

THE PANDITA AND THE SIDDHA
TIBETAN STUDIES IN HONOUR OF E. GENE SMITH

The Pandita and the Siddha
Tibetan Studies in Honour of E. Gene Smith

Edited by Ramon N. Prats

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Preface

I first met with Ellis Gene Smith in 1977, when I rang the doorbell of his beautiful house in South Extension, New Delhi. I was accompanied by Raffaella, my wife, and we were led into a huge living hall by Mr. Smith's assistant, Mangaram Ji, a young Indian man with whom we were soon to become very familiar. At the time, Gene Smith was Deputy Director of the U.S. Library of Congress Field Office in India and I was a doctoral candidate in Tibetan studies for the "Orientale" University of Naples, where I conducted my studies under Professor Namkhai Norbu, Rinpoche, whom I followed also as a disciple. I bore a letter that Professor Luciano Petech, my thesis supervisor, had written to introduce me to the celebrated American scholar and I conveyed to him also Prof. Norbu's regards. That was the beginning of a long and enriching relationship that soon developed into an abiding friendship with the man who more than anyone else has contributed decisively to the preservation and accessibility of Tibetan literature since the 1950s. From that very first meeting, a new dimension of research – in which the profusion of Tibetan texts would play a central role – began to unfold before me, adding to the linguistic and religious teaching I had received from Rinpoche and the strict methodology I had learned under Prof. Petech. Gene Smith's encyclopedic knowledge (Lokesh Chandra defined him once as "a library on foot"), along with his unfailing kindness, proverbial generosity, and unstinting help, were and still are unique. It is my hope that my contribution as editor of this book in his honor, modest a contribution though it may be, may serve as a small token of my deep admiration, esteem, and gratitude.

Just like me, many other specialists in the field of Tibetan studies at large are indebted to Gene Smith in various and multiple ways. The fond memories of him written by some of the authors of this volume bear fervent witness to this.

The idea of preparing a Felicitation Volume to commemorate E. Gene Smith's sixty-fifth birthday was discussed by a group of his closest friends and colleagues during the Ninth Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies held in Leiden in June 2000. The project met with an enthusiastic reply. Yet with little more than a year left before the book was to be presented, time proved too short. By the summer of 2001 only a CD-ROM with a preliminary editing of the articles could be prepared, and this was presented to him.

After that, the publication of the miscellany entered a long, tortuous journey that was halted by a number of vicissitudes, the saddest of which was the untimely death of William Hinman (one of my employers at Sky Dancer Press and a supporter of Gene Smith's institute, the Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center), who had agreed to sponsor the publication of the volume personally. Finally, five years later, older and – hopefully – wiser, we are able to assemble metaphorically in this pages and present Gene Smith with an edition of *The Pandita and the Siddha* as a tribute of our high esteem and affection.

Tibetologists – and Tibetans – owe E. Gene Smith much more than can be conveyed in a few words. His unusual career as the world's leading scholar of Tibetan and Buddhist literature began in 1960 at the University of Washington, Seattle, where he enrolled as a graduate student in the Inner Asia project of the Far Eastern and Russian Institute. He studied there with notable scholars such as Turrell V. Wylie, Edward Conze, Joseph F. Rock, Nicholas Poppe, and above all with Dezhung Rinpoche, a fine Buddhist erudite and exponent of the Tibetan cultural heritage. This venerable lama was one of the eight Tibetan political refugees of the aristocratic Sakyapa family who, like many other thousands of Tibetans, had fled their homeland in 1959. The Sakyapa group had been initially invited to the United States for a three-year cultural research project conducted at the University of Washington under the auspices of a Rockefeller Foundation grant (other eight academic centers worldwide were also funded during the same time period by the Rockefeller Foundation to promote Tibetan studies). Yet Gene Smith not only followed Dezhung Rinpoche at the University: he lived in fact, the only Westerner, in the Sakyapa home in Seattle. The advantages of such a full immersion in a Tibetan framework were really remarkable for Gene-L.A. "If you want to learn a language, stay around children – they never hesitate to correct you! – and women – they are used to speaking to children," he would advise me years later. Gene absorbed Tibetan Buddhism and culture from Rinpoche

and his associates until 1964, when he completed his Ph.D. qualifying exams and moved to the State University of Leiden for advanced studies in Sanskrit. However, resource materials in the Tibetan language were very limited at the time, and Gene's quest for original texts led him to their source. The following year he was awarded a Ford Foundation grant to travel to India and Nepal in order to study and conduct research with some of the great lamas of the different Tibetan Buddhist traditions. Among these were Drukpa Thukse Rinpoche, Khenpo Noryang, and Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche. Gene's fieldwork included scouring the rare book collections, libraries, and archives of Buddhist monasteries and temples as well as some of the private collections of the Lamas – an activity that decisively marked, and matched, his academic inclination. Having decided to remain in India to further his fieldwork, in 1968 he joined the United States' Library of Congress (L.C.) Overseas Operations Division in New Delhi as Tibetan acquisition expert and cataloger. His progress there was nothing short of brilliant and he was appointed its Field Director in 1980. Through his painstaking effort and personal encouragement, the L.C. developed the PL-480 program set in 1963 to support the reprinting and acquisition of rare Tibetan and Himalayan manuscripts and xylographs that were subsequently distributed to twenty subscribing institutions throughout the United States. By the 1970s, this trend had proven seminal for the growth of Tibetan studies as a serious academic discipline in American as well as European universities. Having heard of the program overseen by the already renowned Gene-La, Tibetan refugees or members of the Tibetan-speaking communities in the Himalayan areas in India, Nepal, Sikkim, and Bhutan visited him day after day, bringing to his knowledgeable attention and careful examination many literary treasures that under other circumstances would simply have vanished. Under Gene Smith's aegis, the rich Tibetan literary heritage found protectorate status and began to become accessible. It was in those years that Gene Smith's successive homes in New Delhi became a legendary institute of sorts for many visiting scholars and serious students or researchers from all over the world. Gene was unique not only for his exceptional hospitality but also for sharing his huge and growing library and especially for sharing his unmatched knowledge of Tibetan letters, his constant mentoring, and unstinting assistance (oftentimes in the form of books, if not his personal notes) to different generations of Tibetologists.

More than 5,000 works in the Tibetan language on traditional Buddhist religious literature, art, history, poetry, biographies, linguistics, medicine, Bon, etc., were published under the PL-480 program until 1985, when Gene Smith left India for Jakarta to direct the L.C. Southeast Asian program. In 1994 he was assigned to the L.C. Middle Eastern Office in Cairo, where he remained until he took early retirement in February 1997. After a brief tenure in New York City as consultant to the Trace Foundation to establish the Himalayan and Inner Asian Resources, Gene Smith and a group of friends and colleagues founded the Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center (www.TBRC.org) in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in December 1999. Gene's long-cherished project relocated to New York City in 2002, where it is now associated with the Rubin Museum of Art. Through his post as Executive Director, he is tirelessly leading the impressive TBRC project of digitizing thousands of texts and reference materials, and building a database on the field that is of incalculable value.

A reflection of Gene Smith's outstanding command of Tibetan Buddhist literature are the scholarly introductions, prefaces, and elaborated lists of contents that he authored during his years in India to accompany the reproduction of a large number of Tibetan texts, which constitute a precious resource for any researcher. A selection was published in 2001 under the title *Among Tibetan Texts: History and Literature of the Himalayan Plateau* (Boston: Wisdom Publications), a magnum opus of modern Tibetology. In addition to these, several more of his introductory writings – not all of which bear Gene Smith's name explicitly – deserve to be considered. Though much shorter, they are no less valuable. To list only a few:

Sa gsum na mgon par mtsho ba rdo rje sgra dbyangs gling gi zhal 'don bskang gso'i rim pa phyogs gcig tu bsgrigs pa'i ngo mtshar nor bu'i 'phreng ba skal bzang gzhon nu'i mgul rgyan: The collected liturgical texts of Gnas-chung Rdo-rje-sgra-dbyangs-gling, the residence of the State Oracle of Tibet. Gangtok: Sonam T. Kazi (Ngagyur Nyingmay Sungrab, 3), 1969, pp. 1-4.

The Collected Writings (Gsung-'bum) of 'Bri-gung Chos-rje 'Jig-rten-mgon-po Rin-chen-dpal (5 vols.). New Delhi: Khangsar Tulku, Vol. 1, 1969, pp. 1-4.

Preface

Collected Works of Thu'u-bkwan Blo-bzang-chos-kyi-nyi-ma (10 vols.). Delhi: Ngawang Gelek Demo, 1969, Vol. I, pp. 1-12 and Appendixes, pp. 1-7.

Three Karchacks: Lha ldan sprul pa'i gtsug lag khang gi dkar chag shel dkar me long (1645) by the Fifth Dalai Lama Ngag-dbang-blo-bzang-rgya-mtsho – Grwa sa chen po bzhi dang rgyud pa stod smad chags tshul pad dkar 'phreng ba (1744) by Phur-bu-lcog Ngag-dbang-byams-pa – and Gangs can gyi ljongs su bka' dang bstan bcos sogs kyi glegs bam spar gzhi ji ltar yod pa rnam nas dkar chag spar thor phyogs tsam du bkod pa phan hde'i pad tshal 'byed pa'i nyin byed. New Delhi: Ngawang Gelek Demo (Gedan Sungrab Minyam Gyunphel Series, 13), 1970, pp. 1-6.

Buryat Annotations on the Lam rim. New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture (Śata-piṭaka Series, 97), 1973, pp. 1-3.

The production of *The Pandita and the Siddha* is indebted to those authors who have contributed articles to the present volume. As editor, I wish to express my gratitude to each of them. Special thanks are due also to Tashi Tsering, Director of the Amnye Machen Institute (McLeod Ganj, Dharamsala), who took on the responsibility of publisher. And finally, many thanks to Roberto Vitali who not only acted as a most effective and decisive link on behalf of the Amnye Machen Institute, but also collaborated and helped untiringly in many ways throughout all these years to keep the project ongoing until its very final stage.

Ramon N. Prats

Barcelona

February 2006

Publisher's Note

In June 2000, at the Ninth IATS Conference in Leiden, Dr. Ramon Prats and I revived the idea of dedicating a Festschrift to Gene Smith and decided to bring it out on the occasion of his 65th birthday. The decision brought to an end several years of consultations with some of Gene's friends and colleagues. I felt a Festschrift was an appropriate homage to his knowledge and integrity which I came to appreciate during the many years of our interaction.

This began in 1979, when, at the behest of the late Rai Bahadur T. D. Densapa (Burmiok Athing), OBE of Sikkim, then the doyen of Tibetan Studies in the Indian Subcontinent, and of his son Tashi Densapa (presently the Director of the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology in Gangtok), I was assisting and interpreting for Prof. Emeritus Franz Michael and Prof. Eugene Kenez during their field research based on Max Weber theory and the Tibetan theocracy. We interviewed Tibetan scholars and elders in Rajpur, Mussoorie and Ladakh.

It was upon completion of this research phase that I first chanced upon meeting the legendary Gene Smith. I was also invited to the dinner he hosted in honour of the Professors on 30 July 1979 at D-29 South Extension Part II, his residence in New Delhi. Like several other scholars I began then to be acquainted with his untiring efforts in preserving Tibetan literature.

