

mkhas pas gsung na ci yang bden.
"Anything is true if taught by a learned master."
(Tibetan Proverb)

"Are ... two opposed theories ... to be placed on exactly the same level and accordingly to be treated as incompatible and mutually exclusive? Or are they complementary in the sense that they somehow supplement each other? Or, again, are they perhaps simply incommensurable ...?"
(D. Seyfort Ruegg 1989: 8)

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Although all Tibetan Buddhist schools accepted, together with the three vehicles of auditors (*śrāvakas*), bodhisattvas, and Tantric adepts, the existence of three systems of vows, the question about whether these three vows coexist, and if so, how they coexist, often became the subject of intense scholastic discussion and even of sharp controversy. At least as early as the twelfth century, against a background of a great majority of Tibetan Buddhists holding all three vows, Tibetan religious masters began not only to describe the moral codes within the framework of each respective vehicle, but also to discuss the possibility—or indeed, the necessity—for a single person to practice all three systems of vows together. The related doctrinal discussions continue down to the present day. Its contributions form the as-yet largely unexplored "Three Vow" (*sdom pa gsum*) literature, constituting a distinct genre of Tibetan literature (the *sdom gsum bstan bcos*) and also the topic of related discussions in writings of other genres such as instructions (*zhal gdams*, etc.), replies (*zhus lan* or *dris lan*), and notes (*zin bris*, etc.).

Among the earliest Tibetan masters to present their opinions on how the three vows are to be practiced simultaneously were sGam-po-pa bSod-nams-rin-chen (1079-1153) of the Mar-pa bKa'-brgyud-pa, sKyob-pa 'Jig-rten-mgon-po (1143-1217) of the 'Bri-gung bKa'-brgyud-pa, rJe-btsun Grags-pa-rgyal-mtshan (1147-1216) of the Sa-skyapa school, and the Indian scholar Vibhūticandra (12th/13th century). Among these, the three-vow theories of the 'Bri-gung-pa and of Vibhūticandra already bear clear signs of being reactions to opinions expressed earlier. All these early views, moreover, triggered a flood of later commentaries, refutations, and counter-refutations reflecting the historical development of traditional Tibetan scholarship on this subject.

But no matter how elaborate these views became later on, they all appear to have been focused on the same vital point, namely on the identifying, controlling, and overcoming of the defilements (*kleśas*).¹ On this particular point, too, a historical process is apparent: In the two cases where the early versions of a particular theory display an emphasis on the Mantra vows to the obvious disadvantage of the "traditional" *prātimokṣa*,² they were either severely attacked by scholars of other traditions (as in the case of Vibhūticandra's doctrine), or were soon supplemented and "developed" by their later adherents (as in the case of sGam-po-pa's doctrine). The relatively late rNying-ma-pa doctrine that was first introduced by Klong-chen Rab-'byams-pa (1308-1363) and became widely known due to its propagation by mNga'-ris Paṅ-chen (1487-1542), also postulates a certain superiority of the Mantra vows, but right from the beginning it teaches the integration of the *prātimokṣa* with the higher vows and thereby avoids the danger of appearing to neglect the lower vows. Other systems, too, such as that of the Sa-skya-pas, underwent a high degree of refinement, as later adherents and commentators sought to make their doctrine "watertight" against the challenges of the intense scholastic debate that began in the thirteenth century.

1.1. Previous Research

Given the lack of previous modern scholarly work on the three-vow theme as a doctrinal problem, here I would like briefly to sketch some of the main scholarly work that has been published on the three separate vow systems respectively, namely on the Vinaya *prātimokṣa*, the bodhisattva vows, and Mantra vows. The Vinaya has been a subject of continued interest for modern scholars from early on. The reason is obvious: The material contained in the vinaya is certainly the single most important source for studies on the life of the historical Buddha and for studies on the historical reality of early Buddhism. Already as early as the last decades of the 1800s, i.e. between 1882 and 1897, the French Société Asiatique published Émile Senart's *Le Mahāvastu* with the Sanskrit text, introduction, and commentary in three volumes.³ In the following decades of the early twentieth century, a great number of text editions and translations or summaries were made available, such as L. Finot and É. Huber's *Le Prātimokṣasūtra des Sarvāstivādins* (1913) and C.M. Ridding and L. de La Vallée Poussin's *Bhikṣunīkarmavacana* (1920),⁴ to name only two. Ernst Waldschmidt published his analysis of the *Bhikṣuṇīprātimokṣa* in 1926, which was

¹ See Schmithausen (1987: 247) for a number of strong arguments for rendering "*kleśa*" not as "affliction" but as "defilement."

² For explanations of the term *pātimokkha/prātimokṣa*, see v. Hinüber (1985: 60 ff.).

³ See Yuyama (1979: 42).

⁴ See Yuyama (1979: 1 and 6).

followed in the 1950s by a number of publications such as Pachow's *A Comparative Study of the Prātimokṣa* (1955) and Härtel's *Karmavācānā* (1956). The same year also saw Frauwallner's pioneering *Earliest Vinaya* (1956), which deals with the fundamental problem of the history of the Buddhist vinaya and the "Buddhist church." The stream of publications has continued unbroken up to the present day, including both studies that take a broader approach to the vinaya, exemplified by Charles S. Prebish's *Buddhist Monastic Discipline* (1974), and those that focus on specialized topics, for example, Haiyan Hu-von Hinüber's *Das Poṣadhavastu* (1994).

The beginning of the twentieth century also witnessed an increased interest on the part of modern scholars in Mahāyāna literature. Early examples of the fruit of this interest are Louis Finot (1901), *Rāṣṭrapālapariprechā: Sūtra du Mahāyāna*, and Cecil Bendall's 1902 edition of the *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, followed by his 1922 translation of the same work together with W.H.D. Rouse. In this area, too, publications continue to appear down to the present day.⁵ One of the first scholars to mention a certain tension between the ethics of auditors and bodhisattvas was Ernst Leumann.⁶ Such a tension has been later also pointed out by Seyfort Ruegg, illustrating it with quotations from the *Vimalakīrtinirdes'asūtra* and the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra*.⁷ The conflict between their bodhisattva ethics and "orthodox" prātimokṣa becomes apparent through their teaching that one who is involved with the defilements is capable of producing the resolve for awakening, while one who has entered into the complete freedom from moral faults is not.

