

**CONSORTS AND REVELATION IN EASTERN TIBET:
THE AUTO/BIOGRAPHICAL WRITINGS OF THE TREASURE REVEALER
SERA KHANDRO (1892-1940)**

Sarah Hieatt Jacoby
Marblehead, Massachusetts

B.A. Yale University 1996
M.A. University of Virginia 2006

A Dissertation presented to the Graduate Faculty
of the University of Virginia in Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Religious Studies

University of Virginia
January 2007

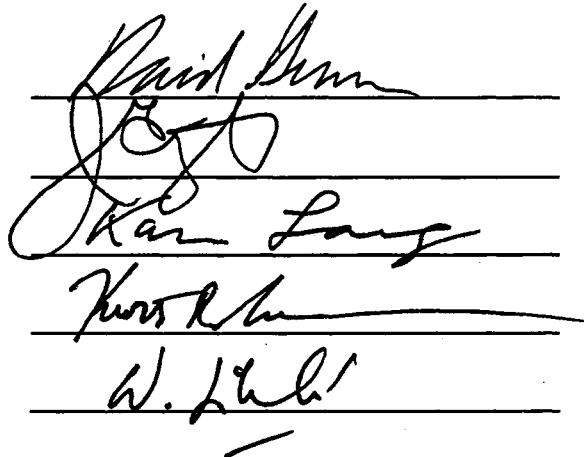
Prof. David Germano

Prof. Janet Gyatso

Prof. Karen Lang

Prof. Kurtis Schaeffer

Prof. Nicolas Sihlé



The image shows five handwritten signatures, each on a horizontal line. From top to bottom, the signatures are: David Germano, Janet Gyatso, Karen Lang, Kurtis Schaeffer, and Nicolas Sihlé. The signatures are written in black ink and are somewhat stylized.

UMI Number: 3235125

Copyright 2007 by
Jacoby, Sarah Hieatt

All rights reserved.

INFORMATION TO USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleed-through, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

UMI[®]

UMI Microform 3235125

Copyright 2006 by ProQuest Information and Learning Company.

All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

ProQuest Information and Learning Company
300 North Zeeb Road
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

© Copyright by
Sarah Heatt Jacoby
All Rights Reserved
January 2007

ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a study of the biographical writings of the Tibetan Buddhist Treasure revealer Sera Khandro (1892-1940), who was one of only a handful of pre-1959 Tibetan women to write her own autobiography. She was one of the few women to become renowned as a Treasure revealer (*gter ston*), or one who discovers scriptural and material Tibetan Buddhist revelations. Her biographical writings include an extremely rare and unpublished 407 Tibetan folio-page autobiography and a 248 folio-page biography of her main spiritual consort Drimé Özer (1881-1924). These writings offer a previously unavailable vantage point from which to examine 1) the process of Treasure revelation and its role in Sera Khandro's early twentieth-century religious communities (*chos sgar*, *gter sgar*), 2) the purposes and social dynamics of consort practices from the emic perspective of a woman who participated in them, and 3) the ways in which one Tibetan woman represented her self and her gender through the literary genre of Tibetan autobiography.

The focus of this study is twofold: 1) to read Sera Khandro's auto/biographical writings as literature, analyzing the ways she crafted her self-narrative, and 2) to read her writings as a resource for understanding more about the community contexts of Treasure revelation and its associated consort practices. Chapter One narrates the dramatic plot of Sera Khandro's *Autobiography*, emphasizing her tension-filled descriptions of community life in Lhasa and Golok. Chapter Two explores Sera Khandro's relationship to the mythological history of the Treasure tradition and analyzes the connections she makes between Treasure revelation and social and environmental well-being. Chapter Three focuses on literary analysis, exploring the ways in which Sera Khandro articulates her autobiographical self.

Chapter Four portrays how consort practices fit into Sera Khandro's community life, which was replete with the jealousies and love that always accompany human relationships. Chapter Five presents Sera Khandro's representation of her relationship with Drimé Özer, bringing the subject of consort practices out of the sterile domain of religious dictum and into the uncharted territory of a Buddhist love story.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This Dissertation could never have been possible without the support of Chatral Sangyé Dorjé, who believed in me enough to lend me a copy of his precious manuscript of Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* and to answer my many questions about Sera Khandro.

The kindness of Khenpo Sangyé from Gyalrong (Khenpo Tupten Lodro Tayé), who painstakingly read both Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* and Drimé Özer's *Biography* with me over the course of several years, can never be repaid. Everything I have understood about Sera Khandro's writing is informed by the endless hours of energy Khenpo Sangyé invested into this project. His insight into Tibetan language, idiom, and religion opened up a new world of thought for me, and I will always be grateful for this enrichment.

Many other Tibetan teachers have offered invaluable support and patience in answering my many questions. They include, in order of chronology, Lama Dorjé of Chamdo, Alak Zenkar Rinpoché of Dartsedo, Khenchen Tashi of Lhagang, Khamtrül Rinpoché of Lhasa, Khedrup of Serta, Namtrül Jikmé Püntsok of Serta, Gelek Pema Wangyal Rinpoché of Padma, Tsültrim Dargay of Serta, Pema Ösel Thayé of Serta, Khenpo Tenzin Özer of Tralek Monastery, Khandro Rinpoché of Darlak, and many others.

I am grateful to my dissertation committee for offering me invaluable advice, suggestions, comments, criticism, and ideas for future research. Special thanks to my main dissertation advisor Prof. David Germano, who has applied his visionary mind to mentoring me throughout my years of graduate education and who invested great energy into reading previous drafts of this dissertation. Also special thanks to Prof. Janet Gyatso for taking the time to participate in my defense and for providing helpful comments. Prof. Karen Lang has been a steady source of support throughout my graduate studies, and Prof. Nicolas Sihlé and Prof. Kurtis Schaeffer have made important contributions to this work.

My fortunate circumstances affording me the freedoms and advantages necessary to devote my attention to researching and writing this dissertation have been made possible by a Fulbright Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Grant (2004-2005) and a Charlotte W. Newcombe Doctoral Dissertation Writing Fellowship (2005-2006). I am appreciative of the opportunity these grants provided me with to devote my attention single-pointedly towards this study.

I would like to thank the many friends who have helped me through this project in innumerable ways. Among them are Britt Marie Alm, Jikmé, Christina Monson, Marian Morgan, Heidi Nevin, Susan Nevin, Jann Ronis, and Tenzin Thosom, to name only a few.

My parents, George and Lee Jacoby, and my partner, Antonio Terrone, have sustained me throughout this and all my endeavors and I could never have completed this work without their encouragement.



Figure 1: Statue of Sera Khandro, Given to Christina Monson in May 1997 by Chatral Sangyé Dorjé, Nepal. Photograph by Antonio Terrone, June 2006.



Figure 2: Photograph of Sera Khandro Tangka from Tralek Monastery (*Bkra legs dgon*) in Kardzé (*Dkar mdzes*) Autonomous Prefecture. Her disciples A skyabs bla ma skar ma don 'grub and Phyang tsha sprul sku padma phrin las rgya mtsho are depicted below her. Photograph given to me by Tralek Khenpo Tenzin Özer, August 2005.



Figure 3: Dartsang Monastery (*Zlar tshang dgon*, Dujom Lingpa's seat). Photograph by Sarah Jacoby, June 2004.

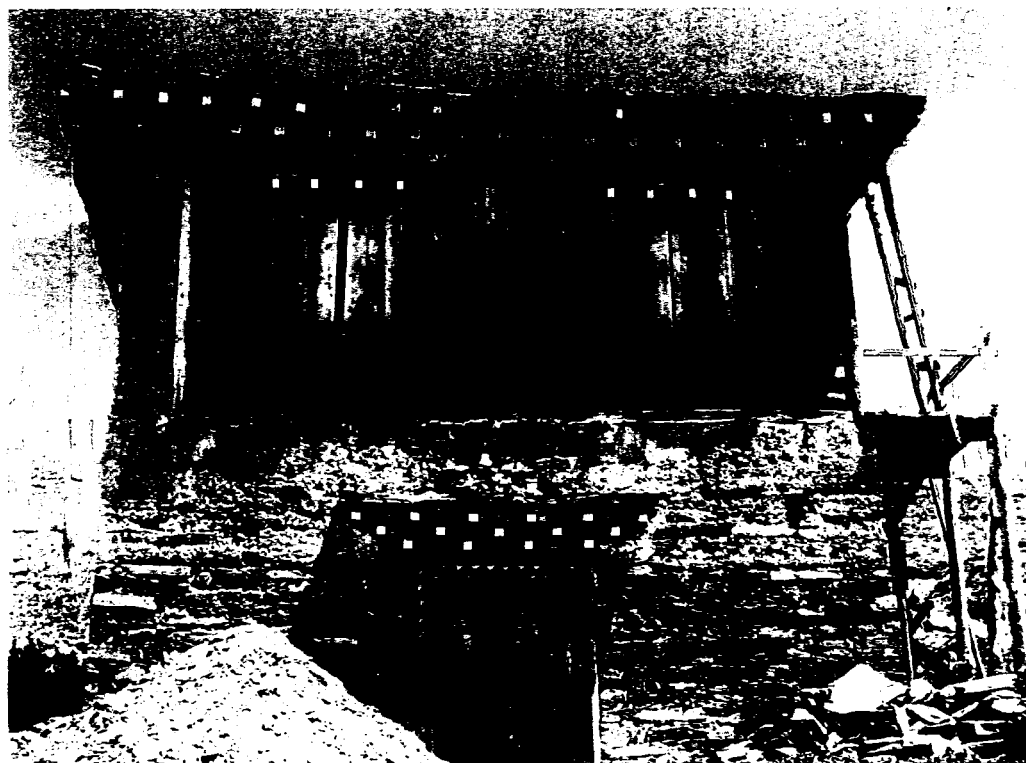


Figure 4: Drimé Özer's household (*bla brang*) in Dartsang. Photograph by Sarah Jacoby, June 2005.



Figure 5: View from Drimé Özer's household. Photograph by Sarah Jacoby, June 2005.



Figure 6: Nyilung Cave, Dartsang, where Drimé Özer and Sera Khandro did retreats near his household pictured above. Photograph by Sarah Jacoby, June 2005.

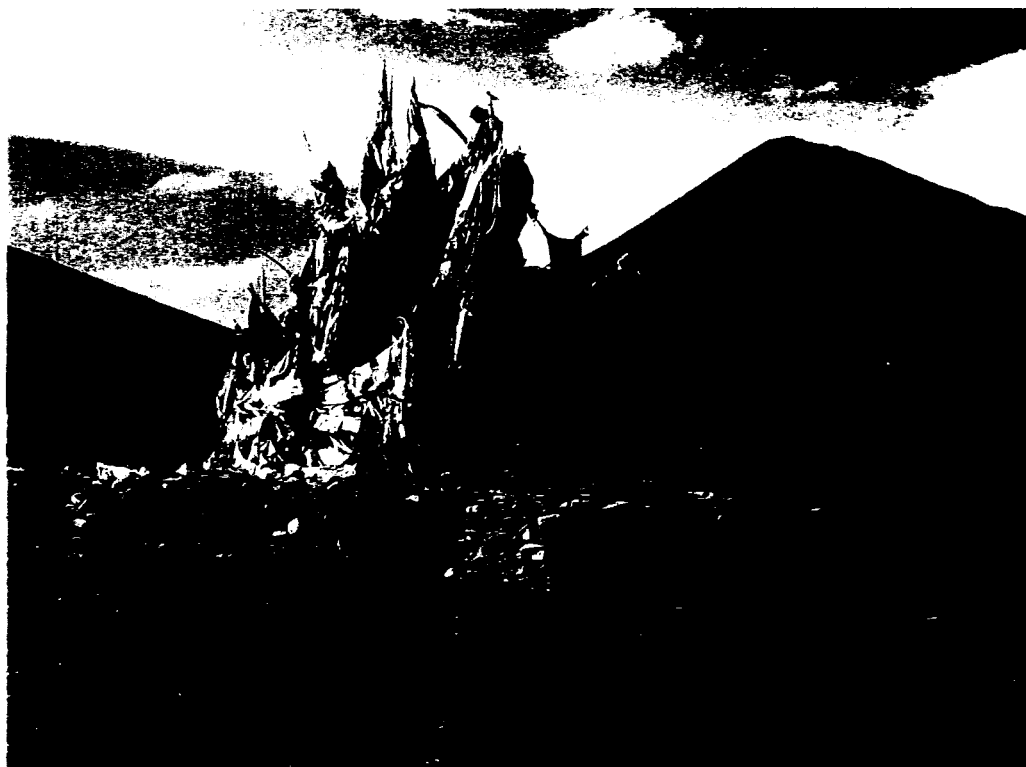


Figure 7: Drungri (*'Brong ri*), the abode of the main mountain deity in Serta, Golok. Foreground is the Washül Serta cairn. Photograph by Sarah Jacoby, June 2005.



Figure 8: Sera Monastery (*Se ra dgon*), Serta, Golok. Photograph by Sarah Jacoby, May 2005.



Figure 9: Banak Monastery (*Pan nag dgon*), Padma County, Golok. Photograph by Sarah Jacoby, May 2005.

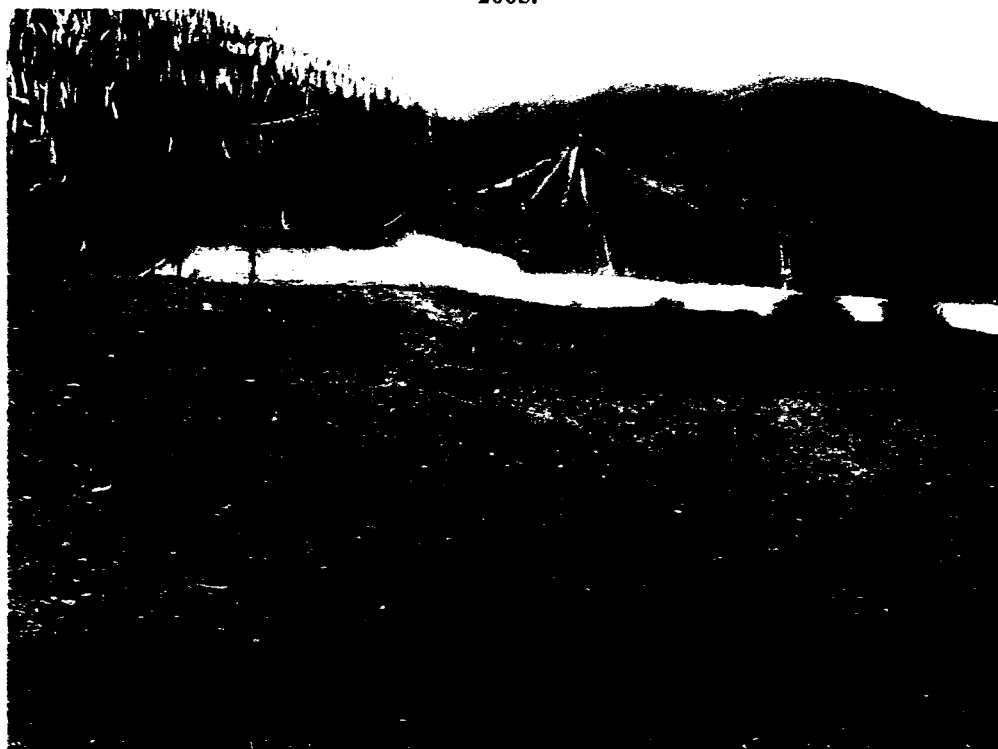


Figure 10: Above Banak Monastery, the hillside where Sera Khandro lived with Gyalsé. Photograph by Sarah Jacoby, August 2004.



Figure 11: Myself en route (there's no road!) to visit Drimé Özer's descendant Lama Gönpa Kyap at his household (*bla brang*) in Dartsang, Serta Couty, Golok.
Photograph taken by local nomad, June 2005.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	1
METHODOLOGY	10
SERA KHANDRO'S WRITINGS.....	12
CHAPTER ONE: SERA KHANDRO'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY	17
CHILDHOOD IN LHASA: RELIGION OR CHINESE POLITICS?	18
VISIONARY EXPERIENCES AND STRUGGLES WITH IMPENDING MARRIAGE.....	22
THE GREAT ESCAPE	27
DIFFICULTIES ON THE ROAD TO GOLOK	28
SEARCHING FOR COMMUNITY AND FINDING RELIGION IN GOLOK	33
PROPHECIES AND PROBLEMS: LIFE AT BANAK MONASTERY.....	39
SHIFTING WINDS: GOTRÜL RINPOCHÉ AND DRIMÉ ÖZER	50
THE UNION OF METHOD AND WISDOM	55
IMPERMANENCE STRIKES HOME	58
SERA MONASTERY LIFE AND TEACHING	60
THE FINAL YEARS.....	67
CONCLUSION.....	72
CHAPTER TWO: THE PROCESS OF REVEALING TREASURES IN SERA KHANDRO'S GOLOK	73
WHAT ARE TREASURES AND WHERE DO THEY COME FROM?	74
TREASURE REVELATION IN NYINGMA SCRIPTURAL TRANSMISSION	78
THE DIVINE COUPLE PADMASAMBHAVA AND YESHÉ TSOGYAL: PROGENITORS OF THE TREASURE TRADITION	82
<i>The Rising Importance of Yeshé Tsogyal</i>	83
<i>Yeshé Tsogyal's Hagiography as Sera Khandro's Model</i>	85
<i>The Divine Treasure Revelation Couple</i>	93
THE PROCESS OF REVEALING TREASURE	96
<i>Prophecy</i>	96
<i>Auspicious Connections</i>	99
<i>Consorts</i>	101
REVELATION AND COMMUNITY IN THE SPIRITUALLY INHABITED LAND OF GOLOK	109
<i>Treasure Protectors, Land Deities, and Revelation</i>	110
<i>Balancing Environmental, Social, and Physical Conditions Through Revelation</i>	114
<i>Treasure Revelation Encampments (gter sgar)</i>	117
CONCLUSION.....	129
CHAPTER THREE: AUTOBIOGRAPHY, GENDER, AND THE SELF	133
AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SELF PRESENTATIONS, WESTERN AND TIBETAN	137
GENDER AS A SELF-HUMBLING STRATEGY IN SERA KHANDRO'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY	143
<i>Abandon this Inferior Female Body?</i>	145
<i>Treasure Revelation and Gender-related Difficulties</i>	149
<i>Visions and Gender-based Self-Denigration</i>	151
GENDERED REFLECTIONS IN TIBETAN WOMEN'S AUTO/BIOGRAPHY	157
<i>The Autobiography of Jetsün Lochén (1865-1951)</i>	158
<i>The Life of Orgyen Chökyi (1675-1729)</i>	163
<i>Female Hagiographies and their Influence on Sera Khandro's Writing</i>	169
A GENRE OF WOMEN'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY? RELATIONALITY AND SELFHOOD	178
SERA KHANDRO'S DIALOGIC SELF	183
THE ROLE OF VISIONS IN SERA KHANDRO'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY	192

CONCLUSION.....	206
CHAPTER FOUR: CONSORTS AND TREASURE REVELATION COMMUNITIES.....	210
THE AMBIGUOUS ROLES OF SEXUALITY AND CELIBACY IN TIBETAN BUDDHISM.....	215
THE PURPOSES OF CONSORTS IN SERA KHANDRO'S WRITINGS	222
<i>Soteriological Purpose of Sexuality, for Men and Women</i>	223
<i>Pragmatic Purpose of Sexuality: Curing Sickness and Prolonging life</i>	231
<i>Hermeneutical Purpose of Sexuality: Treasure Revelation and Decoding</i>	233
VISIONS OF DIVINE ENCOURAGEMENT.....	239
CONSORTS AND COMMUNITY.....	262
<i>Trouble in Paradise: Consorts and Community Tensions</i>	263
<i>The Exchange of Women</i>	275
<i>Monastic Versus Non-Celibate Tantric Lifestyles</i>	282
<i>Drimé Özer's Dilemma</i>	289
<i>Sera Khandro is Neither Nun nor Laywoman</i>	293
<i>Negative Gossip</i>	298
CONCLUSION: CONSORTS AS AGENTS OR OBJECTS?	305
CHAPTER FIVE: THE DIVINE COUPLE.....	309
SERA KHANDRO AND DRIMÉ ÖZER'S LOVE STORY	315
<i>Beginnings</i>	315
<i>Back and Forth</i>	319
<i>The Grand Union</i>	341
<i>Love Medicine and the Im/permanence of Life and Death</i>	347
THE DIVINE TREASURE REVELATION COUPLE INCARNATE.....	357
CONCLUSION.....	361
CONCLUSION	364
APPENDIX I: MAIN CHARACTERS IN SERA KHANDRO'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY	374
APPENDIX II: DUJOM LINGPA'S FAMILY TREE	375
APPENDIX III: COLOPHON OF SERA KHANDRO'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY	377
ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF AUTOBIOGRAPHY COLOPHON	377
TIBETAN TRANSLITERATION OF AUTOBIOGRAPHY COLOPHON	380
ENDNOTES.....	383
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	502

Introduction

Sera Khandro's¹ (1892-1940) writings are extraordinary not only because they include two of only a handful of female-authored auto/biographical writings in all of pre-1959 Tibetan literature, but also because they open a window into the community contexts and social practices involved in the process of revealing Tibetan Buddhist scriptures and sacred substances called Treasures (*gter ma*).² Written from the perspective of a woman who was herself a Treasure revealer (*gter ston*) and a consort (*gzungs ma*) to male Treasure revealers, her auto/biographical writings include a long autobiography and a biography of her main consort Drimé Özer (1881-1924), one of eight sons of the prominent nineteenth-century Treasure revealer Dujom Lingpa (1835-1903).³ These works provide vantage points on the revelation process as it existed in Sera Khandro's early twentieth-century religious communities in the Golok region of Eastern Tibet, offering new insights into questions such as: (1) How do Treasure revealers such as Sera Khandro and Drimé Özer discover Treasures and what relationship do these Treasures have to their revealer's social and environmental contexts? (2) Given her unusual status as one of the few female Treasure revealers, autobiographers, and prolific writers, how does Sera Khandro portray her female gender and its significance? (3) What does it mean to write an autobiography in a Buddhist context in which the autobiographical self includes a host of dialogic encounters with divine interlocutors? (4) What are the roles of consort practices in Sera Khandro's auto/biographical writing and how do consorts relate to each other and to their male partners? (5) How does Sera Khandro represent her relationship with her main consort Drimé Özer and what is the

significance of her writing two biographical works, one about her partner and one about herself?

Sera Khandro's auto/biographical writings, comprising a total of 655 Tibetan folio pages, are rich in details that contextualize Treasure revelation in the early twentieth-century religious communities in Golok in which she lived, in particular Dartsang (*Zlar tshang*) in Serta County and Banak (*Pan nag*) in Padma County.⁴ Additionally, when examined using tools drawn from literary analysis, her writing presents interesting insights into the ways in which one elite female spiritual figure chose to portray herself, her gender, and her religious career in written form for the benefit of future generations of her disciples. Hence, in the chapters that follow, this study seeks to analyze Sera Khandro's writings both as auto/biographical Tibetan literature and as resources for contextualizing the religious phenomena of revelation within the communities in which Sera Khandro lived.

Sera Khandro's autobiographical writings present an account of life in early twentieth-century Eastern Tibet from the rare perspective of an elite religious woman.⁵ Beginning with her childhood experiences growing up in a wealthy half-Mongolian, half-Tibetan noble family in Lhasa, she recounts the dramatic end to her life in Central Tibet: in order to escape from an arranged marriage at the age of fifteen, she ran away from Lhasa with a group of traveling pilgrims from Golok headed by the man who would be her future teacher and spiritual consort, Drimé Özer. Sera Khandro's courageous decision to travel to what appeared to her as the barbaric land of nomadic Golok and to commence a religious life there was met with many hardships. Among them were near-starvation, extreme cold, and hostility directed at her by Golok locals reluctant to include a young

female outsider from Central Tibet into their religious communities. Sera Khandro began life in Golok with little financial or community support. Her autobiography recounts her gradual rise from working as a servant girl and later being involved in a turbulent relationship with her first spouse Gara Gyalsé (with whom she had two children) to gaining increasing recognition as a Treasure revealer, as a *ḍākinī*, and as Drimé Özer's prophesized consort. The climax of her narrative is her long-awaited reunion with Drimé Özer, with whom she lived for four years until his untimely death at the age of forty-four. By the later part of her forty-nine-year life, when she lived at Sera Monastery from the age of thirty-four onwards after Drimé Özer's death, she records being in heavy demand to give religious teachings. When she was not traveling and teaching, she spent her time in retreat writing down her revelations and her auto/biographical recollections in a meditation cell perched high on a mountain overlooking the vast alpine landscape surrounding Sera Monastery in Serta County, Golok. Chapter One of this study narrates Sera Khandro's dramatic life story, highlighting the themes of community tensions, homelessness, impermanence, and love that pervade her account.

Sera Khandro's eloquent writing style illustrates not only her own individual development as a Treasure revealer, but also the larger social, physical, and spiritual environment within which her revelations occurred in early twentieth-century Tibet. Her writings emphasize the dynamic interrelationships necessary for successful revelation to occur, called auspicious connections (*rten 'brel*). These include finding the proper time, place, consort, and doctrine holder (i.e., disciple, *chos bdag*) required to reveal a particular Treasure. Beyond this standard list of criteria necessary to reveal Treasures, Sera Khandro highlights the connections between divine prophecy, successful revelation,

physical health, and community and environmental stability. She interprets physical illness, community unrest, and environmental crises to be products of demonic intervention, a scourge that can only be cured by proper ritual intervention such as Treasure revelation. Thus, the role of a Treasure revealer is one of mediating between divine, demonic, and earthly forces in order to restore equilibrium. This role was not unlike that of the local political leaders with whom Treasure revealers interacted closely in the unincorporated land of early twentieth-century Golok. After providing an overview of the history of Tibetan Treasure revelation, Chapter Two explores the ways Sera Khandro modeled herself and her consort Drimé Özer on the divine progenitors of the Treasure tradition, Yeshé Tsogyal and Padmasambhava. The chapter also describes Sera Khandro's representation of the revelation process, highlighting the interrelationship between processes of the human body (such as illness and sexuality), the social body of communities in which she lived (disputes and cohesion), and the body of text, the revealed Treasure scriptures, that she produced.

Essential to the Treasure revelation process and to Sera Khandro's understanding of herself is the agency of a plethora of divine forces. Female divinities (*dākinīs*), Buddhas, accomplished masters (*siddhas*), oath-bound autochthonous Tibetan land deities (*gzhi bdag*, *gnas bdag*), and powerful demonic forces (*bdud*) permeate Sera Khandro's auto/biographical writings with their own voices and intentions. *Dākinīs'* prophecies and extensive accounts of her visionary experiences traveling to elaborate Buddhafields and interacting with myriads of divinities occupy forty-six percent of her *Autobiography*.⁶ The central role that these encounters take in her writing depicts a self in which Sera Khandro's personal agency is determined largely by divine forces. Chapter

Three of this study draws on insights from Western literary theory and studies of medieval Christian hagiography as well as Buddhist Studies materials to explore the rhetorical devices with which Sera Khandro articulates her autobiographical self. A key facet of this self is the narrative role played by a heteroglossia of dialogic voices ranging from divine to demonic. Sera Khandro's divine visions help her to articulate a strong sense of self, speaking what Sera Khandro cannot express in her own voice – that she is an incarnation of the paradigmatic Tibetan female divinity Yeshé Tsogyal, that she is one of the few authentic female Treasure revealers, and that she, like Yeshé Tsogyal, is a *ḍākinī* empowered to take on male consorts for her own spiritual benefit. The affirmations that Sera Khandro's divine interlocutors provide balance her own insecure and often negative self-perceptions that are reactions to the difficulties of her worldly life. These difficulties included financial distress, isolation in the foreign land of Golok, recurrent physical illness, marital disputes and eventual separation from Gara Gyalsé, problems being accepted as a female Treasure revealer, and intense depression following the deaths of her loved ones. The encouragement Sera Khandro's visionary experiences afford her despite these earthly sorrows allows her to represent herself as a spiritually empowered agent in a Buddhist context in which independent selfhood is an illusion.

The multiplicity of voices in Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* reflect what some theorists of western women's autobiography describe as a “relational” quality of women's autobiographical selfhood, referring to a self represented in relationship to others.⁷ However, rather than being characteristic of her writing as a female, the relational quality of Sera Khandro's autobiographical self reflects a Tibetan social world in which the individual is ineluctably connected to his or her wider community and

environmental context. I suggest that the rhetorical significance of Sera Khandro's dialogic writing style is that it enables her to strike a tenor in her self reflections that is neither overly self-aggrandizing nor detrimentally self-humbling.⁸ This balance allows her to articulate her spiritual successes and her worldly challenges effectively in order to serve as a role model for future generations who is both approachable in her humanity and extraordinary in her divinity.

A key theme of the dialogic interactions that pervade Sera Khandro's self-narrative is her female gender. Divine *ḍākinīs* and important male teachers in her worldly life infuse Sera Khandro with positive interpretations of her female body, counteracting her own repeatedly negative valuations of being female. In Chapter Three, I depict the mantra-like regularity with which Sera Khandro emphasizes the trouble she experiences as one with an "inferior female body" who strives to accomplish spiritual goals. I suggest this is not only a reflection of the gender discrimination she clearly faced in early twentieth-century Golok society, but is also a self-humbling strategy she employs to balance out the laudatory claims she simultaneously makes of being an extraordinary female Treasure revealer and an incarnation of Yeshé Tsogyal.

One of the most interesting aspects of Sera Khandro's auto/biographical writings is her in-depth presentation of the religious purposes, community dynamics, morality, and interpersonal sentiments associated with consort practices, the topic of Chapter Four. Her writing explains consort practices via a Tantric understanding of the human body in which manipulating the subtle body physiology of channels, winds, and seminal nuclei (*rtsa, rlung, thig le*) produces physical health, spiritual realization, and aids in producing Treasures. Beyond this, Sera Khandro portrays the ways in which she and those in her

communities interpreted these religious applications of human sexuality in often divergent and always controversial ways. Her writing betrays a pervasive tension in the religious communities in which she lived between celibate monastic and non-celibate Tantric interpretations of moral behavior. In Drimé Özer's biography, she portrays his dilemma between choosing a celibate path versus living as a non-celibate Tantric practitioner (a *mantrin*, or *sngags pa*) as well as *ḍākinīs*' strong opposition to his monastic yearnings. Similarly, in her autobiography, she constantly reiterates *ḍākinīs*' divine injunctions to engage in consort practices despite her apparent reluctance. Through this interplay between divine commands to engage with consorts and her descriptions of their personal disinclination to do so, Sera Khandro presents herself and Drimé Özer as moral, non-lascivious religious figures striving to live in accordance with divine prophecy.

Divine visions offer Sera Khandro encouragement to pursue a religious career as a female Treasure revealer even though her mundane social circumstances seem only to discourage her. Similarly, Sera Khandro's attempts to actualize the *ḍākinīs*' prophecies to engage with specific male consorts arouse repeated social tensions in her community life. Sera Khandro recounts recurring jealousy and in-fighting between female consorts of male Treasure revealers in the different communities in which she lived. Additionally, she records tensions between herself and nuns who disapproved of her in-between status as neither married laywoman nor celibate nun (*jo min nag min*).⁹ Fear of negative gossip about herself that she frequently mentions elucidates the tensions associated with her indeterminate social position as a non-celibate woman living at times in monastic religious centers, as a bi-racial Central Tibetan woman living in faraway Golok, as a

Treasure revealer, visionary, and author who also was female, and as a consort to men who already had consorts. Sera Khandro's auto/biographical writings thus contextualize consort practices in real community contexts; they ground ephemeral philosophical interpretations of sexual yoga in concrete social realities rife with jealousy, competition, disagreement, and, of course, love. In doing so, her writings present a vision of consort practices in which women were both agents and objects of exchange between powerful men. Consort relationships in Sera Khandro's communities were thus neither entirely gynocentric nor misogynist, but involved complex dynamics characteristic of human relationships despite their rarified context as part of the path towards realizing Buddhist enlightenment.

The final chapter, Chapter Five, spotlights the way in which Sera Khandro describes her relationship to Drimé Özer, which I suggest can be read as a love story. Buddhism generally holds true to its Indian roots as a renouncer's tradition in the sense that Indian and then later Tibetan Buddhism didn't incorporate the sentimental and amorous devotional tones of other Indian religious traditions such as that of the *bhakti* tradition closely associated with Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. However, I suggest that Sera Khandro's auto/biographical writing resembles *bhakti* devotional literature in that the love between Sera Khandro and Drimé Özer is a central part of their path to enlightenment. Her auto/biographical literature thus presents a Buddhist liberation story in which enlightenment is not to be found in solitary meditation underneath a bodhi tree, but rather through the union of method and wisdom in sacred partnership. In Sera Khandro's writing, sexual yoga is not only about manipulating channels, winds, and seminal nuclei in order to engender spiritual liberation within an individual practitioner; it

is also an aspect of an emotionally charged relationship with her consort, Drimé Özer. It is not surprising to find a sacred partnership such as theirs within literature connected to the Tibetan Treasure tradition given that the Treasure tradition claims (one version of) its mytho-historical roots with the eighth-century divine couple Padmasambhava and Yeshé Tsogyal. Sera Khandro places her love story with Drimé Özer in the sacred history of the Treasure tradition, understanding herself and Drimé Özer to be incarnations of the divine couple from whom the Treasures originate.

Hagiographies of Yeshé Tsogyal are the main literary influence for Sera Khandro's self-narrative, a theme to which I will repeatedly return throughout this study. Just as Yeshé Tsogyal had one main guru and consort but also had other consorts who aided her spiritual development, likewise Sera Khandro has her Padmasambhava, Drimé Özer, in addition to other temporary consorts. Just as Yeshé Tsogyal and Padmasambhava are a timeless and inseparable couple, so too are Sera Khandro and Drimé Özer; they are promised to each other in each and every future incarnation, locked in a partnership that defies the separation of death. The power of their intention has not been forgotten by contemporary Treasure revealers in today's Golok – Namtrül Jikmé Püntsok (b. 1944) and his recently deceased consort Taré Lhamo (1938-2002) describe themselves as modern emanations of Drimé Özer and Sera Khandro, drawing explicitly on the paradigm of the inseparability of the divinely prophesized Treasure revelation couple that Sera Khandro emphasized in her auto/biographical literature.

Methodology

In his analysis of medieval European hagiography, Patrick Geary suggests that “not only can hagiography be used for incidental historical information, but it can and must be a privileged source for the study of social values.”¹⁰ Drawing on such insights, this study seeks to read Sera Khandro’s auto/biographical writings as literary reflections of the social world that she inhabited. Throughout this study I focus on what I would suggest is a mutually illuminating project of reading Sera Khandro’s biographical writings both as literature, analyzing the ways in which she constructs her self-narrative, and also as a resource contributing to a social history of the early twentieth-century Eastern Tibetan religious communities in which she lived. Therefore, questions germane to this study are: 1) How does Sera Khandro represent herself as a Treasure revealer, as a woman, and as a self worthy of being the subject of an autobiography? 2) How does she describe the religious communities involved in Treasure revelation in which she lived – what is the relationship between monasticism and consort practices in these religious communities? What is the nature of relationships between women and men who were involved in Tantric consort practices in these communities?

I am primarily interested in examining Sera Khandro’s writing as literature and not in engaging in the hermeneutical enterprise of interpreting the veracity of her visionary and revelatory claims.¹¹ Rather, I analyze the ways in which Sera Khandro represents herself, her partner, and their communities through the conventions of Tibetan Buddhist autobiography and biography. Within this, my primary focus is Sera Khandro’s *Autobiography* and secondarily Drimé Özer’s *Biography* since her *Autobiography* is one of the very rare sources in Tibetan literature depicting the process of Treasure revelation

and consort practices from the perspective of a female Treasure revealer. A study of Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* thus balances the almost exclusively male-authored narrative and prescriptive accounts of Treasure revelation that form our understanding of this distinctive type of Tibetan scriptural transmission in which women are frequently represented as aides to men's realizations but rarely as agents.

In his pioneering analysis of autobiography, Georges Gusdorf suggested that autobiography "shows us not the objective stages of a career – to discern these is the task of the historian – but that it reveals instead the effort of a creator to give the meaning of his own mythic tale."¹² Yet the meaning of the autobiographer's tale is constituted in a particular social/cultural context; the autobiographer's self-narrative describes her own life as much as it depicts the social world in which she comes to know herself. The self she projects is not a direct window into her subjective experience but is rather an intentional perspective on her life written for distinctive personal/political reasons with a particular audience in mind. Hence, in his study on American autobiographical writing, Robert Sayre reminds us that, "Autobiographies, therefore, may reveal as much about the author's assumed audiences as they do about him or her, and this is a further reason why they need to be read as *cultural documents*, not just as personal ones."¹³ Thus, this study of Sera Khandro's biographical writings explores the ways in which one extraordinary Tibetan female Treasure revealer and author represented the intricacies of her visionary and sentimental life as much as it explores the social and cultural context of her prolific literary productions.

Sera Khandro's Writings

Sera Khandro's autobiography is an extremely rare document and has never been published in Tibetan or translated into any other language; it is only extant in manuscript form, handwritten in cursive Tibetan (*yig nag*).¹⁴ Compared to other Tibetan autobiographies, it is very long, comprising 407 Tibetan folio pages (depending on edition).¹⁵ The text is titled *The Biography of the Central Tibetan Woman Dewé Dorjé: A Reliquary for Fortunate and Faithful Ones [Serving as] a Chariot Leading to Renunciation*, henceforth referred to in this study as *Sera Khandro's Autobiography*.¹⁶ Sera Khandro wrote two versions of her autobiography: a condensed 14 folio page version that is included in her revealed Treasures (*gter chos*), and an expanded version that is the focus of this study.¹⁷ The most important currently living disciple of Sera Khandro, the ninety-five-year-old Dzokchen Master Chatral Sangyé Dorjé Rinpoché, describes this expanded version as an integrated combination of an outer, inner, and secret autobiography.¹⁸ The work covers the years of Sera Khandro's life from birth to the age of 43. She completed it in 1934, after she wrote Drimé Özer's *Biography*. Appendix III of this study is a complete English translation and Tibetan transliteration of the colophon of her *Autobiography*, in which she lists her primary sponsors and clearly documents her authorship of the work.¹⁹

Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* is rare in the sense that it is owned only by Sera Khandro's disciples and their circles of disciples and descendants, whose main locations in Tibet are, not surprisingly, the places Sera Khandro lived and taught during her lifetime. These include Padma County in Golok (*Mgo log*) Autonomous Prefecture, Serta (*Gser rta*) County and Tralek Monastery (*Bkra legs dgon*) in Kardzé (*Dkar mdzes*)

Autonomous Prefecture, and the Riwoché (*Ri bo che*) area in the Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture.²⁰ Practitioners of Sera Khandro's teachings also live in Pharping (most notably Chatral Rinpoché), and Boudhanath, Nepal, as well as in India and the West. Although Chatral Rinpoché possesses an original manuscript version of Sera Khandro's *Autobiography*, one reason for the ongoing rarity of the *Autobiography* is the extreme care with which he maintains Sera Khandro's lineage and manuscripts.²¹ Consequently, Sera Khandro's works have received little attention in Western (or Tibetan) scholarship.²²

The biography Sera Khandro wrote chronicling the life of her teacher and most important consort, Drimé Özer, is titled *The Biography of the Omniscient Lord of Accomplished Ones, the Precious Sovereign of the Ocean of Profound Treasure Pema Drodül Sangngak Lingpa: A Chariot for the Faithful Dispelling the Heart's Darkness, a Garland of Jewels, a Rosary of Blue Lotuses*, henceforth referred to as Drimé Özer's *Biography*.²³ Sera Khandro completed writing his *Biography* in 1925 in her mountain retreat overlooking Sera Monastery in Serta, Golok, shortly after Drimé Özer's death and about one year before she commenced writing her *Autobiography*. The text is 248 Tibetan folio pages long and is published as a reproduction of a cursive Tibetan (*yig nag*) handwritten manuscript housed in the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives in Dharamsala, India.

Unlike her *Autobiography*, which she explicitly states that she authored, Sera Khandro claims that Drime Özer's *Biography* is a prophecy bestowed upon her by ḍākinīs. In the colophon of the *Biography* she writes,

If the tongues of the expansive Buddhas don't have the power to proclaim this eloquent liberation story, which is a ḍākinī prophecy that dispels the heart's darkness, how would someone like me? For the sake of leading the chariot of

disciples' faith a bit, this dharma teaching emanated as self-emergent symbols, unpolluted by the stains of the conceptual mind's corrections. Relying on the compassion of the Knowledge Holder Lama [that is like] the cool shade of a white parasol, I deciphered [this text].²⁴

Aside from this difference in the way Sera Khandro expresses her authorship of the two texts, the style and tone of both strongly resemble each other. Both texts include roughly half visionary experience and half this-world narrative, written in Golok dialect-influenced Tibetan with an emphasis on dialogic encounters with a wide range of supernatural and mundane interlocutors. The main distinction between the two biographical works is that Sera Khandro wrote Drimé Özer's *Biography* in the third person until after his death when the narrator's voice switches to that of Sera Khandro in the first person. That his story is a biography and not an autobiography is clear given the laudatory way in which Sera Khandro represents Drimé Özer as opposed to the often insecure and self-denigrating tone with which she represents herself in her *Autobiography*.²⁵ Yet beyond differences in literary genre between biography and autobiography, there are other reasons why Drimé Özer's narrative does not contain the level of suffering and alienation that Sera Khandro's does. Perhaps the more positive tone of Drimé Özer's narrative is also a reflection of his circumstances as the son of the well-known Treasure revealer Dujom Lingpa, educated from early childhood and supported by his family and community to pursue a religious career. This stands in stark contrast to Sera Khandro's struggles as an unusual foreign woman in Golok communities that were not always welcoming to her. Although the intricacies of Drimé Özer's life are another story that is beyond the scope of this study, for our purposes, his biography is a resource

that helps to broaden our understanding of the community contexts of revelation and to provide alternative perspectives on events Sera Khandro depicts in her *Autobiography*.²⁶

Sera Khandro was the most prolific female writer in all of Tibetan history. Her biographical writings comprise only a fraction of her literary corpus. Her writings also include more than two thousand Tibetan folio pages of revealed Treasure teachings (*gter chos*) in four volumes. The titles of her two main revelations, each comprising two volumes, are *The Secret Treasury of the Reality Dākinīs* and *The Reality Dākinīs' Heart Essence*.²⁷ Both of these Treasure texts are comprised of cycles of smaller texts, which are primarily ritual texts including liturgy for accomplishment practice (Skt. *sādhana*, aimed at identifying the practitioner with the particular deity) and Tantric empowerments for each deity. The main deities in Sera Khandro's Treasure cycles include Vajravārāhī, Yeshé Tsogyal, Vajrakīlaya, Hayagrīva, Tārā, Avalokiteśvara, and the three roots (lama, tutelary deity, and *ḍākinī*), among others. Beyond ritual texts, Sera Khandro's Treasure revelation volumes contain prophetic materials, accounts of her visionary experiences (*nyams snang*), and explanatory materials covering topics related to Great Perfection (*rdzogs chen*) philosophy, in particular Direct Transcendence (*thod rgal*) practice. Although her Treasure volumes include little in the way of hagiographic material aside from one biography of Padmasambhava and her condensed 14-folio-page *Autobiography*, in actuality there is significant overlap between her revelations and her auto/biographical reflections in that both genres of writing highlight her visionary encounters with Buddhist divinities.²⁸

Sera Khandro also wrote a commentary on Dujom Lingpa's famous text *Buddhahood Without Meditation* titled *The Main Commentary on Purifying One's*

*Perceptions (Snang sbyang dbus 'grel).*²⁹ In the colophon of this text, Sera Khandro explains that Dujom Lingpa had wanted a commentary written for *Buddhahood Without Meditation*, and Drimé Özer had passed away before he was able to write one. Hence, Sera Khandro records that she acquiesced to disciples' demands and wrote down Drimé Özer's explanatory teachings on his father's teaching, only adding "a bit of clarification" to Drimé's explanation.³⁰ Ironically, given the prevalence of male authors representing women's lives, Sera Khandro is her male partner's mouthpiece in more than one sense. She is his biographer and the author of his explanatory teachings on his father's great Dzokchen commentary. However, perhaps as an accident of history, it appears that Drimé Özer's corpus of Treasure revelations and other writings did not survive the Cultural Revolution. Hence, what we know of him comes essentially through Sera Khandro's words.³¹

Chapter One: Sera Khandro's Autobiography

Given the dearth of literary sources documenting the lives of Tibetan women, Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* stands as a bright and shining exception to the rule. Her writings offer a richly detailed window into not only her participation in the Treasure revelation tradition, but also her hopes, dreams, and reflections on the most significant personal relationships in her life. Hers is not a sedate tale of sanctity; the story Sera Khandro recounts is intensely dramatic, pervaded with suffering, friendship, betrayal, and love. The rage she felt at times towards her spouse (her life partner, *tshe grogs*) Gara Gyalsé and his mother comes freshly through the pages of her narrative today, nearly a century later. The primary emotions that thematize her writing include not only her sorrows, but also the profound devotion she felt for the man who was to become her lama and the love of her life, Drimé Özer. Her sufferings pale in comparison to the love they shared, a devotional love that sustained her through the many dark moments in which she recounts yearning to leave this painful world. Darkness and light in the form of worldly sufferings tempered by blissful encounters with the divine characterize Sera Khandro's powerful story of spiritual liberation. Her *Autobiography* portrays the particular circumstances of one woman in early twentieth-century Tibet – a girl desperate to flee a forced marriage and a woman struggling to fulfill her calling as a Treasure revealer in a society suspicious of her. Hers is a story about what it means to be homeless and to constantly negotiate between competing demands including Chinese and Tibetan cultural influences, life in Lhasa and Golok, monastic and lay society, and religious aspirations and the limitations of her female gender. But above all, her *Autobiography* (and Drimé

Özer's *Biography*) are examples for their disciples of the sacrifice, diligence, suffering, devotion, and love that form integral parts of the Tibetan Buddhist path to spiritual realization.

Childhood in Lhasa: Religion or Chinese Politics?

