of spiritual autobiographical writing. We should note that while this view of the spiritual autobiography has shifted substantially from Watkins' view, written in 1972, at the same time, this general template still lingers beneath more "modern" or "post-modern" autobiographical forms as a kind of palimpsest.

However, as we can see from engaging with *The Drukpa Kunley Namthar*, at least some Tibetan autobiographies arise from a different view concerning the orientation toward representing one's life, and thereby employ different sets of strategies and have different expectations regarding the models of the spiritual and worldly qualities that could or should be presented by the saintly writer. These literary strategies mark the distinctive attempt of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* to break down and confound any sense of self-cohesiveness over time. They focus on the development of a particular kind of momentarily arising self-awareness—one that ruptures any attempt to draw a hard and fast line between so called "religious experience" and the enactment of ordinary life.

In addition to showcasing the narrator as having a mature and cohesive view of the self, the example of *The Confessions* also models the central figure as a person who possesses a

[10] Watkins 1972, 2.

keen ability to note and describe internal fluctuations in motivation, dedication, faith, effort, gratitude, and progress along the path of salvation. This narrator possesses a "serious intention of the mind whereby we may come to search out the truth and settle it effectually on the heart."[11] Such "settling" is demonstrated through the act of writing itself, an act which imagines a dialogue between two present selves, subject and object, established in separate sites, diary and heart. The notion of the dialogues that take place between two present selves is represented in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* by the narrator's engagement with a range of interlocutors who both exhort him as well as are exhorted by him to recognize and speak the truth.

However, while descriptions of a narrator's ability to turn the gaze inward to observe and to scrupulously and truthfully record every aspect of the spiritual journey at the same time as those were reconfigured into a narrative of redemption, may have demonstrated for the faithful a potent means for transformation, such practices also inevitably veered away from events, experiences, feelings or thoughts that did not conform to the overarching teleology. We might say that there is a problem inherent to this way of characterizing the process of spiritual transformation – a problem concerning the both the processes involved in telling the truth about oneself and about nature of the "truth" which is to be told.

This problem has been taken up by scholars in numerous fields, including religious studies, literary studies, and others and it concerns the author's distortion of the past, even in

[11] Webster 1996, 49.

the act of writing a narrative in which "there is moral imperative to tell the truth."[12] The process of telling the truth about the past requires the retrospective picking and choosing of certain memories considered "relevant" to the spiritual trajectory while ignoring or simply conveniently forgetting to include a range of others. The recognition that any attempt to record a life story, no matter how honest the author professes him- or herself to be, inevitably resorts to a project of fictionalization as the author struggles to form a cohesive and sensible narrative out of a vast reserve of flickering memories, has led to a much debated problematic in studies of the field. Should any biographical or autobiographical work ever be considered genuinely non-fictional? Or are all such works "fictional" (and both writers and scholars define this term in various ways) and therefore not "true"? Ultimately, we are led to question to what degree truth matters at all if by 'truth' we mean a factual representation of prior events or experiences. And with this we are brought back to the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* in which truth involves both an accurate assessment and representation of all dimensions of one's being – both faults and qualities - and also the recognition that any attempt to narratively coalesce the multiple dimensions of one's life is doomed to misrepresentation and hypocrisy as one struggles to fit the details and experiences into an explicit or implicitly understood model.

The *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* deliberately resists this impulse. As we have seen, for Drukpa Kunley, the good life, the life worth living, is not necessarily the life that can be unified through narrative. Seen on a meta-level, the "good" life, the life the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* valorizes, is the life in which the subject directly confronts whatever arises *as it arises in the*

[12] John Stachniewski and Anita Pacheco, ed. *Grace Abounding: With Other Spiritual Autobiographies*, 1998, pp. xiii.

moment. This involves the realization that the habitual desire to thread moments of experience into a cohesive or intelligible narrative chain is a project fraught with layers of self-hypocrisy and deception. In creating the fiction of our lives, in deciding that our lives should make up a story, we fabricate that story's narrative continuity and deceive ourselves and others as to the truth of how things actually are – transient, momentary, and constantly changing. The effort to create narrative and temporal coherence prevents the realization of this ever-changing nature of experience and traps us in complicated layers of self-deception.

Even without the example of a constructed autobiography such as St. Augustine's *Confessions,* we can observe that as soon as the idea of "my" story arises, there simultaneously arises the expectation that my story will include certain things and exclude others. For example, when I tell the story of my life as an academic, I instinctively include details that support this story and exclude others that do not conform to my ideal vision of myself as an academic. What else, we might ask, is a CV? For Drukpa Kunley, the creation of a cohesive self through narrative is a form of self-deception because it avoids confronting those aspects of experience that contradict the master narrative. It allows the pretense that real continuity exists between one moment of experience and another. Becoming attached to ideas about ourselves and to a sense of "me" extended over time, human beings expend tremendous energy in maintaining these fictions. The attachment to these deceptive storylines leads to further and further levels of misapprehension and hypocrisy.

As mentioned above in the Introduction, this idea that the act of composing an autobiography is more an act of fiction than a documenting of factual events is relatively recent

in Euro-American literary criticism.[13] Whereas it was once taken for granted and expected in the study of autobiography that such texts were nonfiction literary products in which real historical persons accurately and honestly represented the events, experiences, and vicissitudes of their lives, today it is more common to hear literary criticism scholars discussing what happens when the unspoken "contract" for truth between autobiographers and readers is ruptured.

What happens when the fundamental expectation that authors of autobiography will relate the facts of their lives exactly as they took place is thwarted, when the project of 'factual' representation is shown to be impossible? Does embellishing the details or re-ordering the events of a life in order to streamline them into a cohesive narrative violate the literary conventions that determine nonfiction as a genre? And beyond this, might not this fictionalization of 'real' life also undermine how we understand the ethics of what it means to live the good life, to be a good person? While these are questions that contemporary scholars of autobiography continue to grapple with, they are just as pertinent to our analysis of the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar.* We might say that the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* implicitly anticipated these issues long before any idea of "modern" or "post-modern" literary criticism became part of human consciousness.

In spite of the "fictions" entailed by narrative processes, we have seen how the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* does value the use of narrative as long as it functions to disrupt the mind's patterns of creating and then attempting to reify an ideal vision of the person by instead

[13] Paul John Eakin, *The Ethics of Life Writing* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004); Mircaela Maftei, *The Fiction of Autobiography* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013).

revealing the truth of who that person is. Through this disruption, rather than reifying, narrative instead works to unravel and undermine mind's subtle, but powerful methods of self-construction and deception, liberating one into a more spontaneous and joyful experience of life.

The *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* demonstrates this liberative process through narrative strategies that mimic the moment-to-moment nature of experience, thereby disrupting the habitual tendency to force such experiences to conform to ongoing narrative arcs. The content of each composition in the *Namthar* demonstrates how every moment of experience presents the possibility of acting, responding, or being in harmony with a situation as it arises – the *Namthar* reveals the context-specific momentariness of experience. We have seen this, for example, in the way many of the compositions set up their content with the introduction of a specific question to which the narrator must address his response. From one composition to the next the content can shift radically, demanding that Drukpa Kunley adjust his responses to harmonize with each situation in the moment it arises.

Not only through the content of individual compositions, but also the *Namthar* as a whole embodies this expression of context-specific truth by its mixture of a variety of literary styles and subjects – through its textual cacophony. Generally, due to the persistent human habit of creating the story of "me" – a "me" we hope will be the exception to, who can hold its own in the face of the constant change and dissolution that lies at the root of every experience, we are unable to relax into the momentariness of our experience. Knowing this, Drukpa Kunley flourishes his literary skills as a way to instruct and retrain the mind to recognize how the habit

of self-narration is merely a conceptual overlay onto raw experience. He achieves this linguistically, using words, language, rhetorical devices, styles, moods, and genres. Allowing each individual bead of experience to remain distinct, he reveals how we fail to see these moments for what they are when we force them to be part of a master-narrative chain. Resisting this impulse permits us to relax, as Drukpa Kunley does, into the richness and fullness of our experience. We recognize how, in the act of normalizing, labeling, and forcing our experiences into conceptual configurations, we lose the wonder, the delight, and the joy of things as they are.

As we have seen, this wonder, this joy, this delight in things as they are is one of the main themes traced throughout the analyses of the *namthar.* It accompanies almost all of Drukpa Kunley's literary expressions. It is also found everywhere in the oral stories of Drukpa Kunley and in their tellings. The attempt to represent experience directly, as it is, is shown to be inseparable from delight. As he attends to the momentariness of his experience, Drukpa Kunley delights in showing how we can avoid the trap of self-deception and represent ourselves honestly. Trusting in the "truth" of the immediate moment, he also trusts himself to represent that truth – the truth that who we are cannot be unified, cannot be reduced to a single identity, but is continuously re-forged in every moment, every context, every situation, every composition.

The *Drukpa Kunley Namthar's* use of multiple genres, including its mixing of genres within genres, such as didactic prose sections that contain spontaneous songs (*mgur ma*), lists of colloquial or popular sayings, stories, or commentaries on quotations from teachers or

Sutras, is psychologically astute in its recognition that these rapid transitions from one genre to another keep the reader off balance, mocking and making fun of the human tendency to constantly seek out sources of reliance. As soon as one source is established, it is withdrawn and another takes its place. Bombarded by one literary mode after another, the reader has no opportunity to become complacent or distracted. This cacophony of textual mediums in the *Drukpa Kunley Namthar* demands the reader's ongoing attention and response. It "challenges the reader to alternative forms of existence," suggesting novel alternatives to habitual thoughts and actions.[14] Like the Buddha, Drukpa Kunley recognizes that people hear only what they have the capacity to hear: "Whether my example is harmful or not is determined primarily by the different types of human intelligence."[15] Thus the same themes, the same messages, communicated through multiple forms, will inevitably permeate into the minds and bodies of the recipients, just as the 84,000 teachings of the Buddha were always intended to do.

Ultimately, there can be found no single ethical person or message that is communicated through Drukpa Kunley's life, but a plethora of tellings, constructings, and refigurings that function to shift our experience of the way things are. The truths displayed by Drukpa Kunley are always conditional, always relational, always re-awoken into the present moment by the situations in which and to which the saint is summoned.

[14] Paul Ricoeur, *Figuring the Sacred* (1995), 220.

[15] *Mig ltos la gnod mi gnod mi'i blo rigs gtso*, Volume Ka 1978, 25a.2.

Appendix I

Editions of the *'Brug pa Kun legs Rnam thar* and List of Compositions

(DK1) 'Brug pa Kun dga' legs pa. ***'Brug pa kun dga' legs pa'i rnam thar dang nyams mgur dang zhal gdams sogs.*** (*The Life Story, Songs, and Advice of 'Brug pa Kun dga' Legs pa*.) A reproduction of a clear print from the 1892 blocks carved at Gnyal dre'u lhas. 705 folio pages in four volumes, Ka, Kha, Ga, Nga. Darjeeling: Kargyud Sungrab Nyamso Khang, 1978. TBRC Work # W1KG10253.

(**DK2**) **'Brug pa Kun dga' legs pa.** ***Rnal 'byor pa'i ming can kun dga' legs pa'i rnam thar byung tshul lhug par smras pa zhib mo'i rtsing mo ha la ho le sna zin spu zin nas bkod pa zhes bya ba bzhugs so,*** (*The Story of the Liberation of the Yogi Named Kun dga' Legs pa: The Finest of Crude Memoirs, Spoken Casually, and Slapped Together in Any Which Way*). Ed. Yeshe Chodar. 2 Volumes (Ka) and (Kha, Ga, Nga). Sarnath, Varanasi: Legs Bshad Gter Mdzod Khang, Sarnath. 1972. TBRC Work # W2CZ8023.

(**DK3**) **'Brug pa Kun dga' legs pa.** ***'Brug pa kun legs kyi rnam thar.*** (*The Biography of 'Brug pa Kun legs*.) Beijing: Bod Ljongs Mi Dmangs Dpe Skrun Khang, 2005. This is the most recent edition of the 'Brug pa Kun legs rnam thar.

*****NB: The first set of numbers and the numbers in the parentheses below refer to the page and folio numbers in **DK1.** Page numbers for **DK2** and **DK3** are in parentheses after the description of the composition.

******NB: For **DK1, DK2**, and **DK3** I have indicated where the texts have obvious breaks between one composition and the next. E.g., (**DK2:** 10.3-14.5 No Break.) or (**DK2:** 10.3-14.5. Break Here.) See also the discussion about this on pp. 78-79.

A. Volume Ka

Volume Ka: (**DK1:** 1-337) (**DK2:** Vol I, 1-359) (**DK3:** 1-272)

1. (1a) **Title:** ***Rnal 'byor pa'i ming can kun dga' legs pa'i rnam thar byung tshul lhug par smras pa zhib mo'i rtsing mo ha la ho le sna zin spu zin nas bkod pa*** (*The Story of the Liberation of the Yogi Named Kun dga' Legs pa: The Finest of Crude Memoirs, Spoken Casually, and Slapped Together in Any Which Way*). **(DK2:** 1.1-1.3) **(DK3:** 1b.1-2)

2-4. (1b.2-2b.4): Supplication to ‘Brug pa Kun dga’ legs pa. (**DK2:** 1.4-3.2) (**DK3:** 2-3.9)

4. (2b.4-2b.6): Introduction of Rationale. No Break. (**DK2:** 3.2-3.8 Break Here.) (**DK3:** 3.9-3.14. No Break.)

4-9. (2b.6-5a.4): Religious Lineage; Birth; Lineage; Family Lineage; Childhood; Political Upheaval; Renunciation of Worldly Life; First Teachings Received; Monastic Vows Taken. Break Here. (**DK2:** 3.8-8.9. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 3.14-7.10. Break Here.)

9-12. (5a.4-6b.2): ‘Brug pa Kun legs travels to Rwa lung, ‘Brug, Sgo mo, and back to Rwa lung. He attends the cremation of Rgyal dbang rin po che (Most likely Rgyal dbang rje Kun dga’ Dpal ‘byor, 1428-1476). ‘Brug pa Kun legs is 21 years old. Statement on unconventional behavior. Break Here. (**DK2:** 8.9-11.4. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 7.10-9.14. Break Here.)

