The Pond of Blossoming White Lotuses: An Ornamental Ode[1] to the Goddess of Melodies, Sarasvatī[2]

Shuchen Tsultrim Rinchen[3]

Translated by Joie Szu-Chiao Chen

Homage to the Virtuous Guru![4] [i][5]

O Singer of the melodious song of the entirety of the vast teachings,
Simply thinking of you grants every verbal accomplishment![6]
I bow down to the glorious guru,
Who is inseparable from the captivating Lake-Arisen New Moon,[7]

1. *bsngags pa don rgyan*. Another way to translate this would be "An Alaṃkāric Ode." The Sanskrit term *alaṃkāra* (*rgyan*), literally "ornament," refers to figures of speech or poetic devices used in *kāvya* (*snyan ngag*) poetry. See the accompanying Translator's Commentary for more on these ornaments of Indo-Tibetan poetics.
2. Please note that this translation and accompanying commentary is based on and partially excerpted from my doctoral dissertation, which is entitled "A Culture of Polymaths: Shuchen Tsultrim Rinchen (1697–1774) and the Tibetan Buddhist Pursuit of Comprehensive Knowledge" (Harvard University, forthcoming 2026). I gratefully acknowledge the help of Lobsang Shastri, Nicole Willock, and Hortsang Jigme in producing this translation. Lobsang Shastri went through the initial draft with me stanza by stanza. Nicole Willock provided encouragement and pointers related to *alaṃkāras* during the 2022 Lotsawa Translation Workshop at Northwestern University. She also subsequently shared her and Gedun Rabsal's working translation of *A General Treatise on Kāvya* (*snyan ngag spyi don*), a Tibetan commentary on Daṇḍin's *Kāvyādarśa* by Tseten Zhabdrung Jigme Rigpai Lodrö (tshe tan zhabs drung 'jigs med rigs pa'i blo gros, 1910–1985). The poet Hortsang Jigme read difficult passages with me and clarified several challenging points. Even with the help of these expert readers, however, many lines still proved difficult. Errors no doubt remain, all of which I humbly accept as my own.
3. zhu chen tshul khrims rin chen, 1697–1774.
4. *na mas+sad+gu+ru pA dA ya*, *namasadgurupādāya*.
5. Please note that the letters and numerals I have supplied in square brackets are my own and not part any edition of the Tibetan text. Their sole purpose is to make it possible to reference specific stanzas.
6. *dngos grub*, *siddhi*, a spiritual accomplishment. See *Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, s.v. "siddhi."
7. This is an epithet of Sarasvatī. Sarasvatī is said to come from the mythical Lake Mānasa, created through Brahmā's mind, and she is also said to be Brahmā's wife, daughter, or both. See Eppling 1989, 54–55 on verse 1.1 of the *Kāvyādarśa* (henceforth *KĀ*). Another possible reading of these two lines is "I bow down to the captivating Lake-Arisen Moon and / The inseparable glorious guru..." but I think that here *dang / dbyer med* is indicating that Sarasvatī is no different from the

© 2026 Joie Szu-Chiao Chen
This is an open access article distributed under the terms of a Creative Commons license (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0).

And for the Queen of Melodies, the One Who Dwells in Song,[8] the Goddess of Speech,
I composed this "Magnificently Blooming Pond of Blossoming White Lotuses: An Ornamental Ode for the One Deserving of Ornamentation,"[9]
Following in the style of the experts well-versed in poetry. [A]

The ninth, the *alaṃkāra*[10] of **manifestation**,[11] specifically the subcategory of manifestation that addresses the nature of its result while barely addressing its external cause:[12]
On the banks of a lake untouched by pigment yet the bluest of blue,
Where without pouring molten emeralds the meadows and groves are green,
Where without sprinkling the six precious powders a sweet fragrance permeates,[13]
Where without seeing the faults of others the flowers laugh,[14] [1]

The twenty-eighth, the *alaṃkāra* of **irrelevant praise:**[15]
There is a swarm of buzzing six-legged ones,[16] flying and hovering.

---

guru. Note that Shuchen employs enjambment—the running over of a semantic and/or syntactic unit into the next poetic line—in several instances in this poem.

8. *dbyangs can*, i.e. Sarasvatī. For poetic effect, I am translating the Tibetan literally.
9. Here, fittingly, Shuchen gives an elaborated—ornamented, if you will—version of the title of the work. To highlight this elaboration for the reader, I have underlined the shorter title of the poem as it is given in the colophon.
10. Again, for a discussion of the terms *alaṃkāra* and *kāvya*, please see my Translator's Commentary. I have bolded the names of the *alaṃkāras* to highlight their variety as well as the technical nature of these terms.
11. *srid pa can*, *vibhāvanā.* For the Sanskrit equivalents to the Tibetan names of the *alaṃkāras*, I used Gerow 1971 and Eppling 1989, together with Tshe tan zhabs drung 2022 (trans. Willock and Rabsal), as my main sources of reference. In some cases, I take their English renderings of the terms, while in others I modify them.
12. *phyi'i cung sad dang bcas 'bras bu rang gi ngo bo nyid ston pa'i srid pa can*, *śabda-svābhāvika-vibhāvanā*. Daṇḍin does not have a subcategory name that is as lengthy as this Tibetan one, but the example Daṇḍin gives in *KĀ* of the *śabda-svābhāvika-vibhāvanā* is very similar to what Shuchen does here. Daṇḍin says that in this subtype of *vibhāvanā*, "Cause is explicitly denied / But effects — marked by 'fragrance' and so on / are stated..." (*KĀ* 2.204). See Eppling 1989, 923.
13. The six precious medicinal powders (*bzang drug phye ma*) are: 1) *dza ti*, nutmeg; 2) *cu gang*, bamboo juice; 3) *gur kum*, saffron; 4) *li shi*, cloves; 5) *sug smel*, cardamom; and 6) *ka ko la*, kakola. *Illuminator Dictionary*, version 5.40, s.v. "sman bzang po drug."
14. The word *dgod pa* means "to laugh," though when used to describe flowers, it is usually taken to mean a blooming flower, for a blooming flower is one that has its mouth open as if in laughter. I am translating it as "laugh" to better convey the multiple layers of meaning at play here.
15. *skabs min bstod pa*, *aprastutapraśaṃsā/aprastutastotra.*
16. *rkang drug*. Literally meaning "six-legged," this is a synonymic (*mngon brjod*, *abhidhāna*) commonly used in Indo-Tibetan poetry to refer to the bee. Synonymics is one of the five minor disciplines of knowledge (*rig gnas chung ba lnga*) in the Buddhist system of the ten disciplines of knowledge (*rig gnas bcu*). It is the art of understanding a variety of terms as literal or metaphorical references to a more well-known term. A commonly given example of a synonymic is *nyin byed*,

In the pleasures of this ephemeral state, they are rich in reputation and wealth,
With no concern for desire-induced torments or fatigue of the body or mind.
In this blissful experience[17] where phenomena and mind[18] are sustained by
honey, [2]

The third, the *alaṃkāra* of **metaphor**,[19] specifically the subcategory of complete metaphor:[20]
There is a slender-waisted lotus-stem dancer,
Her branch-limbs adorned with flower-fingernails
And her leaf-hands putting on a show of song and dance.
On the open face of a thousand-petaled white lotus [3]

The thirty-fourth, the *alaṃkāra* of **compounded rhetorical figures**,[21] specifically the subcategory of compounded rhetorical figures involving a primary subject:[22]
Is a moon disc just like the swirl of a milky ocean,
Which supports her two feet and wheel-marked hands.
When she is thus decked out in jeweled anklets, out of embarrassment
The serpent king Śeṣa[23] panics by hiding in the Ocean of Milk.[24] [4]

"day-maker," as another name for the sun.

17. *bde nyams.* This term describes a type of temporary experience that an advanced meditator can have, with an emphasis on temporary. Experiencing this type of bliss is not the same as a state of realization, but it can nonetheless be useful for the practitioner. *Illuminator Dictionary*, s.v. "bde ba'i nyams."
18. *snang sems.* An abbreviation of *snang ba dang sems*, where *snang ba* is the phenomena and *sems* is the mind that is experiencing the phenomena. *Illuminator Dictionary*, s.v. "snang sems."
19. *gzugs can*, *rūpaka*.
20. *mtha' dag gi gzugs can*, *sakala-rūpaka*.
21. *rab spel*, *saṃsṛṣṭi/saṃkīrṇa.*
22. *gcig brten gyi rab spel*, *aṅgāṅgibhāva-saṃsṛṣṭi*.
23. *gdengs can dbang*, i.e. the serpent (*nāga*) king Śeṣa, whose dwelling place is the Ocean of Milk (*kṣīrasāgara*), one of seven main oceans in Indian cosmology.
24. The Tibetan term that I am translating as Ocean of Milk here is *gnam 'phyo'i grong*, literally "the city that soars in the sky." Since I could not find this term in any dictionary nor did the Tibetan readers I consulted know of this term, my most educated guess is that this refers to the Ocean of Milk referenced earlier in the stanza. Another possibility is that the term refers to Krauñca, the name of the continent at the center of the Ocean of Milk. The term *krauñca* refers to a type of bird, a heron or curlew, so it seems possible that Tibetan translators may have incorporated the notion of flight into their rendering of the term. However, due to the context provided by the other instances in which the term *gnam 'phyo'i grong* appears in Shuchen's own *Collected Works* (*gsung 'bum*), I believe the term must refer to the Ocean of Milk itself. Here are three examples to support this claim (see Bibliography for bibliographic details):

    In a text entitled "The Clouds of the Complete Age: A Ritual for Making Offerings and Praising the Glory of the Great Gods of the Fields" (*zhing lha chen po 'khor bcas dbu 'phang bstod cing mchod pa'i cho ga rdzogs ldan sprin phung*), Shuchen writes: *gnam 'phyo'i grong khyer bsrubs las skyes pa'i rta*, or "the horse who arose out of the churning of *gnam 'phyo'i grong khyer*." This must be referring to the celestial horse Ucchaiḥśravas who in Hindu mythology was created

The first, the *alaṃkāra* of **expression of inherent nature**,[25] specifically the subcategory of expression of the inherent nature of a genus:[26]

Perky breasts atop her chest, she has reached the age of sixteen[27]
In the body of a youthful and attractive young woman.
One cannot get enough of looking at her, what with her hundred thousand major and minor marks.[28]
This is the goddess Sarasvatī, blazing in astonishing beauty. [5]

The third, the *alaṃkāra* of **metaphor**,[29] specifically the subcategory of abridged metaphor:[30]

O Autumnal Moon with a breathtaking reflection, you are full of
All the parts of the mandala of knowledge, that cream which arises
From churning the ocean[31] of the inexhaustible secrets of the Conqueror's teachings.
You are the one who perpetually traverses the mental fortresses of fortunate beings. [6]

---

during the churning of the Ocean of Milk. It is clear from this context that *gnam 'phyo'i grong khyer* is what was churned, which means it must be a body of liquid; one cannot, after all, churn a continent or land mass.

In a text entitled "The Oscillations of Sarasvatī's Voice: Aphorisms Presented as a Mandala Accumulation at the time of My Nephew's Request for Dharma Teachings in the Presence of the Keeper of the Teachings, the Glorious Sakyapa Known as Ngawang Kunga Lodrö Sangye Tenpai Gyaltsen Pal Sangpo (1729–1783) (*bstan pa'i bdag po dpal sa skya pa ngag dbang kun dga' blo gros sangs rgyas bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po'i zhabs drung du/ rang gi tsha bo chos zhur btang ba dang mchod 'bul tshogs bsags kyi maN+Da+la stob pa'i ched brjod tshangs sras mgrin pa'i 'gyur khugs*), Shuchen writes: *rang lus gnam 'phyo'i grong khyer bying gyur pa*, or "one's own body sinks into the *gnam 'phyo'i grong khyer*." This example also indicates that the *gnam 'phyo'i grong khyer* is something into which one can sink, i.e. a lake or ocean.

In a text entitled "The Garland of Jasmine: An Avadāna of the Omniscient Buddha" (*thams cad mkhyen pa chen po nyi ma'i gnyen gyi rtogs pa brjod pa mal+li kA'i phreng ba*), Shuchen writes: *ji snyed dag byed rgyun mang btung bas ngoms min pa'i / /gnam 'phyo'i grong khyer che las gzhan pa'i dpe zlas dben*, or "There is no other example that is better than the *gnam 'phyo'i grong khyer* from which one cannot ever get enough of drinking..." If *gnam 'phyo'i grong khyer* is something one can drink from, it must be a body of liquid.

25. *rang bzhin brjod pa*, *svabhāvokti*.
26. *rigs rang bzhin brjod pa*, *jāti-svabhāvokti*.
27. Note that in classical Sanskrit poetics, and thus also the Tibetan poetic tradition inspired by it, sixteen was commonly considered the year a young person comes of age. The reader should know that in Shuchen's time and certainly in the classical Indian literature he was drawing from, this was accepted as a cultural norm, however regrettably.
28. This refers to the thirty-two major marks (*mtshan mchog*, *mahāpuruṣa-lakṣaṇa*) and eighty minor marks (*dpe byad*, *anu-vyyañjana*) of a great person. The Buddha is said to have possessed these physical attributes.
29. *gzugs can*, *rūpaka*.
30. *bsdus pa'i gzugs can*, *samastavyasta-rūpaka*.
31. In the origin story of the Ocean of Milk, Viṣṇu makes the gods (*devas*) and demigods (*asuras*) churn the Ocean of Milk to obtain the elixir of immortality. The expression "churning the ocean" in the Indo-Tibetan context has come to be an analogy for the process of attaining true understanding.

The second, the *alaṃkāra* of **simile**,[32] specifically the first type, simile of attributes:[33]

Your long, slender eyes glance askance,
And their dwelling place, your face, is aflutter with flirtatious smiles,
The same way that an unfurling mud-born lotus, gorgeous and white,
Has a thousand pairs of lover bees hovering about intoxicatedly. [7]

The second, the *alaṃkāra* of **simile**,[34] specifically the second type, simile of entities:[35]

The way your lips expertly uphold the infinite teachings
With a gleaming smile of forty teeth in a straight row
Is like a moonlight-drenched white water lily[36] blooming
Within a delightfully dense grove of ruby-colored lotuses. [8]

The ninth, the *alaṃkāra* of **manifestation**,[37] specifically the subcategory of manifestation that expresses the nature of a result while barely addressing the internal cause and denying a cause that is well-known to be connected to it:[38]

Without being filed down by anyone, your waist is slender and pliant.
Without being stained by the liquid of the melted moon, you glow with a white complexion.
Without being drawn by the tip of a painter's brush,
The centers of your hands and feet are marked with thousand-spoked wheels.[39] [9]

The twelfth, the *alaṃkāra* of **imaginative ascription**,[40] specifically the subcategory of imaginative ascription related to a non-sentient object:[41]

---

32. *dpe*, *upamā*.
33. *chos dpe*, *dharma-upamā*.
34. *dpe*, *upamā*.
35. *dngos po'i dpe*, *vastu-upamā*.
36. *ku mud*, *kumud*. This is a type of white water lily that is often confused with the lotus. *Monier-Williams Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, ed. 1899, s.v. "kumud."
37. *srid pa can*, *vibhāvanā*.
38. *nang gi cung zad dang bcas rab tu grags pa'i rgyu bkag nas 'bras bu rang gi ngo bo nyid ston pa'i srid pa can*, *svābhāvika-vibhāvana*. As was the case with the use of *vibhāvanā* in stanza 1, Daṇḍin does not give a subtype label that is as elaborate as the one given here in Tibetan by Shuchen, but the example Daṇḍin gives in *KĀ* of the *svābhāvika-vibhāvanā* is very similar to what Shuchen does in this stanza. See *KĀ* 2.201 and Eppling 1989, 918.
39. This is one of the thirty-two major physical characteristics of a great person, a concept mentioned in footnote 28.
40. *rab brtag*, *utprekṣā*.
41. *sems med rab rtog*, *acetana-utprekṣā*.

Your body, top and bottom, is shielded from nakedness by the moon,[42]
But then your illuminating clarity flickers[43]
And causes a white cloud freely roving in the sky
To seemingly flash a bashful grin and drip with sweat. [10]

The first, the *alaṃkāra* of **expression of inherent nature**,[44] specifically the subcategory of expression of the inherent nature of a material thing:[45]
Amid patterns of swirling gold[46] and from the gaps
Between your rings inlaid with an assortment of gems,
Emerges sounds soft and sweet—at the tips of your dexterous fingers
Is a beautiful thousand-stringed *vīṇā*.[47] [11]

The twenty-third, the *alaṃkāra* of **denial**,[48] specifically the subcategory of denial of a specific attribute:[49]

42. *sgrib byed*, literally "the obscurer" or "that which obscures." It is listed as a synonymic (*mngon brjod*) of the moon in various dictionaries, so I have chosen to translate it as the moon here as I believe it makes the most sense contextually. See *Grand Monlam Tibetan Dictionary* (*smon lam tshig mdzod chen mo*), s.v. "sgrib byed."
43. *Dwangs gsal* is a term "often used in meditation instructions…to indicate a situation which has been cleaned up and is now crystal clear or highly purified." *Illuminator Dictionary*, s.v. "dvangs gsal." The first two lines of this stanza were difficult to parse, as it is not exactly clear how the phrase *dwangs gsal gyo ba* stands in relationship to the rest of the lines. I read this stanza with two Tibetan readers, and they were not certain of the meaning either. This represents my best attempt at understanding.
44. *rang bzhin brjod pa*, *svabhāvokti*.
45. *rdzas kyi rang bzhin brjod pa*, *dravya-svabhāvokti*.
46. In the Sanskrit-English *Monier-Williams Dictionary*, *pātra* is glossed as a drinking vessel, goblet, bowl, or cup. The Tibetan-English *Illuminator Dictionary* also gives *pā tra* the same definition. I am not sure how a golden vessel figures into this description of Sarasvatī with her musical instrument—is she holding it or is she in it? As far as I am aware, she is not depicted as holding a golden vessel in standard iconography. In her four-armed form, she is sometimes holding a water pot in one of her hands, but nowhere in this poem does Shuchen indicate that she has four arms instead of the more standard two. Given the level of detail Shuchen goes into in describing Sarasvatī, one would expect that he would mention four arms if that were the specific iconography he had in mind. When I spoke to Hortsang Jigme, he seemed certain that *pātra* here refers to a type of pattern, so I am taking his reading.
47. Known vernacularly as "veena," this is an important lute-like stringed musical instrument from India. It is the instrument with which Sarasvatī is always depicted.
48. *bsnyon dor*, *apahnuti*.
49. *chos la bsnyon pa*, *dharma-apahnuti* / *svarūpa-apahnuti*. Eppling indicates that commentators on the *KĀ* have sometimes supplied an additional subcategory of *apahnuti* to the two originally provided by Daṇḍin: *dharma-apahnuti* (Eppling 1989, 1187). *Dharma-apahnuti* would be a perfect equivalent to the Tibetan *chos la bsnyon pa*, so it is likely that this is the subcategory that Shuchen is referencing. However, because Daṇḍin himself does not give this as a subcategory, I am also listing *svarūpa-apahnuti* (one of Daṇḍin's subcategories) here as a possibility, since I think this verse could also be interpreted as a denial of a "specific nature" (*svarūpa*).