The field of Tibetan and Buddhist studies is indebted to Gene for his central role in initiating the publishing of Tibetan texts in the subcontinent from the mid-1960s under the Library of Congress PL-480 program. It was through Gene's guidance and encouragement as Field Director of the Library's South Asian headquarters that individuals in the Tibetan Diaspora started reproducing and publishing ancient Tibetan literature. Between the mid-1960s and 1985 at least 6,000 titles of Tibetan works, some of which comprised up to thirty volumes, were published.

Through revitalizing the Library of Congress Acquisition Program of Tibetan books from the Diaspora and Sikkimese, Ladakhi, Mongolian and Bhutanese publishers, Gene collected and made available a diverse and indispensable corpus of materials for the understanding and advancement of Tibetan Studies internationally.

After Gene left Delhi in September 1985 the program was halted but his commitment never wavered and he returned to Delhi to help the new Field Director re-establish it in 1990. It was on his suggestion that I acted as a consultant for the Tibetan Program to the Library of Congress in New Delhi.

Gene's ground-breaking role at encouraging the Tibetan Diaspora to publish their literature in the Indian subcontinent even had an indirect impact within China. In July 1982 the PRC government for the first time allowed their Tibetologists to participate in the 2nd IATS Conference at Columbia University, New York. At the conference, the scholars and government authorities from China were amazed to see for the first time the number of volumes of Tibetan works reproduced in exile and were urged to establish a competing program. In the following years the PRC experienced a resurgence in the publication of Tibetan texts.

Following his early retirement, Gene's pioneering work in Tibetan Studies has continued with his creation of the Tibetan Buddhist Resource Centre (TBRC) in New York. He has tirelessly located, collected and scanned thousands of rare and not so rare texts from Tibet, China, India and Nepal, using his own collection as a starting point, to make them digitally available to scholars worldwide. To date, TBRC's Digital Library holds a vast fully searchable archive of approximately 4 million images.

Whether in lengthy articles, well written and informative introductions or other works, when it comes to acknowledging help from fellow scholars or teachers, Gene Smith is the finest example of intellectual honesty among all Tibetologists and Buddhist scholars. And when it comes upon him to help fellow scholars, his non-attachment to the most rare and important literary works leads him to share his material and findings, always of the highest standard, with anyone who needs them. Indeed from the mid-1960s to September 1985 Gene's place was an open house, meeting point and haven for all scholars and students of Tibetan, Himalayan, Nepalese and Indian studies.

Since my first meeting with him almost thirty years ago, Gene has been a personal mentor and a source of great inspiration. I was privileged to offer him a small token of my appreciation when I was the Head of the Publication Department of LTWA. The Biography of the First Tre Hor Khang gсар Skyabs mgon Blo bzang Tshul khirms Bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan (1838-1897) was dedicated to him on the occasion of his 60th birthday. I wrote then:

This volume is dedicated to the foremost bibliographer of Tibetan texts,
E. Gene Smith, on his sixtieth birthday,
for opening up the literary treasures of Tibet to the rest of the world
and for his preeminent contribution to the advancement of Tibetan and Buddhist studies.

Now, it is for his knowledge of Tibetan culture and boundless altruism in sharing information and texts that I am publishing this volume in his honour.

I close with a few matters about this Festschrift. I felt particularly honoured when Ramon Prats asked me in August 2002 to take up publication of the volume at the Amnye Machen Institute. I gladly accepted to publish it as a small personal sign of my gratitude towards Gene.

The release of the volume comes after a long time, delayed as it was by several practical problems which prevented the editor from delivering the final draft. In the meantime the contributors were asked to make any changes they deemed necessary to their articles. The final version was delivered in March 2006, but pending work for that year and a few technical problems encountered by the printer led to a final layout only in early 2007.

I wish to thank here the contributors, on behalf of the editor too, for their patience and understanding. They have waited for so long. So has Gene, who never asked me about the book. My gratitude also goes to Ven. Mathieu Ricard who has been so kind to cover part of the publication costs and to Dr. Richard Whitecross who volunteered his services when the editor thought that the English of some articles should be checked, which in the end was not necessary. Many thanks also to Indraprastha Press (New Delhi) for volunteering a rough first layout in Summer 2007. Finally I would like to thank my old friend Robi Vitali for putting so much of his time into keeping the project alive, finding solutions when the book was at a standstill and for making the Festschrift ready today. Without his help the book would have not seen the light of day.

The reader is kindly requested to note that the stylistic idiosyncrasies used by each author have been preserved as in their original articles. The classic criterion of making notes, italics, transliterations or bibliographies consistent throughout the volume has been dropped in light of the fact that every author has reasons to opt for the solutions they favour.

Tashi Tsering

'JU MI PHAM RNAM RGYAL RGYA MTSHO.
HIS POSITION IN THE TIBETAN RELIGIOUS HIERARCHY AND
A SYNOPTIC SURVEY OF HIS CONTRIBUTIONS

Karma Phuntsho
(Balliol College, Oxford)

The history of Tibetan scholarship, especially that of rNying ma, the earliest school of Tibetan Buddhism, entered a new phase in the nineteenth century. This era not only saw the proliferation of visionary teachings (*dag snang* and *dgongs gter*)¹ and the development of the ecumenical (*ris med*) movement² but also witnessed a strong regeneration of rNying ma literary activity. Among the numerous luminaries of this period was 'Ju Mi pham rNam rgyal rGya mtsho (1846-1912), perhaps the greatest polymath Tibet ever produced. Mipham was both an extraordinary scholar and a saint in whom the sNga 'gyur rNying ma doctrine found renewed expression. The contribution of Mipham to rNying ma scholarship and thereby to wider Tibetan and Buddhist learning is prodigious in its novelty, profundity and variety. His writings comprise works on a wide range of subjects, covering almost every science known to his milieu.

To the western audience, it was E. Gene Smith who first introduced Mipham in 1969 describing him as 'one of the most imaginative and versatile minds to appear in the Tibetan tradition'.³ Since then, although the extraordinary nature of his life and works began to attract the attention of western scholars, his enigmatic life and monumental works remain little studied. Despite the brief discussions of Mipham's life and works by Steven Goodman⁴ and John Pettit,⁵ and the rendering of the catalogue of his writings into German by Dieter Schuh,⁶ no attempt has so far been made to gain a complete overview of his output, to reveal the assumptions which lie behind it, or to assess its significance as whole.

Having explored his works briefly, I shall attempt to provide a purview of his massive collection of writings and highlight some of his outstanding contributions. In the first part of this paper, I shall appraise his position in the Tibetan Buddhist and the scholarly hierarchies and shall then undertake a synoptic discussion of his writings. This paper, however, is far from being a comprehensive study of Mipham's writings and it would not do justice to his diverse and stupendous contributions to even attempt to summarise them in a few pages.

The Position of Mipham in the Tibetan Religious and Scholarly Hierarchies

It might not be an exaggeration to claim that Mipham is the most remarkable polyhistorian and prolific writer in the whole history of Tibetan Buddhism. As far as we know, only one scholar, Bo dong Paṅ chen Phyogs las rNam rgyal (1375-1451),⁷ surpassed Mipham in the volume of his work. Yet Mipham remains unparalleled in his versatility and originality for Bo dong Paṅ chen was not as protean and innovative as he. Mipham's wide range of interests not only made him master most of the traditional sciences and arts, but led to the composition and presentation of new theories and methods in philosophy, epistemology, medicine, astrology, art, architecture. It is due to this polymathic nature of his learning and to his exceptional ingenuity that Mipham today ranks amongst the leading religious and spiritual celebrities of Tibet.

Mipham stands among such great masters as Klong chen pa (1308-63), Sa skya Paṅ chen (1182-1251), Tsong kha pa (1357-1419), and Pad ma dKar po (1527-92). Like a few other masters of superb erudition, Mipham has earned such respect and devotion from posterity that he has come to be accorded the title Omniscient (*Kun mkhyen*).⁸ Although the title *Kun mkhyen*, and for that matter other honorific and hyperbolic terms, are not to be taken literally and are sometimes misemployed by Tibetan scholars through their love of panegyric, *Kun mkhyen* is nonetheless a prestigious epithet reserved for only a few exalted masters, impressive for their scholarship and meditative realization.

Another epithet the use of which indicates the social and religious stature of the person for whom it is used is 'Jam mgon or Mañju(śrī)nātha. Mipham is among the very few scholars, including Sa skya Paṅḍita,

Tsong kha pa, mKhyen brtse'i dBang po (1820-92) and Kong sprul (1813-99), who are given this title of religious eminence. Likewise, Mipham is enumerated as one of "the Three 'Jam mgons of Khams" (*Khams kyi 'jam mgon rnam gsum*),⁹ the two others being his masters mKhyen brtse'i dBang po and Kong sprul. This title, which identifies the master for whom it is used with Mañjuśrī, the Buddha of Wisdom, is perhaps the most prestigious epithet available to signify the wisdom and scholarship of a master.

Gene Smith assumes the application of the title 'Jam mgon to Mipham to have occurred after he had the vision of his personal deity, Mañjuśrī, during his eighteen month retreat in 'Ju nyung abbey propitiating Mañjuśrī.¹⁰ Mipham often used as his pen name 'Jam dpal dGyes pa'i rDo rje, and sometimes, more pompously, 'Jam dpal dGyes pa'i rDo rje mTsho byung bZhad pa'i Rang mdangs. His other pen names, like Blo gros Dri med, Mati and Dhī, also suggest assertion of his own wisdom and learning.

With the dissemination of his philosophical writings, Mipham's reputation as a philosopher, hermeneutist and polemicist began to spread beyond the circles of rNying ma scholars by the middle of his academic life. It seems that in the initial stage of his popularity Mipham became notorious among the dGe lugs pas for his opposition to their interpretations. His opponents, including Hor Brag dkar sPrul sku bsTan 'dzin sNyan grags (1867-1910/11) and dPa' ri ba Blo bzang Rab gsal (1840-1910), initially portrayed him as an impertinent dissenter challenging the great dGe ldan pa doctrinal positions.¹¹

mKhan po 'Jigs med Phun tshogs, a staunch follower of Mipham in modern Tibet, recounts in his biography of Mipham, *Sound of the Victorious Battle drum*,¹² how the monks of the three dGe lugs pa seats in central Tibet attempted to vanquish Mipham through sorcery and exorcisms. Mipham however triumphed unharmed through his spiritual powers and the sorcery and exorcism are said to have rebounded onto the performers themselves, bringing abnormal diseases and death. When the gNas chung oracle was consulted and the cause of the problems found, the thirteenth Dalai Lama sent emissaries to Mipham with apologies. Whether or not this account is credible, Mipham's fame and popularity continued to rise and even dGe lugs pa scholars came to admire and respect him. Despite his growing prestige, his opponent Brag dkar sPrul sku seems to have continued to regard him with contempt,¹³ whereas dPa' ri Rab gsal not only acknowledged Mipham's scholarship but went to the extent of eulogizing it and referring to Mipham as Mañjuśrī.¹⁴

Like dPa' ri Rab gsal, scholars from all traditions began to appreciate Mipham as they came to know him better through the printing and propagation of his numerous works. Mipham however did not enjoy in his lifetime the same degree of respect and renown as he does now. By the middle of this century, the bKa' brgyud pa and Sa skya pa admiration of Mipham developed so far that they included Mipham's writings, such as his commentary on *Madhyamakālamkāra* and, *mKhas 'jug* in their academic syllabus. So far, gZhan dga' (1871-1927) is the only other rNying ma master whose works have been incorporated in the curricula of other traditions, although the reasons for including gZhan dga' and Mipham are quite different.¹⁵ The use of prayers and ritualistic writings by Mipham in bKa' brgyud and Sa skya liturgies has now become common. The late rJe mKhan po dGe 'dun Rin chen, the supreme head of the 'Brug pa bKa' brgyud school in Bhutan, for instance, was earnestly propagating Mipham's prayer for good auspices entitled *bKra shis brgyad pa*. The inclusion of a short supplication to Mañjuśrī by Mipham among the daily liturgies of dGa ldan, a chief dGe lugs pa monastery, is yet another unprecedented dimension in the influence of Mipham.