12-13. (6b.2-7a.3): Journey to Kong po to meet 7th Karmapa, Chos grags rgya mtso (1454-1506). Discussion with him on the nature of ‘ritual’ as this applies to the generation of *bodhicitta*. ‘Brug pa Kun legs has a vision. No Break. (**DK2:** 11.4-12.10. No Break.) (**DK3:** 9.14-10.13 No break)

13. (7a.3-7a.5): Meeting with the attendant, Chos bzang po. Receives the *Bsnyen sgrub phreng skor* cycle of teachings. No Break. (**DK2:** 12.10-12.15. No Break.) (**DK3:** 10.13-10.17. No Break.)

13-14. (7a.5-7b.1): Meets with Kong po Sangs rgyas dpal ba to receive Me long skor teachings of Lcer sgom pa (Lce sgom Shes rab rdo rje, ca. 1140/50-1220) No Break. (**DK2:** 12.15-13.2. No Break.) **(DK3:** 10.17-11.1. No Break.)

14-15. (7b.1-8a.4): Pilgrimage to Tsa ri chig char and Gnas nang. Journey to Dbus. Meeting with prefect, Don yod rdo rje rgyal po dpal bzang po. Discourse on Rnying ma view. No Break. (**DK2:** 13.2-14.12. No Break.) (**DK3:** 11.1-12.5. No Break.)

15-18. (8a.4-9b.2): ‘Brug pa Kun legs stays at the *stūpa* of Mon rdo. Discussion of section in the *gsung ‘bum* of Rgyal dbang rje where there is a quote by the yogi ‘Khrul zhig Nam mkha’ rnam ‘byor. Commentary on this quotation. No Break. (**DK2:** 14.12-17.11. No Break) (**DK3:** 12.5-14.9. No Break)

18-19. (9b.2-10a.6): Goddess falls in love with ‘Brug pa Kun legs. He imitates a *mgur ma* for the lama of the valley of Jo mo lha ri. Break Here. (**DK2:** 17.11-19.3. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 14.9-15.14. Break Here.)

19-21. (10a.6-11a.1): Discussion on Rdzogs chen and Mahāmudrā in Mon in response to statement by Rdzog chen Wa lung pa. Break Here. (**DK2:** 19.3-20.8. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 15.14-16.14. Break Here.)

21-24. (11a.1-12b.3): Return to Tibet. At Shol po ko brag meets with Bsod nams mchog ldan, his main teacher./ Discussion on practice of the Six Yogas of Naropā./ Includes a meeting with someone named Rje Lha btsun pa./ Discussion on signs of spiritual progress./ Meeting with Bsod nams mchog ldan in Shangs zur khang./ Journey to 'Brug Monastery with a letter./'Brug pa Kun legs receives transmission of the *Dohakośa* of Saraha from Byang chub Sdings pa./ From 'Brug, he makes a pilgrimage to Lha sa. Sings crazy song. No Break. (**DK2:** 20.8-23.19 No break) (**DK3:** 16.15-19.8 No break)

24-25. (12b.3-13a.1): Discussion with Chos rje Skal bzang po on teachings of 'Brug pa Bka' brgyud. No Break. (**DK2:** 23.19-24.10. No Break.**)** (**DK3:** 19.8-19.17. No Break.)

25-26. (13a.1-13b.5): Spontaneous song (*mgur*) composed to a donor exposing the hypocrisies of all religious and secular actors. 'Brug pa Kun legs ends by ironically referring to himself in the same light. The donor is pleased and offers him cooked fish for alms. No Break. (**DK2:** 24.10-26.8. No Break.) (**DK3:** 19.17-21.4. No Break.)

26-28. (13b.5-14b.3): Response to Dharma Lord Skyab se concerning a tenet by 'Brug pa Kun legs' teacher, 'Brug pa Kun dga' dpal 'byor (also Rgyal dbang rje, the teacher of 'Brug pa Kun legs and of the madman of Gtsang), on the *lhan cig* or *sahaja* doctrine. No Break. (**DK2:** 26.8-28.3. No Break.) (**DK3:** 21.4-22.12. No Break.)

28-30. (14b.3-15b.4): Discussion with Bla ma Thar pa, a *dge bshes* from Zhwa lu Monastery on the hypocrisy of religious practitioners and degradation of Buddhist teachings. Response to question from Rnying ma pa Slob dpon of Thar pa gling at Hot Springs (*Chu tshan kha*) on the definitive meaning, *nītārtha*. No Break. (**DK2:** 28.3-30.9. No Break.) (**DK3:** 22.12-24.6. No Break.)

30-31. (15b.4-16a.3): Journey to Mon and discourse on Rdzogs chen with a Bla ma Dbang phyug. Quotes a song by Yang dgon pa (1213-1258). No Break. (**DK2:** 30.9-31.6. No Break.) (**DK3:** 24.6-24.20. No Break.)

31-33. (16a.3-17a.2): Discussion with a theologian named 'Ol kha ba on a 'Brug pa Bka' brgyud prayer. Quotations from Yang dgon pa, Yon rdor (?) and Mi la Ras pa. Discussion ends with a description of what makes up meditation in the 'Brug pa Bka' brgyud lineage. Discussion with the Dharma Lord 'Ug pa Lung pa. No Break. (**DK2:** 31.6-32.15. No Break.) (**DK3:** 24.20-26.1. No Break.)

33-34. (17a.2-17b.1): Journey to Mon. Commentary on sin of planting rice, going on pilgrimage, etc. No Break. (**DK2:** 32.15-35.1. No Break.) (**DK3:** 26.7-27.1. No Break.)

34-35. (17b.1-18a.6). Three short passages where ‘Brug pa Kun legs goes to different places and has small Dharma interactions. Dga’ ldan, Lha sa, and a debate. No Break. (**DK2:** 35.1-36.2. No Break.) (**DK3:** 27.1-28.12. No Break.)

35-39. (18a.6-20a.1): A discussion on the words of Snyug la rje about remaining in the state of “uncontrived mind” (*sems ma bcos pa*). Quotes from Phag mo gru pa and Atiśa. Question from a yogi on how to eliminate suffering from mind’s continuity (*rang gi rgyud kyi nyon mongs pa gsha’ ma rang zlog pa’i thabs shig byed na gang phan*). ‘Brug pa Kun legs tells a story or parable about how to be a proper monk. No Break. (**DK2:** 36.2-39.6. No Break.) (**DK3:** 28.12-30.21. No Break.)

39-40. (20a.1-20b.2) Discourse on *Gcod yul* practice. **DK3** spells this as “gcod yul”. No Break .(**DK2:** 39.6-40.11. No Break.) (**DK3:** 30.21-31.20. No Break.)

40-41. (20b.2-21a.3) ‘Brug pa Kun legs stays at an inn and the people gathered there ask him which school of Buddhism and which doctrines are the best ones. Quote from Yang dgong pa. No Break. (**DK2:** 40.11-41.19. No Break.) (**DK3:** 31.19-32.20. No Break.)

41-43. (21a.3-22a.2) A discussion with an ascetic traveling in Nepal who is about to drink alcohol thinking that if one remains in a state of non-attachment, this is fine. ‘Brug pa Kun legs gives a long discourse in which he challenges the notion that being “non-attached” is a simple or easy state of mind to achieve and maintain. It is easy to “think” one is non-attached, but is it actually easy to do? No Break. (**DK2:** 41.19-43.16. No Break.) (**DK3:** 32.20-34.8. No Break.)

43-44. (22a.2-22b.5) A discourse on following the rules of the *Vinaya*—who is currently in accord with these rules? And how does one remain in accord with these rules? ‘Brug pa Kun legs answers these questions. No Break. (**DK2:** 43.16-45.7. No Break.) (**DK3:** 34.8-35.13. No Break.)

44-45. (22b.5-23a.1) Someone asks ‘Brug pa Kun legs to talk about a Dharma topic and he chooses “Leave profit and gain to others, take loss and duties on oneself.” No Break. (**DK2:** 45.7-45.15. No Break.) (**DK3:** 35.13-35.19 No Break.)

45. (23a.1-23a.4) Some monks are arguing that since they lost their monastic domains, they must form an army for the benefit of the Dharma. ‘Brug pa Kun legs argues against this. No Break. (**DK2:** 45.15-46.6. No Break.) (**DK3:** 35.19-36.6. No Break.)

45-46. (23a.4-23b.5) Section on composition. ‘Brug pa Kun legs is told that he is a good writer and asked to describe what he sees as valuable about writing. No Break. (**DK2:** 46.6-47.8. No Break.) (**DK3:** 36.6-37.2. No Break.)

46-47. (23b.5-24a.2) Short section where some people ask ‘Brug pa Kun legs which prayers he most likes. He describes a prayer by the *Bodhisattva* Mdzes pa’i tog in the *‘Phags pa gser ‘od dam pa mdo* and another hymn to Mañjuśrī called *Shes bya’i mkha’ dbyings ma*. No Break. (**DK2:** 47.8-48.1. No Break.) (**DK3:** 37.2-37.13. No Break.)

47-48. (24a.2-24b.4) Short description of a visit to Bya yul, the people who live there, Sku skye Rin po che, the *nang so* Stag rtse nas Yon mchog, his wife Dkar mo nas, and the Khri dpon (myriarch) Bkra shis dar rgyas. Dkar mo nas is at the meditation college (*sgrub sde*) of Gsal rje. Short song composed at the wish of an old woman using a water mill (*chu skor*) as the dominant metaphor. Short song composed at the request of an old man in an inn who wishes ‘Brug pa Kun legs to pray for him. Break Here. (**DK2:** 48.1-49.10. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 37.13-38.16. Break Here.)

48-51. (24b.4-26a.1) In Bya, ‘Brug pa Kun legs responds to the comments of some *dge bshes* that he does not wear the robes of a monk, nor does he wear the dress of a *rtogs ldan* (a realized one). Many comments on the hypocrisy of monks and yogins and numerous “self-statements” of who he himself is. Break Here. (**DK2:** 49.10-52.1. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 38.16-40.15. Break Here.)

51-54. (26a.1-27b.1) ‘Brug pa Kun legs engages in conversations with a monk, a servant, a lord, and a healer. The content of each discussion concerns how each person states that they would rather be something other than what they are, as that would be an easier life. ‘Brug pa Kun legs refutes each statement with Dharma teaching on the nature of what they are. Somehow, these four anecdotes are connected, but they feel very much like fiction—as if ‘Brug pa Kun legs make them up in order to illustrate certain points. Break Here. (**DK2:** 52.1-55.7. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 40.15-43.5. Break Here.)

54-55. (27b.1-28a.5) A discussion of karma with a yogi and a discussion of the authenticity of *gter ma* with a *dge bshes*. ‘Brug pa Kun legs seems to think that one should not edit the words of the Buddha and that *gter ma* are a fraud. No Break. (**DK2:** 55.7-57.1. No Break.) (**DK3:** 43.5-44.12. No Break.)

55-56. (28a.5-28b.2) A discussion with a group of yogis performing a *ganacakra*. They are not using the “secret language of the Buddha” (*sangs rgyas gsang ba’i skad*) and ‘Brug pa Kun legs quotes from the *Hevajratantra* to remind them of this. But his own statement is somewhat ambiguous—does he, or does he not believe in using this kind of ritual practice? No Break. (**DK2:** 57.1-57.13. No Break.) (**DK3:** 44.12-44.21. No Break.)

56-59. (28b.2-30a.1) A yogi reprimands ‘Brug pa Kun legs for not taking up his ‘Brug pa Bka’ brgyud pa responsibilities at Rwa lung. ‘Brug pa Kun legs sings a long song in response that expresses who and what he is, and how he lives his life including quotations from the *Garland*

of the Essence of the Human Dharma (*Mi chos gnad kyi phreng ba*). Break Here. (**DK2:** 57.13-60.9. No Break.) (**DK3:** 44.21-47.3. No Break.)

59-61. (30a.1- 31a.6) Two questions: Who is the best donor? Who is the best Lord? Question by a Bka' gdams pa monk on the benefits of the *Precious Heap of Parables* (*Dpe chos rin chen spungs pa*). 'Brug pa Kun legs gives a long discourse, which may include examples from this text about the restrictions on eating meat. It is possible that this section on not eating meat is a separate section. No Break. (**DK2:** 60.9-63.6. No Break.) (**DK3:** 47.3-49.7. No Break.)

61-62. (31a.6-31b.6) A discussion on the writing of *rnam thar* as a listing of events in one's life. 'Brug pa Kun legs refutes this position by giving examples of how most *rnam thar* are merely like debtor's sheets. No Break. (**DK2:** 63.6-64.9. No Break.) (**DK3:** 49.7-50.3. No Break.)

62-63. (31b.6-32a.3) A discussion with a group of people who were gathered together to discuss the problems of the times. They ask 'Brug pa Kun legs where such problems come from. He talks about "group karma." No Break. (**DK2:** 64.9-64.20. No Break.) (**DK3:** 50.3-50.12. No Break.)

63-64. (32a.3-32b.4) A discussion with the Dharma Lord Snyug la rje rin po che on the benefits of the Bka' gdams pa tradition and teachings. 'Brug pa Kun legs is not enthusiastic at first, but as he reads the *Book of the Kadampa* (The *Pha chos bu chos*, two volumes; teachings of Atiśa and 'Brom ston), he expresses much respect for these teachings. He quotes from a number of other Bka' gdams pa texts as well. No Break. (**DK2:** 64.20-66.5. No Break.) (**DK3:** 50.12-51.12. No Break.)

64-66. (32b.4-33b.2) A dharma talk using the example of a game called "*Mi smangs*" as a metaphor for understanding the true meaning of Dharma. No Break. (**DK2:** 66.5-67.20. No Break.) (**DK3:** 51.12-52.19. No Break.)