Sera Khandro recounts her birth and childhood in Lhasa with a retrospective gaze emphasizing her innate predilection towards religion amidst the pressures she faced growing up in a wealthy and politically connected “Chinese” family. After the opening prayers (which I describe in greater detail in Chapter Two), Sera Khandro begins her story with the following poetic description of her birth place in an area of Lhasa near the Jokhang Temple:

North of Bodgaya in India, east of the abode of the incarnation of the Supremely Noble Avalokiteśvara [named] Songtsen Gampo in the snow land of Tibet, west of the Temple of the miraculous place of the goats [the Jokhang Temple], there is a place called Lumotil (*Klu mo mthil*) whose land protector is Dorjé Yüdrönma. Near the place with various amazing deities such as the main image of the land, the Jowo Śākyamuni, and so forth, there is a palace surpassing all those neighboring it called Gyarakashar (*Rgya ra ga shar*).³²

She describes her family's ancestry and her father's background in the following way:

In the palace called Gyarakashar [lived] Lhasé Jampa Gönpö who was a ruler endowed with the silk banner of power and wealth belonging to a Mongolian royal ancestry known as the pure divine race. Renowned to be the emanation of Rongtsa³³, he was empowered in mind Treasures. He displayed signs of accomplishment without difficulty and was a householder.³⁴

Later she describes her family as being a Chinese leader's family (*rgya dpon sang*), thus it appears that she equates her father's Mongol ancestry with the term Chinese (*rgya*).³⁵

Her mother, Tsering Chödzom (*Tshe ring chos 'dzom*), was of a ḍākinī race and was a lady of the Nup (*Gnub*) clan.³⁶ Without causing any pain to her mother, Sera Khandro

was born on the first day of the first month of the water dragon year (1892). Miraculous signs accompanied her birth such as Sera Khandro being born in an egg (*sgong skyes*).³⁷ As her father opened the egg with a feathered arrow adorned with five colors of silk, rainbow light poured out, vultures danced above the house, a good smell pervaded the area, and the sound of a conch shell blowing filled the inside of the house. The baby's body had the letters "*bam ha ri ni sa*" respectively in the five places (crown of the head, throat, heart, navel, genitals) and her hair showed signs of being blessed by *ḍākinīs*.³⁸

An interesting aspect of her childhood is the cultural tensions that arose between having a "Chinese" father and a Tibetan mother. Sera Khandro describes herself as being between two cultural worlds, pressured to fulfill her father's demands and her religious inclinations. The first instance of Chinese/Tibetan tension emerges right after her birth when there is a dispute over which year Sera Khandro was born. The Chinese group (*rgya sde*, presumably her father's family) argues that because there were two thirtieth days of the Chinese month, Sera Khandro was born on the last day of the previous year, the male hare year (1891). The Tibetan group (*bod shog pa*, presumably her mother's family) argues that because Sera Khandro was born on the first day of the year of the Kingdom of Tibet (*rgyal khams bod*), she should be born in the dragon year (1892).³⁹ Unable to resolve the debate, the two factions go to Taklung Mahāyāna Rinpoché⁴⁰ to resolve the dispute and to request a name for the baby. After giving Sera Khandro the name Kalzang Drönma (*Skal bzang sgron ma*), Taklung Mahāyāna Rinpoché exhorts the two factions not to fight. Sera Khandro writes that her mother lamented:

Although before in our family we have had many boys and girls, the two factions [Chinese and Tibetan] have never quarreled before. Now since this girl has agitated the two leaders, I should give her away to someone else.⁴¹

Soon after this, Sera Khandro narrates that tensions diminished between the Chinese and Tibetans and everyone called her by the nickname Kūnga Wangmo (*Kun dga' dbang mo*).

Another example of the tensions that arise as a result of Sera Khandro's location at the interstice between Chinese and Tibetan cultural influences (and parentage) is her education. She recounts that when she was eight years old, her father sought to prepare her to become a political leader (*dpon mo*) by insisting that she learn literary and spoken Chinese (*rgya yig* and *rgya skad*).⁴² Meanwhile she, supported by her mother, yearned for a Tibetan education that would prepare her to renounce worldly life and become a nun. Sera Khandro writes:

Then, although mother said, "This girl needs to study literary Tibetan," father didn't allow it and said, "First she needs to study literary Chinese." He sent me to study literary Chinese from a clerk who was an expert in literary and spoken Chinese. I was disappointed but I didn't dare tell my father.⁴³

Sera Khandro recollects that she had a natural talent learning Chinese: "Because I knew the [Chinese] letters better than my friends did, the local people said, "This princess is intelligent and will certainly take on a leadership role."⁴⁴ Despairing at the thought that her Chinese education was only further binding her to a worldly life involved in politics that she felt powerless to escape, Sera Khandro recounts throwing all of her Chinese books into a river. At the same time, she contemplates whether or not to jump into the river herself as a suicidal gesture, but stops beforehand.⁴⁵

Although Sera Khandro emphasizes her father's wishes for her to be educated in Chinese, her parents must also have exposed her to religion, given its importance in her recollections of her earliest childhood. Sera Khandro notes her father's political

involvement, but also describes him as a devout Buddhist, a Dzokchen practitioner of the Seminal Heart (*snying thig*) sect who “was empowered in mind Treasures.”⁴⁶ In fact, she recounts that when she was nine years old, her father mentions the existence of Dzokchen (Great Perfection) practice to her for the first time. When he explains his “ability to train in seeing that which appears as an illusory dream,” his words instantly cause her to feel great faith in the Dzokchen teachings.⁴⁷ Perhaps it is these influences that support her early focus on religion; Sera Khandro portrays her childhood as one of sanctity, continually remembering the suffering of cyclic existence and exhorting her childhood friends to recite the six-syllable prayer⁴⁸ and to practice the dharma. Instead of playing games with the other children, she recites mantra and is derided by the other children for being like a grandmother doing prayers instead of playing like a child.⁴⁹ She recounts that at the young age of eight, she has her first Treasure revelation experience in which she pulls a ritual dagger (*phur bu*) part-way out of a rock at Drak Yerpa (*Brag yer pa*), a mountainside filled with cave hermitages near Lhasa. Her father is so impressed by this that he sends her back the next day to wander through the caves looking for more Treasures.⁵⁰ Although she begs her parents to allow her to renounce lay society, signs indicate that she should not become a nun. When she is eight years old, along with her family Sera Khandro consults the head lama of the group of eighteen Chinese political leaders⁵¹ who was the incarnation of the Great Accomplished One Tangtong Gyalpo (*Grub chen thang stong rgyal po*) named Changtrong Druptop Rinpoché (*Lcang grong grub thob rin po che*). He performs the refuge ceremony for her and tells her family,

This girl is without mistake an emanation of the Lady Sakya Hayagrīva. Hence, neither being a householder nor a nun is appropriate. When it is time, her [*dākinī*] heritage will awaken, so until then do whatever you want.⁵²

Whether or not her destiny is to become a nun, from her earliest childhood, Sera Khandro writes that she sought to renounce the world into which she was born, a world of Lhasa nobility and political power.

Despite her religious leanings, Sera Khandro writes that at the age of ten she was soon to be forced to take on a political role herself:

Then, a few days later the thirty outer and inner ministers from the group of 18 Chinese leaders and the complete group of Chinese and Tibetan leaders gathered and had a conference and said that I needed to take on my father's [political] position.

I said, "You don't need to decide about me – my former karma knows what I will do and what outcome there will be. Give both my older brothers and sisters father's rank and they will be happy."

The ministers said, "We have already given your two brothers and your sisters their share of the estate and leadership positions. They are already there taking care of whatever they need to be doing. You, the youngest of all the siblings, the darling child of the male and female leaders, because you have the status of the youngest child, you must act accordingly." Having said this, they began preparations.

I prayed to both the Great One from Orgyen and Yeshé Tsogyal and I stayed there not giving them any answer.⁵³

The issue of whether Sera Khandro will assume a political role is temporarily resolved after Sera Khandro prays fervently to Yeshé Tsogyal, who comes to her in a vision. At length, this time the ministers give up trying to convince her to accept the political role.⁵⁴

Visionary Experiences and Struggles with Impending Marriage

This vision of Yeshé Tsogyal is one of many visions and interactions Sera Khandro has with divine figures, most of whom are female.⁵⁵ Terrifying women and beautiful women accompany her daily life and appear to her in dreams at various times.

For example, just as she is about to drown herself in the river in despair at being forced to study Chinese, a terrifying visionary woman appears before her and stops her from jumping.⁵⁶ During her first Treasure revelation experience pulling a ritual dagger out of a rock at Drak Yerpa, a beautiful woman helps her find Treasures and gives her prophecies about her future.⁵⁷ Also in Yerpa, the mountain deity Nyenchen Tanglha (*Gnyan chen thang lha*)⁵⁸ appears to her as a magnificent white man with a ruddy complexion riding a black horse and claims to be her father.⁵⁹ Sera Khandro later confirms with her mother that her true father is in fact the mountain deity Nyenchen Tanglha and this realization gives Sera Khandro the resolve not to follow in her father's footsteps as a political leader in Lhasa because he is not her real father.⁶⁰ After receiving more visions in which *ḍākinīs* teach Sera Khandro essential practice advice, Sera Khandro devotes herself to religious practice.⁶¹ Her commitment is not without benefits; to her father's amazement, she is spontaneously able to cure people of smallpox by reciting mantras, blowing on them, and giving them blessed water during a smallpox outbreak that occurred in Lhasa when she was eleven years old, approximately 1903.⁶²

Just as Sera Khandro is focusing on practicing the teachings that she has received in her visionary experience, marriage proposals destroy her ability to determine her own future. Also in this context of recollecting her father's machinations in arranging her marriage, her writing demonstrates racial tensions between Chinese and Tibetan suitors. Sera Khandro recounts that when she was only eleven years old, inner Tibetan ministers (*bod kyi nang blon*) such as the Shartra family (*Shar khra sang*), the Doring family (*Rdo ring sang*), the Zurkang family (*Zur khang sang*), and others coveted her as a bride and offered her father gifts. Yet she states that, "Because they were part of the Tibetan group,

he didn't give [me to them] and he returned all the presents.”⁶³ Instead, Sera Khandro's father accepts the matrimonial offer of “a Chinese leader⁶⁴ named Daloyi (*Da lo yi*)⁶⁵ from the western area called the Happy City (*Skyid lung grong chen*)⁶⁶ whose appearance was Chinese, whose religious sect (*chos lugs*) was Seminal Heart (*snying thig*) like ours, and who was wealthy.”⁶⁷ She writes that, “All the ministers had a conference and said that, ‘Because they [the Chinese leader's family] are sovereign over ten thousand households, it is acceptable if they can control both ranks.”⁶⁸ Both sides having agreed to the marriage, they rejoiced. Meanwhile, Sera Khandro recollects, “As for me, I was extremely depressed. Wondering ‘What wouldn't be okay about being dead?,’ I passed my time day and night feeling only suffering.”⁶⁹

Sera Khandro describes growing more and more despondent with the finalization of her marriage. Although her father reconsiders giving his daughter away in marriage when he realizes that she has a strong proclivity towards religion as a Treasure revealer, it is already too late as he has already finalized the agreement with the Chinese leader's family. When he tries to extricate his daughter from the marriage, the Chinese leader's family threatens war. All the ministers agree that there is nothing to do but to continue on with the engagement. As a result of this, Sera Khandro decides to kill herself and attempts suicide by drinking a mixture of opium and alcohol. Just at the right moment, her father discovers that she has poisoned herself and saves her life by making her vomit the poison through pouring mustard seed into her mouth through a straw.⁷⁰

As marriage plans are finalized, Sera Khandro experiences multiple visions in which she travels to elaborate Buddhafields and receives empowerments and meditation instruction from figures including Vajrayoginī,⁷¹ Sarahapa,⁷² and Taranatha.⁷³ She also

travels to the land of Yama, the Lord of Death, as one who returns from the dead (*‘das log*), and comes back to life to tell her amazed parents about her journey.⁷⁴ As tensions increase between Sera Khandro’s active visionary life and her obligation to marry, two major turning points in Sera Khandro’s young life occur. First, her mother dies and Sera Khandro no longer feels tied to staying at home.⁷⁵ Second, just as Sera Khandro is beginning to hatch her plans to escape the marriage her father has arranged for her without her consent, she has a vision which changes the course of her life. When Sera Khandro is thirteen years old, Vajravārāhī appears to her in a dream and empowers her in the two Treasure cycles that she will spend the rest of her life revealing and teaching. Sera Khandro recounts,

One day in my dream, in a pleasing land with green pastures and a forest replete with flowers, there were many birds and animals frolicking contentedly. In the middle of this, many different women were gathered. Wondering “Is mother over there in that line of women?,” I went to where the women were.

When I thought that mother wasn’t there and they were all women I didn’t recognize, the nun who had given me advice about death in my previous dream and the girl who had helped me go to the presence of Sarahapa both came to me. They said, “Are you tired? It is greatly amazing that you have come here now.”

Replying “How are you both? It is greatly amazing that we are meeting here,” I prostrated.

They said, “Because we are of the same birth, it is not appropriate to prostrate. Prostrate to the main lady of the *maṇḍala* – the time has come for you to take your accomplishment wealth.”

I asked again, “How is it that we are of the same family line?”

They said, “This nun is Kūnga Buma. Both of our lineages are Sukasiddhi and Dipam Taré.” Saying this, they disappeared without [my knowing] where they went.

According to their words, I prostrated to the main lady. The main lady arose from her seat and she cut open her navel with a curved knife without any redness.

Extremely terrified, I couldn't bear to watch with my eyes and calling out "Mother!" I prepared to come back [home].

At this time, the women said, "Don't say this. Open your eyes and look – there is no fault. The time has come for you to meet the great self-emergent changeless *maṇḍala*."

I opened my eyes and when I slowly looked, all the women had transformed and all had the appearance of *ḍākinīs*. The main lady also having changed into the appearance of Vajravārāhī, she conferred the empowerment of the Assembly of Sense-base Deities of the Body *Maṇḍala* and gave me an introduction [to them]. She conferred a symbolic empowerment in *The Secret Treasury of Reality Ḍākinīs* and *The Ḍākinīs' Heart Essence*.⁷⁶ She bestowed upon me the registry (*kha byang*) and prophetic registry (*lung byang*), including the time to teach these two religious teachings, the place to spread them, the great beings who would hold these teachings, the place where the disciples would be, the way auspicious connections would appear, and the method companions (i.e., consorts, *thabs grogs*). She said, "Since the time has come for you to benefit sentient beings with these teachings, keep the meaning of this registry in your mind and don't forget it. Because you are my messenger, benefit to the teachings and to sentient beings will certainly arise."⁷⁷

Sera Khandro's reaction to the immense honor of being given teachings to propagate by Vajravārāhī herself is to wonder why Vajravārāhī chose her, a mere girl, to be her messenger. This is one of many occasions throughout her narrative when she denigrates herself on the basis of her gender, wondering why one like herself with an inferior body (*skye lus dman pa*), one with a woman's body (*bu med lus*), is empowered to benefit sentient beings through propagating Treasure revelations. In this instance, *ḍākinīs* encourage her, citing Guru Rinpoché's words to Yeshé Tsogyal telling her that her that her female body is not low but is extraordinary.⁷⁸ Thus Sera Khandro explicitly refers to Yeshé Tsogyal's biography as she recounts her own. Key passages in Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* are very similar to passages in hagiographies of Yeshé Tsogyal, an interconnection that reflects Sera Khandro's status as Yeshé Tsogyal's incarnation. Another example of this is a long vision that Sera Khandro recounts experiencing at age

fifteen in which Kukurepa⁷⁹ gives her a detailed teaching on channels and wind practices (*rtsa rlung*) including an instruction on sexual yoga that is nearly identical to a passage from Yeshé Tsogyal's hagiography.⁸⁰

The Great Escape

Meanwhile, Sera Khandro plans her great escape from Lhasa householder life. Although she regrets not being able to please her father, divine visionary prophecies and lamas she speaks with such as Druptop Rinpoché (*Lcang grong grub thob rin po che*) encourage her to follow her life's destiny to live a religious life in Eastern Tibet.⁸¹ After her father remarries, Sera Khandro's desire to leave her home grows stronger. When she is fifteen years old, she asks her father for permission to stay with her brother for a while instead of living with her father and his new wife. This is a strategic move because her brother's house is only three stories high, not the four stories of her father's house and therefore is easier to escape from.⁸² While at her brother's house, the seminal moment of her great escape occurs: her teacher and future consort Drimé Özer arrives from Kham and requests shelter at her brother's house while on pilgrimage in Central Tibet with his entourage of disciples. The following passage marks the beginning of the most important chapter of her life:

Then in the tenth month, some people from Kham came to visit Central Tibet. Among those of the central encampment,⁸³ there was one who was said to be the incarnation of Dzokchen Palgé⁸⁴ from Dzagyal Monastery. Since he asked my older brother to give him lodging, [my brother] gave him lodging and the guests arrived. Watching from the sun-viewing glass window, I looked at the guests. Among them there was one lama with hair on his head. As soon as I saw him, my perception transformed and thinking that he was really the one called Künkyen Longchen Rabjam,⁸⁵ tears flowed from my eyes. On account of the goose bumps on my body, I put my palms together and prayed, "Don't lessen your compassion – in all my lifetimes may I never separate from you."⁸⁶

Sera Khandro is fascinated by this new arrival and sends her servant girls on a secret mission to find out more about who he is. They return, telling her his name. Sera Khandro writes,

Although I was immeasurably happy when I heard that his name was Wish-fulfilling Jewel Incarnate, because of my high status, I couldn't go to him. From the sun-viewing glass window, when I saw the Wish-fulfilling Jewel himself going out and coming in to his tent, I prayed [to him] with my body, speech, and mind united and having [prayed for] him to be my main physical consort, our minds were mixed.⁸⁷

All the signs from Sera Khandro's dreams having come together, she decides the time has come to avoid her impending marriage one month before it is scheduled to happen by escaping Lhasa, never to return or to see her family ever again. One evening when she is fifteen years old, she pours her two servant girls so much beer they become intoxicated and fall asleep. Then, after removing all her head jewelry and fancy clothing, she dons a new servant's outfit over her clothing. With only a few snacks in her pockets, she breaks the window of her room and slowly climbs down from the third floor. She recounts that although terrifying demons of all sorts blocked her passage on the dark road, she persevered remembering that all phenomena are illusory. Traveling as fast as a wild horse, by sunrise the next morning she reaches Tsurpu (*Mtshur phu*) in Tölung (*Stod lung*) and catches up with the people of the central encampment.⁸⁸

Difficulties on the Road to Golok

From the moment Sera Khandro catches up with Drimé Özer and his encampment, difficulties and obstacles pervade Sera Khandro's experience of life on all levels ranging from extreme physical discomforts to social problems that plague her new

life amidst Golok society. The cultural and linguistic differences are vast between the noble Lhasa girl Sera Khandro, who had never known physical hardship, and Drimé Özer's nomadic religious community from Golok, who were seasoned alms beggars accustomed to traveling by foot over vast Tibetan terrains. At first, Sera Khandro recounts,

I couldn't understand what everybody was saying to me and they couldn't understand what I was saying. I thought, "They have the body of humans but they wear leather clothes and when they speak, they are like savage barbarians. It will be difficult for the religious teaching called The Great Perfection to spread in their land."

Nevertheless, having prayed to Lama Drimé Özer, I will certainly accomplish the completely pure dharma [in preparation for] death. Otherwise, if I pass from this life in the view of a precious teacher like him, I certainly will attain the boundless permanent domain [of Buddhahood].⁸⁹

These words of encouragement Sera Khandro tells herself are her only solace as she navigates through the endless litany of sufferings that test her resolve to pursue a religious life. Sera Khandro writes of having no food and begging for her sustenance. She remembers seeing a nomad's black yak hair tent for the first time; not knowing what it was she waited all evening until she saw the nomads returning home with their livestock before daring to approach to beg for roasted barley flour (*rtsam pa*). She is so new at the begging life that she doesn't have a bag in which to put the *tsampa* the nomads give her; when she puts it in her shoe, they all laugh at her and decide she's crazy. The only one who doesn't laugh is an old woman who gives her a bag for her *tsampa* and tells her, "Beautiful girl, you have an excellent physique. It is possible to be freed from a dog's mouth, [but] it is difficult to be freed from under men."⁹⁰ This comment foreshadows the difficulties Sera Khandro will have becoming freed from her husband Gyalsé and the demands of other men in the future. Sera Khandro has no idea how to make herself tea;

she begs for a two-handled clay tea pot from an old woman in Penpo (*'Phan po*) who explains to her, "Put the pot on top of three rocks, pour the water in, put the tea in, burn it and the tea will boil."⁹¹ Even with this instruction, Sera Khandro faces difficulties because she has never experienced the smoke from a cooking fire before. She writes that the smoke from the fire stung her eyes so badly she felt she was going blind.⁹² Sera Khandro nears starvation and indeed almost freezes to death. Her sophisticated clothing from Lhasa is no match for the outdoor vagabond life of religious pilgrimage. Her body turns stiff from overexposure and she loses consciousness. When she awakes, bloody sores erupt all over her body from the cold and then itch as they heal.⁹³

Although some community members including Drimé Özer himself help her through this rough stage by giving her warm leather-skin clothing, food, and some utensils, for the most part the Golok encampment members treat Sera Khandro as the outsider that she in most ways certainly is. Aside from a few nuns who pour tea for Sera Khandro and lend her some clothing, although there are more than thirty smaller groups of people in the encampment, they say it isn't suitable for anybody to meet with her and are suspicious of her as if she was a leper.⁹⁴ In particular, two men named Tashül Jiksam (*Rta shul 'jigs bsam*) and Penchen (*Pan chen*) forbid Sera Khandro from coming close to them and say bad things about her. Even Drimé Özer does not initially accept Sera Khandro's presence and urges her to return home for fear that her wealthy and powerful family will be very angry at him. Ultimately, Drimé Özer acquiesces to Sera Khandro's pleas to join his traveling community because Sera Khandro successfully argues that she cannot live a householder life and accomplish the pure dharma at the same time.⁹⁵

From the beginning, Sera Khandro insinuates that one reason why Drimé Özer's community treated her with such suspicion is that they feared she would become the lama's consort. Sera Khandro mentions that "Everyone said that if [Drimé Özer] took this girl from central Tibet [as a consort], Akyongza (*A skyong bza*)⁹⁶ wouldn't come. Because of this, I didn't dare go before [Drimé Özer].⁹⁷ This is the first mention of a problem that would follow her for the rest of her life; the other consorts of the important male Treasure revealers with whom Sera Khandro interacted repeatedly reacted to her presence with jealousy and hostility. As a young and beautiful female newcomer to religious communities involving consort relationships, Sera Khandro threatened the other women around her, and by extension seemed to threaten others as well who were invested in maintaining peace in their communities.

Sera Khandro is thus able to join this group of traveling nomads from Golok, but they don't fully accept her as a part of their community. She is different from them racially, linguistically, and in terms of social class, and her new religious siblings cannot let her forget her differences. They exclude her from many of the community's activities and treat her as nothing more than a beggar woman. Despite this, her extraordinary qualities of insight, spontaneously-arisen learning, and ability to express herself eloquently soon become apparent. Sera Khandro continually makes elaborate prayers and sings beautiful songs in verse that amaze her companions. When the group is celebrating the enthronement of Drimé Özer's younger brother named Namka Jikmé (*Nam mkha' jigs med*) at Dzagyal Monastery as the incarnation of Patrül Rinpoché, Sera Khandro and her fellow beggar girl Chödrön (*Chos sgron*) are excluded from participating in the abundant celebrations. Sera Khandro urges her friend to join in the celebration, saying,

“Because you are from the same encampment (*sgar*), of course it will be okay for you to go to their [celebration] line. As for me, since earlier Tapen and Jiksam said I wasn’t allowed to go on the Chinese road, now, how would they allow me to join in an enthronement celebration? I won’t go.”

She said, “You don’t accept happiness and you buy suffering. Not wanting your splendid and blissfully happy homeland, you need to worry about the affirmative or negative expressions of Penchen and Jiksam. You took [this] on yourself. Instead of thinking about whether you will get beggar’s food, you could be a king in your own land. If you had stayed and taken on political leadership, you wouldn’t have needed to have suffering like this.”⁹⁸

Sera Khandro artfully turns Chödrön’s very practical statement back towards religious practice; replying, “I am still one with royal authority,” she sings the following song to her:

Oh listen, Lantern of Dharma (Chödrön)!
As for myself, this girl who has attained victory,
I have attained leadership that is changeless,
Equal to none, and especially exalted.

The all-pervasive foundation is
Self-awareness, free from fabrication from the beginning;
It is the energy of the great spontaneously perfect primordial wisdom.

The palace of the mind of enlightenment, non-dual saṃsāra and nirvāṇa,
Is expansive, all-pervasive, with a high summit.
Its expansive entrance is accomplishment without exertion.
Spontaneously present self-appearing ornaments are beautifully arranged.

The supreme king of the changeless dimension of awareness
Resides on a throne endowed with seven vajras.
The queen is continuous primordial wisdom and
The son and retinue are condensing and expanding appearances.

From the inseparability of the expanse and primordial wisdom,
With regard to the arising of potency that manifests everything,
The group of servants and subjects cycling repeatedly
Is perfected in the expanse of self-luminous great bliss.

From the luster of original purity emanates spontaneous presence.
Arising as the establishment of sensory pleasures of the six realms,
It [spontaneous presence] sports in the manner of self-liberation without attachment

And becomes sovereign over all that appears in existence.

I have attained royal power like this.
 I am not attached to illusory objects.
 Father's palace is like a demonic jail.
 It is the cause for the spreading of the afflictions of the eight worldly dharmas.⁹⁹

Father's power is like the anchor of cyclic existence.
 It is the basis for thoughtlessly engaging in the five poisons.
 Becoming free from my homeland is like [being freed from] shackles.
 Attachment and hatred for oneself and others always spreads.

I will not adhere to a region like that –
 Chödrön, keep this in your mind!¹⁰⁰

Sera Khandro eloquently explains to Chödrön that she has traded her access to temporal royal power for access to the eternal royal power of Buddhahood. The verse above is characteristic of the philosophical poetry that pervades Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* and reminds the reader that although Sera Khandro did not have any formal religious education, she certainly had a strong natural ability to write and speak with great prowess. Regardless of how one interprets this ability – as proof that she is a divine incarnate (as her disciples certainly perceive it), as a reflection of the religion she absorbed in her childhood, or as a result of her retrospective gaze thinking back later in life on her sixteen-year-old self – the sophistication of her writing is undeniable.

Searching for Community and Finding Religion in Golok

Sera Khandro experiences many painful difficulties adjusting to the religious mendicant life on the road to Golok, but her troubles have only just begun. When the pilgrims from Drimé Özer's encampment finally arrive home to Dujom Lingpa's main seat, Dartsang Monastery (*Zlar tshang dgon*), they all return home to their families and friends, leaving Sera Khandro alone and unsure of where to go. Sera Khandro's outsider

status as a lone woman from Central Tibet in the middle of nomadic Golok coupled with her identity as neither nun nor laywoman lead to problems finding places to live throughout her life; tumultuous social dynamics seem to follow her wherever she goes. She is threatening to other consorts who fear she will usurp their men, and looked down upon by nuns who are judgmental about her lack of monastic vows. When she arrives in Golok, she has few friends and no more. She writes of being in a desperate situation trying to do anything she can to actualize her dream of pursuing her religious training and being near the object of her hopes, Drimé Özer.

Initially, Sera Khandro is delighted to hear that she can rent a room in Drimé Özer's household (*bla brang*). However, she is soon forced to leave her new accommodations because of community concerns over the feelings of Drimé Özer's consort Akyongza. Sera Khandro recounts:

At that time, the caretaker of [Drimé Özer's] household named Akyap Trülku said, "The Central Tibetan girl is not allowed to live here. If she lives here, Akyongza certainly won't come back." Saying this, he became angry.

I replied, "Because I am still a good person, Akyongza doesn't have any reason not to come back. How will my living here be harmful?" Saying this, I didn't leave.¹⁰¹

Although Sera Khandro does not explicitly state as much, it is likely that the sparks of her love for Drimé Özer had already been kindled at this early stage in her life. Whether or not they were involved in any sort of sexual relationship at this point, that Drimé Özer favored Sera Khandro is clear from her comments that he secretly gave her barley, butter, and cheese from time to time without letting anybody see him do it.¹⁰² It is difficult to interpret why those around Drimé Özer disapproved of his interest in Sera Khandro to the degree that they did. Perhaps Akyongza and her friends banded together to influence the

young Sera Khandro's expulsion, or perhaps Drimé Özer's family members and close disciples also disapproved of his taking on another consort for practical reasons such as the financial drain to his household, an issue that arises later in their lives. In any case, this is the first but not the last time that Sera Khandro is expelled from a Golok religious community in which she sincerely wanted to live.

Despite Sera Khandro's initial stubborn insistence on living in Drimé Özer's household, ultimately she decides that rather than risk the wrath of Akyongza, she had better follow the sage advice of Drimé Özer's attendant Öbar (*'Od 'bar*) who tells her,

If you want to request Dharma this winter, I have arranged a household for you. Go there and work as a servant and they will give you provisions for when you go to request Dharma. If you do this, it will be good. When the time comes for the Dharma [teachings], I will come get you.¹⁰³

Sera Khandro acquiesces to Öbar's suggestion, grateful for his help in finding a way for her to participate in the winter Dharma teachings. The decision to leave Drimé Özer's household was prudent, but heart-wrenching. Sera Khandro recollects catching a glimpse of her lama on her way down the rocky path towards her new home:

Seeing [Drimé Özer], my mind was oppressed with suffering and my eyes filled with tears. Unable to see the path, I acted as if I were putting on my shoes and stayed for a moment on the ground.

Abten (*A bstan*) said, "You go down this path. I need to get a divination from the Trülku." Saying this, he whipped his horse and was off.

Although my heart's desire was to go [with him to see the Trülku], I didn't dare go.¹⁰⁴

With this moment of anguish, Sera Khandro departs for her new life as a servant girl working nearby in the Abten family home. Going from a girlhood in a noble Lhasa

family to teenage life working as a servant girl in a Golok household is no easy transition;

Sera Khandro writes,

Because his was a Golok household, at first I didn't understand the language and because I didn't [know how to] do any of the work accurately, I experienced great hardship. Then, gradually, I learned [how to do] the work and also came to understand the language. After I stayed there for over a month, it became time for the Dharma teachings.¹⁰⁵

After hard work and many sufferings as a servant girl, Sera Khandro is finally rewarded by the gift of receiving religious teachings. Several of Dujom Lingpa's eight sons give her teachings and introduce her to the religious practices that she will spend her life accomplishing. Akyap Trülku, the lama who forbade her from living at Drimé Özer's residence, teaches her channel and wind practices (*rtsa rlung*). Drimé Özer teaches explanations on Purifying Appearances (*snang sbyang*),¹⁰⁶ Direct Transcendence (*thod rgal*), and Cutting (*gcod*). His younger brother named Lhachen Topgyal (*Lha chen stobs rgyal*) teaches preliminary practices (*sngon 'gro*).¹⁰⁷ Sera Khandro eagerly devotes herself to religious practice:

Otherwise, aside from a bit of sleep, I constantly did prostrations, enduring the snowfall, the wind-chill, and so forth. In seventeen days, I finished 100,000 prostrations.¹⁰⁸

In spite of her diligent commitment to spiritual practice, many members of Drimé Özer's community still will not fully accept her. Two men who had earlier caused problems for Sera Khandro, Tashül and Penchung, as well as other people, disrespectfully tease her while she is doing her practice:

At that time, since Tashül and Penchung had requested preliminary practices, when I was prostrating, they said, "The Central Tibetan girl doesn't know the difference between heat and cold – she is like a yak! They gathered grass from inside their shoes¹⁰⁹ and rotten grass from the side of the monastery and [said], "Let's see if it will stick on her back!"

Some people pressed [the dirty grass] down on the top of my head. Some put it in front of me and said, “Put this in your mouth!” Also some people said that I had [no sense of] clean or dirty like a dog and picking up human and dog excrement with a spoon, they put it in front of me and on my head and so forth.¹¹⁰

The people watching these antics just laugh instead of reprimanding the tricksters, until one day the nun Yeshé Drön observes the situation and threatens to report Penchung and the other culprits to Drimé Özer if they don’t stop harassing her. Even so, Sera Khandro’s exclusion from community events continues. She describes the conclusion of her first winter of religious teachings when she is sixteen years old:

Then all the dharma practice sessions having finished, since everybody gathered in the assembly hall of the lama’s household for a feast gathering, I went to the end of one of the rows. Even though I didn’t know how to read, I stayed there reciting prayers but the disciplinarian came and kicked me out, saying, “You beggar woman get out! Don’t stay here in the assembly hall!”¹¹¹

Exclusions like this plagued Sera Khandro, but the most difficult of all was the distance her exclusion enforced between herself and Drimé Özer. Although *ḍākinī* prophecies come to her in the form of visionary experiences that urge her to fulfill her religious calling to be with Drimé Özer as his consort, she laments her inability to accomplish their profound import. She recounts praying to the *ḍākinīs* to appear before her to aid her in her religious pursuits:

Thinking that I had lost the Wish-fulfilling Jewel to the power of his consort, I said this:

“From the midst of the expanse of the realm of unchanging sky,
A voice emerges without a body.
It is difficult for me to accomplish this prophecy.
Although you are unmistaken in the expanse,
For the sake of me, this wretched girl,
If you don’t emanate as a display of an illusory body,
I, this foolish one who is like an old bull,
Don’t know how to be skillful, no matter what happens.

I desire to go under the power of the *sapta* demons.¹¹²
 You, assembly of *ḍākinīs*, be excellent friends.”

I wondered if I would accomplish my purpose according to the *ḍākinī* prophecies. Not going to the presence of the Lord himself [Drimé Özer], I had let go of my first priority.¹¹³

The *ḍākinīs*' prophecies are unanimous: Sera Khandro's first aim must be to accomplish the Dharma, and in order to do that Drimé Özer is her prophesized consort, companion, and lama. Thus, Sera Khandro's poetic interactions with the divine female forces that pervade her experience continue to act as friends and sources of encouragement as she faces innumerable worldly obstacles.

Sera Khandro returns again the following winter when she is seventeen years old to the same Golok household to work as a servant in hopes of saving up enough money to buy a leather coat to keep her warm throughout the bitter cold alpine winter, but she feels herself getting too drawn into non-religious activities. Instead of accepting the household's marriage offer to one of their sons, Sera Khandro goes to live with a nun relative of the household named Tsüldrön, who lives in a religious encampment (*chos sgar*). However, yet again, Sera Khandro still has not found her home; Tsüldrön insists that if Sera Khandro is to live with her, she must shave her hair and become a nun.¹¹⁴ Sera Khandro tells Tsüldrön, “I promise that I won't have a physical relationship with laymen or with lamas without purpose. Otherwise, I won't become a nun.”¹¹⁵ By this reply, Sera Khandro is promising that instead of being celibate, she will engage in sexual relationships only for the religious purpose of engaging in sexual yoga. Tsüldrön is appalled by Sera Khandro's brazen lack of shame about her sexuality; they bicker about this until Sera Khandro effectively silences Tsüldrön by saying that at least she doesn't make promises of chastity but then secretly break them.

Thus, Sera Khandro finds herself unwelcome in each community she attempts to join. Although she is not accepted as one of Drimé Özer's consorts, she doesn't feel drawn to becoming a nun and she certainly doesn't desire to marry into the Golok household for which she works. Banished from Drimé Özer's community by his consort's presence, unhappy with the worldly distractions servant work brings, and unwelcome in Tsüldrön's community of female monastics, Sera Khandro's courageous journey to Golok leads her quite literally into a homeless life of Buddhist renunciation.

Prophecies and Problems: Life at Banak Monastery

Sera Khandro's traumatic difficulties finding a place for herself in Golok religious society are far from over. Just after disputing with Tsüldrön about whether or not she should be a nun, Sera Khandro recounts receiving a letter summoning her to visit a prominent Treasure revealer named Gara Tertön Dūdül Wangjuk Lingpa (*Mgar ra gter ston bdud 'dul dbang phyug gling pa*).¹¹⁶ Sera Khandro writes, "Because the manner in which I was his consort in his ḍākinī prophecies matched [what was said in] my own registry, in the eleventh month I prepared to go there."¹¹⁷ Thus, since the ḍākinīs' instructions that Sera Khandro received and wrote down as prophecy in her Treasure registry matched the words in Gara Tertön's letter, Sera Khandro decides she should go to him as his consort even though he is a well established Treasure revealer in his fifties and she is eighteen. For Sera Khandro, Gara Tertön's letter could not have come at a better time; his invitation to visit his Treasure revelation encampment (*gter sgar*) seems to be an opportunity to further her religious training in a place conducive to Dharma practice.

Sadly, this hope turns out to be for naught. Yet again, Sera Khandro experiences the wrath of other consorts more well-established and older than she. Before she even attempts to go to Banak, Gara Tertön's wife (*yum*) Yakshulza (*Yag shul bza'*, also called Yakza) sends her messages filled with negative words warning her not to come near Gara Tertön.¹¹⁸ Sera Khandro interprets this and other occurrences as signs that her auspicious connection (*rten 'brel*) with Gara Tertön is lost.¹¹⁹ Despite this, Gara Tertön writes her another letter foretelling her auspicious connection with Drimé Özer. Sera Khandro recounts that Gara Tertön's letter said,

Our auspicious connection has fallen away because of other things and there is nothing to be done about it. However, you and the heart-son of the Treasure Revealer [Dujom Lingpa] named Drimé Özer both have a profound connection through [previous] aspirations. Since he is also coming to my place, find a way to quickly come here. It is certain that we all have a great purpose. Because you two are empowered in my final profound Treasures, I need to give you both the teachings to maintain and protect them.¹²⁰

Sera Khandro again attempts to see Gara Tertön before he passes away, this time actually making the trip to Banak. However, Yakza is so threatened by Sera Khandro that she forbids her from visiting the lama until he is on his deathbed. Despite not making a connection with Gara Tertön while he is alive, Sera Khandro has a visionary experience of Gara Tertön conferring empowerment in his Treasures on her and giving her encouraging advice that her female body is not inferior, as Sera Khandro repeatedly laments it is.¹²¹ Gara Tertön's wife Yakza may despise Sera Khandro, but to her chagrin some members of Gara Tertön's community become quite taken with her, intuiting her close connection with Gara Tertön. Sera Khandro explains that, "From that time forth [when she received the visions of Gara Tertön], everybody near and far forgot my name and called me 'dākinī.'"¹²² Despite this hint of favorable treatment, trouble continues to

follow her. After Gara Tertön's funeral ceremony is over, Sera Khandro stays with a monastic lama from Central Tibet named Kitrül (*Skyid lung sprul sku*), who is her platonic friend. Soon, however, Kitrül's sisters, fearing that their brother would lose his vows, criticize Sera Khandro until she decides to leave.¹²³

Again, Sera Khandro is left with nowhere to go and without a community to support her religious aspirations. A pivotal moment in Sera Khandro's life occurs when she attends an empowerment given by a lama named Kangdong Bönpo Gönwang (*Khang gdong dbon po mgon dbang*). After the empowerment, the lama summons her and advises her to enter into a relationship with Gara Tertön and Yakza's son Gara Gyalsé:

You are a pillar – you are extraordinary. Examining you[r] outer, inner, and secret [qualities], you are certainly of *dākinī* heritage. In particular, you are unmistakably an emanation of the Tibetan Lady Yeshé Tsogyal. Now, go to Banak and live temporarily with Gara Gyalsé. If you do not help take care of the Great Treasure Revealer Longyang's [Gara Tertön's] Treasure teachings, the lama's teachings will completely disappear – the religious texts will get put into clay statue houses, thieves will buy and sell the Treasure substances as talismans, and so forth. When this happens, I will be one who has betrayed all the sentient beings of the three realms [by not being able to protect Gara Tertön's teachings]. Because of this, it seems as if you must go to [be] beside Gara for just a temporary period of time.¹²⁴

Sera Khandro reflects that “Although I didn't want to go, not finding a way to go against the orders of a lama who had given me an empowerment, I promised to go there and so forth.”¹²⁵ Sera Khandro and Gara Gyalsé are an unlikely pair from the start since Sera Khandro is still in love with Drimé Özer and Gara Gyalsé is the son of Yakza, the woman who despised Sera Khandro since before they had even met. Perhaps Sera Khandro pursued a relationship with Gyalsé because, while there seemed to be no hope for Sera Khandro to be with Drimé Özer, she perceived living with Gara Tertön's son Gyalsé as an opportunity to fulfill her commitment to maintain and protect Gara Tertön's Treasure

revelation teachings. She may also have seen the relationship as a way to solve her practical problems of having nowhere to live and no consistent source of financial support.

Initially, Sera Khandro's hopes for a life conducive to religious practice near Banak Monastery appear bright. When she follows the Kangdong lama's orders and travels to Gara Gyalsé's vicinity, all the people say that a *ḍākinī* has arrived. People in the area of Banak remember Gara Tertön's high esteem of this young unknown girl from Central Tibet whose presence he requested repeatedly before his death; they come from near and far to ask for prophecies and divinations and everybody brings her butter and cheese. Able to cure people of their sicknesses, Sera Khandro wonders if this is the meaning of the previous prophecies given to her from *ḍākinīs* and lamas indicating that she will be empowered with the auspicious connections necessary to benefit sentient beings.¹²⁶

But even during this moment in which she first begins to receive recognition for her amazing qualities, Sera Khandro has her detractors. The people who don't like her say that she isn't a real *ḍākinī* and that it is a lie that she doesn't know how to read and write.¹²⁷ They say that the appearance of her curing patients of their illness is actually a magical illusion stemming from her knowledge of various negative mantras.¹²⁸ It is no surprise that Sera Khandro is not loved by all in Gyalsé's community; after all, Gyalsé is Yakza's son, the woman who has hated Sera Khandro from the very beginning for being a potential threat to her status as Gara Tertön's main consort.

Life with Gyalsé quickly proves difficult for Sera Khandro. She recounts asking him early on in their relationship for Great Perfection teachings, but he belittles her

understanding, saying that she doesn't know anything at all about the teachings of the Knowledge Holder Jikmé Lingpa (*Rig 'dzin 'jigs med gling pa*). Sera Khandro explains that after this, although she stayed with Gyalsé for another eight years, she never dared to request any esoteric precepts (*man ngag*) from him again.¹²⁹ Tensions between Yakza, Gyalsé, and Sera Khandro mount when it comes time for the Gara family to divide the late Gara Tertön's wealth of Treasure substances between Yakza, her two sons, and other family members. Remembering the prophetic words of the lama from Kangdong named Gönwang, Sera Khandro gives Gyalsé an ultimatum: "If I am allowed to take care of the precious lama's Treasure teachings and Treasure substances, you can live [with me]. If I am not allowed to care for them, it is not acceptable for you to live with me."¹³⁰ In this way, Sera Khandro manages to convince Gyalsé to stealthily take all of his father's Treasure substances and texts away from the lama's household. His mother Yakza and others protest, but by that time Gyalsé and Sera Khandro have already gathered the entire collection. This is not a diplomatic way to begin married life in her spouse¹³¹ Gyalsé's homeland; a faction of people who support Yakza and oppose Sera Khandro suggest that the community "needs to expel this girl from central Tibet," and that "it is not acceptable for her to live with Gyalsé."¹³² Sera Khandro writes of her growing antipathy towards those who want to kick her out of the region. Reminiscent of Milarepa's misdeeds using black magic against those who had harmed his family, she propitiates the Dharma protector in order to cause undesirable things to happen quickly to those who don't like her.¹³³ Sera Khandro soon feels great regret for harming other sentient beings. She burns the incantation texts she used and vows at the risk of her life never to harm anyone again.

Immediately after Sera Khandro experiences the above difficulties, she has a dream in which the *ḍākinī* Künselma (*Mkha' 'gro ma kun gsal ma*) appears to her saying:

Alas – although the *maṇḍala* of the greatly bright sun from the east
Dispels the darkness of the gloom of the realm of beings,
Look at the veil cast by the obscurations of clouds.

You, woman, who is a messenger of the mother *ḍākinīs* –
Although you have the residual prayers of profound Treasure,
The jewel of the two-fold aim is buried in mud.

Look at the [way] the luster of brass can deceive [one into thinking it's] gold!
The being who is your share is dressed in saffron.
The one who holds the first name resides nearby.
On his heart manifests the shape of a vajra.

If you secretly meet him as your consort,
Your life's dharma teachings will certainly spread.
If you stay in one place, your life's dharma and
Disciples and so forth will be like designs in water.

According to the mother *ḍākinīs'* prophecies,
Wander in various lands.
Abandon meeting people with deteriorated commitments.
Not listening to bad friends' speech,
In a secluded place, practice your Treasures . . . ¹³⁴

Künselma's advice comes to Sera Khandro in a dream during a time in which her worldly community life is full of conflict. This forms a common pattern in Sera Khandro's narrative: *ḍākinīs* appear to her just when her worldly life is falling apart.¹³⁵ The next morning after she wakes up from the dream, Sera Khandro thinks,

No matter whether I look at earlier or later prophecies, it is certain that I don't want to be with the Gara family. Nevertheless, because I have a relationship with Gyalsé from the power of karma, now, no matter what happens, I won't do anything to displease him.¹³⁶

Yet, the feeling that she is settling for a life with someone who will not allow her to accomplish her goal of leading a religious life persists. She has chosen brass over gold, her goal of benefiting herself and others as a Treasure revealer is obscured like a jewel

sunk into mud. The one dressed in saffron, an allusion to Drimé Özer, the man whom she should take on as her secret consort, is the missing ingredient that she needs in order to spread her teachings.

Hints, signs, *ḍākinī* dreams, and troubles with Gyalsé all continue to indicate to Sera Khandro that she has strayed from her life's greater religious purpose by settling down with Gyalsé. Not only does Gyalsé find Sera Khandro an unfit vessel for the esoteric precepts of the Great Perfection teachings, he also rejects Sera Khandro's claim that she is a Treasure revealer. At one point Sera Khandro recounts taking out a Treasure vessel and offering it to Gyalsé upon her return home. Responding to Gyalsé's question "What is this?," Sera Khandro replies with a mixture of truthful and false words since "if I told the truth, I wondered whether he would slap me angrily like Marpa."¹³⁷ Gyalsé doubts Sera Khandro, stating:

Before, during the time when there were one hundred great Treasure revealers, two of them actually manifested as female Treasure revealers. These days in this Degenerate Age, [we] don't see the existence of female Treasure revealers.¹³⁸

Her authenticity doubted on the grounds of her gender, Sera Khandro wasn't sure whether he would be pleased if she admitted that the vessel was her Treasure. Thus, she notes, "From that time forward, I wrote my Treasures down secretly."¹³⁹

In accordance with prophecies, when Sera Khandro is twenty-two years old, she becomes pregnant with Gyalsé's child, whom she suspects is an incarnation of his father Gara Tertön. Although she tells Gyalsé that she has received a prophecy in her dream that she needs to go to another place to give birth in order to avoid obstacles, Gyalsé pays no heed to her warning and insists that she stay at home like all other expectant mothers do. Sera Khandro writes:

That year in the first month of fall when it became time to see the face of my child, I went to collect firewood near a man named Chölhün who Gara Terchen previously [said was] one who adhered to demonic scriptures. Because he called out in a fierce voice and performed curses and so forth, the protection of my child was reversed and he became a girl. At that time Gyalsé felt great regret. Saying, “If this girl dies I’ll be happy,” he treated her really badly. Although I wasn’t pleased with this, I didn’t say anything.¹⁴⁰

The opinion of Sera Khandro’s milieu regarding having a female child is clear, given that Sera Khandro attributes the birth of a daughter to demonic intervention. After the child’s inauspicious transformation from boy to girl, there is no more discussion of the child being Gara Tertön’s incarnation. Despite this, Sera Khandro still feels that her daughter is extraordinary. She takes the baby to a lama who, saying she has great merit, names her Yangchen Drönma.¹⁴¹ After Sera Khandro gives birth to her daughter, a Machik Labdrön Accomplishment Practice (*Lab sgron gyi sgrub pa*) comes to her as a new Treasure, but because she secretly teaches it to some monks, Gyalsé scolds her. Extremely sad, she writes that she supplicated the heroes and ḍākinīs of the three realms with the following prayer:

In the unmanifest land of the Glorious Copper-colored Mountain,¹⁴²
Omniscient Mother Yeshé Tsogyal and
Heroes and heroines, consider this!