Let us now make a brief assessment of Mipham's position in the Tibetan religious world by comparing him to the great luminary Tsong kha pa. Both Tsong kha pa and Mipham are believed by their followers to be emanations of Buddhas and are known to have had visions of Mañjuśrī. Scholars in their own right, they have also made almost equal innovative contributions to the study of Buddhism in Tibet and have each pioneered a scholarly revival. However, Tsong kha pa was no parallel to Mipham in the range of his knowledge, or at least his writing, on diverse traditional sciences and arts, nor did he earn much authority and respect in other traditions. Perhaps, Tsong kha pa's lack of influence on other traditions is due to the general isolation of the dGe lugs pa tradition from the three other traditions, which enjoy much closer relations because of the affinity of their philosophical interpretations and practices.

On the other hand, Tsong kha pa occupies an unrivalled supremacy in his own tradition whereas Mipham, although highly esteemed, is but a secondary figure in his tradition, standing after prominent

masters like Padmasambhava (c. 8th century), Rong zom (c. 11th century), Klong chen pa, and sometimes even 'Jigs med Gling pa (1729-98). Although interest in Mipham is growing so rapidly that he is seen to represent the rNying ma pa on all fronts, and his predecessors are studied and understood through him, he will still occupy only a secondary place in the rNying ma lineage. Thus, the religious and scholarly stature of Mipham and Tsong kha pa, both resemble and differ from each other.

The following judgement of A mdo dGe 'dun Chos 'phel (1903-51)¹⁶ gives a clear picture of the position of Mipham. When he was asked, who he thinks was more learned, Tsong kha pa or Mipham, he said:

I thought this over several times. Both of them are equal in their mind for being emanations of the Buddha and in having visions of Mañjuśrī. If both were alive today and had a debate, Tsong kha pa would, I think, probably be wiser in debate, as he spent longer in dialectical centres. As for general sagacity, depth of understanding, style of exposition and so forth, Mipham is terrific. If others hear this, it may vex them. I am being serious.¹⁷

His popularity and influence in the Tibetan Buddhist world could also partly be ascribed to the appreciation and approbation he received from his teachers, 'Jam dbyangs mKhyen brtse'i dBang po, Kong sprul Blo gros mTha' yas, dPal sprul O rgyan 'Jigs med Chos kyi dBang po (1808-87) and mKhan chen Padma Vajra (c. 1800), who were themselves highly esteemed lamas in their days. The first three enjoyed great faith and devotion from the adherents of gSar ma traditions as pioneers of the ecumenical (*ris med*) movement of which Mipham too is regarded as a promulgator. Notwithstanding the common assumption that he was an advocate of the ecumenical movement (*ris med pa*) which his teachers initiated, Mipham was a staunch proponent of rNying ma doctrine, and repeatedly refuted other schools igniting new doctrinal controversies. It still remains a perplexing question whether Mipham was a *ris med pa* in the same way as Kong sprul and dPal sprul.

The fact that mKhyen brtse'i dBang po encouraged and often instigated Mipham to write treatises that provoked his opponents into composing refutations is further bewildering. Nonetheless, mKhyen brtse'i dBang po and Mipham both stood for *ris med* and expressed this time and again in their words and deeds. mKhyen brtse'i dBang po's role and stance in the ecumenism he introduced will have to be studied separately, as it cannot be covered here. As for Mipham, it is clear that his idea of *ris med* is not of one uniform tradition for all Tibetan Buddhists but of a harmony with differences, a unity within diversity. He encouraged a *ris med* wherein all traditions adhere to their own doctrine and respect others. For him, sharp philosophical discussions and criticisms could go on, but in a friendly social atmosphere with mutual respect. This is the *ris med* attitude he adopted when he argued against such opponents as dPa' ri Blo bzang Rab gsal. One could probably say that his stature among the gSar ma pa and to some degree among rNying ma pas is a product of both his socially *ris med* approach and the polemical elements in his philosophical works.

Mipham's popularity among rNying ma pas, like his renown among adherents of other traditions, grew gradually. While on the one hand, those rNying ma pas inclined towards solitary practice and esoteric mantra received Mipham's *sūtra* and non-soteriological works and his growing influence with scepticism and indifference, the scholarly rNying ma pas, on the other, doubted the reliability of Mipham's new interpretations. One rNying ma scholar, rDo grub Dam chos, we are told, even openly challenged Mipham's interpretation of śāntarakṣita's *Madhyamakālamkāra*. This resulted in the writing of *Dam chos dogs sel*, one of the three polemical writings of Mipham.

Certain later rNying ma writers like mKhan po gZhan dga' and Ngag dga' (1879-1941) seem to have deliberately chosen to adhere to the better known interpretations of dGe lugs and Sa skya masters even after Mipham's new interpretations came to light. Some *mKhan pos* even argued that Mipham failed to grasp properly and present the real intentions (*dgongs pa*) of Rong zom and Klong chen Rab 'byams, major authorities in the rNying ma tradition. Thus, unlike masters such as the Dalai Lamas, Karmapas and some Treasure Discoverers, his society did not initially credit him with scholarly talent and spiritual qualities; he became an adept in his own right, earning his position through a series of impressive academic and religious performances.

However, one could also say that Mipham acquired an unquestionable seniority in the rNying ma hierarchy after his master, 'Jam dbyangs mKhyen brtse'i dBang po, the then supreme pontiff of the rNying ma pas, invested him with the guardianship of the rNying ma doctrine by consigning to his care the entire corpus of rNying ma literature, including the *bKa' 'gyur* and *bsTan 'gyur* canons. mKhyen brtse'i dBang po conducted a special ceremony in which a huge pile of scriptures was placed before Mipham, who was made to sit on a raised seat, and was asked from then on to uphold those scriptures by exposition, debate and composition, and to propagate the Buddha's teachings throughout the world. During this ceremony, mKhyen brtse'i dBang po also conferred upon Mipham his own *paṇḍita* hat¹⁸ and the title Mipham 'Jam dbyangs rNam rgyal rGya mtsho inscribed on a *thang ka* in poetic verse.¹⁹ This unique enthronement was a milestone on Mipham's journey to general acceptance and authority within his own tradition.

Although Mipham was not formally recognized as a reincarnate master (*sprul sku*) or seen as a Treasure Discoverer (*gter ston*), his disciples regarded him as an emanation of Mañjuśrī. The recognition of his subsequent reincarnations is still going on in spite of the declaration in his last will that he would not reincarnate in the impure realm²⁰ any more.²¹ His followers also later came to see him as a Treasure Discoverer and all his writings as Mind-Treasures bursting forth spontaneously in the form of treatises (*dgongs gter bstan bcos kyi tshul du rang rdol du byung ba*).²² Mipham himself claims that his works, especially those on profound and sacred topics, were written when words, through the blessing of his deity and power of his realization, poured out spontaneously costing him no effort.²³ Mipham makes another very strong claim in his will when he says that he is not an ordinary being but a Bodhisattva who has taken birth through aspiration and prayers.²⁴

Mipham received uncompromising support and recognition from his masters. His chief guru, mKhan brtse'i dBang po, as mentioned, entrusted him with the guardianship of the Buddha's teachings in general and rNying ma school in particular. He is also said to have remarked: "At the present time there is no one on the earth more learned than Lama Mipham".²⁵ Kong sprul Blo gros mTha' yas, another polymathic teacher of Mipham often called Mipham Mahāpaṇḍita and wrote a long-life prayer for Mipham addressing him as Mañjuśrī.²⁶

When dPal sprul Rin po che was asked who was wiser, Mipham or himself, he replied: "In the field of *sūtra*, we are roughly equal. In [secret] mantra, there is a difference like that between open and closed eyes. Mipham is surely wiser".²⁷ All three of his masters, who were scholars of incredible erudition and adepts renowned for their lofty realization (*rtogs pa*), highly applauded his scholarship and associated him with Mañjuśrī. The recognition he received from his charismatic teachers must have helped him gain influence and respect among rNying ma pas as well as gSar ma pas.

Another minor asset for Mipham's quick ascent to renown could have been the royal patronage he enjoyed from the ruling sDe dge aristocratic family. Although Gene Smith and Steven Goodman assert that Mipham exercised real temporal authority over his aristocratic disciples²⁸ we do not exactly know as to how he had such political influence. Nevertheless, it is clear that he wielded strong spiritual authority by being the spiritual tutor of the sDe dge King Ngag dbang 'Jam dpal Rin chen (c. 1850-1920) and that perhaps may have brought him some prerogative in both social and political affairs. I shall not, however, discuss this here.

The Writings of Mipham

Mipham's writing career began quite early. Goodman, following Schuh's catalogue, tells us that the first datable text by Mipham is a single page prayer to Ge sar written on 20 August 1859.²⁹ Traditional scholars such as mKhan po 'Jigs med Phun tshogs have it that Mipham wrote his *Nges shes rin po che'i sgron me* (Precious Lamp of Certainty)³⁰ when he was seven years old for 'Ju Bla ma Rin chen mGon po (c. 1850-1920).³¹ The book does not however have a proper colophon and is not datable. In his commentary on *Nges shes rin po che'i sgron me*, mKhan po Kun dpal (1872-1943), one of the well-known disciples of Mipham, provides us with a colophon written by Mipham when he was fifty-seven. In it, Mipham says:

Although this *Nges shes rin po che'i sgron me* was written as it fortuitously came to my mind in one session when I was very young and a beginner in my studies, there is no contradiction in its

indigenous medicine, he wrote a few hundred works, of varying size, elucidating ancient theories and practices and contriving new formulae and methods. Even the concoction of aphrodisiac stimulants did not escape the creative mind of Mipham. He also took great interest in the synergy of medicine, physiotherapy and the recitation of powerful mantras. In the colophon of his medicinal works, Mipham refers to himself as a physician (*tsho byed*), although we do not know whether he actually practised medicine. His works, as Gene Smith correctly states, continue to this day to be highly regarded. His synoptic presentation of indigenous medicine entitled *rTsa rgyud rdil gzhaḡ gi 'grel pa* (Commentary on the Outline of the Root Tantra)³⁷ and his treatise on pulse-reading and urinalysis called *Phyi ma'i rgyud kyi rtsa mdo chu mdo'i 'grel pa* (Commentary on the Verses on Pulse-Reading and Urinalysis in the Later Tantra)³⁸ are two of the most comprehensive medical textbooks for beginners.