66-68. (33b.2-34b.6) A question about devotion to the Lord of the Phag mo gru pa. The questioner wants to know the reasons for generating devotion to this lord. This section includes a letter from the Karmapa. (The Fourth Red Hat Karmapa (*zha dmar*). Chos kyi Grags pa ye shes dpal bzang po (1453-1524)?) concerning subduing the wars of the time. 'Brug pa Kun legs reflects on the Karmapa's words and then sings a song to support his views. No Break. (**DK2:** 67.20-70.16. No Break.) (**DK3:** 52.19-54.19. No Break.)

68-70. (34b.6-35b.3) 'Brug pa Kun legs is asked why he does not make offerings to the abbots of Rwa lung. He responds that there are now too many of them and therefore it is difficult to have pure mind toward all of them. No Break. (**DK2:** 70.16-72.7. No Break.) (**DK3:** 54.19-56.1. No Break.)

70-72. (35b.3-36b.1) Discourse on mind essence (*sems kyi ngo bo*) with quotations from the *Chig bsdus* (*Collection of Expressions*) and the *Sdud pa* (*The Condensed Perfection of Wisdom*). No Break. (**DK2:** 72.7-74.1. No Break.) (**DK3:** 56.1-57.6. No Break.)

72-74. (36b.1-37b.5) Defense of the Bka' brgyud order in the form of a song structured like traditional debate, but very tongue-in-cheek and poking fun at both logicians and the Bka' brgyud, and then going on to argue both the merits and hypocrisies of *tāntrikas*. No Break. (**DK2:** 74.1-76.16. No Break.) (**DK3:** 57.6-59.10. No Break.)

74-78. (37b.5-39b.4) Benefactor asks 'Brug pa Kun legs to compose a prayer to gods. He sings two songs—first an imitation, second a "self-statement." No break. (**DK2:** 76.16-80.18. No Break.) (**DK3:** 59.10-62.9. No Break.)

78-79. (39b.4-40a.2) A song mocking poor people. No Break. (**DK2:** 80.18-81.12. No Break.) (**DK3:** 62.9-62.21. No Break.)

79-81. (40a.2-41a.1) A song about women's superiority in tantra. No Break. (**DK2:** 81.12-83.12. No Break.) (**DK3:** 62.22-64.10. No Break.)

81. (41a.1-41a.3) What to look for in a teacher (short). No Break. (**DK2:** 83.12-84.1. No Break.) (**DK3:** 64.10-47.17. No Break.)

81-84. (41a.3-42b.4): Long, funny song mocking the trope of remembering past lives. No Break. (**DK2:** 84.1-87.5. No Break.) (**DK3:** 64.17-66.22. No Break.)

84-87. (42b.4-44a.1) Discourse on the 7 Signs of long-life for the benefit of Thar pa Gling pa, a disciple of Chos kyi rdo rje. No Break. (**DK2:** 87.5-89.17. No Break.) (**DK3:** 66.22-68.21. No Break.)

87-89. (44a.1-45a.4) Long song on the difficulty of being a genuine monastic and another joyful song on his own practices of cultivation (*ah ho rang e* go!). No Break. (**DK2:** 89.17-92.9. No Break.) (**DK3:** 68.21-70.19. No Break.)

89-90. (45a.4-45b.2) Use of *kāvya* style poetry in a composition. No Break. (**DK2:** 92.9-93.4. No Break.) (**DK3:** 70.20-71.11)

90-91. (45b.2-46b.1) A discourse on the importance of guru yoga (*bla ma rnal 'byor*) and an explanation of the song, *Calling the Guru from Afar*, (*Bla ma rgyang 'bod*). Break Here. (**DK2:** 93.4-95.3. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 71.11-72.21. Break Here.)

92-93. (46b.1-47a.2) Question from a yogi about practice once one has realized the deity in yidam practice. Break Here. (**DK2:** 95.3-96.5. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 72.22-73.18. Break Here.)

93-95. (47a.2-48a.5) Discourse on "demons" (*Māra*?) followed by a song. Break Here. (**DK2:** 96.5-98.19. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 73.19-75.20. Break Here.)

95-97. (48a.5-49b.5) Discourse on why not to discipline his son, Zhing skyong 'brug grags to his wife. Discourse on keeping the right company. Short explanation of the *Garland of the Religions of Humans*, (*Mi chos gnad kyi 'phreng ba*). Break Here. (**DK2:** 98.19-102.1. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 75.21-78.8. Break Here.)

99-97. (49b.5-50b.4) On the style of writing his *rnam thar* and whether or not it appears like a treatise instead of a biography. He quotes from the *Vajra Verses* from the *Instructions of Niguma*, (*Ni gu ma'i khrid yig*). Break Here. (**DK2:** 102.1**-**103.9. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 78.8-79.16. Break Here.)

100-105. (50b.4-53a.3) Quotation of a "safe passage letter" (*lam yig*) composed by Gtsang smyon He ru ka and then 'Brug pa Kun legs's satiric composition of the same. In this he refers to himself by the title of 'Brug smyon. Break Here. (**DK2:** 103.19-109.3. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 79.17-83.16. Break Here.)

105-106. (53a.3-53b.5) A discourse on keeping or breaking tantric vows. Break Here. (**DK2:** 109.3-110.11. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 83.16-84.18. Break Here.)

106-120. (53b.5-60b.5) A divination done for 'Brug pa Kun legs by a diviner named Sgrol ma skyabs in Yar 'brug btsan yul. This is very long. Break Here. (**DK2:** 110.11-125.9. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 84.18-95.20. No Break.)

120-121. (60b.5-61a.4) Discussion of Nāropa and Tilopa. Break Here. (**DK2:** 125.9-126.7. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 95.20-96.14. Break Here.)

121-124. (61a.4-62b.2) Discussion of creating a religious bond (*chos 'brel*) with a teacher on the way to Shel grong. Break Here. (**DK2:** 126.7-129.5. No Break.) (**DK3:** 96.14-98.19. No Break.)

124-125. (62b.2- 63a.6) 'Brug pa Kun legs stays in a small meditation cell at Dga' ba gdong, west of Lha sa where he gets sick and sings a song reflecting on the bad practices of the meditators there. Break Here. (**DK2:** 129.5- 130.18. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 98.19-100.1. Break Here.)

125-127. (63a.6-64a.3) 'Brug pa Kun legs imitates the form of a song sung by a very well-known *cham* dancer. Break Here. (**DK2:** 130.18-132.10. No Break.) (**DK3:** 100.2-101.9. No Break.)

127-128. (64a.3-64b.2) 'Brug pa Kun legs gives a defense of the 'Brug pa Bka' brgyud practice of having wives and children. Break Here. (**DK2:** 132.10-133.10. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 101.9-102.4. No Break.)

128-129. (64b.2-65a.2) A conversation with Pad ma gling pa, the *gter ston* of Bum thang. 'Brug pa Kun legs refutes Pad ma gling pa's comments. Break Here. (**DK2:** 133.10-134.12. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 102.4-102.22. No Break.)

129. (65a.2-65a.5) A response to the Dharma Lord Lum pa after receiving the Sa skya pa teachings on the path and its fruit by 'Brug pa Kun legs. Break Here. (**DK2:** 134.12-135.2. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 102.22-103.8. Break Here.)

129-131. (65a.5-66a.6) At Sman thang rdza sna, 'Brug pa Kun legs asks the Dharma Lord Rin po che bzang po for the teaching on the long life of Padmasambhava. This section is a supplication prayer. Break Here. (**DK2:** 135.2-137.8. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 103.9-105.11. No Break.)

131-134. (66a.6-67b.5) 'Brug pa Kun legs wonders whether or not there is "pure" Dharma (*chos rnam dag*) being practiced anywhere. He goes visiting different places and practitioners and sings a song about each. "I the yogi have visited…". Ends with him saying that "having visited the kingdoms and not wishing to increase the doubtful thinking of Hearers and Solitary Realizers, he remains self-controlled (silent)." Break Here. (**DK2:** 137.8-140.9. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 105.11-107.17. No Break.)

134-137. (67b.5-69a.5) 'Brug pa Kun legs relates that the 'Brug pa Lord, Rgyal dbang rje has taken rebirth in the land of Bya according to his own prediction. 'Brug pa Kun legs wishes to go there and meet the new incarnation, but is unable to make the journey due to his wife and children. Instead, he receives a letter from Rin po che and writes one in return. Very beautiful, lyrical letter of praises and devotion to his teacher. Break Here. (**DK2:** 140.9-143.13. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 107.17-110.2. No Break.)

137-138. (69a.5-69b.3) A small section on writing his biography. 'Brug pa Kun legs is challenged by some people who claim he is only writing to criticize the faults of others. He claims he writes what comes to him spontaneously with no thoughts of hurting others. Break Here. (**DK2:** 143.13-144.5. No Break.) (**DK3:** 110-2-110.12. No Break.)

138-139. (69b.3-70a.1) At the request of the Dharma Lord Dbang tshang pa, 'Brug pa Kun legs composes a prayer to the protector deity Zhing skyong. Break Here. (**DK2:** 144.5-145.1. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 110.12-111.4. No Break.)

139-140. (70a.1-70b.5) A discussion on the spontaneous "writing" of *dohā* where 'Brug pa Kun legs uses the verb *thon* to describe how the songs emerge. 'Brug pa Kun legs then composes a spontaneous *dohā.* Break Here. (**DK2:** 145.1-146.15. No Break.) (**DK3:** 111.4-112.9. No Break.)

140-142. (70b.5-71b.2) 'Brug pa Kun legs gives the reading transmission for the *mgur 'bum* of Yang dgon pa. People remark that the *mgur* of Mi la Ras pa and others cannot be imitated, so

'Brug pa Kun legs sings some *mgur* in order to show that he can imitate these great masters. (No break) (**DK2:** 146.15-148.4. No Break.) (**DK3:** 112.9-113.11. No Break.)

142-147. (71b.2-74a.5) 'Brug pa Kun legs is asked to compose an "offering of the leftovers" to the wrathful protectors. He also sings a song on the afflictions of samsara and his sadness at that and another song about effort. This section contains three separate songs. Break Here. (**DK2:** 148.4-154.1. Break Here.)(**DK3:** 113.11-118.1. No Break.)

147-150. (74a.5-75b.1) The Lord of Rwa lung asks 'Brug pa Kun legs to live at Bde chen phug in Mon. He refuses, saying that there is no indication that he will always want to stay in Mon. The Lord of Rwa lung tells him to find a capable man to hold the monastery. 'Brug pa Kun legs then expounds on the qualities one would need in order to be a capable man. Break Here. (**DK2:** 154.1-156.13 Break Here.) (**DK3:** 118.2-119.20. No Break.)

150-151 . (75b.1-76a.1) 'Brug pa Kun legs composes a song punning on *sa* in Sa skya. Break Here. (**DK2:** 156.13-157.13. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 119.20-120.14. Break Here.)

151-152. (76a.1-76b.1) 'Brug pa Kun legs composes a long-life ritual song in honor of his son, Zhing skyong 'Brug grags. Break Here. (**DK2:** 157.13-158.13. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 120.15-121.9. Break Here.)

152-154. (76b.1-77b.1) 'Brug pa Kun legs responds to his wife's question about his contrariness in saying the opposite to most other lamas. When they say, "let wealthy people give alms and you should be nice to weak old people," 'Brug pa Kun legs says, "let wealthy people not give alms; let poor people eat whatever they can find," etc. She wants to know his intention in saying these kinds of things. Break Here. (**DK2**: 158.13-160.13. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 121.10-122.21. Break Here.)

154-155. (77b.1-78a.1) At a tantric feast 'Brug pa Kun legs is asked to compose a song in which he mixes together metaphors and literal meaning are mixed (*dpe don bsgrigs pa'i mgur ma cig gyis dang zer ba la 'di byas so*). Break Here. (**DK2:** 160.13-161.11. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 122.22-123.18. Break Here.)

155-159. (78a.1-80a.5) 'Brug pa Kun legs meets an enlightened yogi named Klo bo ba from Mustang, who asks him a long series of questions. Break Here. (**DK2:** 161.16-166.11. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 123.19-127.12. Break Here.)

159-162. (80a.5-81b.6) 'Brug pa Kun legs discusses *bsangs* rituals with a group of Bon pos. They claim that their rituals explain the origins of everything, including where the rocks come from. 'Brug pa Kun legs, tongue-in-cheek, claims to have a smoke purification ritual that explains the origins of rocks. He is just making this up on the spot. Then the Bon pos ask him for another

song and he composes a song on Dharma practices. Break Here. (**DK2:** 166.11-170.1. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 127.13-130.4. Break Here.)

162-164. (81b.6-82b.2) 'Brug pa Kun legs's old mother dies in 'Brug and his sister is very sad. He gives her a dzomo and some other minor gifts. When he is about to leave, the people ask him for a song. He sings a song about whether there is anything to return to in 'Brug. Break Here. (**DK2:** 170.1-171.8. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 130.5-131.4. Break Here.)

164-167. (82b.2-84a.1) 'Brug pa Kun legs attends a *gaṇacakra* with hermits and donors in which they ask him to give a discourse on two texts: the *Snyan brgyud 'khor ba rgyun gcod ma* and the *Sangs rgyas zhag bdun ma*. He quotes from the *Deb ther sngon po* to explain the lineage of these texts. He then composes a spontaneous song based on a local proverb. Break Here. (**DK2:** 171.9-174.12. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 131.5-133.15. Break Here.)

167-170. (84a.1-85b.1) 'Brug pa Kun legs has two dreams. In the first, he receives a letter from Vajradhara which contains instructions to yogis who have realized "even a little bit of heat." In the second, he receives a letter from Kun tu bzang po chastising the tantrikas for not making a genuine truth of their teachings and practice. Break Here. (**DK2:** 174.13**-**177.16 Break Here.) (**DK3:** 133.16-136.2. Break Here.)

170-173. (85b.1-87a.6) 'Brug pa Kun legs negotiates between some monks whose fields have been destroyed by hail and the group of demons held to be responsible for the hail. He first talks back and forth with the demons, and finally he writes a letter to the chief of the Demons requesting that they not send any more hail. Break Here. (**DK2:** 177.16-181.16. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 136.3-139.4. Break Here.)