Two more recent works in particular should be mentioned here, namely Tatz (1986), *Asaṅga's Chapter on Ethics*, and Pagel (1995), *The Bodhisattvapiṭaka*. Tatz states that bodhisattva ethics has not only one, but three aspects, of which the prātimokṣa aspect "constitutes the bottom third" (p. 16). The other two aspects are the ethics of "collecting virtuous factors" (*kuśaladharmasaṃgraha*) and of "accomplishing the welfare of sentient beings" (*sattvārthakriyā*).⁸ Given the bodhisattva's resolve for awakening, his "over-riding concern is to help others." This important side of the bodhisattva's practice underwent such an upward revaluation that now, with the flourishing of the Mahāyāna teachings, he may act with defilement, even when that means "committing what is 'sinful' in terms of prescribed prātimokṣa, or even in terms of natural morality" when the benefit for others can be achieved through that.⁹

⁵ Pagel (1995: 437-458) offers a detailed bibliography of studies in this field.

⁶ Ernst Leumann (1933-1936: 144 ff.).

⁷ Seyfort Ruegg (1969: 110 f.).

⁸ For these three, see the remarks below in section 2 of this chapter.

⁹ Tatz (1986: 24).

Pagel, too, discusses the nature of the relation between the bodhisattva's practice and the code of the Vinaya at length, and he shows convincingly that there has been a movement in the Mahāyāna from a strict adherence to the moral code of auditors to an acceptance of the "advanced" morality of the bodhisattva.¹⁰ A major contributing factor to such an "advanced" morality is the bodhisattva's new epistemological propositions that are perhaps best illustrated through these words of Candrakīrti's *Madhyamakāvatāra*:¹¹

If he sees [in] moral purity an own-being,

By that very reason, his morality is not pure.

Obviously "moral purity" is now viewed differently in the light of the doctrine of emptiness of own-being: If the bodhisattva understands the lack of own-being in an act that—on a more mundane level—is considered "morally impure," there is no defilement for him. But not only that, for if he furthermore practices with skill in means, the result is universal salvation. This is, for example, set forth in these words of the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*:¹²

Even in the case of [a transgression that] is sinful by nature, the bodhisattva acts with such skill in means that no sin is committed; rather, great merit arises.

With regard to this particular movement towards an "advanced morality," Pagel notes (p. 164):

That this process was slow is attested in several early Mahāyāna sūtras where we find the treatment of morality still bearing close resemblance to the ideal of early Buddhism.

Thus it appears that, by and by, the bodhisattva gained "practically infinite flexibility in the practice of morality" (p. 180). In later Mahāyāna works, the "traditional" moral integrity is assigned to the mundane surface-convention level (*lokasamvṛti*), where the bodhisattva is seen to observe the various commitments and vows and encourages beings to do likewise, and the "advanced morality" is allocated to the ultimate level. As Pagel observes (p. 163 f.):

The ultimate validity of the transactual *śīla* practice is challenged when "reality as it is" (*yathābhūta*) reveals itself as having the characteristics of same (*sama*), unborn (*anutpanna*) and calm (*śānta*), and to be operating beyond the categories of purity and impurity.

In other words, on the mundane level the bodhisattva practices according to the

¹⁰ Pagel (1995: 160-182).

¹¹ Tibetan text (ch. II, v. 3): *gal te de ni khirms dag rang bzhin lal/ de phyir de ni tshul khirms dag mi 'gyur*. See Candrakīrti, *Madhyamakāvatāra*, edited by Louis de la Vallée Poussin (1907-1912: 37).

¹² Wogihara (1930-36: 165.26 ff.). Translation by Pagel (1995: 173).

auditor prātimokṣa, while from the viewpoint of absolute truth (*paramārthasatya*) "all endeavours in morality lose their meaning and become harmful to liberation since they obstruct conceptual 'unbecoming' by superimposing non-existent predicates on reality" (p. 164). This, however, would merely amount to a devaluation of the auditor prātimokṣa, were there not the important integral part of the two truth theory according to which "true realization (...) does not entail dispensation of the relative level but depends on the integration of both facets of reality" (*ibid.*). Thus we may also observe here an effort to integrate both vows into the practice of the bodhisattva.

With the expansion of investigations into Tibetan Buddhism from about the 1960s onwards, modern scholars also turned their attention to Tantric Buddhism. Among the first who published extensive studies on Tantric material were Ferdinand D. Lessing and Alex Wayman, with their translation of mkhas-grub-rje's *Fundamentals of the Buddhist Tantras* in 1968. Wayman continued his research in the Tantric field, producing *The Enlightenment of Vairocana* (published together with R. Tajima),¹³ *The Yoga of the Guhyasamājatantra* (1977), and other works. A great number of other authors, too, devoted books or chapters to Tantric studies; suffice it here to mention Stephan Beyer (1973), *The Cult of Tārā*; Jeffrey Hopkins (1975), *Tantra in Tibet*; Tadeusz Skorupski (1983), *The Sarvadurgatiparis'odhana Tantra*; and Geoffrey Samuel (1993), *Civilized Shamans*. Although the necessity for a study of the three-vow topic and genre had been recognized earlier, in particular by Tatz,¹⁴ most of those works do not take up the theme of the three vows at all, and those that do rarely allott it more than a sentence, or at the most, a paragraph.

The first author to have published a paper more closely related to the theme of the three vows was Gyurme Dorje (1991). His article, however, deals in its main part chiefly with the commitments (*samaya*) and vows (*saṃvara*) in connection with their definition (p. 73 ff.) or with the views of the nine vehicles (p. 74 f.), or as they exist in the causal vehicles (p. 75 ff.), in the outer and inner tantras, and in the *mahā*, *anu*, and *atiyogas* (pp. 77-90). Only the last section (pp. 90-92) considers briefly the "Integration of the Three Vows." It consists primarily of a brief quotation from a work that he identifies as "Klong-chen-pa, *Phyogs-bcu-mun-sel*, Chapter 19."¹⁵ Gyurme Dorje's account, however, is not only confined to the reproduction

¹³ I have not seen the first edition of this book, but according to a catalogue it was published in 1987. The reprint was done in 1992.

¹⁴ Tatz (1986: 40).