Mipham's knowledge of Sanskrit is another prodigious achievement given his lack of direct contact with the Indian world. He is said to have studied the *Cāndravyākaraṇasūtra* – Candragomin's book on Sanskrit grammar – with Kong sprul Blo gros mTha' yas. His most notable contribution in the study of Sanskrit is his Sanskrit-Tibetan dictionary,³⁹ in which he introduces many Sanskrit rDzogs chen terms. There is also a collection of his annotations on the *Sārasvativyākaraṇasūtra*.⁴⁰ He also has to his credit commentaries on *Sum cu pa* (The Thirty Verses) and *rTags kyi 'jug pa*, (The Application of Genders)⁴¹ the classic works on Tibetan language and grammar, and his popular treatise on the syntactical use of the second-suffix "sa".⁴² Also within the linguistic field are a short work on semasiology,⁴³ many sporadic discussions of semantics in his philosophical writings, and a treatise on letter writing.⁴⁴

Mipham's talent for prosody and poetry is evident in all his works. Apart from the breath-taking metaphors and rhetoric in his various writings, he authored a voluminous commentary on Daṇḍin's *Kāvyaḡdarśa*.⁴⁵ This commentary, as Gene Smith says, is the finest and most credible source for understanding the development of Tibetan poetics during the 18th and first half of the 19th century. Mipham wrote no works either on drama or on lexicology except for the bilingual lexicon I have mentioned earlier. However, he composed some songs and dances,⁴⁶ of which the *Gling gro*,⁴⁷ depicting Ge sar and his retinue of warriors, has now become a famous operatic performance among Tibetans.

The cult of Ge sar was one of Mipham's main interests and here he made a major contribution to folk tradition. He compiled and edited the multi-volume epic of Ge sar which until then existed solely in oral form learnt and recited only by a few public narrators. The epic, portraying Ge sar as a reincarnation of Padmasambhava in the form of a righteous king, describes his various triumphant invasions of the evil worlds, both human and non-human. It is probably the largest and most beautiful of folk poetry, as opposed to the poetry derived from Indian sources, and through it runs the theme of the destruction of evil, victory of the righteous and conversion of bad to good.

Although the legends surrounding Ge sar are shrouded in mystery and are not literally believed by all Tibetans, historians like Dudjom Rinpoche believed that Ge sar lived in the 11th century as a monarch based in the region of Gling. Mipham seems to have regarded Ge sar to have lived as a quasi-human figure and believed that Ge sar and his entourage are now divine spirits who are guardians of the Buddha's teachings (*dharmapāla, chos skyong*). Mipham not only adopted Ge sar as his private protector (*srung ma*), or *dgra lha* as he usually referred to him, but also introduced the practice of worshipping Ge sar as a guru and chosen deity (*iṣṭadevatā, yi dam*). Many of his followers today continue the tradition of worshipping Ge sar as a *dgra lha*, who protects them from obstructions on their path to Buddhahood.

Beside compiling and editing the epic of Ge sar, he also wrote a whole cycle of liturgies comprising prayers, invocations, eulogies and manuals for executing sundry purposes through Ge sar. These include prayers and praises to Ge sar and his entourage and liturgies for offering them libations, incenses, feasts etc. There are also supplications requesting them to increase the charisma, wealth, power and fame of their devotees. Some prayers are directed to particular generals in Ge sar's entourage.

On astrology he wrote around a dozen works. His works in this field range from elementary mathematical calculations to foretelling eclipses and assessing the positions of the zodiac and stars. In his monumental two-volume commentary on *Kālacakralaḡhutantra*,⁴⁸ he presents one of the most refined and

intricate exposition on astronomical and astrological calculations, often shedding new light on crucial topics. He wrote a few hundred works on divination, oracles, geomancy, sorcery, magic and similar topics, including rituals and prayers for various purposes like *sang* and *sur* offerings.⁴⁹ It is unusual to find a serious logician and philosopher like Mipham displaying great enterprise in such cultural matters. His technique of divination using the root mantra *Arapacanadhī* of Mañjuśrī,⁵⁰ and the one using the arrow of Ge sar,⁵¹ are two divination methods widely used by rNying ma pas these days.

In this category of study and practice, three large works of Mipham are outstanding. Corresponding to folk superstitions and beliefs, he wrote *gTo 'bum*,⁵² a huge collection of diverse rituals and manuals for achieving different worldly purposes. Then, there is his *Kun gzigs dbyangs 'char chen mo*,⁵³ a work Mipham seems to have undertaken scrupulously, on the practice of divination based on vital air (*rlung*), zodiac positions (*khyim*) and syllables (*dbyangs gsal*). Like *dByangs 'char*, his *Srid pa 'phrul gyi 'ju thig*⁵⁴ is yet another prodigious work on divination; it mainly deals with an archaic Bon tradition of knot-sortilege.

It is fascinating to see, through this work, the degree of Mipham's interest in and knowledge of Bon, Tibet's indigenous faith. Perhaps this voluminous work, to which he devoted much effort and time, reading more than a score of Bon po works, and his work on the art of love-making, *'Dod pa'i bstan bcos 'jig rten kun tu dga' ba'i gter* (Treatise on Love: Treasure of Worldly Pleasure),⁵⁵ are the two works that best reflect Mipham's open-mindedness and versatility. In the case of the latter, he was the first of two Tibetans to compose such a work, although A mdo dGe 'dun Chos 'phel, the other author to write on this topic, jocularly dismissed Mipham's piece as less efficient because it was written without any practical experience.⁵⁶

Mipham's cultural works also include what his cataloguer called *brTag pa thor bu* (Miscellaneous Investigations).⁵⁷ These investigations contain Mipham's study and interpretation of geomantic signs, zodiac signs, butter-lamp signs, signs of sacrificial fire, signs of spiritual accomplishments, and analysis of good and bad skulls used for religious rituals and of varieties of jewels. He also wrote on the verification of genuine and spurious Treasure-Discoverers (*gter ston*).⁵⁸ On magic, he wrote two works, *sGyu ma'i be bum* and *sNgags kyi be bum*, both of which are considered strictly esoteric and thus deliberately kept out of the Zhechen redaction. The latter has appeared in book format from Xining.⁵⁹

Mipham authored no less than one hundred eulogies and supplications which by traditional classification fall under the *bstod tshogs* or hymnic genre. Within this corpus is his remarkable invocation to the Buddha śākyamuni, *Thub chog byin rlabs gter mdzod* (Liturgies [to supplicate] the Sage: Treasury of Blessings)⁶⁰ and the grand exposition of the Buddha's lives entitled *Padma dkar po* (The White Lotus),⁶¹ the latter being an exegesis supplementary to the former. He wrote similar invocations to the Eight Bodhisattvas (*nye sras brgyad*) along with supplementary narratives of their lives.⁶² Mipham is also said to have compiled the catalogues to the publication of the *mDzod bdun* of Klong chen pa, to the writings of Rong zom, to dPal sprul's works and to the archival collection of Kaṅ thog sKu 'bum.

In the *gtam tshogs* or homiletic genre (*zhal gdams skor*),⁶³ Mipham wrote over two dozen advisory epistles and essays addressed to monks, yogis, scholars, rulers, villagers, monastic and lay communities. Some were written for particular individuals who requested instruction from him whereas others were written for a general readership. Among these is his political counsel on kingship, *rGyal po lugs kyi bstan bcos sa gzhi skyong ba'i rgyan* (Treatise on Kingship: Ornament of Earth Rulers)⁶⁴ written for the King of sDe dge.

Mipham's high regard for logic and epistemology is extraordinary in a rNying ma master. Most rNying ma pas lack interest in and are even averse to logic and epistemology; Mipham professed great love of the subject. It is perhaps under the influence of Rong zom, who was a great enthusiast for logic and language, and Klong chen pa, a scholar with a strong sense of rationality, that Mipham acquired his love of rationality and reasoning. Whatever the cause may be, Mipham is an exceptional case among rNying ma pas in presenting Buddhist philosophy and soteriology with acute and elaborate reasoning and logic.

He wrote commentaries on both the *Pramāṇavārttika*⁶⁵ and the *Pramāṇasamuccaya*,⁶⁶ in which he put forward new ideas and interpretations. However, Mipham's position, on the whole, is close to the Sa skya lineage of the logico-epistemological traditions, and he also wrote a commentary on Sa paṅ's *Tshad ma rigs*

ger.⁶⁷ Among his works on logic is the *Bsdus tshan smra ba'i sgo 'byed* (A Compendium that Opens the Door of Speech)⁶⁸ a compendium of satirical but intricate logical arguments primarily intended to make fun of dGe lugs pa sophistry.

Within the logico-epistemological and philosophical works are his contributions to hermeneutics. We can fully appreciate Mipham's hermeneutic dexterity only by reading his commentaries on major philosophical treatises and the two sets of short but interesting quintets he wrote and entitled *Swords and Lilies*.⁶⁹ So far none of these has been studied by western scholars except for *Don rnam nges shes rab ral gri* (The Sword of Wisdom that Ascertains Meaning), one of the five *Swords*, of which Mathew Kapstein has made a paraphrastic presentation.⁷⁰ An English translation of mKhan po dPal ldan Shes rab's commentary on the same text is put on the Web.⁷¹

Generally speaking, most of Mipham's literary output could be linked to a soteriological purpose, while over half of it directly deals with Buddhist philosophy and soteriology. Among the Five Scriptural Texts (*gzhung bka' pod lnga*) popular in the Tibetan academia, Mipham has written least on *vinaya*. He has to his credit a commentary on the *Prātimokṣasūtra*,⁷² the *ōryamūlasarvāstivādiśrāmaṇerakārikā*,⁷³ and the *Upāsakasamvarāṣṭaka*.⁷⁴ Similarly, of the Thirteen Great Texts (*gzhung chen bcu gsum*) known among rNying ma, bKa' brgyud and Sa skya scholarly circles, Mipham did not write a commentary on the *Vinayasūtra* of Guṇaprabha and on one other text, the *Catuḥśataka* of Āryadeva. Does writing less on *vinaya* in any way reflect Mipham's lack of interest in monastic practice, as is the case with some rNying ma masters? We have no record either of Mipham's being ordained as a proper monk. I will not, however, delve into this question here.

On Abhidharma, Mipham wrote an expansive commentary on the *Abhidharmakośa*⁷⁵ and a glossarial exegesis on the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*.⁷⁶ He also commented on Asaṅga's *Mahāyānasaṅgraha*,⁷⁷ Vasubandhu's *Vyākhyāyukti*,⁷⁸ *Triṃśikā*⁷⁹ and *Viṃśatikā*.⁸⁰ On Buddhist phenomenology and metaphysics, his treatise, *mKhas pa'i tshul la 'jug pa'i sgo* (Entering the Ways of the Wise) with its outline (*sa bcad*) and verse summary (*sdom byang*),⁸¹ is one of the most comprehensive books and is much studied in the three non-dGe lugs pa schools. This and his outline of the *Abhidharmakośa* both reflect Mipham's skill in organizing the structure of his works. Steven Goodman and Leslie Kawamura have done a synoptic analysis of Mipham's *mKhas 'jug*,⁸² and a volume of English translation of the same by Eric Pema Kunsang and another by Richard Barrons have come out.⁸³

Of the five works of Maitreya, Mipham wrote quite detailed commentaries on three, but on the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* and the *Mahāyānottaratantra*, otherwise known as the *Ratnagotravibhāga*, there are only commentaries later compiled from his annotations by his students.⁸⁴ His commentaries on the *Sūtrālaṅkāra*, entitled *Theg mchog bdud rtsi'i dga' ston* (The Feast of the Nectar of the Supreme Vehicle),⁸⁵ on the *Madhyāntavibhāga* called *'Od zer phreng ba* (The Garland of Rays)⁸⁶ and on the *Dharmadharmatāvibhāga*, called *Ye shes snang ba rnam 'byed* (Discriminating the Light of Pristine Wisdom),⁸⁷ are very fine works; the first two, specially, are excellent sources for his understanding of *Cittamātra* philosophy.