I, this messenger sent by the mother ḍākinīs,
Was born in an impure body as a woman.
My impure karma is that I have befriended cyclic existence.
My impure land is the demonic land of Golok.
My impure action is that I continually have a negative community.
From what causes and conditions did this karma originate? . . .¹⁴³

In response to her song of lamentation, Sera Khandro hears a voice with no physical form coming from the sky saying,

Alas, alas yoginī –
Is the great self-emergent primordial wisdom
Free from exertion?

Is the unborn self-emergent spontaneous presence
The ground of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa?

Are the appearances of good and bad, happiness and sorrow
The play of reality itself?

Is the poisonous water-lily which is the eight worldly dharmas
Something to be abandoned quickly?

Your wealth of the ḍākinī's heart essence –
Will you take it out in due time?

Will benefit for both the teachings and sentient beings
Come from the south?

You don't need to be displeased and weary
On account of the illusory emanations of this world.
The Lotus [One's] testament is changeless;
It is certain that in time the aspiration prayers will come together.¹⁴⁴

In this way divine voices weave their words of encouragement through Sera Khandro's narrative, providing support and consolation just when her mundane circumstances seem to overwhelm her with obstacles and difficulties.

Despite ḍākinīs' reassuring voices, tensions remain high between Sera Khandro and Gyalsé. On one occasion when she is out collecting firewood, because a visionary experience arises in her mind, she returns home late. Consequently, Gyalsé slaps her and throws her out of the house. After the ensuing fight between Gyalsé and Sera Khandro, the people of Gyalsé's region hear their dispute. Calling her a demon-girl, they are horrified that she would talk back to their revered lama Gyalsé.¹⁴⁵ On another occasion when she is twenty-three, although Sera Khandro perceives that she has a Treasure to take out from a place called Solung Drakar,¹⁴⁶ she suddenly turns back and decides to return home. She tells her companions, "Let's not go now. If we take a long time, Gyalsé will scold me. Moreover, I entrusted Yangchen Drönma [her infant daughter] to Tupzang

and if she cries, Gyalsé will certainly scold me.”¹⁴⁷ Thus, Sera Khandro’s life in early twentieth-century Golok as a mother and as a wife of a man like Gyalsé, who was hostile to her religious aspirations, proves to be extremely difficult. Nurturing her family and nurturing her Treasure revelation career seem to be at loggerheads, despite her efforts to “take a low place and write down the profound Treasures that came to me extremely secretly.”¹⁴⁸

The turbulent community dynamics of Gara Gyalsé’s Treasure revelation encampment (*gter sgar*) continue to cause Sera Khandro misfortune. She explains that on account of troubles escalating between what had become two different factions of the community who were fighting over land rights as well as influenced by Gyalsé and Sera Khandro’s marital problems, Gyalsé expels Sera Khandro and her associates from his encampment.¹⁴⁹ Sera Khandro writes that when she was twenty-seven years old, as a result of this community trauma, she miscarried her unborn child who was an incarnation of Gyarong Ternyön (*Rgya rong gter smyon*). She recounts that while she felt uncomfortable, the child spoke to her and told her that he was leaving for Guru Rinpoché’s Buddhafield, the Glorious Mountain. On the morning of the twenty-fifth of that month:

Then, at the same time as the sun rose, not coming outside from my navel, the boy passed from this life. I thought, if I don’t rely on the power of wind, he [Gyalsé] won’t do healing rituals. Thinking that even if he did those things, I won’t be able to get the boy’s corpse out of my navel, I exerted myself only in wind yoga (*rlung gi rnal ’byor*). Sometimes because of the intensity of the pain, I was on the verge of losing consciousness. Sometimes I generated wind and the boy’s corpse moved about up, down, right, and left as if it was being driven by wind¹⁵⁰ and there was nothing I could do. Having put the cauterization needles of view and meditation on the pain, I composed unwavering wind-awareness.¹⁵¹

After Sera Khandro prays to Guru Rinpoché to liberate her from her agony, she gives birth to her stillborn child, a beautiful boy who almost looks alive. When Gyalsé comes to know about the stillbirth, he feels great regret and along with some of his disciples, he performs purifying rituals. Even after the tragedy of losing her child, Sera Khandro's detractors cannot resist the opportunity to criticizing her. She writes that aside from three members of Gyalsé's family who liked her, the rest of his family and others were happy and said,

The Central Tibetan girl's merit is exhausted and her son died. Still what misery doesn't she give to the Golok Lady¹⁵² and Gyalsé? All that she says about her son dying in her stomach and giving birth to the corpse with its head and feet unreversed is certainly lies. Whenever a calf dies in a female yak's stomach [everyone] can see that both mother and baby die. Her son was not a corpse in his mother's stomach; he didn't die [in the womb]. Because she didn't die, there is absolutely no way she could have gotten the baby's corpse out.¹⁵³

Sera Khandro's mother-in-law Yakza and her cohorts essentially accuse Sera Khandro of murdering her son because they cannot believe she could have given birth to a stillborn child without dying herself.¹⁵⁴ Sera Khandro's account of this and all of her many other painful experiences living in the Treasure encampment at Banak Monastery brims with the resentment and sadness she felt for being so mistreated. Indeed, Sera Khandro and Gyalsé's arguments, in addition to the wider land disputes dividing the community, prove to be too tense for reconciliation. Once again, Sera Khandro is forced to leave her home. She and the faction of Gara Gyalsé's household with whom she is aligned move to the Yeru religious encampment (*Gyas ru chos sgar*) that was near Pelyül Tartang (*Dpal yul dar thang*) Monastery.

Shifting Winds: Gotrül Rinpoché and Drimé Özer

Sera Khandro's life of difficulties and obstacles begins to change when the lama from Pelyül Tartang Monastery named Jiktrel Chöki Lodrö (*'Jigs bral chos kyi blo gros*), whom she calls Gotrül Rinpoché (*Sgo sprul rin po che*), summons her and asks for one of her Treasure revelations. Although Sera Khandro realizes that he is one of the four main disciples (called pillars) who will maintain her Treasure teachings, she hesitates to go before him, thinking, "Because of my inferior [female] body, others will have wrong views about the Incarnate."¹⁵⁵ Via a monk sent as a messenger, Sera Khandro offers the lama a text from the *dākinī*'s symbolic registry (*brda byang*) and consequently the obstacles to the lama's life are cured. Finally, a monk convinces Sera Khandro to visit Gotrül Rinpoché when she is twenty-four years old. Gotrül Rinpoché then announces to everyone in the room, "I think this *dākinī* is certainly the speech incarnation of Yeshe Tsogyal. Abandon your wrong views [about her] and have faith. This is not deception – it is real."¹⁵⁶ Gotrül Rinpoché becomes one of Sera Khandro's first and strongest supporters, contradicting Gyalsé's criticism, encouraging Sera Khandro to write down the Treasures that come to her, and publicizing her legitimacy as a Treasure revealer.

Throughout her time living with Gyalsé in the vicinity of Banak Monastery, Sera Khandro never stops feeling that she has chosen brass instead of gold. She pines for opportunities to meet with Drimé Özer, admitting that "I wanted to see him like a person suffering from thirst wants water."¹⁵⁷ One excellent opportunity arises when a lama named Hor Öchung (*Hor 'od chung*) invites both Gyalsé and Drimé Özer along with their entourages to come consecrate a new prayer wheel. When everyone gathers for the ceremony, Sera Khandro recounts that a beautiful bejeweled woman saying she is Dorjé

Yudrönma appeared before her and gave her a prophecy and a white crystal Treasure vessel. Fearing that others will see the crystal vessel in her hands, Sera Khandro tries to hide it. Before she can do so, Drimé Özer sees the vessel and insists that Sera Khandro give it to him. Sera Khandro writes, “It wasn’t fitting to lie, and so I offered him the Treasure vessel, some of my hair, and a stainless offering scarf. He was greatly pleased and auspicious connections were nurtured.”¹⁵⁸

Gara Gyalsé and Drimé Özer finally have a chance to speak with each other during Hor Öchung’s prayer wheel consecration ceremony. At this time when Sera Khandro is twenty-four years old and has a two-year-old daughter by Gyalsé, Gyalsé and Drimé Özer reach an agreement without ever consulting her that Sera Khandro will become Drimé Özer’s consort.¹⁵⁹ Gotrül Rinpoché also supports this exchange, telling Sera Khandro that Drimé Özer is her prophesized consort as a result of the influence of former prayers and that she needs to develop a connection to him for the purpose of her Treasure revelations.¹⁶⁰ Sera Khandro records that although she wanted to be with Drimé Özer, she also felt uncomfortable about being cast out of her home with Gyalsé even though he was already living with his second spouse, Saldrön. After Drimé Özer and Gyalsé exchange letters and finalize their agreement, Gyalsé makes preparations to give Sera Khandro to Drimé Özer. However, the process is a slow one and Sera Khandro continues to live with Gyalsé for several more years before actually going to live permanently with Drimé Özer. When she leaves, she is several months pregnant, expecting a boy whom Gotrül Rinpoché claims is his incarnation.¹⁶¹ Sera Khandro writes that she told her friends at Gyalsé’s encampment,

“I think [I should] go secretly without everybody seeing me prepare to go. Since I also need to think about [what I will do] from now onwards, from whatever

perspective, I think [we should] not publicize that I have been given to the Treasure revealer lama's [Drimé Özer's] household."

They answered, "Although we think this way, it seems that we don't know whether Gyalsé will talk [about it] or not."¹⁶²

Sera Khandro's discomfort with being given away and Gyalsé's disregard for her feelings emerge in such comments. While staying at Lochö's (*Blo chos sang*) home in Kargab Garkor¹⁶³, Sera Khandro tells Lochö, Gyalsé's brother, and her disciple Tupzang the story of her troubles living with Gyalsé. She recounts,

I told them everything [including] the story of how [Gyalsé] gave me away to the Treasure revealer during the male hare year [1915, when she was 24], the story of how on account of my not having father's name to back me up,¹⁶⁴ he married Saldrön and she gave me misery, and how having separated out his wealth, Gyalsé forbade me and my child to use any of his possessions."¹⁶⁵

Thus, despite her strong connection to Drimé Özer, Sera Khandro describes her distress at being expelled from the religious community at Banak Monastery that she had tried so hard to serve with humility. Yet when Gyalsé, Sera Khandro, and their group of disciples arrive before Drimé Özer, the connection she makes with him proves very useful to her purpose of revealing Treasures. Sera Khandro describes a visit with Drimé Özer before she moves in with him permanently:

In particular, having established me in ripening and liberation, he gave me a name. Then, not being able to resist the Lord's [Drimé Özer's] command, I offered him the registry of *The Secret Treasury of Reality Dākinīs*. By doing this, many amazing auspicious connections were nurtured. The Lord knew the meaning of a *dākinīs*' symbolic expression that was difficult to discriminate and his clarification is elucidated in my Treasure scripture¹⁶⁶. . . He gave me a [long] life empowerment, a summoning longevity [empowerment] and so forth. Having each relied on the other, the obstacles to our lives were pacified.

Then, the Lord himself offered Gyalsé a very expensive thing, a rug adorned with designs of auspicious substances, and an offering scarf. He [Gyalsé] was extremely pleased and they resided there in mutual accord. [Drimé Özer] took care of me with great love as if I were his main consort. In particular, he promised that he wouldn't be upset by circumstantial conditions and [that he would find]

ways to protect his life. I also said that no matter what, I wouldn't go to unknown places. By means of mixing our minds together as if one, we made aspiration prayers that method and wisdom¹⁶⁷ would be inseparable. Then we [Gyalsé and entourage] returned home.¹⁶⁸

Thus Drimé Özer and Sera Khandro exchange teachings. By means of their mutually beneficial relationship, obstacles to their life are pacified and Sera Khandro is able to decode difficult points of the *ḍākinīs*' symbolic expressions. That Drimé Özer and Sera Khandro's relationship involves consort practices is explicit in the passage above, as is Gyalsé's acceptance of the arrangement.

Just after their visit with Drimé Özer, Sera Khandro gives birth to her third (and second living) child amidst extraordinary signs, a son Drimé Özer later names Rikzin Gyurmé Dorjé (*Rig 'dzin 'gyur med rdo rje*).¹⁶⁹ Soon after the child's birth, Sera Khandro recounts that because of the continuing disputes going on in Gara Gyalsé's community, the child became ill. This is one of many examples of the causal relationship Sera Khandro's writings emphasize between social upheaval and physical illness. As in other instances of physical illness, Sera Khandro's infant son's health can only be restored through ritual intervention. In particular, he can only be cured by rituals performed by Drimé Özer in accordance with a prophecy Gotrül Rinpoché gave before his death (in approximately 1919).¹⁷⁰

Sera Khandro's child is not the only one who suffers from illness. Increasingly, Sera Khandro's legs are bothered with worsening arthritis (*'bam*), causing her to have greater and greater difficulty walking. Turbulence pervades her physical and social world in 1921 when she is thirty years old. The "northern Chinese" (*byang rgya*) are creating havoc (*'ur 'ur zing zing byed*), causing Gara Gyalsé and his community to move away from their home of Banak Monastery.¹⁷¹ The same is happening to Drimé Özer and his

community in Serta County. Sera Khandro writes that on another visit she made to see Drimé Özer, “on account of the agitation [caused by] the northern Chinese, the inner circle of Drimé Özer’s encampment held a conference and decided to move Drimé Özer’s seat to Yusé Chawa.”¹⁷²

Amidst this turmoil, Sera Khandro’s greatest respite is her increasingly intimate relationship with Drimé Özer. As Gyalsé and Drimé Özer’s encampments move about the pasture lands of Golok, Sera Khandro, her children, her closest monk disciple Tupzang, and others travel to and from encampments, stopping along the way at famous holy sites in the Golok landscape such as Drungri, the abode of the most important mountain deity of Serta, where Sera Khandro finds Treasure substances and has visions of the place as Guru Rinpoché’s Buddhafield.¹⁷³ Sera Khandro’s visits to Drimé Özer do not only involve exchanging teachings with the lama and making the auspicious connections she needs to reveal her Treasures; she expresses her relationship with him in terms that emphasize her love for him as well as her religious devotion. Sera Khandro’s auto/biographical writings read as a beautiful and suspenseful love story as much as a story about divine revelation and spiritual realization. When she meets Drimé Özer again after visiting Drungri, she “rejoices as if meeting someone raised from the dead.”¹⁷⁴ After the two “nurture auspicious connections” and speak in detail about worldly and religious matters, Sera Khandro grows sorrowful, wondering if she will ever have a chance to see Drimé Özer again, saying:

Your looking after me with a greatly loving heart
Sets me free from the rank of people
And establishes me in the rank of gods.
You are the pillar who holds on to my life force,
My secret consort traveling on the quick path,
The hero who increases the disciples of Profound Treasure,

The holy origin of all worldly and religious actions.
 Before I never found someone like you;
 Later [I can] forget about finding [someone like you]! . . .¹⁷⁵

Drimé Özer is the medicine she needs to cure her arthritis; he performs rituals and they exchange religious teachings.

After this, Sera Khandro returns yet again with her companions to Gyalsé's encampment. Upon her return, negative prophecies and omens abound and her arthritis worsens until she can scarcely walk at all. Sera Khandro tries very hard to continue doing her housework including milking the livestock and churning butter despite her near inability to walk. She explains that Gyalsé thought that she was faking illness, so he neglected to call a doctor or to perform any healing rituals. As she feels she is nearing death, she vows that if she survives, she will certainly leave Gyalsé and go to live with Drimé Özer.¹⁷⁶ While Sera Khandro is on the verge of death surrounded by Gyalsé's contentious community, Drimé Özer's health is also compromised and prophecies indicate that he too is in danger of dying. Thus, Sera Khandro's writings imply that the destined method and wisdom counterparts, Drimé Özer and Sera Khandro, are in danger of dying from their separation; they literally cannot go on living without each other.

The Union of Method and Wisdom

Just as Sera Khandro and Drimé Özer are both on the verge of death, Sera Khandro's companions take her to live with Drimé Özer. Finally the moment arrives that Sera Khandro has been waiting and longing for since she was a young girl watching Drimé Özer from the window of her brother's home. At the age of thirty, she is united with Drimé Özer and is forever freed from the negative circumstances of her life with

Gyalsé. The scene I quote below is the climax of the *Autobiography*; it is the moment of the lovers' reunion or, put in religious terminology, it is the union of method and wisdom resulting in the realization of Buddhahood.

When the bedraggled Sera Khandro finally arrives at Drimé Özer's encampment, he nurtures her back to health by performing healing rituals and insisting that she interrupt her vegetarian diet to eat specially blessed meat to restore her depleted channels and winds.¹⁷⁷ After completing a one hundred day retreat in compliance with Drimé Özer's command, Sera Khandro and Drimé Özer practice together, cultivating wondrous signs of accomplishment. Sera Khandro writes,

... Then, for three months, male and female partners together practiced the end of the esoteric instructions on *Drinking Vajra Water* that [I had] spoken earlier to the Lord himself. At that time, the signs in the outer environment were that day and night the mountains spoke, the earth quaked, a sound roared, the sound of a flute and cymbals came forth, a fragrant smell spread, and so forth. All the group of fortunate disciples actually saw this.

The inner signs of the domains of the channels, winds, and seminal essence becoming purified were that the knots of the head and throat became liberated. Not needing to train in and traverse the path, I understood all the Dharma vehicles completely. The essential meaning of the symbols of all the teachings in accordance with the disposition and devotion of beings from the hidden vessel of the intention of the profound Treasures became self-liberated. The ten winds became pliant and our bodies had youthful flesh and were light like cotton-wool. When I spoke spontaneously uttered hymns of vajra words, the seeds of the first concentration were planted in the mind-streams of those who heard them. By many small deeds such as this, benefit for sentient beings arose.

In particular, the inexpressible understanding of awareness and emptiness that is the primordial wisdom of great bliss and emptiness, without elaboration and endowed with the three liberations,¹⁷⁸ manifested [in me]. The two, method and wisdom, manifestly merged as one taste.¹⁷⁹

From here on Sera Khandro and Drimé Özer are together and are able to cure each other's sickness and decode each other's Treasures due to the auspicious connections fostered by their union. Sera Khandro writes,

In particular, it became extremely quick for both of us to decode our Treasures. Also, for me, by the power of the abundant auspicious connections, I elucidated and propagated the *Anu Yoga Esoteric Precept The Door to the Quick Path of Vajravārāhī's Essential Drops* and the *Profound Explanation of the Meaning of the Great Bliss of the Upper Doors and Enjoying the Three Realms of the Lower Doors* that were teachings in the *Secret Treasury of Reality Dākinīs*.¹⁸⁰

For Drimé Özer as well, this is a time of vast auspiciousness. The obstacles to his life are all pacified and “like stars gathering together” his retinue of disciples increases. He writes down and propagates both his own profound Treasure and that of his father Dujom Lingpa.¹⁸¹ Sera Khandro and Drimé Özer’s love flourishes, as does their ever-increasing community of disciples for whose benefit they reveal and propagate Treasures.

Sera Khandro has received such acclaim as an accomplished consort that at the age of thirty-two (ca. 1923), Adzom Rinpoché (*A ‘dzom rin po che*, ‘Gro ‘dul dpa’ bo rdo rje, 1842-1924) sends Drimé Özer a letter requesting Sera Khandro’s presence at his encampment in order to dispel the obstacles he has to his life and teachings. Despite Sera Khandro’s pleas to stay with Drimé Özer, he insists that she go to Adzom because both Adzom and Sera Khandro need to ignite auspicious connections.¹⁸² Despite her reluctance to act as a consort for an eighty-two-year-old lama that she has never met, she obeys Drimé Özer’s command and goes to Adzom. They exchange many teachings and nurture auspicious connections that cure both of them of illness and allow them to propagate many Treasure teachings. Sera Khandro recounts that when she departed from Adzom’s encampment, Adzom’s wife, children, and community all treated her lovingly and escorted her on her path.¹⁸³ Upon her return to Drimé Özer’s encampment, the whole community is amazed to see that Sera Khandro’s limp caused by years of arthritis is cured. That she can walk normally again demonstrates to all the power of uniting the auspicious connections of method and wisdom.¹⁸⁴ After he teaches Sera Khandro and

their disciples profound teachings on manipulating channels and winds, Drimé Özer states that Sera Khandro must protect and maintain his teachings:

Then the Lord told me, “You must protect and maintain the two profound Treasures [that of Drimé Özer and his father Dujom Lingpa]. I am old and because there is a big group of disciples, it is difficult for me to fulfill everyone’s desires.”

I didn’t have the power or the knowledge to be able to look after the retinue of disciples. Despite this, together with sincere prayers, I promised to maintain the teachings of the two profound Treasures as well as I could just in order not to go against the lama’s command. The Lord was extremely pleased.¹⁸⁵

Drimé Özer’s comment about his old age (he was forty-four!) and his interest in passing on responsibility for his teachings to Sera Khandro foreshadow the upcoming reminders of impermanence that are soon to jolt Sera Khandro’s world.

Impermanence Strikes Home

During even the glory days of Sera Khandro and Drimé Özer’s life together, subtle messages indicate that obstacles lie ahead. Sera Khandro worries about the fate of her six-year-old¹⁸⁶ son Gyurmé Dorjé because she has received a prophecy that his health is in danger.¹⁸⁷ While Drimé Özer decides that they need to publish his father Dujom Lingpa’s teachings, prophecies indicate that illness and demonic influence will arise if Sera Khandro and Drimé Özer continue to live in Drimé Özer’s encampment and do not depart for another place. Meanwhile, Drimé Özer’s consort Akyongza, Sera Khandro’s nemesis from youth, reacts badly to something Sera Khandro says. She declares, “It is unfeasible for this Central Tibetan woman and her two children to maintain a position in the Treasure revealer’s household. [You] don’t need to live together with the Lord – you are not even allowed to contaminate [us] with just these words.”¹⁸⁸ There is no safe place

for Sera Khandro and those she loves; her ex-partner Gyalsé and jealous, competing consorts make each community in which she lives contentious.

In accordance with negative prophecies, all of a sudden a great plague strikes the area. Sera Khandro writes that in 1925, everyone in her community was on the verge of death. Sadly, Sera Khandro's young son Rikzin Gyurmé Dorjé succumbs to disease and dies, causing everyone to be oppressed with misery.¹⁸⁹ As if that weren't enough suffering for Sera Khandro to bear, on the tenth day of the fourth month of that year, the gravely ill Drimé Özer "put his hands on my head, stared into space, and having prayed to arise as Vajradhara in the [form of] the nondual union of method and wisdom, his form body departed for the expanse of reality."¹⁹⁰ After Drimé Özer's death, Sera Khandro recounts that "I was without a protector or guardian, left behind like a blind person in the middle of a plain, but I could do nothing about it."¹⁹¹

Adding misery upon misery, Drimé Özer's household, in particular Akyongza, want nothing to do with Sera Khandro. They promptly expel her from the community for the second time, the first being when she had just arrived in Golok as a teen. Akyongza's grudge against Sera Khandro probably stemmed not only from her jealousy of the woman who had commanded so much of Drimé Özer's attention, but from the fact that Sera Khandro and her daughter's presence only increased competition for their limited household resources. Not only do members of the community tell Sera Khandro that she must leave right away, but immediately there is a problem of succession regarding whether or not Sera Khandro has the right to pass on Drimé Özer's lineage. While Drimé Özer's disciples desire a particular type of "self-empowerment" (*bdag dbang*) for a teaching called *Accomplishing the Mind of the Guru* attainable by receiving

empowerment from one's lama's reliquary, Sera Khandro feels uncomfortable because she knows that Drimé Özer empowered her to transmit that teaching. While she, who is a holder of his lineage, is still there, she thinks that the disciples should request the teaching from her instead of hankering after a "self empowerment." However, Sera Khandro writes that, "Because this Treasure was extremely profound, the auspicious circumstances [to propagate it] went away,"¹⁹² thus indicating that Sera Khandro did not or was not asked to give the teaching.

Sera Monastery Life and Teaching

No sooner have the memorial services for Drimé Özer ended does Sera Khandro depart in acquiescence of the community's wishes. The monk Sotrül Rinpoché (*Bsod sprul sna tshogs rang grol*), Drimé Özer's closest disciple, invites Sera Khandro to his monastery, Sera Monastery,¹⁹³ in compliance with Drimé Özer's deathbed wishes that he look after her. After moving to Sera Monastery, at the age of thirty-four, Sera Khandro has a vision during Tibetan New Year celebrations in which ḍākinīs bestow upon her the symbolic texts of Drimé Özer's *Biography*.¹⁹⁴ Drimé Özer himself comes to her during this period in her life in several visions in which he urges her not to give up on her promise to maintain and propagate the two Treasures, those of Drimé Özer and Dujom Lingpa. Despite these visionary interactions that she is able to have with him, Sera Khandro is devastated by Drimé Özer's death. Waves of depression wash over her in which she desperately misses him for the rest of her life.

Although Sera Khandro recounts some social problems in her new home, due to Sotrül Rinpoché's efforts, Sera Monastery is a reasonably supportive environment for

her. Trouble begins when local people become suspicious of her intentions living in a monastery in close proximity to monks, and especially to Sotrül Rinpoché. Sera Khandro remarks that,

At that time, I offended the perceptions of the local people. Some said, “The Central Tibetan woman is Sotrül’s consort.” Some said, “Because Sotrül is getting older, it seems as if she won’t live here.” Some said, “Since she is a contentious woman, she will harm all of us.”¹⁹⁵

Sotrül Rinpoché is saddened by the negative talk swirling around his monastery. He makes Sera Khandro promise that she will stay at Sera Monastery and not wander about unknown places because she is the “one who maintains the teachings of the kind incarnate.”¹⁹⁶

While she is based at Sera Monastery being looked after by Sotrül Rinpoché, Sera Khandro begins at the age of thirty-four to teach the dharma that she has practiced over her lifetime. Although she had previously given her close disciples teachings from her Treasure revelations, her teaching career begins in earnest during this period. She recounts teaching the *Four Seminal Heart [Volumes]* (*Snying thig ya bzhi*) at a branch of Tsangchen Monastery (*Tsang chen dgon pa*) named Sanglung Monastery (*Gsang lung dgyen*¹⁹⁷ *pa*). She also mentions teaching “the outer purification and explanation on the quintessence of the Great Perfection of *Buddhahood Without Meditation*, which came as a Treasure to the father and son [Dujom Lingpa and Drimé Özer].”¹⁹⁸ She recounts creating a dharma connection by conferring empowerments on over one thousand laywomen and having them accomplish seventy million *ma ni* prayers.¹⁹⁹ Sera Khandro repeatedly confers empowerment, reading transmission (*lung*), and explanations of the two profound Treasures of Dujom Lingpa and Drimé Özer to monks, lamas, and members of religious encampments (*sgar*).²⁰⁰ On another occasion she gives the ripening

empowerments, liberating explanations, and supporting reading transmissions for the eighteen volumes of Drimé Özer's complete Treasure volumes.²⁰¹ Additionally, she gives empowerments, explanations, and reading transmissions from her own two cycles of Treasure texts, the *Secret Treasury of Reality Ḍākinīs* and *The Ḍākinīs' Heart Essence*.²⁰² Sera Khandro also encourages her disciples whether they be lamas, monastics, laywomen, or old people to exert themselves in *ma ni* prayers, saving the lives of animals (*tshe thar*), and fasting rituals (*bsnyung gnas*). She teaches to not only those in her own Nyingma lineage, but also to adherents of other Tibetan Buddhist lineages, including Jonang and Kagyü.²⁰³ Later in life at the age of forty-one, Sera Khandro teaches a regional king, the king of Lingkar (*Gling dkar rgyal po*), and his entourage, conferring empowerment and reading transmission in the *Profound Accomplishment of Vajravārāhī* (*Phag mo'i zab sgrub*) from her own Treasure as well as a longevity empowerment.²⁰⁴ Additionally, she performs the death-bed transferal of consciousness ritual for the regional leader of Dzongda (*Rdzong mda'*).²⁰⁵ Sera Khandro recounts giving these religious teachings in various religious communities in the Golok and northern Gandze vicinity while lengthy and elaborate visions were simultaneously arising in her perception, including going to Buddhafields and interacting with Guru Rinpoché and Yeshé Tsogyal²⁰⁶, Drimé Özer, and many Ḍākinīs.

By the time Sera Khandro is thirty-eight years old, her prowess at writing and editing as well as teaching religious scriptures is clear from her comment that, "In front of the Lord Protector Sotrül Rinpoché, I promised that I would write down the great Treasure [revealer] Dujom Dorjé's entire profound Treasure."²⁰⁷ This is not an easy task because the texts are scattered in different places and first Sera Khandro must gather

them together before beginning to edit. This is difficult not only because of the number of volumes of text involved, but in addition it is socially complicated for Sera Khandro because, as she notes, there is only one correct edition of the text and it is at “the Treasure revealer’s household,” meaning Drimé Özer’s household from which she has been expelled twice, the latter time only four years earlier. Not heeding the warnings of the local people at Sera Monastery who fear she is entering a hornet’s nest of contention by going back to Drimé Özer’s encampment, Sera Khandro reflects that,

Out of my former intentions regarding serving the teachings of the father and son Treasure revealers, because [this task] was remaining, I thought that if it is in accordance with the dharma, no matter what happy or sad worldly actions come up, there is no way I can’t handle it.²⁰⁸

When Sera Khandro, her daughter, her trusted disciple Tupzang, and her faithful scribe Tsültrim Dorjé arrive at a retreat center called Karlung (*Dkar lung*) at Drimé Özer’s Treasure encampment, “all of Drimé Özer’s disciples rejoiced as if seeing someone risen from the dead.”²⁰⁹ Thus, Sera Khandro’s decision to privilege their religious purpose of editing scriptures over worrying about old disputes ends up being a good choice. After Sera Khandro explains her reasons for wanting to borrow the texts from Drimé Özer’s brother Trülku Dorjé Drendül (*Sprul sku rdo rje dgra ‘dul*), he is pleased and allows her to use whatever texts she needs. Sera Khandro writes, “For over a month, we stayed there editing and correcting²¹⁰ and so forth in great detail.”²¹¹ After they finish the editing process, Sera Khandro mentions that she offered Drimé Özer’s community whatever instructional explanations they desired including Drimé Özer’s *Biography* and other teachings.²¹² Sera Khandro later describes the scope of their editing process: Dujom Lingpa and Drimé Özer’s Treasure volumes together totaled forty volumes and with the addition of Sera Khandro’s visionary cycles (*nyams ris skor*), she says that she and her

companions had written forty-four volumes.²¹³ These comments about Sera Khandro and her companions writing, copying, editing, and correcting large volumes of text demonstrate Sera Khandro's significant role in textual production in her communities as well as the advanced level of literacy she was able to attain despite not receiving any formal Tibetan language education. Additionally, mentions of textual production demonstrate that the culture of woodblock printing had limited relevance in these early twentieth century nomadic religious encampments.²¹⁴ Copying large amounts of text is an act of devotion; Sera Khandro notes that on another occasion an entourage of monks and incarnates from Riwoché request empowerment from her in Dujom Lingpa and Drimé Özer's Treasure cycles. Out of a sudden upsurge of devotion, they promise to copy their complete works. Sera Khandro supports their efforts by offering them whatever resources they need including writing paper, ink, and so forth.²¹⁵

After Sera Khandro and her companions complete their project editing and correcting Dujom Lingpa's Treasure volumes, Sera Khandro sings a song that is characteristic of the tone of her narrative towards the end of her story after Drimé Özer's death. After the climax of her four years of living with Drimé Özer, her later life is pervaded with sorrowful reflections on impermanence mixed with poetic expressions of spiritual realization. She sings this song of grief when she recollects the happy moments of her short experience living with her lama and her lover Drimé Özer:

Alas! How sad the situation of
Impermanent phenomena in cyclic existence!

Before I was a woman of a good lineage –
Now everyone sees me as something to throw away.
The silk knots of former words
Now are [like] a beautiful form in the sky.²¹⁶

The former manifestations of my sensory pleasures
Now are what oppress me with suffering.

When I separate from the holy spiritual siblings that I mixed with previously
Without any power [not to], they become the cause of suffering.

My previous home, neighbors, and entourage
Are now like the two sides of a drum.²¹⁷

When I see this reality of change [via]
All of the actions and deeds like these,
Who would be able to bear suffering like
Me, this girl who is an object of pity?

Alas, oh the three jewels!
I have no hope in this and the next [life].
I am without a companion, alone and destitute –
Thrown out like a dog to distant lands with no home.

Without a husband, everybody despises me.
Although I acted kindly in accordance with the dharma,
[Everyone] hated me because of the negative influence of anti-religious factors.

My greatly kind protector lama departed for the Buddhafields.
The wrathful Lord of Death led my only son away.
Pathetic mother and child were expelled to distant lands.

Those with merit gathered together
Like blissful and happy worldly gods.
This is the foundation for all the suffering of my situation.

These situations that had gathered together before
Manifest today as teachers of impermanence.

The rear mountain is impermanent – all the vegetation is dry.
The valley is impermanent – it is the abode of rodents.
The people's homes are impermanent – the walls are destroyed.
Disciples are impermanent – they wander in other lands.
Couples are impermanent – they go their separate ways.

When manifestations like this appear,
The depth of my mind is oppressed with suffering.

Alas, oh – no matter what impermanent phenomena
You ponder, it is without essence.
Whatever you think about is an illusory emanation.

Having abandoned the never-ending pattern²¹⁸ of ungraspable actions,
 These handcuffs of the eight worldly concerns²¹⁹ of cyclic existence,
 If I am able to accomplish the holy divine dharma,
 I will find the purpose of this life and
 Repay the kindness of my lama.

I will fulfill the yearnings of my entourage of disciples.
 By this I will accomplish the two purposes of self and other.
 For the sake of this, I exert my body, speech, and mind in dharma
 [practice].

Although I am without worldly ways, my mind is carefree.
 Although I am expelled from the row of people, I accomplish my purpose.
 Although everyone criticizes me, I am victorious over all.
 Although I am thrown out to a distant land, my mind is resolved.

I have seen the original face of the changeless innate nature.
 I have realized self-awareness inseparable from the lama.
 No prejudice is possible in [my] compassion.
 The vase of my body, speech, and mind contains blessings.
 Perhaps I will go soon
 To the victorious place of the all-good Truth Body (*Dharmakāya*).²²⁰

Sorrow and a realization of impermanence cast a dark shadow over her perceptions after the death of Drimé Özer and her young son, despite the expansive perspective that her spiritual realization affords her. Her poetry after Drimé Özer's death is retrospective, mourning the loss of her teacher and lover's earthly body. Yet it is also charged with anticipation, awaiting their final reunion in the Buddhafields.

In addition to recounting the many religious teachings she is invited to give, the latter stages of her life based at Sera Monastery from the age of thirty-four to the conclusion of her *Autobiography* when she is forty-three emphasize her active visionary life.²²¹ During this period, divinities repeatedly appear before her speaking pithy missives in which they direct her towards the many scriptural revelations she then teaches to her faithful group of disciples. Even though her heart remains inseparably tied to the late

Drimé Özer, ḍākinīs remind her that she still must cultivate auspicious connections by engaging with the proper consorts in order to fulfill their divine prophecies and to reveal Treasures. In one particularly poignant passage, Sera Khandro recounts that when she was thirty-eight years old, she had an extremely sharp pain in her “lotus.” A visionary old woman appears before her and tells her in poetic language that she needs the medicine of a male consort’s “ambrosia” to cure her of the illness that has affected her internal channels and winds. Sera Khandro recounts that she reacted negatively to the old woman’s words, retorting, “At the end of my life that is like a setting sun, aside from wondering if I can accomplish the completely pure Dharma, I don’t think about needing to take on a consort!”²²² Thus Sera Khandro’s mind turns more and more away from the troublesome world of early-twentieth century Golok and towards the moment when she will once again be reunited with Drimé Özer in the permanent domain of the Buddhafields.

The Final Years

Sera Khandro’s *Autobiography* ends when she is forty-three years old, six years before her death. However, there are two sources that summarize the final years of her life. The earlier source is a twelve folio page manuscript handwritten by her scribe Tsültrim Dorjé in 1948 titled *Posthumous Biography of Khandro Rinpoché Dewé Dorjé Who Arose as a Manifestation of the Mother of the Buddhas Yeshé Tsogyal*.²²³ Chatral Sangyé Dorjé Rinpoché used Tsültrim Dorjé’s text as a base upon which to expand in a twenty folio page text he wrote in 1976 titled *A Turquoise Border: A Short Supplement to the End of the Great Biography of the Central Tibetan Ḍākinī Dewé Dorjé*.²²⁴ When Sera

Khandro was forty-four years old in 1935, she was at Sera Monastery giving teachings from both Dujom Lingpa and Drimé Özer's Treasure volumes. During this year, sadly, her disciple and staunch supporter Sotrül Rinpoché died. Although she too experienced many visions in which her perceptions of this world faded and she saw only pure Buddhafields, an incarnate lama from Katok Monastery named Chaktrül Rinpoché Pema Trinlé Gyamtso offered her sacred substances and was able to dispel the obstacles to her life that year.²²⁵ Also that year when she was forty-four, she went to [Drimé Özer's] Treasure encampment and received empowerments and reading transmissions from Lerab Lingpa's Treasure revelations from a lama named Lama Tsechok, which restored previously damaged auspicious connections.²²⁶ While she was there, Drimé Özer's younger brother Dorjé Drendül (*Rdo rje dgra 'dul*) summoned her. Tsültrim Dorjé explains that,

In particular, by the auspicious connections of relying on the quick path of method and wisdom, [Sera Khandro] was able to decode the symbolic meaning of profound Treasures including the *Heart Essence of Tsogyal Mind Accomplishment [Practice]* and so forth that she took out of the Jewel Ocean [near] Vairocana's Cave.²²⁷

"Relying on the quick path of method and wisdom" refers to Dorjé Drendül's acting as Sera Khandro's consort, thus enabling her to decode her Treasures. This is another indication that Sera Khandro continued to have consorts after Drimé Özer's death.

In 1936 when Sera Khandro was forty-five, her disciple Sherab Özer invited her to Dzakok (*Rdza khog*) to a Vai[rocana] cave called Khandro Yangdzong. There she gave teachings to the disciples gathered there and revealed Treasures. Because of the war with the Chinese, Sera Khandro had to move her encampment around several times to places including Dzatö (*Rdza stod*), Nitö (*Snyi stod*), and Tsechu (*Tse chu*). Despite the fighting

going on in the area, Chatral Rinpoché explains that, “Having relied only on the power of the Venerable Lady’s compassion, not even a bit of harm came to all the people and livestock.”²²⁸ When she moved her camp to Dzatö, she taught the disciples gathered there preliminary practices (*sngon ‘gro*), Breakthrough (*khregs chod*), and Direct Transcendence (*thod rgal*) and stayed in retreat there for one hundred days.

In 1937 when she was forty-six years old, the monastic students of Lama Gelek Gyamtso from the Tsang encampment (*Rtsang sgar*) invited Sera Khandro to move her encampment there and give them teachings. She also went to Dralek Monastery (*Bkra legs dgon*) to enjoy the Guru Rinpoché ceremony there on the tenth day of the sixth month. Tsültrim Dorjé recounts that, “After that in the Da area (*Zla yul*) when [she] went to beg for alms, she gave disciples a Dharma connection in accordance with each of their needs and established their ripening and liberation.”²²⁹ This is one of the many instances in which he recounts that Sera Khandro went to beg for alms and gave teachings on the way. Upon returning to Tsang Monastery, she gave the students gathered there explanations on preliminary practices, Purifying Appearances, and Direct Transcendence practices from her own earth Treasure (*sa gter*). After they all did a one hundred day retreat, they had a great thanksgiving feast.²³⁰ A greatly faithful disciple named Lama Tsültrim Norbu from Nyakrong (*Nyag rong*) heard of the great *dākinī* and came to meet her. After he received empowerment in her full teachings, he became one of the people who maintained, protected, and transmitted (*‘dzin skyong spel*) her teachings. Out of great faith, he wrote a copy of all of her teachings including six volumes of her works.²³¹

In 1938 at the age of forty-seven, Sera Khandro gave further teachings in the three Treasure cycles: that of Dujom Lingpa, Drimé Özer, and her own. At Tsang encampment,

she also taught Drimé Özer's *Biography*. During the winter, all her disciples did another one hundred day retreat. In 1939 when she was forty-eight years old, messengers from Kham Riwoché arrived to invite her to visit the Riwoché political leader (*Zhabs drung*) Tsewang Drakpa (*Tshe dbang grags pa*). On the way to Riwoché, the king of Lingtsang (*Gling tshang*) and his queens requested several teachings from Sera Khandro's Treasure cycles. When she arrived in Riwoché, she received a warm welcome and stayed in the leader's household (*Zhabs drung bla brang*).²³²

As she was preparing to give the complete empowerments to Dujom Lingpa, Drimé Özer, and her own Treasure teachings, the first sign of her upcoming death arose. Tsültrim Dorjé recounts,

During the preliminary empowerment, Khandro Rinpoché said to Lama Sherab and I both who were on the outside of a curtain, "The [time] between this life and the next is not distant. Aside from just the outside and the inside of this curtain in-between us, there is no [distance]."

At another time she said, "We have protected and maintained the father and son Lama's teachings well. Now, I don't know how much life I have left."

It seemed that she would not live long.²³³

When Sera Khandro turned forty-nine in 1940, she secretly went off with some of her disciples, including Tsültrim Dorjé, to visit several holy places in which she revealed Treasures including the meditation cave called Orgyen Dzong in Pom (*Spom*), a rock cave called Maratika, and others. Sera Khandro also traveled to Amdo Tashikhyil (*A mdo bkra shis 'khyil*) where she gave empowerments and explanations in the three Treasure teachings. People there said that, "At that time, from between her eyebrows, a bright light radiating the assembly of peaceful and wrathful deities gradually appeared and then went away."²³⁴

In the beginning of the fourth month of 1940, Sera Khandro became sick again with arthritis. Despite the rituals and prayers her disciples performed, her condition did not improve. In the beginning of the fifth month, Sera Khandro asked to be taken to Riwoché where she stayed at the political leader (*Zhabs drung*)’s palace. Tsültrim Dorjé writes,

On the twentieth of the fifth month around noon, [Sera Khandro] fiercely cried out the sound “*Hrik*” and on account of this, she went to the Buddhafields. As soon as she passed away, although we heard the sound of a voice, we didn’t understand the meaning.²³⁵

He also records that,

Rainbow clouds gathered and a sound roared and so forth. After a few days of making offerings to the body, on the twenty fifth day, in a very nice place in the region behind Riwoché, we offered the body to the fire. When it was burning, many amazing signs arose on the body such as one eye flying into the southern direction of the sky and so forth.²³⁶

Chatral Rinpoché adds that when they brought her body out to the cremation site, “Her body had dissolved into light and all that remained was about the size of an eight year old child.”²³⁷ He describes the reliquary that Sera Khandro’s daughter and Tsültrim Dorjé made for Sera Khandro’s relics – it was about the size of an arrow’s length, made of silver with gold and various jewels inlaid in patterns. Inside they put the *ḍākinī*’s bone relics, her hair, her rosary, her Treasure volumes, an amazing Śākyamuni statue, and blessed things including stone (Treasure) vessels and yellow pages. Chatral Rinpoché notes that the reliquary is still there in Amdo in the Treasure encampment (*Mdo smad gter sgar*).²³⁸

Conclusion

Sera Khandro's rich autobiographical reflections depict a life full of extraordinary and miraculous visionary experiences revealing Treasures interspersed with plebeian accounts of interpersonal difficulties. Her life story is dramatic in cinematic proportions, inviting readers to imagine the empty nomadic plains and stark alpine vastness in which her tale of sacrifice, diligence, suffering, love, and realization unfolds. Her world is both distant and near, charged with supernatural forces and grounded by mundane human emotions. It paints a picture of a woman who was extraordinary, experiencing phantasmagoric visions of divine revelation, and very human, distraught by tensions with her mother-in-law, struggling to pursue her religious ambitions and raise her family, and devastated by the loss of her lama and her son.

Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* is an example for those who come after her of what it means to fully embark upon the homeless life of Buddhist renunciation. Her courageous choice to step out of her conventionally comfortable life in Lhasa into the wild unknown land of Golok never to return or see her family again is a powerful portrayal of her commitment to the Tibetan Buddhist path. Hers is a nomadic story in more ways than one; a life riding horses and pitching tents on the pastures of nomadic Golok led to a life in which she never truly found a home within the often turbulent religious communities in which she lived. As a woman from Central Tibet, she was always an outsider, an exception to the rule of male religious hierarchy and hereditary Golok religious succession. Without a worldly place to call her own, the refrain of her *Autobiography* returns to her only true home, her love for Drimé Özer and its fruition as spiritual liberation.

Chapter Two: The Process of Revealing Treasures in Sera Khandro's Golok

The mythic history and multilayered process of revealing Treasures lie at the heart of Sera Khandro's auto/biographical works. Half of both Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* and Drimé Özer's *Biography* consists of their visionary experiences, all of which relate to divine revelation. Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* includes more than twenty-five accounts of revealing Treasures, and Drimé Özer's *Biography* describes at least thirty-one of his (and their) revelation experiences. These accounts include visions inspiring literary productions, called mind Treasures (*dgongs gter*), and discoveries of sacred material including rocks, ritual objects, statues, and yellow scrolls from the Tibetan earth, called earth Treasures (*sa gter*). The process of revealing Treasures involves multiple stages and relies heavily on divine prophecy and the gathering together of fleeting auspicious connections (*rten 'brel*) including finding the right time, place, consort (*thabs grogs*) and doctrine holder (*chos bdag*). The unifying theme of this chapter is an exploration of Treasure revelation as a process in which Treasure revealers such as Sera Khandro and Drimé Özer interact with different realms of beings including: 1) Buddhist divinities such as Padmasambhava, Yeshé Tsogyal, and hosts of *ḍākinīs*, 2) land deities and Treasure protectors who personify the natural environment, and 3) human communities in Golok society including religious encampments (*chos sgar, gter sgar*), monasteries (*dgon*), and lay nomadic tribes (*tsho ba*). Sera Khandro's auto/biographical writings are pervaded with dialogic encounters with this wide range of figures, as we will continue to explore in the following chapter.