The sweet and pleasant melody issuing forth from it
Has the utmost power to lift beings out of delusion.
Since you initially had no accomplishments, surely you have stolen
Everything well-said by the Conquerors, the entirety of their abundant teachings. [12]

The eleventh, the *alaṃkāra* of **hyperbole**,[50] specifically the subcategory of most excellent hyperbole:[51]

Hearing this sound of unimpeded vajra nature[52]—how delightful!
Your words are perfect in every aspect[53] and equal in number to space and time.[54]
Your melody contains that of the Conquerors[55] of many realms.
Everything is gathered into one, yet the hundred thousand parts do not compete. [13]

The eighth, the *alaṃkāra* of **contrary distinction**,[56] specifically the subcategory of contrary distinction involving one object:[57]

Fully satiating the minds of all with melodious, oscillating tunes,
Your voice, emerging from your beckoning throat, is on par with
The melody of Brahmā and the tunes of the *gardharvas'* tanpura.[58]

50. *phul byung*, *atiśayokti*.
51. *khyad 'phags phul byung*, *uttamā-atiśayokti* (my reconstruction) / *atiśayokti-svarūpa*. Shuchen gives the subcategory here as *khyad 'phags phul byung*, or "most excellent hyperbole." This is not actually a subcategory given in the *KĀ*, but Daṇḍin does say that *atiśayokti* is "the most excellent *alaṃkāra*" (*alaṃkārottamā*). See Eppling 1989, 949–950. Shuchen may have somewhat erroneously made this into a subcategory, or he may be following another commentator. For Daṇḍin, this seems to have merely been a description of *atiśayokti*. Here I have given the back-translation *uttamā-atiśayokti*, which would be *khyad 'phags phul byung* reconstructed in Sanskrit, but I think the subtype here really ought to be *atiśayokti-svarūpa*, or "*atisayokti* as such" (Eppling 1989, 956).
52. *rdo rje'i rang bzhin*. In Tibetan Buddhism, "vajra nature" is understood to be one's inherent nature. Some dictionaries understand it to be a translation of the Sanskrit term *svabhāva*, while some take it to be from *prakṛti* or *svarūpa*. These terms all take on a variety of important meanings in Buddhist philosophical literature. For more on the technical concept of *svabhāva* in Buddhist philosophy, see Westerhoff 2009, 19–52. See also *Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, s.v. "svabhāva."
53. *yan lag rdzogs pa,* literally "perfect in their limbs," with limbs being an idiomatic way in Tibetan to refer to the parts of a whole.
54. Which is to say, infinite.
55. *rgyal ba*, *jina*. Conqueror or Victorious One is an epithet for the Buddha or buddhas in general.
56. *ldog pa can*, *vyatireka*.
57. *gcig gis ldog pa can*, *eka-vyatireka*.
58. The tanpura is another stringed Indian musical instrument. It is the drone instrument that accompanies most Indian classical music. The *gandharvas* are a class of celestial beings who are known to be skilled musicians.

It is a distillation of the essence of everything well-said, yet each part remains distinct. [14]

The twelfth, the *alaṃkāra* of **imaginative ascription**,[59] specifically the subcategory of imaginative ascription related to a non-sentient object:[60]

If, out of a desire to test the limits of your mind, which knows the whole of reality as it is and all of phenomena as they appear,[61]
We were to manifest a thousand eyes[62] through special powers,[63]
We would likely only collapse from seeing our own invisible faults.
With such meditative concentration, could we not instead rid ourselves of any chance for lethargy and delusion? [15]

The twenty-fifth, the *alaṃkāra* of **expression of difference**,[64] specifically the subcategory of expression of difference through a deficiency in attributes:[65]

Without the roughness of unbearable thorns
Or the sharp intensity of razor-teeth,
Rather merely through the non-conceptual wisdom of your mind,
You shred all illusions of dualistic appearance into thin air.[66] [16]

---

59. *rab brtag*, *utprekṣā*.
60. *sems med rab brtag*, *acetana-utprekṣā*.
61. *ji lta ji snyed mkhyen pa*. This refers to the *mkhyen pa gnyis*, or the two knowledges of enlightened beings. The two are *ji lta ba mkhyen pa*, "the knowledge of things as they are," and *ji snyed pa mkhyen pa*, "the knowledge of things in their extent." The former refers to the knowledge of reality exactly as it is (i.e. emptiness) and the latter refers to the knowledge of the whole extent of every phenomenon (i.e. discriminating awareness of all the details of phenomena). *Illuminator Dictionary*, s.v. "ji lta ji snyed."
62. The Tibetan here is *'dren byed*, literally "that which leads," which is a synonymic (*mngon brjod*) of the eye, for eyes are "that which leads" a person.
63. I believe there is a play on words with the term *dbang po*. *Dbang po* can mean many things, but here I think Shuchen is referring to both the god Indra, who has a thousand eyes, as well as powers/faculties (*indriya*). Another way to translate the second and third lines would be: "Even if Indra were to manifest a thousand eyes, / Would he not merely collapse from seeing his own faults?" In Hindu mythology, Indra is cursed with having a thousand vaginas all over his body as punishment for seducing a sage's wife. After Indra's repentance, the sage turns the vaginas into a thousand eyes. Shuchen seems to be playing with the ideas contained in this legend—these eyes become the eyes of wisdom for Indra after he sees the fault of his ways.
64. *khyad par brjod pa*, *viśeṣokti*.
65. *yon tan ma tshang ba'i khyad par brjod pa*, *guṇavaikalya-viśeṣokti*.
66. The Tibetan here is *dbyings su gtubs*, where *dbyings* has the sweeping sense of "space" or "expanse," specifically as it relates to the expanse of the emptiness of phenomena. I am translating it here as "thin air" because I think it is more idiomatic in English and conveys something of the sense of the expansiveness of space.

The seventh, the *alaṃkāra* of **introduction of another subject matter**,[67] specifically the subcategory of introduction of another subject matter that expresses a universal truth:[68]

To enter unhindered into the expanse that is aware of
All there is to understand about knowable reality—O how wondrous!
You see into the three times and not a single object of knowledge
Remains unexamined—such is your inherent nature. [17]

The seventeenth, the *alaṃkāra* of **affection**,[69] specifically the subcategory of affection for attaining an accomplishment:[70]

Droplets of the blessings of the three secrets[71]
Touch my heart-center, and I now experience
A new, unobstructed joy for speaking poetry.
Without you, what use is there for the kindness of even a hundred gods?[72] [18]

The sixteenth, the *alaṃkāra* of **ordered sequence**:[73]

Beautiful figure white and radiant, voice undulating with melodies,
With a mind in which the reality of knowable objects dawns nakedly—
O Full Autumnal Moon, O Voice of the Kalaviṅkas,[74]
O Immaculate Mirror of Pure Crystal,[75] my mind is utterly enraptured by you.

---

67. *don gzhan bkod pa*, *arthāntaranyāsa*.
68. *kun khyab kyi don gzhan bkod pa*, *viśvavyāpī-arthāntaranyāsa*.
69. *dga' ba*, *preyas*.
70. *dngos thob kyi dga' ba*. I could not find the Sanskrit equivalent for this subcategory. As far as I am aware, Daṇḍin did not provide subtypes for the *alaṃkāra* of *preyas*. Shuchen may have gotten it from the work of a later commentator. Here accomplishment would refer to a *siddhi*, or spiritual accomplishment. This could also be translated as "affection for attaining an object," with the object here being the *siddhi* of the poet "experience[ing] / A new, unobstructed joy for speaking poetry."
71. The term "three secrets" refers to the vajra body, speech, and mind. This is the Vajrayāna concept that the three doors (body, speech, and mind) are the ways to access the potential for realizing *nirmāṇakāya* (vajra body), *saṃbhogakāya* (vajra speech), and *dharmakāya* (vajra mind). See *Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, s.v. "tridvāra."
72. The meaning here is somewhat unclear. The term *lha brgya* literally means "a hundred gods," but could also be an abbreviation of the name of the god Indra (*lha'i dbang po brgya byin*). I do not think it refers to Indra here, but rather "a hundred gods" in the sense of many or all gods.
73. *rim pa can*, *yathāsaṃkhya*.
74. A type of bird with a beautiful voice. Some see its appearance in Indian Buddhist literature as a reference to a mythical creature rather than a real one, while others believe that it refers to an actual genus of bird, either a type of Indian cuckoo or sparrow.
75. In addition to its role as part of a *upameya-upamāna* pair (see Translator's Commentary for this stanza for an explanation of these terms), "mirror" here is a reference to the *Mirror of Poetics* (*Kāvyādarśa*, *snyan ngag me long*), Daṇḍin's influential treatise on *kāvya* and the use of *alaṃkāras*. Since Sarasvatī is the goddess associated with poetry and the *Mirror* is the most

[19]

The eighteenth, the *alaṃkāra* of **aesthetic mood**,[76] specifically the subcategory of love transformed into the aesthetic mood of eroticism:[77]

The hundred types of joy that I feel from recalling the dwelling place of your face
Cause my mental faculty to quiver. Overwhelmed, I intertwine my ten fingers
At my heart-center, where the qualities of relinquishment and realization arise.[78]
As I utter words of praise, a quivering of experience[79] dawns over the earth. [20]

The nineteenth, the *alaṃkāra* of **majesty**:[80]

Under the power of the Queen of Melodies, who defeats
Even the formless beings who are supreme in the three realms,[81]
Timid beings, too, cast away their great fearfulness
And, with compassion roused from their depths, follow after you. [21]

The fourth, the *alaṃkāra* of **illuminator**,[82] specifically the subcategory of illuminator that appears at the beginning to indicate a genus:[83]

You, glorious lady of vast knowledge:
Vanquish the delusion and ignorance sleeping in the hearts of beings;
Turn all teachings sweet as they pass through your throat;

---

authoritative text on poetry for Tibetans, Shuchen turns "mirror" into another epithet for her. Again, see the Translator's Commentary for more.

76. *nyams ldan*, *rasavat*.
77. *dga' ba'i 'gyur ba sgeg pa'i nyams*, *rati-śṛṅgāra-rasa-gata-rasavat* (my reconstruction). Shuchen is taking his cue here from *KĀ* 2.281, where Daṇḍin explains the use of the *alaṃkāra* of *rasvat* involving the aesthetic mood of eroticism (*śṛṅgāra*) by saying, "Previously joy was presented. / Here love—through an intensification of its nature / becomes śṛṅgāra..." (*prāk prītirdarśitā seyaṃ ratiḥ śṛṅgāratāṃ gatā rūpabāhulyayogena*). See Eppling 1989, 1124. The Sanskrit term for the subcategory is my reconstruction from the Tibetan based on *KĀ* 2.281 but is not given by Daṇḍin as a label as such.
78. Relinquishment (*spangs*) and realization (*rtogs*) are two qualities of a buddha, for buddhas have "abandoned all that there is to be abandoned" and have "realized all that there is to realize." *Illuminator Dictionary*, s.v. "spangs rtogs."
79. *nyams*, "experience." In the practice context, this usually refers to a type of fleeting meditative experience.
80. *gzi brjid*, *ūrjasvi*.
81. The three realms are the desire realm (*kāmadhātu*), the form realm (*rūpadhātu*), and the formless realm (*ārūpadhātu*). Human beings exist in the lowest of the three, the desire realm.
82. *gsal byed*, *dīpaka*.
83. *rigs brjod pa thog ma'i gsal byed*, *jāti-ādi-dīpaka*.

Enact the power to verbalize latent poetry.[84] [22]

The tenth, the *alaṃkāra* of **abbreviated expression**,[85] specifically the subcategory of abbreviated expression of equivalent application:[86]

Instead of wishing for the All-Benefitting Moon[87] that drips with
A hundred thousand drops of torment-robbing nectar,
Confusedly many wish for a flower to be a constant ornament of beauty
Even though it wilts whenever it is touched by heat. [23]

The fourteenth, the *alaṃkāra* of **subtlety**,[88] specifically the subcategory of subtlety of gesture:[89]

When you see the fortunate beings who have worn thin their defilements and obscurations,
Who have perfected the action of giving up deceitful and idle talk in all lifetimes,
You make a show of rattling the jingling bells on
Your wrists, which are in the gesture[90] of great generosity. [24]

The thirteenth, the *alaṃkāra* of **cause**,[91] specifically the subcategory of cause that generates a positive effect:[92]

Because of your great compassion, which is unmatched by anything,
Your power to engender in beings unprecedented intelligence
Which grasps with assurance the liberating wisdom
Of a hundred difficult points relating to the ten subjects[93] is marvelous. [25]

---

84. I have used italics here to emphasize the way the fourth *alaṃkāra* functions. It uses parallel phrases in a grammatical construction that omits a word that could otherwise be repeated. In this case, the "you" referring to Sarasvatī is omitted instead of repeated in three statements that all take her as the grammatical subject.
85. *bsdus brjod*, *samāsokti*.
86. *spyi tsam gyi bsdus brjod*, *tulya-ākāra-viśeṣanā-samāsokti*.
87. This is yet another epithet for Sarasvatī, who has already been compared to the moon.
88. *phra mo*, *sūkṣma*.
89. *zur gyi phra mo*, *iṅgita-sūkṣma*.
90. *phyag rgya*, *mudrā*, a stylized hand gesture that has symbolic importance in Indic art forms and ritual contexts. See *Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, s.v. "mudrā."
91. *rgyu*, *hetu*.
92. *skyed byed 'grub pa'i rgyu*, *nirvartyabhāvakārya-kāraka-hetu*.
93. *bcu phrag shes bya rig pa*, literally "knowledge of the ten knowables," here referring to the ten disciplines of knowledge (*rig gnas bcu*). The ten are split into the five major and five minor fields. The five major disciplines (*rig gnas che ba lnga*) are the inner discipline (i.e. the Dharma, *nang don rig pa*), the discipline of healing (*gso ba rig pa*), the discipline of language

The sixth, the *alaṃkāra* of **objection**,[94] specifically the subcategory of objection to the past or what has occurred:[95]

It would be false to proclaim that you alone are to thank for
All that appears in the poetry and words of Daṇḍī,[96] the King of Speech.
Still, it is true that whenever I remember you in even the slightest,
You make my speech fearless and powerful. [**26**]

The fifteenth, the *alaṃkāra* of **concealment**,[97] specifically the subcategory of worthy concealment:[98]

Lady who increases the intellects of all, for the most part
You regard all greatly deluded beings with equanimity.
But whether one is intelligent or foolish still depends on prior training
In the knowable subjects—such is the binding nature of cause and effect. [**27**]

The twenty-first,[99] the *alaṃkāra* of **universal benefit**:[100]

How very amazing is the way of correct meaning!
It is the antidote that clears away obstructing delusions.
When it is applied to the mind,[101] fortunate beings with past karma

(*sgra'i rig pa*), the discipline of reason (*gtan tshig rig pa*), and the discipline of making (*bzo rig pa*). The five minor disciplines (*rig gnas chung ba lnga*) are synonymics (*mngon brjod*), astrology (*skar rtsis*), performance (*zlos gar*), poetics (*snyan ngag*), and composition (*sdeb sbyor*).

94. *'gog*, *ākṣepa*.
95. *'das pa'am byung ba 'gog pa*, *vṛtta-ākṣepa*.
96. *daN+DI*. "Daṇḍī" is the nominative singular form of Daṇḍin in Sanskrit.
97. *cha*, *leśa*.
98. *'os pa'i cha*. I am not sure what the Sanskrit term for this subcategory would be. My guess is that it refers to Daṇḍin's example of a *leśa* in which praise is achieved through censure, i.e. the *nindāstuti-leśa*. This makes some sense since Shuchen is ultimately praising Sarasvatī even as he points out something that could be construed as a deficiency on her part. If we read the *'os pa* in Tibetan to be "worthiness," this has a similar sense to praise.
99. The Tibetan here actually says "eighteenth." However, *kun phan*, or "universal benefit," is *not* the eighteenth but rather the twenty-first *alaṃkāra* in Daṇḍin's list. (See Eppling 1989, 341–334 for the order in which the *alaṃkāras* are listed.) I am taking this as a mistake and changing the translation to "twenty-first" because Shuchen's intention was clearly to show that he was using all thirty-five *alaṃkāras*. This is the only example of the *alaṃkāra* of "universal benefit," so without labelling it correctly, readers might mistakenly think that Shuchen did not provide an example of the twenty-first *alaṃkāra*. The eighteenth *alaṃkāra* is *rasavat* ("aesthetic mood") and was already used by Shuchen in stanza 20.
100. *kun phan*, *samāhita/samādhi*.
101. *yid la byas tshe*. It is ambiguous whether this is referring to the remembrance of Sarasvatī or the application of the antidote of correct knowing to the mind. Perhaps the point is that Sarasvatī *is* the antidote of correct knowing.

Discover[102] you, the goddess whom the Conquerors praise unanimously. [28]

The twenty-second, the *alaṃkāra* of greatness,[103] specifically the subcategory of greatness of character:[104]

Though you have such immense power that you could trample on
Even the jewel on the topknot of Indra,[105] the highest god in cyclic existence,
Because you are a friend who enhances intellects by teaching and practicing the Buddha's words,
You remember your vows, working hard to serve even greatly deluded beings. [29]

The twenty-fourth, the *alaṃkāra* of play on words,[106] specifically the subcategory of an undivided play on words:[107]

(a) O Youthful One with gorgeous eyebrows, O white and beautiful Lake-Arisen Lady
(b) The fresh, well-ripened lake-arisen beautiful white lotus[108]
(a) Who takes evident pleasure in dancing with your flexible, slender body,
(b) Flits about due to the dance of flashing lightning.[109]
(a) From within your moving garland of smiles you sing sweet songs,

102. The verb here is *thob pa*, "to obtain/attain." I felt that it was more idiomatic in English to say that beings "discover" Sarasvatī, rather than saying that they "obtain" her. But note that the nuances of the verb *thob pa* means that it does makes idiomatic sense in Tibetan, especially if we understand the poet to mean that fortunate beings obtain the spiritual accomplishment that she embodies—that is, they attain the *siddhi* that is Sarasvatī herself.
103. *rgya che ba*, *udātta*.
104. *bsam pa rgya che ba*, *āśaya-udātta*.
105. *lha brgya*. I believe this is referring to the god Indra and not "a hundred gods" since Indra is commonly depicted with hair that is topped with an ornament.
106. *sbyar ba*, *śleṣa/śliṣṭa*. This stanza is given in an unusual format because the *alaṃkāra* being employed means that the lines can be read in two different ways depending on how you gloss the words. See the Translator's Commentary for details on how this *alaṃkāra* functions.
107. *tshig tha dad min pa'i sbyar ba*, *abhinnapada-śleṣa*. This is the first of two types of *śleṣa* that Daṇḍin identifies. *Abhinna*, meaning "unbroken" or "undivided," here refers to the fact that in this type of play on words, the words do not have to be parsed differently or otherwise manipulated to obtain different meanings. See Eppling 1989, 1206. Willock and Rabsal translate this subcategory as a "pun using the same word for two subjects," with the further clarification that another commentator describes it as wordplay wherein the "same reading demarcations/pauses are applied to both subjects." See Tshe tan zhabs drung (trans. Willock and Rabsal) 2022, 109.
108. *mtsho byung*, "lake-arisen." This is a synonymic that can either refer to the moon or the lotus. As mentioned earlier, it is also an epithet of Sarasvatī.
109. *lus phra*. This word can mean *lus phra ma* ("slender waisted lady"), or it can mean lightning.