175-178. (87a.6-89b.2) A series of letters written either in the Horse Year, eighth month, on the eighth day, or on the tenth day, from "the top of Mt. Meru in Akaniṣṭha," (*'Og min lhun po rtse nas bris*). These letters are primarily addressed to *sngags pa(s)* who, while keeping their tantric vows seem to ignore the primary and secondary vows of basic conduct and *bodhicitta*. The last letter seems to actually be two letters—the first is by 'Brug pa Kun legs to a group of monks; the second is quoted by 'Brug pa Kun legs, but seems to have been sent by the Buddha to Āchārya Nāgārjuna from Bya rgod phung po ri, (*bya rgod phung po'i ri na/ bcom ldan thub pa chen pos/ slob dpon glu sgrub la bka' shog 'di 'dra cig skyel bar gnang byung*). Break Here. (**DK2:** 181.16-186.10. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 139.5-142.17. No Break.)

178-180. (89b.2-90b.2) A hymn written by 'Brug pa Kun legs to the *yakṣasas* at the request of the *nang so* (prefect) Dpon blon at the palace of Chos rgyal. This section does not seem to be written in the first person. Break Here. (**DK2:** 186.10-188.9. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 142.17-144.6. No Break.)

180-183. (90b.2-92a.4) An illusion (*'phrul snang*) appears to 'Brug pa Kun legs in the middle of the night. He composes a long song that is a continual play on the word *rnam thar.* Here too, it is difficult to say if this song is written in the first person. He uses (or someone uses) the name Kun legs at the beginning of each refrain and there is no use of the personal pronoun, "I." The song ends with "thus he said," (*ces smras so*). Break Here. (**DK2:** 188.9-191.19. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 144.6-146.17. Break Here.)

183-184. (92a.4-92b.2) 'Brug pa Kun legs goes to stay at Stag rtse. Some disciples ask for proof that he is a *siddha*. 'Brug pa Kun legs sings a song about realization. Break Here. (**DK2:** 191.19-192.14. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 146.18-147.7. Break Here.)

184-186. (92b.2-93b.2) A Bon po priest asks 'Brug pa Kun legs to sing a song to disperse his obstacles using a particular melody associated with Bon. Break Here. (**DK2:** 192.14**-**194.16. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 147.8-148.20. Break Here.)

186-188. (93b.2-94b.4) 'Brug pa Kun legs quotes a section from a song by U rgyan pa (1230-1309) and then sings a long song in commentary on it that is biographical in nature and which expresses ongoing revulsion with samsara. Break Here. (**DK2:** 194.16-197.6. No Break.) (**DK3:** 148.21-150.17. Break Here.)

188-189. (94b.4-95a.6) 'Brug pa Kun legs composes an offering song to the marvelous *stūpa* of Thel, the religious seat of the Phag mo gru pa. Break Here. (**DK2:** 197.6**-**198.15. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 150.18-151.19. Break Here.)

189-193. (95a.6-97a.2) 'Brug pa Kun legs sings a song imitating the hymns of a group of *dge bshes* who are singing their own praises. Break Here. (**DK2:** 198.15-202.3. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 151.20-154.11. Break Here.)

195. (97a.2-98a.2) 'Brug pa Kun legs is asked to describe "the most astounding spectacle" (*ltad mo ngo mtshar ba*) he has seen in his wanderings through different countries. He sings a song that is mostly about how he has recognized nature of mind in various "spectacles" and how amazing this is. At the end of the song, he mentions the iron bridges of Thang stong Rgyal po. Break Here. (**DK2:** 202.3-204.7. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 154.12-156.3. Break Here.)

196. (98a.2-98b.6) While 'Brug pa Kun legs is staying at Sne'u gdong rtse, he is asked why he does not accumulate disciples. He sings a song in which he explains how he works with different kinds of sentient beings. Break Here. (**DK2:** 204.7-206.4. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 156.4-157.10. Break Here.)

p. 198. (98b.6-99b.3) 'Brug pa Kun legs is asked to compose a parable using animals and birds that describes the *shes rab gsum* of hearing, contemplating, and meditating. Break Here. (**DK2:** 206.4-207.16. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 157.11-158.16. Break Here.)

200. (99b.3-100b.3) ‘Brug pa Kun legs goes to relax on a high mountain. While there, he reflects on how to avoid the pride of self-importance by working with hearing, contemplating and meditating. He composes a song in which the examples (*dpe*) and the meanings (*don*) correspond with each other (*bstun pa*). Break Here. (**DK2:** 207.16-209.18 Break Here.) (**DK3:** 158.17-160.7. No Break.)

201. (100b.3-101a.2) A description of the hymn written by ‘Brug pa Kun legs to Paṇchen ‘Bum rams pa that praises him. Break Here. (**DK2:** 209.19-210.16. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 160.7-160.21. No Break.)

202. (101a.2-101b.2) A praise poem written in memory of Chos rje Bsod nams mchog pa. Break Here. (**DK2:** 210.16- 212.1. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 160.21-161.18. No Break.)

203. (101b.2-102a.2) A praise poem written to Snyug la rje or Ngag dbang grags pa for his long life. This is in the third person. Break Here. (**DK2:** 212.1-213.1. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 161.18-162.12. No Break.)

203-205. (102a.2-103a.6) A praise poem to the great translator Rin chen bzang po. Again in the third person. Break Here. (**DK2:** 213.2**-**215.17 Break Here.) (**DK3:** 162.12-164.15. Break Here.)

205-207. (103a.6-104a.2) A call and response song exchange by ‘Brug pa Kun legs and one of his disciples from Kong po. First is the song of the disciple and second is ‘Brug pa Kun legs’s song—back in first-person narration. Break Here. (**DK2:** 215.18**-**217.4. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 164.16-165.15. Break Here.)

207-211. (104a.2-106a.3) A song sung to a *dge bshes* on the contradictory signs (*‘gal rtags pa*). Then the *dge bshes* sings back to ‘Brug pa Kun legs and refutes or defends some of what he has said. Break Here. (**DK2:** 217.4-221.15. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 165.16-169.11. No Break.)

211-214. (106a.3-107b.5) Another song in which ‘Brug pa Kun legs consciously decides to compose a song mixing examples with meaning in order to clearly express his views (*dpe don bsgrigs nas bshad pa ‘di don go ba’I khyad du ‘dug bsam nas ‘di ‘dra cig ‘then no*). Break Here. (**DK2:** 221.16-225.5. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 169.11-171.22. No Break.)

214-217. (107b.5-109a.3) A song of renunciation in which ‘Brug pa Kun legs compares leaving religion with leaving the world. At the end, he makes a self-statement about wishing to be able to do both in this one lifetime. Break Here. (**DK2:** 225.5-227.20. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 171.22-174.1. Break Here.)

217-219. (109a.3-110a.1) ‘Brug pa Kun legs uses the same subject: renunciation of dharma or worldly life, adapting the melody to match the songs of Tsong kha khra mo. Break Here. **DK3** is

missing four lines here. In **DK1:** 109b.2-3 and in **DK2:** 228.19-229.3. (**DK2:** 227.20-229.17. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 174.2-175.6. No Break.)

219-220. (110a.1-110b.5) A song of joy relaxing with the nature of mind sung at 'Brog sgog mkhar. Break Here. (**DK2:** 229.17-230.17. No Break.**)** (**DK3:** 175.6-175.21. Break Here.)

220. (110b.1-5) Someone asks 'Brug pa Kun legs to sing a "melody of good fortune" (*bkra shis kyi dbyangs rta*). Break Here. (**DK2:** 230.17-231.9. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 175.22-176.9. Break Here.)

220-224. (110b.5-112b.4) A *dge bshes* asks 'Brug pa Kun legs to sing a song that will generate devotion in the lineage of *Mahāmudrā*. He sings a song that references and praises all the great masters of the 'Brug pa Bka' brgyud pa Mahāmudrā lineage. Break Here. (**DK2:** 231.9-235.9. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 176.10-179.13. Break Here.)

224-225. (112b.4-113a.4) 'Brug pa Kun legs joins a group of people climbing a mountain for a summer festival. He gets drunk and sings this spontaneous song. Break Here. **DK3** is missing five lines here. In **DK1:** 113a.3-4 and in **DK2:** 236.7-11. (**DK2:** 235.10-236.12. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 179.14-180.6. Break Here.)

225-227. (113a.4-114a.2) A song sung at Zil gnon remembering the kindness of his guru and reflecting that everyone should increase their kindness. Break Here. **DK3** is missing six verses here. In **DK1:** 113b.2-3 and in **DK2:** 237.2-6. (**DK2:** 236.12-238.8. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 180.7-181.11. Break Here.)

227-232. (114a.2-116b.5) 'Brug pa Kun legs sings a song to some meditators at the Sga 'dra hot springs. Then they ask him to tell them some stories and he tells a long bawdy story about a group of monks and different dogmas. Break Here. **DK3** is missing four verses here. These are in **DK1:** 114a.4-5 and in **DK2:** 238.15-18. (**DK2:** 238.9-244.8. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 181.12-185.20. Break Here.)

232-235. (116b.5-118a.4) A *dge bshes* asks 'Brug pa Kun legs to sing a song that praises the Buddha and which has the same meaning as the twelve deeds but uses different words. The idea here is that 'Brug pa Kun legs puts the words of the Buddha into his own words and this marks him as different from most teachers who merely repeat the Buddha's own words. Break Here. (**DK2:** 244.8-247.4. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 185.21-187.22. Break Here.)

235-236. (118a.4-118b.5) 'Brug pa Kun legs goes to Bum thang and hears this song sung by a group of girls. He likes it so much he writes it down. Break Here. (**DK2:** 247.4-248.13. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 188.1-189.2. Break Here.)

236-239. (118b.5-120a.4) ‘Brug pa Kun legs goes to a meditation retreat center and the meditators there ask him to sing about the best conditions for being in retreat and then again to sing about what the proper object of meditation should be while in retreat. Break Here. (**DK2:** 248.13-251.14. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 189.3-191.8. Break Here.)

239-240. (120a.4-120b.2) ‘Brug pa Kun legs improvises a song based on a girls’ song he heard in Phu chu Khyer in Lho. Break Here. (**DK2:** 251.14-252.11. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 191.9-191.21. Break Here.)

240-241. (120b.2-121a.4) ‘Brug pa Kun legs improvises another song here for the nang so of Sgog mkhar nas. This song has two parts. Break Here. (**DK2:** 252.11-253.18. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 191.22-193.1. No Break.)

241-243. (121a.4-122a.1) A third person report of a song sung by ‘Brug pa Kun legs as a religious tax at the hot springs of Sga ‘dra. Break Here. (**DK2:** 253.18-255.9. No Break.) (**DK3:** 193.1-194.4. No Break.)

243-245. (122a.1-123a.2) A song that imitates the *mgur ‘bum* of Yang dgon pa after ‘Brug pa Kun legs has given a *lung* on these same songs. Break Here. (**DK2:** 255.9-257.17. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 194.4-195.20. Break Here.)

245-246. (123a.2-123b.5) A song improvised at Lho brag. ‘Brug pa Kun legs copies down the spontaneous song of a *dge bshes* named Bkra shis ‘dzom dar since he feels these are well-composed songs. Break Here. (**DK2:** 257.17-259.11. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 195.20-197.4. No Break.)

246-255. (123b.5-128a.1) ‘Brug pa Kun legs hears a voice in a dream telling him that since he is already 55 years old he should leave a testament to both monks and laypeople. Men in the ‘Brug pa lineage don’t usually live beyond 51 or 52 years of age. Break Here. (**DK2:** 259.11-268.9. No Break.) (**DK3:** 197.4-204.1. Break Here.)

255-257. (128a.1-129a.6) This section consists of a number of small songs in which ‘Brug pa Kun legs is imitating the form of this song by Bra bo Dngos ngan. There are actually five songs here. Each one is in the same kind of style. Break Here. (**DK2:** 268.9-271.10. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 204.2-206.7. No Break.)

257-258. (129a.6-129b.5) ‘Brug pa Kun legs comments on the hypocrisy of *sngags pas* who are doing rituals only for the acquisition of large amounts of food and offerings. Break Here. (**DK2:** 271.10-272.10. No Break.) (**DK3:** 206.7-207.1. No Break.)

258-259. (129b.5-130a.6) ‘Brug pa Kun legs imitates a hymn to a goddess by using the three kāyas as the metaphor. Break Here. (**DK2:** 272.10-273.14. No Break.) (**DK3:** 207.1-207.21. Break Here.)

259-263. (130a.6-132a.2) ‘Brug pa Kun legs paraphrases a long passage from the text *Bzlog bsgyur blo sbyong mtshon cha ‘khor lo*, by Thogs med bzang po dpal. Break Here. (**DK2:** 273.14-277.10. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 207.22-210.20. Break Here.)

263-265. (132a.2-133a.2) A hymn to *Mahākāla* composed by ‘Brug pa Kun legs at the urging of his secretary, Rin chen at Ri bo brag. Break Here. (**DK2:** 277.10-279.11. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 210.21-212.10. Break Here.)

265-266. (133a.2-133b.3) ‘Brug pa Kun legs composes a song mourning the disappearance of genuine *Mahāmudrā* teachings. Break Here. (**DK2:** 279.11-280.17. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 212.11-213.9. Break Here.)

266-268. (133b.3-134b.3) ‘Brug pa Kun legs attempts to settle a dispute between monks of ‘Bri gung and Dge ldan by singing a song about weapons. Break Here. **DK3** is missing four verses of this song. These verses are in **DK1:** 134a.2-3 and in **DK2**: 281.15-19. (**DK2:** 280.17-282.18. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 213.10-214.18. Break Here.)

268-269. (134b.3-135a.6) ‘Brug pa Kun legs sings a sad song after wandering through the kingdoms and seeing that many people either do not know how to practice the Dharma or pretend to be doing so. Break Here. (**DK2:** 282.19-284.12. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 214.19-216.2. Break Here.)