After introducing aspects of both academic and traditional Tibetan understandings of the history of the Treasure tradition, this chapter will investigate: 1) How does Sera Khandro represent her relationship to the divine progenitors of Treasure teachings, Padmasambhava and Yeshé Tsogyal?, 2) How does she describe the process of revealing Treasures?, 3) In what type of religious communities did Sera Khandro and Drimé Özer live and what relationship did Treasure revealers and their products have to broader Golok society? Through exploring these questions, this chapter seeks to read Sera Khandro's auto/biographical writings as a resource for understanding more about the role of Treasure revelation in Sera Khandro's early twentieth-century Golok.

What are Treasures and where do they come from?

Treasure (*gter ma*) revelation is the discovery of new material, textual, or visionary spiritual artifacts and scriptures affiliated with Nyingma (old school) Tibetan Buddhism and Bön. The religious phenomenon of Treasure revelation originates partly from the ancient and modern practice of hiding sacred religious items in the earth during periods of civil and military unrest. Tibetan history has experienced a need for this hiding of sacred items more than once in its long recorded history dating back to the seventh-century formulation of the Tibetan empire, most notably during the Dark Period in the mid-ninth century when the Tibetan Royal Empire disintegrated and government-sponsored institutional Buddhism declined in Tibet. Beginning in the late tenth century, as Tibetans rebuilt their fragmented religious institutions, they may have discovered some artifacts that had been hidden during the waning years of the Tibetan empire.²³⁹ The Treasure tradition began during this period of revival as early as the eleventh century

with the Treasure revealing activities of Sangyé Lama (*Sangs rgyas bla ma*), but did not become widespread as a distinctive form of scriptural transmission until the thirteenth century.²⁴⁰ Interestingly, in recent Tibetan history, during the Chinese invasion and subsequent destruction of massive numbers of monasteries, religious objects, and scriptures, the history of Tibetans concealing religious objects as Treasures in the earth of Tibet recurred. In fact, during my fieldwork (2004-2005) in Serta, Golok, a contemporary religious figure in Golok named Namtrül Jikmé Püntsok (*Nam sprul 'jigs med phun tshogs*), who is locally accepted as the reincarnation of Sera Khandro's teacher and companion Drimé Özer, asked me for a new copy of Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* because the corners of his manuscript had been damaged by water when his community hid the text under the earth during the Cultural Revolution (1966-76).²⁴¹

However, the Treasure tradition as a form of scriptural transmission of the Nyingma school of Tibetan Buddhism entails far more than finding lost treasures in the earth. Eventually, the early diversity gave way to a codified paradigm in which Treasures came to be thought of as hidden predominantly by the eighth century Indian Tantric master who is credited with bringing Buddhism to Tibet, Padmasambhava, along with the aid of his Tibetan consort Yeshé Tsogyal. These Treasures could then be discovered only by his specially appointed emissaries. Treasures can be either material earth Treasures (*sa gter*) in the form of scripture pages, statues, precious pills, vessels containing scripture, etc. that are discovered in places such as rocks, mountains, lakes, trees, temples, and space or mind Treasures (*dgongs gter*), which have been hidden directly in the minds of their prophesized revealers to be discovered at the appropriate time.²⁴² Treasure revelation is one way to keep the Tibetan scriptural canon open, to continue to add new

scriptures to the already closed and codified Tibetan canon of authentic, Buddha-voiced scriptures.

Precedents for the Tibetan Treasure tradition stem from both Indian and Tibetan Buddhism. Despite skeptical critiques of the tradition, most often voiced by its opponents in the new (*gsar ma*) schools of Tibetan Buddhism, Treasure revelation does have direct Indian antecedents, which is the main criterion for authenticity in Tibetan Buddhism. Robert Mayer draws our attention to the *The Samādhi of Direct Encounter with the Buddhas of the Present* (*Pratyutpanna-buddha-saṃmukhāvasthita-samādhi-sūtra*), a Mahāyāna Sūtra datable to before 179 C.E. as well as the Indian *nidhi* (Treasure) tradition. He argues that both of these presage the Tibetan Treasure tradition in direct ways including the concealing of Buddha-voiced scriptures in caskets under the earth protected by *deva* and *nāga* spirits to be revealed by prophesized lay *bodhisattvas* in the future.²⁴³ More generally, scholars have pointed out that the concept of receiving a newly packaged scripture relevant to contemporary concerns can be seen as a natural outgrowth of the general Indian Mahāyāna understanding that realized Buddhist disciples can produce new scripture based on their realization rather than having to prove always that the new scripture literally came from the historical Buddha's speech. Thus there was Indian precedent for the understanding that Buddha-voiced scripture could mean discourse inspired by the realization of enlightenment that did not literally emanate from the speech of the historical Buddha. These factors lead Mayer to conclude that contemporary Tibetan Treasure revelation is "a unique survival, or at least a close replica, of the workings of the revealers of the famous Buddhist Sanskrit scriptures of the last two millennia."²⁴⁴

Despite these Indian reflections, there are also distinctly Tibetan reasons for the development and ongoing importance of the Tibetan Treasure tradition. David Germano has argued extensively that the discovery of new Nyingma Treasure scriptures was in part a reaction to the onslaught of newly translated Indian Tantric scriptures that new schools of Tibetan Buddhism were importing into Tibet during the later dissemination (*phyi dar*) of Buddhism that followed the Dark Period (850-950 C.E.) of political, religious, and social fragmentation in Tibet. Germano argues that during the Renaissance Period (950-1300 C.E.), the Treasure tradition allowed the Nyingma School to appropriate and transform the new post-tenth century Indian materials under the guise of discovering teachings hidden from Tibet's glory days of its Imperial past (600-850 C.E.). This move enabled Tibetans to forge an autochthonous Buddhist tradition without falling prey to the criticism of outright authorship of new scripture. The Treasure tradition thus emphasizes Tibet's own sacred Imperial history rather than the prevalent valorization of India as the source of Buddhism. With the divine couple Padmasambhava and Yeshe Tsogyal as its sacred progenitors, the Treasure tradition also validated non-monastic forms of religious community and the increasingly important role of the Tantric consort. In addition, Germano highlights the strongly Tibetan nationalist element of the Treasure tradition's gaze backwards into Tibet's own Imperial past for its Treasures instead of reaching for the more familiar stamp of Indian authenticity. He points out the uniquely Tibetan insights that the Treasure tradition allowed its proponents to introduce into Tibetan Buddhism such as the development of the Nyingma Seminal Heart (*snying thig*) system of Great Perfection (*rdzogs chen*) teachings, a lineage to which Sera Khandro belonged in its later nineteenth and twentieth-century manifestations.²⁴⁵ As Janet Gyatso phrases it,

“In the end, the person of the Treasure discoverer is aggrandized both by the cachet of the foreign, borrowed from the civilization of Indian Buddhism, and the power of the indigenous, with all of its ancient memories and allegiances.”²⁴⁶ Just as its genealogical roots stem from an Indian saint, Padmasambhava, and a Tibetan princess, Yeshé Tsogyal, Treasure revelation has verifiable Indian antecedents, yet its rise and development in Tibet is uniquely Tibetan, born out of political, social, and religious circumstances specific to Tibetan cultural history.

Treasure Revelation in Nyingma Scriptural Transmission

There are three main types of scriptural transmission in the Nyingma school of Tibetan Buddhism: the canonical teachings (*bka' ma*), Treasure teachings (*gter ma*), and Pure Vision teachings (*dag snang*). The canonical teachings of the Nyingma school are part of the *Nyingma Gyübum* (*Rnying ma rgyud 'bum*), a thirty-three-volume collection consisting primarily of the inner Tantras of the Nyingma School. The canonical teachings are described as being a “long lineage,” or a lineage of transmission from teacher to student dating back directly with no breaks to the historical Buddha, though in fact many of them are clearly Treasures excavated prior to the fourteenth century. The potential problem with the long lineage according to Sera Khandro’s contemporary, the Third Dodrupchen Rinpoché, is that:

The power of those teachings may have declined by their falling into the hands of improper people and transgressors. The teachings may have been adulterated by individually imposed and unauthorized writings; and also in the long transmissions there tend to be obstructions. In that long period of transmission there may have been some among the lineage holders who did not practice much and did not attain any accomplishment [so the power of the transmission becomes decayed].²⁴⁷

Not falling prey to these potential downfalls, the “short lineage” consists of both Treasure teachings and Pure Vision teachings and is “short” because it is a direct lineage from the timeless Buddhas to human recipients, thus cutting out the “middle men” of the millennia of Buddhist lineage history that can potentially dilute the true Buddha’s teachings. Pure Vision teachings are teachings that highly realized beings receive spontaneously in their waking or dreaming visionary experience from Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, deities, and sages. Not all Pure Vision teachings are Treasure teachings, however, because there is an additional stage in the transmission of Treasure teachings that is not found with Pure Vision teachings; Treasure teachings and Pure Vision teachings both stem from the timeless wisdom of the Buddhas, but Treasure teachings also have a temporal origin in the Treasure hiding activities of key figures in Imperial Tibetan history, most often Padmasambhava.²⁴⁸

Treasure revelation texts consist of many different genres of literature including ritual texts describing meditative techniques for visualizing deities, historical texts recounting the glorified events of Imperial Tibetan history, hagiographies of Tibet’s famous personalities, most often Padmasambhava, explanations of philosophical and doctrinal points, and instructions for the creation of religious art, dance, and architecture.²⁴⁹ One of the largest compendia of Nyingma Treasure texts is the *Rinchen Terdzöd* (*Rin chen gter mdzod*) compiled by Kongtrül Yönten Gyatso (*Kong sprul yon tan rgya mtsho*, 1813-1899), but many cycles of Treasure (*gter skor*) are not included in this compendium.²⁵⁰ Sera Khandro’s four volumes of revealed Treasures include primarily ritual texts (*sādhana*s and empowerments), prophecies (*lung bstan*) foretelling the key disciples and consorts of her teachings, accounts of her visionary experiences

(*nyams snang*), and explanatory materials (*khrid yig*) on Dzokchen philosophy. Her Treasure revelation accounts primarily consist of taking out textual Treasures in the form of scriptures which come to her through visions. However, these scriptures are not only mind Treasures, but also are earth Treasures in the sense that she often describes finding her Treasure texts in vessels (*sgrom bu*) made from substances of all varieties including crystal, stone, rhinoceros hide, and so forth. Less commonly she describes revealing statues and ritual implements.

There are six types or stages of transmission in Nyingma Tantra, three of which are unique to the Treasure tradition, which chart the transmittal of Buddhist teachings from Buddhas to their disciples. The first is Mind Transmission (*dgongs brgyud*), which is a spontaneous transmission between Buddhas in which nothing is expressed, but which represents the transmission of the Truth Body (*Dharmakāya, chos sku*) Buddhas to the Enjoyment Body (*Sāmbhogakāya, longs sku*) Buddhas. The second is the Symbolic Transmission (*brda brgyud*) from the Enjoyment Body Buddhas using verbal and physical symbols to Emanation Body (*Nirmāṇakāya, sprul sku*) Buddhas including figures such as Padmasambhava, Prahevajra, and other Knowledge Holders (*vidhyādhara, rig 'dzin*). The third is the Hearing Transmission (*snyan brgyud*), transmitted by Emanation Bodies such as Padmasambhava to ordinary human disciples via verbal communication.²⁵¹ The forth transmission type begins those which are unique to the Treasure tradition; the Prophetic Authorization (*bka' babs lung bstan*) in which Padmasambhava gives a prophecy to the future Treasure revealer (*gter ston*) indicating the specific time and place that the Treasure revealer will disclose Padmasambhava's teaching. Thus prophecy is an integral part of the transmission of Treasure texts, a theme

that recurs throughout Sera Khandro's biographical writings. The fifth stage is the Aspirational Empowerment (*smon lam dbang bskur*) in which Padmasambhava conceals the Treasure teaching in the Treasure revealer's mind through the power of his aspirations. Also called the Mind-mandate Transmission (*gtad rgya*), this transmission of the Treasure teaching is possible because of the concentration of his enlightened mind and the realization of the disciple's mind. The sixth and last transmission stage is the Entrustment to the Ḍākinīs (*mkha' 'gro gtad rgya*). It is the stage following Padmasambhava's concealment of the Treasures in rock, lake, sky, or other locales in which Padmasambhava entrusts the Ḍākinīs and Treasure protector spirits with the task of guarding the Teaching until the prophesized Treasure revealer arrives at the appropriate time and place. Here the integral involvement of Padmasambhava's consort Yeshé Tsogyal comes into play. Tülku Thondup explains,

Second, after the transmission of the esoteric teachings to his disciples, his consort Ye shey Tsho gyal compiled the teachings through the power of her unforgetting memory. Then according to the wishes and blessings of Guru Padmasambhava, with the help of other realized calligraphers she wrote the teachings in symbolic scripts on yellow scrolls of paper, put them in caskets and concealed them in different places, so they would be discovered by the Tertons and used as keys to awaken the recollection of the words, meanings and realization of the Terma from their awakened state of mind. They also concealed the prophetic guides for the Tertons. This process is the Entrustment to Ḍākinīs or Terma protectors.²⁵²

The role of Yeshé Tsogyal and Padmasambhava acting as a Treasure concealing pair is the topic to which we now turn.

The Divine Couple Padmasambhava and Yeshé Tsogyal: Progenitors of the Treasure Tradition

Although there are several key eighth-century hagiographic figures who hide Treasures such as King Songtsen Gampo, Vimalamitra, and Vairocana to name just a few, by the fourteenth-century Padmasambhava emerged as the dominant figure for the Buddhist Treasure tradition. It is he who conceals Treasures along with his Tibetan partner Yeshé Tsogyal, who acts as his consort and as the one who remembers, encodes, and conceals his Treasure teachings. In Sera Khandro's biographical works, Padmasambhava and Yeshé Tsogyal are a dynamic divine couple from whom she perceives her male consort Drimé Özer and herself to have emanated and to whom her manifold devotional prayers are directed. Inspired by its central importance in Sera Khandro's biographical writings, in this section and also in Chapters Four and Five I will explore the ways in which Sera Khandro represents herself through reference to the Treasure tradition's central origination discourse of Padmasambhava and Yeshé Tsogyal. As Judith Perkins reminds us in the context of her study on the role of the discourse of suffering selves in early Christianity, "In every society, persons come to understand themselves, their roles and their world through their culture's discursive practices and the 'reality' these practices bring into cultural consciousness."²⁵³ Perkins calls for

An investigation of how various discourses in a historical period work to produce particular subjectivities, i.e., particular forms of self-understandings and particular social worlds that generate certain kinds of social power. The dominant power in a society is recognized as being sustained through the domination of a particular social discourse.²⁵⁴

Applying this insight to the context of the Treasure tradition, this section will explore the following questions: What is the significance for communities involved in Treasure

revelation that the tradition's "second Buddha," the paradigmatic figure of Padmasambhava, is a lay Tantric master surrounded by divine *ḍākinī* consorts and in particular partnered with Yeshé Tsogyal for the dissemination of Buddhist Treasure teachings? How does the dominant Treasure revelation origination discourse of Padmasambhava and Yeshé Tsogyal as a divine couple act as a model for Sera Khandro? How has this discourse of Padmasambhava and Yeshé Tsogyal as divine progenitors of the Treasure tradition shifted over time?

The Rising Importance of Yeshé Tsogyal

In his tome on the history of the Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism, Dujom Rinpoché (1904-1988), the reincarnation of Drimé Özer's father Dujom Lingpa, represents the central origination discourse of the Treasure tradition in the following way:

In this country of Tibet, the one who instructed numberless persons in need of training by enlightened activities associated with the nucleus of the teaching, the vehicle of indestructible reality in general, and the profound treasures in particular, was the Second Buddha, Padmasambhava.

It was his particularly great enlightened activity to conceal uncountable treasure troves containing doctrines, wealth, medicines, astrological calculations, images, sacramental substances and so forth in the lands of India, Nepal, and Tibet, with the intention of providing a harvest for future disciples and for the teaching. Above all, skillfully teaching each according to his needs here in Tibet, Guru Rinpoche taught approaches to the doctrine in general, and, in particular, an infinite mass of Tantras, transmissions, esoteric instructions and rites associated with the three classes of yoga [Mahāyoga, Anuyoga, and Atiyoga]. All of those transmitted precepts were compiled by the mistress of secrets, the queen of the expanse, Yeshe Tshogyel, who retained them in her infallible memory. She arranged them on five kinds of yellow scroll [symbolizing the five families] in the symbolic script of the *ḍākinīs* and, inserting them in various treasure chests, sealed them to be indestructible. Guru Padmasambhava and his consort, alone or in the company of the king and his subjects, concealed them in different locations and entrusted them to their respective treasure protectors. Yeshe Tshogyel, in particular, lived for more than a hundred years after the guru's departure for

Camaradvipa and concealed an inconceivable number of treasure troves in upper, middle and lower Tibet. In this way she fulfilled her service to the treasures.²⁵⁵

Trülku Thondup mirrors this version of the Treasure revelation origination discourse, explaining that,

The source of Dharma Treasure, the person who established the Terma system of the Nyingma, is Guru Padmasambhava, assisted by his consort Ye shey Tsho gyal. There are also teachings that were concealed or reconcealed by his disciples, such as Vairocana, and their reincarnations, and also by Vimalamitra, a great Indian scholar and sage of the ninth century.²⁵⁶

The more ancient sources for twentieth-century accounts such as the ones above include Nyangrel Nyima Özer's (*Nyang ral nyi ma 'od zer*) thirteenth-century *Zanglingma* (*Zangs gling ma*) and Orgyen Lingpa's (*'O rgyan gling pa*) fourteenth-century revelations *Padma Katang* (*Padma bka' yi thang yig*) and the *Tangyik Denga* (*Thang yig sde lnga*).²⁵⁷ Interestingly, both the *Zanglingma* and the *Padma Katang* hardly mention Yeshé Tsogyal as a divine partner to Padmasambhava who helped him to conceal and disseminate the Treasure teachings. The *Zanglingma* contains two chapters devoted to the history of Padmasambhava's revealing Treasures, chapter twenty-one and twenty-two, both of which never once mention Yeshé Tsogyal. The *Zanglingma* recounts:

Master Padma consecrated these secluded locations to be sacred places for sādhana. He personally visited everywhere in the land of Tibet and concealed innumerable terma treasures for the sake of worthy people in future generations. He also buried separate location lists, guide texts, and key texts. For the sake of each destined recipient he made these aspirations, "May this meet with a person possessing the karmic destiny! May it be practiced by destined people!" He also gave these three gradual seals, "Seal of treasure, seal of entrustment, seal of concealment." As well, he gave these decrees, "Entrusted, fully entrusted! Concealed, concealed as treasure! Profound, hold it sacred!"²⁵⁸

Nowhere in this narrative of Treasure-concealing activities is there any trace of Yeshé Tsogyal except for Nyangrel Nyima Özer's grand allusion to her as the text's author. Thus, although clearly she reigned essential to Padmasambhava's teachings as the one

“who had attained perfect recall” in order to write down and conceal the *Zanglingma* in the ninth century as a Treasure text, her role as his partner in Treasure-concealing activities appears to be quite understated.²⁵⁹ The same is true of Orgyen Lingpa’s *Padma Katang*; cantos ninety-one through ninety-four describe Padmasambhava’s Treasure-hiding places, times, and prophesized revealers without mentioning Yeshé Tsogyal at all, aside from the general reference to her as the author of the entire volume who “having the ability to remember everything, for the sake of future generations has preserved in writing and hidden like a treasure of jewels this Life of Padma”²⁶⁰

I include these earlier accounts of Padmasambhava as a revealer of Treasure in order to suggest that perhaps the discourse of Yeshé Tsogyal and Padmasambhava as a Treasure-concealing pair who together “concealed them [Treasures] in different locations and entrusted them to their respective treasure protectors,” as Dujom Rinpoché portrays them, developed and shifted over time to include a more central role of Yeshé Tsogyal and of the importance of sexual yoga to the production of Treasure.²⁶¹ This rise in the importance of the Tantric consort within texts relating to Treasure revelation reflects the non-celibate social structure of communities in which the Treasure tradition flourished.

Yeshé Tsogyal’s Hagiography as Sera Khandro’s Model

The main influence on Sera Khandro’s auto/biographical works is Yeshé Tsogyal’s hagiography. Although she gives her readers no indication of which edition(s) of Tsogyal’s famous biography she read, there are distinct resemblances between Sera Khandro’s writing and the biography of Yeshé Tsogyal revealed by Taksham Samten Lingpa in the mid-seventeenth century.²⁶² In Yeshé Tsogyal’s hagiography, she has a

more prominent role as Padmasambhava's scribe and divine consort than in the earlier materials I mentioned above. In the following analysis, I will show how Sera Khandro's writings explicitly draw on the version of sacred history found in Yeshé Tsogyal's hagiography to portray herself and Drimé Özer as a divinely prophesized Treasure revelation couple. Indeed, the overlap between these two Treasure revelation couples is more than conceptual, for Sera Khandro also portrays herself and Drimé Özer to be emanations of this divine couple, charged with the mandate of maintaining the Treasure teachings they hid. Thus, Sera Khandro and Drimé Özer can act as mediators between the eternal sacred reality of Padmasambhava and Yeshé Tsogyal and the temporal context of early twentieth-century Golok because ultimately, they are not separate.

In the biography of Yeshé Tsogyal revealed by Taksham Samten Lingpa in the mid-seventeenth century, Yeshé Tsogyal is Padmasambhava's scribe and his most important consort. After filling her with all of the instructions of the Secret Mantra, holding nothing back "like a brimming vessel poured into another," Padmasambhava said that before he departed, "first I must place inexhaustible teachings, vast and profound. You [Yeshé Tsogyal] must take these Treasures into your charge."²⁶³ After offering Padmasambhava a consort named Siddhi with whom he united for the purpose of propagating the teachings of the Secret Mantra, Yeshé Tsogyal then recounts,

"It was then that all the instructions the Precious Master had given, and which were to be concealed as Treasures, were committed to writing. This was done by Namkhai Nyingpo, who was adept in the art of writing with miraculous speed; by Atsara Pelyang, most exact and careful; by Denma Tsemang, excellent in orthography, speed and accuracy; by Kawa Peltsek, adept in orthography; by Chokro Gyaltzen, a master penman; by Yudra Nyingpo, skilled in grammar and logic; by Vairotsana, accomplished in all these arts; and by myself, Yeshe Tsogyal, who had attained unfailing memory."²⁶⁴

In the above quote, Yeshé Tsogyal may be one of several important disciples to commit Padmasambhava's Treasures to writing, but they are clearly a divine pair above and beyond Padmasambhava's other twenty-four famous disciples:

It was thus that the Guru and his consort Yeshe Tsogyal, at one in the wisdom of their Minds, brought about the benefit of beings through their skillful means and wisdom. At one in the enlightened motions of their Speech, they unfolded naturally the teachings of the Sūtra and the Tantra. At one in their miraculous powers of Body, they had the world's appearances beneath their sway. At one in their enlightened Qualities of Knowledge, they contrived the benefit of beings. At one in their Enlightened Action, they had mastery of the four activities. In the absolute sphere, their name is Künzang Pema Yab-yum-the All-Good Guru-Consort Lotus-Born. Their Body, Speech, Mind, Qualities and Activities are present everywhere, wherever space pervades.²⁶⁵

Yeshé Tsogyal and Padmasambhava formulate a divine couple, albeit one which operates on a paradigm in which both engage with other consorts in service of their spiritual attainment, but ultimately are one whole in male and female aspects. This paradigm fits into a Tantric and also Mahāyānic understanding of Buddhahood as the combination of method, gendered male, and wisdom, gendered female; a Buddha is one who transcends gender difference, who embodies all genders and thus is represented as being of a neutral (most often read male) gender. Yet in the case of the Treasure tradition, more specific gendered attributes are at stake. Yeshé Tsogyal is Padmasambhava's mnemonic device and his special aide in concealing the Treasures. Both have other consorts, yet looking at them through the lens of Sera Khandro's biographical writings, they are the exemplary couple from whom the Treasure teachings emanate and to whom Sera Khandro fervently prays.

The centrality of the origination discourse of Padmasambhava and Yeshé Tsogyal for Sera Khandro's perception of her own subjectivity is evident by the fact that Sera Khandro begins her *Autobiography* with an origination story of this divine couple's

enlightened activity. Sera Khandro's self-narrative begins not with her own birth or even with prophecies about her Treasure revealing activities (as does Drimé Özer's *Biography*), but with the following story of Padmasambhava and Yeshé Tsogyal:

The essence of all the Buddhas of the three times, the Great Knowledge Holder Pema Thötrengtsal (Padmasambhava) was born enclosed by a lotus free from the faults of the stains of the womb. His deeds and beneficial actions exceeded that of the Lord of two footed beings, Gyalwa Tupé Wangpo (Śakyamuni Buddha). In his mind, which contained the beneficial deeds of all the Buddhas of the past, present, and future in one, he thought, "Now relying on [good] methods, because I need to spread the difficult to spread teachings of the Secret Mantra Vajrayāna here in Tibet, the time has come for the expression of the emanations of the Expanse Woman Vajravārāhī."

He departed from the Unsurpassed Land and then wandering in one hundred Buddhafiels of emanations, he stayed [in them] for seven years. Having gathered together all the primordial wisdom *ḍākinīs* of the three Bodies such as Vajrayoginī and so forth, the sky traveling *ḍākinīs* of the three abodes (*gnas gsum*) such as Venerable Tārā and so forth, and the four classes of *ḍākinīs* of the land (*gnas yul*) such as the Goddess Sarasvatī and so forth [they all] enjoyed the taste of stainless bliss and resided in the mental state of the great primordial wisdom of bliss and emptiness.

He aroused Vajravārāhī's intentions and for the sake of taming the red-faced people of Tibet, she manifested six emanations including body, speech, mind, virtuous qualities, beneficial deeds, and suchness and acted as the Guru's consort.

The Goddess Sarasvatī who is the collection of all of [the six emanations] into one arose in the middle of the *maṇḍala* and spoke to the *ḍākinīs*: "The time has come to tame the demonic Tibetan people who are difficult to tame in the realm of the world and those who harm the Buddhist teachings such as the [beings in] the Southwestern Demonic Land, the Bön heretics, and so forth, to spread and maintain for a long time the difficult to spread Secret Mantra Vajrayāna teachings, to be the Guru's consort, and to collect the teachings."

She emanated as none other than herself emanations such as Kalasiddhi in Nepal, Tashi Chidren in Mön, Shelkar Dorjé Tso in Central Tibet, and so forth. She also arose in the form of the Great Bliss Yeshé Tsogyal. [Yeshé Tsogyal] acted as the collector of the Secret Mantra teachings and her beneficial deeds were equal to those of the Guru himself; her actions and beneficial deeds were unrivalled in the three realms [above, on, below the earth].²⁶⁶

This origination story has a tripartite form: the Dharmakāya Padmasambhava incites the display of Sāṃbhogakāya Vajravārāhī who then manifests into Nirmāṇakāya emanation bodies whose job is to spread the teachings of the Secret Mantra and thus to tame sentient beings. Yet this version of Padmasambhava and Yeshé Tsogyal's origination story is striking for a number of reasons: Padmasambhava tames the red-faced people of Tibet through: 1) pleasing a host of ḍākinīs with the taste of stainless bliss, and 2) inspiring Vajravārāhī to manifest emanations by uniting with her, and then his job is finished! From here on, Vajravārāhī's emanations gathered together into one as Sarasvatī, who becomes the agent and manifests emanations into the world such as Kalasiddhi, Tashi Chidren, Dorjé Tso, and most importantly Yeshé Tsogyal. Significantly, Sera Khandro states that Yeshé Tsogyal's enlightened activity and beneficial deeds are *equal* to those of Padmasambhava himself, a very grandiose claim given that she has just explained that Padmasambhava's enlightened activity exceeded that of Śākyamuni Buddha. Thus, in her formulation of the divine origins of the Treasure tradition and her role within it, Sera Khandro puts forth a model of Padmasambhava and Yeshé Tsogyal that emphasizes their status as equal partners. This then serves as a divine precedent for her understanding of her own relationship with Drimé Özer.

In formulating this origination story, Sera Khandro was clearly drawing from hagiographies of Yeshé Tsogyal, most likely in literary form, because she appears to be quoting Yeshé Tsogyal's biography when she describes her final scenes on earth just after the origination story above. As Yeshé Tsogyal begins her ascent into the Southwestern Buddhafeld, the Glorious Copper-colored Mountain of Padmasambhava,

Sera Khandro describes the advice Yeshé Tsogyal gave to her emanations Kalasiddhi and Tashi Chidren. After this, she recounts that

As soon as she said this, Tashi Chidren transformed into an eight petalled blue lotus flower with a “*Hung*” in the middle and eight “*Phet*” [letters] on the surrounding petals and disappeared into the right side of Yeshé Tsogyal’s heart center. Kalasiddhi, having transformed into a red lotus with a “*Hri*” in the middle of its sixteen petals that were ornamented by sixteen “*A li*” [vowels], dissolved into the left side of Yeshé Tsogyal’s heart center.²⁶⁷

This description should sound familiar, given that it is a paraphrase of a line found in Taksham Samten Lingpa’s seventeenth century version of Yeshé Tsogyal’s biography:

Then, with her right hand, Tsogyal touched Trashy Chidren, the girl from Mön. She was transformed into a blue utpala lotus with eight petals marked with the syllables *Hung* and *Phat*, and dissolved into the right side of the Lady’s heart. Then with her left hand, Tsogyal touched Kalasiddhi of Nepal, who changed into a red lotus of sixteen petals marked with the sixteen vowels and *Hri* and dissolved into the left side of her heart.²⁶⁸

Despite its clear literary precedents, is this story of Padmasambhava and Yeshé Tsogyal something we would expect to read at the beginning of a female Treasure revealer’s autobiography? It is in the sense that Sera Khandro is offering her readers a genealogical history of her own origins; she is tying herself to the mythic history of the origins of the Treasure texts by demonstrating that she is none other than an emanation of Yeshé Tsogyal who has manifested in the world to fulfill Padmasambhava’s intentions. Sera Khandro specifies that she is actually an emanation of the lady from Central Tibet, Shiwa Dorjé Tso, who is herself an emanation of Yeshé Tsogyal. This is not surprising because Sera Khandro was referred to throughout her life in Golok as the “Central Tibetan Princess Dākinī” (*Dbus bza’ mkha’ ‘gro*) and is still remembered by that name today in the regions of Golok in which she once lived. The centrality of her identity as a woman from Central Tibet is also evident given that the term “Central Tibetan Lady”

(*dbus mo*) is the first word in the title of her *Autobiography*. Beyond the fact that the Golok people referred (and still refer) to her as the Central Tibetan Lady, perhaps one reason that she emphasized this regional identity in the first word of her *Autobiography* is because it formed yet another tie between herself and Yeshé Tsogyal, who was also from Central Tibet.

After Sera Khandro describes the parting supplication prayers that Shiwa Dorjé Tso offered the soon-to-be departing Yeshé Tsogyal, she recounts that Yeshé Tsogyal gave Shiwa Dorjé Tso a prophecy that she would be a steward of a Treasure. Then, Sera Khandro gives a detailed outline of Shiwa Dorjé Tso's subsequent incarnations, the last of which is Sakya Tamdrin Drupé Wangmo, a woman who the Lhasa lama Changtrong Druptop Rinpoché recognized as Sera Khandro's former incarnation.²⁶⁹ Immediately after this, she recounts several prophecies foretelling her life and purpose as a Treasure revealer including prophecies from Padma Lingpa, Düdül, Jomo Menmo,²⁷⁰ Dodrup Rinpoché, Lerab Dorjé, Padma Ledreltsel, and one from her own Treasure revelations. In these ways, she clearly links herself with the divine genealogy of the Treasure tradition.

The importance of the Treasure tradition's central origination discourse focusing on Padmasambhava and Yeshé Tsogyal is not only as a divine genealogical origin point in Sera Khandro's narrative; Padmasambhava and Yeshé Tsogyal are ever-present in Sera Khandro's writings as a timeless reality that she can access through the manifold visionary experiences (*nyams snang*) she frequently recounts in which she traveled through elaborate Buddhafields. Sera Khandro is not unique in her presentation of mythic history as eternally present, but rather is characteristic of a Treasure revealer's

unmediated access to the divine.²⁷¹ Trülku Thondup explains this phenomenon in the following way:

The Termas of Guru Padmasambhava were not all concealed in the ninth century while he was visiting Tibet. If there is an important reason, he conceals or provides Termas today to be discovered for the benefit of beings. The transmission continues because of his enlightened power and not because of any limited cause and conditions.²⁷²

Padmasambhava and Yeshé Tsogyal are just as present and accessible today to those with faith and good fortune as they were in their ninth-century human physical forms. Thus the Imperial Period history of Padmasambhava empowering his twenty-five important disciples including Yeshé Tsogyal in Treasures to be discovered in future degenerate times is not only an origination story, but a transcendent reality accessible to those such as Sera Khandro and Drimé Özer who have active visionary experiences in which they travel to Buddhafields and interact with Padmasambhava, Yeshé Tsogyal, and their entourage. A large portion of Sera Khandro's biographical writings are comprised of such visionary encounters, which serve not only to demonstrate Sera Khandro's ability to have unmediated access to the divine, but also to help represent Sera Khandro as a legitimate and authoritative Treasure revealer to those in her community and to her future disciples.²⁷³ I include one visionary experience below in which Sera Khandro travels to Padmasambhava's Buddhafield called The Glorious Copper-colored Mountain in her dream and receives a Treasure text, empowerment, and mind-mandate transmission directly from Padmasambhava and Yeshé Tsogyal:

Then, all [the divinities] gathered there performed a vast feast offering. In particular, having opened the *maṇḍala* of the *Ocean of Dharma of the Collected Teachings*, [Padmasambhava] gave ripening and liberation [instructions] to each of the [twenty-five] main disciples. Having done this, he collected the teachings and sealed all of the treasuries of books in a magical basket. He gave the disciples the essence [of the teachings] and performed aspiration prayers and so forth.

In particular, the Wish-fulfilling Jewel [i.e., Drimé Özer] acted as my hero for the group of Accomplishment Practices and established me in ripening and liberation. Yeshé Tsogyal looked after me with great love and having given me the golden pages of the fifty-eight sectioned *Extremely Secret Dākinī's Heart Essence Dharma Cycle* in the manner of Oral Transmission, she conferred a symbolic empowerment [upon me]. She gave me a secret name Khandro Gyepé Dorjé and performed the mind-mandate aspiration prayers.²⁷⁴

Sera Khandro's biographical writings thus operate on two temporal schemas: one grounded firmly in the temporal reality of early twentieth-century Eastern Tibet, and the other representing Sera Khandro and Drimé Özer's access to timeless primordial wisdom. As a Treasure revealer, Sera Khandro thus acts as a mediator between the specificity of her own temporally-situated religious community and the primordial state of awakening from which Treasure teachings and objects arise for her to reveal for the benefit of her disciples. This at once transcendental and historically (and environmentally) grounded nature of temporality in the Treasure tradition is reminiscent of Eliade's myth of the eternal return in which "the past is but a prefiguration of the future."²⁷⁵ In the Treasure tradition, future events are foreshadowed by the emissaries of the atemporal and primordial Buddhas while the past continually becomes present through divine visions such as the one quoted above.²⁷⁶ Sera Khandro's purpose as a Treasure revealer is to fulfill the ancient yet ever-present aspirations of Padmasambhava and Yeshé Tsogyal, and thus her life and that of her partner Drimé Özer, as their emanations, are modeled after their divine examples on multiple levels.

The Divine Treasure Revelation Couple

Sera Khandro's self-understanding as a part of a divine couple is clearly derived from the paradigm of Padmasambhava and Yeshé Tsogyal, a Buddhist model that

presents consort relationships as essential components of religious revelation. The emphasis within the Treasure tradition of the importance of consorts for successful revelation draws on the Mahāyāna gendered concepts of male method and female wisdom as essential components of Buddhahood, but adds to it a literal necessity of sexual yoga in order to produce Treasure texts and objects. Sera Khandro's interpretation of the mythic paradigm of Padmasambhava and Yeshé Tsogyal is one in which she had more than one male consort but only one partnership crucial for her activities related to Treasure revelation. Hers is a vision of lifelong and eternal partnership in which neither partner was exclusively monogamous but both perceived each other as more important than all other consorts. That Sera Khandro portrays herself and Drimé Özer as a divinely prophesized couple is clear in the following passage in Drimé Özer's *Biography* in which he asserts their exclusively equal relationship as mutually beneficial partners. This concept of a sacred partnership of equals harkens back to Sera Khandro's opening divine origination story in which she explains that Yeshé Tsogyal's "beneficial deeds were equal to those of the Guru himself." Sera Khandro recounts the following interaction when Drimé Özer was forty and Sera Khandro was twenty-nine:

Then, Dewé Dorjé handed a symbolic prophecy from the ḍākinīs to the Lord and when she asked him, "Do you understand the meaning of this?," he looked at it and replied, "I have taken out a Treasure that belongs to you."

Dewé Dorjé said, "Why is that?"

The Lord answered, "Our Treasures are principal and subsidiary. In particular, I have a prophecy that I will have four Treasure retinues and three consorts that will benefit the Treasures. Out of those, it is clear in the prophecy that there will be one extraordinary [consort] who will benefit the Treasures who is equal to me – this is you. Hence, because of this, we can act as consorts for each other."

Although Dewé Dorjé thought, “It is certain that an inferior one like me is not equal to Trülku Rinpoché,” for the purposes of auspicious connections, she didn’t say anything [like this] and said, “Okay.”

The two male and female partners had detailed discussions and [gave each other] advice and so forth and then Dewé Dorjé returned home.²⁷⁷

Sera Khandro’s writing includes both a powerful claim to equality between herself and Drimé Özer as partners prophesized to aid each other in mutually beneficial ways in their revelation processes, a comment she writes as Drimé Özer’s speech, and a self-humbling negation of this claim to equality in her own voice. This is one of the many examples of this type of dialogue in which Sera Khandro writes lauding things about herself in other’s voices and negates them in her own, a topic that we will explore further in the following chapter. Despite her quick move to diffuse this radical claim of parity between herself and Drimé Özer, the existence of a claim to equal status in his *Biography* is significant. She is the only one who has this status despite his other retinues and consorts, just as Yeshé Tsogyal was Padmasambhava’s main consort with regard to concealing and propagating the Treasure teachings. Sera Khandro thus emphasizes a vision of herself and Drimé Özer as a divine couple who not only engaged in sexual yoga together, but who revealed Treasures together, taught each other, and lived together. Throughout this study, particularly in this chapter in the “Consorts” section and in Chapter Five, we will explore further passages from Sera Khandro’s writings that express more about their powerful and multivalent love relationship.

The Process of Revealing Treasure

Prophecy

Despite the strong relationship Sera Khandro's writing emphasizes between herself and her divine genesis, the ability to reveal Treasures is not simply a matter of preordained fate; a number of different factors must come together for successful Treasure revelation. The bulk of Sera Khandro's biographical writings narrate the uncertainty and difficulty she experienced attempting to fulfill her life purpose of revealing Treasure. Hers is a life in a land imbued with spirits, both benevolent and malevolent. Powerful negative forces including a host of demonic autochthonous Tibetan spirits who inhabit the earth, possess people, and wreak havoc through causing natural disaster and physical illness threaten to thwart Sera Khandro's mission to reveal Treasures. Supernatural forces shape and interact with the human realm in confusing and inexplicable ways via prophecies and visionary encounters in a world where the threat of demonic influence is always imminent and auspicious connections are fleeting and unstable. Elusive and ephemeral divine prophecies continually appear to Sera Khandro warning her of the dangers constantly lurking around her, their only antidote being proper ritual obeisance and adherence to the divine aspirations of Padmasambhava and Yeshe Tsogyal. I include an example of one of the many prophecies that Sera Khandro recounts in her *Autobiography*:

Wam wam- I am a miraculous golden bird coming
From the Supreme Glorious Mountain –
Your one companion Ledreltsel²⁷⁸
Has a lantern of clear speech for you.

Is the city of blissful, blissful ḍākinīs,
Adorned by the self-emergent expanse,

Without error?

Are the supreme method heroes who are appearances
And the wisdom queens who are the expanse of emptiness
Inseparable?

Do not throw away the awakening of remaining karma from former aspirations
To the *sapta*²⁷⁹ [demons]!

Female bodhisattva (*sems ma*) who is the origin of great bliss –
If you exert yourself quickly in
Enacting the iron hook which grasps the heart,
It is certain that we will meet in the direction of directionlessness.

By the power of this, it is certain that the teachings of the two Treasures²⁸⁰
Will spread in the East and South.

In the male hare year when the great son Ratnapasham
Arrives near your area,
It is possible that the two benefits²⁸¹ will naturally arise.

If you pray single-pointedly
To both the Lotus Born One (Padmasambhava) and Tsogyal,
Your wish will become true
And later it is certain that you will be established in the Glorious Mountain.²⁸²

When you become interested in relying on
Deceptive patterns [like] rainbows,
The face of one hundred sounds²⁸³ will bring on
The poison flower of the eight worldly Dharmas.

Having angered the deities and protectresses,
The door to undesirable powers will become clear
And it is not certain what will happen.

When you incite the actions of symbols and meanings
Of the one named Künzang from the West,
Don't weaken the arrow of knowledge –
It is important to be careful regarding the key point of auspicious connections!²⁸⁴

Prophecies such as the one above foretell of positive outcomes as well as caution Sera
Khandro that danger is lurking around every corner; focusing on the illusory rainbow-like
patterns of worldly temptations will anger the deities and protectresses. Elliptical

prophetic advice regarding figures she will meet in the future foreshadow upcoming events, but leave Sera Khandro wondering how to avoid falling to the power of the *sapta* demons. Thus, the agility with which Sera Khandro is able to move between primordial Buddhafields and her own worldly, temporal context is clouded by uncertainty. The success of her purpose of revealing Treasures is far from guaranteed despite its divine mandate.

The main prophetic vision in Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* occurs when she is thirteen years old when she dreams that she appears before Vajravārāhī.²⁸⁵ Vajravārāhī gives Sera Khandro a registry (*kha byang*, *lung byang*) foretelling the specifics about her two main Treasure cycles. This registry is a prophetic document characteristic of Treasure revelation that corresponds to the fourth Prophetic Authorization Transmission stage (*bka' babs lung bstan*), foretelling details about the auspicious connections that need to come together in order for the full Treasure to be revealed. Like an abstract to a dissertation, the registry highlights the main points of the future Treasure to be discovered, yet it does so in a pithy and elusive format meant for the Treasure revealer to decipher. Chapter One includes a complete translation of this significant visionary sequence.²⁸⁶ In summary:

I opened my eyes and when I slowly looked, all the women had transformed and all had the appearance of *ḍākinīs*. The main lady also having changed into the appearance of Vajravārāhī, she conferred the empowerment of the Assembly of Sense-base Deities of the Body *Maṇḍala* and gave me an introduction [to them]. She conferred a symbolic empowerment in *The Secret Treasury of Reality Ḍākinīs* and *The Ḍākinīs' Heart Essence*. She bestowed upon me the registry (*kha byang*) and prophetic registry (*lung byang*) including the time to teach these two religious teachings, the place to spread them, the great beings who would hold these teachings, the place where the disciples would be, the way auspicious connections would appear, and the consorts. She said, "Since the time has come for you to benefit sentient beings with these teachings, keep the meaning of this

registry in your mind and don't forget it. Because you are my messenger, benefit to the teachings and to sentient beings will certainly arise.²⁸⁷

According to Sera Khandro's description above, the key elements that must gather together properly for successful Treasure revelation include: 1) the proper time, 2) the proper place to spread the teachings, 3) the proper disciples (usually referred to as the proper doctrine holders, *chos bdag*), 4) the place where disciples will be, 5) auspicious connections (*rtan 'brel*), and 6) the proper prophesized consorts. This list is a variation adapted to the Treasure revelation process of a more standard Buddhist orienting structure for establishing the positive qualities of a Buddhist scripture called the five excellences (*phun sum tshogs pa lnga*) including an excellent teacher, retinue, place, teaching, and time. Without the synthesis of all these elements that Sera Khandro lists above, successful Treasure revelation is impossible, hence the uncertainty and insecure tone of many of the *ḍākinī* prophecies in Sera Khandro's writings. While the first several requirements including the need for the proper time, place, and doctrine holder are relatively self-explanatory, the final requirements of gathering the proper auspicious connections and finding the proper consort present the most intriguing and unusual elements of the Treasure revelation process.

Auspicious Connections

The Tibetan term “tendrel” (*rtan 'brel*), which I translate as auspicious connections, is a translation of the Sanskrit Buddhist term *pratītya-samutpāda*, a technical term meaning “dependent arising.” Dependent arising describes the way people and phenomena in the world exist according to Buddhist philosophy: as dependent on causes and conditions. The *Samyutta-nikāya* (II, 28) includes a passage that describes this

concept concisely: “That being, this comes to be; from the arising of that, this arises. That being absent, this is not; from the cessation of that, this ceases.”²⁸⁸ In colloquial Tibetan, the term can mean something like good connection, or favorable condition. In the context of the Treasure tradition, *tendrel* refers to the circumstances, good signs, omens, and connections that must come together for successful revelation.

Sera Khandro repeatedly laments that because the proper auspicious connections didn’t come together, she wasn’t able to reveal Treasure. In one instance, she explains that:

At that time, I let go of the auspicious connections for many Treasures. In particular, I let go of the profound Treasures from Drakar Drel dzong that were Dharma cycles on *The Condensed Intentions of the Dākinīs*. At that time the Treasure protector actually came and although all the people gathered there actually saw that the auspicious connections that had gone away due to other things, because of my inferior merit with regard to place and time, it was as if I was helpless to stop the auspicious connections from falling away.²⁸⁹

The prevalence of Sera Khandro’s comments about not finding the right auspicious connections to reveal her Treasures is another reminder of the uncertain and shifting winds of chance that characterize Treasure revelation. On another occasion, the circumstances around Sera Khandro suddenly obstructed her intention to reveal a Treasure to the surprise and confusion of her nun friend. Sera Khandro recounts,

. . . Because I also went to collect firewood, Chötreng said, “I already gathered your share of wood.”