¹⁵ G. Dorje (1987). I presume this to be Klong-chen-pa Dri-med-'od-zer, *gSang 'grel phyogs bcu mun sel dpal gsang ba'i snying po de kho na nyid nges pa'i rgyud kyi 'grel pa phyogs bcu'i mun pa thams cad mam par sel ba*, a detailed commentary on the
(continued...)

of a short section of one of Klong-chen-pa's works, but it is also limited by presenting only one of the six topics that constitute the rNying-ma-pa's doctrine of the three vows taught by Klong-chen-pa, as well as by mNga-ris Pan-chen, Lo-chen Dharma-shrī, and others (cf. Gyurme Dorje's account with the fifth part of Lo-chen Dharma-shrī's final chapter of his *Commentary on the "Clear Comprehension"*).¹⁵

Finally, two recent publications that treat the three vows directly, namely Ngari Panchen (1996) and Kongtrül Lodrö Tayé (1998), should be mentioned, both truly pioneering attempts to translate important though often difficult treatises. The first is a loose translation or paraphrase of mNga'-ris Pan-chen's *Clear Comprehension of the Three Vows* into English. According to its front cover, the book contains the commentary of Dudjom Rinpoche, i.e. the *sDom gsum nam nges 'bru 'grel*, in English translation by Khenpo Gyurme Samdrub and Sangye Khandro. It appears, however, that the main part of the book is more adequately described as a transcript of the translation of an oral teaching by Khenpo Gyurme Samdrub on Dudjom Rinpoche's work, edited perhaps to some extent on the basis of the Tibetan text. The work is useful as a general introduction to the three vows, but its value for a detailed study of the special rNying-ma-pa doctrines of the three vows is limited. The main problem of the book is, I think, that the English renderings of key concepts of mNga'-ris Pan-chen's root text are often questionable and that—due to the lack of a more precise understanding of some of the vital terms—on occasion passages from the commentary are only translated in a very loose manner. The part from the basic verses, for example, which actually says something like: "[The practice of the vows] is perfectly complete [through that which is to be] prevented [and through] the purpose" (*dgag dgos yongs rdzogs*), where "[that which is to be] prevented" (*dgag*) and "the purpose" (*dgos*) have the same referent, namely the defilements, that are to be prevented (which is the activity that is connected with the vows) and through which one is not to be bound (which is their purpose), is translated on pp. 141 and 172 as "[he] must fully perfect what to reject and what to accept," where "accept" is probably understood through the meaning of the verb *dgos pa*, "to be necessary," and where "what to reject and what to accept" obviously have two referents instead of having only one (and the same).

Another passage from the basic verses whose loose English rendering leads to a number of misinterpretations is found on pp. 142 and 172, where what should

¹⁵(...continued)

Guhayagarbhatantra. A reproduction from a print from the A-'dzom 'Brug-pa Chos-sgar blocks was published in Paro, 1975, by Ngodup.

¹⁶ The final chapter of the *Commentary on the "Clear Comprehension"* will be translated in chapter 15 of this book. Its fifth part teaches that the three vows are, through their vital points, not incompatible (*gnad kyis mi 'gal ba*).

perhaps be rendered as "since the place [i.e. person] from which [the vows] are taken, [and] the volitional impulses [and] rituals [through which they are taken] are ascertained as separate, [their] distinctive aspects are not mixed"¹⁷ is translated as: "without confusing their distinctions, the vows, the intention, and the ritual are all individually accomplished." Here "the place from which [the vows] are taken" (*blang yul*, i.e. the teacher) is understood as the vows themselves, probably because *blang yul* has been misunderstood as "the object (*yul*) that is taken (*blang*)," "ascertained" (*nges [pa]*) is rendered as "accomplished," the construction with *phyir* ("since") is neglected altogether, and the key concept "[the vow's] distinctive aspects are unmixed" (*rang ldog ma 'dres*)—originally the conclusion—is rendered "without confusing their distinctions."

As a consequence, the passage from Dudjom Rinpoche's commentary that follows in the translation (on p. 142) is hardly understandable. It states:

Each category of vows is received according to the intention maintained while receiving them. The rituals through which the vows are received are all different. At the time that one receives a vow, one embraces the nature of that vow. Then, as the next vow is received, the essence of what one already holds transforms into the next, without presenting any conflict. Each vow category will never deteriorate if it is maintained according to its own status. For example, the prātimokṣa precepts are taken for the duration of a lifetime, whereas the bodhisattva and Mantra vows are taken until the essence of enlightenment is realized.

The Tibetan text says something more like:

Now, since the three vows are ascertained as separate regarding their place [i.e. person] from which one takes them, the volitional impulse through which one takes them, [and] the duration for which they are taken, too, through the different rituals for taking them, even though the nature [of the vows] are transformed, the distinctive aspects of each [vow] continue to persist unmixed, because there is no possibility for these distinctive aspects to have a common basis, for after they are obtained, they continue to persist individually without decay. That is the case, because one accepts the prātimokṣa for as long as one lives, and the bodhisattva vows until one fully awakes [to Buddhahood on] the seat [of awakening (Skt. *bodhimāṇḍa*)], but at the time [of] obtaining the Mantra vows, the conditions for damaging or the causes for losing [the two above-mentioned vows] are not taught.¹⁸

¹⁷ The Tibetan text is: *de yang blang yul bsam pa cho ga rnams// so sor nges phyir rang ldog ma 'dres yin*. See part 1 of the translation in chapter 15.

¹⁸ For the Tibetan text see part 1 of chapter 15. My translation represents Lo-chen (continued...)

The second book that I should mention is an English translation of the fifth chapter of Kong-sprul's *Pervading All Objects of Knowledge*. The book is a useful contribution in some ways. It is, for example, very helpful in that it presents the outline of Kong-sprul's work with exactly the same sub-chapters and sections and in that the root-verses are marked (in bold letters). Much effort has also been undertaken in the annotation. The translation, however, is frequently misleading. Often the translators miss the subject of a sentence, even if it is marked with *ni*, or they overlook simple constructions expressing assertion and reason such as ... *ste* ... *phyir*. In sum, the work is far from a word-by-word translation, since in almost every sentence one or more words are left untranslated, or words are introduced into the translation for which there is no equivalent in the Tibetan text. Sometimes one even finds gross distortions of the meaning that were not noticed during the process of later editing. For example, a verse (p. 301) that asserts that "there have been in both India and Tibet many opinions about how [the vows] persist" (*gnas tshul 'phags bod gnyis su bzhed srol mang*), is rendered as "Indian scholars differ from Tibetan scholars in their assertions on how all three vows coexist."

Let me take this opportunity to ascertain that it is not my intention to discredit the efforts of others in an indiscriminate manner. Everyone, including myself, is bound to make mistakes and err on occasion. The point I would like to make is that the authors of both books, like many others, choosing as their subject at least in parts of their works the practices of Tantric Buddhism, aim at English reading Buddhists as their primary target group. And in doing so, these authors accept, in my opinion, a great responsibility. Anyone familiar with tantric studies knows that in the past this delicate subject has more often than not been misrepresented even in scholarly publications, although in theses one is more likely to find an informed and more carefully balanced approach. But the vast majority of non-specialist readers is neither taking note of scholarly studies, nor do they have the means to judge the accuracy of translations from such languages as Sanskrit or Tibetan. As a result, the non-specialist reader for his information is often found depending solely on such books as the ones that are under scrutiny here.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama has once said that books on Tantra were never really meant for a larger public. Nowadays, however, he feels that it is better to read a book presenting correct views on Tantra than to continue with one's erroneous ideas on the nature of the Tantric path.¹⁹ Careful studies on Tantra are therefore

¹⁸(...continued)

Dharma-shrī's *Commentary on the Clear Comprehension*, fol. 297r, which bDud-'joms Rinpoche, fol. 192r, repeats almost *verbatim*.