(b) From a swaying garland of blooming lotuses,[110] *sweet songs arise,*
Indiscriminately increasing the festive merriment of beings. [30]

The twenty-sixth, the *alaṃkāra* of **contrived similarity**,[111] specifically the subcategory of similarity contrived through praise:[112]

In the south, the winds of Mount Malaya[113] and the rays of the moon
Turn glacial snow into rivers;[114] touched by Sarasvatī's compassion,
The supreme power to vanquish all torments
Can be found in the words of beings of repute and intelligence. [31]

The twenty-seventh, the *alaṃkāra* of **antithesis**,[115] specifically the subcategory of antithesis of actions with distinct causes:[116]

Then, as those with powerful memories[117] intone songs of poetry
While intoxicated with a hundred types of pleasure,
Magically emanated bows and arrows of flowers
Make the Destroyer of the Three Realms[118] cry out in pain. [32]

The twenty-ninth, the *alaṃkāra* of **veiled praise**,[119] specifically the subcategory of veiled praise through censure:[120]

Without any mental exertion, this Wish-Fulfilling Jewel[121] makes any desire come true.
If without any effort whatsoever you have the power of immense generosity,

110. "Smiling flowers" is another way to say blooming flowers.
111. *mtshungs sbyor*, *tulyayogitā*.
112. *bstod pa'i mtshungs sbyor*, *stuti-tulyayogitā*.
113. According to the Tibetan tradition, this the place where the esoteric Vajrayāna teachings were first taught in our world by Vajrapāṇi. See, for example, Patrul Rinpoche 1998, 334–335. Today it is considered by many to be located at Adam's Peak in Sri Lanka.
114. *nyal 'gro*, literally "that which goes lying down." This is a synonymic for river.
115. *'gal ba*, *virodha*.
116. *gzhi tha dad pa'i bya ba 'gal ba*, *kriyā-virodha*.
117. *dran dbang*. This can mean the faculty of memory itself or someone who has mastered memory, depending on how you understand the *dbang* (short for *dbang po*). Since it is given in the plural (*dran dbang tshogs rnams*), here I take it to mean those who have mastered memory. Saying someone is powerful in their faculty of memory is another way of calling someone learned or intelligent.
118. *sa gsum 'pham byed*. This means "destroyer of the three realms," which likely refers to Śiva.
119. *zol bstod*, *vyājastuti*.
120. *smad pa'i zol bstod*, *nindā-stuti*.
121. Though a common trope in Indo-Tibetan literature, used here it is yet another epithet for Sarasvatī.

Then the fact that you are known for instantly granting accomplishments
Is merely you following through on promises—why then are you so proud? [33]

The thirty-first, the *alaṃkāra* of **simultaneous expression**,[122] specifically the subcategory of simultaneous expression of attributes:[123]

Like the sound of many jeweled ornaments tinkling,
My composition, which lays out the *arthālaṃkāras*,[124] pleases the ear.
As the moon climbs to the peak of the dark blue mountain,[125]
Simultaneously a pure vision[126] of the desired status[127] glistens. [34]

The twentieth, the *alaṃkāra* of **oblique statement of intention**:[128]

In my heart-center, the supreme friend Mañjuśrī[129]
And you, goddess, revel happily in uncontaminated bliss.
Tough lady who knows my internal self-cherishing,
I have indeed been skirting the altruistic intention, steering clear of it.[130] [35]

The thirtieth, the *alaṃkāra* of **demonstration**,[131] specifically the subcategory of positive demonstration:[132]

The murmuring Gaṅgā River bears along the burden of her molecules
Continuously, day and night—her limitless inexhaustibility
Is the perfect articulation of your qualities.
What you teach goes beyond what is spoken by noble beings of the tenth *bhūmi*.[133] [36]

---

122. *lhan cig brjod pa*, *sahokti*.
123. *yon tan lhan cig brjod pa*, *guṇa-sahokti*.
124. *don rgyan*, *arthālaṃkara*, "ornaments of meaning." Again, see the Translator's Commentary for an explanation of this technical term.
125. *mthon mthing ral*. It is unclear to me what the *ral* means here and whether this is a reference to a specific place. It is possibly referring to Mt. Gaurishankar (*mthon mthing rgyal mo*).
126. *dag snang*.
127. The "desired status" presumably refers to the status of liberation.
128. *rnam grangs brjod pa*, *paryāyokta*.
129. Sarasvatī is considered the consort of Mañjuśrī, the bodhisattva of wisdom.
130. This is a difficult stanza. I have interpreted *gyong po ma* as "tough lady" and *gzhan phan sems la 'dzur* as "avoiding the mind of benefitting others," which I take to be self-deprecation on the poet's part. See Translator's Commentary for more explication on this verse.
131. *nges bstan*, *nidarśanā*.
132. *mchog gi nges bstan*, *satphala-nidarśanā*.
133. That is, enlightened bodhisattvas.

The thirty-fifth, the *alaṃkāra* of **intention**:[134]

Therefore, until I have gone beyond, this true but ignorance-shrouded friend of yours
Has no ability to explain the faultless *Mirror of Poetics*.[135]
Even so, for the sake of engaging the eye of wisdom,[136]
I have given examples of the *arthālaṃkāras*. [37]

The thirty-second, the *alaṃkāra* of **reciprocity**:[137]

I make offerings of excellent compounds,[138] melodious tunes, and words that
Contain within them many *alaṃkāras*, each distinct in expression.
Please grant me confident intelligence unobstructed
In its understanding of all ten disciplines of knowledge. [38]

The fifth, the *alaṃkāra* of **repetition**,[139] specifically the subcategory of repetition of meaning:[140]

By praising all parts of the bountiful qualities of the Lake-Arisen One's three secrets,
Through this composition, which delights the One Who Dwells in Song—
That slender-waisted daughter of Brahmā[141] whom I have placed close in my mind,
May I become equal to the Goddess of Speech.[142] [39]

134. *dgongs pa can*, *bhāvika*.
135. This is the *Kāvyādarśa* (*snyan ngag me long*) by Daṇḍin.
136. *ye shes kyi gzigs pa*, *prajñācakṣus*. "Eye of wisdom" is a technical term referring to one of five types of vision that a buddha possesses, or which an advanced Mahāyāna practitioner develops. The wisdom eye is the eye that "knows all conditioned (saṃskṛta) and unconditioned (asaṃskṛta) dharmas and is free from all projections." *Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, s.v. "pañcacakṣus."
137. *yongs brjes*, *parivṛtti*.
138. *sdeb*. This refers to the Sanskrit *samāsa*, the linguistic compounds which form such an integral part of the Sanskrit language. While Tibetan has compound words, it is not truly the same as a Sanskrit compound; nevertheless, Tibetan writers familiar with Sanskrit literature sometimes invoke this Sanskritic idea of compounds.
139. *bskor ba*, *āvṛtti*.
140. *don la bskor ba*, *artha-āvṛtti*.
141. That is, Sarasvatī.
142. I have underlined the phrase in each line of the stanza that refers to Sarasvatī to emphasize the use of the *alaṃkāra* of "repetition of meaning" here. All four underlined phrases mean the same thing: Sarasvatī.

The thirty-third, the *alaṃkāra* of **benediction**:[143]

Masters of speech and holders of the teachings who pervade this earth,
Who explain, debate, and write[144] about the teachings, who point out what contradicts or conforms with the scriptures,
Who are unimpeachable in their exposition and guidance on the texts,
Please bestow vast auspiciousness until the end of existence! [40]

The third, the *alaṃkāra* of **metaphor**[145] or [the thirty-third *alaṃkāra*,][146] metaphorical **benediction**:[147]

O White Lotus whom I have thus elegantly praised,
Dripping with nectar of a hundred delectable tastes,
When the bees—beings as numerous as space—partake of you,
Please sing a tuneful song of happiness that reaches far and wide![148] [41]

This "Pond of Blossoming White Lotuses: An Ornamental Ode to the Goddess of Melodies, Sarasvatī" was written by the foolish nobody[149] named Śīlaratna[150] at the supreme retreat place that sits at the peak of the Silk Banner of the Three Existences—which is to say, the glorious Evaṃ Chöden Monastery, the second Akaniṣṭha where the Wheel of the Dharma of the Great Secret Vajrayāna turns in all possible *kalpas* due to the arrival of the successive births of the regents of the Vajradhāra Kunga Sangpo,[151] the Second Buddha—so as to not reject the insistent request of the *kalyāṇamitra*[152] Tsultrim Phuntsok[153] sent through a messenger. If it is flawed, then I repent to the learned; any virtue I dedicate to beings who pervade space. [**B**]

143. *shis brjod*, *āśiṣ*.
144. *'chad rtsod rtsom*. These are the three activities of learned people: explaining the Buddha's teachings, debating others on them, and composing texts about them.
145. *gzugs can*, *rūpaka*.
146. The phrase bracketed here is not in the Tibetan, but is implied, as "benediction" is the thirty-third *alaṃkāra* in Daṇḍin's list.
147. *gsugs can gyi shis brjod*, *rūpaka-āśiṣ* (my reconstruction). Daṇḍin does not provide subtypes of the *alaṃkāra* of benediction (*āśiṣ*), so the Sanskrit term here is my reconstruction from the Tibetan.
148. What I am translating as a "song…that reaches far and wide" is *rgyang glu*, literally a "long-distance song." It means a song that can be heard from afar.
149. *mong rtul phran bu*.
150. This is the Sanskritized version of the poet's ordination name, Tsultrim Rinchen (tshul khrims rin chen).
151. This is the founder of the Ngor Evaṃ Chöden Monastery, Ngorchen Kunga Sangpo (ngor chen kun dga' bzang po, 1382–1456).
152. *dge ba'i bshes gnyen*, "virtuous friend."
153. *tshul khrims phun tshogs*.

Bibliography

Tibetan Language Works

Editions of the poem

Zhu chen Tshul khrims rin chen (1697–1774). 1972. "Sgra dbyangs lha mo dbyangs can ma la bsngags pa don rgyan pad+ma dkar po bzhad pa'i rdzing bu." In *Gsung 'bum / tshul khrims rin chen*, 1:181–190. New Delhi: Jamyang Norbu. http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW10347_8BCCDE.

———. 2000. "Sgra dbyangs lha mo dbyangs can ma la bsngags pa don rgyan pad+ma dkar po bzhad pa'i rdzing bu." In *Gsung 'bum / tshul khrims rin chen* (*sde dge par ma*), 3:175–184. Sde dge dgon chen: Sde dge par khang. http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW1KG10853_92F1E2.

———. 2004. "Sgra dbyangs lha mo dbyangs can ma la bsngags pa don rgyan pad+ma dkar po bzhad pa'i rdzing bu." In *Snyan ngag*, 5:495–501. Pe cin: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang. http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW29979_91CF0D.

———. 2005. "Sgra dbyangs lha mo dbyangs can ma la bsngags pa don rgyan pad+ma dkar po bzhad pa'i rdzing bu." In *Gsung 'bum / tshul khrims rin chen*, 3:181–190. Kathmandu, Nepal: Sachen International Guru Lama. http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW00EGS1016703_DBDB0D.

———. 2021. "Sgra dbyangs lha mo dbyangs can ma la bsngags pa don rgyan pad+ma dkar po bzhad pa'i rdzing bu." In *Zhu chen Tshul khrims rin chen gyi bka' 'bum*, 3:125–130. Chengdu: Sichuan minzu chubanshe.

Other works referenced

Zhu chen Tshul khrims rin chen (1697–1774). 1972. "Zhing lha chen po 'khor bcas dbu 'phang bstod cing mchod pa'i cho ga rdzogs ldan sprin phung." In *Gsung 'bum / tshul khrims rin chen*, 4:562–568. New Delhi: Jamyang Norbu. http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW10347_D0BCE7.

———. 1972. "Thams cad mkhyen pa chen po nyi ma'i gnyen gyi rtogs pa brjod pa ma+li kA'i phreng ba." In *Gsung 'bum / tshul khrims rin chen*, 7:6–63. New Delhi: Jamyang Norbu. http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW10347_6CF821.

———. 2005. "Bstan pa'i bdag po dpal sa skya pa ngag dbang kun dga' blo gros sangs rgyas bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po'i zhabs drung du/ rang gi tsha bo chos zhur btang ba dang mchod 'bul tshogs bsags kyi maN+Da+la stob pa'i ched brjod tshangs sras mgrin pa'i 'gyur khugs." In "Dpal sa skya'i gong ma rdo rje 'chang yab sras dang ngor khang gsar mkhan chen dang kar+ma zhwa nag pa bcas la rang gzhan gyi legs 'bul stob pa'i shis brjod tshangs

sras rgyud mangs sgra dbyangs." In *Gsung 'bum / tshul khrims rin chen*, 9:473–492. Kathmandu, Nepal: Sachen International Guru Lama. http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW00EGS1016703_389EE7.

English Language Works

Eppling, John Frederick. 1989. "A calculus of creative expression: The central chapter of Daṇḍin's 'Kāvyādarśa'." PhD dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Gerow, Edwin. 1971. *A Glossary of Indian Figures of Speech.* The Hague: Mouton.

Patrul Rinpoche. 1998. *The Words of My Perfect Teacher*. Revised edition. Translated by the Padmakara Translation Group. Boston: Shambhala Publications.

Tshe tan zhabs drungs 'jigs med rigs pa'i blo gro (1910–1985). Unpublished provisional translation, 2022. "Snyan ngag me long gi spyi don sdeb legs rig pa'i char sgo." Translated by Nicole Willock and Gedun Rabsal. Edited by Nicole Willock. Provided through personal communications.

Westerhoff, Jan. 2009. *Nagarjuna's Madhyamaka: A Philosophical Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Translator's Commentary

When the Sakya monk Tsultrim Rinchen composed this highly ornate ode to Sarasvatī (*dbyangs can ma*)—the goddess of music, learning, and poetry—he was not yet known by the epithet Shuchen (*zhu chen*), or "great editor." Written between 1725–1727 on one of his two visits to the Ngor monastery Ewaṃ Chöden (*e waM chos ldan*),[154] this was a decade before his tenure as the chief editor of the Tengyur (*bstan 'gyur*)[155] and other monumental collections of Buddhist scriptures at the prolific Dergé Publishing House (*sde dge par khang*) in the Kham region of Eastern Tibet. Though this poem was written when he was in his late twenties, before his eventual fame as a bona fide intellectual worthy of the moniker "Shuchen," Tsultrim Rinchen's prodigious poetic prowess is already on full display. To facilitate the reader's appreciation of the extent of Shuchen's mastery of *nyenngak* (*snyan ngag*), or Tibetan poetry inspired by the Indian *kāvya* tradition, I will provide some notes of explanation on the genre, followed by an in-depth commentary.[156]

The Ornaments of Indo-Tibetan Poetics

The title of the poem, "The Pond of Blossoming White Lotuses: An Ornamental Ode to the Goddess of Melodies, Sarasvatī," indicates Shuchen's intent that the work be viewed as a composition in the style of a particularly exalted tradition of Indo-Tibetan poetry. Here "ornamental ode" translates the Tibetan term *ngakpa döngyen* (*bsngags pa don rgyan*), where *döngyen* (*don rgyan*) refers to the Sanskrit poetic concept of *arthālaṃkāra*. Literally "ornaments of meaning," *arthālaṃkāras* (or simply *alaṃkāra / rgyan* for short[157]) are essential components of formal Sanskrit poetry (*kāvya*) that seek to provide aesthetic enjoyment to the reader through the use of tropes, figures of speech, and rhetorical devices. These "ornaments of meaning" can range from simple to overwhelmingly complex. Included in the genus of *alaṃkāras* are the usual suspects such as metaphor, puns, personification, and so forth, but also items that cannot be easily understood

154. See [B] (the colophon) at the end of the poem, where Shuchen says it was written at Evaṃ Chöden (*e waM chos ldan*), also known as Ngor Monastery. According to his autobiography, he visited Evaṃ Chöden twice, once in 1725 and once in 1726. See Tshul khrims rin chen 1971, 379 and 394.

155. He begins work on the Tengyur in 1737. See Tshul khrims rin chen 1971, 481.

156. Although he was not yet known as Shuchen at the time of composition, I will refer to him as such because this is the title by which he is most widely known in contemporary discourse. In fact, he was not known as Tsultrim Rinchen either until his first visit to Ngor in 1725. It was there that the 32nd abbot of Ngor, Tsultrim Lhundrub (*tshul khrims lhun grub*, 1676–1730), gave him the ordination name "Tsultrim Rinchen." See Tshul khrims rin chen 1971, 383.

157. The other category of *alaṃkāra* is the *śabdālaṃkāra* (*sgra rgyan*), or metrical and sound-related ornaments. This category consists of poetic devices such as meter, rhyme, alliteration, and so on. Since it is to the *arthālaṃkāras* that Daṇḍin's *Kāvyādarśa* (henceforth *KĀ*) devotes most time, when we speak of *alaṃkāras* without specifying which type, we usually mean the *arthālaṃkāras* (*don rgyan*), the ornaments of meaning.

without examples to demonstrate their scope, such as "concealment"[158] or "irrelevant praise."[159] Attempting to account for this taxonomical diversity, scholars have variously translated *alaṃkāra* as figure of speech,[160] poetic trope,[161] semantic ornament,[162] and so forth.[163] Yigal Bronner is certainly right in calling the *alaṃkāras* an "unruly bunch,"[164] but what they share is a common end: to make poetry more aesthetically refined.[165] Daṇḍin, the 7th-century Indian grammarian regarded by Tibetans as the most influential theorist of Sanskrit poetics, says that *alaṃkāras* are the features that create the beauty (*śobhā*) of *kāvya* poetry.[166] This idea of aesthetic beauty as a defining feature of poetry is reflected in the Tibetan translation of the term *kāvya*, for *nyenngak* means "beautiful speech."

For Tibetan poets, the single most influential work on *kāvya*, and specifically on the proper understanding and use of *alaṃkāras*, is Daṇḍin's *Kāvyādarśa* (*Mirror of Poetics*, *snyan ngag me long*). In this authoritative treatise on poetics, Daṇḍin lists thirty-five distinct *alaṃkāras*, each intended to describe specific ways of utilizing language to enhance the beauty of a poetic image or sentiment. It is the use of these rhetorical ornaments that distinguishes *kāvya* from commonplace poetry. In the famous second chapter of the *Kāvyādarśa*, Daṇḍin provides explanations and verse examples of all thirty-five *alaṃkāras*; in this poem, which is comprised of forty-one full stanzas, Shuchen, too, employs all thirty-five of them. This cannot be mistaken as anything other than Shuchen's self-conscious demonstration of his proficiency in the *alaṃkāras* and, in consequence, the composition of *nyenngak*.[167] Usefully for us, he labels each stanza with the *alaṃkāra* that he is employing within it. By utilizing the *alaṃkāras* in such an overt and comprehensive manner, Shuchen situates himself emphatically within a long-standing Tibetan tradition of deep

158. *cha*, *leśa*.

159. *skabs min bstod pa*, *aprastutapraśaṃsā/aprastutastotra*.

160. Edwin Gerow, for one, calls the *alaṃkāras* "figures of speech" in his seminal *Glossary of Indian Figures of Speech*. See Gerow 1971.