Of the five, Mipham seems to have considered the *Madhyāntavibhāga* and *Dharmadharmatāvibhāga* to encompass all Mahāyāna schools, unlike *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* and *Mahāyānottaratantra*, which he considered to be Mādhyamika in content, and the *Sūtrālaṅkāra* which he considered to be *Cittamātra*. In addition to his commentary on the *Mahāyānottaratantra*, he wrote two supplementary works on Buddha Nature called *bDe gshegs snying po'i stong thun senge'i nga ro*, (Exposition on *Tathāgatagarbha*: Lion's Roar)⁸⁸ wherein he discusses the three arguments Maitreya used to establish that Buddha Nature pervades in all sentient beings, and *gZhan stong khas len sen ge'i nga ro* (Assertion of the Emptiness of Other: Lion's Roar)⁸⁹ a text written in defence of the exposition of the Emptiness of Other. I shall return to say more on this in the next section when I discuss his works on *Madhyamaka*.

Like other Tibetan masters, Mipham emphasized *śāstras* and did not write much directly on the canonical *sūtras*. There are only four commentaries on the *sūtras*: on the *Prātimokṣasūtra*,⁹⁰ I mentioned earlier, on the *Āryaratnatrayānusmṛtisūtra*,⁹¹ on the *Prajñāpāramitāsamuccayagāthā*⁹² and an annotation of

the *Bhadracariprañdhāna*.⁹³ On the *Sāñcayagāthā*, he wrote a second exegesis in the *shan byar* genre,⁹⁴ by juxtaposing and collating this *sūtra* and Maitreya's *Abhisamayālamkāra*. Among other miscellaneous works on *sūtrayāna* are his commentary on Nāgārjuna's *Suhṛllekha*,⁹⁵ which has been translated into English in Leslie Kawamura's *Golden Zephyr*,⁹⁶ his *Yid bzhin mdzod grub bsdsus* (Compendium of Tenet Systems [presented] in the Treasury of Wish-fulfilling Jewels)⁹⁷ extracted from the twelfth chapter of Klong chen pa's *Yid bzhin rin po che'i mdzod* (Treasury of Wish-fulfilling Jewels)⁹⁸ and his essay on establishing the three vows to be of a single nature.⁹⁹

His output in subjects related to the *vajrayāna* system is massive, comprising around seven hundred works of varying size. Besides writing new philosophical treatises and commentaries to the existing ones, he composed hundreds of accomplishment practices, invocations, meditation manuals, and liturgies for empowerment, consecration, and numerous other purposes. He dealt with all the four schools of tantras – *kriyā*, *caryā*, *yoga* and *yogottaratantra* – or the six mantra vehicles of *kriyā*, *caryā*, *yoga*, *mahāyoga*, *anuyoga* and *atiyoga* according to the rNying ma tantric taxonomy.

Among the scores of deities he dealt with, Mipham apparently wrote most on practices based on multiple forms of Mañjuśrī, his tutelary deity. His cycle of Mañjuśrī worship contains eulogies, prayers, invocations, accomplishment manuals, meditation instructions, and liturgies for bestowing empowerments, performing divination, sorcery, magic, oracles, exorcism, and consecration, making offerings and even making blessed pills, amulets, etc.

A notable feature of Mipham's contribution on *vajrayāna* is his interest and erudition in what are categorised as *gSar ma* or New Tantras. Unlike many rNying ma masters, who were satisfied with the rNying ma tantras translated during the Earlier Translation (*snga 'gyur*) undertaken at the time of first propagation of Buddhism into Tibet under Dharma King Khri song lDe btsan and Padmasambhava, Mipham actively studied and wrote prolifically on the *gSar ma* tantras, which were translated during the Later Translation (*phyi 'gyur*) period, which was part of the second dissemination of Buddhism in Tibet.

Among his works on *gSar ma* tantras are his numerous accomplishment manuals (*sgrub thabs*) and liturgical compositions on the *Bhairava*, *Hevajra*, *Vajrayogini*, *Guhyasamāja*, *Cakrasamvara* and *Kālacakra* practices. On the last one, Mipham produced one of the finest commentarial exegeses on the *Laghutantra*¹⁰⁰ and, in addition to the two thick volumes of commentary, another volume of liturgical writings and diverse essays.¹⁰¹ Time and again Mipham praised the effectiveness and profundity of the *Kālacakra* cycle and reaffirmed its superiority over other tantras,¹⁰² or at least over other *gSar ma* tantras. He also wrote two works on the *Pañcakrama* (*Rim lnga*) of the *Guhyasamāja* cycle.¹⁰³

If Mipham treated the *gSar ma* teachings with deep interest, he certainly could be said to have undertaken the study of and writing on rNying ma doctrine with zeal and zest. He is said to have remarked that the *gSar ma* works are easy to understand and immediately convincing whereas rNying ma teachings, on the contrary, are abstruse and obscure but pithy and profound, requiring to be unravelled gradually.¹⁰⁴ Mipham wrote profusely on rNying ma tantras. Of the two, *bKa' ma* and *gTer ma*, it is curious that Mipham, apart from his scrutiny of authentic and spurious *gter stons*, did not discuss *gTer ma*¹⁰⁵ much, compared to the bulk of work he did on *bKa' ma*.¹⁰⁶ Although he was closely connected to great *gTer stons* like 'Jam dbyangs mKhyen brtse'i dBang po and Kong sprul Blo gros mTha' yas, and despite the compilation of *Rin chen gter mdzod chen mo* happening in his day, Mipham seems to show little interest in any *gTer ma* cycle.

Amongst his important compositions on rNying ma tantric scholarship, his exegetical, liturgical and instructional writings on *bKa' brgyad*¹⁰⁷ are outstanding contributions to the *sgrub sde* section of Mahāyogatantra. Likewise, his *gSang snying spyi don 'od gsal snying po* (The Essence of Clear Light: An Exegesis on *Guhyagarbhatantra*),¹⁰⁸ among several others, is a remarkable contribution to the *rgyud sde* category of Mahāyoga literature, although in it he interpreted the *Guhyagarbhatantra* in the light of the *Atiyoga* tradition.

He has also written supplementary works to Klong chen pa's *Yid bzhin rin po che'i mdzod*¹⁰⁹ and commentaries on Padmasambhava's *Man ngag lta phreng*,¹¹⁰ Huñkāra's *Samsiddhimahāśriherukanopika*,¹¹¹ and Mañjuśrīmitra's *Bodhicittabhāvanopalasuvarmadruta*,¹¹² Saraha's *Dohakośagīti*,¹¹³ Pad ma dBang rgyal's

sDom gsum rnam nges,¹¹⁴ on the *Dhyānottaratantra*,¹¹⁵ *Tshig bdun gsol 'debs*,¹¹⁶ *rGyud lung man ngag gi bshags pa*¹¹⁷ and other tantric treatises, some of which could be considered to be his work on *anuyogatantra*, the second inner tantric vehicle in rNying ma tradition. There are also his prayers, invocations, *guru yoga* practices directed to many saints and yogis of India and Tibet and liturgies for supplicating and for offering feasts, libations, incense etc. to different deities and dharma-protectors. He also authored around fifteen works which his cataloguer classifies as benedictory and dedicatory prayers.

Foremost among his contributions are his quintessential writings on rDzogs chen thought and practice. He wrote a few exegetical works and many practical instructions, which were published as his distinctive writings on rDzogs chen at rDzong sar monastery.¹¹⁸ A similar collection was also reproduced as a book at Sarnath.¹¹⁹ Apart from his independent texts on rDzogs chen, he also gave ample thematic treatment to rDzogs chen philosophy and meditation in many other works, especially in those on *Madhyamaka*.

His writings on rDzogs chen, like Klong chen pa's but unlike 'Jigs med Gling pa's poetic presentation, are pithy and abstruse, often encrypted in rDzogs chen terminology, and, like Rong zom's, firmly grounded on philosophical reasoning. One could claim that Mipham undertook all his work on soteriology and philosophy in the spirit of mastering rDzogs chen thought, for rDzogs chen was to him, as to other rNying ma pas, the *summum bonum* of all teachings and practices. If anything made him a staunch adherent of rNying ma school, it was the rDzogs chen, and it was mainly to fulfil this end of perfecting Great Perfection that Mipham expounded *Madhyamaka* philosophy extensively. I shall now turn to survey his works on *Madhyamaka*, the "profound writings".

The Madhyamaka Writings

Of all his writings, his writings on *Madhyamaka* thought attracted the most attention from other scholars and bought popularity and fame in religious and scholarly circles. It is on this subject, among the numerous subjects he covered, that Mipham showed the most enthusiasm and vigour, and came up with much novelty and also dissent. Both the popularity of the subject in Tibet and the innovative but controversial nature of his writings contributed towards making his works on *Madhyamaka* distinctive and famous.

Perhaps the earliest work that Mipham wrote on *Madhyamaka* is his *Nges shes rin po che 'i sgron me*,¹²⁰ which as mentioned earlier, was written at an initial period of his advanced training. John Pettit has recently done his Ph.D. thesis on this text, providing an insightful account of Mipham's position in *Madhyamaka* thought as presented in this text.¹²¹ He has also produced an English translation of this and its commentary, *rNam bshad 'od zer dri med* (Exegesis [called] the Stainless Rays) by Khro shul 'Jam rDor (1920-60).¹²² In this text, Mipham portrays himself as a judicious sage to whom a wandering mendicant poses seven crucial questions relating to *Madhyamaka*.

Through giving answers to the seven queries, he expounds various aspects of *Madhyamaka* philosophy, and explicates the crux of it, especially while answering the first question, whether Emptiness is strong or weak negation (*lta ba dgag gnyis gang ltar smra*), and the last question, whether or not there is assertion in the Mādhyamika system (*dbu mar khas lan yod dam med*). The coherence and consistency with which he provides answers to these questions, thereby elucidating the rNying ma doctrinal position, gives us an impressive picture of Mipham's erudition even at that early stage of his scholarship.

However, we see Mipham's exposition of *Madhyamaka* growing more elaborate, profound and rigorous in his commentary on the *Madhyamakālaṅkāra* of śāntarakṣita,¹²³ written when he was thirty-one. At the behest of his chief master, 'Jam dbyangs mKhyen brtse dBang po, he composed, within only twenty-one days, a stupendous exegesis on this *Madhyamaka* text, previously to a great extent neglected by Tibetan scholars. In his detailed commentary on the main body of the text and the extensive, systematic introduction he wrote to the commentary, he formulated the rNying ma doctrinal position corresponding to both the Svātantrika and the Prāsaṅgika traditions of Mādhyamika. For posterity, this commentary was to become his most authoritative work on subjects relating to *Madhyamaka* studies and the most important source for his interpretation of several controversial topics. Kennard Lipman has done his dissertation on this.¹²⁴

Connected to this work is Mipham's short polemic entitled *Dam chos dwogs sel* (Clarification of Doubts of Damchos),¹²⁵ written at the request of rDo ba Dam chos, a rNying ma scholar who at first seems even to have challenged Mipham to a public debate. In 1878, two years after his commentary on the *Madhyamakālaṃkāra*, Mipham wrote *Sher le'u 'grel pa nor bu ketaka* (Commentary on Wisdom Chapter: the Ketaka Gem),¹²⁶ his exposition on the ninth chapter of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* of śāntideva, which, in the years to come, was to provoke several controversies and polemical discussions. This commentary, as Gene Smith has correctly said, turned into a tempest that triggered an intellectual commotion in dGe lugs pa circles.¹²⁷

The dGe lugs pas retaliated by sending him several refutations of his work, which subsequently led to the writing of his two other polemical works, *Rigs lam rab gsal de nyid snang byed* (The Clear Logic that Illuminates the Reality),¹²⁸ written in reply to the refutation of dPa' ri ba Blo bzang Rab gsal, and *rGal lan nyin byed snang ba* (Reply to a Refutation: The Light of the Sun)¹²⁹ to Brag dkar sPrul sku Blo bzang dPal ldan bsTan 'dzin sNyan grags. These three works and three subsequent polemical texts embody almost the entire contributions of Mipham in *Madhyamaka* philosophy and thus form the *magna opera* of Mipham's writings on *Madhyamaka*.