¹⁹ See the foreword to Glenn H. Mullin (1991): *The Practice of Kalachakra*. Snow Lion, (continued...)

certainly welcome, but in many cases it would have been better had the author(s) concentrated on single topics rather than to attempt to translate complete works.

1.2. The Meaning of the Term "Three Vows"

(*sdom pa gsum*, Skt. *trisaṃvara*)

In general, the Buddhist scholars of Tibet conceived the "three vows" (*sdom pa gsum*) according to the Tantric tradition, namely as referring to the vows of the auditor *prātimokṣa*, the bodhisattvas, and the Tantric adepts. But there are also other meanings of the term, some of them attested already in Indian literature, all of which were apparently known to most of the Tibetan authors who dealt with the subject in any detail. In the *Abhidharmakośa*, for example, the "three vows" apply to the three moral observances, i.e. the observances of individual liberation (*so thar gyi sdom pa*), of [guarding against] impurity (*zag med kyi sdom pa*), and of concentrative absorption (*bsam gtan gyi sdom pa*).²⁰ Tibetan authors have also noted the use of the term in the Vinaya as relating to the vows of householders (*upāsaka*), novice monks (*śramaṇera*), and full monks (*bhikṣu*). The *Abhidharmakośa*, commenting on the term as used in the Vinaya, offers an explanation for the possession of these three vows by a single person, which must be regarded as a three-vow theory in itself, for it says: "[The three vows persist] separately, [but] they are not incompatible."²¹ This early "three vow theory" of the *Abhidharmakośa* also involves a discussion of the

¹⁹(...continued)

Ithaca, New York, p. 12.

²⁰ See *Abhidharmakośa*, ch. IV, v. 13cd: *saṃvaraḥ prātimokṣākhyo dhyānajo' nāsravas tathā*. See Pradhan (1967: 205); for the Tibetan text, see *P* vol. 115, no. 5591, *gu* 202b ff. "The observance of *prātimokṣa* is the morality of the beings of the spheres of desire" (*prātimokṣasaṃvara ihatyānām kāmāvacaram śīlam*/), see Pradhan (1967: 205). "The observance of *dhyāna* is the morality of the spheres of form" (*dhyānasamvaro rūpāvacaram śīlam*, *ibid.*). It is possessed by "the one who possesses that which is produced by *dhyāna*" (*dhyānajena tadanvitaḥ*, see *Abhidharmakośa*, ch. IV, v. 17b). "The persons who are saints are provided with the observance that is without evil influence" (*āryapudgalā anāsraveṇa saṃvareṇa samanvāgatāḥ*/), see Pradhan (1967: 208). See also Pagel (1995: 168, fn. 226), who includes some interesting remarks on these three categories. For a discussion of the *so thar*, *bsam gtan*, and *zag med kyi sdom pa* in a Tibetan work of the nineteenth/twentieth century, see Mi-pham (1846-1912), *mKhas 'jug*, pp. 181 ff.

²¹ *Abhidharmakośa*, ch. IV, v. 14d, *P* vol. 115, no. 5591, *gu* 203b: *tha dad de dag 'gal ba med*. See also, Pradhan (1967: 206): ... *prīhak te cāvirodhinaḥ*. For a Tibetan discussion of this point, see Sangs-rgyas-rgya-mtsho, *dPal ldan gso ba rig pa'i khog 'bugs*, pp. 475 f.

unmixed (*ma 'dres pa*, Skt. *avyāmiśra*) state of the vows, of their separate defining characteristics (*mushan nyid tha dad pa*, Skt. *prthaglakṣaṇa*), their different occasions [of transgression] (*gzhi'i khyad par*, Skt. *nidānaviśeṣād viśeṣaH*), and the greater number of rules (*bslab pa'i gzhi*) of the higher vows respectively, through which a greater number of occasions of transgression are avoided. Here also some undesirable consequences of wrong positions are discussed, for example that from an inclusion (*'dus pa*) of the lower vows within the higher ones, it would follow that a monk who returns his vows would lose all three vows (*gsum char yang btang*). In general, however, if a householder takes higher vows, he does not lose the preceding vow. Therefore, it is said, the vows are also not incompatible (*'gal ba med*).²²

Other enumerations of "three vows" are also mentioned in Tibetan works:²³ The vows of body, speech, and mind (*lus ngag yid gsum gyi sdom pa*) of the "basket [of scriptures] of auditors" (*śrāvakapiṭaka*), and the vows of refraining from [morally] wrong behaviour (*nyes spyod sdom pa'i tshul khrims*) and of gathering virtuous factors (*dge ba chos sdud kyi tshul khrims*) and establishing the benefit for sentient beings (*sems can don byed kyi tshul khrims*) of the "basket [of scriptures] of the Mahāyāna [i.e. of the bodhisattvas]" (*mahāyānapīṭaka* or *bodhisattvapiṭaka*).²⁴ Even within the Mantra division (*gsang sngags kyi rgyud sde*) there exist several sets of three vows:²⁵ The vow of the production of the resolve for awakening (*sems bskyed kyi sdom pa*), the vow of the stage of production (*bskyed rim gyi sdom pa*), and the stage of perfection (*rdzogs rim gyi sdom pa*), again a set of vows of body, speech, and mind (*sku gsung thugs kyi sdom pa*), and finally the vows of the prātimokṣa, the bodhisattva, and the Tantric adept (*so thar byang sems rig pa 'dzin pa'i sdom pa*).

²² See *P* vol. 115, no. 5591, *gu* 202b-3b. Technically this means that when a householder becomes a novice monk, he still possesses the previous householder vows consisting of five rules. The ten precepts of the novice monk include the same five rules of the householder once again, but with a greater number of occasions to observe them, plus five more vows which are specific vows of the novice monk. Although he thus actually received fifteen vows altogether, the novice monk is usually described as holding ten vows.

²³ The following lists of vows can be found in Go-rams-pa, *General Topics*, p. 205, fol. 11v-r.

²⁴ The corresponding Sanskrit terms for the last three vows are *saṃvaraśīla*, *kuśaladhar-masamgrāhakaśīla*, and *sattvānugrāhakaśīla*. Cf. mNga'-ris Paṇ-chen, *Clear Comprehension of the Three Vows*, p. 25 l. 6; *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, Wogihara (1930-36: 138 ff.); Bodhibhadra, *Bodhisattvasaṃvara*, 168-5-8; and Pagel (1995: 168 ff.).