269-270. (135a.6-135b.4) ‘Brug pa Kun legs gives advice to monk named ‘Jam she on *sādhana* practice. Break Here. (**DK2:** 284.12-285.7. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 216.3-216.15. Break Here.)

270-272. (135b.4-136b.2) ‘Brug pa Kun legs has a conversation on the road from Yar ‘brog to Dol with a group of monks about the nature of secret mantra practice. He quotes from a text by ‘*Bri gung dgongs gcig*, a short treatise by ‘Bri gung ‘Jig rten mgon po (1143-1217). Break Here. (**DK2:** 285.7-287.2. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 216.16-218.1. Break Here.)

272-274. (136b.2-137b.3) Interesting song in which ‘Brug pa Kun legs discusses his attractiveness when he was young. He tells a story about what he was like when he was younger, including how he discouraged a group of young girls from offering themselves to him as consorts. Break Here. (**DK2:** 287.2-289.8. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 218.2-219.17. No Break.)

274-275. (137b.3-138a.5) ‘Brug pa Kun legs offers a song to the great secretary Tshe dpal ba after a series of teachings on *Mahākāla* at the closing *gaṇacakra.* Break Here. (**DK2:** 289.8-290.16 Break Here.) (**DK3:** 219.17-220.18. No Break.)

275-279. (138a.5-140a.6) ‘Brug pa Kun legs writes two letters of safe-conduct (*lam yig*)—one for his son Zhing skyong, and one for Bla ma Mgon po don grub. Break Here. (**DK2:** 290.16-295.5. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 220.18-224.1. No Break.)

279-282. (140a.6-141b.5) ‘Brug pa Kun legs and the Lord of Death exchange letters concerning whether or not the townspeople of Sga ‘dra should be allowed to take the lives of the fish in the lake Gri gu in Yar klung. Break Here. (**DK2:** 295.6-298.5. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 224.1-226.5. Break Here.)

282-283. (141b.5-142a.5) A song recorded in the third person expressing ‘Brug pa Kun legs’s disappointment or sadness concerning change. Break Here. (**DK2:** 298.5-299.7. Break Here.)(**DK3:** 226.6-227.2. Break Here.)

283-284. (142a.5-142b.4) ‘Brug pa Kun legs sings a song from Mon for the *sādhaka* Ye shes dpal ba, who has requested a song to dispel demons. ‘Brug pa Kun legs says that he is not allowed to sing such songs, but then he chooses a song from Mon to fill in. Break Here. (**DK2:** 299.7-300.5. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 227.3-227.17. No Break.)

284-285. (142b.4-143a.2) ‘Brug pa Kun legs composes a song with a melody from Kong po. It is a happy song about finding the dharma, a lama, and the right instructions. Break Here. (**DK2:** 300.5-300.19. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 227.18-228.7. Break Here.)

285-287. (143a.2-144a.6) ‘Brug pa Kun legs sings a song to explain to the great Thos grol ras chen the six classes of practice as they are applied to instantaneous *rig pa*. Break Here. (**DK2:** 300.19-303.17. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 228.8-230.9. Break Here.)

287-292. (144a.6-146b.1) ‘Brug pa Kun legs imitates songs composed by a lama named Ston pa nyams bro for religious dances. He calls the song a *śāstra*. Break Here. (**DK2:** 303.18-308.6. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 230.10-233.15. Break Here.)

292. (146b.1-146b.5) A short improvised song about whose hypocrisy makes him a joke. Break Here. (**DK2:** 308.6-309.1) (**DK3:** 233.16-234.5)

292-293. (146b.5-147a.6) A short improvised song entitled “A Song of Shame” (*Kun legs pa rang la rang khrel ba’i glu ‘di ‘then no*). Break Here. (**DK2:** 309.2-310.4. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 234.5-235.1. Break Here.)

293-297. (147a.6-149a.1) A song written to a friend named Bde spug pa (Bliss Hidden) where each stanza ends with this friend’s name. However, the next song is a song written to another friend named Bde gsal ba (Clear Bliss), so it is likely these two songs are meant to be sung

together and are puns on each other. Break Here. (**DK2:** 310.4-313.12. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 235.2-237.13. Break Here.)

297-300. (149a.1-150b.4) A song by a woman named Gsum mchog to 'Brug pa Kun legs about the practice of dharma in this lifetime and another song from him to her answering her questions. Break Here. (**DK2:** 313.13-317.8. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 237.14-240.8. Break Here.)

300-306. (150b.4-153b.4) Forty stanzas of advice to monks spoken by 'Brug pa Kun legs as he is on the point of death. He sings these to a yogi named Snyan grags rdo rje. Break Here. (**DK2:** 317.8-323.20. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 240.9-245.8. No Break.)

306-308. (153b.4-154b.1) This is possibly an extension of his advice given above as he is dying. He cites himself as giving advice here as an old man and the theme is the same. Break Here. (**DK2:** 323.20-325.11. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 245.8-246.11. Break Here.)

310. (154b.1-155b.5) 'Brug pa Kun legs sings a song of advice to his consort as she returns to Yar klung at 'Ja' tshun phug pa. He calls her "*nged kyi zla.*" Break Here. (**DK2:** 325.11-328.11. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 246.12-248.16. Break Here.)

310-314. (155b.5-157b.2) 'Brug pa Kun legs gives a commentary on the fourteen basic sins in which he confesses (*mthol lo bshags*) at the temple of Don grub rdzong in Lho brag. This initially seems to be genuine and in a traditional confession style but about halfway through he begins to joke and satirize the confession process. Break Here. (**DK2:** 328.11-332.6. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 248.17-251.12. Break Here.)

314-316. (157b.2-158b.6) Someone asks the Lord Snyug la rje a question about composing poetry. He responds by asking 'Brug pa Kun legs to compose a poem, which imitates a previous poem with nine metaphors. Break Here. (**DK2:** 332.6-335.9. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 251.13-253.20. No Break.)

316-318. (158b.6-159b.2) A song sung to 'Brug pa Kun legs by the Dharma Lord Gyag ra ba that seems to be about fooling oneself. Break Here. (**DK2:** 335.10-336.18. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 253.20-254.21. Break Here.)

318. (159b.2-159b.6) A group of people request 'Brug pa Kun legs to sing a song that is "useful for the mind" (*sems la phan pa'i bslab bya cig mdzod*). Break Here. (**DK2:** 336.19-337.12. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 254.22-255.11. Break Here.)

318-320. (159b.6-160b.2) 'Brug pa Kun legs sings a song of advice to those who are going on pilgrimage. Break Here. (**DK2:** 337.13-339.3. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 255.12-256.14. Break Here.)

320-321. (160b.2-161a.1) ‘Brug pa Kun legs sings a song that takes each letter of the alphabet as a starting point for the next stanza (*bka’ shad*). Break Here. (**DK2:** 339.3-340.4 Break Here.) (**DK3:** 256.15-257.9. Break Here.)

321-322. (161a.1-161b.1) The woman A lce Lu gu sings a song to ‘Brug pa Kun legs about sexual yoga practice—even though she is ugly, she says, he has been kind to her. Break Here. (**DK2:** 340.4-341.3. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 257.10-258.7 Break Here.)

322-323. (161b.1-162a.5) ‘Brug pa Kun legs sings a song of grief concerning the suffering of beings due to their own actions. The refrain ends with “I have three words to teach you.” Break Here. (**DK2:** 341.4-343.4 Break Here.) (**DK3:** 258.8-259.21. Break Here.)

323-325. (162a.5-163a.5) ‘Brug pa Kun legs’s disciples ask him to explain his “way of being.” He sings a song about not having acquired equanimity. Break Here. (**DK2:** 343.4-345.7. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 259.22-261.14. No Break.)

325-327. (163a.5-164a.3) ‘Brug pa Kun legs’s message to his son on how he has lived his life and his hopes that they will meet again. Break Here. (**DK2:** 345.7-347.2. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 261.14-262.16. Break Here.)

327-329. (164a.3-165a.3) A supplication to ‘Brug pa Kun legs from a prefect (*nang so*) named Ba sha nas to write his biography (*rnam thar*). Break Here. (**DK2:** 347.2-349.5. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 262.17-264.9. Break Here.)

329-333. (165a.3-167a.3) A description of ‘Brug pa Kun legs’s death and cremation, including where his relics are kept and the miraculous events surrounding his cremation. This section is arranged by someone named “Rdo rje.” There is also a play on ‘Brug pa Kun legs’s name at the beginning. Break Here. (**DK2:** 349.6-353.18. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 264.10-267.16. Break Here.)

p. 333-334. (167a.3-167b.5) Praises to ‘Brug pa Kun legs and a long play on his name written by someone named Pad dkar, whom Stein thinks might be the great ‘Brug pa writer, Pad ma dkar po (1527-1592), written at Rwa lung Thel. Break Here. (**DK2:** 353.18-355.9. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 267.17-268.20. Break Here.)

334-337. (167b.5-169a.6) Colophon to Volume Ka of the *rnam thar*. Compiled by the “mad monk of Mon,” (*mon ban smyon pa*), who discusses his recognition as an incarnation of ‘Brug pa Kun legs. He says he compiled this collection, of which the first part Ka is the “most authentic” at the behest of many of ‘Brug pa Kun legs’s disciples and descendants. He discusses the difficulty of putting together all of the many editions of ‘Brug pa Kun legs’s life (up to 20) and expresses his fear that he will not be able to fully complete the project. (**DK2:** 355.9-359.7) (**DK3:** 268.21-271.18)

B. Volume Kha

Volume Kha: (**DK1:** 339-499) (**DK2:** Vol. II, 1-174) (**DK3:** 273-400)

339. Title: ***Kun dga' legs pa rnal 'byor gyi dbang phyug kun dga' legs pa'i rnam thar gsung 'bum rgya mtsho las dad pa'i ku shas chu thigs tsam blangs pa, ngo mtshar bdud rtsi'i zil mngar.*** (*The Nectar of Marvelous Amṛita, Only a Few Drops from the Grass of Faith Drawn From the Ocean of the Life-story Collection of Kunga Legpa, the Lord of Yogins*) (**DK2:** 1) (**DK3:** 272)

340-344. (1a.1-3b.6.) An introduction to the composition by the scribe, Rdo rje, followed by a long section on 'Brug pa Kun legs's rationale for writing a *namthar.* This is then followed by a description of 'Brug pa Kun legs's visit to a small hermitage where he gives the practitioners of the *Mkha' 'gro snying thig* a lecture on intention. This is followed by a discussion on style of dress of different practitioners, including 'Brug pa Kun legs's own disciples. Break Here. (**DK2:** 1.1-5.20. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 273.1-276.15. Break Here.)

344-350. (3b.6-6b.1) 'Brug pa Kun legs tells a long parable story to an old woman named Bu krid in Lhasa. He ends with a song to a group that has gathered to hear him speak. The song is about different ways to traverse the path. Break Here. (**DK2:** 5.20-11.17. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 276.15-280.20. No Break.)

350-354. (6b.1-8b.6) 'Brug pa Kun legs stays at an inn where the innkeeper is stingy and out for her own gain. Her husband asks 'Brug pa Kun legs to speak to her and bring her into harmony with the Dharma. 'Brug pa Kun legs tells another parable story. Break Here. (**DK2:** 11.17-17.6. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 280.20-284.21. No Break.)

354-358. (8b.6-10b.3) In another inn, the female innkeeper teaches 'Brug pa Kun legs to make beer. When she leaves for the day, she asks him to brew the beer. He doesn't do it. Break Here. (**DK2:** 17.6-21.4. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 284.22-287.2. Break Here.)

358-364. (10b.3-13b.3) 'Brug pa Kun legs is invited to a New Year's festival with the Second Dalai Lama. He is asked to sing a song in celebration. He sings a long song targeting everyone's hypocrisy. Break Here. (**DK2:** 21.4-28.1. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 287.2-293.2. No Break.)

364-365. (13b.3-14a.2) 'Brug pa Kun legs goes to Skyor mo Lung. After he is accused of being a beggar, he sings a song of renunciation. Break Here. (**DK2:** 28.1-28.20. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 293.2-16. No Break.)

365-366. (14a.2-14b.2) A philosopher criticizes the Bka' brgyud school and 'Brug pa Kun legs defends it. Break Here. (**DK2:** 28.20-30.3. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 293.16-294.13. No Break.)

366-368. (14b.2-15b.1) A group of hermits do not understand the meaning of many philosophical books of Dharma they have read. 'Brug pa Kun legs seeks to explain the meaning. Break Here. (**DK2:** 30.3-32.2. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 294.13-296.1. No Break.)

368-376. (15b.1-19b.2) 'Brug pa Kun legs travels to the valleys of Gtsang and Nyang. There, he remembers a past life as Dge bshes Nyams bro. He gathers the local people and sings a song, which include a series of treatises. Break Here. (**DK2:** 32.2-43.15. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 296.1-304.5. No Break.)

376-381. (19b.2-22b.4) 'Brug pa Kun legs again stays at an inn where he tells the innkeeper a moral story about two friends to keep her from stealing the amber inside a yogin's packsack. No Break. (**DK2:** 43.15-46.11. No Break.) (**DK3:** 304.5-306.6. No Break.)

381-382. (22a.1-22b.4) A story about how when staying in the village of Grum mda', 'Brug pa Kun legs performs some rituals and builds a bridge over a river. When he leaves in a boat, five young women sing him a farewell song. He responds with a song of Dharma instructions which leads to three of the girls taking refuge. Break Here. (**DK2:** 46.11-48.9. Break Here.) (**DK3**: 306.6-307.14. No Break.)

382-384. (22b.4-23b.1) 'Brug pa Kun legs goes for a horseback ride with a friend who is thrown from the saddle. When the friend doesn't rise, 'Brug pa Kun legs sings a song to him. Break Here. (**DK2:** 48.9-50.1. Break Here.) (**DK3**: 307.14-308.17. No Break.)

384. (23b.1-23b.5) A short parable on how a speech of the Buddha cures a sick man. Break Here. (**DK2:** 50.1-50.15. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 308.17-309.6. No Break)

384-385. (23b.5-24a.4) In a dream, 'Brug pa Kun legs has visions that make him sad. In the dream he sings a song of sorrow. Break Here. (**DK2:** 50.15-51.14. Break Here.) (**DK3**: 309.6-309.21. No Break.)

