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When Buddhist Teachings Meet –
Preliminary Remarks on the Relationship Between the *Four
Dharmas of Sgam po pa* and Kun dga' snying po's *Parting from
the Four Attachments*¹

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1. Introduction

In the early phase of reception² during the second spread of Buddhism in Tibet, distinct Tibetan religious schools had not yet formed. Still, the later Bka' brgyud tradition generally considers the translator Mar pa chos kyi blo gros (11th century), the yogi Mi la ras pa (1040/52–1123/35), and the monk Sgam po pa bsod nams rin chen (1079–1153) as their three founding fathers. While they are all revered very much by the tradition, it is particularly Sgam po pa, also called Dvags po rin po che, who played a unique role in shaping the tradition. The tradition's first monastic seat was founded by him in the region Dvags po on the Sgam po mountain, and soon more monasteries were established by his disciples and their followers. These monasteries were the bases for several sub-schools that came to be known as the *four great and eight minor Bka' brgyud traditions* (*bka' brgyud che bzhi chung brgyad*), collectively referred to by the generic name *Dvags po bka' brgyud*. Not only did Sgam po pa directly influence the organizational structure of these various schools, but he also left a significant impact on their doctrinal level, and even on that of Buddhism in Tibet as a whole. In his research on the three vows in Tibetan Buddhism, Jan-Ulrich Sobisch stated that “the earliest Tibetan doctrinal formulations on the three vows”³ that he was able to locate were those found in Sgam po pa's collected works.⁴

¹ This paper is largely based on the preliminary work for my forthcoming dissertation *When Sūtra Meets Tantra. Sgam po pa's Four Dharma Doctrine as an Example for his Synthesis of the Bka' gdams and Mahāmudrā Systems*.

² This doxographical classification follows Tauscher 1995: 10.

³ Sobisch 2002: 177.

⁴ Western and Tibetan scholars alike observed that a degree of uncertainty remains as to the authorship of many of the texts in the collected works, several of which seem to be disciples' notes. (cf. Sobisch 2002, 180f.) The first xylographic print version of the collected works is the 1520 Dvags lha sgam po edition compiled by a distant relative of Sgam po pa, Sgam po pa bsod nams lhun grub (1488–1552). The Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project (NGMPP) microfilmed a copy of this print in 1995 (DKB-Dvags). I will mostly rely on said edition for this paper.

Sgam po pa was the first yogi who was also a monk of the Tibetan Bka' brgyud tradition. He is further credited for combining two of the most prevalent traditions during the second spread of Buddhism in Tibet, the Bka' gdams system of the Indian Buddhist master Atiśa Dīpaṃkāra Śrījñāna (980–1054) and the *mahāmudrā* system brought to Tibet by Mar pa the translator. The system set down in his works which forms the doctrinal ground for all of the later Bka' brgyud traditions was therefore characterized as the “unity of Bka' gdams and *mahāmudrā*” (*bka' phyag zung 'brel*). His most elaborate presentation of the system and also his most famous work is certainly the influential *Jewel Ornament of Liberation, the Wish-Fulfilling Gem of the Noble Dharma* (*Dam chos yid bzhi nor bu thar pa rin po che'i rgyan*).⁵

The *Four Dharmas of Sgam po pa* (*Dvags po chos bzhi*) represents the most condensed presentation of his doctrinal system, and consists of no more than four short formulations. It is said to summarize the intent of all the Buddha's teachings of *sūtra* and *mantra* alike.⁶ The later Bka' brgyud tradition produced a great variety of commentaries on this subject. The following presentation of the four *dharma*s can be found in the *Excellent Synopsis of the Four Dharmas*⁷ contained in the collected works of Sgam po pa:

[It] says that one needs:

- [1.] A *dharma*⁸ that turns towards the *dharma*
- [2.] A *dharma* that turns towards the path,
- [3.] A path that dispels delusion,
- [4.] And delusion that appears as gnosis.⁹

⁵ See bibliography: DTG.

⁶ See for example Bla ma zhang brtson 'grus grags pa's (1121/1123–1193) *Dvags po chos bzhi'i ngo sprod* (ZSB, vol.3: 558–568).

⁷ *Chos bzhi mdor bsdod pa legs*. DKB-Dvags, NGMPP reel no. L 0595/01, fol. 401a, 5–404a, 2. Cf. DKB-bKra, vol. 2: 387, 3–388, 6.

⁸ While generally following the custom of differentiating between capitalized 'Dharma' when the term refers to the teachings of the Buddha and lowercasing it as 'dharma' in all other instances, I do not follow this approach here in relation to the formulations of the four *dharma*s where it will generally occur in lowercase and italicized to identify the Tibetan *chos* as equivalent for the Sanskrit term *dharma*. A variety of interpretations of this phrase can be found in different commentaries that define the meaning of *chos* as referring either to the path, mental objects, merit and sacred words, probably on the basis of Vasubandhu's tenfold definition for the term *dharma* from the *Vyākhyāyukti* (*Rnam bshad rigs pa*):

[The term] *dharma* refers to knowable objects, path, nirvāṇa, mental objects, merit, circumstances of life, sacred words, the future, certainty, and law. (*VY*, 21,5–8: *chos ni śes bya lam dan ni* | *mya ngan ḥdas dan yid kyi yul* | *bsod nams tse dan gsun rab dan* | *ḥbyun ḥgyur* [40b3] *nes dan chos lugs laḥol*)

For a discussion of the interpretative model applied in the *Excellent Synopsis of the Four Dharmas* of DKB, see Scheuermann 2014.

⁹ DKB-Dvags, NGMPP reel no. L 0595/01, fol. 401a, 6: *chos chos su 'gro ba* | *chos lam du 'gro ba* | *lam 'khrul pa sel ba* | *'khrul pa ye shes su 'char ba cig dgos gsung*].

Another influential doctrine that also consists of four short formulations is the *Parting from the Four Attachments* of Sa chen kun dga' snying po (1092–1158). Sa skya rje btsun grags pa rgyal mtshan (1147–1246) explained that Kun dga' snying po received this fourfold *topos* at the age of twelve in a direct vision from the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī after spending half a year in retreat under the guidance of Ba ri lo tsā ba (1040–1112).¹⁰ The four formulations include:

[1.] If one clings to this life, one isn't a Dharma practitioner (*tshe 'di la zhen na chos pa min*)

[2.] If one clings to the three realms, it is not renunciation (*kham s gsum la zhen na nges 'byung min*)

[3.] If one clings to one's own benefit, it is not *bodhicitta* (*bdag don la zhen na byang sems min*)

[4.] If grasping occurs, it is not the view (*'dzin pa byung na lta ba min*)¹¹

To this day, a great number of authors in the Sa skya tradition uphold the view that the two doctrines of the *Parting from the Four Attachments* and the *Four Dharmas of Sgam po pa* are closely connected. Those who advocate such a view combine the two doctrines in the following way: each of the four *dharma*s is said to describe the result that

Most if not all of the existent translations of these four short formulations, including my own (cf. Scheuermann 2014), seem to have treated these as if they were sentences. This ignores the fact that each of the Tibetan formulations ends with a nominal particle *ba*.