161. See, for example, Bhum and Gyatso 2023.

162. See Jabb 2015, 145.

163. Note that other Indian arts, including music and dance, also use the term *alaṃkāra* to refer to ornamentations specific to the art form which elevate the work to the stratosphere of polished perfection. For the sake of clarity, throughout the translation and here in the commentary, I have retained the use of the Sanskrit *alaṃkāra* as a technical term. Readers should be aware that if I use the English terms "ornament," "ornamented," or "ornamental" in the translation, it is because Shuchen is engaging in wordplay related to *alaṃkāras* as poetic ornamentation.

164. Bronner 2023.

165. This, of course, begs the question of whether a common aesthetic sense can be assumed. Taste is largely a matter of cultural context, and even *kāvya*, considered so refined in the Indo-Tibetan cultural sphere, has been viewed pejoratively in the West as "artificial," or "contrived, baroque, pedantic," and even "derivative." See Lin 2023, 326.

166. *KĀ* 2.1: *kāvyaśobhākārān dharmānalaṃkārān pracakṣate*. See Eppling 1989, 333.

167. In addition to a demonstration of mastery, we could also imagine that the process of composition served as a kind of pedagogical exercise for the poet. That is, perhaps he wrote it to practice the *alaṃkāras* and provide a pedagogical tool for others wishing to learn *kāvya* composition, as much as to show off his knowledge of them.

engagement with Sanskrit poetics, a tradition dating to as early as the ninth century[168] but beginning in earnest with the great Sakya Paṇḍita Kunga Gyaltsen (sa skya paN+Dita kun dga' rgyal mtshan, 1182–1251) in his *Gateway for the Learned* (*mkhas pa rnams 'jug pa'i sgo*),[169] and extending to contemporary times.[170] The result here is a poem of highly refined form and meaning that is exquisite in its aesthetic and literary dimensions, but also highly demanding of its readers. Without ample knowledge of Buddhism and Sanskrit poetics, the poem would be as opaque to Tibetan readers of Shuchen's day as it is to English ones today. This being the case, the purpose of the commentary I have provided below is to point out the way each stanza functions vis-à-vis the *alaṃkāra* employed, thereby highlighting for the reader the nuances of its poetic construction and Shuchen's mastery of Buddhist poetic expression. The explanations vary in length; some stanzas require more interpretative analysis, whereas others are relatively straightforward.

Approach to Translation

For each stanza, I provide some explanation of the overall meaning and how the *alaṃkāra* functions. This commentary, though representing my interpretations grounded in literary close reading and informed by my study of *kāvya*, is nonetheless limited. The works of Edwin Gerow, John Frederick Eppling,[171] Yigal Bronner, Nicole Willock, Gedun Rabsal, Janet Gyatso, Pema Bhum, Lama Jabb, Nancy Lin, as well as the assistance of expert Tibetan readers Lobsang Shastri and Hortsang Jigme have been instrumental to my being able to fathom even an inch of Shuchen's literary depth. Yet even with their assistance, the meaning was not always clear. Wherever this is the case, I have done my best to comment in the footnotes in the translation itself about the specific difficulty and, where appropriate, provide alternate readings. Sometimes the ambiguity seems purposeful on the poet's part, so if I could not capture it in the translation, I have again resorted to the footnotes as a place for expanded discussion. I have no pretensions of perfection in this translation, only the hope that it adds something to our understanding of the complexities of Tibetan *nyenngak* as an important adaptation of Sanskrit *kāvya* and a unique register of Tibetan poetry in its own right. As with any poetry, readers should not take any single commentary to be the definitive be-all end-all interpretation, but rather a suggestion of the range of possibilities contained within a poem.

---

168. Martin 2014, 572.

169. Gold 2007, 117–119. Scholars have translated this title variously as *Gateway to Learning* (Jonathan Gold), *Introduction for Scholars* (Pieter C. Verhagen), *Entrance Gate for the Wise* (David Jackson), *An Introduction to Scholarship* (Leonard van der Kuijp), and more. See my forthcoming dissertation (Chen 2026) for more on my translation choices with regards to *mkhas* and *mkhas pa*.

170. See Willock 2021, 25 and Jabb 2015, 10–13.

171. Though somewhat dated today, Gerow 1971 and Eppling 1989 remain two of the most useful resources in English for understanding *alaṃkāras*. I relied on them heavily throughout the process of translation and interpretation.

The Commentary

[i] Homage

Shuchen begins with a brief line of homage to the guru, a standard Indic and Tibetan Buddhist trope which casts both the composition of the poem and the reading of it as a spiritual exercise. He chooses to render this homage in transliterated Sanskrit, signaling to the reader that this poem is participating in a literary tradition that traces its origins to India.

[A] A classical benediction[172]

After the homage, Shuchen gives a benediction to Sarasvatī, revealing his intent to praise the goddess as the one who grants accomplishments (*dngos grub*, *siddhi*) in the realm of the verbal arts. He mentions several of her epithetic names: the Lake-Arisen Moon (*mtsho byung zla ba*), for she is said to be the mythological river whose source was the mythical Lake Mānasa;[173] the Queen of Melodies (*rgyal yum sgra dbyangs*), for she is the patron goddess of music and poetry; the One Who Dwells in Song (*dbyangs can*), for this is the name usually taken to be the Tibetan equivalent of her Sanskrit name Sarasvatī;[174] and the Goddess of Speech (*ngag gi lha*), for she is the one who governs the realm of language and poetry. The version of the poem's title that is given within the stanza is an elaborated version of the actual title of the poem. By ornamenting even the title of the poem, the reader is made to understand that the entire poem will be an exercise in the same spirit—embellishing as much as possible to heighten the meaning and aesthetics of the poem. When he says the poem is "in the style of the experts well-versed in poetry," Shuchen marks himself as a follower of the well-trodden path of Indo-Tibetan poetics.

[1] The external stage is set

Shuchen chooses one of the more rhetorically complex *alaṃkāras* for the first true stanza of the poem. The ninth *alaṃkāra of* **manifestation** (*vibhāvanā, srid pa can*) is defined by Edwin Gerow as "a figure in which an effect is realized in the absence of its normal or conventional cause, thus implying another, unusual cause."[175] In other words, this is an *alaṃkāra* in which certain phenomena are said to be observed, yet their usual causes are deemed to be absent. To be more specific to the examples at hand, Shuchen describes a series of manifest phenomena—an exceedingly blue

172. Not to be confused with the thirty-third *alaṃkāra* of benediction (*shis brjod*, *āśiṣ*). I am calling this a classical benediction because it is customary in the Indic tradition of poetry to begin longer poetic compositions with a benedictory invocation. I do not count this as the first real stanza as Shuchen's labelling of *alaṃkāras* only begins with the next stanza.

173. Eppling 1989, 54.

174. Etymologically speaking, *dbyangs can ma* is not a translation of Sarasvatī, but this is the Tibetan name most used to refer to her, so we often treat Sarasvatī and Yangchenma (*dbyangs can ma*) as equivalent terms.

175. Gerow 1971, 264. I will primarily be using Edwin Gerow's *A Glossary of Indian Figures of Speech* for definitions of the *alaṃkāras*, sometimes supplemented by comments given by John Frederick Eppling and supported by explanations from Tshe tan zhabs drung (trans. Willock and Rabsal 2022).

lake, very green meadows surrounding it, a sweet aroma that permeates the air, and blooming flowers bobbing in the breeze—but negates their probable cause. The probable cause for a lake to be *this blue* would be that it has been dyed by pigment; the probable cause for the meadows to look *this green* would be that liquified emeralds have been poured all over the landscape; the probable cause for the air to smell *this good* would be that someone has scattered aromatic medicinal powders; the cause for the flowers to be bobbing their heads *this much* would be that they are laughing at somebody's faults.

Readers may immediately take issue with calling these "probable" causes, as they are not at all, to our sensibilities, probable in the slightest. However, the force of the rhetoric here only works if we imagine, as the poet asks us to, that the scenery presented before us is so stunning as to be incomprehensible unless we ascribe them to such causes. This requires no great stretch of the imagination; after all, there are places on our earth that possess such awe-inspiring natural beauty as to reduce the viewer to tears. Even if we have not seen such a place with our own eyes, we have certainly seen photographs. That is the type of place towards which Shuchen directs our minds.

Shuchen brings us into a space so vivid in color and so fragrant in smell that it feels as though it must have encountered external interference, possibly human. His point, however, is to negate this presumptuous notion. Though the lake, greenery, and fragrant air might all seem too good to be natural, they do not result from any human act. The human technologies of painting ("pigment"), alchemy ("molten emeralds"), and medicine ("six precious powders"), as well as the human penchant for Schadenfreude (laughing from "seeing the faults of others") are all invoked to describe the beauty of an environment that we might mistake as manmade. Yet Shuchen tells us to relinquish such human hubris. This is a place that falls beyond our realm of ordinary understanding. It is beautiful in all the ways we think only we can create, yet it is so without our intervention.

The effect of using this *alaṃkāra* is to make the reader ask: If these are not the causes, then what are? What is the unusual cause or reason for the existence of this beautiful landscape? Shuchen holds us in suspense until the third stanza, but the intelligent reader might already guess that the external stage is being set for the goddess Sarasvatī.

[2] The internal stage is set

The second stanza is a further elaboration on the natural beauty of the landscape that builds on the scene set by the first verse. Here Shuchen uses the twenty-eighth *alaṃkāra* of **irrelevant praise** (*aprastutapraśaṃsā*, *skabs min bstod pa*), defined by Gerow as "a figure in which the real but simple subject matter is obliquely referred to by means of an explicit, but apparently irrelevant subject which, however, stands in a specific relationship to the former."[176] At first glance, what Shuchen writes about here—bees flying about experiencing bliss—certainly seems irrelevant as far as Sar-

176. Gerow 1971, 111.

asvatī is concerned. Yet because he is employing the *alaṃkāra* of irrelevant praise, we know that this description of bees must be in some way relevant to the goddess.

To understand the implied relationship between Sarasvatī and the bees, it is important to know that bees are a common trope in Indo-Tibetan poetry. On the most fundamental level, a bee swarming around a lotus flower is an erotically charged analogy for a lover's infatuation with an object of desire. In the Buddhist and especially Tibetan context, the bee-and-flower metaphor of attraction takes on another, perhaps tamer, meaning:[177] a swarm of happy, buzzing bees collecting nectar from a lotus is a stand-in for the way sentient beings behave around the virtuous from whom they wish to glean wisdom. Once we realize that the bees in this stanza are sentient beings, then the logical conclusion is that the flower from which they are collecting this bliss-giving honey must be the true, implied subject—Sarasvatī. Realizing this, the experience of the bees is no longer irrelevant to the subject at hand, but rather a direct description of the inner experience of sentient beings when they are in the vicinity of Sarasvatī. She is the inferred subject from whom beings are collecting their bliss-sustaining, torment-subduing honey. Partaking of her nectar does not in and of itself provide the essence of enlightenment, but it does provide temporary relief from everyday torments, a type of transient bliss that practitioners can experience through advanced meditation practice, known as *dényam* (*bde nyams*). This is the type of bliss that these bees—which is to say, us—immediately experience in the presence of the yet unnamed Sarasvatī. Even though no flower is directly mentioned in this stanza, by understanding the *alaṃkāra* of irrelevant praise, we now realize that a flower must be present in the milieu. It is no surprise then when the next stanza introduces Sarasvatī as a lotus.

[3] Sarasvatī enters the stage

Sarasvatī finally makes her grand entrance. Using the third *alaṃkāra* of **metaphor** (*rūpaka*, *gzugs can*),[178] Sarasvatī, "the slender-waisted lady," is introduced as a white lotus flower. In a masterful metaphor of parts and wholes, employing a subcategory of the metaphor *alaṃkāra* known as complete metaphor (*mtha' dag gi gzugs can*, *sakala-rūpaka*),[179] the parts of a lotus become the various body parts of her. The lady being introduced is a dancer on a lotus stem, or she *is* the lotus stem that is dancing. Her fingernails are adorned with flowers, or her fingernails *are* flowers. The leaves dance in her hands, or they *are* her hands. She is on a white lotus, or her face *is* a white lotus. The reader now grasps that the bees in the previous stanza were taking their nectar from the lotus

177. See Jabb 2015, 193 for discussion on the Buddhicization and consequent de-eroticization of *kāvya* in Tibet.

178. This is "a figure in which the subject of comparison is identified with its object by a specific process of grammatical subordination" (Gerow 1971, 239). Gerow's rather technical definition notwithstanding, this category can simply be understood as what we call "metaphor" in English. In a metaphor, unlike in a simile, the thing that is being compared to something *is* the thing to which it is being compared. That is what is meant by "grammatical subordination."

179. Eppling 1989, 606–607.

flower that *is* Sarasvatī. Thus, we the readers, as ordinary human beings, are brought into a direct relationship with Sarasvatī, the lady who can generate unbelievable beauty in her environment (stanza 1) and induce incredible bliss in the minds of sentient beings (stanza 2).

[4] Her general posture is described

Sarasvatī has now been introduced, but thus far we have only had a metaphorical description of her as a lotus flower. In this stanza, using the thirty-fourth *alaṃkāra* of **compounded rhetorical figures** (*rab spel*, *saṃsṛṣṭi/saṃkīrṇa*),[180] Shuchen provides further elaborations on her physicality. This *alaṃkāra* denotes the simultaneous use of more than one *alaṃkāra* within a single stanza. The specific subcategory that Shuchen employs, "compounded rhetorical figures involving a primary subject" (*gcig brten gyi rab spel*, *aṅgāṅgibhāva-saṃsṛṣṭi*) indicates that there is one *alaṃkāra* that will stand out as the primary focus, with the other *alaṃkāras* merely "assisting" it.[181]

Shuchen begins with the primary *alaṃkāra*: a **simile** (the second *alaṃkāra*, *dpe*, *upamā*) which states that Sarasvatī's hands and feet are supported by a moon-shaped disc that is "just like the swirl of a milky ocean." This is a significant comparison, as it introduces an element of Indian mythology that will be invoked for the next few verses. The moon disc is described as similar to a milky ocean not just because it is apt imagery for the moon; it is a direct reference to the Ocean of Milk (*kṣīrasāgara*), one of seven main oceans in Indian cosmology and the dwelling place of the serpent (*nāga*) king Śeṣa. By first saying that Sarasvatī seems to be standing on a milky ocean, Shuchen is paving the way for the last two lines involving Śeṣa's appearance and disappearance.

The second *alaṃkāra* Shuchen utilizes is **expression of inherent nature** (*rang bzhin brjod pa*, *svabhāvokti*), which we will see again in the next stanza. He states that Sarasvatī has hands that bear the marks of wheels, one of the physical signs of a great being. This is stated plainly, a simple description of her physical appearance.

The final *alaṃkāra* our poet uses here is the twelfth *alaṃkāra* of **imaginative ascription** (*rab brtag*, *utprekṣā*),[182] wherein he ascribes to the moon disc at Sarasvatī's feet an entire narrative involving the Ocean of Milk and the serpent king that is not possible in a literal sense. As Sarasvatī in all her ornamented glory stands on what looks like the Ocean of Milk, the poet imagines that the serpent king panics upon seeing her beauty and hides in the depths of his oceanic abode. This is an especially potent poetic image because the serpent king's consort, Nāgalakṣmī, is sometimes

180. Gerow 1971, 307.

181. Eppling 1989, 1358–1359.

182. This is "a figure in which a property or mode of behavior is attributed to a subject literally incapable of sustaining that property, whereby an implicit simile is suggested whose subject (*upameya*) is the subject receiving the attributed property and whose object (*upamāna*) is the real basis of the property" (Gerow 1971, 131). In this case, it is clearly what we would call personification in English, but this does not apply across all cases of *utprekṣā* because the qualities that an object has may not always be a human quality.

considered the personification of the Ocean of Milk.[183] Therefore, when the poet says that Śeṣa, having come face-to-face with the beauty of Sarasvatī, panics and escapes into the Ocean of Milk, he is also saying that he escapes back to his own wife. We are told this is out of embarrassment and left to imagine that it is perhaps also to avoid reproach.

The multiple *alaṃkāras* employed in the stanza, together forming the *alaṃkāra* of compounded rhetorical figures, work in concert to turn a simple simile in the first line (the primary *alaṃkāra*) into a complex, imagined narrative involving the Ocean of Milk and the serpent king. The result is the heightening of Sarasvatī's beauty and the strengthening of her presence in the reader's mind.

[5] Her physical beauty is described

Sarasvatī is finally mentioned by name in this stanza. Using the first *alaṃkāra* of **expression of inherent nature** (*rang bzhin brjod pa*, *svabhāvokti*),[184] specifically an expression of the inherent nature of a genus (*jāti-svabhāvokti*),[185] Shuchen describes her physical attributes, which are the standard attributes of the genus of "attractive young woman," at least according to a traditional Indo-Tibetan sensibility. Sarasvatī is described as having the expected markers of youthful female beauty as derived from Sanskrit literature: she is full-breasted and in the flush of youth.[186] She also has a set of special marks, the major and minor marks that distinguish an enlightened being, which set her apart from an ordinary young woman who might merely be the site of worldly erotic attraction. Furthermore, the sight of her makes the perceiver want to keep staring at her, such is the greatness of her beauty. (As Elaine Scarry has written about beauty, "the simplest manifestation of the phenomenon is the everyday fact of staring."[187]) With this straightforward expression of her physical beauty, Shuchen establishes the full force of Sarasvatī's physical presence.

[6] Her connection to the Dharma is elucidated and her relationship to the Ocean of Milk is brought to completion

It is in this stanza that the true extent of Sarasvatī's extraordinary qualities is revealed, for she is cast metaphorically as a symbol of the Buddha's teachings. The stanza employs the third *alaṃkāra* of **metaphor** (already seen in stanza 3), with two main metaphors at work: one, the full autumnal moon as an expression of Sarasvatī's complete embodiment of all aspects of the Dharma ("O Autumnal Moon..., you are full of / All the parts of the mandala of knowledge") and two, the

183. This personification occurs in the Sanskrit text *Garga-Saṃhitā*.

184. This is "a figure in which a natural or typical individual is characterized" (Gerow 1971, 324).

185. Eppling 1989, 345–350.

186. Much could be critiqued about this obsession with youthful female beauty, an obsession that persists in our day and age. But this is beyond the scope of this article.

187. Scarry 1999, 5.

ocean on which Sarasvatī's fullness is being reflected, like a moon is reflected in water, as an expression of the vastness of the teachings of the Buddha ("the ocean of the inexhaustible secrets of the Conqueror's teachings"). Furthermore, this ocean is also the Ocean of Milk because the "mandala of knowledge," Shuchen opines, is the "cream which arises / From churning the ocean… of the Conqueror's teachings." The imagery of the Ocean of Milk initiated in stanza 4 is brought to completion here, with Sarasvatī as the full moon that is reflected in the milky ocean of the Buddha's teachings, an ocean that has been churned for its creamy essence of knowledge. Knowledge is gained through the churning of the ocean, and she is the full, round moon reflected in the creamy ocean, an image visible to all beings everywhere. Through the metaphorical sleight of hand of this stanza, Shuchen transforms the Ocean of Milk from the serpent king's residence into the very image and symbol of the Buddha's teachings.