Again I replied, “If I don’t have to go collect wood, should we two go to Solung Drakar²⁹⁰?”

She answered, “Its okay if we go. I heard that that place used to be a Treasure site of Gara Lama [Gara Tertön].”

When we both were on the road going there, a layman went into the monastery and we met him when he came out. He had a cleft lip and was named Dönam. Because the two factors that I hadn’t taken a consort and that the man didn’t have

an upper lip came together, I thought this: in this life no matter what work I exert myself in, it will be difficult for me to offer the service of maintaining Gara Terchen's profound Treasure. Although in that place there was a rhinoceros hide vessel containing the profound pages of a *Detailed Teaching on the Profound Path of Primordial Wisdom* from the Dharma section *The Profound Path Dākinīs' Secret Treasury* together with religious medicine, the auspicious connections went away due to other forces.

I said, "I need to go back quickly."

She answered, "Aren't we going to Drakar? Its not far – let's go there."

Again I answered, "Let's not go now. If it takes a long time now, Gyalsé will punish me. If he doesn't do this, because I gave Yangchen Drönma [Sera Khandro's infant daughter] to Tupzang, if she cries, Gyalsé will certainly scold me." After I said this, we carried the wood and returned home.²⁹¹

The sign of seeing a layman with a cleft lip seems to be a metaphor for Sera Khandro's singular status without a consort and serves as an ill omen that she will not be able to fulfill her purpose of maintaining Gara Tertön's Treasure teachings.²⁹² In the selection above, the specifics of Sera Khandro's circumstances as a female Treasure revealer and as a young mother stand out. Not only did Sera Khandro have to contend with the uncertainties of the paradigmatic auspicious connections necessary for successful Treasure revelation such as finding the proper consort, but she was concerned with some other very conventional auspicious circumstances such as securing childcare and avoiding the criticism of a husband who disapproved of her acting as a Treasure revealer.

Consorts

The Third Dodrupchen Rinpoché explains the necessity of having the auspicious connection of a consort in the following way:

Furthermore, in order to arouse the accomplishment from their depths, the teachings which have been concealed in the natural sphere of the luminous state (*A'od gSal Gyi Khams*) [of their minds], it is also necessary to have the

spontaneously arisen bliss (*Lhan sKyes Kyi dGa' Ba*) which can be produced by a special consort who has made the appropriate aspirations in the past, and who is to become the key to accomplishment. That is one of the reasons why all Tertons happen to have consorts.²⁹³

Treasure revelation is founded upon a Tantric understanding of the body in which mental realizations are generated from manipulating the channels, winds, and seminal nuclei of the subtle body (*rtsa, rlung, thig le*). Unique to the Treasure tradition is the link between the generation of textual and material Treasures and biologically generative act of sexuality.²⁹⁴ Specifically, the role of the female consort is linked to Yeshe Tsogyal's mnemonic and encoding powers; female consorts aid Treasure revealers in their process of decoding the Treasure's symbolic scripts. The Third Dodrupchen Rinpoche clarifies this point:

The Discoverer must reach the identification of the true text, one word and one meaning, by achieving fully perfected power in decoding the symbolic script. This is accomplished through favorable conditions such as meeting with the Doctrine-holder of those Termas; being in the right place or being present at an important occasion; and most important, by encountering the miraculous skill of a Vajradūta [consort] whose mind has been purified by empowerments and precepts, who has practiced the path of two stages (*Rim gNyes*), who has been blessed by Guru Rinpoche himself in order to take the birth of an appropriate sacred support [consort] for the Terton in future to discover the Termas of the sphere of primordial wisdom (*Ye Shes dByings*) by means of the hook (*lChags Kyu*) of spontaneously arisen bliss, and who himself or herself has made the appropriate aspirations [in the past]. Because of those conditions the Terton will become certain about the real words and meanings of the texts, and other appearances will disappear.²⁹⁵

The consort is thus an integral part of the auspicious connections necessary to successfully reveal Treasure. If the consort cannot be physically present for the Treasure discovery, a gift from the prophesized consort or even a visualized encounter with the consort can be a substitute. Narrative and prescriptive sources describing the process of Treasure revelation, such as the quotation above, do so almost exclusively from the

perspective of a male Treasure revealer engaging with multiple female consorts in order to reveal Treasure. But does the reverse take place? What happens to the paradigm of the consort “breaking the code” of the Treasure when the Treasure revealer is female and the consorts are male? Do male consorts have the same decoding capabilities attributed to female consorts? What, in fact, do consorts do? Since these questions will be the topic of Chapter Four, I will not elaborate here, but only provide a few relevant examples from Sera Khandro’s biographical writings.

In Sera Khandro’s writings, she represents herself as a female Treasure revealer in need of male consorts in order to reveal Treasure. She recounts numerous visions such as the following in which Yeshé Tsogyal advises Sera Khandro to be careful regarding gathering together the necessary auspicious connections:

Practice according to the ḍākinī prophecies and we will assist you. In particular, because a Treasure revealer’s beneficial activity depends on consorts and doctrine holders [disciples], it is important that you behave in accordance with not letting auspicious connections go.²⁹⁶

In the many passages such as this one, Sera Khandro makes it clear that having consorts is a divinely prophesized auspicious connection that she must have in order to fulfill her religious purpose. Below is a good example from her *Autobiography* of the way in which Sera Khandro describes finding Treasures and the role of a consort in this process:

Then, when the encampment was staying beside Tachok, because we exhorted a symbolic registry from the seven Sovereign Guardian Ladies of Magyal [protectresses of the Amnye Machen Mountain range], when evening came, together with the nun Chötren, Kachö Drön, Dechen Drönma, my daughter Chöying Drönma, and the monk Jikmé Könchok who was the commitment upholding son of Gara Ter[tön] Rinpoché, we went to the residence of the Seven Sovereign Ladies near the snow mountain. When we were going there, the entire sky was filled with banks of rainbow clouds in shapes standing upright and in spokes, curves, semicircles, lotuses, and so forth.

They said, “This is extremely amazing! It seems as if we will receive an accomplishment (*dnegos grub, siddhi*)!”

I didn’t say anything. Then, when we reached the Treasure entrance, on top of the rainbow clouds from before there were many beings who had a form like offering goddesses who seemed to be holding offering substances in their hands gathered to the right and left just a bit below the Treasure site. They [my companions] were amazed and offered prostrations, prayers, and so forth to [the offering goddesses].

At that time because the road was far and there was no sun, from between the clouds something like sunlight illuminated our vicinity and in particular the Treasure entrance. I said to them, “You all go and circumambulate this cliff. Because my daughter is young and my leg is bad, it seems that I can’t circumambulate so I will stay here and wait for you all.”

After they went to do the circumambulation, as soon as the secret consort of the Treasure entrance Bimarasmi portrayed the wrapped vajra symbol with his top-knot,²⁹⁷ the Treasure entrance that was like a moon disk opened and I took out a vajra-sealed Treasure chest that was a Profound Accomplishment of Vajravārāhī. Inside there was one precious rhinoceros hide vessel, a marble statue of Sarasvatī about the size of the measure of a *ḍākinī*’s thumb to index finger, a secret explanation of the Four Volumes (of Longchenpa’s Seminal Heart teachings) [written on] a Treasure page about the size of the thumb to index finger [made from] the skin of Rudra’s heart, a turquoise vessel, an agate vessel, three woven vessels, other dharma medicine, and saffron pills which liberate through taste. Then, I offered a Treasure substitute. Because I didn’t have an actual consort or doctrine holder, I left behind the auspicious connections of the mind-support and beneficial action vessels. At that time, in the valley the aroma of a good smell permeated, miraculous water sprung forth from the Treasure site, the earth quaked, a sound came forth, and so forth.

When all this happened, they wondered what it was and came back quickly, saying, “It is certain that you have taken out a Treasure. You need to show it to us.”

I replied, “This is my daughter that I have taken out as a Treasure – I wonder if I can take out a son?”

When I said this, Chötreng said, “Your daughter has already seen the Treasure. We need to see this Treasure [from which] a good smell pervades!,” and she repeated this again and again.

Thinking of my commitments to the *ḍākinīs*, I didn’t dare to tell an outright lie. I said, “After you prostrate to the goddesses amidst the clouds, offer prostrations to me and to this site and as I have extracted miraculous water in the manner of a Treasure, everyone taste it – it is the accomplishment [sign] of this place.”

They said, “It is greatly amazing that you suddenly extracted a self-emergent spring from a dry rock like this!” When everybody tasted the ambrosia, they said it had unusual power and a delicious aroma²⁹⁸

Many characteristic elements of Sera Khandro’s Treasure revelation experiences emerge in this passage: the impetus for the Treasure revelation is the group of land deities who protect the Treasure, the subject to which we shall soon turn, and it is by uniting with a consort that the entrance to the Treasure opens. Sera Khandro’s visualized consort provides enough auspicious connection for her to reveal many parts of the Treasure, but because she visualizes the experience and is not literally there with her consort, she is unable to extract the full Treasure. Sera Khandro is characteristically modest in sending her disciples off to circumambulate the mountain so she can secretly take out her Treasures, and when her disciples come back she never actually shows them the full wealth of Treasure she has just extracted. Her comment about extracting a daughter and perhaps also a son as Treasure is, I would suggest, a joke or a light-hearted quip that Sera Khandro makes in order to deny that she has any special capacities as a Treasure revealer. This joke is interesting because it draws a link between the production of children and the production of Treasure substances, two creative and generative processes, one mundane and the other extraordinary, that both require sexuality. Yet this joke is a joke that only makes sense if spoken by a woman; it is an analogy based on a woman’s reproductive physiology. If there are “female perspectives” on Treasure revelation that move beyond the common descriptions of female consorts as aides to male Treasure revealers, this self-humbling comment sheds light on what types of metaphors these perspectives might employ.

In Sera Khandro's writings, having a consort may be a technical necessity to completely reveal Treasures, but her relationship with her main consort Drimé Özer is far more than that. Chapter Five will explore the multiple spiritual and worldly registers of Sera Khandro's descriptions of love for Drimé Özer that she records in both her *Autobiography* and his *Biography*. Unlike other Treasure revealers who represent themselves as individual actors using consorts as aides in their revelation process, Sera Khandro describes herself as one part of a divinely prophesized Treasure revelation couple in which both she and Drimé Özer are necessary for each other to reveal their Treasures. As I have introduced above, Sera Khandro explicitly draws on the divine paradigm of Padmasambhava and Yeshé Tsogyal found in texts such as Yeshé Tsogyal's hagiography to formulate this model of the necessity of male and female partnership for Treasure revelation. Thus, according to Sera Khandro's portrayal of revelation, it is a heterosexual couple who is the basic unit who reveals Treasures, not individual revealers who use consorts, although this occurs as well in her works.²⁹⁹

The theme of male and female partnership in the Treasure revelation process is clear in the following passage in which Sera Khandro describes going out to reveal Treasures with her partner Drimé Özer. In Drimé Özer's *Biography*, Sera Khandro records that during the time they were living together when he was forty-four and she was thirty-three shortly before his death:

At that time, a *ḍākinī*'s symbolic prophecy came to Dewé Dorjé [saying] that the time had come to extract a Treasure from on top of the *ḍākinīs*' assembly hall that was a *Condensed Intention of the Ḍākinīs* Dharma Cycle.

When she [Sera Khandro] offered the symbolic prophecy to the Lord, he was extremely happy and said, "We need to abide by the time of the auspicious connection – let's both go get it."

The Dākinī³⁰⁰ said, “Okay,” and for a few days the time arose to take out the Treasure.

Male and female partners both secretly went. They went slowly on account of the dākinī’s bad leg. The Lord having said he was going to look for the Treasure entrance, he went ahead. A little while later he came back.

When the Dākinī asked, “Why did you go?,” the Lord thought that it was unacceptable to mix up the auspicious connections so he said, “I took out my Treasure and came to get you.” Together, they went to a cave.

Then, the Lord said, “Why are so many fish and frogs gathered at the Treasure site?”

Dewé Dorjé said, “Perhaps since the outer Treasure protector is a *nāga* spirit, they are its illusory emanations.”

Then, when they were nearing the Treasure entrance, a good smell pervaded and in the sky vultures swirled and sang melodiously. When the two male and female partners arrived at the Treasure entrance, the Lord sat and recited the seven line prayer. Dewé Dorjé opened the Treasure entrance and took out three Treasure vessels.

When she gave them to the Lord, he said, “Amazing.” He received empowerment [from the three vessels]. Feeling extremely joyous, he put in a Treasure substitute and bound the Treasure entrance.

Then, Dewé Dorjé said, “Because my Treasure is a secret Treasure, it is not acceptable to tell anybody about [my] taking it out.”

The Lord replied, “Since everyone knows that you are a Treasure revealer, even if I don’t say anything it is certain that they will come to know.”

Then Dewé Dorjé said again and again, “Now it is time for you to take out a profound Treasure.”

One day, male and female partners went to Dangyen. The Lord said, “Since now I need to take out a Treasure, I need to examine a playful auspicious circumstance.” The Lord asked Dewé Dorjé’s five-year-old son, “Will you be a Treasure revealer?”

The son replied, “I will be a Treasure revealer like you.”

The Lord said, “Of course it will be like this.” Then, from the [mountain] side of that place, the Lord having taken out a big Treasure vessel [filled with] the five families of Sarasvatī made out of *Akyong* [a type of medicine], many amazing auspicious circumstances arose.³⁰¹

In passages like this, Sera Khandro describes the ways in which Treasure revelation was a process in which both partners participated together. In this case, the partners function as aides to each other on multiple levels including helping to find the proper prophesized Treasure locations, maintaining auspicious conditions for revelation, interpreting the significance of phenomena in the environment, and making prayers.

Sera Khandro portrays her partnership with Drimé Özer as being so close that they could even reveal each other’s Treasures. During her third visit to see Drimé Özer before she moved in with him, Sera Khandro explains that Drimé Özer was able to reveal a Treasure that was hers. She writes, “The male partner was empowered in the female partner’s Treasure and the female partner was empowered in the male partner’s Treasure and their intentions became one.”³⁰² Even death cannot stop Sera Khandro and Drimé Özer’s partnership revealing Treasures. In her *Autobiography*, she describes the following visionary experience that she had when she was thirty-six, three years after Drimé’s death:

That year on the celebration of the twenty-fifth day [Dākinī day] of the tenth month, having relied on the compassion of the illusory primordial wisdom body of the Lord Protector Omniscient Drodül Sangngak Lingpa,³⁰³ I took out a secret Treasure from Kangri Tökar that was profound pages [titled] *Secret Hidden Drops of Heart Nectar of the Dākinīs*, thirteen groups of symbols written in gold by Vairocana on skin [paper], vessels made of rhinoceros hide sealed with hooked knives . . . and auspicious connections abundantly arose.³⁰⁴

Just as her relationship with Drimé Özer symbolizes and inspires the realization of the deathless state of awareness, likewise, Treasure revelation as a divinely prophesized

couple is a bond that transcends death. While Chapter Five continues this exploration of the divine couple from whom and to whom Treasures are revealed, this chapter returns to this earth, grounding Sera Khandro's portrayal of Treasure revelation in the spiritually inhabited land of Golok.

Revelation and Community in the Spiritually Inhabited Land of Golok

Treasure revelation is more than a negotiation between the primordial wisdom of the Buddhas and the imperfect human temporal realm of suffering and confusion. Treasure revealers are bridges between timeless wisdom and human suffering, but they are also figures who interact with the host of autochthonous spirits who inhabit local areas of Tibetan land. In Sera Khandro and Drimé Özer's case, the high mountain peaks and the green valleys of Golok are not just the locations of their Treasures, but are personified spiritual realms endowed with an agency and power of their own. Hence, land deities and Treasure protectors must be treated properly for human society to operate smoothly without illness or calamity. That earth Treasures come from the Tibetan land is thus not coincidental to the revelation process; the earth and the society that surround the phenomena of Treasure revelation have vital roles in the process. Revelations including ritual liturgies propitiating to deities of all ilks help to maintain the equilibrium between social order, health in human society, and environmental conditions such as good weather favorable for livestock and grass. Thus, in their roles as mediators between these powerful forces, Treasure revealers had a close relationship to the political leaders of their local areas since their ritual interventions were powerful in achieving worldly aims as well as spiritual liberation. The following sections will introduce the land deities and

Treasure protectors who control the land from which Sera Khandro and Drimé Özer reveal their earth Treasures. Additionally, these sections will begin to explore the relationship Treasure revealers had to the Golok societies in which they lived.

Treasure Protectors, Land Deities, and Revelation

One more important link in the uncertain process of revealing Treasures deserves our attention: Treasures are not simply bestowed upon their revealers directly by Padmasambhava and Yeshé Tsogyal, they are entrusted to deities who have been pressed into service by Padmasambhava as Treasure protectors in a process that is the last stage of Treasure Transmission, the Entrustment to the *Ḍākinīs*. These deities are very often Tibetan indigenous land deities (*gnas bdag*, *gzhi bdag*, *yul lha*) whose divinity far predates the spread of Buddhism in Tibet. Tibetan land deities are inextricably tied to Tibetan regional understandings of place, local politics, and social identity.³⁰⁵ The discourse of Padmasambhava subjugating these “worldly” deities through ritual control demonstrates the fact that the Tibetan land itself is a spiritually inhabited, living, embodied domain teeming with deities and demons who must be bound into the service of Buddhism. Land deities have an ambiguous role as members of a worldly class of deities that can be either helpful to people (*dkar phyogs*) or harmful (*nag phyogs*); they are not enlightened Buddhist divinities and they must take their orders from Tantric masters such as Padmasambhava and others up to the present day who continue to press them into service.³⁰⁶ In one instance, Sera Khandro’s account depicts this blurry status that land deities have, situated between this world and Buddhist divinity:

Then, that month on the tenth day my attendant Shila Bazra [i.e., Tsültrim Dorjé], my daughter Chöying Drönma, and I went together with two people [who came

to] invite us to Dzirong Sanglung Monastery. When we were staying there, a white man on a white horse saying he was the land protector (*yul skyong*) Lharik Nyentse³⁰⁷ came and said the following: "You should make offerings to us and we will do whatever beneficial actions you desire." Having said this, he disappeared.

I thought that from the time I was ten years old until now I had set my mind on the three jewels. Aside from praying to them, it seemed that I had no custom of taking refuge and making offerings and so forth to land protectors and land deities (*gzhi bdag*) and so forth. Despite this, because he was my Treasure protector, thinking of the commitments of being a guest [in this] land, I visualized him and when I made a bit of offerings to him, I got whatever provisions I needed.³⁰⁸

Despite her reticence to propitiate to a class of deities that she perceives to be worldly and not a part of the three jewels of Buddhism, Sera Khandro decides that as her Treasure protector, Nyenpo Yutsé is worthy of her devotion. Nyenpo Yutsé comes to Sera Khandro's aid again in an interesting passage of her *Autobiography* that portrays the relationship of auspicious connections, Treasure revelation, demonic spirits, and Treasure protectors:

At that time, because I had some Treasures to take out near the seat of the Treasure revealer from before named Sangngak Lingpa,³⁰⁹ I went there with my group. An old woman said, "I heard that you, the Central Tibetan woman, passed away last year. You didn't die?"

All the monks became fiercely angry. Although I told her, "I didn't die and hence I came here," she didn't believe me and said this again and again. Because of this, I thought that it was certain that now I was going to let my Treasure go. Despite this, since I had a prophecy about what I was to do regarding the final [parts] of Akyé Sangngak Lingpa's Treasures, I wondered if I would have a way to do it. When I was doing preparations, because the auspicious connections went away, the Treasure protectors got angry and suddenly undesirable things happened to us.

I invoked the beneficial deeds of the land protector Lharek Nyentse and bound the rock demon (*brag btsan*) with an oath. I gave everyone gathered there, high and low, whatever advice they desired. Having taught detailed esoteric precepts that were explanatory teachings, [everyone's] faith and devotion was nurtured.³¹⁰

In this case, it is the benevolence of the land deity that Sera Khandro employs to control the woman who acted as an ill omen in Sera Khandro's delicate stage of preparing to

reveal a Treasure, a woman whom she interprets to be a type of rock demon. Sera Khandro not only propitiates land deities; she herself is the daughter of an important mountain deity; as a woman well known for her Central Tibetan origins, Sera Khandro claims to be the daughter of Nyenchen Tanglha, the deity of a mountain range north of Lhasa in Central Tibet. In a milieu such as Treasure revelation communities in which pedigree is everything, being the daughter of a mountain deity bound under oath to be a Buddhist guardian had a strong cachet.

The strict power that Treasure protectors hold beyond the inclinations of Treasure revealers comes through the following passage from Drimé Özer's *Biography* in which a Treasure protector refuses to allow him to take out a Treasure for which he is not the prophesized revealer:

He [Drimé Özer] arrived at a place with the traces of being the seat of the monk Trotung [*Khro thung*, a figure from the Gesar epic]. There was a sword given to Trotung by the deity the red Hayagrīva that had repelled one trillion armies and could not be hit. Although the Lord knew that it wasn't his share of Treasure, he gradually remembered how during the time of [Gesar of] Ling, the powerful people had harmed the less powerful people. Because this came to his mind, he grabbed the sword that was made of meteorite and a compound metal³¹¹ and no matter what rocky mountain he thrust [the sword into], a sound "*shik shik yol yol*" came out involuntarily and [the rock] shook. Since its size was about two fathoms [two measures of outstretched arms], the Lord thought that it would be difficult to keep it secret.

Wondering if the two monks [he was with] would be afraid and [say] negative things, he put [the sword] down. Then, because it was a Treasure substance, [he thought] there would be no fault. He thought that as a little joke he needed to show the two monks, so he grabbed it.

When he was going, because the rock face path was narrow, the Lord walked slowly. On that road, a being with a human body covered with eyes who was black with a blue luster came up and looked [at him].

The Lord said, "Go away, I need to go."

He replied, "If you have wings then fly. If you have claws, climb up the earth. If you are an Accomplished One, go without hindrance. Because this is my place, I won't go."

Again, the Lord stayed there wondering for a moment, "What is this? Is it the Treasure protector? Is it a demon?" and then realized that it was the Treasure protector. Again the Lord told him to go but he wouldn't.

He said, "You are going with my wealth – if you give it [to me] I will go and if you don't I won't."

Again the Lord asked, "Who is the owner of your wealth?" He said, "Dzokchen Pönlop, but I don't know if he has a way to take it out."

[The Lord] asked, "Why would he not have a way [to take it out]?"

[The protector] said, "He says he is a monk. If one can't quickly tame one's mind, saying [one is] 'tamed' means little."

The Lord said, "Now I will give you your wealth," and he put [the sword] in his hands.

He [the Treasure protector] transformed into a snake and holding the sword in his mouth, he carried it away. When the Lord looked, the sword got smaller and the snake got larger and went into the Treasure entrance. As soon as that happened, the rock grew flat and the Treasure entrance disappeared.³¹²

There is a playful quality about Drimé Özer's arrogant brandishing of a sword that he knows very well is not his to hold. He hesitates for a while, wanting to take the powerful sword that does not belong to him to show his monk friends. But, eventually, he complies with the proper cosmic order and returns the sword to its rightful protector. The Treasure protector makes an interesting comment that Dzokchen Pönlop may not be able to extract his Treasure because he has become a monk. In a comment not without Freudian significance, the Treasure protector insinuates that as a monk, he may not have the power needed to brandish his sword. His comment thus highlights the importance of consorts in the process of revealing Treasures. This Treasure is a sword coming from the time of Gesar's heroic battles against oppressors, again linking Drimé Özer's early twentieth-

century Treasure revelations with the sacred mythology of Tibetan and specifically Golok history.³¹³

These few examples of the role Treasure protectors and land deities play in the revelation process call attention to the living quality of the environment and the land from which revelations come. There is a strong rhetoric of control and subjugation involved in these interactions with subterranean and ethereal spirits. But yet, a playfulness emerges in this process as well. Small signs mean everything, whether it is a man with a cleft lip, a pattern in the clouds, or Sera Khandro's five-year-old son's response to a perplexing question. There is no lack of creativity here – a bluish-black being covered in eyes bars Drimé Özer's path and then morphs into a snake, lending a psychedelic quality to the visionary apparitions of Treasure revelation that Sera Khandro depicts. Yet these fantastic visionary revelations are more than imaginative journeys; they have serious and practical consequences in the communities in which Sera Khandro lives.

Balancing Environmental, Social, and Physical Conditions Through Revelation

In the nomadic pasture lands of Golok where Sera Khandro and Drimé Özer lived their days, each valley and every village and tribal group had and still has their own local land deities who must be propitiated through ritual offerings and annual obeisance in order to prevent massive livestock casualties, weather disruptions, and sickness. It is precisely these land deities who appear often to Sera Khandro and Drimé Özer as protectors of their Treasures, including some of the most famous land deities of Golok such as Drongri Mukpo (*'Brong ri smug po*) of Drongri (*'Brong ri*), the most important mountain deity of Serta who is its anthropomorphic "head," Machen Pomra (*Rma chen*

sbom ra) of the Amnye Machen mountain range in Amdo, and Nyenpo Yutsé (*Gnyan po g.yu rtse*) of the Nyenpo Yutsé mountain range in Golok (the deity Sera Khandro propitiated to in two passages quoted above).³¹⁴ Hence, Sera Khandro and Drimé Özer's Treasures have not only been concealed by Padmasambhava to be disclosed at the appropriate time, but they are literally grounded in the Golok landscape, thus tying their revealers to the local deities and regional leaders of the land.

The importance of these sites and deities as loci of regional identity and political organization cannot be overstated. The people of Golok understand themselves to be the descendants of these mountain deities, in particular Nyenpo Yutsé. It was the traditional role of their tribal and village leaders to lead in annual mountain deity propitiation rites to pray for the ongoing health and well-being of their people.³¹⁵ Similarly, as ritual specialists who had (and today still have) special abilities to interact directly with these powerful land spirits, Treasure revealers held important positions in their communities because they could mediate between powerful malevolent and benevolent deities and the local communities in which they lived, benefiting beings by improving social harmony and health as much as spiritual liberation. For example,

At that time a woman saying she was Sengcham Trukmo [Gesar's wife] came from out of a cloud and gave [Drimé Özer] a yellow scroll. The mind-mandate having awakened, he wrote down the outer accomplishment practice of *Gesar, the Jewel who Tames Enemies* and the inner accomplishment practice *The Dharma Cycle on the Wealth Deities of Orgyen*. In the lama's household, the "hun" sickness [a disease affecting livestock] came and the livestock deteriorated. He recited these prosperity accomplishment practices from Gesar and [the livestock] flourished.³¹⁶

Thus, in Sera Khandro's biographical writings, there is a direct correspondence between proper obeisance to Treasure protectors and other deities, including *ḍākinīs*, and the social, environmental, and biological well-being of communities in which Sera Khandro

and Drimé Özer lived. For example, in Drimé Özer's *Biography* Sera Khandro explains that:

When [Drimé Özer] was giving the empowerment, reading transmission, explanation, and so forth, for the new parts of his profound Treasure, an expanse ḍākinī became agitated. Hence, the Lord suddenly became sick. When the Lord wondered what it was, although he knew that it was because two of the vajra siblings were fighting, he pretended he didn't know and didn't say anything and gave expansive empowerments and explanations. The Lord's physical condition got worse and knowing that various undesirable things were nearing, he scolded and hit the disciples in the empowerment line [who had been fighting] and displayed many fierce behaviors. After that, the ḍākinī's agitation pacified itself and the vajra sibling's dispute got better on its own. The Lord did expansive rituals, feast offerings, and thanksgiving feasts and so forth.³¹⁷

Ḍākinīs' agitation, Drimé Özer's physical illness, and a dispute in the religious community are all bound up in a relational world view in which Treasure revealers are never individual actors in a neutral scene; they are intermediaries between a host of beings. As such, they strive to maintain equilibrium between deities and demons, environmental conditions, human health, and social well-being.

As I have already introduced, land deities who are Treasure guardians are not simply submissive beings controlled by Treasure revealers; they have their own agency. The Tibetan land personified as land deities may rise up to hand Treasure revealers their hidden Treasures, but they do so with their own expectations. Consequences for failing to satisfy the deities inhabiting the Tibetan land are natural disasters, sickness, and social upheaval. For example, Sera Khandro recounts:

Then, during that year on the twenty-fifth of the eighth month, when my group was on the road coming back home, I received a bit of a prophecy foretelling the coming of Treasures of the three Treasure protector siblings of Dungra Drakar. Because I ignored it, fierce hail fell on us and it was difficult to bear the terrors of thunder and lightning. Having prayed to my Lama and abided without separating from the dimension of equanimity, [we] didn't experience great harm. Despite this, that night a girl gave perverse advice [to me] in the form of a prophecy . . .³¹⁸

Again, when Sera Khandro cannot reveal a Treasure, she angers the Treasure protectors, whose wrath affects the physical health of those around her:

At that time although there was a bit of Treasure, I let it go and because of this, the Dharma protector got angry and my disciple Rikzang suddenly got sick.³¹⁹

Displeased Treasure protectors can cause all sorts of undesirable occurrences within human society as well, such as inciting bandits to attack Drimé Özer when he is traveling on the road with his encampment (*sgar*) members. In his *Biography*, Sera Khandro records:

Then, gradually when some days had passed, although the mother *dākinī*s had given him Treasure symbols, on account of other things he had let them go. The Treasure protectors got jealous and bandits and other undesirable things occurred to both the encampment bases of the Treasure revealer [Drimé Özer] and the doctrine holder [Sotrül Rinpoché]. According to the *dākinī* prophecy from before, having incited the actions of the protectresses of profound Treasure, the signs of their manifest activity occurred and all the harm was pacified.³²⁰

Through ritual action, Drimé Özer is able to appease the jealous Treasure protectors and get rid of negative circumstances such as banditry, which was a common problem along the travel routes of Golok. Thus, Treasure protectors/land deities are not simply subdued deities controlled by the will of the Treasure revealers. Here again, the ongoing need for Buddhist subjugation and the uncertainty of gathering auspicious connections necessary for successful revelation remind us that the Treasure revealer is not the singular agent of revelation, but rather must participate in a balance of relationships between spirits and humans of all varieties.

Treasure Revelation Encampments (*gter sgar*)

As I have shown above, Treasure revealers' ritual interventions balanced the competing forces of the Tibetan land, Buddhist divinities, and human interests. But how

do Treasure revealers' ritual interactions with these hosts of deities relate to the social communities in which they lived? What is a Treasure revelation encampment³²¹ and how is it different from a monastery? How did Treasure revelation encampments relate to the wider lay Golok society? Did Treasure revealers such as Drimé Özer have a political as well as a religious role in Golok society?

Before I embark upon a discussion of the question of the relationship between Treasure revelation encampments, monasteries, and lay society in Golok, some general background on Golok social structure is useful. Golok is a high alpine nomadic area that now straddles the border between Amdo and Kham, or the Chinese provinces Qinghai and Sichuan, but in Sera Khandro's day the land of Golok was a completely unincorporated territory. Neither the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), the Dalai Lama's government in Lhasa, nor the Republic of China (1912-1949) ever held any sovereignty over the Golok region of Serta where Sera Khandro made her new home.³²² Indeed it is hard to imagine the difficulties Sera Khandro faced adjusting at the age of sixteen to nomadic life in one of the highest and coldest regions of Eastern Tibet where the altitude ranged between 12,000 to more than 16,000 feet, leaving most regions too high for agriculture, where frosts and hail were year-round phenomena, and where Sera Khandro initially had no friends, family, or source of income. Golok is not only well known for its inhospitable climate, it is well known for being a rough place infamous for banditry and lawlessness, as Sera Khandro's description of banditry in Drimé Özer's *Biography* mentioned above corroborates. Joseph Rock, who himself lived in a nomadic region of Qinghai not far from Golok in the early twentieth century, recounts that:

... the Golog attack anyone approaching the region west of the Yellow River. They acknowledge no one's authority except that of their chiefs, and as the Shing

bZah incarnation told us their word could not be trusted. They enjoy attacking anyone, especially foreigners who penetrate their mountain fastness... Their life is spent on horseback, always ready for battle and even among themselves they squabble to the point of combat They bring terror to the hearts of all their neighbors and travelers... They even ask the blessing of lamas before going on robbing expeditions.³²³

If even Drimé Özer, as a respected Golok lama, faced problems with bandits, no doubt a strange foreigner like Joseph Rock experienced great danger in Golok. Yet the lawlessness of the vast and open grasslands of Golok is remembered differently by some local residents. As one mid-ranking Tibetan government official in Serta told me reminiscing about the nomadic life of his childhood in the mid-twentieth century:

Before, when there were no Chinese, the lives of Tibetans were happy. The reason they were happy was because there were no Chinese in Serta. When there were no Chinese there were no laws.³²⁴

Some fifty years earlier, Joseph Rock also cites an early-twentieth-century Golok man appreciating the lack of laws in Golok society in much the same way:

You cannot compare us Go-log with other people. You obey the laws of strangers, the laws of the Dalai Lama, of China, and of any of your petty chiefs . . . We Golok, on the other hand, have from time immemorial obeyed none but our own laws, none but our own convictions . . .³²⁵

Serta was, in fact, lawless in the sense that there was no state – there was no police force, no specially designated courts, and no particular civil agencies formally responsible for resolving disputes.³²⁶ Serta society operated without these governing attributes of the state because it was divided into forty-eight “wider camp groups” (*tsho ba*) who each had leaders that formed a union that handled disputes over grazing rights, could mobilize a military force to defend the Serta people’s land when necessary, and that organized annual religious festivals.³²⁷ The scope of these forty-eight wider camp groups before 1960 included 5,340 households and 21,900 people dispersed over an area of about

11,500 square kilometers.³²⁸ Within one wider camp group there were smaller extended family subgroups called *ru skor*, made up of up to five tents who herded their livestock together. Each wider camp group had rights to a certain territory for livestock grazing and had their own leader who would join in the forty-eight member union. In the words of the son of the last leader of the union of the wider camp groups which together were named the Washül Serta,

In the old society my role would have been to resolve disputes among the public. They [the Serta people] would have listened and obeyed my word. Whereas the Chinese leaders now put people in prison when they do bad things I would have had [the people's] respect and they would have done what I said.³²⁹

In fact, Sera Khandro mentions the Washül Serta leader who would have been my informant's grandfather doing just exactly this: "At that time the Washül [Serta] leader settled a land dispute and so forth and everybody having reached an agreement, the animosity was pacified."³³⁰ Thus, the famed lawlessness of the Golok tribes is more than nostalgic lore; it includes reminiscences of an old society in which tribal leaders successfully negotiated between competing interests to maintain social order. Below I will describe the ways in which religious figures such as Treasure revealers aided political leaders such as the Washül Serta leader in their governance by securing the vital support of earthly and celestial divinities.

Still the question remains: how did religious communities, including monasteries and religious encampments, fit into this larger nomadic social organization of wider camp groups (*tsho ba*)? Gelek mentions that each tribe of Serta had its own monastery:

The Washu Serthar herdsmen believed that a tribe without a monastery was incomplete. There were 24 monasteries and more than 3,300 monks among the 48 groups. These monasteries served as centres of culture, education and religion and also operated as market centres. People gathered there on religious holidays, and old people no longer able to travel with the herds lived in the precincts of the

monasteries. At times, they were also used as courts by the herdsmen, to settle outstanding lawsuits. Then they would make a vow to explain their cases truthfully in front of the lamas and the gods, and the case would be settled.³³¹

But this raises yet another question: what was the relationship between a religious encampment (*sgar*) and a monastery (*dgon*)? In fact, Sera Khandro's usage of the terms encampment (*sgar*) and monastery (*dgon pa*) seem to overlap in many instances. For example, Sotrül Rinpoché's residence was Sera Monastery, whereas Sera Khandro always refers to Drimé Özer's community as a Treasure encampment (*gter sgar*) with a lama's household (*bla brang*) despite the fact that they often lived in the vicinity of his father Dujom Lingpa's monastery, Dartsang Monastery. In Padma County, Golok, Sera Khandro lived within Gara Tertön's Treasure encampment, which she often refers to as the *gter ston sgar*, although the encampment also included a monastery, Banak Monastery (*Pan nag dgon*). Based on Sera Khandro's writings, two general distinctions can be made between a monastery (*dgon*) and a religious encampment (*sgar*): a monastery is an immovable structure in which inhabitants maintained monastic vows of celibacy, such as the monk Sotrül Rinpoché in Sera Monastery, whereas a religious encampment is a potentially mobile community comprised (at least partially) of non-monastic religious specialists who often traveled from place to place in tents.³³²

In terms of their mobility, religious encampments in Sera Khandro's early twentieth century context were not necessarily very different than the lay encampments (*ru skor*) of nomadic pastoralists that made up the larger camp groups (*tsho ba*). As Levine notes, the camping sites and grazing grounds of the various encampments (*ru skor*) could be changed from one section of the larger camp group's terrain to another with flexibility.³³³ Even though both encampment types, religious and nomadic

pastoralist, were “lay” in the sense of not maintaining celibacy vows and consequently having families, it is not appropriate to call Drimé Özer and Sera Khandro “lay” Buddhist practitioners because their role as religious specialists was very different than that of the pastoralists, who sponsored their ritual activities. Both religious encampments and monasteries relied on donations and goods in exchange for ritual service and did not depend exclusively on maintaining livestock. According to Sera Khandro’s auto/biographical accounts, the constant moves that Drimé Özer and Sera Khandro’s religious encampments made were focused on performing religious pilgrimage, taking out (and putting in) Treasures from sacred landscapes in Golok, and giving religious teachings in exchange for necessary provisions. In contrast, their lay counterparts moved according to the seasonal grazing needs of their livestock and did not have ritual expertise.³³⁴ Moving from place to place was thus a part of life on the high pasture lands of Golok, unique neither to pastoralists nor to the religious specialists who catered to their spiritual needs. Indeed, the only stable residence possible in Golok in the early twentieth century could be found at the monasteries, living alongside those who had “renounced” householder life. In fact, as late as in early 1980s, the county seat of Serta did not include a single permanent house, but was rather comprised of white and black nomad’s tents surrounding the large newly-rebuilt post-Cultural Revolution version of the Gogentang Stupa.³³⁵ For Sera Khandro coming from her father’s four-story Lhasa mansion, life in Golok must have been full of hardship; her life and that of Drimé Özer were spent traveling on horseback, avoiding bandits, flattening new ground, pitching tents, begging for alms, going on pilgrimage, and performing ritual service for their

communities. All this they did when they were not practicing their Treasure revelations during the one hundred day retreats they repeatedly undertook.³³⁶

Sera Khandro's writings, in particular her comments in Drimé Özer's *Biography* about his roles in Golok society, give us hints about what type of relationship Treasure revealers had to lay communities and their leaders. The following passage from Drimé Özer's *Biography* is particularly informative in portraying the activities of religious figures and the interactions that Treasure revealers such as Drimé Özer had with their region's leaders:

Having relied on the symbolic and prophetic registries of a ḍākinī saying she was Künkyap Wangmo that had come to him that night in his dream, [Drimé Özer] wrote down the profound Treasure *Elements Jumping in to Space [like] a Lion* from the Guru Hayagrīva and Vajravārāhī Dharma cycle. At that time, using the earlier prophecy from Drongri as a foundation, he put Treasure vases in Drongri to fulfill the desires of the Washül [Serta] leader. Having spoken the *Accomplishment of the Great Deity*, he performed it expansively and took out some Treasures.

At that time, there was a retreatant lama who was known as "the leader of the head of the land in Drongdün."³³⁷ He told [Drimé Özer], "It is certain that you are an emanation of Künzang³³⁸ because I had a good dream about this," and so forth. Having requested prayers to make a Dharma connection from the Lord, he offered material goods for the auspicious connection.

Then, [Drimé Özer] gradually went to his seat [in Dartsang]. As the Lord's [Drimé Özer's] representative, Sotrül Rinpoche³³⁹ had gone out to tame disciples.³⁴⁰ When he came back he gave all the gathered offerings to the lama's household.

At that time the Washül [Serta] leader settled a land dispute and everybody having reached an agreement, the animosity was pacified.

At that time [Drimé Özer] saw the face of the Precious Lama [i.e., his father Dujom Lingpa] and he spoke many prophecies, though I have elucidated them in the Treasure scriptures [rather than here].³⁴¹

This passage above touches upon several different aspects of the spiritual, political, and economic relationships between religious specialists such as Drimé Özer and Sotrül

Rinpoché and the political leader of their area, the Washül Serta leader I mentioned previously. Sera Khandro records that Drimé Özer fulfilled the leader of Serta's wishes by burying and discovering Treasures at the mountain that is the abode of the main mountain deity of Serta, Drongri Mukpo, who is one and the same as Avalokiteśvara. In this way, Drimé Özer acts as an intermediary between the sacred mountain, whose Treasures are his to bury and discover, and the region's political leader, whose power to maintain social order is linked to proper propitiations to his region's mountain deity.

A characteristic element of the Treasure tradition that I have already introduced comes through clearly in the long passage quoted above: the importance of prophecy. Prophecy leads Drimé Özer to make the offering of burying Treasure vases filled with ritual substances that ensure the environmental and social well-being of the land. A dream convinces the leader of Drongdün that Drimé Özer is a special incarnation, thus inspiring him to make material offerings. Dujom Lingpa comes to Drimé Özer in a vision and gives him many prophecies. Prophecy is thus not just one element of the technical aspects of revealing Treasures; it is a significant factor in determining the course of people's lives.³⁴² Dreams, hints, and subtle signs are of concrete importance in Sera Khandro's world, just as fleeting auspicious connections determine whether or not a Treasure can be revealed.

The interactions between Drimé Özer and the retreatant lama who has faith in him as well as the mention of Sotrül Rinpoché going out to "taming disciples" provide us with information about the economic exchanges that kept Treasure revealers such as Drimé Özer solvent. From the passage above we can see that Drimé Özer was revered and supported materially for his ritual efficacy by both members of the lay community and (at

times at least) other religious specialists. Sera Khandro writes, “As the Lord’s representative, Sotrül Rinpoché had gone out to tame disciples. When he came back he gave all the gathered offerings to the lama’s household and so forth.”³⁴³ “Taming beings” in Sera Khandro’s writing is a euphemism for going out to perform rituals and give empowerments in order to gather resources for the lama’s household (*bla brang*). On another occasion when Drimé Özer returned from a long pilgrimage to Central Tibet, Sera Khandro recounts that because his religious seat had very little wealth remaining, everybody in the community said that Drimé Özer needed to go “tame disciples” in order to gather wealth. Sera Khandro explains that after Drimé Özer supplicated the proper wealth-giving deity (*lha gnod sbyin*), his mission was easily accomplished.³⁴⁴ In several instances, Sera Khandro mentions that Sotrül Rinpoché would do this resource-gathering work in Drimé Özer’s stead as an act of service to his teacher. She does not clearly describe what “taming beings” actually consisted of; it seems to be obvious to those for whom she wrote her auto/biographical works. However, based on the other rituals she repeatedly describes, perhaps “taming disciples” involved giving the laity “Dharma connections” (*chos ’brel*) by giving empowerments, reading transmissions, and explanations for parts of Dujom Lingpa or Drimé Özer’s Treasure cycles. Sera Khandro does not mention going out by herself specifically to “tame disciples,” presumably because she did not have her own household to maintain, but rather lived in other male Treasure revealer’s households or monasteries (such as Sera Monastery).

As I have described above, Sera Khandro briefly mentions that the Washül Serta leader solved a land dispute after Drimé Özer’s ritual interventions on his behalf, a role not dissimilar to the description his descendant gave me of the Serta leader’s role in the

old Tibetan society. In fact, land disputes were the central source of tension between the nomadic pastoralist peoples of Serta. When one wider encampment group (*tsho ba*) encroached upon another's territory or stole herds, fighting to the point of death was not uncommon. In these cases, the leaders (*dpon po*) of the wider encampment groups would gather, sometimes with mediators, to settle the dispute and to offer a price for any loss of life in order to stop blood feuds.³⁴⁵ Not only the wider encampment leaders but also religious leaders such as Drimé Özer and his disciple Sotrül Rinpoché were called upon to resolve land disputes because they could garner widespread consensus between different encampments. At one point, Sera Khandro recounts that when Drimé Özer returned from a journey, Sotrül Rinpoché could not be there to welcome him home because he had gone to resolve a land dispute in his local area.³⁴⁶ Land disputes did not only occur between the lay nomads, but also affected religious communities. Sera Khandro mentions land disputes that divided both Gyalsé and Drimé Özer's religious communities at times, forcing factions of their communities to relocate.

During the 1920s, there was another reason why the religious communities in which Sera Khandro lived needed to move: skirmishes with the Chinese repeatedly wreaked havoc, causing everyone to flee. In Drimé Özer's *Biography*, Sera Khandro records that when Drimé Özer was forty-one in approximately 1921, people warned him of the impending danger of Chinese attack:

At that time, Akyong said, 'The terror of the Chinese has arrived and they are fighting. [We] need to move the encampment foundation to another area.' Although the local people, his close entourage, the lama's household inhabitants and so forth repeatedly said this, the Lord himself [Drimé Özer] let it go.³⁴⁷

That same year again, when they were in Drongdün in Serta near the sacred mountain Drongri, Drimé Özer's community worried about the agitation caused by the Chinese attacks, yet Drimé Özer himself seemed unperturbed by the commotion:

Then when everybody said that there was fighting and that he needed to move the encampment foundation, the Lord said, "Although I think there is no problem, it is okay if we move the encampment according to their thought."

They went together with the encampment base to a hidden land prophesized by the *ḍākinīs* under the power of the western gatekeeper named Nyenchen Yuse of Ser Drongri.³⁴⁸ There the male and female partners both had new Treasures come to them and they performed empowerments and reading transmissions and so forth.³⁴⁹

Perhaps one reason Drimé Özer was not overly worried about the problem of the Chinese is that one purpose of Treasure revelation is to repel foreign invasion and disease. In the words of Drimé Özer's brother the Third Dodrupchen:

Also, until the end of the age comes, because of ceaseless efforts of those such as the Tertons, Termas, both of teachings and materials, detailed and appropriate prophecies will appear in time to protect Tibet from foreign invasions, internal fighting, disease, famine, and so on.³⁵⁰

In fact, Sera Khandro includes some very specific prophecies foretelling the oncoming Chinese; she recounts a prophecy given by Dujom Lingpa to Drimé Özer when he was nineteen:

The Lama said, "On account of the great wrong views and weak merit of sentient beings of this time, on account of the many wars, contagious diseases, famines, and so forth of this time period, and in particular because after the old lady and I die it is certain that the terror of the Chinese Mongols will come near, it is not clear what will happen. At that time people's consciousness will be blessed by demons and oneself and others will meet up with disaster. The power of the barbaric border people will spread. Much of the life, deeds, and beneficial actions of good men who adhere to the [Buddhist] teachings will go away to [negative] conditions. It will be difficult to do anything about this. Because of this, since you are a good man who nurtures the teachings and sentient beings, you need to be careful regarding the demonic power that is changing this time and place. When I am here, you will not be harmed by negative forces. Later I will help. If you do

everything, good and bad, according to the *ḍākinīs*' prophecy, great benefit for yourself and others will arise.³⁵¹

Thus Treasure revealers such as Sera Khandro and Drimé Özer incorporated the growing problem of Chinese agitation into their Buddhist understanding of the contemporary age being an age of degeneration (*snyigs dus*) that involved increasing warfare, disease, and natural disaster. Put into this apocalyptic perspective, the threat of the Chinese was something to repel through adherence to the divine *ḍākinī* prophecies that constantly interpenetrated their lives as represented in Sera Khandro's biographical writings. For example, the *ḍākinīs* Künsel and Shiwa Dorjé Tso come to Drimé Özer and give him the following prophecy:

Earlier in Samyé in the presence of the Lotus Guru
We gathered together as an auspicious connection.
Because of my vast aspirations and prayers,
Up until now I have arisen as your friend.