Even if one were to ignore the nominal particle, the third formulation poses a particular problem for reading the formulations as sentences since it lacks the grammatically needed particle between *lam* and *'khrul pa* (either the agentive particle *gyis* or the genitive particle *gyi*) which would allow to read the construction as “The path (*lam gyis*) dispels the delusion (*'khrul pa sel*).” or “The delusion(s) of the path (*lam gyi 'khrul pa*) are dispelled (*sel*).” Since the formulations are in prose, it is also impossible to argue that the particle was omitted for metrical reasons. Furthermore, in the above quoted passage, the infinite article *cig* is applied after the last formulation which is also suggestive that the formulations grammatically need to be understood as a noun phrase.

Each of the formulations further shows a similar structure: noun + noun phrase (head noun + nominalized verb). The head noun of each noun phrase occurs as first noun in the subsequent formulation. This gives the strong impression that the focus of each formulation is placed on the first noun which is then further qualified by the noun phrase that follows after.

Below, a few possibilities are listed to exemplify the grammatically possible ways for interpreting the construction. The first formulation is used here as an example, but the following applies of course also to the other three formulations:

1) “The *dharma* that turns towards the *dharma*” or “The towards-the-*dharma*-turning *dharma*”: interprets *chos su 'gro ba* as being a verbal adjective qualifying *chos*.

2) “The *dharma*, i.e., that which turns towards the *dharma*”: interprets *chos su 'gro ba* as a verbal noun in non-restrictive apposition to *chos*.

3) “The turning towards the *dharma* with respect to the *dharma*”: interprets *chos su 'gro ba* as a nominalized verbal adjective in an accusative relationship with *chos*.

¹⁰ SKB, vol.9: 638, 1–3: *bla ma sa skya pa chen po dgung lo bcu gnyis bzhes pa'i tshe| 'phags pa 'jam pa'i dbyangs kyi bsgrub pa zla ba drug mdzad pas| dus gcig gi tshe 'od tshogs kyi dbus na rin po che'i khri cig gi steng na rje btsun 'jam dbyangs dmar ser chos 'chad kyi phyag rgya can| bzang po'i stabs kyi bzugs pa 'khor byang chub sems dpa' gnyis g.yas g.yon du gnas pa mngon gsum gzigs te gtso bo'i zhal nas|*

¹¹ SKB, vol.9: 638, 3.

is achieved by successfully applying the remedy for each of the four attachments, respectively. By examining the processes of cultural and religious exchange¹² surrounding these two doctrines, this paper will explore whether such a straightforward equation can indeed be justified. It will further propose a hypothesis to explain their existing commonalities.

2. Body

2.1 The Relationship Between the *Parting from the Four Attachments* and the *Four Dharmas of Sgam po pa*

2.1.1 Nub pa rig 'dzin grags pa

Probably the first author of the Sa skya tradition to directly suggest such a connection between the two doctrines was Nub pa rig 'dzin grags pa (13th century) in his commentary on Sa chen kun dga' snying po's *Parting from the Four Attachments*, commonly known by the straightforward title *Parting from the Four Attachments by Nub pa rig 'dzin grags* (*Nub pa rig 'dzin grags kyis mdzad pa'i zhen pa bzhi bral*).¹³ The following introductory paragraph of said commentary aims at demonstrating the connection between the two doctrines which is then fully developed in the remaining part of the work where each attachment is discussed along with its corresponding remedy and result:

The four attachments are: (1) attachment to this life, (2) attachment to saṃsāra, the three realms, (3) attachment to one's own benefit and (4) attachment to things and characteristic signs (*nimitta; mtshan ma*).¹⁴ Their remedies are also four: The remedy for the first attachment is the (1) meditation on death and impermanence. The remedy for the second is to (2) recollect the shortcomings of saṃsāra. The

¹² Peter Burke suggests using the term *cultural translation* to substitute *cultural transfer* and *cultural exchange*. He considers the term *transfer* to be too linear, since in “an encounter between two cultures, information usually flows in both directions, even if in unequal amounts.” (Burke 2009: 70) He also voices the following reservations against using the term exchange: “Like the old term ‘tradition’, it implies handing over something that remains more or less unchanged. However, it has become increasingly apparent in the last generation, in studies ranging from sociology to literature, that ‘reception’ is not passive but active.” (Burke 2009: 70) Even though the term *exchange* may indeed be understood in such a restrictive sense, it can also imply an active exchange of ideas or discourse involving a process of transformation, and will hence be used in this sense throughout this paper.

¹³ DND, vol.6 (cha): 315, 1–317, 2. Cf. GDKT, vol. 23: 723, 6–726,3.

¹⁴ Mathes 2005 discusses characteristic signs (*nimitta; mtshan ma*) in the context of 'Gos lo tsā ba Gzhon nu dpal's commentary on the *Dharmatā* chapter of the *Dharmadharmatāvibhāgākārikā* which gives a list of four characteristic signs: “The relevant passage in the DhDhVK (171–179) is as follows:

The abandonment of *nimittas* is also comprehended under four points, because one abandons the *nimittas* of what is opposed [to liberation], the remedy, suchness and the phenomenon of realization. Therefore the coarse, average, subtle and long-lasting *nimittas* are abandoned in corresponding order.” (Mathes 2005: 11–12)

remedy for the third is to (3) recollect [relative] *bodhicitta*. The remedy for the fourth is to (4) recollect that all phenomena are selfless, like a dream or an illusion. Four effects result from having recollected and accustomed oneself like that: (1) the *dharma* that turns towards the *dharma*, (2) the *dharma* that turns towards the path, (3) the path that dispels the delusion, (4) and the result of that kind of knowledge and habituation, i.e., a transformation of deluded appearances comes about, Buddhahood, which is perfectly complete gnosis.¹⁵

2.1.2 Four Obstacles to Attaining Awakening

A doctrine that closely resembles the *Parting from the Four Attachments* can in fact be found in Sgam po pa's *Jewel Ornament of Liberation*. In the beginning of the chapter on impermanence, Sgam po pa explains the *four obstacles to attaining awakening* (*sangs rgyas mi thob pa'i gegs bzhi*):

- (1) attachment to this life's activities (*tshe 'di'i spyod yul la chags pa*)
- (2) attachment to well-being within cyclic existences (*srid pa'i bde ba la chags pa*)
- (3) attachment to the well-being of the peace [of nirvāṇa] (*zhi ba'i bde ba la chags pa*)
- (4) not knowing the means for attaining awakening (*sangs rgyas sgrub pa'i thabs mi shes pa*)¹⁶

As we can see here, the wording, apart from the fourth, is very similar to the formulations of the four attachments, except that instead of the term *zhen pa* or 'attachment', its synonym *chags pa* is used. Sgam po pa further lists the individual remedies to counter each of the *four obstacles to attaining awakening*:

- (1) cultivating an understanding of impermanence (*mi rtag sgom pa*)
- (2) cultivating an understanding of the shortcomings of saṃsāra along with the law of karma (*'khor ba'i nyes dmigs las 'bras dang bcas pa sgom*)
- (3) cultivating loving kindness and compassion (*byams pa dang snying rje sgom pa*)
- (4) generating supreme *bodhicitta* (*byang chub mchog tu sems bskyed pa*)¹⁷

¹⁵ DND, vol.6 (cha): 315, 2–5: *zhen pa bzhi ni| tse 'di la zhen pa| kham gsum 'khor ba la zhen pa| bdag gi don zhen pa| dngos po dang mtshan ma la zhen pa'o| | de'i gnyen po'ang bzhi ste| zhen pa dang po'i gnyen por 'chi ba mi rtag par bsgom pa| gnyis pa'i gnyen por 'khor ba'i nyes dmigs dran pa| gsum pa'i gnyen por byang chub kyi sems dran pa| bzhi pa'i gnyen por chos thams cad rmi lam sgyu ma lta bur bdag med pa dran pa'o| |de liar dran zhing goms par byas pa'i 'bras bu bzhi 'byung ste| chos chos su 'gro ba| chos lam du 'gro ba| lam 'khrul ba sel ba| de liar shes shing goms pa'i 'bras bu| 'khrul snang gnas gyur ye shes phun sum tshogs pa'i sangs rgyas 'byung ngo||.*

¹⁶ Cf. DTG, fol. 580b, 2–3.

¹⁷ Cf. DTG, fol. 580b, 4–6.

The direct correspondence of these explanations and the passage from Nub pa rig 'dzin grags pa's commentary on the *Parting from the Four Attachments* discussed above is apparent. Sgam po pa's *four obstacles to attaining awakening* vary slightly in wording. Even though the fourth formulation of the obstacles is termed differently, its remedy, "generating supreme *bodhicitta*", matches exactly with the fourth remedy in Nub pa rig 'dzin's explanations, i.e., "to recollect that all phenomena are selfless." Still, the *Jewel Ornament of Liberation* does not associate this fourfold *topos* with the four *dharma*s and there are also further passages in the collected works where a similar presentation occurs independently from the *Four Dharmas of Sgam po pa*.¹⁸

2.1.3 Phag mo gru pa

Before we turn towards various presentations of the four *dharma*s in the collected works of Sgam po pa, let us first have a look at Phag mo gru pa rdo rje rgyal po's (1110–1170) commentary on the four *dharma*s called *A Presentation of the Four Mental Reversions for the Three Types of Beings* (*Skyes bu gsum gyi blo ldog bzhi bstan pa*).¹⁹ Being a direct disciple of Sgam po pa, Phag mo gru pa was an influential master in the Bka' brgyud tradition and the so-called eight 'minor' Bka' brgyud sub-schools trace themselves back to him. From the perspective of these traditions, he is thus considered to be an early authoritative doctrinal source. His presentation of the four *dharma*s is very similar to the effects described in Nub pa rig 'dzin grags pa's commentary on the *Parting from the Four Attachments* quoted above. Looking at the following excerpt, we can understand that Sa skya scholars like Nub pa rig 'dzin grags pa who came in contact with Phag mo gru pa's explanatory model for the four *dharma*s must have had all reason to believe that the two doctrines of the *Four Dharmas of Sgam po pa* and the *Parting from the Four Attachments* were identical:

¹⁸ An example for such an occurrence of this fourfold *topos* is found in the *Teaching to the Assembly, A Pearl Necklace* (*Tshogs chos mu tig phreng ba*). An English translation of this passage can be found in Roberts 2011: 31–32: "First, turn your mind away from this life by meditating on impermanence. Then meditate on the faults of samsara. The purpose of meditation on the faults of samsara is to turn the mind away from the entirety of samsara. When your mind has turned away from samsara, meditate on bodhicitta. First there is meditation on relative bodhicitta-wishing, from the depths of your heart, that all beings will have happiness, freedom from suffering, and complete buddhahood. Then view everything you do as being for the welfare of all beings. Have no concern for your own desires but develop an aspiration with the Mahayana perspective of benefiting others as your goal. That is how you meditate on relative bodhicitta. Meditation on ultimate bodhicitta is simply remaining in the mind as it naturally is, a state in which all thoughts of perceiver and perceived, self and other, are intrinsically devoid of reality. Practicing in that way during each of the four kinds of behavior is what is called meditation on ultimate bodhicitta. Practicing in that way brings the realization and attainment of ultimate bodhicitta. There is no Dharma other than this." (Cf. TCMP, NGMPP reel no. L 0594/01, fol. 289a, 4–289b, 5).

¹⁹ PGSB, vol. 7: 23, 1–44, 1.

Furthermore, by cultivating [an understanding of] death and impermanence, mind turns away from [the concerns for] this life and so the *dharma* turns towards the *dharma*. By cultivating [an understanding of] the defects of *saṃsāra* and karma, cause and effect, mind turns away from *saṃsāra* altogether and so the *dharma* turns towards the path. By cultivating loving kindness and compassion, *bodhicitta*, the delusion of the path is dispelled. By cultivating [an understanding of] emptiness, *mahāmudrā*, delusion appears as gnosis.²⁰

2.1.4 Sgam po pa's *Excellent Synopsis of the Four Dharmas*

It becomes clear that things are not so simple when comparing the presentations of the four *dharmas* found in such works as the *Excellent Synopsis of the Four Dharmas* (*Chos bzhi mdor bsdus pa legs*)²¹ contained in the collected works of Sgam po pa (see table 1) with Nub pa rig 'dzin grags pa's presentation (see table 2) or that of Phag mo gru pa rdo rje rgyal po.²²

Table 1: Sgam po pa's presentation of the four *dharmas* in the *Excellent Synopsis of the Four Dharmas* (*Chos bzhi mdor bsdus pa legs*)

Dharma	Characteristics
1. <i>dharma</i> : the <i>dharma</i> that turns towards the <i>dharma</i>	Meditation on (1) impermanence, and (2) <i>karma</i> , cause and result, and (3) the shortcomings of <i>saṃsāra</i>
2. <i>dharma</i> : the <i>dharma</i> that turns towards the path	(1) Developing loving kindness and compassion (relative <i>bodhicitta</i>) as well as (2) an understanding of the illusory nature of phenomena (absolute <i>bodhicitta</i>)
3. <i>dharma</i> : the path that dispels the delusion	Each delusion is remedied with its specific antidote along the path in a gradual process from coarse to subtle
4. <i>dharma</i> : delusion that appears as gnosis	As a result of this process, a direct understanding of emptiness happens

²⁰ PGSB, vol.7, 25,1–26,1: *de yang' chi ba dang mi rtag pa bsgoms pas| tshe 'di las blo log pas chos chos su 'gro|'khor ba'i nyes dmigs dang las rgyu 'bras bsgoms pas 'khor ba mtha' dag las blo log pas chos lam du 'gro| byams pa dang snying rje byang chub kyi sems bsgoms pas lam gyi 'khrul pa sel| stong pa nyid phyag rgya chen po bsgoms pas 'khrul pa ye shes su 'char rol|*

²¹ DKB-Dvags, NGMPP reel no. L 0595/01, fol. 401a, 5–405a, 2. Cf. DKB-Bkra, vol. 2: 387, 3–388.6. For a translation of the *Excellent Synopsis of the Four Dharmas*, see Scheuermann 2014.