²⁵ According to Go-rams-pa, *General Topics*, p. 205, fol. 12r.

1.3. The Importance of the Three Vows for Tibetan Buddhism

Already when Tibetans came into contact with Indian Buddhism for the first time, they received either *prātimokṣa* ordinations, or *bodhisattva* vows,²⁶ or Tantric initiation. Very soon, however, the question of whether these vows were always correctly transmitted became a topic of debate.²⁷ The seventeenth century master Karma-chags-med (1613-78),²⁸ for example, recorded an early instance of an incorrect transmission of the three vows. According to him, some *rNying-ma-pas* of a very early period erroneously believed that they had received the three vows merely by obtaining the initiations of the nine vehicles (*theg pa dgu*). As a consequence, they carefully maintained and observed the *prātimokṣa* vows without actually having received them. This error, however, is not considered to be a major defect since the rules of the Vinaya were observed, but it "does possess one fault, [in so far as] no great benefit will arise [from practicing so]."²⁹ In the same text he also informs us of a correctly transmitted system which was followed by Padmasambhava, King Khri-srong-lde'u-btsan, and (twenty-four of) his subjects (who are actually considered to be great adepts):³⁰

²⁶ According to Bu-ston's History of Buddhism, it was Śāntarakṣita who ordained the first seven Tibetans (*sad mi mi bdun*). See, János Szerb (1990: fol. 141b). Śāntarakṣita, who was referred to by Tibetans as *mKhan-po* Bodhisattva, also transmitted the *bodhisattva* vows, for example, to gSal-snang of Mang-yul (fol. 140a). See also, E. Obermiller (1931: 187 ff.).

²⁷ R.A. Stein (1972: 144), presents an interesting law decreed by the king Khri-srong-lde'u-btsan that already reveals a conflict between monks and Tantric adepts.

²⁸ Karma-chags-med is best known for his fusion of the Mahāmudrā and *rDzogs-pa-chen-po* traditions (*phyag rdzogs zung 'jug*). His presentation of the three vows in his *Ri chos mtshams kyi zhal gdams*, ch. 5 (ca), provides a very interesting summary of different Tibetan systems. Where I was able to investigate his descriptions further, I found that he accurately presented the most essential points. His sketches, however, do not include citations, but rather seem to be recapitulations of the oral teachings he had received. This teaching was given by speaking through a hole in the wall of his cave to one of his disciples.

²⁹ Karma-chags-med, *Ri chos*, fol. 27v (p. 76): *ma dag snga 'gyur rnying ma'i chos lugs la// mdo dbang la sogs theg dgu'i dbang thob nas// sdom pa gsum ka thob par rlom nas kyang // 'dul khrims sdom pa gghan ni mi zhu bar// chos gos snam sbyar gyon nas srung sdom gzabs// de ni o rgyan chen po'i lung bstan las// sdom pa dbang gi(s) thob par risi ba yin// 'dul ba'i bsten (bstan) pa nyams pa'i rtags su gsungs// 'di la nyes 'gal chen po ma mchis te// 'dul khrims ma zhus 'dul khrims srung ba des// phan yon chen po mi 'byung skyon cig gda'// 'di ni mdo khams shar phyogs mtha' nas dar.*

³⁰ *O rgyan rje 'bangs [nyer lnga]*, the names of these twenty-four "subjects" are listed in the *Tibetan-Chinese Dictionary*, p. 910. "rje" denotes the king, thus this compound is to be understood as "Padmasambhava [and the] twenty-five [disciples, i.e.] the king [and] the (continued...)"

The three vows are received in sequence and separately maintained.
 At the time when one has acquired adroitness in [the practice of] channels
 and winds,
 one does not lose the prātimokṣa vows
 even if one has dwelled in such [practices] as the path of desire;
 and the monk vows are not lost
 [even] if [enemies of the teachings dwelling on?] the ten fields have been
 killed through wrathful mantras [and] black magic.³¹

This practice, however, goes completely against both Buddhist monastic ethics and all social norms. It is known that strong reservations about erroneous, literal Tantric practice were expressed by some important figures in early Tibetan Buddhist history, such as the king of mNga'-ris Gu-ge, Ye-shes-'od, the translator Rin-chen-bzang-po, the Indian master Atiśa, and his disciple 'Brom-ston. It would seem that they either had doubts about the authenticity of Mantra practices in general,³² or they intended

³⁰(...continued)
 subjects."

³¹ Karma-chags-med, *Ri chos*, fol. 27r (p. 75): *sdom gsum rim gyis zhus shing so sor srung // rtsa lung las su rung ba de yi tshel/ chags lam la sogs brten par byas na yang // so sor thar pa'i sdom pa mi 'chor zhing // drag sngags ngan mthus zhing bcu bsgral ba na// dge slong sdom pa 'chor bar mi 'gyur ba*. Evidently the practice of sexual union and mactation (*sbyor sgröl*) is referred to. Mactation, or "ritual slaughter," is here linked with the term *zhing bcu*. In the *Tibetan-Chinese Dictionary* we find the following explanation (p. 2389): "It is necessary that ten conditions are fulfilled in an enemy of the teachings who is to be 'liberated' (i.e. killed, *bsgral byar gyur pa*) according to the Tantric teachings." These ten conditions are then listed as: *bstan pa bshig pa dang / dkon mchog la smad pa/ dge 'dun gyi dkor 'phrog pa/ theg chen la smod pa/ bla ma'i sku la bsdo ba/ rdo rje spun grogs sun 'byin pa/ sgrub la bar gcod byed pa/ brtse ba snying rje gtan nas med pa/ dam tshig sdom pa dang bral ba/ las 'bras la log lta*. It is interesting to note that this kind of practice is associated with the same King Khri-srong-lde'u-btsan who also issued the decrees which restricted Tantric practice. See ftns. 27 and 32.

³² Tibetan historians repeat again and again the story that lHa-bla-ma Ye-shes-'od became dissatisfied with the abuses or mispractices of the Buddhist Tantric traditions in Tibet in his time, and that as a consequence he sent Rin-chen-bzang-po (958-1055) to Kashmir to investigate the authenticity of Tantric teachings. See Samten G. Karmay (1979: 150 ff.); see also Seyfort Rugg (1981: 224 ff.); Chattopadhyaya (1967: 291 ff.).