385-389. (24a.4-26a.1) 'Brug pa Kun legs visits Bya yul where he witnesses a *ganacakra* in progress. He sings a song of praise to the ruler and Bya yul (mention of his father here). And another song in which he describes the benefits of the life of being a great hermit meditator. Later he sings another song. Break Here. (**DK2:** 51.14-55.8. Break Here.) (**DK3**: 309.21-312.12. No Break.)

389-390. (26a.1-26b.6) On the way to Mon, 'Brug pa Kun legs stays in a place called Lo ro dos. Five young women make offerings to him and request a song that they can sing with the tune of the mani. 'Brug pa Kun legs teaches them a song. Break Here. (**DK2:** 55.8-57.10. Break Here.) (**DK3**: 312.12-313.18. No Break.)

390-409. (26b.6-36a.1) This is a long section with no breaks between events. ‘Brug pa Kun legs continues his travels to Mon. First, he arrives at the house of the ruler of Mon and speaks a eulogy (27a.1-27a.4). Next, the Queen of Mon arrives with her attendants to see ‘Brug pa Kun legs. He sings a Mon pa song (27a.4-27b.4). The Mon pas all want to follow him. Then the king of Mon takes ‘Brug pa Kun legs to be spiritually tested by giving him poison. ‘Brug pa Kun legs and his disciples are unscathed. His teachings are said to spread throughout Bhutan. (27b.4-28b.3). ‘Brug pa Kun legs then travels to India where he performs various miracles and subdues some heretics, turning them to the Dharma. There is a short section where he speaks in “Indian.” He returns to Tibet and sings a very long song commenting on different peoples’ styles of hypocrisy and self-deception (28b.3-36a.1). Break Here. (**DK2:** 57.10-77.1. Break Here.) (**DK3**: 313.18-327.18. No Break.)

409. (36a.1-36a.6) ‘Brug pa Kun legs goes to Lho drak where a yogi asks him to sing a song of praise to himself. Break Here. (**DK2:** 77.1-77.20. Break Here.) (**DK3**: 327.18-328.11. No Break.)

409-416. (36a.6-39b.5) ‘Brug pa Kun legs travels to Sga ‘dra in Yar ‘brog and engages in an archery competition with the people of that area. He also negotiates for them with the Lord of Death in order that they can eat the local fish. Break Here. (**DK2:** 77.20-85.8. Break Here.) (**DK3**: 328.11-333.21. No Break.)

416-424. (39b.5-43b.2) Praises to the Glorious Lord of the Three Times, Rgyal dbang chos rje. Then ‘Brug pa Kun legs travels to Dong dkar rdzong and meets the leader. Recalling one of his prevous lives as the dance master Bla ma Bkra shis, he describes a number of “dances.” Break Here. (**DK2:** 85.8-93.6. Break Here.) (**DK3**: 333.21-339.19. No break.)

424-426. (43b.2-44b.6) ‘Brug pa Kun legs goes to Chu shul and visits with a rich patron named A’ bo Bsam pa who has a faithful daughter and wife. Their son has died of small pox and they are suffering greatly. ‘Brug pa Kun legs tells a story set in India at the time of the Buddha with the moral that one must accept the reality of death. Break Here. (**DK2:** 93.6-96.2. Break Here.) (**DK3**: 339.19-341.20. No Break.)

426-431. (44b.6-47a.4) Another patron in Chu shul, Tshul khrims ‘bar, who is a braggart, egoistic, and not very bright, believes he is the leader of the valley. Break Here. (**DK2:** 96.2-100.17. Break Here.) (**DK3**: 341.20-345.9. No Break.)

p.431-438. (47a.4-50b.6) ‘Brug pa Kun legs goes to Nyug la and tells a long parable story to a destitute old woman. The story’s moral is that good things come to those who wait. Break Here. (**DK2:** 100.17-108.16. Break Here.) (**DK3**: 345.9-351.6. No Break.)

438-442. (50b.6-52b.2) ‘Brug pa Kun legs goes to the region of Phen. There a minister and his wife, named Lha kyi, who have no money, but great faith in the Dharma, wish to go on

pilgrimage to Lha sa. ‘Brug pa Kun legs relates a story from India as a parable for the benefits of merit over riches. Break Here. (**DK2:** 108.16-112.6. Break Here.) (**DK3**: 351.6-353.20. No Break.)

442-445. (52b.2-54a.5) ‘Brug pa Kun legs travels to ‘Bri kung where the ‘Bri kung pas and the Ri bo Dga’ ldan pas are quarreling. Break Here. (**DK2:** 112.6-116.2. Break Here.) (**DK3**: 353.20-356.15. No Break.)

445-447. (54a.5-55a.1) ‘Brug pa Kun legs goes to the mountain of Lam po where two shepards have killed a fat ram and are eating it. ‘Brug pa Kun legs again tells a parable story from India. Break Here. (**DK2:** 116.2-117.13. Break Here.) (**DK3**: 356.15-357.19. No break.)

447-452. (55a.1-57b.5) ‘Brug pa Kun legs goes to Dwags po and arrives in Gar dga’. From a cliff he sees an idiot and his beautiful wife named Dga’ ya mo. ‘Brug pa Kun legs conceives an elaborate scheme to seduce Dga’ ya mo and lure her away from her idiot husband. She couples with him and then goes off to meditate. ‘Brug pa Kun legs returns some years later to visit her. Break Here. (**DK2:** 117.13-123.17 Break Here.) (**DK3**: 357.19-362.15. No Break.)

452-454. (57b.5-58b.5) ‘Brug pa Kun legs goes to see Spyan snga rin po che. He tells ‘Brug pa Kun legs that others feel he is a crazy yogi. ‘Brug pa Kun legs responds by telling him not to trust what people say. He then sings a song with the refrain, “Look at me!” At the end the nuns serve him lots of beer and everyone dances around. No break. (**DK2:** 123.17-126.3 No Break.) (**DK3:** 362.15-364.8. Break Here.)

454-456. (58b5-59b.3) ‘Brug pa Kun legs goes to Kong po where he wanders through a charnel ground, gathers a crowd, teaches them to recite the Mani, and dances around singing songs and teaching the Dharma. The Karmapa sends a servant to invitie ‘Brug pa Kun legs to visit. ‘Brug pa Kun legs sings a song. At the end everyone is moved and cries. Break Here. (**DK2:** 126.3-127.19 Break Here.) (**DK3**: 364.8-365.16 No break.)

456-457. (59b.3-60a.5) ‘Brug pa Kun legs goes to Yar klung where he meets a pretty barmaid and explains the Dharma to her. A *gter ston* named ‘E Nay, riding a horse and wearing a cloak and lotus hat, appears. Everyone gathers around to ask him if he is the Vajra Guru. ‘Brug pa Kun legs sings a mocking song. Break Here. (**DK2:** 127.19-129.5 Break Here.) (**DK3**: 365.16-366.16 No break.)

457-467. (60a.5-65a.6) ‘Brug pa Kun legs goes to Ne’u Dong. He sings a song of being a little beggar with a refrain concerning how sometimes he doesn’t stay and sometimes he does. In the song he mocks Dbus smyon and Gtsang smyon. No break. (**DK2:** 129.5-140.8 No break.) (**DK3**: 366.16-374.17 No break.)

468-472. (65b.1-67b.3) A section on how to perform the rituals necessary to make a *mdos* (thread cross amulet). Seems to include also how to perform the thread-cross exorcism ritual itself. Break Here. (**DK2:** 140.8-145.5) (**DK3**: 374.17-378.12 No break.)

472-483. (67b.3-73a.2) This is a long sections of praises to different protector deities. Break Here. (**DK2:** 145.5**-**156.18) (**DK3**: 378.12- 386.21)

483-484. (73a.2-73b.1) There is one short story concerning a quarrel over the selling of spears in the Lhasa market. The next story concerns 'Brug pa Kun legs visiting Rin spungs and miraculously creating mixed black and white dogs. Break Here. (**DK2:** 156.18-158.14) (**DK3**: 386.21- 388.7)

484-488. (73b.1-75b.6) 'Brug pa Kun legs sings some songs. The governor is moved by devotion and offers 'Brug pa Kun legs the keys to the treasury. 'Brug pa Kun legs puts on the jewels but gives them back saying he has no need for them. No break. (**DK2:** 158.14-162.20 No break.) (**DK3**: 388.7-391.11)

488-498. (75b.6-80b.5) A song about himself. Break Here. (**DK2:** 162.20-173.12) (**DK3**: 391.11-399.3 No break.)

498-499. (80b.5-81a.3) This is a short colophon written by the "Dharmaless one with the name of *Vajra Digghi Bahdra* in the place of Dogs sde in Lha mo Rab brtan. Break Here. (**DK2:** 173.12-174.7) (**DK3**: 399.3-399.16 No break.)

C. Volume Ga:

(DK1: 501-647**) (DK2:** Vol. II, 174-340) (**DK3:** 401-522)

501. (1a) Title: ***Rnal 'byor pa'i ming can kun dga' legs pa'i nyams la shar ba'i phral gyi chos spyod 'dra dang nyams 'char ci byung ma byung bris skyag gtad gang yang med pa 'ga' zhig*** **(***Some Experiences, Written Exactly as They Occurred, Without any Bullshit, and Some Momentary Dharmic Activities that Arose in the Experience of Kun dga' Legs pa, the One Who is Called "Yogi*) (**DK2:** 175) (**DK3:** 400)

502. (1a.1-1a.6) Opening praises and prayer to 'Brug pa Kun legs. Break Here. (**DK2:** 175-176.3. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 401.1-401.13. Break Here.)

502-512. (1a.6-6b.1) A condensed practice of making offerings to the guru that arose in the experience of 'Brug pa Kun legs. Break Here. (**DK2:** 176.4-186.5. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 401.13-409.2. Break Here.)

512-518. (6b.1-9b.4) A supplication prayer arranged by ‘Brug pa Kun legs to the Bka’ brgyud lineage. Break Here. (**DK2:** 186.5-193.10. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 409.2-414.13. Break Here.)

518-519. (9b.4-10a.3) A supplication made as an offering from ‘Brug pa Kun legs to ‘Brug pa rin po che Ngag dbang chos kyi rgyal po. Break Here. (**DK2:** 193.10-194.11. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 414.13-415.9. Break Here.)

519-521. (10a.3-11a.2) A supplication from ‘Brug pa Kun legs to Snyug la Chos rje rin po che Ngag dbang grags pa. Break Here. (**DK2:** 194.11-196.11. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 415.9- 416.21. Break Here.)

521-522. (11a.2-11b.6) *That Which is Known as the Garland of Vajras*, Praises to Dbus smyon he ru ka by ‘Brug pa Kun legs. Break Here. (**DK2:** 196.11-198.9 Break Here.) (**DK3:** 416.21-418.8. Break Here.)

522-525. (11b.6-13a.1) That which is called the *Sound of the Profound Vajra*, praises to Rje rin po che Yar rgyab pa, composed by ‘Brug pa kun legs. Break Here. (**DK2:** 198.9-200.17. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 418.8-420.7. Break Here.)

525-527. (13a.1-14a.5) An offering of praises written out of unshakeable faith by ‘Brug pa kun legs to Rdo rje ‘dzin pa bstan pa rgya mtsho. Break Here. (**DK2:** 200.17-203.18. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 420.7- 422.15. Break Here.)

527-528. (14a.5-14b.5) ‘Brug pa Kun legs wrote these praises from out of the state of deep appreciation for the practices of the *ro snyoms skor drug*. Break Here. (**DK2:** 203.18-204.19. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 422.15-423.10. Break Here.)

528-530. (14b.5-15b.6) A prayer written to Sgrol ma by ‘Brug pa Kun legs at the request of Dbus smyon pa. Break Here. (**DK2:** 204.19-207.10. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 423.10-425.7 Break Here.)

530-539. (15b.6-20a.4) A long series of praises beginning with a torma offering. Break Here. (**DK2:** 207.10-217.6. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 425.7-432.13. Break Here.)

539-542. (20a.4-21b.3) Offering verses to protectors by ‘Brug pa Kun legs, composed in response to (a request) from the monastic seat of Gser togs in the mansion of Yar ‘brog sgog. Break Here. (**DK2:** 217.6-220.9. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 432.13-434.14. Break Here.)

542-544. (21b.3-22b.2) Praises to ‘Brug pa rin po che composed by ‘Brug pa Kun legs. Break Here. (**DK2:** 220.9-222.11. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 434.14-436.3 Break Here.)

544-547. (22b.2-24a.3) Two alphabet songs. Break Here. (**DK2:** 222.11-226.3. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 436.3-438.15. Break Here.)

547-548. (24a.3-24b.5) An alphabet song sung in honor of ‘Brug pa Kun legs and Rje ‘Bum ram pa Rin chen chos kyi dbang phyug. Break Here. (**DK2:** 226.3-227.14. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 438.15-439.17. Break Here.)

548-549. (24b.5-25a.3) Some words spoken to gossipers among the Bka’ brgyud pas. Break Here. (**DK2:** 227.14-228.8. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 439.17-440.6. Break Here.)

549-550. (25a.3-25b.4) ‘Brug pa Kun legs spoke these words as an offering with great love to Snyug la Chos rje in Hor chol. Break Here. (**DK2:** 228.8-229.14. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 440.6-441.6. Break Here.)

550-567. (25b.4-34a.5) A long discourse on the practice and view of *Mahāmudrā* with answers by ‘Brug pa Kun legs and questions by Snyug la chos rje. Break Here. (**DK2:** 229.14-250.2. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 441.6-456.6. Break Here.)

567-585. (34a.5-43a.2) While staying at Gser khang, Snyug la chos rje asks ‘Brug pa Kun legs to relate a vision that appeared to him to Chos rje ngag dbang. Break Here. (**DK2:** 250.2-270.6. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 456.6-470.17. Break Here.)