²² The presentations of Nub pa rig 'dzin grags pa and Phag mo gru pa rdo rje rgyal po in the above mentioned commentaries resemble each other, except for Phag mo gru pa adding the further remedy “cultivating [an understanding of] *karma*, cause and effect” for the second attachment.

Table 2: The occurrence of the four *dharma*s in Nub pa rig 'dzin grags pa's *Parting from the Four Attachments* (*Zhen pa bzhi bral*)

Attachment	Remedy	Result
1. Attachment to this life	Meditation on death and impermanence	The <i>dharma</i> that turns towards the <i>dharma</i> (1 st <i>dharma</i>)
2. Attachment to <i>saṃsāra</i>	Recollecting the shortcomings of <i>saṃsāra</i>	The <i>dharma</i> that turns towards the path (2 nd <i>dharma</i>)
3. Attachment to one's own benefit	Recollecting <i>bodhicitta</i>	The path that dispels the delusion (3 rd <i>dharma</i>)
4. Attachment to things and characteristic signs	Recollecting the selflessness of phenomena	A transformation of deluded appearance, gnosis, comes about (4 th <i>dharma</i>)

In the case of Phag mo gru pa's works discussing the *Four Dharmas of Sgam po pa* such as the *Presentation of the Four Mental Reversions for the Three Types of Beings* (*sKyes bu gsum gyi blo ldog bzhi bstan pa*), as well as the commentaries on the *Parting from the Four Attachments* of Nub pa rig 'dzin grags pa, one finds a straightforward allocation of four attachments that hinder awakening, their respective remedies and the result that comes about once the attachments have been overcome. Thus, by meditating on impermanence and death one, for example, overcomes the attachment to this life. This is said to have the effect that the *dharma* turns towards the *dharma*, i.e., that merit (*dharma*) becomes one's primary mental object (*dharma*), which means that one becomes a truly religious person. The same applies also for the other three attachments, remedies and results, respectively.

But in the presentations of the four *dharma*s found in Sgam po pa's collected works such as the *Excellent Synopsis of the Four Dharmas*, the case is quite different. In addition to meditation on impermanence, the presentation of the first *dharma* also includes the meditation on *karma* and the shortcomings of *saṃsāra*. The presentation of the second *dharma* then encompasses the remedies for the remaining two attachments, cultivating loving kindness and compassion, i.e., relative *bodhicitta*, and the understanding of the illusory nature of phenomena, i.e., absolute *bodhicitta*.

If compared with Atiśa's presentation of three types of persons (*skyes bu gsum*),²³ the explanations of the first *dharma* in the *Excellent Synopsis of the Four Dharmas* corresponds with both the paths of beings with lesser and with middling capacities, while the explanations of the second *dharma* would conform with the path of beings with higher capacities. This varies clearly from Phag mo gru pa rdo rje rgyal po's or Nub pa rig 'dzin grags pa's approach where the first attachment, remedy and result correspond to the path of beings with lesser capacities, the second to the path of beings with middling capacities and the third and fourth to the path of beings with higher capacities.

The presentation of the third *dharma* in the *Excellent Synopsis of the Four Dharmas* continues with an explanation of how the gradual path functions, i.e., how each delusion or obstacle is treated by its respective remedy in a sequence from coarse to subtle. The path of beings with lesser capacities is thus considered to involve coarse methods for coarse obstacles, while the path of beings with higher capacities is said to involve the most subtle methods meant to counter the most subtle obstacles.

The Tibetan formulation for the third *dharma*, “the path that dispels delusion” or “the delusion-dispelling path” (*lam 'khrul pa sel ba*) lacks a grammatical particle between path (*lam*) and delusion (*'khrul pa*) which leaves it open to different interpretations. The following two different ways of interpreting the phrase can be witnessed in later commentaries on the four *dharmas*:

- (1) By adding a genitive particle (*'brel sgra*) *gyi* between “path” (*lam*) and “delusion” (*'khrul pa*), the phrase is transformed into a sentence with the meaning “The delusion of the path is dispelled.” (*lam gyi 'khrul pa sel ba*),²⁴
- (2) By adding an agentive particle (*byed sgra*) *gyis* between “path” (*lam*) and “delusion” (*'khrul pa*), the phrase is transformed into a sentence with the meaning “The path dispels the delusion(s).”²⁵ (*lam gyis 'khrul pa sel ba*).

Different commentaries to the four *dharmas* found in the collected works of Sgam po pa²⁶ support both interpretations in a non-exclusive way. The following explanation found in

²³ In the *Bodhipathapradīpa*, Atiśa gives an explanation of three types of beings (*skyes bu gsum*), i.e., beings of lesser, middling and higher capacities. Beings of lesser capacity are said to strive for worldly pleasures, corresponding to a mundane path. Beings of middling capacity are said to strive for their own liberation, which encompasses both the practice of the Śrāvaka- and the Pratyekabuddhayāna. Beings of higher capacity are consequently defined as striving to eliminate the sufferings of others, which corresponds to the Mahāyāna. Cf. Eimer 1978: 104–107.

²⁴ Cf. the short passage discussing the four *dharmas* in *Phag mo gru pa's Great Teaching to Assembly in Twelve Parts* (*Phag mo gru pa'i tshogs chos chen mo dum bu bcu gnyis ma*), PGSB, vol.5: 642, 3–643, 1.

²⁵ Cf. La yag pa's CZGZ, 8, 4.