Major issues on which Mipham shed new light in these works are: the nature of Emptiness, its knowability and inexpressibility, the definition of the two truths, classification of the ultimate truth, the dual system of the two truth theory, differences between Svātantrika and Prāsaṅgika sub-schools, the Mādhyamika stance on reflexive awareness and store-consciousness, the process of discarding the two obscurations, the degree of realization of Selflessness by śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas, the Prāsaṅgika position in making assertions, the mode of reasoning and meditation on Emptiness, the validity of convention and the scrutiny of shared appearance (*mtshun snang*) among the six realms of beings. Paul Williams, in his book *The Reflexive Nature of Awareness*,¹³⁰ has done an elaborate study of Mipham's Mādhyamika stance on reflexive awareness (*svasaṃvedana, rang rig*) and a Franz-Karl Ehrhard has written on Mipham's theory of assertions in Prāsaṅgika school.¹³¹

Mipham covered in these texts philosophical, soteriological, gnoseological and ontological issues that most writers on *Madhyamaka* would deal within commentaries on Candrakīrti's *Madhyamakāvatāra* or Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*. One often wonders why Mipham, apart from his annotations that his students later compiled for us,¹³² did not write a proper commentary on those two, but wrote on *Madhyamakālaṃkāra*. Could this be because of his greater faith in śāntarakṣita, as he was a rNying ma master? Similarly, he did not write an extensive commentary on the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* and *Mahāyānottaratantra*, as did other masters, but wrote on other works of Maitreya. Perhaps, Mipham was deliberately avoiding comment on those popular texts that already had a great deal of scholarly work done on them, and was trying to bring some less known works to light. Or was Mipham trying to avoid the risk of more controversy, which would be inevitable if he undertook elaborate exposition on those books that are widely studied in Tibetan monasteries?

One important characteristic of Mipham's writing is his ecumenical spirit of reconciliation. Although his controversial contributions and the related polemics make him appear disputatious and provocative, Mipham was a master who fervently sought to reconcile and respect all conflicting views and systems. It was his liberal approach, interpreting dissonant teachings so as to bring them into harmony, which often annoyed and provoked opposition from orthodox groups. His effort to bring dichotomic systems, such as the Profound tradition of Nāgārjuna (*Klu sgrub kyi zab mo lta srol*) and the Extensive tradition of Asaṅga (*Thogs med kyi rgya chen spyod srol*), the Svātantrika and Prāsaṅgika *Madhyamaka*, *sūtrayāna* and *vajrayāna*, the *gSar ma* and rNying ma and even Tsong kha pa and his opponents, into agreement is evident in his *Madhyamaka* works.

Besides, Mipham respected every Buddhist tradition and its masters and even accepted their spiritual and doctrinal authority, notwithstanding his philosophical disagreements with his opponents. A salient example is Mipham's devotion to Tsong kha pa and some other dGe lugs pa masters, despite the fact that many of his polemical writings are refutations of Tsong kha pa's interpretation and dGe lugs pa understanding of Emptiness. He repeatedly stated that Tsong kha pa and other eminent dGe lugs pa masters

like ICang skya Rol pa'i rDo rje (1717-1786) held views consonant with the rNying ma pa and other sNga rabs pa¹³³ viewpoints, although they taught a provisional understanding of Emptiness that their followers, the dGe lugs pas, mistook for definitive and final.

A strong testimony to Mipham's ecumenical outlook is that he even wrote commentaries on Tsong kha pa's *Lam gso rnam gsum* (Three Principal Practices)¹³⁴ and ICang sKya's *lTa mgur* (Hymn on the Experience of Emptiness).¹³⁵ In the same way, he wrote a short article defending the Sa skya pa philosophical position in answer to twelve pivotal questions posed to the Sa skya pas¹³⁶ and he wrote his *gZhan stong khas len senge'i nga ro* to justify the view of the Emptiness of Other (*gzhan stong*) although he himself adhered to the concept of the Emptiness of Own-being (*rang stong*).

Now to turn to his doctrine on *Tathāgatagarbha*, Mipham touches on the concept of *Tathāgatagarbha* in the above mentioned works, although it is his commentary on the *Mahāyānottaratantra*, and the supplementary writings, *bDe gshegs snying po'i stong thun senge'i nga ro*¹³⁷ and *gZhan ston khas len senge'i nga ro*,¹³⁸ which deal with this topic in depth and detail. Towards the end of his life, Mipham also composed three other works on *Tathāgatagarbha* and Innate Mind (*gnyug sems*), called the Trilogy on Innate Mind.¹³⁹ Unfortunately, Mipham did not live long enough to see a formal completion of this trilogy; his student, Zhe chen rGyal tshab Pad ma rNam rgyal, finished it by augmenting miscellaneous notes by Mipham on the same theme and published it at Zhe chen monastery. In this trilogy, he bridges the *Tathāgatagarbha* in *sūtrayāna* and the Innate Mind in *vajrayāna* and goes on to show how this concept is fundamental and crucial to Mahāyāna philosophy and practice irrespective of what terms are used for it in different schools and vehicles. This, one could say, is one of his last attempts to harmonize not only the *sūtra* and *tantra* schools in their basic theory and ultimate goal but the positions of various Buddhist traditions and schools with respect to *Tathāgatagarbha*.

Other works of Mipham on *Madhyamaka* include his commentaries on Nāgārjuna's *Pratītyasamutpādahṛdaya*¹⁴⁰ and *Hastavāla*¹⁴¹ and śāntideva's *Bodhicaryāvatāra*,¹⁴² although the last two are not included in the Zhechen Monastery edition of his writings. Mipham did not write anything on Āryadeva's *Catuhśataka*, one of the major treatises of *Madhyamaka* in Tibet, but he wrote a commentary on the *Jñānasārasamuccaya*,¹⁴³ believed to be by the same Āryadeva. Katsumi Mimaki has written an article on this in French.¹⁴⁴ Mipham wrote around half a dozen practical instructions for meditation on *Madhyamaka*, of which two have been rendered into English in the book, *Calm and Clear*,¹⁴⁵ published by the Tibetan Nyingma Meditation Center.

His student gZhan phan Chos kyi Blo gros (c. 1890-1960) compiled his miscellaneous notes on *Madhyamaka* philosophy and created a collection entitled *dBu ma sogs gzhung spyi'i dka' gnad skor gyi gsung gros sna tsogs phyogs gcig tu bsdu pa rin po che'i za ma tog* (Collection of Diverse Discussions on *Madhyamaka* and Other Difficult Doctrinal Topics: the Vessel of Jewels).¹⁴⁶ Most of notes in this and in his annotation of *Mādhyamakāvatāra* are refutations of the dGe lugs pa understanding of Emptiness as lack of inherent nature and the phrase "vase is not empty of vase but of hypostatic existence". It is also in this text where he categorically claims to be a proponent of *rang stong* philosophy, introduces the terms, *kun rdzob gzhan stong* and *don dam gzhan stong*, which in his *Nges shes sgron me*, he calls *tshig gi gzhan stong* and *don gi gzhan stong*, and accuses the dGe lugs pas of espousing the first type of *gzhan stong*.

One of Mipham's last wishes was to write another extensive exegetical work on *Madhyamaka*. This wish however was not fulfilled, due to his physical deterioration and because of the number of pending works to be completed. From the nature of his works and the degree of his emphasis, it is clear that *Madhyamaka* was for Mipham a profound and crucial subject, deserving more attention than any other in the *sūtrayāna*. The correct understanding of *Madhyamaka qua* Emptiness was not only an indispensable soteriological factor in itself but a direct link to the knowledge of rDzogs chen. In many of his works, Mipham stressed this connection between rDzogs chen and *Madhyamaka* and went so far to deny that one could master rDzogs chen without adequate knowledge of *Madhyamaka*.

In his *Nges shes sgron me*, he says: "In order to scrutinize thoroughly the Primordial Purity,¹⁴⁷ one has to perfect the view of Prāsaṅgika,"¹⁴⁸ and also in his commentary on the *Madhyamakāvatāra*, he states: "The

Great Perfection [view], which realizes the equality of appearance and emptiness, could be seen only by means of the excellent treatises of Nāgārjuna."¹⁴⁹

This was a bold claim for him to make, especially as a rNying ma pa, because many yogic rNying ma pas in his milieu regarded themselves as rDzogs chen adepts although they were not really versed in *Madhyamaka* philosophy. More disconcerting to such rNying ma pas was his opinion that full knowledge of *Madhyamaka* can be gained only in the light of sufficient *pramāṇa* understanding. Like the dGe lugs pas, Mipham argued that knowing *pramāṇa* concepts is a prerequisite for mastering *Madhyamaka* philosophical theories and propositions.

In his commentary on the *Madhyamakālaṅkāra*, he stated that śāntarakṣita's text was particularly meant for a Mādhyamika who has a strong interest in and taste for *pramāṇa*. In the same text, he introduced the concept of *dbu tshad sen ge mjing bsnol*, the coalition of *Madhyamaka* principle and *pramāṇa* logic, represented by two lions intertwining their necks to guard each other. Thus, Mipham revolutionized rNying ma scholarship by not only encouraging philosophical learning and exposition but by emphasizing the rational, analytical and zetetic approach of learning and pedagogy.

Through his writings on *Madhyamaka*, of all his contributions, he left for future rNying ma pas what they could consider as assertions of their own tradition (*rang lugs kyi 'dod pa*) or philosophical boundaries to hold (*gzhung gi 'dzin mtshams*). In this respect, Mipham fulfilled his goal in writing commentaries, for it was partly to make the rNying ma pas, who were then heavily dependent on other traditions, self-reliant in their doctrinal field that Mipham undertook the writing of his works. He repeatedly admonishes the rNying ma pas to stop relying on other schools for philosophical and doctrinal positions while so much goodness is treasured in the rNying ma tradition itself. With this message, he encourages the rNying ma pas and for that matter any other scholars and practitioners to develop twofold certainties in the teachings: a certainty through which one need not rely on others anymore (*gzhan dring mi 'jog pa'i nges shes*) and a certainty which cannot be invalidated by others anymore (*gzhan gyis mi 'phrogs pa'i nges shes*). These dual certainties form a common theme in many of his works.

Mipham's output in *Madhyamaka* redefined, for the rNying ma pas, their perspective on *Madhyamaka* scholarship and their scholastic modalities by pointing out both strengths and weaknesses, while it proved a stimulus for other traditions of Tibetan Buddhism to reassess and reconstruct their doctrinal positions. For general Tibetan scholarship, it rejuvenated the long history of polemical debate and thereby gave fresh life to the study of *Madhyamaka* in Tibet.

Conclusion

If we look at the massive collection of his writings, it appears as though Mipham can have done nothing but spend his entire life writing books. Yet, according to his colophons, Mipham wrote most of his works only during the intervals of his teaching sessions or meditation retreats, the two activities that occupied him most. Thus, it is not just the depth and amount of what he knew that amaze people, but the speed at which he mastered and composed that make him a distinguished prodigy.