Rin-chen-bzang-po returned to Tibet as a Mantra practitioner himself, but he remained a critic of the Tantras of the Ancient Tradition; see Roerich (1976: vol. 1, pp. 102, 204 ff.); see also, Chattopadhyaya (1967: 293 ff.). See also Khri-lde-srong-btsan's decree on restricting *vajrayāna* translations, reproduced in N. Simonsson (1957: 260); and Bu-ston, *Chos byung*, fol. 130r-v, for the time of Ral-pa-can = Khri-gtsug-lde-btsan(!); and Padma-dkar-po, *Chos* (continued...)

to restrict these practices in some way.³³ In particular, several authors voiced their concern about a certain "Red Master" (*Ācārya dMar-po*) and his followers.³⁴ In the period shortly before Atiśa's coming to mNga'-ris (presumably 1042), the *Ācārya dMar-po* spread the three vows in that area.³⁵ Karma-chags-med describes his system of obtaining the three vows as a system where higher vows are obtained successively by transformation (of the lower ones) and the lower vows are completely abandoned.³⁶ The monks with Mantra vows are permitted to associate with women. As a result the *Ācārya*'s following "increased greatly" and these so-called

³²(...continued)

byung, fol. 168v, for the time of Khri-lde-srong-btsan.

³³ Mi-la-ras-pa and sGam-po-pa are said to have expressed their disapproval of 'Bromston's attitude to keep the Mantra practices secret; see Roerich (1976: vol. 1, 261). Atiśa did not allow the *guhyaḥḥiṣeka* and the *prajñāḥḥiṣeka* for celibates, i.e. for the full monk (*bhikṣu*) and the celibate householder (*brahmacārin*); see Atiśa, *Bodhipathapradīpa*, in: Eimer (1978: text edition, l. 259 ff.); see also Seyfort Ruegg (1981: 213 ff.). Other Tibetan authors explain that Atiśa only intended to encourage Vinaya practice and that such teachings were intended to attract those of inferior capacity; see, for example, Klong-chen-pa, *bSam gtan ngal gso*, fol. 139v-140r.

³⁴ See, for example, 'Jig-rten-mgon-po, *sDom gsum gnad gcig*, fol. 2r; Las-chen Kundga'-rgyal-mtshan, *bKa' gdams kyi nam par thar pa*, fol. 64r. See also Seyfort Ruegg (1981: 220 ff.); Chattopadhyaya (1967: 291 ff.). Concrete references to the *Ācārya dMar-po* are scarce and I do not know of any publication that goes beyond the facts presented by Seyfort Ruegg. There is also an interesting note on a blue-robed monk of the Sammitiya school who practiced sexual union. On this see Giacomella Orofino (1992: vol. 2, 622, n. 27). A blue-robed master (*shams thabs sngon po can*) is often associated with the *Ācārya dMar-po* in Tibetan historiographical literature.

³⁵ For the date 1042, see for example Pañ-chen bSod-nams-grags-pa, *bKa' gdams chos 'byung*, fol. 3v. The connection of mNga'-ris with *Ācārya dMar-po*'s activities is made for example in 'Jig-rten-mgon-po, *sDom gsum gnad gcig*, fol. 2r.

³⁶ Karma-chags-med, *Ri chos*, p. 74: *de nas byang chub sems bskyed zhus pa yis// so thar sdom pa byang sems sdom par 'gyur// de nas 'dul khrims gcig kyang srung mi dgos// (...)* *de nas gsang sngags dbang bzhi zhus pa yis// byang sdom de'ang sngags kyi sdom par 'gyur// de nas byang sdom bslab pa bsrung mi dgos//*

Thereafter, by receiving the [ritual of] producing the resolve for awakening (*bodhicitta*) [i.e. the bodhisattva vows],

the prātimokṣa vows turned into the bodhisattva vows.

After that, none of the rules of the Vinaya had to be maintained (...)

Thereafter, by receiving the four initiations of the Mantra,

these bodhisattva vows too turned into the vows of Mantra.

After that, the training of the bodhisattva vows did not have to be maintained.

"householder monks" (*gser khyim pa*)³⁷ spread "everywhere in mNga'-ris, dBus and gTsang." This passage ends with the statement: "All learned ones censure and refute [this doctrine], calling it the 'perverted doctrine of Ācārya dMar-po.'"³⁸

1.4. The Key Concepts of the Tibetan Three-Vow Theories

Motivated by feeling the need to reject such incorrect doctrines and to integrate correct Mantra practices into mainstream Tibetan Buddhism, Tibetan scholars began to investigate the three vows seriously, and they began to develop a terminology for discussing their different concepts. I shall not attempt to begin to explain the terminology here in this introduction, but I would like to provide a preliminary idea of the main problems that were considered and discussed in the Tibetan works on the three vows.

At the earliest recorded stage of development there are two essentially different positions on the interrelations of the three vows. The first emphasizes the superiority of Mantra. According to this position, the vows are different and the higher ones are more powerful. Interestingly, however, this particular initial position led again to two quite different concepts of the vows and to correspondingly different terminologies. On the one hand, sGam-po-pa asserts that the natures of the vows are different (*ngo bo tha dad*); he refers, for example, to the fact that the three vows are established in different sections of the teachings and are obtained for different durations, etc.³⁹

Vibhūticandra, on the other hand, as the second proponent postulating the vows as different, explains that they are so because they consist of "distinct entities of their own" (*rdzas gzhan tha dad*).⁴⁰ Furthermore, the opinion that the higher vows are more powerful is connected by sGam-po-pa with the higher capacity of the

³⁷ The *gSer-khyim-pa* were people who wore the yellow robes of a monk but lived like householders, thus corrupting the rules of the Vinaya. It is to be noted that a tradition of *gSer-khyim-pas* was still to be found in twentieth-century Ding-ri, where they formed one fifth of the entire population. Whether this particular tradition can be traced back to the time of the Red Master is at present unknown. See Barbara Aziz (1978: pp. 76-94).

³⁸ That the doctrine of Ācārya dMar-po was rejected in Tibet seems to be the case at least with regard to the system of the three vows that is ascribed to him. On the other hand it appears that certain teachings of the Red Master have survived in Tibet. See, for example, Seyfort Ruegg (1981: 220). Furthermore, a miniature colour picture of him is displayed in the *Secret Visions of the Fifth Dalai Lama*, see Samten Karmay (1980: XI, picture no. 4). On p. 74 he is referred to as the person who has introduced the cult of dPal-ldan-lha-mo (of whom the Fifth Dalai Lama had visions) to Tibet.

³⁹ sGam-po-pa, *Work A* 5.

⁴⁰ Vibhūticandra, *Garland of Rays* 23.