[7] Her face is described as a lotus, and the bee-and-flower metaphor is fully realized

Having now introduced Sarasvatī metaphorically, Shuchen moves onto a **simile of attributes** (*chos dpe*, *dharma-upamā*)[188] that completes the comparison of Sarasvatī to a white lotus. Eppling explains that this type of simile "stands as a paradigm for a 'complete'/pūrṇā upamā with all four fundamental components—upameya, upamāna, sādhāraṇa dharma, and vacaka [sic]—present."[189] *Upameya* (*dpe can*), *upamāna* (*dpe*), *sādhāraṇa-dharma* (*mtshungs pa'i chos*), and *vācaka-śabda* (*mtshungs pa gsal bye kyi sgra*) are technical terms that describe the components of a simile, where *upameya* is the subject that is being compared to something, *upamāna* is the object or standard to which the *upameya* is being compared, *sādhāraṇa-dharma* is the attribute or property that the *upameya* and *upamāna* are said to share, and the *vācaka-śabda* is the word that indicates a similarity is being drawn. In this stanza, these components play out as follows:

- the *upameya* (subject of comparison) is Sarasvatī's face;
- the *upamāna* (object to which Sarasvatī's face is being compared) is an unfurling white lotus;
- the *sādhāraṇa dharma* (the attribute that Sarasvatī's face and the lotus have in common) is the movement of Sarasvatī's face and the hovering of bees around an open lotus flower;
- and the *vācaka śabda* (the word that indicates similarity) is the word "the same way" (the word used in Tibetan is *lta bu*).

The way Sarasvatī's face is "aflutter with flirtatious smiles" is akin to the way the open face of a

188. This is "the comparison of one thing with a substantially different thing in terms of a property, quality, or mode of behavior which they share" (Gerow 1971, 140).

189. Eppling 1989, 443.

lotus might have "a thousand pairs of bees hovering about intoxicatedly," so lively are the minute movements of her face. With this simile, Shuchen is harkening again to Indic tropes, wherein attractive ladies are often described as smiling and moving their eyes or eyebrows in demure yet suggestive ways.[190]

On top of conveying the attractiveness of Sarasvatī's face, this comparison also serves to enhance the previously employed metaphor of her as a lotus flower flowing with nectar, ready for bees to enjoy (stanzas 2 and 3). In conjunction with the metaphor from before, then, this simile further emphasizes Sarasvatī as the lotus into whose orbit we the bees are drawn.

[8] Her mouth and teeth are described

This stanza utilizes the second subtype of simile called **simile of entities** (*dngos po'i dpe*, *vastu-upamā*), which Eppling describes as a simile that "drops an explicit common attribute, focusing attention on the 'objects' compared."[191] Instead of stating explicitly the main *sādhāraṇa dharma* (shared attribute) between Sarasvatī and a white lotus in a grove of red lotuses, it is implied. If Sarasvatī is "like a moonlight-drenched white water lily blooming / Within a delightfully dense grove of ruby-colored lotuses," as the second half of the verse relates, then what is the connection to the movement of her lips and her gleaming, toothy smile detailed in the first half of the stanza? The shared quality here is not just the color. Yes, the sparkling teeth that Sarasvatī exposes by smiling is like a moonlight-drenched white water lily in color, and yes, a grove of red lotuses is like the red lips which enclose her white teeth. But beyond the shared color, other shared attributes are hinted at: the teachings that come from Sarasvatī's red mouth are as numerous as a thick grove of ruby lotuses and the white teeth that she exposes when she speaks these teachings are as visually arresting as a singular white water lily glimmering under moonlight.

[9] The delicate beauty of her physique and complexion are described

In this stanza, Shuchen returns to the intriguing use of the ninth *alaṃkāra* of **manifestation** (*srid pa can*, *vibhāvanā*), wherein we are told that the cause of a phenomenon is not what we might assume. Shuchen is again drawing attention to signs of beauty that appear to indicate the involvement of human fabrication. In describing Sarasvatī's appearance, he draws on the arts of sculpting and painting, areas where beauty is associated with refinement and is the result of a controlled expression of specific forms. The refinement of her appearance is such that she seems to have been dreamed up by an artisan, but the point here is to reject this so as to highlight the incredible nature of her beauty. Her waist is so slender that it looks like it was filed down by a sculptor—but it was not. Her palms have such intricate designs on them that it looks like they were drawn on by the

190. This aesthetic trope is perfectly embodied in Indian dance in the art of facial expressions (*abhinaya*).

191. Eppling 1989, 443.

fine tip of a painter's brush—but they were not. Her complexion is so radiant that it looks like it was stained by a pigment made from melting the moon—but this is not the case. By negating in each of these cases "a cause that is well-known to be connected to it," Shuchen draws attention to these qualities as inherent to Sarasvatī's nature. She is exquisite in her refinement without any human or external intervention.

[10] The effect of her body and mind on the environment is described

The 12th *alaṃkāra*, **imaginative ascription**, (*rab brtag*, *utprekṣā*),[192] is used here to personify the roving cloud as someone who might be dazzled and frazzled by Sarasvatī's beauty. Sarasvatī, who was previously described as the moon, is now a beautiful figure protected by the moon from the lustful male gaze. But because her innate light of wisdom is so bright, a cloud passing by in the sky becomes aware of her beauty and sweats with embarrassment. The term *dwangs gsal* is used in meditation instructions to refer to the removal of perceptual impurities or obstructions. A cloud, on the other hand, is often described as an "obstructor," but here the Tibetan term "obstructor" (*sgrib byed*) is used to refer to the moon providing Sarasvatī with cover. When Sarasvatī's innate light shines through the cover provided by the moon's radiance, her beautiful body is exposed; without the protection of the obstructor that is the moon, the obstructor that is the cloud gets a glimpse of Sarasvatī's exposed body. This personification of the cloud's sheepish embarrassment functions remarkably well because "sweating" is essentially what clouds do when they turn into rain.

We have now seen Sarasvatī described in various ways. She is the reason for the existence of a picturesque landscape; she is a flower that attracts bees within that landscape and a source of nourishment for them, providing nectar that induces in them a state of spiritual inebriation; she cuts an exceedingly attractive figure, so much so that she causes *nāgas* to panic and clouds to sweat. Without doing much, these are her multitude of effects on the environment and those who encounter her. What, then, might we expect when she is engaged in action?

[11] Her musical instrument is described

And engaged in action she is in this next stanza. Sarasvatī, holding her musical instrument of choice, does what she does best: produce sweet sounds. Once again utilizing the first *alaṃkāra* of **expression of inherent nature**, specifically the expression of the inherent nature of a material thing (*rdzas kyi rang bzhin brjod pa*, *dravya-svabhāvokti*),[193] Shuchen describes her actions upon the *vīṇā*, a stringed Indian lute with a voluptuous body. It is no ordinary *vīṇā* that she plays, but one made of a precious stone and replete with a thousand strings. These are, no doubt, seemingly

192. Gerow 1971, 131.

193. Eppling 1989, 345–346.

impossible attributes. How, after all, could a string instrument made of gemstone be resonant? And how could the neck of an instrument with a thousand strings be plucked by one hand? It is by stating these attributes plainly, not as simile or metaphor, that Shuchen draws attention to the spectacular nature of the instrument—fit for a goddess, to be sure. As she moves her beautifully adorned fingers across the fret board of the *vīṇā*, pleasing melodies burst forth. Shuchen has now given us the first description of her engaged in an action and, significantly, that action is music.

[12] The music coming from the instrument is described

What distinguishes the music that Sarasvatī plays is not merely the ordinary effect of delighting the listener, but rather its salvific effect: Shuchen says that her music can bring sentient beings out of their deluded state. Used here is the twenty-third *alaṃkāra* of **denial** (*bsnyon dor*, *apahnuti*), which Gerow defines as "a figure in which the object of comparison is affirmed in place of the subject of comparison."[194] Here Sarasvatī's sweet melodies are the subject of comparison (*upameya*)—the thing being compared—and the words of the buddhas are the object of comparison (*upamāna*)—the thing against which Sarasvatī's melodies are being compared. The *alaṃkāra* of denial works by way of an implicit comparison that seems to praise the object of comparison (words of the buddhas) rather than the subject of comparison (melodies of Sarasvatī). By not directly saying that her music is like or equal to the buddhas' teachings, but rather by saying that she must have stolen everything in her music from them because her music can "lift beings out of delusion," she is indirectly praised. Saying her songs sound like they were plagiarized from the buddhas' words is, in fact, a roundabout way of affirming the superior quality of her songs.

[13] The qualities of her voice and song are described

The *alaṃkāra* of **hyperbole** (*phul byung*, *atiśayokti*)[195] is used in this stanza to suggest that Sarasvatī's voice is perfect, infinite, and all-encompassing. Shuchen says that her words and songs contain everything, including the melodies of all the buddhas of different realms. Interestingly, he makes a point of saying that even though her voice contains within it multitudes, every element is still distinct. They do not blend together into one incoherent mass, but rather each element retains its distinctness.

[14] Her voice is compared to the voice of celestial beings

The *alaṃkāra* used here is the eighth, **contrary distinction** (*ldog pa can*, *vyatireka*), which Gerow defines as "a figure wherein two notoriously similar things are said to be subject to a point of difference; usually the subject of comparison is stated to excel the object, surprising the norm of its

194. Gerow 1971, 109.

195. This is "the exaggeration of a quality or attribute in a characteristic way, so as to suggest pre-eminence in its subject" (Gerow 1971, 97).

own comparability."[196] In a comparison that is meant to be flattering, usually someone or something is compared to another thing that is considered to be excellent; the subject of comparison (*upameya*) is thereby elevated through being compared to the object of comparison (*upamāna*). This *alaṃkāra*, however, turns this usual mode of comparison on its head, with the effect of further enhancing the greatness of the subject of comparison (*upameya*). Here, Sarasvatī's voice is compared to Brahmā's voice and the *gandharvas'* music-playing, both of which are conventionally considered to be the height of musical perfection in the Indic cultural sphere. If this were a normal comparison, Shuchen would simply say that Sarasvatī's voice is akin to their divine voice/music, and that would be enough to indicate the beauty of her voice. However, the *alaṃkāra* of contrary distinction functions by saying that Sarasvatī's voice (the *upameya*, subject of comparison) is not merely *like* the music of Brahmā and the *gandharvas* (the *upamāna*, object of comparison), but in fact *exceeds* it. Her voice is not just as good as theirs but is also the "distillation of the essence of everything well-said," which is to say that her voice is also the voice of the buddhas. She is not just like them; she supersedes them.

[15] The limitlessness of her wisdom mind is established

This is a difficult stanza, but what is clear is that Sarasvatī's mind is being described as limitless. She is the one "knows the whole of reality as it is and all of phenomena as they appear." The *alaṃkāra* of **imaginative ascription** (*rab brtag*, *utprekṣā*) is used here in a remarkably different manner from its previous usages in stanzas 4 and 10. As it is used here, it is not personification, but something more complex. Shuchen describes an imagined interaction between ordinary beings and Sarasvatī. The imagined scenario is that deluded sentient beings might want to find flaws in Sarasvatī's mind—to "test her limits," as it were. But, our poet says, even if we were to somehow magically create a thousand eyes for the sole purpose of conducting this manner of critical investigation, we would "collapse from seeing our own invisible faults" long before we could accomplish our mission. The implication here is that her mental capacity is boundless. Since this exercise would be a futile, meaningless waste of time, Shuchen suggests that the energy required to search for her faults could instead be applied towards ridding ourselves of common meditative vices such as lethargy and delusion.

[16] Her ability to cut through dualistic appearance is detailed

Continuing to describe Sarasvatī's wisdom, Shuchen employs the twenty-fifth *alaṃkāra*, **expression of difference** (*khyad par brjod pa*, *viśeṣokti*), which Gerow defines as "a figure in which a deficiency (a negative attitude), either natural or occasional, is pointed out in such a way as to

196. Gerow 1971, 276.

magnify or emphasize the capability of its subject."[197] The deficiency pointed out here is the fact that Sarasvatī does not physically possess sharp thorns, sharp teeth, or hold any other sharp tool for cutting. Yet she still cuts through dualistic appearance. She may not possess literal sharpness, but her sharpness is all the more powerful for being figurative, for it is the blade of the "non-conceptual wisdom of [her] mind."

[17] Her inherent nature is described

This stanza uses the seventh *alaṃkāra*, **introduction of another subject matter** (*don gzhan bkod pa*, *arthāntaranyāsa*). Gerow defines this as "a figure in which a proposition or remark is justified or substantiated by the adjunction of a relevant moral or rationale."[198] The proposition is made in the first two lines of the stanza: it is wondrous to know all there is to know about reality. This proposition is then followed by what we might call "a relevant moral": Sarasvatī is someone who by nature understands everything there is to understand. By giving Sarasvatī as an example of someone who can actualize complete knowledge, the proposition of unhindered knowledge presented in the first two lines becomes corroborated and substantiated.

[18] The poet describes his emotional affect in her presence

At this point in the poem, we have become acquainted with Sarasvatī's exceptional physical beauty, tremendous mental capacity, and her effect on the environment and sentient beings in general. But what we do not know yet is Shuchen's personal feeling towards her. And so, in this stanza, he paints a picture of his personal affect in the presence of Sarasvatī. Using the seventeenth *alaṃkāra* of **affection** (*dga' ba*, *preyas*),[199] Shuchen expresses the depth of his gratitude for Sarasvatī, saying that she is dearer to him than all the gods combined. Most importantly for our poet, he feels great affection for her because she has allowed him to attain a novel spiritual accomplishment (*siddhi*), as evidenced by the fact that he "now experience[s] / A new, unobstructed joy for speaking poetry."

[19] Sarasvatī is given three names, each corresponding to one of her qualities

The sixteenth *alaṃkāra*, used in this stanza, is **ordered sequence** (*rim pa can*, *yathāsaṃkhya*), which Gerow defines as "a figure consisting of ordered sequences of terms, such as nouns and adjectives or subjects and objects of comparison, so arranged that item one of the first sequence matches item one of the second, item two of the first matches item two of the second, and so on."[200] In this case, we can clearly see that Shuchen has listed a set of three *upameyas* (subjects of comparison), followed by a list of three *upamānas* (objects of comparison), where each *upa-*

197. Gerow 1971, 270.
198. Gerow 1971, 118.
199. Gerow 1971, 217.
200. Gerow 1971, 222.

māna corresponds with a *upameya*, presented so that each pair is in the corresponding spot in the ordered sequence. The pairs can be mapped out as follows:

- "[b]eautiful figure white and radiant" goes with "Full Autumnal Moon"
- "voice undulating with melodies" goes with "Voice of the Kalaviṅkas"
- and "a mind in which the reality of knowable objects dawns nakedly" goes with "Immaculate Mirror of Pure Crystal."

Sarasvatī's physical body, white and radiant, is compared to a gleaming autumnal moon; her voice, forever modulating its pleasing melodies, is compared to that of the *kalaviṅkas*, a bird legendary for its beautiful voice; her mind, which sees and knows everything, is compared to a mirror of pure crystal. The last comparison between Sarasvatī's reality-knowing mind and a mirror of pure crystal works on the level of pure imagery, but it also functions on another level: since this is *nyenngak*, it is an explicit reference to Daṇḍin's *Mirror of Poetics*.

This order of first describing her physical qualities, then the qualities of her speech and songs, and finally the quality of her mind matches the order in which these qualities have been introduced in the poem so far. The sense of an ordered sequence can thus be seen in not just this stanza, but in the poem overall.

[20] The poet describes his feelings and experiences

Having already described his personal feelings of affection for Sarasvatī in stanza 18, Shuchen now goes on to describe the aesthetic mood she causes him, and the reader, to feel. **Aesthetic mood** (*nyams ldan*, *rasavat*) is the eighteenth *alaṃkāra*, defined by Gerow as "a figure in which is clearly expressed a mood or *rasa*—usually *śṛṅgāra*, the amorous."[201] *Rasa* is a key concept in Sanskrit aesthetics and poetics, and its influence pervades all areas of the arts, from poetry to drama, dance, and music. The *Nāṭyaśāstra*, the classic Sanskrit treatise on the performing arts, lists eight main types of *rasas* that a work of art ought to make the viewer feel.[202] Here, Shuchen specifies that the *rasa* he is invoking is "love transformed into the aesthetic mood of eroticism [*śṛṅgāra*]." He begins with something akin to the feeling of romantic love for Sarasvatī, which causes his "mental faculty to quiver" and makes him feel physically overwhelmed. One could say that the affect being described here by Shuchen are physiological ones that are common to the experience of worldly love—feeling joy simply by looking at someone's face, mind quivering, feeling overcome by emotion. However, he transforms what might otherwise be mere lust for Sarasvatī into the formal aesthetic mood of eroticism (*śṛṅgāra*) through devotion, as represented by the joining of his hands

201. Gerow 1971, 239.

202. The eight *rasas* are: *śṛṅgāra* (romantic/erotic love), *hāsya* (joy), *raudra* (anger), *kāruṇa* (compassion, pity), *bībhatsa* (disgust), *bhayānaka* (horror), *vīra* (heroism), and *adbhuta* (awe). Some later authors also added a ninth *rasa* of *śānta* (peace).

at his heart. His devotion transforms mundane love into a heightened form of aesthetic love, and by virtue of this transformation of desire, Shuchen has a fleeting, quivering taste of liberation.

[21] Sarasvatī's majesty is described

This stanza uses the nineteenth *alaṃkāra* of **majesty** (*gzi brjid*, *ūrjasvi*), which Gerow qualifies as "the expression of extraordinary assurance or arrogance."[203] The imagery employed by Shuchen is indeed an image of Sarasvatī's impressive display of dominance. He says that her great might is twofold: she can defeat the highest beings in cyclic existence, *and* she can rouse timid beings into finding the courage to enact compassion.

[22] Her extraordinary powers are described

In this stanza, we have three parallel phrases that describe the kind of power and action that Sarasvatī possesses, in a construction called **illuminator** (*gsal byed*, *dīpaka*), the fourth *alaṃkāra*. Gerow defines this as "a construction wherein several parallel phrases are each completed by a single (unrepeated) word or phrase."[204] The unrepeated phrase here is Sarasvatī as the grammatical subject in the first line, "You, glorious lady of vast knowledge." The three remaining parallel lines are completed by this first unrepeated phrase. In each of the three parallel constructions, one of her great powers is described: she vanquishes delusion, she turns everything into sweet sounds, and she makes everything into poetry.

[23] The foolish behavior of ordinary beings is described

The tenth *alaṃkāra* used in this stanza is called **abbreviated expression** (*bsdus brjod*, *samāsokti*), defined as "a figure in which the descriptive qualifications of an explicit subject suggest an implicit comparable object to which they likewise apply."[205] Although Sarasvatī is not explicitly mentioned anywhere in this stanza, she is still present in our minds. Therefore, when Shuchen writes about the "All-Benefitting Moon that drips with / A hundred thousand drops of torment-robbing nectar," we understand that this is implicitly referring to Sarasvatī, for she has the same qualities that are being attributed to the moon. Eppling says that in using this type of *alaṃkāra*, "we are simultaneously 'implying one thing (an upameya) in expressing another similar thing' (an upamāna)."[206] Here our poet is clearly implying Sarasvatī when he mentions the "All-Benefitting Moon."