²⁶ Short presentations of the *Four Dharmas of Sgam po pa* are contained in the following works from among the collected works of Sgam po pa: *Tshogs chos yon tan phun tshogs* (TCYP), *Tshogs chos chen mo* (TCC), *Dus*

the *Excellent Synopsis of the Four Dharmas* introduces the topic by stating that it is the path (*lam gyis*) which should dispel delusions, followed by a presentation of several delusions that are to be dispelled by the path:

[3.] Having understood it like that, the path is what should dispel delusions:²⁷

First, one dispels the delusion of attachment to this life by familiarizing oneself with impermanence. One dispels the delusion of bad views by familiarizing oneself with *karma* and effect. One dispels the delusion of clinging to *samsāra* by familiarizing oneself with the shortcomings of *samsāra*. One dispels the delusion of the Hīnayāna by familiarizing oneself with loving kindness and compassion. One dispels the delusion of holding on to existing things by familiarizing oneself with [them being] dream-like illusions. In general, it is said that by means of ever higher [practices], the ever further delusions are dispelled.²⁸

Interpreting the third dharma as “delusion of the path”, Phag mo gru pa rdo rje rgyal po limits the scope of the phrase in a way where it pertains no longer to the entire path which would include also the paths of beings of lower and middling capacities, but to a single delusion. As can be seen in the following passage from *Phag mo gru pa's Great Teaching to the Assembly in Twelve Parts* (*Phag mo gru pa'i tshogs chos chen mo dum bu bcu gnyis ma*), he considers this phrase to refer to the foremost obstacle of the Mahāyāna, i.e., the concern for one's own benefit, the third of the four attachments:

Due to having turned away the mind from the Śrāvaka- and pratyekabuddhayāna by training in loving kindness and compassion, the delusion of the path is dispelled.²⁹

Similarly, Nub pa rig 'dzin grags pa seems to particularly associate the formulation of the third *dharma* with the path of beings of higher capacities and its main delusion to be countered. In his explanations on the third *dharma*, he explains that the phrase of the third *dharma* refers to “the first delusion of the path, clinging to one's own benefit.”³⁰ Still, in

gsum mkhyen pa'i zhus lan (DSKZL), *Chos rje'i dvags po lha rje'i gsung sgras dum sgrigs ma* (SGDG), and *Chos bzhi mdor bsdu pa legs* (CZDD).

²⁷ DKB-Dvags de ltar go nas lam gyi 'khrul pa sel bya ba yin te : DKB-Bkra de ltar go nas lam gyi 'khrul pa sel bya ba yin te.

²⁸ CZDD, NGMPP reel no. L 0595/01, fol. 402b, 6–403a, 1: *de ltar go nas lam gyis 'khrul pa sel bya ba yin te | dang po mi rtag pa bsgoms pas tshe 'di la zhen pa'i 'khrul pa sel | las 'bras bsgom pas | lta ba ngan pa'i 'khrul pa sel | 'khor ba'i nyes dmigs bsgoms pas | 'khor ba la chags pa'i 'khrul pa sel | byams snying rje bsgoms pas | theg dman gyi 'khrul pa sel | rmi lam sgyu ma lta bur bsgoms pas | dngos por 'dzin pa'i 'khrul pa sel | lar na gong ma gong mas | 'og ma og ma'i 'khrul pa sel gsung |*.

²⁹ PGSB, vol.5: 642, 5: *byams pa dang snying rje la bslabs pas nyan rang las blo ldog pas lam gyi 'khrul pa sel*.

³⁰ GDKT, vol. 23: 725,5: *lam gyi 'khrul pa dang po bdag gi don la zhen pa sel ba |*.

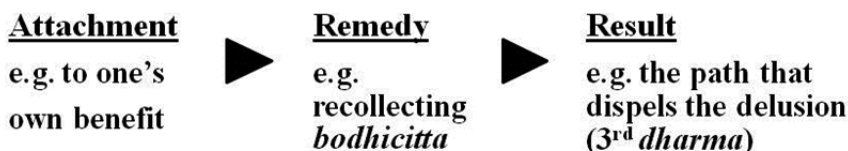
his introduction to the explanations of the fourth attachment, he also refers to “the second delusion of the path, clinging to things and characteristic signs.”³¹

In the presentations of the four *dharma*s found in the collected works of Sgam po pa, the fourth *dharma* describes fruition, i.e., the direct understanding of emptiness, as a result of gradually overcoming the various delusions as laid out in the explanations of the third *dharma*. Thus, this specific outline does not correspond with the allocation of obstacle, remedy and result along a horizontal axis for each of the four *dharma*s, as is the case in the presentations of Nub pa rig grags pa and Phag mo gru pa. Instead, we find a vertical axis of methods, obstacle and result stretching from the first to the fourth *dharma*. While the first two *dharma*s thus present the different methods, the third explains how they gradually function as remedies for ever more subtle obstacles, and the fourth discusses the final result that can be attained (see table 3).

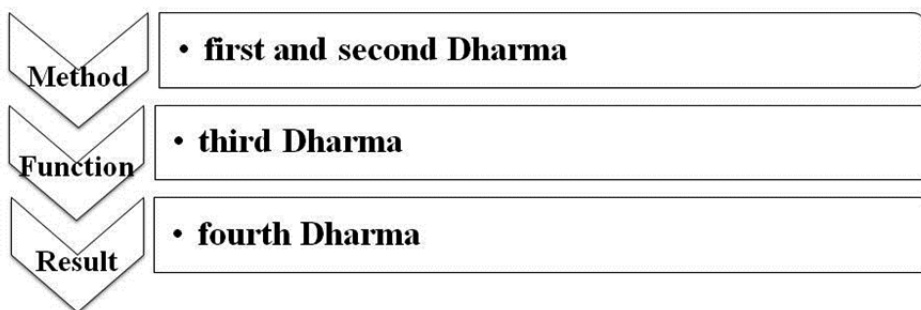
Table 3: Horizontal and vertical axis

Horizontal axis (Nub pa rig 'dzin /Phag mo gru pa)

For each of the four *dharma*s:



Vertical axis (Sgam po pa)



³¹ GDKT, vol. 23: 726,2: *lam gyi 'khrul pa gnyis pa dngos po dang mtshan mar zhen pa sel ba* | .

2.1.5 The presentation of the Third *Dharma* in the *Teaching to the Assembly, an Abundance of Qualities*

A presentation where each of the four *dharma*s is allocated to one of the four attachments or obstacles as applied by Phag mo gru pa rdo rje rgyal po and Nub pa rig 'dzin grags pa, does not seem to correspond very well with the presentations of the four *dharma*s found in the collected works of Sgam po pa. The discrepancy between such an approach that advocates an allocation of obstacle, remedy and result along a horizontal axis for each of the four *dharma*s becomes particularly obvious when considering the following presentation of the third *dharma* found in the *Teaching to the Assembly, an Abundance of Qualities* (*Tshogs chos yon tan phun tshogs*):

[Third *dharma*.] “The path that dispels delusion” refers to the stages of the doctrine. How are [they] dispelled? They are dispelled consecutively: the mind-set which clings to the permanence of this life is delusion. For, by cultivating [an understanding of] death and impermanence as its remedy, a mind-set of total non-occupation arises, delusion is dispelled by that path. The mind-set that sees well-being and happiness in this *samsāra* is delusion. By cultivating [an understanding of] the shortcomings of *samsāra* as its remedy, a mind-set that there is nothing whatsoever one could cling to or be attached to arises. Therefore, delusion is dispelled by that path. The mind-set that desires the liberation of peace and well-being for oneself alone is delusion. If, by cultivating loving kindness, compassion and *bodhicitta* as its remedy, a mind-set that desires to cherish others more than oneself also occurs, delusion is dispelled by that path. The mind-set that grasps onto things and characteristic signs is delusion. By cultivating emptiness, the mode of being of all phenomena, as its remedy, one realizes that all phenomena are empty and void of a self like the center of the sky. Therefore, delusion is dispelled by that path.³²