585-588. (43a.2-44b.2) ‘Brug pa Kun legs gives a Dharma discourse for the benefit of the secretary Tshe dpal ba. Break Here. (**DK2:** 270.6-273.14. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 470.17-473.5. No Break.)

588. (44b.2-44b.5) A meeting between ‘Brug pa Kun legs and Gtsang smyon pa. Break Here. (**DK2:** 273.14-274.5. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 473.5-473.15. No Break.)

588-592. (44b.5-46b.2) A meeting between ‘Brug pa Kun legs and Dbus smyon pa. Break Here. (**DK2:** 274.5-278.4. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 473.15-476.12. Break Here.)

592-593. (46b.2-47a.3) Another meeting with Dbus smyon pa who asks ‘Brug pa Kun legs to comment on how he practices with conceptual thoughts. Break Here. (**DK2:** 278.4-279.9. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 476.12-477.8. No Break.)

593-594. (47a.3-47b.6) ‘Brug pa Kun legs sings a song to comfort the consort of an old yogi, Apa Yar rgyap. A vision of the yogi appears and two ḍākinīs sing a song. Break Here. (**DK2:** 279.9-281.4. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 477.8-478.14 No break)

594-599. (47b.6-50a.2) A short *mgur.* Break Here. (**DK2:** 281.4-286.2. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 478.14-482.4. No break)

599-606. (50a.2-53b.5) A letter of request (*zhu yig*) addressed to the political heads of the Phagmodru and Rinpung regimes, as well as some lesser lords. The second half of the letter is directed to the people of Tibet more generally. 'Brug pa Kun legs requests all these to reform their deceptive behaviors. Break Here. (**DK2:** 286.2-294.7. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 482.4-488.7. No break)

606-608. (53b.5-54b.2) A letter sent by 'Brug pa Kun legs to a monk named Ban pa Chos 'khor. Break Here. (**DK2:** 294.7-296.2. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 488.7-489.13 No Break)

608-610. (54b.2-55b.5) A condensed version of all the good qualities and activities of the body, speech, and mind of all the Buddhas of the three times as an offering prayer to the Karmapa. Break Here. (**DK2:** 296.2-208.18. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 489.13-491.14 No break)

610-613. (55b.5-57a.1) 'Brug pa Kun legs makes a request to Chos rje 'ja' tshon phug pa. Break Here. (**DK2:** 208.18-211.7. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 491.14-493.9 No break)

613-614. (57a.1-57b.1) 'Brug pa Kun legs sings a short crazy song. Break Here. (**DK2:** 211.7-212.9. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 493.9-494.2. No Break.)

614. (57b.1-57b.6) A petition letter to 'Brug pa Kun legs from Chos rgyal don yod rdo rje. Break Here. (**DK2:** 212.9-213.8. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 494.2-494.14. Break Here.)

614-616. (57b.6-58b.4) 'Brug pa Kun legs sings a song on the occasion of being offered a painting of the seven attributes of the universal monarch by 'O rgyan gling pa. Break Here. (**DK2:** 213.8-305.6 The page numbering skips from p. 214 to p.305, but without losing any text inbetween. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 494.14-495.22. Break Here.)

616-618. (58b.4-59b.4) 'Brug pa Kun legs gives a condensed explanation of the five aspects of Rdzogs pa chen po. Break Here. (**DK2:** 305.6-307.12. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 496.1-497.14. Break Here.)

618-619. (59b.4-60a.2) 'Brug pa Kun legs gives a short explanation of the necessity of the five auspicious symbols. Break Here. (**DK2:** 307.12-308.7. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 497.14-498.2. Break Here.)

619-622. (60a.2-61b.3) A long tongue-in-cheek explanation of how to make a tea offering. Break Here. (**DK2:** 308.7-311.15. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 498.2-500.16. Break Here.)

622-624. (61b.3-62b.3) Another time when 'Brug pa Kun legs had come to Lha sa, he took as an example the profound meanings of the *Mi chos gnad kyi phreng ba* that was written as heart

advice by ‘Brom ston pa to the Tibetan translator Nag tsho. Break Here. (**DK2:** 311.15-314.1. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 500.16-502.8. No Break.)

624-625. (61b.3-62a.1) A short question and answer session concerning relative and absolute truth between ‘Brug pa Kun legs and Sman thang po. Break Here. (**DK2:** 314.1-314.14 Break Here.) (**DK3:** 502.8-502.19. No Break.)

625-632. (62a.1-66b.4) A song exchange between ‘Brug pa Kun legs and his disciple Bde sbug pa. Break Here. (**DK2:** 314.14-322.19. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 502.19-508.12. No Break.)

632-634. (66b.4-67b.3) Having traveled to Lha sa in a bird year, ‘Brug pa Kun legs writes this letter of love and compassion from the teachings of Jo bo bcu gcig (Spyan ras gzigs). Break Here. (**DK2:** 322.19-325.2. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 508.12-509.22. No Break.)

634-636. (67b.3-68b.2) Because many hermits supplicated him, ‘Brug pa Kun legs gives an explanation of Gcod. Break Here. (**DK2:** 325.2-327.3. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 509.22-511.22. No Break.)

636-641. (68b.2-71a.3) Questions and answers with the lady A ce Khra ‘bur. Break Here. (**DK2:** 327.3-333.2. Break Here.) (511.22-516.8. Break Here.)

641-645. (71a.3-73a.4) The story of how ‘Brug pa Kun legs subdued the Long rong demoness in Mon. Break Here. (**DK2:** 333.2-337.18. Break Here.) (516.8-519.17 No break)

645-646. (73a.4-73b.3) ‘Brug pa Kun legs sang this prayer while drunk on beer. Break Here. (**DK2:** 337.18-338.17. Break Here.) (519.17-520.11. No Break.)

646-647. (73b.3-74a.6) Another crazy drunken song ending with “Now its time for the rhododendron to bloom. It’s time for me to go to Tibet. It’s time to drink cold, golden beer. It’s time for me to meet up with Dpal bzang Lha mo!” (**DK2:** 338.17-340.15) (**DK3:** 520.11-521.18)

D. Volume Nga:

(DK1: 649-705**) (DK2:** Vol. II, 341-392) (**DK3:** 523-559**)**

649. **Title:** ***Rnal ‘byor gyi dbang phyug kun dga’ legs pa’i gsung ‘bum thor bu bzhugs so,*** (Fragments of collected writings of the Lord of Yogis, Kun dga’ Legs pa) (**DK2:** 341) (**DK3:** 522)

650-653. (1a.1-3a.5) ‘Brug pa Kun legs engages in a question and answer session with a female hermit named Rgyal mtshan bzang mo. Break Here. (**DK2:** 341.1-344.4. No Break.) (**DK3:** 523.1-525.1. Break Here.)

653-658. (3a.5-5b.2) ‘Brug pa Kun legs describes living in luxury due to his patron, the chieftain of Sne gdong. He sings a song on how to live in accord with things as they are. The song ends with a long list of proverbial phrases. Break Here. (**DK2:** 344.4-348.1. No Break.) (**DK3:** 525.1-527.21 Break Here.)

658-662. (5b.2-7b.5) A long discourse on the practice of *Mahāmudrā*. Break Here. (**DK2:** 348.1-352.3. No Break.) (**DK3:** 527.21-530.22. Break Here.)

662-668. (7b.5-10b.3) A discourse in which ‘Brug pa Kun legs describes how worldly goals in this life should be in harmony with aims for the next life. He sings a long song describing everything from eating meat to drinking beer and how one should turn away from these activities in order to remain in harmony with Dharma. He also sings some praises to Sku skyes Rin po che. Break Here. (**DK2:** 352.3-357.5. No Break.) (**DK3:** 530.22-534.19. Break Here.)

668-670. (10b.3-11b.3) A song about relaxing the mind. Break Here. (**DK2**: 357.5-358.20. No Break.) (**DK3:** 534.19-536.4. Break Here.)

670-671. (11b.3-12a.5) ‘Brug pa Kun legs gives instructions to retreatants who are practicing ‘pacification’ (*Zhi byed*). He describes the obstacles that arise in the four directions and how to overcome them. Break Here. (**DK2:** 358.20-360.4. No Break.) (**DK3:** 536.4-537.2 No break)

671-674. (12a.5-13b.2) ‘Brug pa Kun legs travels to upper Bsam ‘grub bde chen. He mediates the taxes for a group of nomads, but since he’s a wandering yogi, they don’t like his advice. He gives them a lesson on greed and finally they agree. Break Here. (**DK2:** 360.4-362.7. No Break.) (**DK3:** 537.2-538.14. Break Here.)

674-683. (13b.2-18a.6) ‘Brug pa Kun legs is invited for the tenth day festivities at the home of a female patron from the nomads place of Sga ‘dra. While there he mediates an argument between horse traders. He expounds on greed and trickery. Then follows a series of adventures in Sga ‘dra. Break Here. (**DK2:** 362.7-370.20. No Break.) (**DK3:** 538.14-544.22. No Break.)

683-692. (18a.6-22b.5) A story in which ‘Brug pa Kun legs negotiates with the Lord of Death about whether or not the villagers can eat the fish in their lake. Break Here. (**DK2:** 370.20-378.17. No Break.) (**DK3:** 544.22-550.19. Break Here.)

692-695. (22b.5-24a.1) ‘Brug pa Kun legs sings a song in Lha lung while on his way to Lho Brag. Break Here. (**DK2:** 378.17-380.16. No Break.) (**DK3:** 550.19-552.6. Break Here.)

695-696. (24a.1-24b.3) ‘Brug pa Kun legs sings a song. Break Here. (**DK2:** 380.16-381.19. No Break.) (**DK3:** 552.6-553.3. No Break.)

696-697. (24b.3-25a.3) A short treatise on advice to ‘Brug pa Kun legs’ disciples on how to wander through the country. Break Here. (**DK2:** 381.19-382.18. Break Here.) (**DK3:** 553.3-553.19. No Break.)

697-700. (25a.3-26b.3) ‘Brug pa Kun legs disguises himself and goes to Ralung to trick Ngag dbang chos rgyal. Break Here. (**DK2:** 382.18-385.11. No Break.) (**DK3:** 553.19-555.19. No Break.)

700-702. (26b.3-27b.3) ‘Brug pa Kun legs has an encounter with Ngag dbang chos rgyal. Ngag dbang chos rgyal requests him to perform a special ritual of the thread cross for him that includes an effigy of Ngag dbang chos rgyal. No Break. (**DK2:** 385.11-387.6. No Break.) (**DK3:** 555.19-557.4. No Break.)

702-704. (27b.3-28b.6) ‘Brug pa Kun legs performs an exorcism for Ngag dbang chos rgyal. No Break. (**DK2:** 387.6-389.12.No Break.) (**DK3:** 557.4-558.20. No Break.)

704-705. (28b.6-29a.6) A story of a competition between ‘Brug pa Kun legs and Ngag dbang chos rgyal in which they hang various items on a sunbeam. (**DK2:** 389.12-390.13) (**DK3:** 558.20-559.15)

Appendix II

Colophon to Volume Ka

(**DK1:** 334-337, 167b.5-169a.6) (**DK2:** 355.9-359.7) (**DK3:** 268.21-271.18)

de ltar rnal ‘byor gyi dbang phyug chen po kun dga’ legs pa zhes snyan bar grags pa de nyid kyi rnam par thar pa dang zhal gdams bka’ ‘bum rnams/ snga sor nas phyag mdzod pas par du sgrub pa’i smon sems tsam gyis par shing thor bu rtsol sgrub byas ‘dug pa’ang/ bar skabs su par shing ‘ga’ re gyag shor dang chud zos la song ba bcas brtsams pa lam du ma lon par rim ‘gyangs su lus ‘dug pa nas/ rang nyid kyang chung du’i dus smra sgo las/ lhas bskul dang ‘dres bskul ji ltar yang/ kha col sna tshogs lab pa dang/ spyod tshul ya ma zung sna tshogs las/ gtam byi khung du bshad pas sa mtha’ khyab zer ba ltar/ rje gong ma’i gra slob rnams kyi rna bar son pas/ brtag dpyad sna tshogs byas pa rnams stabs legs kyis ‘grig pa tshad mar bzung nas/ ji ltar lang gshegs las/ ming du gdags par ma mdzad na/ ‘jig rten thams cad rmongs par ‘gyur/ de bas rmongs pa bsal bya’i phyir/ mgon pos ming du ‘dogs par mdzad/ ces pa ltar rang nyid ‘brug pa kun legs mi dgos kun nyes kyi skye ba yang ga la yin mod kyang/ dam pa de’i skye ba yin par sgro btags la ‘chel ba’i rnyed pas ‘tsho ba’i mon pa na smyon pa bdag gis gang gi lugs gnyis kyi sku drin gso phyir dang/ gzhan yang rang la ltos bcas kyi gra slob ‘ga’ dang/ chos rjer mos gus thob pa’i dad ldan ‘ga’ zhig gis bskul bas rken byas/ grub smyon chen po’i gsung ‘di dag chos ‘jig rten gnyis kar zab pa’i bslab bya rkyang yin ‘dug gshis mchog dman mang po la phan thugs pa’i mtshan ma mthong bas/ par du sgrub par ‘dod nas rnam thar gyi ma dpe phyogs mtha’ dag nas rtsol sgrub lta rtog byas/ yong rdzogs gungs gcig tu sgrigs nas par du bzheng ‘dod byung kyang/ ma dpe’i cha/ rnam thar gcig na grub thob min zer ba ltar chos rje nyid zhal bzhugs pa’i skabs dad ldan gyi slob ma dang yon bdag so sos bskul ba’i ngor/ rnam thar dang zhal gdams sogs mi ‘dra ba du ma yul phyogs dang gnas dus ma nges par so so’i blo dang mtshams par gsungs pa rnams/ phyis phyogs gcig tu bsdu ba po ma byung bar brten/ zhu ba po’i zin bris kha ‘thor sogs yig sna rgyas bsdus sna tshogs pa zhig yod ‘dug pa ltar dam pa ‘ga’i zhal rgyun dang ‘jig rten rgan po’i ngag rgyun la’ang gsung mgur kyi tshig dang grub pa’i rol rtsed bstan tshul sogs nges dag mang po bshad rgyu ‘dug pa dang/ phyi nang gsang ba’i rnam thar sogs skor tsho le lag shin tu mang ba par du sgrubs pas mi lang ba tsam yod ‘dug rung/ dpe rnams da res yongs rdzogs lag tu ‘byor pa zhig ma byung/ slar ‘byor bstun khyu sgril gyis sgrub ‘dod kyang/ dpe sna ma ‘dzom pa’i ngang la bsam pa lam du lus dogs/ ‘di lo gang ‘grub zhig dbu brtsams/ de mus ‘di nang du ma ‘thus pa rnams slar rnyed bstun rim pas mu ‘thud byed rtsis yin pa mon spa gro’i rdor gcod kyi dpe rang mi yong la che ba bcas/ da res par du sgrub skabs/ dpe tshan mi ‘dra ba nyi shu tsam lag tu ‘bor pa rnams dag bsdur byas par/ rnam thar ka pa ‘di gsung gtsang mar go rim gcig pa mang zhing/ gzhan ‘di dag chos rje nyid kyi bu slob mi brjed pa’i gzungs thob pa ‘gas zin bris su mdzad pa yin ‘dug gshis go rim sogs mtha’ gcig tu ma nges pa dang/ gsung ‘di rnams phral