Shuchen seems to be directing a pointed reproach towards sentient beings and the reader through this abbreviated expression. He accuses us of not knowing what is good for us—instead of yearning for the cool moon that, steadfast in its presence every night, reduces the fever of

203. Gerow 1971, 171.
204. Gerow 1971, 193.
205. Gerow 1971, 316.
206. Eppling 1989, 927.

existence, we are always lusting after impermanent things like flowers that wilt quickly in heat. This is a rather unusual admonishment, especially given that he has been comparing Sarasvatī to the moon *and* a flower throughout this poem. Nevertheless, the point in this metaphorical figuration seems to be that we should be placing our attention on an actual source of relief from the torments of existence, instead of something that is pleasurable to the senses but short-lived in the satisfaction it provides.

[24] Sarasvatī performs a hand gesture in response to being pleased

The fourteenth *alaṃkāra* is **subtlety** (*phra mo*, *sūkṣma*), defined by Gerow as "a figure in which an intention or idea is said to be conveyed through a gesture, glance, or means other than language."[207] Sarasvatī has her hands in the symbolic generosity gesture (*phyag rgya*, *mudrā*) as she rattles the bangles with bells on her wrists. (This image of a lady wearing bracelets of tiny bells calls to mind an elegant classical Indian dancer fully adorned in performance regalia.) It is through this gesture that she conveys her pleasure at the beings who have done well to give up non-virtuous talk and diminished their defilements. Using the *alaṃkāra* of subtlety, Shuchen gives a nuanced but culturally legible expression of her pleasure.

[25] Her ability to engender intelligence is described

The *alaṃkāra* used in this stanza is **cause** (*rgyu*, *hetu*), specifically one that "generates a positive effect" (*skyed byed 'grub pa'i rgyu*, *nirvartyabhāvakārya-kāraka-hetu*).[208] Sarasvatī's compassion is the cause whose positive effect is the generation of understanding in the ten disciplines of knowledge.[209]

[26] She is compared to Daṇḍin

The sixth *alaṃkāra* of **objection** (*'gog*, *ākṣepa*) is used to express "an objection to or denial of some state of affairs, either real or imagined, either past, present, or future."[210] Shuchen objects to the idea that everything Daṇḍin composed is due to Sarasvatī's inspiration, but in doing so inadvertently affirms that this seems like a possibility. That is, it seems possible, even if false, that the greatest expounder of poetics owes all his brilliance to Sarasvatī. Shuchen says that while this is not true, what *is* true is that every time he thinks of her, his own verbal abilities are enhanced.

It is worth noting here that Shuchen renders Daṇḍin's name in the nominative singular form (Daṇḍī), demonstrating his knowledge of Sanskrit grammar even in the smallest of details.

207. Gerow 1971, 323.
208. Eppling 1989, 1012–1014.
209. See footnote 93 of the translation for an enumeration of the ten disciplines.
210. Gerow 1971, 124.

[27] A case is made for why some are foolish, and some are wise

Used here is the *alaṃkāra* of **concealment** (*cha*, *leśa*), defined by Gerow as "a figure in which a pretext is alleged to cover an embarrassing or otherwise unpleasant situation."[211] Eppling further states that this concealment "must be deflected or disguised" because its "recognition would in embarrassment or worse."[212] What might be a potential source of embarrassment here? It is the fact that some beings are still foolish, even though Sarasvatī supposedly has the power to "increase the intellects of all." If this were truly the case, then why is it that some people are still foolish? Clearly this means that Sarasvatī has *not* managed to make everyone intelligent, which is potentially a problem or cause for embarrassment if we want to claim that she is indiscriminate in her kindness to sentient beings. If she operates without favoritism, then why do her powers not work on everyone? Shuchen explains this perceived defect away by saying that "whether one is intelligent or foolish still depends on prior training," clarifying that the rules of cause and effect cannot be circumvented on an individual basis just because Sarasvatī is equally kind to all.

[28] She is described as the antidote to delusions

The *alaṃkāra* of **universal benefit** (*kun phan*, *samāhita/samādhi*) is described by Gerow as "a figure in which a desired effect is accomplished by the coincidental intervention of another and quite irrelevant cause,"[213] while Eppling says it "involves the felicitous display of 'fortuitous circumstance.'"[214] In this stanza, by understanding the correct meaning of reality, beings also simultaneously discover the presence of Sarasvatī. The intended task here is to know "the way of correct meaning;" it is unexpected that by seeing reality as it is, beings also automatically become close to Sarasvatī. She is the fortuitous side-effect of having the correct understanding of reality.

[29] Sarasvatī's selfless dedication is described

The *alaṃkāra* of **greatness** (*rgya che ba*, *udātta*) is used here; this is "a figure in which great accumulation of wealth or greatness of character…is described."[215] The vastness of Sarasvatī's character is demonstrated by the fact that she deigns to help deluded beings even though she has power that is more immense than that of the greatest gods. Her service to beings is therefore a demonstration of her noble character.

[30] She is described as increasing the joy of beings

The twenty-fourth *alaṃkāra*, **play on words** (*sbyar ba*, *śleṣa/śliṣṭa*), specifically an undivided play

211. Gerow 1971, 259.
212. Eppling 1989, 1068.
213. Gerow 1971, 315.
214. Eppling 1989, 1169–1170.
215. Gerow 1971, 139.

on words (*tshig tha dad min pa'i sbyar ba*, *abhinnapada-śleṣa*),[216] is used here so that the stanza can be read in two completely distinct ways. Gerow defines the *alaṃkāra* as "paronomasia; pun; double-entendre; the simultaneous expression of two (or more) meanings,"[217] and Eppling says it "refers to the derivation of multiple meanings from a given discrete pada or phonemic 'string' (whether 'word' as such, or compound)—the given unit thus 'embraces' more than one meaning."[218] In other words, the lines can be read in multiple ways to result in more than one valid reading. In the translation, I delineated two separate ways of reading the lines, depending on how the compound words are understood. The first is to read the lines as a description of Sarasvatī, and the second is to read them as a description of a lotus pond. These two readings, which are given as (a) and (b) in the translation, ultimately work in tandem, since we know that the white lotus is a metaphor for Sarasvatī, and a pond of blooming lotuses is another way of describing the environment in which she resides. It could be said that the utilization of this *alaṃkāra* is the *nyenngak* poet's trump card, for it is a virtuosic display of one's facility with poetic diction. This type of wordplay functions especially well in the Sanskrit language due to the sheer wealth of meanings that Sanskrit words and compounds contain, and because of the complexity of Sanskrit compounds and the multiple ways in which words can be parsed into discrete elements due to rules of *sandhi*.[219] To perform this level of wordplay in Tibetan, which is linguistically unrelated to Sanskrit, [220] presents an arguably greater challenge to the poet. It is therefore all the more astonishing that Shuchen manages to use this *alaṃkāra* to great effect.

[31] Her abilities are compared to the wind and moonlight of Mount Malaya

Contrived similarity (*mtshungs sbyor*, *tulyayogitā*) is an *alaṃkāra* that Gerow defines as "a figure in which several subjects sharing a property or mode of action, though in unequal degrees, are represented as equivalently endowed; the lesser subject is thus magnified."[221] The comparison here is between the power of the winds and moon rays of Mount Malaya, the glorious peak considered to be the birthplace of Buddhist tantra, and Sarasvatī's compassionate activities. We might consider the workings of nature at a mountain peak of high elevation to be unsurpassable in terms of force and power, but here Shuchen suggests that Sarasvatī has powers that are just as great as nature's powers to melt glacial ice. Just as Mount Malaya's winds and moon rays can turn

216. Eppling 1989, 1206.
217. Gerow 1971, 288.
218. Eppling 1989, 1200–1201.
219. *Sandhi* is a term in Sanskrit grammar that describes the sound changes that occur between the ends and beginnings of words depending on the interactions between vowels and consonants. For a discussion of the rules of *sandhi*, see Deshpande 2014, 37–39, 81–83, 88, 108–110. Note that in the subtype of *śleṣa* that Shuchen in employing, the wordplay does not rely on parsing words differently, but rather on using the different meanings of the same words.
220. See Hill 2020 for a discussion on the linguistic classification of the Tibetan language.
221. Gerow 1971, 191.

even glaciers into rivers, so Sarasvatī's compassion can touch the minds of intelligent beings so that they produce words capable of vanquishing the torments of existence. This might seem like a "contrived" comparison, but the forced similarity is precisely the point, for Sarasvatī's powers are thereby magnified.

[32] An unexpected effect of her songs is described

The *alaṃkāra* of **antithesis** (*'gal ba*, *virodha*) is used here, which Gerow defines as "a figure in which contradictory properties are expressed of the same subject."[222] In this verse, the poetry inspired by Sarasvatī has two contradictory qualities: 1) it makes those who are virtuous drunk with pleasure and 2) it makes those who are not on the Buddhist path cry out in pain. The power of the rhetoric lies in the juxtaposition of two qualities that are the antithesis of each other. The reader might think that saying the poetry and songs inspired by Sarasvatī engender "a hundred types of pleasure" is commendatory enough as an affirmation. However, by saying that the same poetry and songs also have the power to "make the Destroyer of the Three Realms cry out in pain," another powerful aspect of her poetry is revealed. Those who are connected to her, and thus connected to wisdom, experience *joy*, while those who are deluded, worldly gods like Śiva experience *pain*. She can simultaneously engender two antithetical effects.

[33] Sarasvatī is chastized by the poet for taking pride in her abilities

This *alaṃkāra* is another intriguing one: **veiled praise** (*zol bstod*, *vyājastuti*) is "a figure in which apparent blame conceals real praise or appreciation."[223] By seeming to adopt a tone of reprimand, Shuchen introduces censure into a poem of praise. He accuses Sarasvatī of being overly proud, which reads as a castigation and not a compliment. Yet his point is this: If Sarasvatī's abilities come to her naturally and without much effort on her part, or if she helps beings because she previously made a promise to do so, then there is really nothing remarkable about her abilities or actions. That being the case, then she has no reason to feel self-satisfied. But of course, hidden in this strange reprimand is a compliment of the highest order—Shuchen is saying that Sarasvatī is a veritable wish-fulfilling jewel whose ability to grant accomplishments is not only unmatched but also completely effortless.

[34] The poet describes his composition and his experience

In this stanza, the *alaṃkāra* of **simultaneous expression** (*lhan cig brjod pa*, *sahokti*) is used, defined as "a figure in which two separate things or ideas are represented as conjoined or occurring at once."[224] On the one hand, Shuchen's poetry is described as being pleasing to the ear, tinkling like

222. Gerow 1971, 265.
223. Gerow 1971, 286.
224. Gerow 1971, 320.

bells; on the other hand, he describes the moon rising to the peak of a mountain, an image that symbolizes the achievement of an elevated spiritual status. The juxtaposition of these two descriptions—the dulcet sound of his composed verses and the pure vision glistening on a mountain top—gives the reader a sense of these two occurrences being linked to each other in some way. Even if a causal relationship is not given, there is a sense of a corollary being established between the two, such that the reader understands that Shuchen's efforts to compose *nyenngak* are somehow related to his ability to have a glimpse of realization.

[35] The poet indirectly mentions his ultimate intention in making this composition

The *alaṃkāra* of **oblique statement of intention** (*rnam grangs brjod pa*, *paryāyokta*) is employed here. This is "a figure in which a speaker conveys his intention without reference to the evident motive which prompts his utterance; oblique reference."[225] For a Tibetan Buddhist, the ultimate intention for engaging in any activity is usually couched in the Mahāyāna aspiration of *bodhicitta*, the wish to achieve enlightenment for the sake of benefitting all other sentient beings. Any Buddhist reader of the poem would expect Shuchen to say that bringing benefit to other beings is his intention for exerting so much effort in composing this elaborate poem. Instead of directly saying so, however, he references *bodhicitta* in an oblique and unexpected way. When he says, "I have indeed been skirting the altruistic intention, steering clear of it," he is saying that he does *not* have the altruistic intention of *bodhicitta*, and that Sarasvatī, the "[t]ough lady who knows [his] internal self-cherishing," sees right through him. Yet by bringing up altruism, he brings attention to the fact that this is, of course, a preoccupation for him. Thus, by obliquely and self-effacingly saying that he has *not* been living up to the ideals of someone on the bodhisattva path, we know that his intention is in fact altruistic after all.

[36] Sarasvatī's tirelessness is commended

Here, Sarasvatī's qualities are compared to the Gaṅgā River's inexhaustibility using the 30th *alaṃkāra* of **demonstration** (*nges bstan*, *nidarśanā*), wherein "a particular situation is translated into a general truth."[226] Shuchen articulates a very specific situation by saying that Sarasvatī's excellent qualities are as indefatigable as the mighty river's continuous and relentless movement. This comparison itself is a positive appraisal of her abilities, but our poet goes a step further and translates the situation into a general truth: what she teaches is so profound that it goes beyond even the teachings of the bodhisattvas.

[37] The poet directly addresses his intention for writing the poem

225. Gerow 1971, 205.

226. This is "a figure in which a particular situation is translated into a general truth, and a moral is drawn which is based upon the mode of action and the ultimate tendency of that situation" (Gerow 1971, 201).

Here, unlike in stanza 35, Shuchen states his intention in a direct way. Utilizing the *alaṃkāra* of **intention** (*dgongs pa can*, *bhāvika*), whereby "the coherence of the entire work [is stated] in a clear and realistic unity," [227] he says that he has given examples of *alaṃkāras* even though he does not yet have the ability to truly explain the *Mirror of Poetics* correctly. Even so, he has written this poem, which gives examples of every *alaṃkāra*, "for the sake of engaging in the eye of wisdom." His desire to "engage the eye of wisdom" is the most obvious intention of the poem. The entire exercise of composing this poem has for him been an exercise in expanding his wisdom and intellectual capacity.

[38] The poet describes what he has offered to Sarasvatī and what he wishes for in return

As we near the end of the poem, Shuchen utilizes the *alaṃkāra* of **reciprocity** (*yongs brjes*, *parivṛtti*) to express that there is something he wishes for in return for praising Sarasvatī. This *alaṃkāra* is simply "a figure expressing non-literally an exchange of ideas or things."[228] What he offers are linguistic ornamentations, all of which are contained within the poem itself: well-wrought compounds, sophisticated prosody, and the polished use of *alaṃkāras*. What he wants in return is unobstructed intelligence in the ten fields of knowledge. By offering what he thinks will please Sarasvatī, Shuchen hopes to garner her favor and become skilled at the disciplines over which she governs. The purpose of his literary endeavors, of painstakingly producing poetry that is replete with the qualities of aesthetic refinement, is so that he can be skilled in the various disciplines of knowledge. This is not poetry for poetry's sake, but poetry as a means to greater learning and intellectual accomplishment.

[39] The poet announces his aspiration to be equal to Sarasvatī

Using the *alaṃkāra* of **repetition** (*bskor ba*, *āvṛtti*), which is "the repetition of a word or an idea in the same or closely related phrase," Shuchen praises Sarasvatī.[229] Eppling describes the specific subcategory that Shuchen employs, the "repetition of meaning" (*don la bskor ba*, *artha-āvṛtti*), as a type of repetition wherein "different words in parallel sentences 'repeat' essentially the same sense."[230] In the case of this stanza, the repetition occurs in each line, with Shuchen using a different synonym for Sarasvatī in each one: *tshangs sras lus phra* ("the slender-waisted daughter of Brahmā") in the first line,[231] *dbyangs can* ("the One Who Dwells in Song") in the second, *mtsho byung* ("the Lake-Arisen One") in the third, and *ngag dbang lha mo* ("the Goddess of Speech") in the fourth. Through the force of this repetition, Sarasvatī's various qualities are emphasized, as is

227. Gerow 1971, 220.
228. Gerow 1971, 203.
229. Gerow 1971, 128.
230. Eppling 1989, 730.
231. I am following the order in which they appear in the Tibetan original here, not the order they appear in the translation.

Shuchen's wish that he might become equal to the goddess. Though seemingly hubristic, this is a standard Tibetan sentiment that is in line with the arrogance that a tantric practitioner must have to engage in deity yoga.[232] In fact, one might even say that this entire poem could be viewed as an elaborate poetic exercise in the generation stage of visualizing Sarasvatī as a meditational deity. Throughout the poem, using *alaṃkāras* Shuchen has carefully generated a three-dimensional and multi-faceted image of Sarasvatī, both in terms of her physical form and her internal qualities. Now, at the end, he concludes this visualization by requesting to become equal to her. In this wish to become just like her, we see echoes of completion stage practice. For Shuchen, Sarasvatī is not just an external image to be worshipped, but one that has the potential to become inseparable from himself.

[40] The poet casts his benediction widely to all who teach the Dharma

In the penultimate stanza of the poem, Shuchen uses the *alaṃkāra* of **benediction** (*shis brjod*, *āśiṣ*), which is "a figure expressing a wish for prosperity, good fortune, or reconciliation."[233] He asks for the bestowal of blessings from all the learned teachers of the Dharma and wishes for auspiciousness to prevail across time and space. By asking them to bestow auspiciousness at the conclusion of this poem, he is casting these Buddhist poets and intellectuals as the receptacles of Sarasvatī's inspiration and qualities.

[41] The poet ends with a metaphorical benediction praising Sarasvatī

Shuchen notes that this final stanza could be interpreted as the *alaṃkāra* of **metaphor** or the *alaṃkāra* of **benediction**. This is because while this stanza is clearly a benediction, the benediction is conveyed through metaphor by returning to the image of Sarasvatī as a nectar-laden white lotus. She is the lotus from whom all beings wish to collect the delicious essence of poetic wisdom. Shuchen beseeches her to continue singing her far-reaching song (*rgyang glu*) for the sake of our collective happiness.

[B] The colophon describing the circumstances of the poem's composition

As is standard for Tibetan colophons, this is a prose statement of the circumstances of the text's composition. As mentioned earlier, though Shuchen does not give a date, this must have been written between 1725–1727, the two years during which he visited the Ngor Evaṃ Chöden Monastery in his lifetime. This was a pivotal time in the life of Shuchen, for it was at Ngor in 1725 that he was given the name Tsultrim Rinchen (given in its Sanskritized form Śīlaratna here) and in 1726 he

232. See the Tibetan term *lha'i nga rgyal*, literally "arrogance/pride of the deity," sometimes translated as "divine pride." This is the type of pure confidence that a tantric practitioner must have in order to practice deity yoga wherein one visualizes oneself *as* the tutelary deity.

233. Gerow 1971, 129.

was asked to be secretary to the retired 31st abbot of Ngor, Tashi Lhundrup (bkra shis lhun grub, abbacy 1725–1730).[234] This secretarial assignment would change the course of Shuchen's life and career. In 1727, when the king of Dergé, Tenpa Tsering (bstan pa tshe ring, 1678–1738), asks Tashi Lhundrup to serve as court chaplain at Dergé, Shuchen follows as his secretary.[235] It is for this reason that Shuchen arrives at Dergé Monastery, where he spends the rest of his life and eventually establishes himself as a "great editor" of the Dergé Publishing House. It is possible that this "Pond of Blossoming White Lotuses" had a role to play in this career trajectory—perhaps the mastery of linguistic abilities that he demonstrates in this poem was one of the reasons he is recommended for the role of secretary to Tashi Lhundrup in the first place. If so, then this ornamental ode to Sarasvatī may have helped to pave Shuchen's path to a decorated career at Dergé.

234. Tshul khrims rin chen 1971, 389.

235. Tshul khrims rin chen 1971, 400–404.

Bibliography

Tibetan Language Works

Tshul khrims rin chen (1697–1774). 1971. *Chos smra ba'i bande tshul khrims rin chen du bod pa'i skye ba phal pa'i rkang 'thung dge sdig 'dres ma'i las kyi yal ga phan tshun du 'dzings par bde sdug gi lo 'dab dus kyi rgyal mos re mos su bsgyur ba* in *The Autobiography of Tshul-khrims-rin-chen of Sde-dge and Other of His Selected Writings.* Delhi: N. Lungtok & N. Gyaltsan. http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW23862.