³² DKB-Dvags L 0594-01, 263a,7–263b,3: lam gyi 'khrul pa sel ba ni bstan pa'i rim pa yin te| ji ltar sel na 'khrul pa thams cad thad ka tha kar sel te| tshe 'di la rtag par 'dzin pa'i blo ste 'khrul pa yin| de'i gnyen po 'chi ba mi rtag pa bsgom[s] pas| cis kyang byar med kyi blo cig skyes na lam des 'khrul pa sel| 'khor ba 'di la bde zhing skyid par mthong ba'i blo de 'khrul pa yin| de'i gnyen por 'khor ba'i nyes dmigs bsgoms pas| gang la yang ma zhen cing ma chags pa'i blo cig skyes pas lam des 'khrul pa sel| rang gcig pu zhi bde thar pa 'dod pa'i blo de 'khrul pa yin| de'i gnyen por byams pa dang snying rje byang chub kyi sems bsgoms pas| rang las gzhān gces par 'dod pa'i blo'ang 'byung bas| lam des 'khrul pa sel| dngos po dang mtshan mar 'dzin pa'i blo de 'khrul pa yin| de'i gnyen por chos thams cad kyi gnas lugs stong pa nyid bsgoms pas| chos thams cad stong zhing bdag med pa nam mkha'i dkyil lta bur rtogs pas| lam des 'khrul pa sel ba yin no|.

Even though a close connection of this passage with the fourfold *topos* of the *Parting from the Four Attachments* or the *Four Obstacles to Attaining Awakening* (*sangs rgyas mi thob pa'i gegs bzhi*) in Sgam po pa's *Jewel Ornament of Liberation* cannot be denied, this presentation is not related to the four *dharma*s as a whole, but pertains exclusively to the third *dharma*. It thus clearly rules out the allocation as carried out by Phag mo gru pa. The commentary of the latter seems to follow an approach of harmonizing the two doctrines in a way not reflected in Sgam po pa's collected works or other early commentaries following a similar structure such as that of Sgam po pa's disciple La yag pa Byang chub dngos 'grub (12th century).³³

Phag mo gru pa had been a disciple of Sa chen kun dga' sying po before meeting Sgam po pa. It is said that he stayed at Sa skya from around 1138 to 1150 and was one of Kun dga' snying po's closest disciples, receiving directly from him the entirety of secret teachings belonging to the *Path and Result* (*Lam 'bras*) system. It is thus very likely that he was also familiar with the doctrine of the *Parting from the Four Attachments*.³⁴

Phag mo gru pa's commentarial approach seems to have strongly influenced the majority of commentaries found in the so-called eight 'minor' Bka' brgyud traditions, which all claim to trace their lineages back to him. The large majority of texts observed³⁵ from the 'Bri gung and 'Brug pa sub-schools follow the same approach of discussing each individual *dharma* in terms of the respective obstacle, remedy and result. If scholars of both the Sa skya and Bka' brgyud traditions viewed the four *dharma*s through the lens of such commentaries, it is not surprising that they regarded the two doctrines to be identical in nature.

2.2 The Question of Origin

Even though a direct correlation between the *Four Dharmas of Sgam po pa* and the *Parting from the Four Attachments* cannot be justified on the basis of the works contained in the collected works of Sgam po pa, a close connection between the two doctrines cannot be ruled out. As can be shown through Sgam po pa's presentation of the third *dharma* in the *Teaching to the Assembly, an Abundance of Qualities* and the *Four Obstacles to Attaining Awakening* in the *Jewel Ornament of Liberation*, a four-themed doctrine whose

³³ He authored the *Chos bzhi grags pa'i gzhung* and its auto-commentary. The colophon of its root text claims that it was composed in the presence of Sgam po pa. See. CZGZ, 9, 2.

³⁴ Stearns 2001: 26–27.

³⁵ There is a large variety of presentations that are present in these two traditions. One of the most famous and extensive texts (205 fols.) is the *Dvags po'i chos bzhi'i rnam bshad skyes bu gsum gyi lam nyin mor byed pa* (CZKSLN) by Kun mkhyen padma dkar po, 'Brug chen IV: (1527–1592).

content and formulation closely resembles that of the *Parting from the Four Attachments* must have been known to Sgam po pa. This fourfold *topos* forms an integral part of both texts, and the *Four Dharmas of Sgam po pa* may have even been developed on the basis of this *topos*. The third dharma plays a crucial role in most explanations of the four *dharmas*, defining the relationship of the other *dharmas* to one another, and the *Four Obstacles to Attaining Awakening* play an equally important role in the *Jewel Ornament of Liberation*. They introduce the whole section of the work which introduces the methods of the spiritual friend, the central part of the work, and function as their lay-out.³⁶

Such a close resemblance is more than surprising for two doctrines that are considered to have arisen independently from one another around the same time. Therefore, leaving aside this unlikely possibility generally accepted by the tradition, the possibility that they are directly related needs to be considered. Unfortunately, traditional accounts of the creation of the two doctrines don't shed much light on this question. Neither of the commentaries in both traditions questions their doctrine's origin. Quite surprisingly, the early commentaries on the *Four Dharmas of Sgam po pa* do not give us any information about the circumstances of the doctrine's origin. In the case of the *Parting from the Four Attachments*, as mentioned above, it is already Kun dga' snying po's son Sa skya rje btsun grags pa rgyal mtshan who begins his commentary with a mystical account of how his father received the four lines directly in a vision from the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī.³⁷ Such origin myths are quite common in Tibetan Buddhist traditions, often probably applied in order to defend doctrinal innovators against the accusation of propagating self-made (*rang bzo*) teachings, as described by David Seyfort Ruegg:

This theme of a visionary encounter with, and of inspiration received from, a great bodhisattva is reminiscent of the role attributed to the bodhisattva Maitreya(nātha) in the traditional *Vita* of Asaṅga at a time when this Indian master too was meeting with difficulties in understanding and interpretation. The *topos* of visionary encounter and teaching may perhaps be understood as implicitly alluding, in India as well as in Tibet, to a felt need for both conservative traditionalism and restorative or renovative interpretation.³⁸

³⁶ Cf. DTG, fol. 580b, 2–6.

³⁷ SKB, vol.9: 638, 1–2.

³⁸ Ruegg 2004: 381–382.

That the *topos* of a visionary encounter with the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī is brought up to explain the origin of the *Parting From the Four Attachments* may thus indicate that Grags pa rgyal mtshan considered this doctrine to be an innovation of his father. Nevertheless, other reasons for employing this *topos* may be equally thinkable, such as applying the metaphor of the bodhisattva of wisdom to express respect for the profundity of the formulation³⁹ or to glorify an important founding father of one's own lineage.⁴⁰ Thus, this account might tell us more about the tradition and its view on Grags pa rgyal mtshan than about the actual origination of the *Parting From the Four Attachments*.