nyams dga’ la phugs don bzang ba ‘dug gshis/ rtsed mo dang don dam la dga’ ba’i ser skya mchog dman phal cher la dar so che gshis yig mkhan gyi rkyon sdebs brda dag dang tshog gong ‘og ‘khrugs pa sogs ‘dra min sna tshogs shig ‘dug kyang/ de rigs kyi skyon thor bu rnams ma dpe dag pa la cha bzhag nas bcos/ kha thor rnams so so’i bzhugs byang gsung ngo ma yod pa rnams mtshams su bkod nas dpe tshan ga par phyogs gcig tu sgril/ gzhan ma yul phyogs so so’i skad dang brdas ma bcos lhug par gsungs pa rnams dang/ rdo rje’i gsung gi gsang ba zab mo rang re dman pa’i blo’i go yul du ma gyur pa rnams ni dpe sna bsdur nas ‘dra phyogs mang ba la cha bzhag/ de phyin kun brtags kyi blos bsri bsnan bsre lhad sogs gtan nas spangs pa yin pas/ mchog dman kun gyi thugs la som kyi ‘jug pa’i gnas med do/ de ltar legs par grub pa’i dpe tshan gsum po ‘di yang/ rang nyid kyis rgyu dngos mthun rkyen rnams chud mi ‘dza’ ba’i phyir de’i rgyu tshogs su bsngos shing/ ji ltar bgyi ba’i bkod pa rnams rang ngos kyi ‘dod pa ltar dang du len pa’i phyag mdzod thugs dam pa sogs nye bar gnas pa rnams kyis khur blangs shing/ do dam pa rang la dad pa tshud pa’i slob ma atho siddhi ..... bgyis te/ chos sbyin mi zad par du sgrub pa’i yi ge pa ni bod snyi siddhi dza ya dang/ par brkos pa e nas mkhas gra bcu phrag gcig dang lngas chu ‘brug sa ga zla ba’i yar tshes nas brtsams/ khrum zla’i dkar phyogs la chos grva chen po dri’u lhas su gegs med grub par bgyis pa bstan pa dang sems can la phan pa rgya cher ‘byung bar gyur cig/ grub pa’i dbang phyug kun dga’ legs pa yi/ rtog brjod par du sgrub la mthun pa’i rkyen/ ‘brel thogs kun dang mkha’ mnyam sems can rnams/ myur du rnam mkhyen thob pa’i rgyur gyur cig/ dge’o

Appendix III

List of Sites Sacred to 'Brug pa Kun legs in Bhutan by District

Stories Associated with Each Site

Names and Dates of Persons Interviewed

1) Sites in Punakha Dzongkag (Spu na kha Rdzong Khag)

Toeb Changdana (Stod pa sa Chang da na): this is the location of the house into Drukpa Kunley shot an arrow from Tibet. The arrow lodged itself in the ladder of the house. When Drukpa Kunley arrived, he seduced Pelzang Bhuti (Dpal Bzang bu khrid), the young beautiful wife of the house owner, Toeb Tshewang (Stod pa Tshe Dbang). When the husband protested, Drukpa Kunley tied his sword in a knot. Toeb Tshewang recognized Drukpa Kunley as a realized yogi and offered him everything he had, including Pelzang Bhuti. Pelzang Bhuti and Drukpa Kunley had a son named Ngawang Tenzin. Ngawang Tendzin's son was named Tshewang Tenzin. Tshewang Tenzin's son was named Tenzin Rabgye. Tenzin Rabgye became the second temporal ruler of Bhutan. His seat is at Tango Monastery in the upper Thimphu valley. The current incarnation of Tendzin Rabgye lives there now. The original house in Toeb Changdana is still there. The ladder into which the arrow was shot is located in a shrine room inside the house. Outside is a small temple built to Drukpa Kunley.
Persons Interviewed: Khandu, the caretaker of the house and the lhakhang and Zam, his elderly sister.
Dates Visited: May 2012; November 2012; and May 2013.

Chime Lhakhang (Khyi med Lha khang) – the main temple and seat of 'Brug pa Kun legs in Bhutan: The temple is located in the middle of a wide river valley on the top of a hill shaped, as 'Brug pa Kun legs said, "like a breast." It is said the the temple itself was built by 'Brug pa Kun legs' brother, Ngag dbang Chos rgyal. This is the place where 'Brug pa Kun legs subdued the demoness Hema (He ma) of Rdo Kyong la, the most fearsome demoness in Bhutan. While fleeing from him, she transformed herself into a black dog. 'Brug pa Kun legs buried her underground and erected a black stupa over her to contain her. The stupa is still there. The main temple, which was built some time later, is now the site of various rituals surrounding fertility, including the practice where couples who hope to conceive children spend the night at there after being blessed with 'Brug pa Kun legs's wooden phallus. The temple houses a large statue of 'Brug pa Kun legs, some of his relics, the large wooden phallus he is said to have

carved, his bow and arrows, and a small stupa he is said to have made. There is a sacred spring (*sgrub chu*) on the hillside beneath the temple.
Persons Interviewed: Chime Lhakhang Lam
Dates Visited: September 2011; April 2012; May 2012; October 2012; November 2012; May 2013.

Benag Wachey (Sbed nag Wa che), a village in Wangdi district: Where Drukpa Kunley seduced Goeki Pagmo (Dgos skyes Dpal mo). The original house is still standing. In this story, Drukpa Kunley tried to seduce Goeki Pagmo but she consistently refused to allow him into her house. Finally, he asked her to serve him tea. When she brought the tea, Drukpa Kunley said an insulting blessing over the tea and threw his cup at the wall. Where the tea splashed on the wall, the liquid turned to gold. Drukpa Kunley then seduced her on her doorstep.
Persons Interviewed: Dashö Khencho Tshering, the Caretaker
Dates Visited: November 2012

Silunang (Si la nang) - village in lower Toebesa at the juncture of the Rong and Phachu/Machu rivers (mar stod pa rong chu dang spungs thag gtsang chu bsdoms): Here, where a heap of earth protrudes out into water is where 'Brug pa Kun legs subdued the Longrong demoness (Long rong bdud ma).
Persons Interviewed: Dashö Khencho Tshering and his wife, Aum Om.
Dates Visited: November 2012

Wolakha ('O lag kha): The village where 'Brug pa Kun legs taught the old man Ap Tendzin (Ap Bstan 'dzin) a refuge chant filled with lewd phrases. The old man achieved liberation and rainbow body. A small chorten exists to mark the spot.
Persons Interviewed: Dashö Khencho Tshering, Caretaker of the house in Wolakha, Rinchen.
Dates Visited: November 2012

Pachang (Spa cang) is a village in Punakha district: This is where Drukpa Kunley seduced Namkha Droenma (Nam mkha' Sgron ma) in her home.
Persons Interviewed: Dashö Khencho Tshering, Uncle of current caretaker.
Dates Visited: November 2012

2) Sites in Wangdi District (Dbang 'dus Pho brang Rdzong khag):

Chiligang (Byi li sgang) is a village near to Wangdi Dzong: The is the location where Drukpa Kunley, to annoy Ngawang Chogyal, his brother, who was preaching the Dharma, slaughtered a stag, cut the meat into pieces and offered it to the people as a blessing. When everyone was horrified, Drukpa Kunley clapped his hands and the stag gathered itself together and ran off into the mountains.
Persons Interviewed: Dashö Khencho Tshering

Dates Visited: November 2012

Shar Chungsekha (Khyung se kha): the place where Drukpa Kunley seduced Ashi Gyelzom (A lce Rgyal 'Dzoms) and created a one-legged chicken. (Story told to me by the blind manipa Dorji in November 2012 at Shar Luetsho (Shar Lud mtsho) in Wangdi district. Dorji told this story and sang the many songs sung by both Drukpa Kunley and Ashi Gyelzom.)
Persons Interviewed: Blind Manipa Dorji, Rinzin Dorji, Descendent of Ashi Gyelzom, Am Zhige.
Dates Visited: November 2012

Shar Kuenzaling (Kun bzang Gling): the place where Drukpa Kunley tricked the Demon of Seven Goiters. This demon had been tormenting the people of Kuenzaling for many years. Every year one family had to sacrifice one family member to the demon. Three hundred and fifty families lived in the village and they had come to the final family. The villagers tricked Drukpa Kunley into sleeping in the ruins below the village where the demon came to carry off the sacrifice. But instead of a sacrifice, Drukpa Kunley smashed the demon in the mouth with his flaming thunderbolt of wisdom (his penis), throwing him across the country onto the cliff of Ugyen in the Kheng district (central Bhutan). The demon's body disintegrated into fine particles of dust in the flames from Drukpa Kunley's penis. Even today you can smell burnt flour near the cliff due as a result of the demon's burned goiters. However, since the people of Kuenzaling had tricked Drukpa Kunley and did not even bother to supply him with food or beer, he allowed some of the flames to burn part of the village. Everyone ran to put out the fire with such speed that many people forgot to dress themselves and their reproductive organs were burnt. Since this time there have been fewer and fewer people living in Keunzaling.
Persons Interviewed: Blind Manipa Dorji, Rinzin Dorje
Dates Visited: November 2012

3) Sites in Paro District (Spa ro Rdzong khag)

Jagarthang (Rgya gar thang): A village where an old woman with no children had died. The villagers were gathered together trying to decide who would carry the old woman's corpse up to the cremation grounds. Just at the moment, Drukpa Kunley came by. The villagers asked him to carry the corpse. Drukpa Kunley said he would if they gave him chang (beer) and paid him something. The villagers agreed to provide him with as much chang as he could drink and a pig as payment. So, Drukpa Kunley drank the chang. When he was drunk, he picked up a stick and beat the old lady's corpse three times. The old lady rose up and walked up to the cremation grounds above Jagarthang. The pig followed her and Drukpa Kunley followed them both. At the top of the hill, the old lady was completely liberated. A stupa was erected to mark the spot with a stone carved in the shape of a pig's head. But in the 1960's a flood carried away both the stupa and the stone pig's head. When workers came to rebuild the stupa, they found one arrow inside and assumed that it had belonged to Drukpa Kunley.
Persons Interviewed: Dashö Dego, Chimmi Rinzin, Phuntsho Dorji

Dates Visited: December 2012

4) Sites in Thimphu District (Thim phu Rdzong khag)

Gonsarkha: Where Drukpa Kunley subdued three demonesses with his thunderbolt of wisdom.
Persons Interviewed: Dashö Dego
Dates Visited: December 2012

5) Sites in Bumthang District ('Bum thang Rdzong khag)

Tang Kuenzongdrag (Stang skyid 'dzom grags): The place where Drukpa Kunley engaged in banter with Bhutan's other patron saint, Pema Lingpa.
Dates Visited: April 2013

6) Sites in Mongar District (Mong sgar Rdzong khag)

Aja Ney (A rgya gnas): This is one of the main pilgrimage sites in Bhutan, located at an altitude of more than 3,500 meters. It is a two-day trek from Serzhong village to reach the site. It is primarily sacred to Guru Rinpoche and boasts a rock that bears 100 renditions of the sacred syllable "Ah." Guru Rinpoche is said to have meditated there for three months on his way back to Tibet afte subduing a pesky demon. It takes a full week to complete all four *khors* or circumambulation routes and it is impossible to even find these without a guide. There are various places there that are also sacred to 'Brug pa Kun legs, including a rock that used to be his hunting dog. The Ajaney guides are all elderly women. The story, as retold to me by the youngest daughter of Dechen, the 98 year-old woman who has guided pilgrims through Ajaney her entire life, goes as follows: While on pilgrimage at Paro, Taktsang, 'Brug pa Kun legs caught sight a huge reindeer with a giant rack of antlers. He pursued the deer over high mountains passes and through dense Himalayan jungle valleys until they reached the sacred site of Ajaney. There, 'Brug pa Kun legs shot the deer with his bow and arrows. The reindeer's body had so much fat that 'Brug pa Kun legs smeared layers of it across the rocks below the cave in which he meditated. He set the antlers atop a mountain peak adjacent to the river, where they can still be seen to this day. He then hollowed out a cave for his hunting dog and established himself in a cave higher up the slope above the river. Today, one can still see the places where his bow and arrows were placed and where he himself sat and meditated for a three-month period.
Persons Interviewed: Abi Kezang Eden (A ni Kal bzang e den), her younger sister, and their mother Dechen (Bde chen), 98 years old at the time of the interview and bedridden.
Dates Visited: November/December 2012

Links To Articles On Chime Lhakhang's Fertility Rites

https://eivf.net/blog/2012/03/31/chimi-lhakhang-provides-hope-for-infertile-women/

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/01/fashion/a-forgotten-prayer-answered-modern-love.html

http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2007/10/hidden-kingdom/306183/

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