Completely dispel the troubles between China and Tibet.
Accomplish the aspirations of the Lotus Born One and Tsogyal!

The illusory emanation of the mother of the expanse Tsogyal,
The woman who is a light ray from my heart,
Will arise as the companion for the entrance to the three Treasures.

By the profound power of the beneficial actions of the mother *ḍākinīs*,
If you inseparably unite method and wisdom
You will repel the expansion of the demonic barbarians for one hundred years . .
³⁵²

Thus proper adherence to the *ḍākinī* prophecies and specifically the union of method and wisdom, i.e., the union of Drimé Özer with the emanation of Tsogyal, the light ray from these *ḍākinīs*' hearts who is none other than Sera Khandro, will foster the auspicious circumstances necessary to repel the marauding armies who lurk on the borderlands of Tibet.

Yet despite these efforts, in Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* as well, trouble is near. When Sera Khandro is thirty years old in approximately 1922 during the time that she lived with Gara Gyalsé at Banak Monastery in Padma County, she recounts that,

That year the Northern Chinese became more powerful and caused disturbances. When everyone said that we should move the group (*ru*) to another location, Bön Rikdzin from Banak and Gara Tertön's direct disciple the renunciate from Benshul Lama Ngakwang Demchok had a discussion. Having resolved the land dispute between the two factions of the lama's household, they decided that Gyalsé needed to establish a seat. Everybody from here and there agreed with this discussion.³⁵³

This passage is another example of prevalence of land disputes over pasture rights, this time occurring within Gara Gyalsé's household in Padma County. Also in Serta County, during that same year when Sera Khandro was visiting Drimé Özer, she recounts that, "Then, on account of the agitation caused by the Northern Chinese, the inner retinue held a discussion and decided to move the Lord [Drimé Özer]'s residence to Yusé Chawa."³⁵⁴ Thus in the world of Treasure revelation where auspicious connections, uncertainty, and prophecy determine everything, the Chinese incursions into the previously stateless and unincorporated lands of Golok signaled the growing strength of demonic forces in this degenerate age, forces that could only be repelled by strict adherence to the *dākinīs'* divine injunctions to reveal Treasure and benefit sentient beings.

Conclusion

Treasure revelation involves a process with many different stages, originating from the primordial Buddhas to Padmasambhava and Yeshé Tsogyal and then to *dākinīs* and Treasure protectors who guard the Treasures until the auspicious circumstances come together for them to be discovered by their prophesized Treasure revealers. This process

of Buddhist scriptural transmission relies on a pantheon of Buddhist deities ranging from ethereal to autochthonous, who literally ground the Buddhist path to enlightenment in the Tibetan earth. As the human recipients of this multidimensional divine transmission, Treasure revealers such as Sera Khandro and Drimé Özer served as mediators between these variegated celestial forces and the environmental and social realities of early twentieth-century Golok.

The first sections of this chapter considered the ways Sera Khandro models herself and her relationship with her partner(s) in a way that reflects the divine genealogy of the Treasure tradition. Just as Yeshé Tsogyal and Padmasambhava form a divine couple who produce and hide Treasures, likewise, Sera Khandro and Drimé Özer are their divinely prophesized incarnations and rely on each other to produce their Treasures. Just as there are differing literary interpretations of the importance of Yeshé Tsogyal in the history of the Treasure tradition, likewise many of Sera Khandro's comments portray her struggle to find a place for herself as a female Treasure revealer in a society at times hostile to her religious aspirations. The following two chapters will examine this dialectic concerning the role of women in the Treasure tradition in greater detail. However, as this chapter has emphasized, Sera Khandro's greatest influence, her greatest source of strength, and the object of her devotion is Yeshé Tsogyal.

Treasure revealers such as Sera Khandro and Drimé Özer articulate their Treasures to be fulfillments of divine prophecies dating back to Imperial Tibetan history, but the process of enacting these prophecies clearly reflects the fluctuations, insecurities, and needs of day-to-day life in early twentieth-century Golok. The tough natural environment of high-altitude nomadic life in which hail, frost, famine, and sickness were

never far away is a palpable reality in the way Sera Khandro reiterates the uncertainty of her ability to gather together the auspicious connections required to reveal her Treasures. Hints, signs, and omens alert her to the shifting winds of chance that determine her ability to actualize the prophecies she receives through visionary encounters.

Despite the ephemeral and highly imaginative quality of her many visionary experiences of prophecy and revelation, Sera Khandro and Drimé Özer's Treasures had concrete applications in early twentieth-century Golok. Their revelations were not only transcendental incantations directing their faithful adherents towards enlightenment; they were also practical formulas that reflected problems specific to their particular context such as livestock health, Chinese incursions, and territory disputes between and within Golok tribes. Sera Khandro and Drimé Özer maintained balance in the natural environment by putting in and taking out Treasures from sacred mountains and lakes, ensuring clean water and favorable weather for the livestock and humans that depended on the grasslands. Their Treasure revelations appeased *ḍākinīs*' agitation and ensured social harmony and physical health. They supported their local political leader's sovereignty by propitiating to the mountain deities of the land. In turn, they were supported by lay nomadic tribesmen and women, political leaders, and their monastic and non-celibate disciples with resources necessary to allow them to pursue their religious vocation as Treasure revealers.

Sera Khandro paints a picture of her Golok society in which there was a significant overlap between monasteries, made up of permanent housing for celibate monks, and religious encampments, consisting of mobile communities including monastics and non-celibate Tantric practitioners who lived in tents. If there were any

tensions between these two groups of religious specialists, her writings do not expose them. Rather, some monastics lived their lives within religious encampments while many non-celibate religious specialists such as Drimé Özer and Sera Khandro had close ties with monasteries (Drimé with his father's monastery in Dartsang and Sera Khandro with Sera Monastery). The laity, monastics and non-celibate religious professionals alike had great respect for the spiritual and temporal power of Treasures as well as for the revealers who embodied the liberative potential of their revelations.

Thus far, this study has focused on outlining the contours of Sera Khandro's autobiographical narrative and contextualizing her writings within the religious and cultural tradition of Tibetan Treasure revelation. I have emphasized that in Sera Khandro's works, the purpose of revealing Treasures was not only to inspire spiritual realization, but also to achieve environmental, social, and physical well-being in the world of early twentieth-century Golok. Sera Khandro's writings can thus serve as a resource to help us understand more about the social and religious milieu in which she lived, but they do so through the particular lenses of the Tibetan literary genres of autobiography and biography. The following chapter turns towards reading Sera Khandro's writings as literature, analyzing the rhetorical strategies by which she represents her identity as a non-celibate female Treasure revealer. Through this analysis and through comparing Sera Khandro's writing with other relevant works, in turn, we come to see more facets of her social and cultural world.

Chapter Three: Autobiography, Gender, and the Self

Autobiography in its Western contexts has long been associated with notions of an individual, unique, and specifically Western post-enlightenment subject. Indeed it has often been assumed that such conceptions of subjectivity were a precondition for the very existence of such a genre of self-focused literature. That autobiography has taken root in the Tibetan Buddhist context with its emphasis on a lack of independently existent selfhood calls attention to the diversity of ways in which the self can be interpreted through the genre of autobiographical literature. As one of the only female-authored autobiographies in all of Tibetan literature, Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* presents an early twentieth-century emic Eastern Tibetan perspective on life as a female religious visionary that offers new insights into Tibetan Buddhist conceptions of gender and selfhood. A study of Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* raises the following intriguing questions: (1) What rhetorical strategies does Sera Khandro use to formulate a sense of self in her autobiographical narrative? (2) How can we analyze Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* in a larger comparative perspective, drawing insights from Western literary theory as well as other Himalayan Buddhist autobiographies and hagiographies by and about women? In pursuing these questions, this chapter will highlight three facets of Sera Khandro's self-representation: 1) rhetoric about gender and the female body, 2) dialogical encounters with a heteroglossia of human, divine, and demonic voices, and 3) the role of visions. I suggest Sera Khandro harps on her inferior female gender as a way to express humility, while she simultaneously represents herself in laudatory ways through recounting her manifold visionary experiences. Within this dialectic between

self-deprecation and self-aggrandizement, she strikes a balance between expressing herself as an imperfect human and as a spiritual pillar, thus providing a valuable example for the generations of disciples for whom she composed her reflections.³⁵⁵

This chapter seeks to bring Sera Khandro's autobiographical writings beyond her intended religious readership into a wider conversation on representations of gender and the self in autobiography. Woven throughout this chapter are theoretical insights drawn from the study of Western autobiography, in particular Western women's autobiography, concerning the relationship of the self to society. Following Patrick Geary's suggestion that hagiography "must be a privileged source for the study of social values," I suggest that this analysis of the refractions of Sera Khandro's literary self illuminates much about her social world.³⁵⁶

Given the rarity of female-authored Tibetan autobiographies, a study of Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* invites us to explore the relationship, if any, that Sera Khandro's account has with other available female-authored Tibetan language autobiographies. A comparison between Jetsün Lochen's autobiography, the only other extant early-twentieth-century Tibetan Buddhist woman's autobiography, and that of Orgyen Chökyi, a late seventeenth to early eighteenth-century nun from Dolpo, demonstrates the wide diversity between different female-authored Tibetan autobiographies. Indeed, their differences remind us that the category of gender is only meaningful in relation to other social and cultural factors including education level, social class, monastic versus non-monastic status, religious sect, and geographic environment. That said, given the relatively few models of religious women in Tibetan Buddhism, it is interesting to examine some of the paradigms of female saints (Yeshé Tsogyal, Gelong

Palmo, Machik Labdrön, and Nangsa Obum) that influenced historical women such as Jetsün Lochen, Orgyen Chökyi, and Sera Khandro in formulating their own accounts of spiritual liberation.

After a brief introduction to relevant historical and theoretical issues in the study of Western and Tibetan autobiography, the first section of this chapter explores the ways in which Sera Khandro thematizes her gender and female body. Drawing on Janet Gyatso's analysis of the tension between self-humbling and self-aggrandizing rhetoric in the genre of Tibetan autobiography, I suggest that Sera Khandro creates a self-humbling narrative primarily through repetitive comments about her female gender and "inferior female body."³⁵⁷ I do not intend to imply that her litany of comments bemoaning her difficulties as a woman wanting to participate in Tibetan Buddhist ecclesiastical circles is "just rhetoric" and thus not real. Rather, I suggest that it is *also* rhetoric, and as such serves a literary purpose of representing Sera Khandro as a humble person. Yet, this is not the only side of the story; Sera Khandro's self-denigrating comments about her inferior female body often solicit responses from her interlocutors that extol the virtues of the female body, articulating an encouraging message to her readership about women's spiritual capacities.

The second section of this chapter explores the interactive, dialogical nature of her writing. Through incorporating direct speech dialogue with a heteroglossaic host of other voices ranging from demonic to divine, Sera Khandro represents herself always in relation to others who populate her discursive world. Thus, the subject of Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* is not a separate, individual subject characteristic of older interpretations of Western autobiography. Instead, it resembles the relational self that Western theorists

of women's autobiography proposed to be characteristic of women's writing. However, I suggest that rather than being a characteristic of her gender, the relational self that Sera Khandro narrates is characteristic of her position as a member of a Tibetan community in which connections between divinities, environmental forces, and human society were closely intertwined.

Thirdly, this chapter analyzes the role of the many visionary experiences that Sera Khandro weaves into her self-narrative that stretch her direct speech dialogue to encompass a wide range of supernatural forces. I suggest that recounting dialogues with a host of deities in her elaborate visions is an important way in which Sera Khandro formulates a strong identity for herself as a female Treasure revealer. Divine voices, in particular those of Yeshé Tsogyal and other *dākinīs*, continually offer Sera Khandro encouragement and provide her with examples that illustrious females do accomplish their spiritual aims despite the fact that she had no earthly female role models. Sera Khandro describes visions that appeared before her at particularly traumatic moments in her life narrative as if to balance out the negativity she simultaneously records in her mundane world. This tension between extraordinary visionary experiences in which deities laud Sera Khandro's divine purpose and torturous worldly sufferings in which others denigrate her is another way in which her writing expresses a tension between self-denigration and self-aggrandizement that is characteristic of Tibetan autobiography. Yet ultimately, for Sera Khandro as for all Tantric practitioners striving to view the world as a pure realm, the encouraging voices and magnificent lands of the Buddhafields Sera Khandro recounts bear more weight as divinely inspired reality than the difficulties she recollects in the illusory and impermanent realm of her mundane sufferings.

Autobiographical Self Presentations, Western and Tibetan

In the context of Western literary analysis, the genre of autobiography has long been associated with the development of a post-European Enlightenment subject who is an autonomous individual, most often white, male, and Western.³⁵⁸ Until the 1980's, literary theorists understood the subject of autobiographical writing to be an individual self grounded in a Western notion of personhood. For example, Philippe Lejeune famously defined autobiography as "retrospective prose narrative written by a real person concerning his own existence, where the focus is on the individual life, in particular the story of his personality."³⁵⁹ According to autobiography theorists such as Karl Weintraub, individuals are those historical figures who perceive themselves as unique personalities as opposed to those who do not differentiate themselves from their social environment.³⁶⁰ This Western concept of the individual stems from a particular historical moment in late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Europe when the term "individual" transformed from its older meaning of "indivisible" such as "the hye and indyvyduall Trynyte" (1425) or "the individuall Catholicke Church" (John Milton, 1641) to its more current meaning of a unique and different person, most commonly understood as a white, land-owning, educated man.³⁶¹ The transformation of the term "individual" around the turn of the nineteenth century coincides roughly with the early usages of the term "autobiography" that appear for the first time in a 1797 issue of the British *Monthly Review*, replacing earlier terms including confession, apology, memoir, diary, letters, journal, and narrative.³⁶²

The foundational autobiography theorist Georges Gusdorf drew the connection between autobiography and culturally-specific notions of personhood, concluding in his

well-known 1956 essay “Conditions and Limits of Autobiography” that autobiography is not to be found outside of the Western cultural area because it is dependent on a particular post-Copernican consciousness of the self that does not exist in other cultures in which,

. . . the individual does not oppose himself to all others; he does not feel himself to exist outside of others, and still less against others, but very much with others in an interdependent existence that asserts its rhythms everywhere in the community. No one is rightful possessor of his life or his death; lives are so thoroughly entangled that each of them has its center everywhere and its circumference nowhere. The important unit is thus never the isolated being – or, rather, isolation is impossible in such a scheme of total cohesiveness as this.³⁶³

Thus, according to Gusdorf’s understanding, the interdependence of selves in other cultures prohibits them from writing in a genre such as autobiography in which the author must isolate his sense of self in contrast and opposition to others.

Gusdorf may conclude that autobiography is not possible in a cultural landscape “where consciousness of the self” does not exist in the sense of a Western enlightenment individual, but Janet Gyatso has made the important point that Gusdorf was certainly wrong to conclude that autobiography is an exclusively Western phenomenon given the example of the prevalence of the autobiographical genre in Tibet. To the contrary, Janet Gyatso has identified over 150 book length autobiographies in pre-1959 Tibet, only a few of which are female-authored. Tibetan autobiography is not a result of Western influence as Gusdorf would surely propose, but has its roots in the period of political and social fragmentation in the twelfth century that followed Tibet’s dynastic period (sixth to ninth centuries) beginning with figures such as Zhang Rinpoche (1123-93), the Second Karmapa Karma Pakši (1204-83), the Treasure discoverer Guru Chöwang (1212-70) and so forth.³⁶⁴ Tibet did not inherit its predilection for producing autobiographical literature

from either of its influential neighbors; whereas India lacked a tradition of either historical or autobiographical literature, China had such a strong tradition of historical literature that autobiography was rare and what existed was obliged to impersonate historiography using a distant third person voice.³⁶⁵ Gyatso points out that like China, Tibet had a strong tradition of historiography as well as a perduring interest in recording genealogical narratives, two factors which paved the way for the development of autobiographical writing in Tibet. She also argues that the reasons for the prevalence of autobiography in Tibet relate to the importance of Buddhism in Tibet, which eclipsed indigenous religious traditions and included a competitive climate in which individual religious masters struggled to establish themselves partly via recording their personal accomplishments in autobiographical formats.³⁶⁶

Tibetan biography and autobiography refers to the indigenous literary genre *namtar* (*rnam thar*), or *rangnam* (*rang rnam*). *Namtar* can be literally translated as “complete liberation story” while *rangnam* incorporates a self-reflexive pronoun *rang* to indicate “one’s own complete liberation story.”³⁶⁷ Both of these terms refer to a specifically spiritual biography or autobiography documenting the chronological trajectory of (predominantly male) Tibetan spiritual figures’ teleological liberation from the sufferings of cyclic existence to the realization of Buddhahood. Thus, far from Gusdorf’s notion of the autonomous Western individual as the subject of autobiography, Sera Khandro’s self-presentation shares more with the tradition of pre-Rousseau Western spiritual biography in which the subject of autobiography is an “individual” in its older meaning of being indivisible from the divine. Autobiography theorist Sidonie Smith defines autobiographical or life narrative as “a historically situated practice of self-

representation” in which “narrators selectively engage their lived experience through personal storytelling.”³⁶⁸ Using this definition, self-authored Tibetan *namtar* such as Sera Khandro’s work fits into a Western understanding of autobiography and can be interpreted using theoretical frameworks developed in reference to Western auto/biographical literature.

While the genealogy of spiritual biography can also be traced to Christian, Jewish, and Islamic roots, Sera Khandro’s autobiography participates in the long tradition of Buddhist biography. Buddhist spiritual biographies draw on the example of the Buddha’s life story, first written prior to the first century B.C.E. as *jātaka* tales elaborating moral themes drawn from accounts of the Buddha’s previous lives. The format of Sera Khandro’s story of spiritual realization is reminiscent of biographies of Śakyamuni Buddha at the same time as it recasts this foundational Buddhist life story in new ways, adjusting it to the contours of a woman’s life who practiced a Tantric form of Buddhism. Just as the Buddha was born into a royal family and given every pleasure with the hope that he would inherit his father’s crown, likewise Sera Khandro recounts being born into a noble family in Lhasa and raised with every luxury in hopes that she would become a political leader in Tibet. Just as the Buddha renounced worldly life in one pivotal moment in after marrying and having a son, Sera Khandro also renounced life as she had known it in one moment when she escaped from her family’s wealthy home to avoid an unwanted arranged marriage. While the Buddha practiced austerities in the Indian forest for six years after he renounced lay society, Sera Khandro recounts the radical asceticism she was plunged into on her long journey to Golok and afterwards when she struggled to pursue a religious life in Golok despite a myriad of obstacles.

However, whereas the Buddha gained enlightenment under the bodhi tree sitting in solitary meditation, Sera Khandro's enlightenment occurred in the manifestly Tantric form of her union with Drimé Özer. In this and other regards, Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* bears close resemblance to the hagiography of the paradigmatic female saint of Tibet, Yeshé Tsogyal. Both Yeshé Tsogyal and Sera Khandro's life stories include mothers who come from the powerful Tibetan Nup (*Gnubs*) clan, fathers who are local political leaders, great beauty in youth, extreme repulsion from impending marriages, consort relationships with important male Buddhist teachers, resistance to unwanted male attention, and explicit use of male consorts to serve their own spiritual needs. Parallels in Buddhist biographies such as those listed above might inspire the suspicious reader to reconsider Paul de Man's skeptical interpretation of autobiography.

De Man asks,

. . . can we not suggest, with equal justice, that the autobiographical project may itself produce and determine the life and that whatever the writer *does* is in fact governed by the technical demands of self-portraiture and thus determined, in all its aspects, by the resources of his medium?³⁶⁹

Paul de Man's assertion directs our attention to the fact that there can be no unmediated access to the self or to human experience that is not also already filtered through literary conventions and social constraints. Yet it is precisely through this already colored glass image of a life that Sera Khandro's voice comes through; more than a repetition of paradigmatic aspects of Buddhist or Tibetan biography, Sera Khandro's works portray a life located in a specific social, cultural, linguistic, literary, and gendered context.

Beyond being an example of Buddhist biography, Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* fits into a distinctive subgenre of Tibetan autobiography: that of Treasure revealers. Gyatso notes that Treasure discoverers have been among the most prolific

autobiographers in Tibet.³⁷⁰ While no statistical evidence is available for the ratio of Tibetan autobiography written by Treasure revealers, their importance as autobiographers relates to the connections between revelation and writing about the self. Just as Tibetan autobiographies demonstrate a tension between strong articulations of self and humble self-effacement, likewise Treasure revelation is both intensely personal, involving introspective processes analyzing ephemeral signs, and predetermined, acting to fulfill the prophecies of Padmasambhava and Yeshé Tsogyal.³⁷¹ Thus, the multifaceted selfhood Treasure revealers inscribe in their autobiographies parallels the intense process of self-reflection involved in revelation.

Writing about the self and revealing Treasures are both intensely interpretive acts in which dreams and visions are the primary source of authentication verifying that the self in question is worthy of being the subject of autobiography and of being a Treasure revealer.³⁷² In Sera Khandro's *Autobiography*, visions provide not only revelations, but reassurances that Sera Khandro is Yeshé Tsogyal's emissary, thus proving that she is an authentic Treasure revealer. In the latter part of this chapter we will examine some of these identity-forming visions Sera Khandro recounts in her *Autobiography*. In the wide open grasslands of the unincorporated region of Golok, religious and institutional authority was open and contested. Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* served to legitimize her four volumes of revealed Treasure teachings by portraying herself as a visionary with spiritual realization and unmediated access to the divine. Therefore, writing autobiography for a Treasure revealer such as Sera Khandro was both constitutive as much as it was reflective; it was part of actualizing her religious aspirations to become

accepted by her community as an authentic Treasure revealer as much as it was an account of her struggles gaining acceptance in the communities in which she lived.

The many dreams and visions Sera Khandro recounts validate her legitimacy as an authentic Treasure revealer precisely to the people for whom this mattered the most, her disciples who were practicing her revealed Treasure scriptures. Therefore, Sera Khandro's auto/biographical writings, like other spiritual biographies, are both *models of* exemplary Buddhist figures such as Yeshé Tsogyal and Buddhist ideals such as renunciation and meditative realization as well as *models for* the Buddhist disciples and religious communities who emulate these figures and ideals.³⁷³ In this sense, her autobiography points both backwards in time to a sacred past and forwards to a future in which faithful disciples will benefit from reading her autobiography by attaining their own liberation.³⁷⁴ Hence, this double motion of reaching to a distant primordial past and looking towards a future liberation is another link between Treasure revealers and autobiography, for, as I described in Chapter Two, Treasure revealers act as emissaries sent from the primordial sacred dimension of Padmasambhava and Yeshé Tsogyal to catalyze the future enlightenment of their disciples.

Gender as a Self-Humbling Strategy in Sera Khandro's Autobiography

After Sera Khandro elaborates on the prophecies foretelling her illustrious accomplishments as a Treasure revealer in the opening sections of her *Autobiography*, she makes a self-humbling comment typical of her writing:

Because I was born in an inferior female body, I am without a basis for expressing my realizations³⁷⁵ regarding how the beneficial deeds of [accomplishing] the two-fold aim [of helping others and oneself] arose in me and how I traversed the grounds and paths. Despite this, as I have said before, for the purpose of guiding

fortunate doctrine holders and taming those who come after [i.e., disciples], I will express a bit about my history.³⁷⁶

The term Sera Khandro uses for “inferior female body” (*skye lus dman pa*) could very literally be translated as “inferior birth body” but given that it is a ubiquitous term for the female body, I translate it as “inferior female body.” The abbreviated form of this Tibetan term, *skye dman*, literally “low birth,” is one of the most common colloquial terms for “woman” in the Tibetan language, also used in the Golok dialect that Sera Khandro spoke.³⁷⁷ Sera Khandro informs us that because she is female, she has no ability to express her realization. The fact that Sera Khandro’s *Autobiography* is pervaded with self-denigrating comments should be of no great surprise given that this is characteristic of Tibetan autobiography. But how are we to interpret the gendered tone of disclaimers in Sera Khandro’s *Autobiography* such as this one? There is a strongly ironic aspect to this disclaimer given that it marks the beginning of Sera Khandro’s more than 400-page self-narrative!

The fact that Sera Khandro thematizes her gender and her inferior female body in what becomes a constant litany of self-denigrating comments should not be taken as somehow “natural” given that she is a female author since, as I will expand upon below, other Tibetan female-authored autobiographies such as that of Jetsün Lochen Rinpoché (1865-1951) do not thematize gender and the female body to the degree that Sera Khandro does. In the context of medieval Christian women’s visionary literature, Caroline Walker Bynum makes a similar point that women writers did not necessarily thematize their gender as much as their male confessors and interpreters did. Bynum concludes that

Women writers used imagery more androgynously. Personal and social characteristics were more often shared by the two genders in women's writings. The female was a less marked category; it was more often simply a symbol of an almost genderless self. When women did give the female content taken from the traditional idea of asymmetrical genders, they saw it as physical and bodily. And this physicality was seen as useful in joining with a human Christ.³⁷⁸

Thematizing gender is thus not necessarily an attribute of women's writing. Yet the mantra-like regularity with which Sera Khandro calls attention to her female gender as a limitation to her potential spiritual achievements is reminiscent of other female mystics' self-denigrating writing styles. Monica Furlong suggests that female Christian medieval mystics had a general tendency to denigrate themselves on the basis of their gender. Hildegard of Bingen describes herself as "a weak and fragile rib;" Clare of Siena as "a useless handmaid and unworthy servant;" and Julian of Norwich as "a woman ignorant, weak, and frail."³⁷⁹ Furlong attributes this "ritual obeisance" of gender-based self-denigration as a reflection of a socially imposed sense of inferiority as much as it was a literary device that helped their divine mystical visions to be heard. Likewise, we may think of Sera Khandro's treatment of her inferior female gender as both a rhetorical strategy that adds a humanly believable touch to her extraordinary mystical revelations and a reflection of negative gender stereotypes that Sera Khandro internalized. Her laments about her inferior female form are thus not only rhetoric; they are also one way in which she describes the difficulties she faced as a rare female Treasure revealer struggling to find a place for herself in her society.

Abandon this Inferior Female Body?

Sera Khandro thematizes her lowly female gender even in her childhood recollections. Despairing at her father's insistence that she study Chinese characters

because of the worldly political life Chinese literacy was meant to introduce, Sera Khandro recounts throwing her Chinese books into the river and contemplating putting an end to herself in the river as well. She makes the following prayer of lamentation to Padmasambhava, Yeshé Tsogyal, and Venerable Tārā:

Alas, I pray to the Lotus Born One from Orgyen, all refuges condensed into one,
To Mother Tsogyal, and to the Venerable Noble Lady Tārā –
Look upon me with compassion!

This female body of mine is the foundation of cyclic existence.
Having thrown away this contaminated, unclean, negative body
Bless me with attaining a body replete with the freedoms and advantages.

As soon as I am born, having met with the dharma,
May I have the freedom to practice properly.³⁸⁰

Just as she was about to throw herself into the water, Sera Khandro recounts experiencing the first vision in her *Autobiography*; a terrifyingly ugly woman appears before her and brandishing a sword, threatens to kill her. This, Sera Khandro narrates, is enough to jar the eight-year-old Sera Khandro out of her suicidal mood.

Sera Khandro may consistently have a negative valuation of her female body, yet others in her narrative try to balance her negativity with positive counter-arguments. This dual message including her own negativity and others' positive reassurances is clear in the passage below in which Sera Khandro recounts her visionary interaction with the deceased Gotrül Rinpoché. In a vision Sera Khandro experiences after Gotrül Rinpoché's wife Yakza forbids her from speaking with Gotrül Rinpoché before he dies, Sera Khandro interacts with Gotrül Rinpoché:

"Because of my inferior [female] body, it is difficult for me to benefit beings in the world. Hence, having abandoned this body, if I try to attain a man's body, I wonder if I will benefit beings?"

The lama [Gotrül Rinpoché] said,

“Don’t think like this. This body you have is that of a great female bodhisattva, the mother who gave rise to all the Buddhas. It is the chariot that traverses the grounds and paths, the foundation which propagates men who adhere to Sūtra and Tantra. Like snow comes from water, the expansive space of the greatly secret empty realm of the mother [i.e., the womb], the space (*mkha*’) of reality itself in which the energy of compassion goes (*’gro*), is the source of both saṃsāra and nirvāṇa. Hence, this body of yours is the superior [way to] benefit beings. If you wonder how it is that it is superior, before, during the time of Kaśyapa,³⁸¹ when you were the daughter of a Brahmin named Namka Drönma (*Sky Lamp*), based on your pure aspiration to generate the supreme awakening and by the power of your prayers to the Lady Tsogyal, you dispelled all manifest and unmanifest negative obstacles to the life forces of men who adhered to the teachings. You raised the victory banner of the teachings. Via skillful means and auspicious connections, you propagated the happiness of beings and established them in bliss. In particular, be like a mother to exhausted sentient beings and it is certain that inconceivable benefit for beings will gradually arise.³⁸²

Gotrül Rinpoché’s response to Sera Khandro’s despair transforms her negative evaluation of her female body by honoring its extraordinary qualities, qualities that reflect a Tantric perception of the positive aspects of the feminine body centered on the morphology of the womb: the womb is the source of the Buddhas, and Gotrül metaphorically describes it as associated with the two parts of the Tibetan word for *dākinī* (*mkha*’ *’gro*), or Sky-goer. Gotrül Rinpoché specifies that Sera Khandro’s previous incarnation Namkha Drönma dispelled obstacles to the life force of religious men, an ability which in a Tantric context refers to her capacity to engage in sexual practices. The equation between sexuality and longevity that Gotrül Rinpoché’s comment evokes persists in Sera Khandro’s writings as one of the main reasons for consort practices, a topic to which we shall return in Chapter Four.

Despite positive interpretations of the female gender such as the maternal imagery above, Sera Khandro’s *Autobiography* is replete with her (rhetorical?) desire to abandon her lowly female body, a body which she describes as the source of the suffering of

cyclic existence and an obstacle to her purpose of benefiting sentient beings. Speaking to a visionary woman with a terrifying appearance who repeatedly appeared before her, Sera Khandro summed up her gender-related problems in the following words:

I abide in an inferior [female] corporal body.
 Although I have good intentions, it is difficult to tame beings in the negative time.
 I have met with Treasures, yet the auspicious connections of skillful means are bad.
 Because of my small knowledge, it is difficult to understand the meaning of the symbols.

This inferior female body (*skye lus dman pa*) cannot get free from the mouth of my husband;
 When I wander about this country, it can't get free of the mouth of dogs.
 Whatever I do, people don't like me.

When things like these occur, I am one who must abandon this body.
 Even though there is no difference in the mind of enlightenment (Skt. *bodhicitta*) between men and women,
 In the perspective of disciples, my body is inferior.

I think that having transformed into a hero with a supreme body,
 I certainly will accomplish the great purpose of benefiting [all] beings who have been my mother.

Without this, how will this body
 Have a way to accomplish great benefit for the teachings and sentient beings?
 Lady, give me advice.³⁸³

Sera Khandro clarifies that ultimately it is not that the female body itself is inferior, but that the problem lies in the perspectives of disciples. The terrifying woman to whom Sera Khandro speaks above responds to her plea for advice with a detailed prophecy teaching her about types of *ḍākinī* script and foretelling her future doctrine holders, consorts, and teachings. By including lauding comments such as that of Gotrül Rinpoché along with Sera Khandro's derogatory statements about herself, Sera Khandro's representations of her female gender reiterate the tension within Tibetan autobiography between self-aggrandizement and self-denigration. Yet regardless of its positive or negative valences,

gender is clearly a noteworthy issue for Sera Khandro in a way that I suggest is not relevant for male-authored autobiographies in which gender is far more likely to be an unremarkable topic.³⁸⁴

Treasure Revelation and Gender-related Difficulties

As if she feels she must endeavor to explain her unusual status as one of the few female Treasure revealers, Sera Khandro thematizes her gender-related difficulties in the context of presenting herself as a Treasure revealer.³⁸⁵ From her representation of her earliest childhood experiences revealing Treasures, being female was a deterrent to being a Treasure revealer. Sera Khandro recounts that at the age of nine when she accompanied her parents on pilgrimage to U ri (*Dbus ri*), they arrived at Önpu Taktsang (*'On phu stag tshang*), a site closely associated with Yeshé Tsogyal, where Sera Khandro recollected that her share of texts were located. After she told this to her mother, her mother scolded her saying,

Don't speak like this. From the time of your paternal ancestors [such as] the Dharma King Ngaki Wangpo³⁸⁶ until now, there have been many who have attained accomplishment. Because it is impossible for a woman to take out textual Treasures, the King's punishment will soon come. Be silent.³⁸⁷

Far more disastrous for her life as a Treasure revealer was her partner Gyalsé's disrespect for her spiritual calling. Sera Khandro writes that when she was twenty-two, she returned home after taking out a Treasure vessel. Sera Khandro records being unsure how Gyalsé would react to her discovery. Sure enough, he doubts her, stating:

Before, during the time when there were one hundred great Treasure revealers, two of them actually manifested as female Treasure revealers (*gter mo*). These days in this Degenerate Age, [we] don't see the existence of female Treasure revealers.³⁸⁸

Her authenticity doubted on the grounds of her gender, Sera Khandro wasn't sure whether he would be pleased if she admitted the vessel was her Treasure, so from thenceforth she notes that she kept her Treasure revelation activities secret from Gyalsé. This was only the beginning of the divisive problems that plagued Sera Khandro when she was living with Gyalsé and his community. Sera Khandro recounts being in a social environment that was largely hostile to her, aside from a few trusted disciples and nun friends. In particular, Sera Khandro narrates that on another occasion when she was twenty-two, while out gathering firewood she had a visionary experience that caused her to return home later than expected to serve her partner Gyalsé his tea. He was furious and having slapped her, he threw her out of the house. After a fiery fight, the local people were shocked at Sera Khandro's anger towards Gyalsé and called her a demon girl (*'dre mo*). She records that,

I took a low place and kept the Treasure texts that had come to me extremely secret. During this time, one day Gyalsé went to [see] his middle brother Jikmé Könchok who was a monk at Palyül Monastery. I was alone and there wasn't anybody around. I had an unfinished Treasure text that was from the Oral Transmission Dharma Cycle from my Treasure that was Tsogyal's final testament together with a biography that came as a Treasure. When it became time [to finish it] and I was there writing the lines,

"I have no purpose aside from [benefiting] sentient beings.
It is impossible for a jewel to be stained by mud.
Phenomena depend only on interdependent causation,"

all of a sudden an old monk named Kyaga Künzang arrived. Saying he had an offering of Tibetan cake [made of barley flour, butter, cheese, sugar], he came with a full plate. He saw the text that I had written and asked, "What is this?"

I replied, "It is a Treasure scripture."

He said, "It is amazing that you are taking care of Gara Lama's Treasure scripture. It is not suitable for you to contaminate Lama Gyalsé."

I answered, “Your Gyalsé having a wife like me is like the proverb of a donkey having golden ornaments on his head. I am not inflicting any harm on Gyalsé. Like the saying ‘a nectar vase on top of an assembled *maṇḍala*,’ aside from benefiting [beings] with the inner meaning of primordial wisdom, I didn’t harm him. If you think that I harmed Gyalsé, aside from me, it is certain that earlier your Gyalsé was already contaminated.”³⁸⁹

This is an especially poignant scene, for who better to record the biography of Yeshé Tsogyal than another female practitioner who was widely believed to be her emissary? Yet Sera Khandro recounts that the monk rejected her ability to produce Treasures and that her harsh words incited his rage. In response, she threw her Tsogyal prophecy into the fire and vowed not to write profound Treasure again. Immediately after this unhappy episode in which Gyalsé’s community members such as this old monk could not accept Sera Khandro’s involvement in literary and religious pursuits, Sera Khandro interpreted her difficulties through the lens of her “inferior” gender. She pondered that, “Because of my inferior female body, it is difficult to benefit beings. Hence, if I had a lineage holder [i.e., a child] who could definitely benefit sentient beings, how happy [I would be]!”³⁹⁰ With this sentence, Sera Khandro foreshadows her ensuing pregnancy with her first child. Yet “definite benefit for sentient beings” seems to be inherent only for boys and not girls; Sera Khandro writes of Gyalsé and her own despair when the child she is carrying transforms from being a boy to a girl in her womb due to demonic influence.³⁹¹

Visions and Gender-based Self-Denigration

Almost half of Sera Khandro’s *Autobiography* is Sera Khandro’s description of her prolific visionary and dream state travels to Buddhafields and her interactions with all varieties of Buddhist divinities and Tibetan demons.³⁹² A large portion of these visions consist of her interactions with *ḍākinīs*, including Vajravārāhī and Yeshé Tsogyal.

Despite her genealogical relationship to these female divinities, Sera Khandro laments her inferior female body with mantra-like regularity in her interactions with divine figures who offer her consolation and encouragement. One of the most important visionary experiences in Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* is the episode in which Vajravārāhī confers upon Sera Khandro the prophetic registry and empowerment for her two Treasures, *The Secret Treasury of Reality Dākinīs* and *The Dākinīs' Heart Essence*.³⁹³ After receiving empowerment and instruction from Vajravārāhī, Sera Khandro recounts that her thirteen-year-old self asked the dākinī Sukhasiddhi,

“You are extremely kind to bestow empowerment and instruction upon me. Because I am one with an inferior [female] body, it is difficult to accomplish the Dharma and [benefit] beings. However I can do this, how great! Why do I have the karmic residue to be empowered in these two profound Treasures?”

The dākinī answered, “Noble woman, you are not one with an inferior [female] body. Before, in response to Tsogyal's inquiry, Guru [Padmasambhava] proclaimed:

‘The body of a female bodhisattva is a supreme body without [karmic] remainder;
It is the mother [who gives birth to] the great assembly of primordially perfected Ones Gone to Bliss (Skt. *Sugata*).

Generate the aspiration to attain a supreme body like
The Great Vajra Queen with the knowledge of the expanse of emptiness.

The beneficial deeds of the Buddhas of the three times, a dance of the moon [reflecting] in water,
Arise in physical form on account of disciple's devotion.
Their source, the lotus mouth of the Vajra Queen,
Is the foundation of the Buddha's teaching, like a ripening bud.

This female body is not inferior; this body is good.

Tsogyal, you must generate the pure aspiration
Never to part with this [female] body.’

Because [the Guru] spoke like this, [your body] is not inferior.”³⁹⁴

This is one of the many moments in which Sera Khandro explicitly invokes the sacred history of the Treasure tradition in the form of the divine couple Yeshé Tsogyal and Padmasambhava to validate her own circumstances.³⁹⁵ This passage emphasizes the divine precedence of Sera Khandro's role as a female religious figure; if Guru Rinpoché proclaimed that Yeshé Tsogyal's female body was not inferior, then, as her emissary, Sera Khandro's female body must also not be inferior. Similar to the passage cited above in which Gotrül Rinpoché commends Sera Khandro's female form, this passage betrays the dual tone of Sera Khandro's gender-based self-denigration. Thematising her inferior female body can be subversive in that it has the ironic effect of occasioning responses from others that articulate highly positive views of women.³⁹⁶ Yet it is not only subversive; we can also interpret her negative rhetoric about being female as an internalization of the negative gender stereotypes prevalent in her communities. In early twentieth-century Golok, being female was associated with impurity and with being enmeshed in cyclic existence. As Sera Khandro laments in a prayer to Yeshé Tsogyal after Gyalsé scolds her again for revealing a Treasure:

... I, this messenger sent by the mother ḍākinīs –
 My impure body is being born as a woman.
 My impure karma is grasping on to cyclic existence.
 My impure place is the demonic land of Golok.
 My impure deed is always having a negative community . . .³⁹⁷

Nevertheless, her existence as a successful Treasure revealer and as an author of a long *Autobiography* proves that despite the “ritual obeisance” (to quote Furlong's term) that she makes putting herself down for being female among other faults, her gender does not provide insurmountable barriers to her spiritual (and literary) purposes.

During the difficult phase of life with her restrictive and demanding partner Gara Gyalsé, when she was twenty-four years old, Sera Khandro recounts a disappointing experience. The incident involved being unable to accompany Gyalsé and her disciple Tupzang to attend a *Condensed Intention of the Lama* empowerment and reading transmission given by Katok Situ Rinpoché because, “Since mother and child had inferior [female] bodies, we had a weak karmic connection and weren’t able to find a way to go.”³⁹⁸ It is not clear from Sera Khandro’s comment exactly what the problem was, whether women and girls were not allowed to attend the monastic empowerment or whether there was another type of obstacle. What is clear is that Sera Khandro recalls being very disappointed with her situation as a woman; she narrates that she was extremely depressed and sang the following song of misery:

In the unmanifest land of the Glorious Mountain,
The Lord of the Buddhas of the three times, the protector of beings,
The glorious Lake Born Vajra of Orgyen, think of me!
I supplicate to you – look upon me!

By the power of the aspirations of the former Namnying Bazra,
I had pure karma and was empowered in profound Treasure.
The assembly of mother *ḍākinīs* nurtured me like their child.
They gave me the instructions of the oral transmission of profound Dharma
In the manner of [giving me] precious wealth.

For the purpose of expanding beneficial deeds of benefiting both [self and other]
and
To accomplish the aspirations of the Lotus Born Lord,
Various emanations conferred symbolic empowerment on me.

Thinking that deeds benefiting both [self and other] would certainly arise,
In accordance with the mother *ḍākinīs*’ orders, I came to the eastern
Land of the demons alone
Despite great physical hardship.

Having incited the negative condition of the *sapta* demons of this degenerate time,
The types of karma and auspicious connections [I experienced] are like this:

I forgot about accomplishing the two benefits and
 On account of the weakness of my inferior [female] body
 My chance to attain profound Dharma weakened.
 All the fortunate ones went off on the upper path of dharma.
 I, Dewé Dorjé, wandered in cyclic existence.

Now, when I think of this, I feel sad.
 I constantly think of the Copper-colored Mountain.
 I would like to throw away this receptacle [that is my] illusory body.

Through the crystal column channel,
 Mixing with the changeless expanse of awareness,
 Inseparable from the mind of Mother Tsogyal,
 I will go to the dimension of the self-appearing Unsurpassed Buddhafield.³⁹⁹

Just after Sera Khandro sings this song of sadness, her perception changes and she perceives herself actually in Padmasambhava's Buddhafield, the Copper-colored Mountain. She despairs at her situation being a lowly woman trying to practice and teach the Dharma. Yet she also marvels to the *ḍākinīs* who greet her how ironic it is that in her visionary experience she is able to interact with the most exalted divinities, while in her conventional worldly reality in Tibet she cannot even manage to receive an empowerment.⁴⁰⁰ This sequence is one example of many in which *ḍākinīs* and divine visions provide her only source of encouragement in a world that seemed determined to discredit her.

Sera Khandro's litany of self-denigrating comments focuses on representing herself as inferior due to being female (among other flaws), yet ultimately the message of her long *Autobiography* is one of triumph over the hardships she faced, including her troubles seeking liberation from cyclic existence while trapped in a female body that was itself associated with cyclic existence. Sera Khandro's self-description was more than rhetoric in the sense that her words reflect very real difficulties she faced. Towards the end of her *Autobiography*, Sera Khandro writes,

When I was thirty-eight, on account of a strong negative circumstance, I felt depressed and fed up with being someone like me with a negative, inferior body, who was without a protector or refuge, and who nurtured others lovingly but was spontaneously hated in return.⁴⁰¹

Sera Khandro repeatedly recounts her sadness and depression, in particular after her consort Drimé Özer's death, and we can only imagine how difficult life must have been for her as a woman alone with no relatives to support her in the rough lands of early twentieth-century Golok. Yet there is also a sense in reading Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* that her repeated self-denigrating comments about having an inferior female body are rhetorical lip service she pays while at the same time she presents an entirely different message. After all, she tells a little bird who lands on the edge of her yak hair tent and tries to console her during her bout of depression,

By the kindness of my realized lama who [is like] my only father,
I saw the natural state of the self-aware Truth Body.
Hence, I don't need to judge [thinking that mental] stillness is good and thought is bad.
Whatever arises extends equally as the expression of primordial wisdom.
I don't hope for artificial meditation involving reifying efforts.

The signs on the path of understanding, experience, and realization have manifested –
I don't need to have hopes, fears, or two-minded doubts.
I have cast away a meditator and a thing to be meditated on
In the perfection of the ground of the indivisibility of the three Bodies.

Because unceasing appearances arose as an example,
I did not need to gather many words from various texts.
Because I have seen the meaning of primordial wisdom free from attachment,
I am not attached to the forms of householders who engage in desirous behavior.

If I am involved in Dharma for the remainder of my life,
This is the supreme purpose of attaining the support of a body.
Do you understand? Do you hear me, miraculous little bird?⁴⁰²

In her *Autobiography*, Sera Khandro represents a self that is not only about the difficulties of life as a single non-monastic woman struggling to survive in a hostile

world; it is a liberation story of a woman who transcended all limitations of conceptual mind to become constrained by nothing, least of all her “inferior female body.”

Gendered Reflections in Tibetan Women’s Auto/biography

A study of Sera Khandro’s treatment of gender invites the question: to what degree is Sera Khandro’s literary treatment of gender and the female body characteristic of other female-authored Tibetan texts? To what degree is her writing influenced by biographical/hagiographical texts about Tibetan women? There are so few female-authored autobiographies in Tibetan literature that it is difficult to draw any conclusions regarding their treatment of gender. As I will expand upon in the following section, even if Tibetan and Himalayan Studies did have access to the plethora of research on women’s writing that Euro-American autobiographical research has, stereotypes about writing style based on the author’s gender are highly problematic. Comparing Sera Khandro’s *Autobiography* with the near-contemporary autobiography of the co-founder of the important Central Tibetan nunnery Shuksep named Jetsün Lochen (1865-1951) as well as the autobiography of the nun and hermitess from Dolpo named Orgyen Chökyi (1675-1729) demonstrates that the category of gender is always visible only in relation to other social and cultural factors including education level, monastic versus non-monastic status, and religious tradition. Interestingly, despite Jetsün Lochen and Sera Khandro’s shared temporal context, their autobiographies have little in common. On the other hand, Orgyen Chökyi’s writing thematizes gender, the body, and suffering in a way that resonates with Sera Khandro’s *Autobiography*.