Leaving aside this generally accepted view of the tradition that the two doctrines have arisen separately from one another around the same time, it is of course thinkable that one of them served as a direct forerunner for the other. While no evidence suggests so far that any of the doctrines directly influenced or caused the formation of the other, further research would be required to fully rule out this possibility.

2.3 A Possible Bka' gdams pa Forerunner?

Another likely explanation for their similarity is that both of them trace their doctrine back to a common forerunner. A preliminary assessment of potential forerunners in the canonical sources⁴¹ did not give any clear indication pointing towards an Indian predecessor,⁴² but this can hardly be ruled out without further research. Still, it might be possible to trace a process of cultural exchange by investigating texts from the Bka' gdams tradition that traces back to the Indian master Atiśa, who influenced both the Sa skya pa and Bka' brgyud pa's doctrinal system.

A connection between the *Four Dharmas of Sgam po pa* and the Bka' gdams tradition is suggested since Sgam po pa's system, as mentioned above, is generally characterized by the tradition itself as the union of Bka' gdams and *mahāmudrā*. Kun dga' snying po's visionary encounter with the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī is also said to have taken place after conducting a retreat under the guidance of Ba ri lo tsā ba rin chen grags (1040–1112) who had an upbringing in the Bka' gdams tradition and is said to have met Atiśa,

³⁹ During two fieldwork trips in India in 2011 and 2012, as well as further interviews conducted in Europe, different Tibetan scholars expressed varying opinions on the meaning of the origination myth for the *Parting from the Four Attachments*. While some considered this to be an account of a true event, others stated that the association with the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī could rather be understood to imply that the formulation of the *Parting from the Four Attachments* was a stroke of genius by Kun dga' snying po.

⁴⁰ For a detailed examination of such a shift that occurred in the Dge lugs tradition's interpretation of the relationship between Tsong kha pa and Mañjuśrī, see Ary 2007.

⁴¹ This was mostly done with the help of search engines, most importantly RK&TS.

⁴² Even though the individual topics addressed in the two doctrines are fundamental Buddhist teachings and are of course addressed in many Indian *sūtras* and *śāstras*, I wasn't able to identify any text where they occur as a set.

even though this is not very likely.⁴³ Such a Bka' gdams connection is even more probable if one takes into account that both the *Parting from the Four Attachments* and the *Four Dharmas of Sgam po pa* are considered to be a teaching belonging to the gradual path system, and, according to the Tibetan tradition, this “genre is primarily associated with Atiśa Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna (ca. 982-1054) and the followers of his Bka' gdams order.”⁴⁴ Furthermore, within the gradual path system, the *Parting from the Four Attachments* is sometimes classified as belonging to the system of mind training (*blo syong*) which is generally agreed to have originated with Atiśa.⁴⁵

Still, in accordance with the view of the Sa skya tradition, the *Parting from the Four Attachments* is considered to form an independent branch of mind training instructions. In the introduction to his translation of Go rams pa bsod nams seng ge's (1429–1489) influential commentary on the *Parting from the Four Attachments*, Bsod nams rgya mtsho explains:

Within the bLo sbyoñ tradition, two main branches are in evidence; the Bka'-gdams-pa and the Sa-skya. The former stems from Atiśa's sojourn to Tibet in 1042 A.D. and was continued by 'Brom ston, eventually becoming standard material for all of the great lineages in Tibet. ... The other branch of bLo sbyoñ is the Źen pa bži bral, or Separation from the Four Attachments, and is peculiar to the Sa-skya pa.⁴⁶

The theory of a possible common forerunner for both the *Parting from the Four Attachments* and the *Four Dharmas of Sgam po pa* is also supported by textual evidence in Bka' gdams literature. Substantial evidence is found in a short instruction by Dge bshes phu chung (1031–1106), recorded in the *Bka' gdams kyi skyes bu dam pa rnams kyi gsung bgros thor bu ba rnams*. He is considered to be a direct disciple of both Atiśa and 'Brom ston pa (1004/5–1064).⁴⁷ This work is an anthology that contains short instructions of Bka' gdams masters, and was compiled by Lce sgom shes rab rdo rje (late 12th to early 13th

⁴³ Davidson is certainly right in stating that such an encounter “is impossible given the chronology.” (Davidson 2005, 297; he explains the reasons in 434, fn. 72).

⁴⁴ Jackson 1996: 229–330.

⁴⁵ See for example Sweet 1996: 252: “The mental purification literature is a native Tibetan practical synthesis of Buddhist doctrine which had its origin in the teachings of Atiśa, his disciples, and earlier Indian works.”

⁴⁶ Rgya mtsho 1981: 23–24.

⁴⁷ Cf. Roerich 1949: 263.

century).⁴⁸ The wording of this passage resembles the formulations of the *Parting from the Four Attachments* in every respect, except for the use of the term *chags pa* or ‘attachment’ instead of its synonym *zhen pa*.⁴⁹

Well then, what is it that puts us onto a wrong path? It is the desire for this life that puts us onto a wrong path. Therefore, by constantly thinking about death and recollecting death, we should have detachment from this life. By cultivating the shortcomings of the entirety of saṃsāra and recollecting weariness, we should have detachment from the entirety of saṃsāra. By cultivating loving kindness, compassion and *bodhicitta*, and recollecting sentient beings, we should have detachment from self-benefit. By cultivating [an understanding of] emptiness, the reality of phenomena, and recollecting the absence of a self, we [should have] detachment from things and characteristic signs.⁵⁰

Though Sgam po pa may not have had direct contact with Phu chung ba, quotations of the latter can be found in a few places throughout the collected works of Sgam po pa. Among these are two occurrences⁵¹ in the *Introduction to Conceptualization [as] the Dharmakāya* (*Rnam rtog don dam gyi ngo sprod*), of which there exists a diplomatic edition and translation by Gyaltrul Rinpoche Sherpa.⁵² Spyān snga ba tshul khrims ’bar (1039–1115), together with Phu chung ba another of the “three brothers” (*sku mched gsum*), i.e., the main disciples of ’Brom ston pa, was the teacher of Bya yul ba gzhon nu ’od (1075–1138). The latter was one of Sgam po pa’s Bka’ gdams pa teachers whom he relied on before meeting with Mi la ras pa.⁵³

⁴⁸ KDST, 33, 3–34, 4. It is discussed in Roesler 2011: 170–173. A translation of it can be found in Jinpa 2008: 559–610.

⁴⁹ Having shown this passage to several Tibetan scholars of both the Sa skya and Bka’ brgyud traditions without identifying its source, they all identified it as a text which probably belongs either to the *Parting from the Four Attachments* or the *Four Dharmas of Sgam po pa* system.