Tantric yogi. Whenever an "internal conflict arises" (*nang thug byung na*) between the higher and the lower vows, the yogi should prefer to practice according to the higher vow, which, despite the conflict with the lower vows, does not constitute a fault because of the yogi's greater insight (*prajñā*), means, and higher intention.⁴¹ Vibhūticandra, on the other hand, explains the greater power of the Mantra vows in accordance with his postulation of the vows persisting as distinct entities of their own: The Mantra vows, which are like the sun, outshine (*zil gyis gnon*) the two lower vows, which are like the stars and moon.⁴² When the Mantra vows are obtained, the lower vows remain in a "dormant mode" (*bag la nyal*).⁴³

The second of the two essentially different positions concerning the three vows emphasizes their sameness. 'Jig-rten-mgon-po, for example, teaches that all three vows have the same vital point (*gnad gcig*), namely the abandoning of the ten non-virtues through all three vows alike.⁴⁴ The vows are three, nevertheless, because "the possessor of the vows has changed" (*bdag po 'phos pa*),⁴⁵ i.e. has become a bodhisattva or a Tantric adept. rJe-btsun Grags-pa-rgyal-mtshan, on the other hand, does not directly allude to a sameness of the vows, but he states clearly that in Mantra practice, too, the prātimokṣa and bodhisattva vows are to be carefully maintained and continued.⁴⁶ Later on, Go-rams-pa (1429-1489), for example, elaborates this position and postulates the three vows as having the "same nature" (*ngo bo gcig*).⁴⁷ rJe-btsun Grags-pa-rgyal-mtshan speaks, furthermore, of a change with regard to the three vows. But according to him, it is not the possessor of the vow who changes, instead the respective lower vow turns ('gyur) into the respective higher one.⁴⁸ Later on this position is again elaborated by teaching the transformation (*gnas 'gyur*) of the vows.⁴⁹

1.5. Purpose and Procedure

Let me now briefly describe the purpose and procedure of my research. My purpose is to carry out three main objectives of doctrinal description and historical

⁴¹ sGam-po-pa, *Work A* 8 and 9.

⁴² Vibhūticandra, *Garland of Rays* 27.

⁴³ Vibhūticandra, *Garland of Rays* 25.

⁴⁴ rDo-rje-shes-rab, *Same Intention*, vajra utterance 1.24.

⁴⁵ rDo-rje-shes-rab, *Same Intention*, vajra utterance 1.25.

⁴⁶ Grags-pa-rgyal-mtshan, *Removing Errors Regarding the Fundamental Transgressions*, fol. 18r-v.

⁴⁷ Go-rams-pa, *General Topics*, for example on fol. 72v.

⁴⁸ Grags-pa-rgyal-mtshan, *Removing Errors Regarding the Fundamental Transgressions*, fol. 48v.

⁴⁹ See, for example, Go-rams-pa, *General Topics*, fol. 72v ff.

interpretation:

1. To identify and describe the main early three-vow doctrines of Tibet,
2. to differentiate between the different strands of the related doctrinal discussion by identifying the earliest proponents of the different doctrines and their later followers and respondents, and
3. to describe the historical development of the key doctrinal terms, as far as this is possible. Here I will try to take into consideration the influences that the different strands may have exercised on each other.

When attempting to trace the different strands of doctrine, the development of the terms within them, and the influences between them, one immediately is faced with the problem of concretely documenting the later influence of early authors. Here, even though all our authors and their dates are fairly well known (and even the dates of composition of many of their works can be established), our conclusions in these regards must remain tentative, for the accessibility of each work even to scholars of the same tradition remains still very much unknown. Thus we face not only the problem of whether, for example, the works of the slightly earlier seventh Karma-pa Chos-grags-rgya-mtsho (1454-1506) and of Karma-'phrin-las-pa (1456-1539) were actually known to mNga'-ris Pan-chen (1487-1542) of the rNying-ma-pas, but also whether, for example, Karma-nges-legs-bstan-'dzin (1700s) drew from the same sources as Karma-'phrin-las-pa, for the latter identifies as the originator of what he accepts as his "own tradition" (*rang lugs*) sGam-po-pa, while the first says that he derives his almost identical doctrine from the third Karma-pa Rang-byung-rdo-rje (1284-1339). Even though it appears that the third Karma-pa was more likely the originator, since the terms and concepts used by both Karma-'phrin-las-pa and Karma-nges-legs are already quite developed and point rather to the thirteenth than to the twelfth century, one still has to be quite careful about this conclusion, since we still have much more to learn about sGam-po-pa and his works, and no treatise on the three vows of the third Karma-pa has turned up as yet.

Another factor limiting the strength of my conclusions is that since this is the first time the problem of the three vows is addressed in a Western academic work, my investigation to a large extent consists of the mapping out of wide, previously unexplored terrain, and that this wide comprehensiveness can only be gained at the expense of less attention to every detail and particular (which is not the case when one concentrates on a single textual tradition). Once I decided to write a dissertation on the theme of the three vows, my first aim was to find out whether there exist different competing doctrinal systems. These I found in abundance. I very soon discovered that in order to appreciate properly even one author's work, I would have to investigate the rivalling doctrines as well. I therefore undertook to identify the most prominent proponents of Tibetan three-vow doctrines and then began to translate the relevant passages of their works. During the process of translation, I

mainly directed my attention to the first two of the three above-stated objectives. The third objective—namely, describing the historical development—was dealt with only after the translations were completed.

Even though I cannot hope in my translations to convey all of my authors' profound intentions in each and every aspect, I nevertheless have tried to render their works as faithfully as possible. In those cases where the full meaning of a passage remained unclear to me, my aim was still to follow in the translation the structure of the Tibetan text as closely as possible and to translate each Tibetan word with what seemed to me the most suitable English equivalent. While translating I tried, whenever time and opportunity allowed it, to consult learned Tibetans of different traditions. Among the numerous scholars who were kind enough to submit themselves to my pestering with many questions the first was, at the beginning, my friend Ngawang Tsering of Nurla, Ladakh, who also was the one who first introduced me to the theme of the three vows. Although his primary focus is very much as an adherent of the 'Bri-gung bKa'-brgyud-pa, he is also well versed in other bKa'-brgyud-pa and rNying-ma traditions. Later on I consulted Nub-pa Rin-po-che and mKhan-po dKon-mchog-bkra-shis of the Drikung Kagyu Institute in Dehra Dun, India, as well as mKhan-po dKon-mchog-rgyal-mtshan of the 'Bri-gung tradition, dGe-shes Thub-bstan-ngag-dbang, Hamburg, Ācārya Tshul-khrims-rnam-dag, formerly of Rumtek College, Sikkim, and my colleague rDo-rje-dbang-phyug of the University of Hamburg. I also had the opportunity to go through most of my translations with my teacher Prof. David P. Jackson, Hamburg.