The Autobiography of Jetsün Lochen (1865-1951)

Perhaps the most important commonality between the renowned late nineteenth-century founder of the Central Tibetan nunnery Shuksep (*Shug gseb*), who was popularly called Jetsün Lochen (*Rje btsun lo chen, Rig 'dzin chos nyid bzang mo*, 1865-1951), and Sera Khandro is that both women managed to stand out in their respective communities as extraordinary women whose powerful status led them to write long works about their lives.⁴⁰³ In their autobiographies, both Jetsün Lochen and Sera Khandro recount extraordinary childhood occurrences (not unlike those of many male-authored autobiographies) including miracles at birth, supernatural learning abilities, and proclivities to teach Avalokiteśvara's six-syllable mantra.⁴⁰⁴ Both Jetsün Lochen and Sera Khandro recount being recognized as emanations of Yeshé Tsogyal, although Jetsün Lochen was more strongly associated with Machik Labdrön.⁴⁰⁵ Both women experienced great hardship early in their lives and during their spiritual training. Jetsün Lochen recounts her turbulent life traveling with her mother and her often drunk, abusive, and unpredictable father, who even sold them on one occasion for money to pay for beer. She also describes the trials she experienced under the tutelage of her root teacher Pema Gyatso. Sera Khandro recounts hardships including starving, freezing, being socially ostracized, and working as a servant during her long trek to Golok and in her new life there.⁴⁰⁶ Both women have visions in which *dākinīs* inspire them to write down religious texts, but both women are reprimanded for writing by important men in their lives; Sera Khandro's first partner Gara Gyalsé abuses her for writing Treasures while Jetsün Lochen writes in her autobiography:

When Teacher Chosang saw this [Ani Lochen writing religious teachings coming from her visions] he said, “You are not allowed that kind of writing!” and then he burnt everything in the fire. He kicked me in the head and from then on these visions stopped forever.⁴⁰⁷

Both women recount visions and dream sequences in which *ḍākinīs* offer help and encouragement, although the frequency and level of detail with which they record their visionary experiences are radically different; Jetsün Lochen’s autobiography includes approximately twelve visions, the majority of which involve *ḍākinīs*, while Sera Khandro includes ninety-two different visionary sequences, more than half of which feature her interactions with *ḍākinīs*.⁴⁰⁸ Both women describe experiences returning from visionary travels to the realm of the dead (*‘das log*).⁴⁰⁹ Jetsün Lochen and Sera Khandro both record having very close relationships with their mothers and feeling extremely depressed when they passed away.⁴¹⁰ Additionally, both women’s autobiographies contain a combination of self-humbling and laudatory remarks about themselves characteristic of Tibetan autobiography. In her autobiography, Jetsün Lochen qualifies that, “although I did not possess the knowledge to do welfare to others, I was unable to refuse their expectations,” as the prelude to describing the way that she “explained the empowerments, oral transmissions and instructions of the profound meaning of the stages of the path (*theḡ rims*).”⁴¹¹ As I have elaborated upon above, Sera Khandro peppers her self-narrative with self-humbling words, often thematizing her gender, while at the same time presenting quite a different message. Nearing the conclusion of her 407 page tome, Sera Khandro writes,

Although I didn’t have the freedom to not write this, I, this one with an inferior [female] body, did not have even a sesame seed worth of knowledge from whatever perspective of the three doors [body, speech, and mind].⁴¹²

Sera Khandro adds this comment just after she finishes describing the expansive empowerments and explanations that she gave to large assemblies of monastic and lay disciples in not only her own Treasure texts, but also those of her consort Drimé Özer and his father Dujom Lingpa. Thus, it is highly unlikely her readers are meant to take such disclaimers seriously.

Despite the many similarities noted above, Jetsün Lochen and Sera Khandro's autobiographies are nearly completely different in tone, content, and style. This should be no surprise, given the vast differences between Jetsün Lochen's life as a prominent nun in Central Tibet and Sera Khandro's life in Golok as a Treasure revealer who had male consorts and children. Jetsün Lochen and Sera Khandro had very different educations as well: Jetsün Lochen gained prowess in reading from a very early age, acting as a professional reciter, or *ma ni pa*. Whereas Jetsün Lochen recited famous biographies as a girl, including that of the female Nangsa Obum, Sera Khandro writes that she was illiterate in Tibetan until she spontaneously knew how to read and write at the age of twenty-two.⁴¹³ From her earliest childhood, Jetsün Lochen was a renowned religious figure, an unusual role for women. She recollects attracting crowds and private sponsors due to her ability to recite texts and give religious teachings. As one of the founders of Shuksep Nunnery around the year 1904 along with her teacher Tokden Semnyi Rinpoché, Jetsün Lochen spent the majority of her life practicing in retreat and teaching nuns and lay sponsors. Jetsün Lochen's mother Tsentsar encouraged her religious predilections, and indeed mother and daughter traveled together everywhere.

In contrast, Sera Khandro's mother died when she was thirteen years old. This event, her desire to escape from an arranged political marriage, and her interest in

pursuing a religious life encourage her to completely cut her family ties and pursue a new life as a religious mendicant in Golok. While Jetsün Lochen's parents were itinerant pilgrims, traveling widely around the Central and Western Himalayas, Sera Khandro's parents were sedentary nobility in Lhasa. These differences in social class, access to religious education, and parental support shaded their childhoods in divergent ways.

The central difference in their adult lives was that Jetsün Lochen was a meditator and a religious hierarch, a nun and an abbess. In contrast, Sera Khandro lived her life on the outskirts of religious institutions as non-monastic woman involved in revealing Treasures and practicing their associated rituals; she was a woman at home neither in the tents of Golok laypeople or in monastic contexts in which she continually seemed to incite people's suspicion.⁴¹⁴ The two women therefore had very different social communities; Jetsün Lochen had strong relationships with her community of nuns, whereas Sera Khandro lived in (often contentious) religious encampments (*chos sgar*) in which she never had a supportive community of female practitioners.

Another noticeable difference between Jetsün Lochen and Sera Khandro's writings is the quantity of visions Sera Khandro recounts and the level of detail with which she writes of them. This difference can be understood as a reflection of the importance of visions in determining a Treasure revealers' legitimacy, in particular visions that demonstrate their divinely mandated and prophesized roles as Padmasambhava and Yeshé Tsogyal's emissaries. For Jetsün Lochen, recounting the pilgrimage sites she visited, the teachers with whom she studied, the teachings she practiced, the retreats she conducted, the instructions she taught, and the disciples she had

appear to be far more essential to her self-presentation as an authentic religious master than the dreams and visions that are so central for Sera Khandro.

The most noteworthy difference for our discussion between these two contemporary female-authored autobiographies is the ways they thematize (or don't thematize) gender. That gender discrimination existed in both Jetsün Lochen and Sera Khandro's lives is clear from that fact that they both mention preferential treatment of boy children over girl children: Jetsün Lochen portrays her father's dismay at her birth as a female and Sera Khandro recounts Gyalsé and her dismay at their firstborn child's transformation from a boy to a girl due to demonic influence.⁴¹⁵ Although Jetsün Lochen mentions being excluded from staying at larger monasteries she visited including Tashilhunpo, Gyantsé, and Ganden on the basis of her gender, she does not thematize her gender or her female body in the way that Sera Khandro pervasively does. Sera Khandro's repeated rhetoric that "because she had an inferior female body," she was unable to benefit beings is nowhere to be found in Jetsün Lochen's writing. Their different geographic region and monastic status do not necessarily explain why these two extant late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century female-authored autobiographies diverge so significantly in their literary treatment of gender and the body. However, their divergences serve to exemplify the complex relationship between an author's gender and the way he or she thematizes gender. Perhaps Jetsün Lochen's accomplishment of building a community of nuns around her during her years at Shuksep Nunnery created an environment conducive to women's spiritual practice in a way that Sera Khandro's life in Golok religious encampments did not. Sera Khandro's repetitive laments about the difficulties she faced because of her female body could indicate greater challenges she

experienced being one of the very few female Treasure revealers in a context in which she not only had little precedent (both women mention knowing few other female religious adepts), but also little supportive female community.

The Life of Orgyen Chökyi (1675-1729)

Despite the fact that Jetsün Lochen and Sera Khandro's autobiographies share a common time period, Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* shares more in terms of representations of gender and female body with Orgyen Chökyi's (1675-1729) autobiography, the *Life of Orgyen Chökyi*.⁴¹⁶ At first glance, it appears that Orgyen Chökyi's life story bears little resemblance to that of Sera Khandro. Orgyen Chökyi was born in Dolpo to a father who had leprosy and a mother who did not want her. She lived her life as a shepherd, a nun, and a hermitess, dying in 1729 at the age of fifty-five when a wooden beam fell on her head. Stylistically as well, the *Life of Orgyen Chökyi* is much terser than Sera Khandro's elaborate and long-winded descriptions of her visionary and worldly interactions. This difference betrays Orgyen Chökyi's humble origins as much as her editor's disturbing abridgement of her story because her full life story "would be nothing more than a copy of the *Life of Nangsa Obum*, so it was not written."⁴¹⁷ Orgyen Chökyi's writing is inspired by metaphors from the world of her familiar, which was a harsh mountainous terrain in which she was continually reminded of the suffering of impermanence through her work caring for animals.

Despite their temporal and cultural distance, Orgyen Chökyi's *Life* and Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* both thematize suffering and the female body in similar ways. Orgyen Chökyi focuses on the suffering of female animals, likening their suffering to her

own on the foundation of their shared female bodies. After a leopard snatches away a mare's young foal, Orgyen Chökyi laments,

When I ponder our female bodies
I am sorrowful; impermanence rings clear.
When men and women couple – creating more life –
Happiness is rare, but suffering is felt for a long time.
May I not be born again in a female body.
May the mare not be born as a mare.⁴¹⁸

Again, after the death of a female yak cross-breed and her calf, Orgyen Chökyi despairs:

. . . Humans, horses, dogs, all beings,
Male and female all think alike,
But the suffering of life comes to females as a matter of course.
I could do without the misery of this female life.
How I lament this broken vessel, this female body.

I could do without this female body with its misery.
Ranting thoughts dwell in this woman's body.
From within the body, spreading outward,
From the center of the mind misery comes unchecked.
Like the yak protecting her calf,
They give up life for their children.

This female body is itself saṃsāra – the round of existence.
May I attain a male body, and keep the vows,
May I never again be born in the body of a woman!⁴¹⁹

From passages such as these, Schaeffer demonstrates that for Orgyen Chökyi, suffering was closely associated with the female body. He contrasts this to the autobiography of her teacher Tenzin Repa who represents suffering in general social terms that do not involve gender.⁴²⁰ Schaeffer concludes that, “in the *Life of Orgyen Chökyi*, the female body is not merely a symbol of saṃsāra, nor receptacle for the seeds of saṃsāra. It *is* saṃsāra.”⁴²¹ He calls for further research into the relationship between suffering, gender, and female authored Tibetan Buddhist writings, stating that:

. . . we must ask if this gendering of suffering is unique to Orgyen Chökyi, or if it is found across a range of Tibetan Buddhist writings. I suggest that the strong

equation of suffering with the female body is characteristic of Orgyen Chökyi's writing as a woman.⁴²²

Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* stands as another example of a female-authored text in which gender and suffering are linked in a parallel way to that of Orgyen Chökyi's writing. Both Orgyen Chökyi and Sera Khandro lament their female births and pray to be reborn in male bodies. Both explicitly compare the female body with cyclic existence, an analogy with ancient Buddhist roots.⁴²³ While portraying the suffering of cyclic existence is common to all Buddhist biography, its explicit association with women's bodies is a theme particularly salient in biographies written by and about women. This association between women and physicality is also evident in the medieval Christian context; referring to the prevalence of fasting and other harsh physical austerities in medieval female mystics' writings, Catherine Mooney notes that, "Women . . . are embodied physicality in a way that men, more often identified with mind and spirit, are not. Still contested, however, is the extent to which women and men shared an understanding of women's embodied religious experience."⁴²⁴ In the Tibetan Buddhist context, this association between women and physicality is, as in its Christian manifestation, an association between women and human suffering. Just as Orgyen Chökyi prays to be reborn as a man and never again as a woman because "This female body is itself saṃsāra – the round of existence," Sera Khandro describes her female body as "the foundation of cyclic existence" that is a "contaminated, unclean, negative body."⁴²⁵ She too wishes for an escape from the sufferings of the female body, sufferings she knows first-hand from her own traumatic experiences giving birth to three children, only one of whom lived past

childhood; she too prays to be reborn as a male in order to be of greater benefit to sentient beings.

Despite the ways in which Orgyen Chökyi and Sera Khandro thematize suffering and inferiority using gendered metaphors that can be read as their internalization of negative gender stereotypes about women and their bodies, both women's autobiographies also betray a subversive element.⁴²⁶ Orgyen Chökyi elaborates on the suffering of human and animal female bodies, yet the existence of Orgyen Chökyi's autobiography itself is a strong testament to her disavowal of negative stereotypes about her female gender. As Orgyen Chökyi recounts in the beginning of her narrative, her teacher refused her request for him to write an account of her joys and sufferings, saying "There is no reason to write a liberation tale for you – a woman."⁴²⁷ Orgyen Chökyi then explains that she was "struck with the spiritual instruction of the *dākinī*" and was able to write her account for herself without her teacher's help.⁴²⁸ We can interpret this passage as an apologetic, explaining Orgyen Chökyi's motivation to laud herself in written format despite the unconventionality of a woman writing, but we can also read this as Orgyen Chökyi's assertion that her account *did* have value despite her teacher's gender-based misgivings. Also, later, her teacher doubts her on the basis of her gender, telling her, "Your woman's mind does not understand great philosophy," and "You are like an old woman who needs a lesson on how to get started," but Orgyen Chökyi refuses to accept her teacher's insults. She concludes, "'I am not an old woman,' I thought. 'I have no burning desire, so he speaks falsely.'" ⁴²⁹ In addition to these self-assertive comments, Schaeffer suggests that her association between the female body and suffering allows her to be the expert on this essential Buddhist topic since she speaks "not from books but

from her body.”⁴³⁰ In these ways, Orgyen Chökyi presents the very real societal and physical suffering that women of her milieu experienced as much as she demonstrates that these negative valuations of the female gender were ultimately surmountable. Likewise, Sera Khandro’s repetitive laments about her negative female body and her desire to abandon it because of its lesser ability to benefit beings allude to real limitations that Sera Khandro faced as one of the only women in her social world to be a Treasure revealer and an author as much as they demonstrate that Sera Khandro ultimately overcame these hardships to become one of the most prolific female authors in Tibetan literary history.

Sera Khandro’s first-hand experience with the sufferings of childbirth points towards the main difference between the lives of Orgyen Chökyi and Sera Khandro: Orgyen Chökyi’s life as a nun allowed her to eventually attain a level of autonomy in the context of a supportive female community, a freedom that Sera Khandro sought but never found. The struggle to attain an autonomous life is a major theme in both Orgyen Chökyi and Sera Khandro’s narratives, a commonality indicative of difficulties Himalayan women of their milieus faced finding freedom from housework, child rearing, and cooking in order to devote themselves to religion. Even after Orgyen Chökyi became a nun, she was distraught for years, begging her teacher for release from the kitchen drudgery that kept her too busy to practice religion. Once she had finally attained freedom to live her desired life as a hermitess, Orgyen Chökyi recounts,

“Before, when I was tending the kitchen fire, I had to get out of bed by lamp before dawn,” I thought. “I had to cook the food. Now I do not have to get up at dawn if I do not want to. If I want to take soup, I am free to do so when I am hungry. I am free to eat when I think of it. I can wear clothes on the path, and I can go naked when I am in my cell practicing. I do not have to grind the grain.

Woven and dyed things come to my ani friends, so I do not need rhubarb. The young nuns bring water . . .”⁴³¹

Schaeffer explains that Orgyen Chökyi’s desire for release from the oppressive social world of the monastery with its concomitant labor duties was a desire for solitude, for “an empty valley with no people.” Yet, at the same time, he points out that she prays to “meet women friends with a similar religion.”⁴³² Orgyen Chökyi writes of her sustaining friendships with other nuns as well as her role as a mentor to younger nuns such as Ani Drupamo Drolma whom she encourages to stop doing kitchen work and go into retreat.⁴³³ Her hermitage life in the mountains of Dolpo was thus filled with supportive relationships between the renunciate women who shared her life of religious devotion.

Sera Khandro, too, dreamed of independence and autonomy away from the drudgery of nomadic women’s work including milking animals, preparing tea for her life partner Gara Gyalsé, and caring for her children. Like Orgyen Chökyi, Sera Khandro despaired that even though she has renounced worldly life, she still did not have the freedoms and advantages to devote her energy to spiritual practice. She repeatedly wished that she could wander off to various unknown lands, but ultimately she could never find the autonomy to do this because she had to care for her young children. These constraints kept her in an unhappy, repressive relationship with Gyalsé until she became so ill that he finally sent her to live with her prophesized consort Drimé Özer. Even during her short years of happiness with Drimé Özer and her subsequent years as a sorrowful widow living at Sera Monastery, Sera Khandro never had a supportive community of women. Aside from her nun friend Chötreng and a few other friends, Sera Khandro described her relationships with many of the women around her as being full of jealousy and contention. Outside of the hagiographical figures Yeshé Tsogyal and

Machik Labdrön, Sera Khandro does not mention having female role models or knowing other female religious teachers.⁴³⁴ Nevertheless, she slowly gained greater, but never complete, autonomy towards the end of her life after she was freed from Gyalsé and widowed from Drimé Özer; she traveled with her disciple Tupzang, her scribe Tsültrim Dorjé, and her daughter Chöying Drönma far and wide throughout the regions of Golok and Kham conferring empowerments, reading transmissions, and explanations of her own Treasure teachings as well as those of Drimé Özer and his father Dujom Lingpa. Thus, both Orgyen Chökyi and Sera Khandro attained levels of autonomy in their lives that were unusual for women, although Orgyen Chökyi did so in a context of a supportive female community that Sera Khandro never had.

Female Hagiographies and their Influence on Sera Khandro's Writing

Distinctive metanarratives commonly appear in biographies and hagiographies about Tibetan women's lives. Jetsün Lochen recounts reciting the biography of Nangsa Obum and being familiar with Gelong Palmo. Orgyen Chökyi mentions the extraordinary lives of Gelong Palmo, Machik Labdrön, and Nangsa Obum. Yeshé Tsogyal's hagiography had a major influence on Sera Khandro's writing. As I have described in other parts of this study, common elements between Yeshé Tsogyal and Sera Khandro's life stories include mothers who come from the powerful Tibetan Nup (*Gnubs*) clan, fathers who are local political leaders, great beauty in youth, extreme repulsion from impending marriages, consort relationships with important male Buddhist teachers, resistance to unwanted male attention, and explicit use of male consorts to serve their own spiritual needs, which I will expand upon in Chapter Four. But what other paradigms

for female religious exemplars would Sera Khandro have been familiar with? Two female religious exemplars whom Sera Khandro mentions and whose hagiographies bear significant similarities to her *Autobiography* are Jomo Memo (1248-83) and Machik Labdrön (eleventh-twelfth century). Two others that Orgyen Chökyi and Jetsün Lochen mention are Nangsa Obum and Gelong Palmo. Although Sera Khandro does not mention these latter two by name in her auto/biographical writing, she, too, would have been familiar with their life stories. In the following pages, I will briefly outline key elements of these female saints' lives and explore the ways in which Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* relates to their well-known examples.

Jomo Menmo is a thirteenth-century figure who bears a special relationship to Sera Khandro's life narrative. She is one of the two female Treasure revealers mentioned in Jamgön Kongtrül's (1813-1899) *Gter ston rgya rtsa* along with Künga Buma, a text Sera Khandro mentions more than once. Jomo Menmo's hagiography from this collection of Treasure revealer's biographies is quite short, but her influence on Sera Khandro is clear given that she is among the seven previous masters whose prophecies Sera Khandro includes at the beginning of her *Autobiography*. In the prophecy she cites, Sera Khandro even claims to be her incarnation:

From the *Pure Vision Testament* of Pema Tsokyi or Jomo Menmo,

“In the hare or the dragon year, my incarnation
Will be a householder named Sukhabazra.
By the power of prayers, she will wander in the lands of Amdo.
She will take out the *Extremely Secret Dākinī's Heart Accomplishment*
Dharma Treasure.
She will be born as the bud of the lineage of Chöwang's incarnation.
Some teachings will flourish and others will not.”⁴³⁵

Jomo Menmo's prophecy is particularly relevant to Sera Khandro's life because she is a rare example of a female saint renowned for being both a Treasure revealer and the consort of one of the most prolific early Treasure revealers named Guru Chöwang (1212-1270). Although Gyatso notes that Guru Chöwang's thirteenth-century autobiography does not mention Jomo Menmo as his consort, that Sera Khandro connected the two figures is clear from the fact that she mentions him in the above prophecy.⁴³⁶ Thus, Sera Khandro's claim that she is an incarnation of Jomo Menmo and a descendant of Guru Chöwang is another way in which she relates her life to the divine history of the Treasure tradition, a history that for her is strongly connected to the paradigm of a divine Treasure revelation couple. Other connections tying the two female Treasure revealers together are that both were incarnations of Yeshé Tsogyal and both received their divine mandate to reveal Treasures from a visionary encounter with Vajravārāhī when they were thirteen.⁴³⁷

Machik Labdrön, the eleventh-to twelfth-century female saint, is an example of an erudite non-celibate woman who gained the unprecedented honor of being the Tibetan founder of a new system of Buddhist practice known as Chöd, or "cutting." Machik plays a smaller role in Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* than she does in Jetsün Lochen's autobiography, in which Jetsün explains that she was known as Machik's incarnation. Jetsün's life is similar to Machik's as well in the sense that both women were renowned for being talented child reciters of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*. Yet Sera Khandro also portrays herself as having a special relationship with Machik beyond their similarities as two Tibetan women who came from wealthy nobility and pursued the non-celibate Tantric path. The only occasion that Sera Khandro mentions another (human) female religious teacher is when she describes a nun named Ané Zangmo who was a famous

incarnation of Machik Labdrön. Sera Khandro recollects being disappointed that she never got to meet the illustrious nun, who died when Sera Khandro was twenty years old. Despite this, Sera Khandro writes that after meeting two of the nun's disciples, who came to offer Sera Khandro a skull cup and seal that the nun had bequeathed to her, she had a vision of meeting Machik Labdrön:

That night, after I prayed to the lama and the deities, I had a dream in my sleep. [I saw] a beautiful *ḍākinī* who said she was Machik Labdrön with a pleasant body clothed in a sky blue skirt and a stainless white cotton wrap with her hair hanging loosely down her back. In her right hand, she played a damaru and in her left, she rang a white silver bell. In a melodious voice, she spoke words like this:

Pray to the birthless Mother,
The Great Mother of the Buddhas who is the Truth Body.

Pray to the unhindered Mother,
Vajrayoginī who is the Enjoyment Body.

Pray to the all-pervading Mother,
Tsogyal Lapdrönma who is the Emanation Body.

Eradicate the error of grasping to a self!

I bless you with the realization of selfless knowledge.
I bless you with unobstructed, nonreferential vision.
I bless you with turning adversity into favor.
I bless you with the capacity to turn your body into food.
I bless you with the realization of the wisdom of the Great Mother.
I bless you that all your interactions will be meaningful.
I bless you that you will attain the permanent domain of the Truth Body!
Phet, Phet, phet!"

As soon as she said this, my perception transformed. Together with two *ḍākinī* companions, the appearance of wandering in many Buddhafields arose . . . ⁴³⁸

Sera Khandro's rendition of Machik Labdrön's eloquent blessings gives voice to an all-female hierophany. After she offers obeisance to the divine Mother (*Prajñāpāramitā*) as the manifestation of the ultimate realization of Buddhahood, she confers realization to her

dākinī sister Sera Khandro in the practice tradition for which she was best known, Chöd, in which one mentally offers one's body as food in order to annihilate self-cherishing. That Machik Lapdrön supplicates the divine in the form of the multi-faceted Great Mother is especially fitting given that she is one of the few examples of a female Buddhist saint who was a mother not only in the philosophical sense of being the mother of all sentient beings, but in the physical sense of bearing three children of her own who later became her students. In the thirteenth-century biography of Machik written by her disciple Namkhai Gyaltsen (b. 1370), he portrays the mixed feelings the young Machik expressed to her teachers after "entering into the union of means and wisdom" with a yogi named Töpa Bhadra:

Lapdrön told Lama Drapa that a ritual master named Bhadraya had seduced her. But the lama said, "That will create an interdependent connection that will bring about the welfare of beings. Don't shy away from it."

She then took some offerings and went to see Sönam Lama. She told him, "In Echung I met a man called Töpa Bhadra and he seduced me."

"You are not a nun," the lama said, "and Bhadraya is not a bad person, so there is no problem. Your family lineage will increase. You should stay with Bhadraya and it will create the karma and interdependent connections to bring vast benefit to sentient beings for a very long time. In fact, last night I had an excellent dream about it."

Both of her lamas had given her their prophecies concerning the man, plus many other prophecies had come up. So she decided that she would settle this auspicious connection with Bhadraya. At the age of twenty-three, she went to live with Bhadra in Central Tibet.⁴³⁹

Namkhai Gyaltsen's depiction of Machik's teachers encouraging her to engage in consort practices is reminiscent of the dialectic in Sera Khandro's writing between her own hesitation and dākinīs' and her lamas' insistence that she should have consorts. Machik Labdrön is a female exemplar of the non-celibate Tantric path in which sexuality does not

go against the spiritual life, even if children are the result – Machik Labdrön had three children with Bhadraya. Likewise, Sera Khandro had three children, although only her daughter survived to adulthood. Both Machik Labdrön and Sera Khandro were actual mothers, but both illustrious women's life narratives emphasize their religious achievements and scriptural output far more than their progeny.

Another immensely popular Tibetan female religious exemplar who was also a mother is the folk drama heroine Nangsa Obum. Nangsa Obum's life is perhaps the most famous example of the commonly female religious figure of the "one who returns from the dead," or *delok* ('*das log*).⁴⁴⁰ Although Sera Khandro does not mention Nangsa Obum by name, she does mention her own *delok* experiences traveling to the realm of the dead, witnessing the sufferings of hell, and returning back to earth to counsel her family and later her disciples on morality in both her *Autobiography* and her Treasure revelations.⁴⁴¹ The outline of Nangsa Obum's life story is that her parents compel her to marry the local king's son against her will when she is fifteen years old. Instead of escaping arranged marriage as Sera Khandro (and Yeshé Tsogyal) did, Nangsa Obum complies with her parents' wishes and marries. Although her royal husband and his father, the king of Rinang, love Nangsa Obum and want to give her the keys to the royal storehouse, the king's sister Ani Nyemo grows jealous of her. She succeeds in convincing the two, father and son, that Nangsa Obum is unfaithful because she catches her giving alms to a traveling yogin. The king becomes enraged and beats her to death. While dead, she travels to the hell realms and meets Avalokiteśvara, who turns her back to the land of the living because of her positive karma. She returns to the palace transformed by her death experience and eager to teach her family about impermanence, karma, and suffering, but

they do not listen. This motivates Nangsa Obum to truly devote herself to religion; she departs from her palace house, leaving her young son behind, and becomes the disciple and then consort of the Tantric yogin Shakya Gyaltsen. Her royal family tries to battle with Shakya Gyaltsen to get her back, but the couple manifests miracles and repels the king's armies. All are moved to faith and repent their sins. Nangsa's true identity as Vajravārāhī becomes known, and her son becomes a virtuous king of the land.⁴⁴²

The story of Nangsa Obum exemplifies struggles that Sera Khandro and indeed countless other women faced between supporting their families and pursuing their spiritual lives. Nangsa Obum attempts to be virtuous as a perfect laywoman, but is torn between competing demands to care for her son, to placate the jealous sister of the king, and to pursue a religious career. It is only through her death to the world of her family that she is able to pursue a spiritual life for herself; in her narrative, life as a laywoman and life as a devout religious practitioner are antithetical to each other. Nangsa Obum and Sera Khandro's life stories thus share more than their mutual journeys to the realm of the dead. Like Nangsa Obum, Sera Khandro becomes "dead" to her family when she escapes palace life at the age of fifteen. Yet this does not prevent her from ending up in a family context later on in Banak, Golok, struggling with her contentious and suspicious mother-in-law. Only near-death illness saves her from her life of servitude with Gara Gyalsé, freeing her to live with her Tantric master and consort Drimé Özer, with whom she gains ultimate realization. Nangsa Obum and Sera Khandro's tales thus have many thematic similarities that highlight pivotal moments and key tensions in lay religious women's lives: marriage, child care, tension with older women in their husbands' families, and the desire to pursue their own religious practice. These competing demands are irresolvable;

their escalation creates a breaking point, an escape from or a death of one life and the beginning of another. Both Nangsa Obum and Sera Khandro's life narratives are examples for Buddhist disciples of women who negotiated this tension-filled terrain and prevailed as spiritually realized women who followed the Tantric path of liberation.

All the paradigms for female saintliness in Tibet do not follow this Tantric path in the same way. Another important paradigm is that of Gelong Palmo, the most famous Buddhist nun in Tibet. Gelong Palmo (Skt. Bhikṣuṇī Lakṣmī) was a great Indian Buddhist nun who was the sister of the Indian king Indrabodhi. Similar to Sera Khandro, Gelong Palmo escaped the marriage that her royal family had arranged. Yet here is where their religious paths diverge. Gelong Palmo is renowned for the purity of her monastic vows and the boundless intensity of her devotion to Avalokiteśvara. Through her devotion, the scrupulous maintenance of her full ordination vows, and her practice of fasting, she was cured from her terrible case of leprosy. Gelong Palmo's ritual fasting practice (*smyung gnas*) is still practiced widely in Tibet by laypeople and monastics alike, but primarily by nuns.⁴⁴³ Gelong Palmo's life of celibate sanctity was certainly one that Sera Khandro respected, for she too yearned for the life of a nun during her childhood. Sera Khandro never mentions doing the fasting ritual so strongly associated with the female exemplar Gelong Palmo. The winds of prophecy carried her life in a different direction, towards the path of Treasure revelation in which she incorporated sexuality as a part of the spiritual path.

These four paradigms of female spirituality put forth very different interpretations of sanctity. Jomo Menmo was a Treasure revealer and a consort to a great lama, Machik Labdrön was a great yoginī, Nangsa Obum was an extraordinary *delok*, and Gelong

Palmo was a devout nun. Despite the availability of these varied examples of female sainthood, as Sarah Harding points out, for women “positions of power or even erudition in the clerical hierarchy were generally unavailable.”⁴⁴⁴ Examining the difficulties Sera Khandro faced finding a place for herself in the religious hierarchy of the Treasure tradition in Golok only adds one more example proving this point. The stories of these extraordinary women are exceptions to the rule of male hegemony; the lineage masters who inherited Gelong Palmo’s fasting ritual and Machik Labdrön’s Chöd rite were all male. Even so, the life stories of Sera Khandro, Jetsün Lochen, and Orgyen Chökyi are encouraging proofs that some Buddhist women did find ways to bridge the wide gap between being a human woman and becoming a female saint. Also noteworthy is that they achieved this transformation through very different life paths including becoming a nun, an abbess, a Treasure revealer, a consort, and a hermitess. That they were able to narrate their lives in the form of autobiographical literature both serves as an acknowledgement of their successful passage from mundane humanity to female sanctity as much as it paved the way for their further sanctification. Their autobiographies thus enabled them to join in the ranks of the female exemplars whose influence pervades the pages of their writing.

Despite the similarities between the hagiographies of prominent Tibetan female religious figures and the lives of female spiritual adepts such as Sera Khandro, it is not necessarily the case that female autobiographers modeled themselves exclusively on female role models. This is true not only in the Tibetan Buddhist case, but also reminiscent of Bynum’s interpretation of medieval Christian female saints’ writings. Bynum concludes that the idea that Mary and other women were models for female saints

was an idea more often professed by male biographers of females and *not* by female autobiographers, who were much more likely to discuss the imitation of Christ.⁴⁴⁵ In their interpretations of the biographical models for Jetsün Lochen and Orgyen Chökyi's autobiographies, Hanna Havnevik and Kurtis Schaeffer do not lose sight of this point. Havnevik suggests that among others, the autobiography of the famous wandering yogin from Amdo named Shabkar Tsokdruk Rangdröl (1781-1851) had a decisive influence on Jetsün Lochen's autobiography.⁴⁴⁶ Kurtis Schaeffer explores the influence of the most famous Tibetan biography of all time, that of the Kagyü yogi Milarepa (1052-1135), on Orgyen Chökyi. Similarly, while Sera Khandro clearly modeled herself on elements of hagiographies of women such as Yeshé Tsogyal, it is likely that another important literary influence was the biography of Drimé Özer's father Dujom Lingpa (1835-1924), which is replete with elaborate accounts of his visionary experiences that are not unlike Sera Khandro's account.⁴⁴⁷ Sera Khandro's first homes in Golok were in the vicinity of Dujom Lingpa's seat, Dartsang Monastery. Later in her life, Sera Khandro recounts editing Dujom Lingpa's entire textual corpus of revealed Treasures, totaling over forty volumes.⁴⁴⁸ Drimé Özer's biographical and visionary textual output may also have had a significant influence on Sera Khandro's writing, but this is difficult to ascertain since Drimé Özer's writings appear not to have survived the Cultural Revolution.

A Genre of Women's Autobiography? Relationality and Selfhood

The question of commonalities between women's autobiographical writings and hagiographies about Tibetan women parallels a larger debate within studies on autobiography: can it be said that women's autobiographies constitute an

autobiographical genre of their own? In the early 1980's, autobiography theorists such as Mary Mason and Estelle Jelinek began to articulate this question in reaction to the nearly total exclusion of female-authored autobiographies from the canon of autobiographies studied by literary theorists that included classics such as St. Augustine's *Confessions*, Cellini's *Life*, Rousseau's *Confessions*, Fox's "Journal," Franklin's *Autobiography*, Goethe's *Truth and Poetry*, Mill's *Autobiography*, Cardinal Newman's *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, and Thoreau's *Walden*.⁴⁴⁹ They and others including Domna Stanton and Susan Friedman attempted to redress this oversight by spotlighting female autobiographies, religious and secular, and by theorizing the ways in which they differed from male-authored autobiographies. These feminist scholars criticized Gusdorf's notion that the "conscious awareness of the singularity of each individual life" was essential to the selfhood expressed in autobiography, a selfhood Gusdorf defined as existing separately and in opposition to others.⁴⁵⁰ Well-known autobiography theorist John Paul Eakin concludes that the serious study of women's autobiography and its concomitant critique of Gusdorf was "the single most important achievement of autobiography studies in the last decade."⁴⁵¹

Mary Mason's 1980 essay "The Other Voice: Autobiographies of Women Writers" was the ground-breaking beginning to this study of women's autobiography. Mason compared the Duchess of Newcastle Margaret Cavendish's 1656 autobiographical reflections *True Relation of My Birth, Breeding and Life*, Anne Bradstreet's seventeenth-century spiritual account "To My Dear Children," Margery Kempe's fifteenth-century *Book of Margery Kempe*, and Julian of Norwich's *Revelations*. She concludes that according to these four models of female-authored autobiography, "the self-discovery of

female identity seems to acknowledge the real presence and recognition of another consciousness, and the disclosure of female self is linked to the identification of some 'other.'"⁴⁵² For Mason, women's life-writing portrays a subject that is not separate from her social context but rather defines herself in relation to it. Hers is a "sort of evolution and delineation of an identity by way of alterity," or a narrative in which the subject is constituted by its relationship and interactions with others.⁴⁵³

Another pioneering study on women's autobiography that developed Mason's theory of the relationality of the female autobiographical subject is the work of Estelle Jelinek. Jelinek argues that the topics that women write about are family, close friends, and domestic activities. She claims that although women's autobiographies may include mention of historical or social events, "the emphasis remains on personal matters – not the professional, philosophical, or historical events that are more often the subject of men's autobiographies."⁴⁵⁴ Jelinek concludes that,

In contrast to the self-confident, one-dimensional self-image that men usually project, women often depict a multidimensional, fragmented self-image colored by a sense of inadequacy and alienation of being outsiders or "other"; they feel the need for authentication, to prove their self-worth.⁴⁵⁵

Jelinek suggests that despite the differences between women's self narratives, these similarities including the domestic, personal focus and the fragmented self-image formulate a genre of women's autobiography that is a discrete literary tradition of its own.⁴⁵⁶

More recent critical theory has questioned the way in which early feminist autobiography theorists related the author's gender to modes of self-presentation in a way that linked relationality to female subjectivity and autonomy to male subjectivity. Feminist autobiography theorists wrestled open Gusdorf's association between

autobiography and the autonomous self by expanding analysis of autobiographical selfhood to include a wider interpretation of the self as relational. Nevertheless, as Eakin points out, these early champions of women's autobiography tended to pigeonhole men's autobiographical writing in Gusdorf's older model of separate selfhood at the same time as they expanded that definition to include alternative constructions of selfhood for female autobiographers.⁴⁵⁷ More recent literary theorists such as Nancy Miller accept readings of women's autobiography as including a relational self-presentation. However, she argues that men's autobiography demonstrates the same relational quality that earlier theorists linked to female authors. Analyzing Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, Philip Roth's *Patrimony*, Jacques Derrida's *Circonfession*, and Paul Auster's *The Invention of Solitude*, Miller explores how these male authors' autobiographical writings express their narrative selves in relation to others and as part of communities.⁴⁵⁸

The interest that autobiography theorists from the 1980's onwards applied to women's autobiographical writings offered important critiques of Gusdorf and others' assumption that the self represented in autobiography was that of a necessarily Western, autonomous individual. However, the over-simplistic ways in which theorists defined the parameters of a genre of women's autobiography rested on stereotypes of women as more relational and interested in the home. Later theorists quickly debunked these stereotypes as outdated reflections of socially-constructed gender expectations instead of being defining characteristics of female selfhood. Early feminist theorists such as Jelinek compared female-authored autobiographies from a wide variety of temporal and cultural contexts because they understood gender to transcend other differences such as

nationality, time period, race, class, sexual preference, and religion. Postcolonial theorists have now demonstrated the problematic nature of this perspective.

The debates that Western autobiography theorists have grappled with regarding how to define a genre of women's autobiography offer important insights relevant to interpreting Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* in its Tibetan literary context. Theorists of European and American autobiography have debunked the grounds for articulating a separate genre of women's autobiography through demonstrating the way that both men's and women's autobiographical selves are defined in relation to others. Just as no clear distinctions can be drawn exclusively on the basis of gender between male- and female-authored autobiographies in the West, we can also apply this insight to the Tibetan context of autobiographical writing. Women such as Jetsün Lochen did not place a strong emphasis on thematizing gender and the sufferings of the female body, yet her autobiography is no less exemplary of female-authored Tibetan autobiographies than those that did, such as Sera Khandro and Orgyen Chökyi's autobiographies.

While it is not necessarily useful to argue for genre distinctions between men's and women's life writing, the focus that theorists of Western autobiography apply to investigating the nature of the self – independent or relational – offers useful insights for the study of Tibetan autobiography as well. For example, Sidonie Smith asks of autobiographies:

What others inhabit the text? Is there a significant other posited in the text through whom, to whom, or about whom the life narrative is narrated? Who or what is that other – a family member, friend, mentor, lover, or even a divine force?⁴⁵⁹

Additionally, Smith asks the following interesting questions about voice:

Is the text monovocal or polyvocal? . . . If there are multiple voices, when do they emerge and when disappear? Why? Is there a blending or an unresolved tension

of voices in the narrative? . . . Is more than one group or collectivity invoked in the text, each with distinct values and languages?⁴⁶⁰

The value of the explosion of interest in women's autobiographical writing in the West in the last twenty years for analyzing texts such as Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* lies in exploring provocative questions such as these, not in conjecturing about the status of Tibetan women's autobiography as a genre. In particular, we might ask: where does Sera Khandro's autobiography fall in this continuum between an isolated, independent self-presentation and a relational self? What writing styles does Sera Khandro employ to assert a sense of self in her autobiography? Does her writing style have anything to do with her gender? In the first part of this chapter we have already partially addressed these questions in terms of analyzing the ways in which her negative comments about her inferior female body act as a self-humbling strategy allowing her to present a multifaceted self that is both human and exemplary, humble and extraordinary. In the following two sections, we will focus on two other important aspects of Sera Khandro's self-presentation: the dialogic nature of her writing and the role of the many visionary experiences she weaves throughout her *Autobiography*.

Sera Khandro's Dialogic Self

Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* is pervaded with a multiplicity of voices including a wide range of divine, human, and demonic voices all written as direct speech dialogue. Sera Khandro presents a narrative version of herself through dialogic interaction with a host of others in a way that resembles the relational self that autobiography theorists articulated as paradigmatically female. For example, Domna Stanton expresses the relational self of women's autobiography in the following way:

The female “I” was thus not simply a texture woven of various selves; its threads, its life-lines, came from and extended to others. By that token, this “I” represented a denial of a notion essential to the phallogocentric order: the totalized self-contained subject present-to-itself.⁴⁶¹

Sera Khandro describes her emerging identity as a Treasure revealer and as a consort through dialogic interactions with others. She presents herself always in relation to these others, be they divinities presenting prophecies or criticisms from the very human members of her communities. However, for Sera Khandro, this self-narrative woven from the threads of other’s speech is not a denial of the phallogocentric order as Domna Stanton expresses it, for both male and female selves in the Buddhist context do not exist as autonomous individuals separate from others in the Gusdorfian sense. Sera Khandro’s *Autobiography* is an account of her rise to becoming an exemplary religious figure, but through the conversations she constantly records, her personal reflections and the social values of her milieu are always interconnected. Just as Bakhtin theorizes the word as a dialogic entity always already “entangled, shot through with shared thoughts, points of view, alien value judgments, and accents,” likewise Sera Khandro’s autobiographical self is not a self in isolation from others but rather is constituted by the social atmosphere in which it exists. In “Discourse in the Novel,” Bakhtin writes,

The living utterance, having taken meaning and shape at a particular historical moment in a socially specific environment, cannot fail to brush up against thousands of living dialogical threads, woven by socio-ideological consciousness around the given object of an utterance; it cannot fail to become an active participant in social dialogue.⁴⁶²

Similarly, Sera Khandro’s *Autobiography*, like Bakhtin’s living utterance, is shot through with different voices in her social world. Through a dialogic process, Sera Khandro’s self-narrative is able to “shape its own stylistic profile and tone” by “harmonizing with some of the elements in this environment and striking a dissonance with others.”⁴⁶³ This

heteroglossia of voices in Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* effectively produces her sense of self, a self that is closely related to other figures in her communities yet also empowered as a self-determining agent.

Sidonie Smith draws on Judith Butler's understanding of gender as performative, as constituted through its performance and not prior to it, to argue that the self of autobiography is not existent prior to its autobiographical expression, but is actually an effect of autobiographical storytelling.⁴⁶⁴ Likewise, Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* is a narrative in which she develops her sense of herself as a divinely prophesized female Treasure revealer using the tools of dialogic speech, tools drawn from colloquial language that were easily accessible to Sera Khandro despite her lack of a formal literary education. This colloquial tone of many of the heteroglossaic interactions recorded in her *Autobiography* constitutes the one way in which this relational, dialogic quality of her self-presentation could be tied to her female gender in the sense that as a laywoman and a runaway far away from her family, Sera Khandro never had a chance to get a formal Tibetan language education. Aside from this connection, Sera Khandro's presentation of herself through dialogic interaction with others, what Mary Mason would call her relational self, is not linked to her female gender but is, rather, characteristic of her social world in which individuality was not a highly esteemed ideal.⁴⁶⁵

The dialogic interactions Sera Khandro recounts in her *Autobiography* allow her to say things she wouldn't otherwise be able to say about herself without defying culturally acceptable models of self-humility.⁴⁶⁶ There are many instances in which other figures in Sera Khandro's life, often important personages in her social world, praise her as an important Treasure revealer despite her vociferous denial of their lauding

comments. For example, the prominent lama from Pelyül Tartang Monastery in Golok named Gotrül Rinpoché (*'Jigs bral chos kyi blo gros*) was one of the first voices to recognize Sera Khandro as an incarnation of Yeshé Tsogyal and to encourage her to reveal Treasures when she was twenty-four. Sera Khandro recounts what happened when she went to visit him:

Then, as offering supports I offered [Gotrül Rinpoché] a high quality turquoise wrapped in five-colored silk along with a silk scarf with auspicious symbols on it and I prostrated to him. When I asked him, “How are you?,” the incarnate himself got up from the middle of the assembly and offered me silver and a kata. The lamas, monks, and laymen and women gathered there all didn’t know what was going on. Each one looking at the other, they didn’t say anything.

Again, the incarnate [Gotrül Rinpoché] said, “You all don’t need to have doubt. I think this *ḍākinī* is certainly the speech incarnation of Yeshé Tsogyal. You all abandon your wrong views and be faithful. This is not a deception; it is real.”

I thought, “Before [now] he has never met me or my retinue, so how can he know that I am Tsogyal? Not only that, how is it possible for someone with an inferior [female] body like me to be a *ḍākinī*? On the outside, I have little learning. On the inside, I am ignorant with regard to generation and perfection stage practice. No matter what action I begin, I cannot get past the activities of cyclic existence.”

When I wondered this, he said, “Not needing to exert yourself in learning and training, you fully comprehend all the paths of generation and perfection. Not needing to learn how to write and recite text, [you know] from the awakening of residual karma of having learned [before]. Nevertheless, not letting your own Treasures go, you must write and propagate them or the *ḍākinīs*’ punishment will come near.”

I said, “I am not a Treasure revealer. I have never attained even one type of dharma teaching and I don’t know about generation and perfection [stage practices].”⁴⁶⁷

In this exchange with Gotrül Rinpoché, Sera Khandro maintains her characteristic humility, again drawing on her “inferior female body” as one way to put herself down, despite the fact that being female cannot possibly be a reason she cannot be a *ḍākinī*. It is Gotrül Rinpoché who announces Sera Khandro’s extraordinary qualities; since his voice

speaks these lauding words, Sera Khandro is not directly praising herself by quoting him. In this way, other voices in Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* speak about her in ways that she herself cannot. Yet, after she displays appropriate amounts of humility by denying Gotrül Rinpoché's compliments, Sera Khandro hints that this was not the only reaction she had to Gotrül Rinpoché's words by writing, "Not keeping anything that I knew secret, I spoke to him and we nurtured each other's practices."⁴⁶⁸

Later, Gotrül Rinpoché reiterates his praises of Sera Khandro, urging her to fulfill her life's purpose of revealing Treasures:

Again, he said the following: "You are really Yeshé Tsogyal but because you belong to the leader of a bad lineage [Gyalsé], it is difficult to understand whether you think positively or negatively [about wanting to reveal Treasures]. Not being like this, in accordance with the intellect of beings of this Degenerate Age, you must endeavor to find a way to bring about benefit for yourself and others. In particular, now, when you come back from pilgrimage, do whatever you can not to forget to find a way to take out whatever type of Treasure – body, speech, mind, good qualities, or beneficial deeds – that is for me." Having said this, he gave me silver and a scarf blessed by the power of the divine [a kata] and made aspiration prayers.