His polymathy, although extremely diverse, was never short of intellectual acumen, and the socially ecumenical outlook he professed did not undermine his philosophically critical approach. With a strong soteriological conviction and devotion to meditation, he could still pursue his interests in what his tradition would consider profane sciences. He instigated doctrinal dissension and yet was respected for the conciliatory movement of which he was a prominent leader. He was open minded, abiding strictly by reason and logic, and yet he adhered to his own tradition with fervent faith.

Mipham was and still is a personal enigma, whose fascinating life and works deserve much more careful study and research. He is *sui generis*. To his followers, he is just another Mañjuśrī, the Bodhisattva who comes now and then to help the ignorant and the scholarly, but for the wider world, I suppose, he is a "renaissance man" to a degree rarely seen in history.

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Notes

1. *Dag snang* (lit. pure visions) and *dgongs gter* (lit. mind treasures) are revelations known primarily in the rNying ma school of Tibetan Buddhism. They form a large section of the *gTer ma* cycle, the corpus of rediscovered teachings believed to be hidden for safety by Padmasambhava and his disciples in the 8th century. Although *dag snang* and *dgongs gter* were not unknown before, both began to thrive intensely in the 18th and 19th century through visionaries like 'Jigs med Gling pa and 'Jam dbyangs mKhyen brtse'i dBang po.
2. *Ris med* or the Ecumenical movement was started in the nineteenth century by the luminaries, 'Jam dbyangs mKhyen brtse'i dBang po and Kong sprul Blo gros mTha' yas in order to reconcile the differing Buddhist schools which have brought decades of strife in Tibet. Since then, this movement spread widely. H.H. the 14th Dalai Lama is perhaps the strongest promulgator of this movement today.
3. E. Gene Smith, (1969), p. 6.
4. Steven D. Goodman, (1981), pp. 58-78.
5. John W. Pettit, (1998): "Theory, Practice and Ultimate Reality in the Thought of Mipham Rinpoche" (Ph.D. thesis, Columbia Univ.), pp. 32-64; John W. Pettit, "The Life and Works of Mipham Rinpoche" at website: <http://www.hvnet.com/jwp/Miphambio.html>. See also John W. Pettit, (1999).
6. Dieter Schuh, (1973): *Tibetische Handschriften und Blockdrucke*, Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, vol. XI 5.
7. Bo dong Paṅ chen Phyogs las rNam rgyal is credited with around hundred and fifty volumes of work. The works, grouped into four *De nyid bsdu pas* (Compendiums on Reality), are mostly compilations of the works of his predecessors.
8. Giving titles like *Kun mkhyen*, *Kun gzigs* and *Thams cad mkhyen pa* to a particular master normally happens only within his own tradition and may not be acceptable to the adherents of other traditions. However, certain masters of established scholarly renown are accorded the title even beyond their own tradition. In the case of Mipham, although the practice of addressing him as *Kun mkhyen* may be common only among his followers, it is not totally unacceptable to others to call him *Kun mkhyen*. Even dGe lugs pas would perhaps agree that Mipham is a *Kun mkhyen* as much as 'Jam dbyangs bZhad pa is.
9. I credit Alak Zengkar Rinpoche for this information.

10. E. Gene Smith, (1969), p. 5.
11. dPa' ri Blo bzang Rab gsal, (1991): "'Jam dpal dbyangs kyi dgongs rgyan rigs pa'i gzi 'bar gdong lnga'i sgra dbyangs", *Yongs rdzogs bstan pa'i mnga' bdag sudhisara'i gsung 'bum*, Beijing: National Centre for Tibetan Studies Press, p. 356; Brag sprul bsTan 'dzin sNyan grags, *Zab mo dbu ma'i gnad cung zad brjod pa blo gsal dga' ba'i gtam zhes bya mi pham rnam rgyal la klan ka gyis pa dang po* (Works of Brag dkar sPrul sku bsTan 'dzin sNyan grags, copy in IsMEO, Rome, vol. Ca, 274/5); See also MGS, vol. Ca, pp. 195-7.
12. Jigs med Phun tshogs, *Kun mkhyen Mi pham rgya mtsho la gsol ba 'debs tshul g.yul las rnam par rgyal ba'i mnga sgra* (n.p. n.d.)
13. Brag dkar sPrul sku wrote two other works to refute Mipham's reply to his first refutation. 'Jam dbyangs rnam rgyal gyis 'dod tshul la klan ka bgyis pa zab mo'i gtam (Works of Brag sprul bsTan 'dzin sNyan grags, copy in IsMEO, Rome, vol. Ca, 274/6) and *Mi pham rnam rgyal gyis rtsod pa'i yang lan log lta'i khong khrag 'don pa'i skyug sman* (Works of Brag dkar sPrul sku bsTan 'dzin sNyan grags, copy in IsMEO, Rome, vol. Ca, 274/7).
14. dPa' ri Blo bzang Rab gsal, (1991): "Rigs 'phrul spyid kyi pho nya", *Yongs rdzogs bstan pa'i mnga' bdag sudhisara'i gsung 'bum*, Beijing: National Centre for Tibetan Studies Press, pp. 350-353; Kun bzang Chos grags, (1987), pp. 646-7; See also MGS, vol. Ca, pp. 463-64. Mipham and dPa' ri Rab gsal later became good friends, who frequently wrote and visited each other.
15. Mipham's works were studied in bKa' brgyud and Sa skya institutions mainly for his dextrous style of presentation, consistent arguments or for providing deeper insight. gZhan dga' is studied because his commentaries are mainly compilations of original Indian glosses and annotations, which are considered unaffected by linear Tibetan interpretations and thus accepted by all traditions of Tibetan Buddhism.
16. A mdo dGe 'dun Chos 'phel, a scholar of great brilliance, was a rNying ma reincarnate educated in the dGe lugs pa centre of 'Bras spungs. He had great respect and faith in Tsong kha pa although his polemical work on *Madhyamaka* made him infamous among dGe lugs pa scholars.
17. Shes rab rGya mtsho, (1988): "A mdo ba dge 'dun chos 'phel gyi mdzad rnam", *dGe 'dun chos 'phel gyi gsung rtsom*, Bir: Dzongsar Shedra, vol ii, p. 378: go de ngas bsam blo mang po mang po btang rgyu byung / khong gnyis thugs sangs rgyas kyi rnam 'phrul la 'jam dpal zhal gzig pa 'dra 'dra red / deng sang gnyis ka bzhugs yod na / rtsod pa zhig mdzad na rje rin po che grwa skor rgyun ring mdzad tsang mkhas pa mi yong ngam snyam gyi yod / rtsa ba'i rigs pa'i rtsal dang / go stobs bshad stangs sogs mi pham 'jigs gi / gzhan gyi go na dgongs pa 'gal yong / ngas ngo ma bshad ni yin /
18. The *Pandita* hat is an insignia of scholarship and high spiritual status in the rNying ma school. Its use is normally reserved for senior *mKhan pos*.
19. Kun bzang Chos grags, (1987), p. 643: Om svasti jayantu / mi pham mgon po'i dgongs don ji bzhin rtogs // 'jam dpal dbyang bzhin shes bya kun la mkhas // phyogs las rnam rgyal chos kyi grags pa ltar // snyan pas rgya mtsho'i gos can khyab gyur cig // "Om! May it be auspicious and victorious! [You have] realized the meaning of the intentions of Maitreya (Mipham) [and you are] wise in all fields of knowledge like Mañjuśrīgṛhṣa ('Jam dpal dbyangs). Being victorious (rNam rgyal) from [all] directions like Dharmakīrti, may [your] fame pervade the earth (rGya mtsho'i gos can)". See also Dudjom Rinpoche, (1991), vol. ii, p. 875.
20. Impure realms, here refers to the samsāric realms like this world in contrast to the pure Buddha fields like Sukhāvātī.
21. Kun bzang Chos grags, (1987), p. 661; Dudjom Rinpoche, (1991), vol. ii, p. 879.
22. Ibid., p. 654; Dudjom Rinpoche, (1991), vol. ii, p. 877.
23. Ibid., p. 641; Dudjom Rinpoche, (1991), vol. ii, p. 874.
24. Ibid., p. 659; Dudjom Rinpoche, (1991), vol. ii, p. 878.
25. Ibid., p. 644: da lta'i dus 'dir sa'i steng na bla ma mi pham las mkhas pa med /. See also Dudjom Rinpoche, (1991), vol. ii, p. 875.
26. Ibid., p. 644; Dudjom Rinpoche, (1991), vol. ii, p. 875.
27. Ibid., p. 645-46: dPal sprul rin po cher / bla ma mi pham dang khyed gnyis su mkhas zhus par / mdo phyogs la nged gnyis phyogs 'dra tsam yin / sngags la mig phye btsum tsam gyi khyad yod / bla ma mi pham rang mkhas gsungs /
28. Steven D. Goodman, (1981), p. 64.
29. Ibid., p. 60; Dieter Schuh, (1973): *Tibetische Handschriften und Blockdrucke*, Wiesbaden, Franz Steiner Verlag, vol. XI 5, p. 157.
30. MGS, vol. Shri, pp. 71-123; 'Ju Mi pham and Kunzang dPal ldan, (1997): *Nges shes sgron me rtsa 'grel*, Chengdu: Sichuan People's Publishing House.

31. Jigs med Phun tshogs, *Kun mkhyen mi pham rgya mtsho la gsol ba 'debs tshul g.yul las rnam par rgyal ba'i nga sgra* (n.p. n.d.).
32. Ju Mi pham rGya mtsho and Kun bzang dPal ldan, (1997), p. 256: slar rje nyid kyi gzigs gnang mzad pa'i zhal byang ni / nges shes rin po che'i sgron me 'di rang lo shin tu gzhon zhing slob gnyer gсар bu ba'i dus zhig na 'phral du yid la shar rtsom stan gcig par bris pa yin mod / don la 'gal ba med cing go rgyu gnad can 'dug pas ma bcos par de gar bzhag pa yin no // zhes mi pham pas rang lo nga bdun par smras pa dge'o //
33. John W. Pettit, (1998), pp. 43-44.
34. Gene E. Smith, (1969), pp. 5-10; Steven D. Goodman, (1981), pp. 59-67.
35. See MGS, vol. Ka, pp. 71-138; 'Ju Mi pham rGya mtsho, (1993): *Bzo gnas nyer mkho'i za ma tog*, Xining: Qinghai People's Publishing House.
36. The four medicinal tantras are: *rTsa rgyud* or the Root Tantra, *bShad rgyud* or the Explanatory Tantra, *Man ngag gi rgyud* or the Instructional Tantra and *Phyi ma'i rgyud* or the Later Tantra. They are basic works of Tibetan indigenous medicine.
37. MGS, vol. Ka, pp. 559-75.
38. MGS, vol. Ka, pp. 751-815.
39. Jam mgon 'Ju Mi pham rGya mtsho, (1979): *sKad gnyis shan sbyar rab gsal nor bu'i me long*, Leh: Smarntsis Shesrig Spendzod. Originally published in Kah thog monastery in Tibet.
40. MGS, vol. Kha, pp. 467-532.
41. These are not in the Zhechen redaction although Kun bzang dPal ldan mentions in his catalogue.
42. MGS, vol. Hūm, pp. 463-72.
43. MGS, vol. Kha, pp. 533-49.
44. MGS, vol. Ca, pp. 929-40; This has been reproduced in a book. See Mipham rNam rgyal rGya mtsho and bKa' blon bShad sgra, (1998): *Yig bskur rnam gzhas me tog phreng ba*, Chengdu: Sichuan People's Publishing House.
45. MGS, vol. Shri, pp. 185-640.
46. MGS, vol. Nga, pp. 591-616, vol. Tsa, pp. 217-61.
47. This cannot be found in the Zhechen redaction.
48. MGS, vol. E and Wam.
49. *Sang* is the offering of incense by burning fragrant substances like sandalwood and juniper leaves. *Sur* is the offering of smell by burning edible things like flour, butter, meat etc. These are both said to be Bon po rituals later incorporated into Buddhist practices through coupling them with Buddhist principles. See MGS, vol. Dhī, pp. 1-88, pp. 407-15.
50. MGS, vol. Tsa, pp. 349-98. See translation by Jay Goldberg and Doya Nardin, *Mo: Tibetan Divination System*, Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 1990.
51. This cannot be found in the Zhechen redaction.
52. MGS, vol. Dhī, pp. 89-455.
53. MGS, vol. Dhī, pp. 771-1118.
54. MGS, vol. Ja.
55. MGS, vol. Nga, pp. 525-90.
56. A mdo dGe 'dun Chos 'phel, (1996): *'Dod pa'i bstan bcos*, Dharamsala: Sherig Parkhang, p. 98.
57. MGS, vol. Nga, pp. 695-739.
58. MGS, vol. Ca, pp. 475-88.
59. See Mi pham rNam rgyal rGya mtsho, (1999): *Las sna tshogs kyi be'u bum*, Xining: Qinghai People's Publishing House.
60. MGS, vol. Cha, pp. 1-7.
61. *Ibid.*, pp. 9-1010.
62. MGS, vol. Ca, pp. 489-925; MGS, vol. 25, pp. 191-482.
63. MGS, vol. 23, pp. 241-475.
64. MGS, vol. Om, pp. 1-157.
65. MGS, vol. 20.
66. MGS, vol. Hūm, pp. 473-620.
67. MGS, vol. Kha, 549-751.
68. MGS, vol. 27, pp. 285-354.
69. *Ibid.*, pp. 467-94; MGS, vol. 23, pp. 319-28; MGS, vol. Pa, pp. 787-820. The Five Swords are:
- 1) *Don rnam nges shes rab ral gri*
 - 2) *brDa shan 'byed the tshom drwa ba gcod pa'i ral gri*