⁵⁰ KDST, 34, 1–4: ’o na lam log tu gang gis bcug na| tshes ’di’i ’dod pas lam log tu bcug pas| de bas na rtag tu ’chi ba bsams la| ’chi ba rjes su dran pas tshes ’di la ma chags pa cig dgos| ’khor ba mtha’ dag gi nyes dmigs bsgoms la skyo ba rjes su dran pas ’khor ba mtha’ dag la ma chags pa cig dgos| byams snying rje byang chub kyi sems bsgoms la| sems can rjes su dran pas rang don la ma chags pa cig dgos| chos rnam kyī gnas lugs stong pa nyid bsgoms la| bdag med rjes su dran pas dngos po dang mishan ma la ma chags pa cig dgos gsungs||. Cf. the translation of Jinpa 2008, 587. Note that the line expounding the third of the four perspectives is missing in his translation.

⁵¹ Cf. NGMPP reel no. L 0595/01, fol. 197b, 6–198a, 1 and fol. 198a, 1–2. For an English translation of it see Sherpa 2004: 208–213.

⁵² Sherpa 2004: 187–293, Cf. DKB-Dvags, NGMPP reel no. L 0595/01, fol. 192b, 1–215a, 7.

⁵³ See Sherpa 2004: 72ff.

3. Conclusion

Even though the above stated evidence from the Bka' gdams literature does not undoubtedly prove that both doctrines derived from a common forerunner, it strongly supports this hypothesis. Both Kun dga snying po and Sgam po pa have had contact with Bka' gdams pa teachers and a fourfold *topos* that may have existed already in the early Bka' gdams tradition, and which is similar to both the *Parting from the Four Attachments* and the *Four Dharmas of Sgam po pa*. While the formulation of the *Parting from the Four Attachments* would directly correspond to the fourfold *topos*, the *Four Dharmas of Sgam po pa* would constitute a modified version that blends the Bka' gdams scheme with the *mahāmudrā* system of Mar pa.⁵⁴

Still, further investigation that incorporates the available Bka' gdams literature will be necessary to ascertain the validity of this hypothesis. If my hypothesis is correct, it would follow that the influence of the Bka' gdams tradition on the other Tibetan traditions might have been even more far-reaching than generally accepted. If it were to pertain even to core teachings of these traditions that have been regarded as having originated from their respective founding masters, the border-line between doctrinal assertions begin to appear blurred and entangled, thus challenging the traditional frameworks for defining distinct schools of thought and practice in Tibet.

Furthermore, as was shown by the example of Phag mo gru pa's interpretation of the *Four Dharmas of Sgam po pa* and the commentary on the *Parting from the Four Attachments* by Nub pa rig 'dzin grags, there have been most likely continued doctrinal entanglements occurring throughout their history of reception. The boundaries between different traditions and their doctrines were not only malleable during their formation periods, but have been subject to a continuous process of exchanged influence and development. Understanding that they were both subjects and objects of cultural exchange processes will help to further deconstruct the common notions of distinct Tibetan Buddhist traditions. By contrast, these were in fact extremely interconnected and intertwined cultural systems, engaged in a constant flux of negotiation to define and redefine their positions.

⁵⁴ Specifically the formulation of the fourth *dharma* resembles formulations found in *mahāmudrā* works of Mar pa. See MSB₂, vol. 5: 222,8: *yang tshogs drug ye shes su 'char bas*, and MSB₁, vol. 2: 34,4 : [*snang ba*] *thams cad ye shes su shar bas*.

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- CZKSLN Dvags po'i chos bzhi'i mam bshad skyes bu gsum gyi lam nyin mor byed pa. In PKSB, vol. 11, 1–205. Cf. NGMPP reel no. L 0311-07/01, fol. 2a,1–107b,4.

Sgam po pa bsod nams rin chen (1079–1153)

- CZDD Chos bzhi mdor bsdus pa legs so. In DKB-Dvags, NGMPP reel no. L 0595/01, fol. 401a,5 – 404a,2. Cf. DKB-bKra, vol. 2, 387,3–388.6.
- TCC Tshogs chos chen mo. In DKB-Dvags, NGMPP reel no. L 0594/01, fol. 323b,1–354b,5. Cf. DKB-bKra, vol. 1, 326,6–360,2.
- TCMP Tshogs chos mu tig phreng ba. In DKB-Dvags, NGMPP reel no. L 0594/01, fol. 285b,1–322b,7. Cf. DKB-bKra, vol. 1, 293,4–326,6.
- TCYP Tshogs chos yon tan phun tshogs. In DKB-Dvags, NGMPP reel no. L 0594/01, fol. 253b,1–284b,7. Cf. DKB-bKra, vol. 1, 258,3–293,4.
- DKB-Dvags *Dvags po'i bka' bum.* Scans of the Ri bo che-blockprint by the NGMPP. NGMPP reel no. L 594/596.
- DKB-Bkra *Collected Works (gsuñ 'bum) of Sgam-po-pa Bsod-nams-rin-chen. Reproduced from a manuscript from the bkra-sis-chos-rdzoñ monastery in Miyad Lahul.* 2 vols. Delhi: Khasdub Gyatsho Shashin, 1975.
- DTG Dam chos yid bzhin gyi nor bu thar pa rin po che'i rgyan. In DKB-Dvags, NGMPP reel no. L 0595/01, fol. 562b,1 – L 0596/01, fol. 206a,7 (incomplete). Cf. also *Dam chos yid bzhin gyi nor bu thar pa rin po che'i rgyan.* Kathmandu: Gam-po-pa Library, 2006 (1. Ed. 2003).
- DSKZL Dus gsum mkhyen pa'i zhu lan. In DKB-Dvags, NGMPP reel no. L 0594/01, fol. 376b,1–475b,5. Cf. DKB-bKra, vol. 1, 376,5–469,3.

- SGDG Chos rje dvags po lha rje'i gsung sgros dum sgrigs ma. In DKB-Dvags, NGMPP reel no. L 0595/01, fol. 266b,1–280b,7. Cf. DKB-bKra, vol. 2, 283,1–294,3.
- 'Jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha' yas (1813–1890/99)
- DND *Gdams ngag mdzod*. Paro: Lama Ngodrup and Sherab Drimey, 1979-1981. (TBRC W20877, 18 vols)
- 'Jam dbyangs blo gter dbang po (1847–1914)
- GDKT *Rgyud sde kun btus*. Kathmadu: Sachen International, 2004. (TBRC W27883, 32 vols)
- Phag mo gru pa rdo rje rgyal po (1110–1170)
- PGSB *Dus gsum sangs rgyas thams cad kyi thugs rje'i rnam rol dpal ldan phag gru rdo rje rgyal po mchog gi gsung 'bum rin po che*. Kathmandu: Khenpo Shedrub Tenzin and Lama Thinley Namgyal, 2003. (TBRC W23891, 9 vols)
- Bla ma zhang brtson 'grus grags pa (1121/1123–1193)
- ZSB *Dpal tshal-pa bk'a-[sic]brgyud-kyi bstan-pa'i mña-bdag zhañ gyubrag-pa rtson-'gu grags-pa'i gsuñ-'bum rin-po-che (The Collected Works of Zhañ brTson-'grus grags pa, 1123-1193)*. Kathmandu: Gam-po-pa library, 2004 (W26673, 9 vols.).
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