English Language Works

Bhum, Pema and Janet Gyatso. 2023. "*Mirror* on Fire: An Ardent Reception in Tibet and Mongolia." In *A Lasting Vision: Dandin's Mirror in the World of Asian Letters*, edited by Yigal Bronner. New York, online edn, Oxford Academic, accessed 6 Jul, 2025. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197642924.003.0007

Bronner, Yigal. 2023. "Dandin's Magic *Mirror.*" In *A Lasting Vision: Dandin's Mirror in the World of Asian Letters*, edited by Yigal Bronner. New York, online edn, Oxford Academic, accessed 6 Jul, 2025. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197642924.003.0002.

Chen, Joie Szu-Chiao. Forthcoming 2026. "A Culture of Polymaths: Shuchen Tsultrim Rinchen (1697–1774) and the Tibetan Buddhist Pursuit of Comprehensive Knowledge." PhD dissertation, Harvard University.

Deshpande, Madhav M. 2014. *A Sanskrit Primer*. Ann Arbor, MI: Center for South Asian Studies, University of Michigan.

Eppling, John Frederick. 1989. "A Calculus of Creative Expression: The central chapter of Daṇḍin's 'Kāvyādarśa." PhD dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Gerow, Edwin. 1971. *A Glossary of Indian Figures of Speech*. The Hague: Mouton.

Gold, Jonathan. 2007. *The Dharma's Gatekeepers: Sakya Paṇḍita on Buddhist Scholarship in Tibet*. Albany, NY: State University of New York.

Hill, Nathan W. 2020. "Languages: Tibetan." In *Brill's Encyclopedia of Buddhism Online*, edited by Jonathan A. Silk, Richard Bowring, and Vincent Eltschinger. Accessed September 15, 2025. https://doi.org/10.1163/2467-9666_enbo_COM_0083

Jabb, Lama. 2015. *Oral and Literary Continuities in Modern Tibetan Literature: The Inescapable Nation.* Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

Lin, Nancy. 2023. "What Language We Dare Learn and Speak: Decolonizing the Study of Tibetan

Poetry." In *Living Treasure: Buddhist and Tibetan Studies in Honor of Janet Gyatso*, edited by Holly Gayley and Andrew Quintman, 323–336. Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications.

Ludvik, Catherine. 2007. *Sarasvatī: Riverine Goddess of Knowledge: From the Manuscript-carrying vīṇā-player to the weapon-wielding defender of the Dharma*. Leiden: Brill.

Martin, Dan. 2014. "Indian *Kāvya* Poetry on the Far Side of the Himālayas: Translation, Transmission, Adaptation, Originality." In *Innovations and Turning Points: Toward a History of Kāvya* Literature, edited by Yigal Bronner, David Shulman, and Gary Tubb, 563–608. New Delhi, India: Oxford University Press.

Scarry, Elaine. 1999. *On Beauty and Being Just.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Tshe tan zhabs drungs 'Jigs med rigs pa'i blo gro (1910–1985). Unpublished provisional translation, 2022. "Snyan ngag me long gi spyi don sdeb legs rig pa'i char sgo." Translated by Nicole Willock and Gedun Rabsal. Edited by Nicole Willock. Provided through personal communications.

Willock, Nicole. 2011. *Lineages of the Literary: Tibetan Buddhist Polymaths of Socialist China*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Tibetan Critical Edition of “Pond of Blossoming White Lotuses”

སྒྲ་དབྱངས་ལྟ་མོ་དབྱངས་ཅན་མ་ལ་བསྟཁས་པ་དོན་རྒྱན་པརྒྱ་དཀར་པོ་བཞད་པའི་རྗིང་བུ་བཞུགས་སོ།

ན་མསྟུརྒུ་ཎྱ་དྷ་ཡ། [i]

རབ་འབྱམས་ཚོས་ཀུན་སྐྱེན་པའི་གླུ་ལེན་མཁན།
།དྲན་པས་[236]ངག་གི་དངོས་གྲུབ་ཡོངས་སྐྱེལ་བ།
།ཡིད་འཕྲོག་མཚོ་བྱང་བླ་བ་གསར་པ་དང་།
།དབྱེར་མེད་དཔལ་ལྡན་བླ་མ་ལ་བཏུད་ནས།
།རྒྱལ་ཡུམ་སྒྲ་དབྱངས་དབྱངས་ཅན་ངག་གི་ལྷུན།
།བསྟཁས་བརྗོད་དོན་རྒྱན་རྒྱན་འོས་པརྒྱ་དཀར།
།ཚར་དུ་དངར་བཞད་བཞད་པའི་རྗིང་བུ་འདི།
།སྐྱེན་ཚོགས་སྒྲ་མཁས་མཁས་པའི་རྗེས་འབྲངས་བརྩམས། [A]

།དཀུ་པ་སྲིད་པ་ཅན་ལས་ཕྱིའི་རྒྱུ་ཆུང་ཟད་དང་བཅས་འབྲས་བུ་རང་གི་ངོ་བོ་ཉིད་སྟོན་པའི་སྲིད་པ་ཅན་ནི།
།ཚོན་གྱིས་མ་བསྒྱས་རབ་སྟོ་ཚུ་གཏེར་འགྲམ།
།མཆད་ཞུན་མས་བྱན་མིན་སྤུང་ལྕང་[237]ཚལ།
།བཟང་བྱུག་ཕྱེ་མ་མ་བཀྲམ་དྲི་བསུང་འཕྲུལ།
།གཞན་རྣོན་མ་མཐོང་དགོད་པའི་མེ་ཏོག་ཁྲིད། [1]

།ཉེར་བརྒྱད་བསྣབ་མིན་བསྟོད་པ་ནི།
།ཞིང་དེར་འཕྲུར་ལྷིང་གཡོ་བའི་ཤང་བྱ་ཚོགས།
།འདིར་སྣང་ཡུད་ཙམ་བདེ་ལ་ཞི་གྲགས་འབྱེར།
།འདོད་པས་ལུས་སེམས་མནར་དུབ་དོགས་མེད་པར།
།སྤང་རྩིས་འཚོ་བའི་སྣང་སེམས་བདེ་ཉམས་ལ། [2]

།གསུམ་པ་གཟུགས་ཅན་གྱི་རྒྱུན་ལས་མཐའ་དག་གི་གཟུགས་ཅན་ནི།
།དེ་དུབྱས་པད་སྟོང་གར་མཁན་ལུས་ཐུ་མས།
།ཆེ་ཏེག་སེན་མོས་སྤྲས་པའི་ཡལ་གा་དང་།
།ཁོ་འདབ་ལགा་པའི་བྱོས་གར་བསྒུར་བ་དེས།
།འདབ་སྟོང་དཀར་པོའི་བཞིན་རས་ངོམ་པའི་རྩེར། [3]

236. [B] དྲན་པའི་
237. [B] སྟོངས་

།སོ་བཞི་པ་རབ་སྦྱིལ་ལས་གཅིག་བརྒྱན་གྱི་རབ་སྦྱིལ་ནི།
།འོ་མཚོ་འཁྱིལ་འདུ་ཟླ་བའི་དཀྱིལ་འཁོར་གྱིས།
།བཏེགས་པའི་ཙོག་ཤུར་ཞབས་གཉིས་འཁོར་ལོའི་ལག
།རིན་ཆེན་ཤང་གདུབ་བཟླབས་ཚེ་[238]གདེངས་ཅན་དབང་།
།ངོ་ཚས་གནམ་འཕྲོའི་སྤོང་དུ་ཡིབས་ཀྱིས་དོགས། [4]

།དང་པོ་རང་བཞིན་བརྗོད་པའི་རྒྱུན་ལས་རིགས་རང་བཞིན་བརྗོད་པ་ནི།
།བྱང་གི་ལོགས་སྐྱེས་མངོན་མཐོ་བཙུ་དྲུག་ལོར།
།གནས་པའི་ན་ཚོད་དར་བབ་སྐེག་མོའི་སྐུ།
།བལྟ་ན་མི་ངོམ་མཚན་དཔེའི་སྐང་བ་འདུམ།
།འབར་བའི་མཚར་སྟུག་ལྟ་མོ་དབྱངས་ཅན་མ། [5]

།གསུམ་པ་གཟུགས་ཅན་གྱི་རྒྱུན་ལས་བསྟན་པའི་གཟུགས་ཅན་ནི།
།རྒྱལ་གསུང་གསང་བ་མི་ཟད་ཆུ་ཡི་གཏེར།
།བསྡུབས་སྐྱེས་སྐྱིང་པོ་མཁྱེན་རབ་དཀྱིལ་འཁོར་ཆ།
།གང་བའི་ཡིད་འཕྲོག་སྐང་བཆུན་སྟོན་དུས་བྱ།
།སྐལ་བཟང་ཡིད་མཁར་རྟག་ཏུ་བགྱིད་པ་མཁན། [6]

།གཉིས་པ་དེ་རྒྱུན་ལས་དང་པོ་ཚོས་དེའི་ནི།
།ཡོན་པོར་ལྟ་བྱེད་དཀྱུས་སུ་རིང་བའི་སྤྱན།
།ནམ་པར་གཡོ་བའི་སྐེག་འཕྲོམ་ཞལ་གྱི་ཁྱིམ།
།ཤང་དུག་ཁྱོ་ཤྲག་ཚྭོས་པའི་འཕྱང་ལྷིང་སྟོང་།
།བསྐྱར་བའི་འདམ་སྐྱེས་ལྟ་བུར་མཇོས་ཤིང་དཀར། [7]

།གཉིས་པ་དངོས་པོའི་དེའི་ནི།
།གཙུག་ལག་རབ་འབྱམས་འཆང་མཁས་མཆུ་ཡི་[239]སྤྲོས།
།འཕྲོམ་དབུས་དཀར་ལ་ཐགས་བཟང་བཞི་བཀྲའི་ཚེམས།
།པད་སྣ་རྣ་གའི་ནགས་སྒྲུང་ཤམས་དགའ་བར།
།ཟླ་འོད་ཁྲབ་པའི་ཀུ་སུམ་བཞད་པ་བཞིན། [8]

།དགུ་པ་ནང་གི་རྒྱུ་ཆུང་ཟད་དང་བཅས་རབ་ཏུ་གྲགས་པའི་རྒྱུ་བཀག་ནས་འབྲས་བུ་རང་[240]གི་ངོ་བོ་ཉིད་སྟོན་པའི་སྡིད་པ་ཅན་ནི།
།བྱེད་པོས་མ་བདར་ཐུ་ལྷེམ་སྐུ་ཡི་ཤེད།
།ཟླ་ཞུན་ཁུ་བས་སྤྲགས་མིན་དཀར་མདངས་འཚེར།

238. [D] [DG] [K] The syllable ཚེ་ is not present in these editions.
239. [D] མཆུ་ལ་ This second syllable looks like it was altered by hand.
240. [D] དང་

།ཚོན་པར་རྩེ་ཡིས་མ་བྲིས་རྩིབས་སྦྱོང་གི།
།འོག་ལོས་མཚན་པ་ཁྱོད་ཀྱི་ཕྱག་ཞབས་མཛེལ། [9]

།བནུ་གཉིས་པ་རབ་བརྟག་[241]གི་རྒྱན་ལས་སེམས་མེད་རབ་བརྟག་[242]ནི།
།སྐུ་ཡི་སྦྱོང་སྣང་སྤྲིབ་བྲེད་གཅེར་ལས་སྐྱོབ།
།དྲངས་[243]གསལ་གཡོ་བས་མཁའ་ལ་བག་ཡངས་སུ།
།རྒྱུ་བའི་སྤྲིན་དཀར་སྐྱེངས་ཏེ་འཇུམ་པའི་མདངས།
།འཁྱུར་ནས་རྟུལ་ཀྱི་ཐོགས་ཆུ་འཛོག་པ་འདྲ། [10]

།གཅིག་པ་རང་བཞིན་བརྗོད་པ་ལས་རྗེས་ཀྱི་རང་བཞིན་བརྗོད་པ་ནི།
།གསེར་བཟང་པྲ་ཏ་འཁྱིལ་དབུས་ནོར་བུའི་ཐྲ།
།སྣ་ཚོགས་བགོད་པའི་སོར་གདུབ་ཁོང་གསིང་ལས།
།འཛོན་པའི་འཇམ་མཉེན་ཕྱག་སོར་གཡོ་ལྷེམ་[244]རྩེར།
།སྦྱོང་ཐག་རྒྱུད་ལྡན་བོ་ཏྲའི་བི་ཁང་མཛོས། [11]

།ཉེར་གསུམ་པ་བསྟོན་དོར་ལས་ཚོས་ལ་བསྟོན་པ་ནི།
།དེ་ལས་བྱང་བའི་སྟན་འཇེབས་སྐྲ་དབྱངས་འདི།
།ལུས་ཅན་རྣོངས་པ་ལས་བསྐང་ནུས་པའི་ཕུལ།
།གདོད་ནས་གྲབ་པ་ཉིད་མིན་རྒྱལ་གྱུན་ཀྱིས།
།ལེགས་གསུངས་ཆོས་ཕུང་མཐའ་དག་བརྒྱས་པར་ངེས། [12]

།བནུ་གཅིག་པ་ཕུལ་བྱུང་གི་རྒྱན་ལས་ཁྲད་འཕགས་ཕུལ་བྱུང་ནི།
།འགག་མེད་རྩོ་རྗེའི་རང་བཞིན་སྐྲ་འཇོག་དཔྱིད།
།མཁའ་དུས་གྲངས་མཉམ་ཡན་ལག་རྣོགས་པའི་གསུང་།
།ཞིང་མང་རྒྱལ་བ་མཆིས་སོ་ཅོག་གི་དབྱངས།
།གཅིག་ཏུ་སྤྲངས་ཀྱང་བརྒྱ་སྦྱོང་ཚར་མི་འགྲན། [13]

།བརྒྱད་པ་ལྷོག་པ་ཅན་ལས་གཅིག་གིས་ལྷོག་[245]པ་ཅན་ནི།
།འཁྱུར་ཁྲགས་སྐྱན་པའི་དཔལ་འཇོ་ཀུན་གྱི་ཡིད།
།འགུགས་བྱེད་མཐྱིན་པ་ལས་སྐྱེས་ཚངས་དབྱངས་དང་།
།དྲི་ཟའི་རྒྱུད་མངས་སྐྲ་མཚུངས་ཁྱོད་ཀྱི་གསུང་།

241. [B] རབ་རྟོག་
242. [B] རབ་རྟོག་
243. [D] [DG] དངས་
244. [B] ལྡན་ There is a formatting mistake in this edition where this verse is rendered in the smaller font that is reserved for use in the stanza headings wherein the *alaṃkāra* used is indicated.
245. *[K] [S] ལྡོག་

།ལེགས་བཤད་སྙིང་པོའི་འབྱོར་བས་[246]ཐ་དད་དབྱེ། [14]

།བཅུ་གཉིས་པ་རབ་བརྟག་[247]ལས་སེམས་མེད་རབ་བརྟག་[248]ནི།
།ཇི་ལྟ་ཇི་སྙེད་མཁྱེན་པའི་ཐུགས་ཀྱི་མཐའ།
།འཚོལ་འདོད་དབང་པོས་ཡོས་འདྲེན་བྱེད་སྤྲོང་སྤུལ་ཡང་།
།མ་མངོན་རང་མཚོང་རྟོག་སྐྱེས་བསམ་གཏན་འདིས།
།གཉིད་ཟུགས་གོ་སྐབས་ཐུལ་བ་[249]ཡིན་ནམ་སྐྱེས། [15]

།ཉེར་ལྟ་པ་ཁྱད་པར་བརྗོད་པ་ལས་ཡོན་ཏན་མ་ཚང་བའི་ཁྱད་པར་བརྗོད་པ་ནི།
།བཟོད་དཀའི་[250]ཆོར་མའི་རྒྱབ་དང་སྦུ་གྲིའི་སོ།
།རྐོ་གདུག་ངར་[251]དང་མི་ལྟེན་དེ་ལྟ་ནའང་།
།ཁྱོད་ཐུགས་རྣམ་པར་མི་རྟོག་ཡེ་ཤེས་ཀྱིས།
།གཉིས་སྣང་འཁྲུལ་བ་[252]མ་ཡུས་དབྱིངས་སུ་ཀྱུབས། [16]

།བདུན་པ་དོན་གཞན་བཤོད་པ་ལས་ཀུན་ཁྱབ་ཀྱི་དོན་གཞན་བཤོད་པ་ནི།
།ཤེས་བྱའི་གནས་ལུགས་ཇི་སྙེད་མཁྱེན་དབྱིངས་སུ།
།དོག་མེད་ཆུད་ལ་འགྲོ་[253]འདི་ཡ་མཚན་ཅི།
།དུས་གསུམ་གཟིགས་པས་མ་གཞལ་ཤེས་བྱ་ཞིག
།ལོགས་ན་མེད་པ་རང་གི་ཚོས་ཉིད་ཡིན། [17]

།བཅུ་བདུན་པ་དགའ་བའི་རྒྱན་ལས་དངོས་ཐོབ་ཀྱི་དགའ་བ་ནི།
།གསང་གསུམ་བྱིན་རླབས་ཟེགས་མ་སྙིང་གི་དབུས།
།རེག་པས་དེང་བདག་སྣོན་ངག་སྒྲ་བ་ལ།
།ཐོགས་མེད་དགའ་བ་གསར་པ་འདི་ནི་སླར།
།ཁྱོད་མིན་ལྟ་བརྒྱའི་དྲིན་ལས་ཅི་སྲིད་ཐོབ། [18]

།བཅུ་བྱག་པ་རིམ་པ་ཅན་གྱི་རྒྱན་ནི།
།དཀར་གསལ་མཛེས་སྤུ་འགྱུར་ཁུགས་སྐྱེན་པའི་གསུང་།
།ཤེས་བྱའི་གནས་ལུགས་རྗེན་པར་འཆར་བའི་ཐུགས།

---

246. [K] [S] པས་ [D] [DG] It is difficult to discern whether the syllable is བས་ or པས་.
247. [B] རྐོག་
248. [B] རྐོག་
249. [B] བྱལ་བ་
250. [D] [DG] [K] [S] དཀའ་
251. [K] [S] རང་ [DG] It is unclear if it is རང་ or ངར་, though [D], which is a fascimile of [DG] with some changes likely made by hand, clearly reads ངར་.
252. [D] [DG] [K] [S] པ་
253. [B] འཕྲོ་ [DG] The print is not clear; could be འགྲོ་ or འཕྲོ་.