The above sketch of my purpose and procedure readily reveals certain limitations of my work. First of all, it would have been desirable to investigate each tradition in much more detail through the many commentaries that exist on them, instead of using only two or three of the most prominent works of each tradition. But the lack of time and the already alarming bulkiness of my materials prevented me from further probing into them. I also had to give up following one particular and very promising strand of the discussion in Tibet, namely that which began with Tsong-kha-pa Blo-bzang-grags-pa's (1357-1419) reply to rJe-btsun Grags-pa-rgyal-mtshan's *Removing Errors Regarding the Fundamental Transgressions*,⁵⁰ and was furthered by Śākya-mchog-ldan's (1408-1507) reply to the Tsong-kha-pa.⁵¹ An investigation that would have done justice to these three eminent masters could have easily doubled the time I had already spent and would certainly have doubled the number of pages of the final study, too. Yet another obvious limitation is that Indian works have largely been excluded. Here the main reason is simply that, except for

⁵⁰ In: Tsong-kha-pa Blo-bzang-grags-pa, *gSang sngags kyi tshul khrims*, vol. 1, pp. 375-512.

⁵¹ In: Śākya-mchog-ldan, *'Khrul spong gi brgal lan*, vol. 23, pp. 105-296.

Vibhūticandra's *Garland of Rays*, no "proper" three-vow treatise of Indian origin came into my hands (and even that work is said to have been composed in Tibet), although we have ample reason to believe that discussions of the theme existed in India.⁵² Many other Tibetan three-vow treatises turned up during my work, but their proper investigation must be postponed because of limitations of time and space. A few of the works that had to be left out are:

Tsong-kha-pa Blo-bzang-grags-pa's (1357-1419), *gSang sngags kyi tshul khrims*, containing a reply to Grags-pa-rgyal-mtshan's *rTsa lung 'khrul spong*.

Shākya-mchog-ldan's (1408-1507), *'Khrul spong gi brgal lan*, containing Śākya-mchog-ldan's reply to Tsong-kha-pa.

Mi-bskyod-rdo-rje, Karma-pa VIII (1507-1554), *'Jig rten gsum mgon dgongs gcig nam bshad*, a large commentary on 'Jig-rten-mgon-po's *Same Intention*.

Padma-dkar-po, 'Brug-chen IV (1527-1592), *sDom pa gsum gyi rgyan*. 3 vols., basic verses and autocommentary. A basic work of the 'Brug-pa tradition.

sDom pa gsum gyi snying po. A large work despite the title.

Rang zhin(!) rdzogs pa chen po nam nges bstan bcos. This is a commentary of doubtful authorship on mNga'-ris Paṇ-chen's *Clear Comprehension of the Three Vows*.

Dharmabhadra, dNgul-chu (1772-1851), *sDom gsum gyi bslab bya'i sdom tshig*, dGe-lugs-pa.

Grub-pa'i-rdo-rje, dByangs-can (1809-1877? 1887?), *sDom pa gsum gyi mi mthun phyogs dran tshul*, dGe-lugs-pa, disciple of dNgul-chu Dharmabhadra.

Mi-pham (1846-1912), *sDom gsum ngo bo gcig*, which, although it clearly stands in the tradition of the rNying-ma-pas, appears to include reflections of masters from other lineages, such as of 'Jig-rten-mgon-po of the 'Bri-gung-pas.

Karma-nges-don-bstan-rgyas, sMan-sdong-mtshams-pa (1879?-1921? 1960?), *sDom gsum rags bsdus* and *sDom gsum 'rags(!) bsdus byang chub*, a Karma-bka'-brgyud-pa work and autocommentary with obvious rNying-ma-pa influences.

dGe-'dun-rin-chen, dGe-bshes Brag-phug (1926-), *sDom gsum rgyan gyi*

⁵² Kong-sprul, *Pervading All Objects of Knowledge* 4, and Karma-nges-legs, *Good Vase* 3, for example, report of a three-vow theory of Abhayākara-gupta, and of several different systems having existed in India.

- mchan 'grel*, a word-by-word commentary of Padma-dkar-po's *sDom gsum gyi rgyan*.
- bSod-nams-chos-'grub, Glag-bla (20th c.), *sDom gsum gyi dris lan nyi 'od snang ba*, a modern reply in the tradition of the rNying-ma-pas.
- Karma-sangs-rgyas-chos-'phel (?-?), *gZhung lugs bshad bya'i yan lag sdom gsum zur rgyan*.
- ?, *sDom gsum kha khong gi rnam bshad*, Microfilm NGMPP. Commentary on Go-rams-pa's *sDom gsum kha skong*, maybe by Ngag-dbang-chos-grags?
- ?, *sDom gsum ldan pas nyin zhag phrugs gcig*, Microfilm NGMPP.
- ?, *sDom gsum rnam nges las 'phros*, Microfilm NGMPP, a further discussion on mNga'-ris Paṇ-chen, *Clear Comprehension of the Three Vows*.
- ?, *sDom gsum rnam nges mchan 'grel*, Microfilm, NGMPP, a word-by-word commentary on mNga'-ris Paṇ-chen, *Clear Comprehension of the Three Vows*.

* * *

I did not attempt to establish by philological criteria any lineages of textual transmission. Except in a very few cases, the authors of the sources that I have used mention only the originator of their teaching such as "sGam-po-pa," "Grags-pa-rgyal-mtshan," etc., and additionally perhaps the teacher from whom they have received teachings on the three vows. And even in these cases, the naming of alleged "originators" has to be taken with a grain of salt—in some cases their mention appears to be rather an act of devotion than a record of historical truth. For the Sa-skyapa lineage, for example, we read again and again in treatises of all the various traditions that the Sa-skyapa doctrine of transformation (*gnas 'gyur*) and same nature (*ngo bo gcig*) of the vows originated with, or at least appeared in, Sa-paṇ's *Clear Differentiation of the Three Vows*. This is certainly not the case, for such terms were never used there. In the Karma bKa'-brgyud-pa tradition, to take another example, most authors refer to sGam-po-pa as the originator of their teachings. But after sGam-po-pa, the doctrine taught in that tradition appears to be so much expanded and "improved" that hardly a single key term from the works of the later tradition can be found in the relevant passages of sGam-po-pa's collected works. And, as mentioned before, one author of the 1700s, namely Karma-nges-legs, refers in particular to the third Karma-pa as the originator of those same teachings that are ascribed by others to sGam-po-pa. In short, detailed future investigation of such doctrinal transmissions will have to focus more exclusively on single textual traditions.