- 3) *bDud kyi sgyu thabs 'joms pa mkhyen pa'i ral gri*
 - 4) *Kun rtog 'ching ba gcod pa sngags kyi ral gri*
 - 5) *Bya rtsol kun tu gcod pa ye shes ral gri*
- The five Lilies are:
- 1) *mChog grub pa'i ut pal*
 - 2) *sNgags grub pa'i ut pal*
 - 3) *Ye shes grub pa'i ut pal*
 - 4) *rTen 'brel grub pa'i ut pal*
 - 5) *bDud rtsi grub pa'i ut pal.*
70. Mathew Kapstein, (1988): "Mipham's Theory of Interpretation", in Donald S. Lopez Jr. (ed.): *Buddhist Hermeneutics*, University of Hawaii Press, pp. 149-74.
 71. See the website: <http://users.plinet.com/~rime/index.html>.
 72. MGS, vol. Hüm, pp. 1-129.
 73. MGS, vol. Om, pp. 159-201.
 74. MGS, vol. Hüm, pp. 131-5.
 75. MGS, vol. Ra.
 76. MGS, vol. Ga, 410-509.
 77. Ibid., pp. 517-670.
 78. This cannot be found in the Zhechen redaction.
 79. MGS, vol. Ga, pp. 343-58.
 80. Ibid., pp. 332-42.
 81. MGS, vol. 22, pp. 1-425.
 82. Steven D. Goodman, (1981), pp. 58-78; Leslie S. Kawamura, (1981): "An Analysis of Mipham's *mKhas 'jug*", in Ronald M. Davidson (ed.) *Wind Horse: Proceedings of the North American Tibetological Society*, Asian Humanities Press, 112-26; Leslie S. Kawamura, (1982): "An Analysis of *Yānā-Kauśālyā* in Mipham's *mKhas 'jug*", *Bulletin of Institute of Buddhist Cultural Studies*, Ryukoku University, vol. 20, 1-19; Leslie S. Kawamura, (1982): "An Outline of *Yānā-Kauśālyā* in Mipham's *mKhas 'jug*", *Indogaku Bukkyogaku Ronshu*, vol. 29.1, 956-61; Leslie S. Kawamura, (1983): "The *Akṣayamatīnirdeśasūtra* and Mipham's *mKhas 'jug*", *Contributions on Tibetan and Buddhist Philosophy*, Vienna: Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde, vol. 2, 131-145.
 83. Mi pham rNam rgyal rGya mtsho, Erik Pema Kunzang (tr.) (1997): *mKhas 'jug*, Hong Kong: Rangjung Yeshe Publications; Mi pham rNam rgyal rGya mtsho, Richard Barron (tr.) (1998): *mKhas 'jug*, Padma Publishing.
 84. MGS, vol. Pa, pp. 1-347, and pp. 349-561.
 85. MGS, vol. Ah.
 86. MGS, vol. Pa, pp. 659-785.
 87. Ibid., pp. 609-57. K. D. Mathes, I am told, has done a translation of this into German.
 88. Ibid., pp. 563-608.
 89. MGS, vol. Ga, pp. 359-78.
 90. See footnote no. 70.
 91. MGS, vol. Shrī, pp. 1-70.
 92. MGS, vol. 24, pp. 1-222.
 93. This cannot be found in the Zhechen redaction.
 94. MGS, vol. 24, pp. 223-352.
 95. MGS, vol. Hüm, pp. 157-217.
 96. Nāgārjuna and Lama Mipham, Leslie Kawamura (trans.) (1975): *Golden Zephyr: Instructions from a Spiritual Friend*, California: Dharma Publishing.
 97. MGS, vol. 21, pp. 439-500. See also English translation, Herbert V. Guenther, (1971): *Buddhist Philosophy in Theory and Practice*, Baltimore: Penguin Books.
 98. One of the Seven Great Treasures by Klong chen pa.
 99. MGS, vol. Hüm, 137-55.
 100. MGS, vol. E and Waṃ.
 101. MGS, vol. 25, pp. 1-190.
 102. MGS, vol. Shrī, p. 92; 'Ju Mi pham and Kunzang dPal ldan, (1997), pp. 22-3; MGS, vol. 19, p. 10.
 103. MGS, vol. Hüm, pp. 253-434.
 104. Kun bzang Chos grags, (1987), vol. Hüm, p. 635; Dudjom Rinpoche, (1991), vol. ii, p. 872.

105. gTer mas are the teachings believed to be hidden by Padmasambhava and his disciples and later rediscovered by the Treasure Discoverers. Although this is common among rNying ma pas, it is not totally unknown in other traditions.
106. bKa' mas are the teachings transmitted uninterruptedly from teacher to disciple since the time of Early Translation.
107. MGS, vol. 21, pp. 1-207.
108. MGS, vol. 19, pp. 1-275.
109. MGS, vol. 21, pp. 510-610.
110. MGS, vol. Nga, pp. 417-65.
111. MGS, vol. 21, pp. 209-437.
112. MGS, vol. Nga, pp. 465-96.
113. MGS, vol. Ga, pp. 759-95.
114. Although Kun bzang dPal ldan mentions this in the catalogue, it is not much known that Mipham wrote this.
115. MGS, vol. Shri, pp. 139-84.
116. MGS, vol. 19, pp. 277-370.
117. MGS, vol. Om, pp. 839-54.
118. MGS, vol. 27, pp. 1-284, see also MGS, vol. 19, pp. 371-710.
119. Mipham, (1984): *Cintāmaṇi: Tibetan Manuscripts on Buddhist Meditation of the Great Perfection School*, Varanasi: Tarthang Tulku.
120. See n. 32.
121. John Pettit, (1998).
122. See John W. Pettit, (1999).
123. *dBu ma rgyan gyi rnam bshad 'jam dbyang bla ma dgyes pa'i zhal lung* (Exegesis on *Madhyamakālaṅkāra*: The Words of Delighted Master Mañjuḥṣa), MGS, vol. Nga, pp. 1-358.
124. See also, Kennard Lipman, (1981): "A Controversial Topic from Mipham's Analysis of Śāntarakṣita's *Madhyamakālaṅkāra*", in Ronald M. Davidson (ed.), *Wind Horse: Proceedings of the North American Tibetological Society*, Asian Humanities Press, 40-57.
125. *Ibid.*, pp. 359-415.
126. MGS, vol. Ca, pp. 1-193; Mi pham rNam rgyal rGya mtsho, (1993), pp. 1-130.
127. E. Gene Smith, (1969), p. 8.
128. MGS, vol. Ca, pp. 191-474; Mi pham rNam rgyal rGya mtsho, (1993), pp. 133-464.
129. *Ibid.*, pp. 1-193; Mi pham rNam rgyal rGya mtsho, (1993), pp. 467-679.
130. Paul Williams, (1998): *The Reflexive Nature of Awareness: A Tibetan Madhyamaka Defence*, Surrey: Curzon Press.
131. Franz-Karl Ehrhard, (1988): "Observations on Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka in the rNying-ma-pa-school" in Helga Uebach and Jampa Panglung (eds.), *Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the 4th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies*, Munich: Schloss Hohenkammer, pp. 47-57.
132. *'Jug 'grel zla ba'i zhal lung dri med shel phreng* (Commentary on *Madhyamakāvātāra*: Words of Candrakīrti, the Garland of Pure Crystal), MGS, vol. Om, pp. 497-837. *dBu ma rtsa ba'i mchan gnas lugs rab gsal klu dbang dgongs rgyan* (Annotations of *Mūlamadhyamaka*: The Illuminator/ of Reality and Ornament of Nāgārjuna's Thoughts), vol. Om, pp. 203-495.
133. sNga rabs pa here refers to the scholars prior to Tsong kha pa.
134. The Three Principal Practices are the Mind of Renunciation, Bodhicitta and Wisdom. Mipham's commentary is however not within the Zhechen redaction.
135. MGS, vol. Pa, pp. 821-67.
136. MGS, vol. Shri, pp. 125-38.
137. See n. 86.
138. See n. 87.
139. MGS, vol. 24, pp. 353-774.
140. MGS, vol. Ga, pp. 277-96.
141. *Ibid.*, pp. 322-23.
142. Kun bzang dPal ldan mentions this in his catalogue but this is not even known to exist.
143. MGS, vol. Ga, pp. 297-323.
144. Katsumi Mimaki, (1982): "Le commentaire de Mipham sur le Jñānasārasamuccaya", *Indological and Buddhist Studies*, Volume in Honour of Professor J.W. De Jong on his Sixtieth Birthday, pp. 353-76.

145. Mi pham rNam rgyal rGya mtsho, Tarthang Tulku (tr. and comm.), (1997): *Calm and Clear*, California: Dharma Publishing.
146. MGS, vol. 22, pp. 427-710.
147. Primordial Purity (*Ka dag*) is the term for the empty nature of all things in rDzogs chen philosophy.
148. MGS, vol. Shrī, p. 88; Mi pham rNam rgyal rGya mtsho and Kun bzang dPal ldan, (1997), 19: Ka dag bdar sha chod pa la // thal 'gyur lta ba mthar phyin dgos //
149. MGS, vol. Om, p. 813: sNang stong mnyam par nges shes rdzogs pa che // klu sgrub gzhung lugs bzang po kho nas mthong //

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