།ཉ་གང་སྡོན་ཟླ་ག་ལ་པིརྐའི་དབྱངས།
།དྲངས་[254]ཤེལ་མེ་ལོང་གཙང་མས་ཡིད་རབ་འཕྲོག [19]

།བཅོ་བཆུད་ཉམས་ལྡན་ཀྱི་རྒྱན་ལས་དགའ་བའི་འགྱུར་བ་སྐྱེག་པའི་ཉམས་ནི།
།གང་གི་ཞལ་ཁྱིམ་དྲན་ཆམས་གྱེན་དགའ་བཆུས།
།ཡིད་དབང་གཡོས་པར་མ་བཟོད་ལགེ་སོར་བཅུ།
།སྐྱིང་གར་བཅིངས་ཏེ་སྤངས་རྟོགས་ཡོན་ཏན་ཚར།
།བསྟགས་བརྗོད་གཏམ་ཀྱིས་ས་སྟེང་འདར་ཉམས་སྡོན། [20]

།བཅུ་དགུ་པ་གཟི་བརྗིད་ཅན་ཀྱི་རྒྱན་ནི།
།ས་གསུམ་འགྲོ་བ་ལས་རྒྱལ་ལུས་མེད་སྟེ།
།ཚམ་མཇད་དབྱངས་ཀྱི་རྒྱལ་མོའི་ནུས་སྡོངས་ལ།
།དངངས་སྐྱག་ཆེན་པོ་སྐྱངས་ཤིག་ཉམ་ཆུང་རྣམས།
།སྐྱིང་རྗེ་གཏིང་ནས་འཁྱགས་པས་རྗེས་སུ་འཛིན། [21]

།བཞི་པ་གསལ་བྱེད་ཀྱི་རྒྱན་ལས་རིགས་བརྗོད་པ་ཐོག་མའི་གསལ་བྱེད་ནི།
།མཁྱེན་ཡངས་དཔལ་མོ་ཁྱོད་ཀྱིས་འགྲོ་མང་གི།
།སྐྱིང་ལ་ཉལ་བའི་མི་ཤེས་རྣོངས་ཚོགས་འཇོམས།
།ཆོས་ཀུན་མཐིན་པའི་ལམ་ནས་སྐྱན་འགྱུར་ཏོ།
།བརྟས་པའི་ཚོག་སྐྱན་སྨྲ་བའི་དབང་ཕྱུག་བྱེད། [22]

།བཅུ་པ་བསྡུས་བརྗོད་ཀྱི་རྒྱན་ལས་སྦྱི་ཙམ་ཀྱི་བསྡུས་བརྗོད་ནི།
།གདུང་བ་ཀུན་འཕྲོག་བདུད་རྩིའི་ཟེགས་མ་འདུམ།
།འཇོག་པའི་ཀུན་ཐན་ཉིད་ལ་མི་རེ་བར།
།དོད་ཀྱིས་རེག་པ་ལན་རེས་རྣིང་བྱེད་པའི།
།མེ་ཏོག་གཏན་ཀྱི་མཇོས་རྒྱན་འདོད་འགའ་འབྱུལ། [23]

།བཅུ་བཞི་པ་ཐུ་མོའི་རྒྱན་ལས་ཟུར་ཀྱི་ཐུ་མོ་ནི།
།སྐྱེ་ཀུན་གཡོ་སྐྱུ་འཁྱལ་གཏམ་སྤངས་པའི་ལས།
།མཐར་སོན་སྤྱིག་སྤྲིབ་སྤྱབ་པའི་[255]སྐལ་བཟང་འགའ།
།མཐོང་ཚེ་མཆེག་སྤྱིན་ཕྱག་རྒྱའི་མཁྱིག་མ་ལས།
།གཡེར་ཁ་གདུབ་སོལ་འཐབ་པའི་སྐྱ་ཡང་ངོམ། [24]

།བཅུ་གསུམ་པ་རྒྱ་རྒྱན་ལས་སྐྱེད་ཅིང་འབྲུབ་པའི་རྒྱ་ནི།

254. [D] [DG] དངས་
255. [B] བསྐྱབ་པའི་

།གང་གིས་སྒྲུབ་[256]མིན་ཐུགས་རྗེ་ཆེན་པོས་འགྲོར།
།བཅུ་ཐག་ཤེས་[257]བྱ་རིག་བའི་དཀའ་གནད་སྤོངས་པ་སོགས།
།འགྲོལ་བའི་ཤེས་རབ་གཟུངས་དང་སྤོབས་པ་སོགས།
།སྟོན་མེད་བློ་གོས་བསྐྱེད་པའི་ནུས་པ་རྣམ། [25]

།དྲུག་པ་འགོག་རྒྱུ་ལས་འདས་པཉམ་བྱང་བ་འགོག་པ་ནི།
།སྣ་དབང་དཀྲིའི་ངག་ཀུན་སྐྱེན་ཚོག་སྐྱེར།
།ཤར་བ་ཁྲོད་གཅིག་དྲིན་དུ་སྨྲོགས་པ་རྗུན།
།འོན་ཏེ་ཡིད་ལ་དྲན་པ་ཙམ་རེས་ཀྱང་།
།ངག་ལ་འཇིགས་མེད་མཐུ་ལྡན་བྱེད་པར་ངེས། [26]

།བཅོ་ལྔ་པ་ཚའི་[258]རྒྱུ་ལས་འོས་པའི་ཚ་རྒྱུ་ནི།
།ཡོངས་ཀྱི་བློ་འཕེལ་མ་འདིས་རྩོངས་ཆེན་འགྲོ།
།ཞལ་ཆེར་བཏང་སྙོམས་བཞག་འདི་ཤེས་བྱ་ལ།
།སྟོན་སྣང་ཡོད་མེད་མཐུ་ལས་མཁས་བླུན་དག
།འབྱུང་བ་རྒྱ་འཕྲས་ཆོས་ཉིད་བཙན་པས་ཡིན། [27]

།བཅོ་བརྒྱད་པ་ཀུན་ཚན་ཀྱི་རྒྱུ་ནི།
།ཡང་དག་དོན་ཀྱི་གནས་ལུགས་མཚར་པོ་ཆེ།
།སྒྲིབ་བྱེད་རྩོངས་ཚོགས་སེལ་བའི་གཉེན་པོ་ཞིག
།ཡིད་ལ་བྱས་ཚེ་[259]རྒྱལ་རྣམས་མཐོན་གཅིག་ཏུ།
།བསྟགས་པའི་ལྟ་ཁྲིད་སྟོན་ལས་སྐལ་བས་ཐོབ། [28]

།ཉེར་གཉིས་པ་རྒྱ་ཆེ་བའི་རྒྱུ་ལས་བསམ་པ་རྒྱ་ཆེ་ནི།
།སྲིད་ན་ཆེ་མཐོ་ལྟ་བརྒྱའི་དོ་གེར་ཏོག
།ཞབས་ཀྱིས་གནོན་པའི་དཔག་ཡས་མཐུ་མངའ་ཡང་།
།ཐུབ་གསུང་བཤད་སྐྱབ་བྱེད་པའི་བློ་འཕེལ་གྱོགས།
།དམ་བཅས་རྗེས་དགོངས་རྩོངས་ཆེན་བྱན་ལ་བརྩོན། [29]

།ཉེར་བཞི་པ་སྐྱབ་བའི་རྒྱུ་ལས་ཆོག་ཐ་དད་མིན་པའི་སྐྱབ་བ་ནི།
།གཡོ་ལྷེམ་[260]ལུས་སྤའི་གང་གིས་མངོན་རོལ་བའི།
།དཀར་མཛོས་མཆོ་བྱང་སྨིན་ལེགས་ལང་ཚོ་ཅན།

256. [D] སྒྲུབ་ The consonant looks like it may have been changed by hand.
257. [D] [DG] ཤས་ The vowel mark may not have printed properly.
258. [D] ཚོའི་ The vowel appears to have been altered by hand.
259. [D] ཚོ་ The vowel appears to have been altered by hand.
260. [B] ལྟན་

།འཇྲོམ་ཐེང་གཡོ་བའི་ཁྲོད་ནས་ངག་སྐྱབ་ཀྱི།
།ལེན་པས་རིས་མེད་འགྲོ་ལ་དགའ་སྟོན་གྱེལ། [30]

།ཉེར་དྲུག་པ་མཚུངས་སྦྱོར་ལས་བསྟོད་པའི་མཚུངས་སྦྱོར་ནི།
།སྟོ་ཐུགས་མ་ལ་ཡ་ཆུང་བྱ་བའི་ཟེར།
།གང་ཀྱི་ཉལ་འགྲོ་དབྱངས་ཅན་ཐུགས་རྗེ་ཆགས།
།རེག་པས་གདུང་བ་ཡོངས་བཅོམ་ནུས་པའི་ཕྱུལ།
།གྲགས་སྐྱབ་[261]བྱོ་ལྡན་རྒྱུ་བོའི་ངག་ལས་ཆེད། [31]

།ཉེར་བདུན་པ་འགལ་བའི་ཆུན་ལས་གཞི་ཐ་དད་པའི་བྱ་བ་འགལ་བ་ནི།
།དེ་ཚེ་དྲན་དབང་ཚོགས་ཆམས་དགའ་བ་བརྒྱས།
།སྐྱེས་པའི་སྐབ་འགྱུར་ཚེགས་གི་བྱུ་ལེན་ཚེ།
།ཨེ་ཏེག་མདའ་དང་གནམ་རྟའི་འཁྱུལ་འགོར་གྱིས།
།ས་གསུམ་འཕམ་བྱེད་རྒྱག་བསྡལ་ཚོ་དེ་འཁྱིན། [32]

།ཉེར་དགུ་པ་རྩལ་བསྟོད་ཀྱི་ཆུན་ལས་སྨད་པའི་རྩལ་བསྟོད་ནི།
།སེམས་བཟལ་ཡིད་བཞིན་ནོར་འདིས་ཅི་འདོད་དངོས།
།འབད་མེད་སྤྲིན་པའི་མཐུ་སྟོབས་ཆེར་མངའ་ན།
།རང་གི་ལས་བྱངས་ཇི་བཞིན་འགྲོ་བའི་ངོར།
།དངོས་གྲུབ་སྒྲུབ་མར་གྱགས་ལ་ཅི་སྨད་བསྟེམས[262]། [33]

།སོ་གཅིག་པ་ལྔན་ཅིག་བརྗོད་པའི་ཆུན་ལས་ཡོན་ཏན་ལྔན་ཅིག་བརྗོད་པ་ནི།
།རིན་ཆེན་ཆུན་མང་འཁྲིལ་བའི་སྒྲ་དང་མཉམ།
།ཁོ་བོའི་དོན་ཆུན་བགོད་པའི་ཚོག་སྒྲོར་སྐྱེན།
།མཐོན་མཐིང་རལ་རྩེར་འཛོགས་པའི་བྱ་བ་དང་།
།ཆབས་[263]ཅིག་ཙོ་འཕང་འདོད་པའི་དག་སྣང་དགར། [34]

།ཉི་ཤུ་པ་རྣམ་གྲངས་བརྗོད་པའི་ཆུན་ནི།
།བདག་སྐྱིང་དབྱངས་སུ་གོགས་མཆོག་འཇམ་དཔལ་དང་།
།ལྷ་ཁྱོད་ཟག་མེད་བདེ་ལ་ཅི་དགར་རོལ།
།རང་ཉིད་གཅེས་འཛིན་ནང་ཤེས་ཐྱོང་[264]ཡོ་མ།
།གཞན་བན་སེམས་ལ་འཇུར་ཏེ་ལོགས་ཤིག་འགྱོ། [35]

261. [B] གྲགས་པའི་
262. [D] བསྟོམས The vowel mark seems to have been altered by hand.
263. [D] [DG] [K] [S] ཆད་
264. [B] [DG] [K] [S] གྱང་

།སྲུམ་ཙུ་པ་ངེས་བསྟན་གྱི་རྒྱན་ལས་མཆོག་གི་ངེས་བསྟན་ནི།
།ཅ་ཅོའི་སྒྲ་བཅས་གཏན་རྟག་ལ་གྱི་ཁྱེད།
།ཉིན་མཚན་ཁོང་ཡུག་འདྲེན་ཡང་ཟད་པའི་མཐའ།
།མེད་འདིས་ཁྱོད་ཀྱི་ཡོང་ཏན་རྫོགས་པའི་གྲངས།
།ས་བཅུའི་འཕགས་པས་བརྗོད་པའི་ཡུལ་[265]འདས་སྟོན། [36]

།སོ་ལྟ་པ་དགོངས་པ་ཅན་གྱི་རྒྱན་ནི།
།དེས་ན་མི་ཤེས་རྣོངས་པའི་སྐྱིང་གོགས་འདིས།
།མ་བཏང་དེ་སྲིད་སྐྱོན་བཟལ་མེ་ལོང་གཞྱེང་།
།འཆད་པའི་མཐུ་མེད་འོན་ཏེ་ཡེ་ཤེས་ཀྱི།
།གཟིགས་པ་འཇུག་ཕྱིར་དོན་རྟན་དཔེར་བརྗོད་བཀྱིས། [37]

།སོ་གཉིས་པ་ཡོངས་བརྗེས་ཀྱི་རྒྱན་ནི།
།བརྗོད་ཚུལ་ཐ་དད་རྒྱན་མང་འདུས་པའི་ཚོག
།སྟེབ་ལེགས་སྐྱན་འགྱུར་དབྱངས་ཀྱིས་མཆོད་པ་འདུལ།
།ཤེས་བྱ་བཅུ་ཐུགཔ་རིག་པའི་གནས་ཀུན་ལ།
།ཐོགས་མེད་མཁྱེན་པའི་བློ་གྲོས་སྤོབས་པ་སྟོལ། [38]

།ལྟ་པ་བསྐོར་བའི་རྒྱན་ལས་དོན་ལ་བསྐོར་བ་ནི།
།ཚངས་སྤྱས་ལུས་ཐུའི་མཇོས་སྐུ་ཡིད་ཀྱི་ངོས།
།ཉེར་བགོད་དབྱངས་ཅན་དགྱེས་པའི་ཚོག་སྟོར་གྱིས།
།མཚོ་བྱང་གསང་གསུམ་ཡོན་ཏན་ཕུང་པོའི་ཆར[266]།
།བསྟོད་པས་ངག་དབང་ལྷ་མོ་ཉིད་མཚུངས་ཤོག [39]

།སོ་གསུམ་པ་ཤེས་བརྗོད་ཀྱི་རྒྱན་ནི།
།འཆད་ཚོད་ཚོམ་དང་ལུང་རིགས་འགལ་འབྲེལ་གནད།
།སྟླ་དབང་བསྟན་འཛིན་ས་སྟེང་ཁྱབ་པའི་སྟེས།
།ཉེར་བསྟེན་ཆམ་འདྲེན་རིང་ལུགས་དྲི་མ་མེད[267]།
།སྲིད་མཐའི་བར་དུ་རྒྱས་པའི་བཀླ་ཤེས་སྟོལ། [40]

།གསུམ་པ་ཡང་ན་གཟུགས་ཅན་གྱི་ཤེས་བརྗོད་ནི།
།དེ་ལྟར་བསྟོད་པའི་ལེགས་བྱས་མཆྱར།[268]

265. [B] This edition has an extra syllable: བརྗོད་པའི་ཡུལ་ལས་འདས་སྟོན. This looks like a typo, since it adds an extra syllable to the line.
266. [K] [S] འཆར་
267. [D] [DG] [K] དྲིན་མེད།
268. [K] [S] མ་རྨྱ་ར།

རོ་མཆོག་བརྒྱ་ལྔན་འབྱིལ་བའི་པད་དུ་དཀར།
།མཁའ་མཉམ་ལུས་ཅན་བྱང་བས་སྐྱོང་བའི་[269]ཚེ།
།བདེ་སྐྱིད་རྒྱང་གྲུ་སྐྱན་པོ་ལེན་པར་ཤོག [41]

།དེ་ལྟར་སྨྲ་དབྱངས་ལྷ་མོ་དབྱངས་ཅན་མ་ལ་བསྟགས་པ་དོན་རྒྱན་པད་དཀར་བཞད་པའི་རྗེང་བུ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་འདི་ནི་དགེ་བའི་བཤེས་གཉེན་ཚུལ་ཁྲིམས་ཕུན་ཚོགས་ཀྱི་བཀའ་ནན་ལོ་ཉས་བསྒུལ་བར་མ་ལྷོག་ཅམ་དུ། །མོང་[270]རྒུལ་ཐུན་བུ་ཤི་ལ་རབྟ་ཞེས་བཀྱི་བས་རྒྱལ་བ་གཉེས་པ་རྗེ་རྗེ་འཆང་ཀུན་དགའ་བཟང་པོ་པའི་རྒྱལ་ཚབ་ཀྱི་སྐྱེས་བུ་རིམ་པར་བྱོན་པ་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་གསང་ཆེན་རྗོ་རྗེ་ཐེག་པའི་ཆོས་ཀྱི་འཁོར་ལོ་རྗེད་སྒྲིད་བསྐྲལ་པར་བསྐོར་བའི་འོག་མིན་གཉིས་པ་ཤྲཱི་ཨེ་ཁཾ་ཆོས་ལྡན་ཀྱི་དགོན་པ་ཞེས་གྲགས་པའི་བ་དན་དཀར་པོ་སྲིད་པ་གསུམ་ཀྱི་རྩེར་སྐྱེགས་པའི་དབེན་གནས་དམ་པར་བྱིས་པ། ཞེས་ན་མཁས་ལ་བཤགས་ཤིང་དགེ་བ་མཁའ་ཁྱབ་ཀྱི་འགྲོ་ལ་བསྔོའོ།། །། [B]

269. [K] [S] པའི་ [D] [DG] It is difficult to discern whether the syllable is བའི་ or པའི་.
270. [B] [K] [S] རྩོངས་

Editions Consulted

[D] Zhu chen Tshul khrims rin chen (1697–1774). 1972. "Sgra dbyangs lha mo dbyangs can ma la bsngags pa don rgyan pad+ma dkar po bzhad pa'i rdzing bu." In *Gsung 'bum / tshul khrims rin chen*, 1:181–90. New Delhi: Jamyang Norbu. http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW10347_8BCCDE.

[DG] ———. 2000. "Sgra dbyangs lha mo dbyangs can ma la bsngags pa don rgyan pad+ma dkar po bzhad pa'i rdzing bu." In *Gsung 'bum / tshul khrims rin chen* (*sde dge par ma*), 3:175–184. Sde dge dgon chen: Sde dge par khang. http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW1KG10853_92F1E2.

[B] ———. 2004. "Sgra dbyangs lha mo dbyangs can ma la bsngags pa don rgyan pad+ma dkar po bzhad pa'i rdzing bu." In *Snyan ngag*, 5:495–501. Pe cin: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang. http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW29979_91CF0D.

[K] ———. 2005. "Sgra dbyangs lha mo dbyangs can ma la bsngags pa don rgyan pad+ma dkar po bzhad pa'i rdzing bu." In *Gsung 'bum / tshul khrims rin chen*, 3:181–190. Kathmandu, Nepal: Sachen International Guru Lama. http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW00EGS1016703_DBDB0D.

[S] ———. 2021. "Sgra dbyangs lha mo dbyangs can ma la bsngags pa don rgyan pad+ma dkar po bzhad pa'i rdzing bu." In *Zhu chen Tshul khrims rin chen gyi bka' 'bum*, 3:125–30. Chengdu: Sichuan minzu chubanshe.

Abbreviations

[D] Delhi 1972 edition, facsimile of Luding Khen Rinpoche's copy of Dergé blockprint
[DG] Dergé 2000 edition, Dergé blockprint
[B] Beijing 2004 edition, as part of modern print anthology *Snyan ngag* (*Poetry*)
[K] Kathmandu 2005 edition, computerized pecha print edition
[S] Sichuan 2021 edition, modern print edition