I said, "Aside from being one who can take out the Treasure of boys and girls, I don't have a way to take out vast earth Treasures."

When I said this, again he replied, "Even if you don't want to be a Treasure revealer, you are empowered with the karma of Treasures and you cannot keep this secret or it is certain that the auspicious connections will go to other powers. Because of this, not being secretive, speak to me honestly. Because we are connected by the karma of former aspirations, having relied upon each other, I think that benefit will arise for beings. Hence, we need to do this accordingly."⁴⁶⁹ Otherwise, despite the fact that I too am also one empowered in Treasures, because my root lama did not give me permission, I hid my registry (*kha byang*) and prophetic registry (*lung byang*) under the monastery wall. Later I will give it to you. I, not having the power to break the lama's orders, amounted nothing more than an ordinary person. I turned forty-two years old this year and in this body, I didn't [find] a way to accomplish the Lotus Born One's aspirations. Since I have sincere prayers to [find] a way to accomplish [his aspirations] in a later [lifetime], keep this in your mind."

Again, I said, “Although it is certain that I am not a Treasure revealer, if you think this [that I am], from now on I will do whatever it takes to write down all the texts from my deluded perception and I won’t let them go away.”⁴⁷⁰

This dialogue is a very interesting exchange because Gotrül Rinpoché is not only articulating that Sera Khandro is a Treasure revealer, he is asserting that he needs her Treasures himself. Since he did not receive permission from his lama to accomplish Padmasambhava’s purpose of revealing Treasures in this lifetime, he exhorts her to reveal Treasures on his behalf. Sera Khandro’s deferential response to Gotrül Rinpoché is that she cannot possibly reveal anything more than the Treasures of a son or a daughter. The point of this analogy is that since Sera Khandro is just an ordinary woman, the only thing she can produce is children. This analogy makes sense because both children and Treasures are products of the generative act of sexuality. Thus, through dialogues such as the one above, Sera Khandro skillfully conveys her authority to reveal Treasures without having to express her extraordinary qualities in her own voice.

Sera Khandro recounts an interaction she had with Adzom Rinpoché when she was thirty-three that also exemplifies the ways in which she employs the voices of others, in this case an important religious patriarch, to present herself as a female Treasure revealer. Describing her visit to see Adzom, Sera Khandro records:

Then, when I met Drodül Pawo Dorjé [Adzom Rinpoché], the Lama said, “It is extremely good that you came here now. There are many arisings of auspicious connections that [are beneficial] for all, ourselves and others. In particular, it came to my mind a long time ago that you are an incarnation of the ḍākinī Kūnga Bumo. I said this to the retinue including Angak and so forth. After this, when I heard that there was a woman Treasure revealer in Golok, I was sure that you were the incarnation of Buma.”⁴⁷¹

Kūnga Bumo is the other of the two female Treasure revealers (along with Jomo Menmo) recorded in Jamgön Kongtrül’s *One Hundred Treasure Revealers* (*Gter ston brgya rtsa*).

Therefore, through the voices of others in her narrative, Sera Khandro has claimed to be the incarnation of all of the most famous female figures in the Treasure tradition: Yeshe Tsogyal (through Gotrül Rinpoché's proclamation), Jomo Menmo (through her prophecy), and Künga Buma. After Adzom Rinpoché flatters her with this compliment, he quizzes her in greater detail about her pedigree as a Treasure revealer:

The Lama [Adzom Rinpoché] asked, "Which lama told you that you were a Treasure revealer?"

I answered, "Until I had reached the age of thirty, I had never met my lama, hence I didn't have time to ask if I was a Treasure revealer or not. From the time I was fifteen years old I wrote down whatever I remembered and sang songs. Besides that, I did not examine whether or not I was a Treasure revealer. If one realizes the meaning of reality itself, phenomenal appearances arise as symbolic examples. No matter what happens to this one with a [walking] stick, I cannot fall down. Hence, I write down whatever arises and I explain whatever I know as oral instructions."

When I said this, the lama said, "Aside from perhaps being one who sees him or herself as being a Treasure revealer, all the other Treasure revealers were given the name "Treasure revealer" by their root lama or other beings who have attained [bodhisattva] grounds. I have never heard of someone calling him or herself a Treasure revealer."

Again, I said, "Like the Chinese Emperor giving titles to the masses, someone else saying whether you are a Treasure revealer or not is very difficult to determine. These days, still there are many Treasure revealers who write ample text who – aside from knowing how to recite a bit of text and having stayed in a month-long retreat examining the origin of mind – have not themselves met with a lama endowed with substantial and insubstantial characteristics, nor ripened the profound generation and perfection stages in their mind streams, nor abandoned desiring the eight worldly dharmas that are the actions of cyclic existence. Indeed, they do things like not protecting their vows and commitments and so forth. I don't know what will happen to those who just say they are Treasure revealers.

Because of this, although other people say that I, this inferior one, am or am not a Treasure revealer, my mind is unwavering and I am without manifest and hidden commitments. For one thing, like barley and oat seeds are different from the beginning, from the time I was eight years old, the lamas and ḍākinīs took care of me. Second, they established me in ripening and liberation [practices]. Thirdly, no matter whether I had symbolic pages or not, without doubt or corrections based on personal ingenuity, I wrote [text] like Treasure scripture.

Although I have many clear prophecies including all my consorts, doctrine holders, and places of my disciples and so forth, until the time comes for the [ripening] of former aspirations, based on the fact that I exerted myself greatly in my own desires and did not endeavor (in the Dharma), I didn't ask anyone if I was a Treasure revealer. Aside from this, in me all good qualities are exhausted and I have all the faults. I am a maid servant of the Gara family. Hence, I am without even a hair's breadth of learning regarding what I see and understand. These days the fact that I am neither nun nor laywoman arose through the kindness of my holy guide The Incarnate Wish-fulfilling Jewel [Drimé Özer]."

The lama was extremely pleased and said, "Daughter of a good father, of course you are like this [i.e., a Treasure revealer]." ⁴⁷²

That Sera Khandro grappled with presenting herself as a legitimate Treasure revealer is clear from passages such as this in which the authenticity of her status as a Treasure revealer was the topic of her dialogic interactions and personal reflections. Although Sera Khandro hints that she is different from ordinary people, just as barley and oat seeds are different, she convinces Adzom of her legitimacy as a Treasure revealer due to her humility and introspective speech. Adzom's probing questions test Sera Khandro, questioning her claims to be a Treasure revealer just as, perhaps, future readers of her *Autobiography* might do. Thus, through dialogues such as this one with Adzom Rinpoché, the voices of others who inhabit Sera Khandro's narrative extol her virtues in a way that she cannot in her own voice.

The multiple voices Sera Khandro interacts with in her narrative not only laud her extraordinary qualities, but also at times present opinions that Sera Khandro does not want to put in her own voice for other reasons. For example, when Sera Khandro was returning to Gyalsé's encampment after an extraordinary visit with Drimé Özer during the transitional stage of her life before she permanently left Gyalsé when she was thirty

years old, she recounts feeling uneasy about her return to the contentious context of Gyalsé's encampment. She spoke with her trusted disciple Tupzang about her misgivings:

Then, since the encampment base of the household that we were going to had gone to the Gar [Gara Gyalsé's] camp, I told Tupzang, "This year because our encampment base went to the Gar camp, there aren't any good prophecies. It isn't a good auspicious circumstance."⁴⁷³

Tupzang said, "Yes, before when Gyalsé was one with no wealth or food, I never saw his relatives say they were from the Gar camp. These days thanks to your kindness, when there is wealth and possessions, their identity as [part of] the Gar ra family is awakened and they need to take care of Gyalsé."

I said, "You are [like] a young person with a child's intellect who doesn't know anything. It is not acceptable for you to say that. If they hear you, they will say bad things."⁴⁷⁴

This dialogue portrays the mobile culture of Golok as well as the financial hardship that religious encampments at times endured. Tupzang's comment about Sera Khandro being the source of Gyalsé's financial windfall is an interesting allusion to the financial disputes she had with Gyalsé not long after this time when they separated. Sera Khandro artfully places these negative words about Gyalsé and his money-grubbing relatives in Tupzang's voice, which she then somewhat harshly refutes. Yet, in writing these words in her *Autobiography*, she conveys the bad feelings that *both* of them had about Gyalsé's relatives without appearing to be insulting her in-laws.

Sera Khandro (rhetorically?) negates much of what the other voices in her self-narrative tell her, whether they praise her as a *ḍākinī* and a Treasure revealer, whether they tease her about needing a consort, or whether their messages are less lauding and more mundane, pertaining to the difficulties of living within her worldly communities. Chapter Four continues this exploration of Sera Khandro's dialogic interactions, focusing on her representations of consort practices through conversations she narrates between

herself and other jealous and disapproving women in her communities, the men in her life who exchanged her between themselves, and the *ḍākinīs* who never let her forget that her destiny involved engaging in consort relationships. Somewhere in-between these dialectics concerning whether or not her female body was virtuous, whether or not she was a Treasure revealer, and whether or not sexual yoga was misconduct, Sera Khandro articulates her autobiographical self. It is through these many dialogic interactions that she can present herself as humble, but assertive, destined for greatness, yet overwhelmed with human suffering.

The Role of Visions in Sera Khandro's Autobiography

The dialogic tone of Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* stretches out to include not only interactions with humans, but also with supernatural beings. The most central way in which Sera Khandro represents herself in her *Autobiography* is through recounting a host of elaborate visionary experiences in which she describes in minute detail her interactions with the plethora of *ḍākinīs*, *dakas*, and bodhisattvas in their various celestial palaces. Nearly half of Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* records events, interactions, and journeys that occurred in Sera Khandro's dream-like visions. As I have previously mentioned, the importance of visions in Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* is paradigmatic of Treasure revealers' autobiographies in which visionary experiences receiving teachings and finding Treasures serve to legitimize their claims to be Padmasambhava and Yeshé Tsogyal's prophesized emissaries. The key figures in Sera Khandro's visionary encounters are *ḍākinīs*, especially the mother of all *ḍākinīs* Yeshé Tsogyal. Of the roughly ninety-two visions Sera Khandro recounts in her *Autobiography*, the majority of

them (forty-eight) are visions in which the central figure is a *ḍākinī* or some type of female divinity, including most commonly Yeshé Tsogyal, Vajravārāhī, Vajrayoginī, Tārā, Machik Labdrön, Dorjé Yüdrönma, Shelkar Dorjé Tso, Dorjé Zungma, and Dewé Gocha.⁴⁷⁵ While some might dismiss these super mundane reveries as superfluous fictional interludes in an otherwise interesting autobiographical account of life as a female Treasure revealer in early twentieth-century Golok, Sera Khandro's visionary reveries tell us just as much about the ways in which she understood and sought to portray herself as her more mundane reflections do. *Ḍākinīs* and the other divinities Sera Khandro envisions offer her encouragement in an uncertain world; they restore her inner confidence in herself and her divine purpose as a Treasure revealer, boosting her up in moments of self-doubt when others in her conventional reality distrust her. Visions appear in Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* at strategic moments, just when her worldly circumstances reach their most extreme lows. They thus form another dialectic running through Sera Khandro's narrative between conventional worldly difficulties and divine inspiration.

In her analysis of the role of *ḍākinī*'s in Jikmé Lingpa's autobiographical writings, Janet Gyatso demonstrates the ways in which *ḍākinīs*' language destabilizes Jikmé Lingpa's conventional understanding of himself. Gyatso suggests that *ḍākinīs*' language emphasizes the unformulated quality of selfhood, which in turn reflects the undecidability of experience in the Buddhist context. Gyatso writes,

Rather, the self-consciously encoded nature of the *ḍākinīs*' talk demonstrates the provisional status of her words, the very relativity of distinctions, and their lack of any single determinate or specifiable meaning. It suggests a way of writing autobiography that does not violate the reality of the "self," as Jigme Lingpa sees it, namely, its ultimate empty and unformulatable nature.⁴⁷⁶

Gyatso also represents the instances in which visions offer Jikmé Lingpa affection, encouragement, advice, and recognition as a Treasure revealer.⁴⁷⁷ Thus, she argues that visions both bolster Jikmé Lingpa's sense of himself and destabilize it, contributing to the ultimate undecidability of his experience.

The elusiveness of *ḍākinīs'* language emerges in Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* as well, yet I would suggest that for Sera Khandro, divine visions and especially visions of *ḍākinīs* help her to build up a solid, self-confident understanding of herself as a female agent in a world not particularly supportive of her religious aspirations. What is at stake in Sera Khandro's visionary life is not the prototypically Buddhist project of reflecting on the unformulatable nature of the self, but rather articulating a viable sense of self in a social world in which she had very few role models and supporters. Perhaps because of her unusual status as a female Treasure revealer and as an outsider to the Golok family lineages of Treasure revealers, Sera Khandro did not have the luxury of analyzing the unformulated quality of her sense of self as much as she felt the urgency of putting together a coherent identity with the aid of her divine interlocutors.⁴⁷⁸ Yet the importance of visions in formulating a coherent sense of Treasure revealers' selfhood is not unique to Sera Khandro because she was female or because she had difficult social circumstances. In the famous fourteenth-century polymath and Treasure revealer Longchenpa's biographical reflections, *ḍākinīs* bolster his confidence in himself as a legitimate Treasure revealer by recognizing him as an authentic incarnation and by confirming how and where he will extract his Treasures.⁴⁷⁹ Therefore, although Sera Khandro's subordinate status as an "inferior female birth" struggling to make a name for herself in Golok society as a Treasure revealer influences the way she presents her literary self, the fact that her

ḍākinī visions bolster her sense of self-confidence resembles the autobiographical self-presentations of other Treasure revealers. The difference is that for Sera Khandro, divine visions offer her nothing but confirmation, albeit sometimes in a “tough love” form, such as when a terrifying woman threatens to stab Sera Khandro in order to stop her from jumping into the river during a childhood bout of depression. Perhaps Sera Khandro’s worldly experiences of suffering and displacement serve to destabilize her sense of selfhood to the degree that her visionary life can do nothing but bolster her fragile self-confidence.

Sera Khandro recounts having visionary experiences that offered her encouragement to accomplish her divinely inspired purpose of revealing Treasures at key moments in her narrative, moments in which her worldly life was causing her great sadness and hardship. From her childhood onwards, ḍākinīs appear to Sera Khandro immediately after discouraging events and interactions in her worldly life. She recounts that when she was nine years old on pilgrimage to U ri (*Dbus ri*), the night after Sera Khandro’s mother scolded her for indicating that she remembered her share of texts from Önpu Taktsang, a holy place associated with Yeshé Tsogyal, she had an extraordinary dream:

That night in my dream a ḍākinī wearing bone ornaments and silk clothing adorned with various jewels arrived. Having given me a skull cup full of beer, she said, “Noble woman, drink this – it is [your] share of the ḍākinī feast.”

I asked her, “If I don’t arrive at the ranks of the ḍākinī feast, what is the benefit of just my share of the feast?”

The ḍākinī replied, “Train your vajra body in yogic postures. Because you are an illusory emanation of the ḍākinī’s mental energy, in not a long time we will meet again.”⁴⁸⁰

Even if her mother cannot accept her divine capacities and feels she must punish her for indicating that she is a Treasure revealer, divine *ḍākinīs* immediately appear to reassure Sera Khandro that she is special by giving her a share of the *ḍākinīs*' feast. Just after this short dream interlude, Sera Khandro continues recounting the story of her pilgrimage with her parents. In this way, visionary interludes interspersed in her narrative balance the negative elements of her conventional account, lending a two-toned quality to her narrative. They allow her to reveal her extraordinary access to the divine at the same time as she relates the story of her worldly sufferings.

Sera Khandro writes that when she was ten years old, the Chinese and Tibetan leaders met and had a conference about Sera Khandro's leadership status. Despairing at the thought of being forced into pursuing a worldly life, Sera Khandro prays fervently to Yeshé Tsogyal:

Then, when I was in my bedroom [called] the Sunlight Place, a pleasant woman saying she was the *Ḍākinī* Yeshé Tsogyal came who was ornamented with many jewels and whose good smell pervaded the vicinity of the entire room. She said: "Fortunate Lady – why did you call me?"

I said, "My reason for calling out lamentingly to you is this: since you all who reside in the expanse of primordial wisdom have greatly powerful compassion and strength, how do you think I can accomplish my intention to practice the completely pure Dharma on an isolated mountain ravine, going from my home to being a homeless one? All my parents and relatives say that I must maintain the actions of cyclic existence. What do I need to do to dispel their strict orders?"

When I asked this, the *ḍākinī* replied, "Pray according to this during the six times of the day and night and it is certain that all of your obstacles will be pacified."

She disappeared and I heard this from the resonance of her voice:

E ma ho!
 All refuges condensed into One, *Ḍākinī* Yeshé Tsogyal,
 I supplicate to you with overwhelming fervent yearning.
 Pacify my outer, inner, and secret obstacles and
 Grant me the blessing of spontaneously accomplishing all of my wishes.

Because I constantly exerted myself in [reciting] this, all the leaders got fed up and said that I could do whatever I wanted regarding being a leader or not.⁴⁸¹

In this passage, Sera Khandro's visionary interaction with Yeshé Tsogyal not only offers her encouragement and religious instruction, but actually directly intervenes to ameliorate the hardships she faces in her worldly life by helping Sera Khandro to evade the political leaders' demands.

Visionary interludes give Sera Khandro hope and encouragement during the difficult period in her childhood when she struggles to escape the demands her parents place on her to marry and pursue a political life in Lhasa. Despairing that her father didn't love her since he had given her away in marriage, Sera Khandro recounts that she attempted suicide by drinking a mixture of opium and alcohol. Her father rescues her just in time by forcing the unconscious Sera Khandro to regurgitate the poison. Sera Khandro recovers from this trauma only to suddenly lose consciousness for a period of seven days in which she travels to other realms as one who returns from the dead (a *delok*). Sera Khandro recounts traveling to various realms including Guru Rinpoché's Buddhafield in which she met Yeshé Tsogyal in person and begged her not to be sent back into the world. Yeshé Tsogyal responds:

"Noble woman, because you are a manifestation of the form of my beneficial deeds, still you must benefit beings and return to the world. When the time comes, I will come to lead you on the path."

Then, in the center of the *maṇḍala*, there was a crystal vase. Inside of this she said there was a "*ra sa ya*" ambrosia of immortality and [she] poured it into [my mouth]. As soon as I touched this [ambrosia], as if waking from sleep, I returned to my physical body. Tears sprang forth from my parents and all my relatives.⁴⁸²

Yeshé Tsogyal in person thus nurtures Sera Khandro back to life after her depression and suicidal experience. Sera Khandro explains that although some accused her of being a

delok, her family denied this accusation for fear that her future husband's family, the Chinese leader's family, would disapprove. Whether or not Sera Khandro is a *delok*, she stuns her parents by telling them of her journeys traveling through the hells and viewing the suffering in the six realms of cyclic existence.

This pattern of stressful worldly circumstances and encouraging divine visionary interludes, most often with Yeshé Tsogyal as the main figure, continues throughout the many difficult times in her early teen years. The climax of these early visions occurs shortly after the worst devastation of her young life: her beloved mother dies at the same time as her father finalizes the plans for her upcoming marriage to the Chinese leader of Kyilung. Just as her depression reaches its ultimate low, the most important vision of Sera Khandro's life occurs. Vajravārāhī appears before her in a dream and bestows upon her the registries of Sera Khandro's two Treasure cycles. This vision gives her life purpose and helps to bolster her resolve to leave home and embark upon her life-long journey of spiritual practice.

After Sera Khandro's escape from the confines of her Lhasa family's life, trouble follows her. Hardships on the road and adjusting to the rough environment of Golok plague her. Not only that, but interpersonal problems between Sera Khandro and other women in her religious communities as well as between her and her life partner Gara Gyalsé make life difficult. During this period also, visions appear in Sera Khandro's narrative at critical moments of despair to reassure her that her worldly problems are surmountable. For example, when Sera Khandro was seventeen years old, she was working as a servant girl after being expelled from Drimé Özer's household by his jealous consort. At this time, she receives a letter from Gara Tertön summoning her to act

as his consort. Shortly after this, Gara Tertön's consort Yakza threatened to abuse her verbally and physically. Sera Khandro despairs when she realizes that the auspicious connection of her prophesized interaction with Gara Tertön is ruined. Then, when she practices the clear light of the fierce woman (*gtum mo*) meditation practice,⁴⁸³ she has the following vision:

When I was there practicing the clear light of the fierce woman (*gtum mo*), my perception transformed and in a large seminal drop, there was an even, vast ground with flowers and lakes surrounding it. In the middle of this, inside of a vast rainbow pavilion, there were many offering substances. In particular, a feast offering was arranged called the Feast of the Ḍākinīs of the Three Bodies [body, speech, and mind]. There, heroes, heroines, and Ḍākinīs had gathered like a market assembly of gods and men.

I wondered, "What is this?" When I went to the door of the pavilion and looked in, the Ḍākinī Yeshé Tsogyal acted as the head of the assembly and opened the *Maṇḍala* of the Dharma Ocean of the Collected Teachings. I was extremely joyous and I prostrated, offering these words:

"Salutations!
From the center of the expanse of the pure sky realm of reality,
You act for the benefit of beings with the excellent means of compassion.

To the divine assembly of mother Ḍākinīs who gave birth to all the
Buddhas,
I prostrate with devotion from my three doors [body, speech, and mind].

By the power of auspicious connections of good prayers from former
lives,
Today I meet with the assembly of mothers and Ḍākinīs.

Having taken care of all of us sentient beings in existence,
Until the ocean of cyclic existence is empty,
Ḍākinī Tsogyal, may we become inseparable from you!"

After I made this prayer, two Ḍākinīs saying they were Künselma and Dewé Gocha came and said,

"Eh ma! One with fortunate karmic traces!
It is extremely amazing that you came, friend,
To the city of the blissful, blissful Ḍākinīs.

The time has come for the prayers
 Of your share of the secret treasury of dharma.
 Noble Lady, you have [fortunate] karmic traces!”

Saying this, they both washed me and changed my clothes and [we] went into the pavilion. Mother Tsogyal smiled and said the following:

“Noble lady, how is benefiting beings going?
 Have you had great difficulties in the world?
 Have you not [grasped on] to the illusory land as your own?”

When she said this, thinking of the suffering I felt when I came from my land [Lhasa] and thinking of the suffering I had experienced since arriving in Amdo and Kham, I bowed before the feet of the Lady and offered these words:

“Alas! One with eyes of the treasury of primordial wisdom –

I will tell you a bit about the situation of myself, this one with an inferior [female] body.

From the time I was eight, *ḍākinīs* took care of me;
 They reassured me in reality, visions, and dreams.

From the time I was twelve, the Accomplished Knowledge Holder
 Sarahapa took care of me and bestowed ripening and liberation upon me.

When I was thirteen, I obtained in my hands the non-erroneous registry of
 the profound Treasure of the *ḍākinīs*’ oral transmission.

From the time I was fourteen, I exerted myself only in benefiting others.

At fifteen in accordance with the *ḍākinī*’s order
 I came to the eastern region of Amdo and Kham that is like a demonic
 land.

Not dying, I experienced the suffering of hell.

Although the karmic traces of former aspirations gathered in time,
 Suddenly, again and again they went away on account of *sapta* demons.

For someone like me in a demonic land without virtue
 [I can] forget about benefiting beings – on account of obscurations from
 degenerated [commitments],
 It is difficult to benefit myself with pure morality.

Because of other forces, the profound Treasure consorts and doctrine
 holders

Have been lost [to those who] pretend to follow Vinaya rules
And see me, this inferior birth [i.e., woman] as something to
abandon.

The two benefits [of self and other] not arising, I don't accomplish the
ḍākinī's orders.
Because one cannot hear of or see [someone] with bad karma like me,
Now I will not go to the realm of the world."

Saying this, I cried. The ḍākinī [Yeshé Tsogyal] said,

"Listen one with karmic traces of good fortune!
Don't be saddened by the illusory land.
Adhere to the secure place of changeless awareness.

Happiness and suffering are like a dream-city.
Don't weaken your capacity to carry awareness and emptiness on the path.

This hollow illusory body
[Must] rely on a consort to enhance bliss and emptiness.

By the power of the prayer of the Lotus [Born One],
Gradually you will meet consorts and Dharma holders.

When the time of karma and prayers gathers together,
You will skillfully subdue the five fields of disciples.

With an iron hook, you will summon of the noble hero method consort
Who grasps the quintessence of the esoteric precepts.

The sword of egoless knowledge cuts through
The eight worldly dharmas that are in opposition to dharma.

May the demonic spy who grasps on to duality
Attain the realization of the non-dual Truth Body.

Realize that all mental waverings of happiness and suffering
Are luminous and empty awareness.

One with the karmic traces of being a messenger of the ḍākinīs –
Although you don't want to [go to the world], benefit sentient beings.

Like a precious jewel,
It is impossible that you will be stained by negative, inferior wrong views.

Like water bubbles up from hard earth,

You will spontaneously accomplish the two purposes.

Since still in the world your remaining disciples have not finished,
Intensely arouse vows and aspirations
To establish [disciples] in bliss by whatever means you can tame [them]
In the various places of the demonic land of Amdo and Kham.

Until you are twenty, keep this secret.
Abandon the bliss of ordinary men.
Benefit beings, both formless and with form,
By [means of] auspicious connection substances.

You must not rip the seal of the profound Treasure.
From now onwards, if you rely on the essential auspicious
connection,
It is certain that you will take out the jewel of the two benefits.”

Having said this, [Yeshé Tsogyal] gave me a full skull cup of beer and said,
“Drink this without remainder – because it is *ḍākinī*’s accomplishment substance,
it is certain that without exertion, you will know everything there is to be
known.”⁴⁸⁴

In the passage above, Yeshé Tsogyal appears just in time to encourage Sera Khandro to endure her worldly sufferings for the sake of benefiting others despite the overwhelming disappointment and exhaustion she feels. All three themes of this chapter (gender, dialogic interactions, and visions) are present in this passage: Sera Khandro bemoans her “inferior birth” as a woman and the difficulties it causes her to accomplish her spiritual goals in the form of a visionary dialogue. Yeshé Tsogyal’s response to Sera Khandro is unequivocal that she must benefit beings through cultivating the auspicious connections of relying “on a consort to enhance bliss and emptiness.” After all, this visionary sequence emerges just after Gara Tertön’s consort Yakza forbids Sera Khandro access to the lama to act as his consort. *Ḍākinī* visions such as this one offer encouragement in times of distress. As Sera Khandro herself describes, “From the time I was eight, *ḍākinīs* took care of me; they reassured me in reality, visions, and dreams.”⁴⁸⁵ These visionary

ḍākinīs are the opposite of destabilizing forces in her self-narrative; they enable Sera Khandro to build an identity for herself as a legitimate Treasure revealer.

During the difficult period of Sera Khandro's life in her mid-twenties living with her partner Gara Gyalsé, who strongly disapproved of her being a Treasure revealer, divine visions repeatedly comfort Sera Khandro immediately after Gyalsé reprimands her for revealing Treasures. Sera Khandro recounts that when she was twenty-two, just after giving birth to her first child who transformed from a male incarnation of Gara Tertön to a girl (i.e., not an incarnation), she propagated part of a new Treasure that was a (*Machik*) *Labdrön Accomplishment Practice* to monks of the Kangsar family. She records that Gyalsé discovered her Treasure teaching and scolded her. Feeling extremely sad, she prays to the heroes and ḍākinīs of the three realms and has the following visionary interaction:

“I beseech the Omniscient Mother Yeshé Tsogyal
And the heroes and heroines
In the unmanifest land of the Glorious Copper-colored Mountain.

I, this messenger sent by the mother ḍākinīs –
My impure body is being born as a woman.
My impure karma is grasping on to cyclic existence.
My impure place is the demonic land of Golok.
My impure deed is always having a negative community.

From what cause did my karma arise like this?
I am not one who took on the mind stream of the five poisons of afflictive
emotions
And adhered to a worldly householder's life.
I acted in accordance with the divine lama's prophecy.

I thought that I would certainly accomplish benefit for the teachings and beings.
Now, not to mention benefiting others,
Even benefiting my own mind stream is on the verge of going to waste.

Marshall the forces of the might of the ḍākinīs who course in the mother's
expanse!

I beseech you to repel these obstacles of negative conditions!

Bless this impure realm, this ocean of cyclic existence
[To be] the glorious lotus light [realm].

Bless this impure flesh and blood body
[To be] the stainless expanse that is a rainbow body.

Bless this mind and mental events in cyclic existence
[To be] liberated into the state of great primordial wisdom.

Liberate adherence to the two types of erroneous ignorance that is Rudra
In the great unobstructed nonreferential state of the expanse.

In short, experiences of the way things are arose like this
In me, the tramp of the unfabricated dimension –

I am without hatred or no hatred for my life partner.
I am without falling or not falling into cyclic existence.
I am without liberation or non-liberation from this illusory body.
I am without the errors or non-errors of sentient beings.

I am without seeing or not seeing Buddhafields.
I am without attaining or non-attaining Buddhahood.
I am without knowing or not knowing the view.
I am without realization or non-realization concerning experience during meditation.

The nature of mind that is without error
Does not enter into mental fabrications regarding illusory forms.
Like the sky, [that which is] completely pure is without bias.
It is seminal essence alone, without elaboration.

In short, I sing a song of the way things are.”

I heard a formless voice coming from the sky say something like this:

“Oh my, oh my yogi –

Is the great self-emergent primordial wisdom
Free from exertion?

Is the unborn self-emergent spontaneous presence
The ground of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa?

Are appearances of good and bad, bliss and misery

The play of reality itself?

Is the poisonous water lily that is the eight worldly dharmas
To be abandoned quickly?

Will you take out the ḍākinī's heart nectar that is your [Treasure] wealth
At [the right] time?

Will benefiting both the teachings and beings
Come from the south?

You don't need to feel upset and exhausted
By this appearance of illusory emanations.

The Lotus [Born One]'s testament does not change.
It is certain that in time, aspirations prayers will gather together.”⁴⁸⁶

Visions such as this one present their message using poetic and elusive language, yet their support for Sera Khandro's spiritual purpose is unequivocal. In the visionary interchange above, Sera Khandro represents herself (again) as one with an impure female body and as one who has wandered off the spiritual path and become engaged in cyclic existence surrounded by a negative community (i.e., Gyalsé) in the demonic land of Golok. Yet this time, in her own voice, she expresses that her spiritual realization has fully transcended attachment to her unfortunate circumstances; she has realized the true nature of mind beyond clinging to concepts of cyclic existence and freedom and beyond attaining or not attaining Buddhahood. Thus, recounting her visionary encounters not only gives Sera Khandro a way to present herself positively through others' voices, but also allows her to find her own voice through interactions with encouraging forces who mitigate the repression that Gyalsé and others imposed on her in her mundane existence. Through including laudatory visions such as these in distinctive moments of her self-narrative just after traumatic or negative occurrences in her daily life, Sera Khandro

emphasizes the encouraging role these visionary interludes played in her life at the same time as she portrays herself as a religious visionary worthy of her disciples' devotion.

Conclusion

Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* is not the story of one woman; it is the story of a woman in conversation with many others in her social world. Like Bakhtin's living utterance, the words of Sera Khandro's narrative are populated by a heteroglossia of voices that are overlapping, competing, argumentative, and harmonizing. The voices of hostile and amicable members of her religious communities, benign and pestilent spirits, and chimerical Buddhist divinities animate Sera Khandro's depiction of herself and her religious communities in early twentieth-century Golok. Their conversations invoke issues of great importance to Sera Khandro such as the ability of women to act as religious figures, the virtue or vice of sexuality as a part of the spiritual path, and the balance between personal agency and divine intervention.

Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* is a liberation tale not about herself as an individual agent in a Gusdorfian sense, but in a sense more aligned with medieval Christian religious autobiography in which the autobiographical subject is a soul returning to the divine. Her self-representation fits into Mary Mason's description of the relational self of Western female-authored autobiographies, but the relationality of Sera Khandro's self has more to do with her Tibetan cultural context in which selves were less individuated from each other than with her female gender. But if her self-presentation has little to do with her female gender, then what, if anything, can we say characterizes female-authored autobiographies? What characterizes Tibetan women's autobiographies?

Early feminist autobiography theorists such as Jelinek claimed that styles of autobiographical self-representation had everything to do with the author's gender. Her conclusions reduced gender to a totalizing category that overlooked other differences between selves such as race, class, cultural background, and historical time period. But on the other hand, to say that writing has nothing to do with gender risks the same critique of reductionism. In the case of Tibetan women's autobiography and hagiographies about Tibetan women, there are distinctive and recurrent themes. Themes characteristic of religious women's lives in Tibet are the centrality of marriage (and its associated suffering or need to escape from it), struggles gaining access to religious education, and tensions between balancing labor (farming, animal husbandry, housework) with religious practice, to name a few. These elements are not always present in all texts written by or about Tibetan religious women and they also appear at times in men's writing, but they have a particular resonance with the stories of women's lives. It is preposterous to imagine that if Gara Gyalsé wrote an autobiography, he would record being punished for being late to serve Sera Khandro tea, rushing to return home instead of revealing a Treasure for fear of his child's crying, or feeling depressed that his partner would not accept his status as a Treasure revealer on the basis of his male gender. These issues – food preparation, childcare, and gender discrimination – are specific to the status and social roles of women in Sera Khandro's cultural context. That these themes resonate with experiences of other Tibetan women is evident by the ways in which the female-authored autobiographies we have examined in this chapter include varying degrees of intertextuality with famous female hagiographies such as those of Yeshé Tsogyal, Machik Labdrön, Nangsa Obum, Gelong Palmo, and others. Although we can articulate

some similarities in Tibetan women's autobiographical writing, their writings vary in conjunction with a constellation of other factors including temporal and geographical differences as well as race and class distinctions. Simply because Jetsün Lochen and Sera Khandro were both unusual women who wrote about their lives in early twentieth-century Tibet does not mean that Sera Khandro necessarily shared a great deal in common with Jetsün Lochen, whose life as a celibate nun and abbess in Central Tibet was far removed from her own. Surely Sera Khandro shared more with her male colleagues in their Golok religious communities than with Jetsün Lochen.

That Sera Khandro's female gender was a salient issue for her and others in her communities is clear by the frequency with which she mentions it. Similar to the writing of Orgyen Chökyi, Sera Khandro's inferior female body is a vice that she transforms into a virtue, for her descriptions of herself as a lowly, uneducated woman, as a tramp expelled from empowerment lines, and as a maid servant to Gyalsé dramatize her humility and her human suffering. Yet being female is not only negative, as hosts of *ḍākinīs* hasten to illustrate. Their words of encouragement speak not only to Sera Khandro, but to all female and male disciples who read her *Autobiography*, exhorting them to see the female body as "the mother [who gives birth to] the great assembly of primordially perfected Ones Gone to Bliss."⁴⁸⁷ Through these visionary and worldly dialectics representing Sera Khandro's negotiation between perceiving herself as an inferior woman with little community support and as a divinely prophesized *ḍākinī*, Sera Khandro forms an *Autobiography* befitting of a woman with religious authority that is sufficiently humble, yet assertive and confident. We will continue this exploration of the interactive nature of Sera Khandro's writing in the following chapter, turning our focus to

another major issue about which a cacophony of divine, demonic, and human voices speak: the controversial issue of consort relationships.

Chapter Four: Consorts and Treasure Revelation Communities

Perhaps the most controversial and ground-breaking facet of Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* and the *Biography* she wrote of her consort Drimé Özer is the glimpse they provide into the world of consort practices in the early twentieth-century Eastern Tibetan religious communities in which Sera Khandro lived. The descriptions in her writings go far beyond prescriptive accounts of consort practices that can be found in other hagiographic and doctrinal literature. Sera Khandro portrays the complicated interests, relationship dynamics, and emotions of women and men engaged in consort relationships. Her writing includes ephemeral philosophical poetry evoking the Vajrayāna interpretation of the significance of the union of male method and female wisdom for the realization of Buddhahood. Yet it also includes mundane descriptions of jealousy between competing female consorts and tensions between the men who were involved with them. Sera Khandro's multivalent accounts of consort practices as they were practiced in her communities lend insight into the following intriguing questions: 1) What are the purposes of consort practices involving sexual yoga in Tibetan Buddhism and in particular in the Treasure tradition? 2) What rhetorical strategies does Sera Khandro use to represent herself as a participant in consort practices in her *Autobiography*? 3) How does she portray the social dynamics revolving around consort practices in the communities in which she lived? 4) What is the proper moral code, celibate or non-celibate, for a Tantric Buddhist practitioner? 5) What is the role of women in Tantric sexual yoga – are they objects serving the male subject or are they also agents who benefit from sexual practices?

This chapter begins with a synoptic history of the ambiguous and controversial status of sexual practices in Tibetan Buddhism, more specifically in the Great Perfection system of the Nyingma School that Sera Khandro practiced. This history will provide background for a discussion of the purposes for consort practices within Tibetan Buddhism according to Sera Khandro's auto/biographical writings. Much of Sera Khandro's presentation follows normative ideas within the Treasure tradition, aside from the unusually clear message she conveys that consort practices are beneficial for both male and female Tantric practitioners.⁴⁸⁸ The most obvious precedent for Sera Khandro's radical presentation of herself as a female Treasure revealer who uses male consorts for her own spiritual benefit is Yeshé Tsogyal, a natural model for Sera Khandro given that she was considered to be Yeshé Tsogyal's incarnation. According to Sera Khandro, consort practices increase the pliancy of the channels and winds (*rtsa rlung*) running through the practitioner's subtle body. More specifically, consorts are essential in dispelling obstacles to the health and longevity of both male and female practitioners. For Treasure revealers, having a consort (*thabs grogs*) is one of the several essential auspicious connections (*rten 'brel*) necessary for successful revelation, along with finding the proper doctrine holder (*chos bdag*), time, and location of the Treasure. In the context of Treasure revelation, consorts are specifically associated with the process of decoding unreadable symbolic scripts. The decoding capacity of consorts is associated with female consorts and with the celestial *ḍākinīs* who encode and guard Treasures, prototypically the *ḍākinī* consort of Padmasambhava, Yeshé Tsogyal. However, an interesting facet of Sera Khandro's writings is that she depicts both her male consorts and

male Treasure revealers' female consorts as having the capacity to aid in the decoding process.

After introducing Sera Khandro's understanding of the purposes for having a consort, this chapter will explore not only *what* Sera Khandro writes about consort practices but the *way* in which she writes it, including the literary devices she employs and the tones she uses to portray the very sensitive and personal topic of her own involvement in consort relationships. As I have discussed in Chapter Three, Sera Khandro portrays her extraordinary qualities primarily through the many other human and divine voices that populate her self-narrative. These divine voices also continually remind her not to ignore the *ḍākinīs*' prophecies that urge her to seek the appropriate consorts necessary for her to successfully reveal Treasures. These voices come to Sera Khandro almost always in the form of divine *ḍākinīs* who appear to her, teasing and taunting her to overcome her bashfulness and to differentiate between immoral sexual indulgence and pure spiritual union. What is at stake in these dialogic interactions is the question of the ethics of sexuality as a part of religious practice. Sera Khandro depicts herself as constantly rejecting the *ḍākinīs*' hints and allegations, yet when she responds to their insinuations, she reveals her own commitment to the Tantric path. By presenting the necessity of having a consort not in her own voice but through the divine voices that populate her narrative, Sera Khandro portrays herself as a legitimate participant in esoteric Tantric practices involving multiple male consorts without appearing to be lustful, immoral, or arrogant. *Ḍākinīs* give her the divine backing she needs to pave the way for her own apotheosis from being an ambiguous woman, neither nun nor laywoman, to becoming recognized as an emissary of the *ḍākinīs*. The divine injunctions

Sera Khandro receives culminate in prophecies directing her to realize the ultimate fulfillment of her spiritual and sentimental hopes and dreams, union with the love of her life, Drimé Özer.

Although Tantric Buddhist scriptures and iconography abound with descriptions of esoteric sexual rites and images of divinities in various poses of sexual union, little information can be gleaned from them regarding if and how Tantric practitioners actually performed rituals involving consorts. Tibetan monastic apologists have attempted to aestheticize explicit mention of sexuality in Tantric scriptures by offering sophisticated hermeneutical strategies that metaphorically interpret the often erotic content of Tantric scriptures; rather than enacting rites involving sexual yoga literally, monastics visualize practices involving consorts. In contrast, the Tibetan Treasure tradition with its predominantly non-monastic adherents maintains a vestige of a literal interpretation of Tantric scriptures in that engaging with a human consort is an essential aspect of the revelation process. There are examples of monastic Treasure revealers who do not engage with consorts, such as the founder of the immense monastic community Larung Gar (*Bla rung sgar*) in contemporary Serta, Golok, named Khenpo Jikmé Püntso (1934-2003). Nevertheless, even in cases of monastic Treasure revealers there is a persistent belief that without sexual yoga, a Treasure revealer cannot reveal all the Treasures that are available to him or her, or at least will have considerable additional difficulty. This is clear in Sera Khandro's writing; she repeatedly laments that she could not reveal a particular Treasure due to not having a consort. Visualizing a consort is also possible, but according to Sera Khandro, it produces less powerful auspicious connections (*rten 'brel*) than engaging with an actual physical consort.

Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* and Drimé Özer's *Biography* portray persistent tensions between celibate monastic and non-celibate Tantric interpretations of religious values and lifestyles. In her *Autobiography*, Sera Khandro depicts this tension through representing the difficulties she faced as a religious adept who was neither an ordinary laywoman nor a monastic. Sera Khandro recounts that this in-between status led to tension with nuns who sought to make her conform to monastic ideals and to problems with negative gossip about her sexual conduct that seemed to accompany her everywhere she went. In Drimé Özer's *Biography*, Sera Khandro portrays his dilemma between choosing a monastic life (to the chagrin of the visionary *ḍākinīs* who made their preferences against monkhood well known to him) and choosing a non-celibate Tantric life (involving the complications of managing and providing for a community including multiple consorts).

Sera Khandro's description of consort practices is not fascinating in the detail she provides about sexual interactions, for she is quite modest and metaphoric in her descriptions, but rather in the detail with which she describes the interpersonal relationships and emotional connections among people in her communities. Sera Khandro's auto/biographical writings take consort practices out of the distant, analytical frameworks in which they are presented in prescriptive doctrinal and ritual scripture and place them back into the vibrant community contexts in which they were enacted, contexts filled with strong personalities and competing interests but above all great faith in the Tantric spiritual path. Her portrayal of consort practices lends itself neither to unrealistic conclusions of female supremacy nor to overly negative judgments of women's subordination in communities involving consort practices. Rather, her writings

present women as agents, as aides, and as objects of exchange, thus offering varied perspectives on the status of women and sexuality in Tantric practice. Given that Sera Khandro herself was intimately involved in the world of consort practices that she depicts, her writings are an excellent resource contributing to a social history of the religious values and community realities of Tantric consort practices.

The Ambiguous Roles of Sexuality and Celibacy in Tibetan Buddhism

A study of the history of sexuality in Tibetan Buddhism, or more specifically in the Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism, deserves a lengthy book of its own. However, in order to contextualize Sera Khandro's discussion of tensions related to consort practices in her religious communities, I will briefly introduce some broad contours of the framework within which Sera Khandro's accounts of sexual yoga and consort practices fit. Sexuality plays an ambiguous role in Tibetan Buddhism, a fact that emerges in Sera Khandro's writing through her descriptions of her own ambivalence to engage in consort practices as well as her descriptions of monks repeatedly requesting her services as a consort. Controversies have raged for at least one thousand years over questions pertaining to the proper role of sexuality in Tibetan Buddhist religious practice. Key questions over the many centuries of debate have included the following: 1) Should a celibate monk request Tantric initiation when consecration rites involve ritualized sexuality? 2) How can one person maintain the three sets of Buddhist vows – the vows of individual liberation (*prātimokṣa*, the monastic vows), the Mahāyāna bodhisattva vows, and the Tantric vows – if each set of vows contains differing interpretations of the role of sexuality in religious life? The three sets of vows listed above represent the historical

transformation of Buddhism from an ascetic religion of renunciation in early Indian Buddhism, to a Mahāyāna understanding of the bodhisattva path emphasizing benefiting others that developed in the early centuries of the Common Era, and then later to Tantric reinterpretations, beginning in the late seventh century, that emphasized ritual initiations and the transmuting of afflictive emotions such as desire into energy for the path to enlightenment.

The key hermeneutical problem in reconciling the vows associated with these three distinct elements of Tibetan Buddhism lies in the fact that initiation into Tantric Buddhism requires four consecrations (*abhiṣeka*). Given that two of them include ritualized sexuality if interpreted literally, they appear to contradict celibacy vows. In his exhaustive study on Indian esoteric Buddhism, Ronald Davidson has shown that the first consecration, the jar consecration (*kalasābhiṣeka*) in which a teacher initiates the Tantric disciple into the *maṇḍala* of a deity, represents a royal metaphor of coronation parallel to those found in the political spheres of sixth-century post-Gupta India.⁴⁸⁹ Yet the following two consecrations, the secret consecration (*guhyābhiṣeka*) and the insight consecration (*prajñājñābhiṣeka*), follow an antinomian and explicitly sexual model. In the eighth century *Hevajra Tantra*, the secret consecration is described in the following way:

Then one places in the center of the *maṇḍala* the Wisdom-maiden, sixteen years old, who has all the marks of perfection, who has been bathed with water containing sandalwood extract, saffron and camphor, in immaculate garments and adorned with all kinds of jewelry. . . Then envisaging the Family-Head (= Akṣobhya) as resting on his crown, the master honors her with worship, external, internal and secret, praising her with acclamations, and thus he should unite in her embrace. Then he should recite the *anurāga* (enamoring) mantra, and as soon as there is excitation he intones the refrain of HŪṂ; as bliss descends, he recites *pūja* (worship) mantra. Then with an elephant tusk he collects the *bodhicitta* from her pudenda and pouring it into a shell-receptacle, with a gesture of the ring-

finger and the thumb, he drops it into the pupil's mouth. The pupil says: "O Bliss!" and drinks it without hesitation.⁴⁹⁰

After this ritual in which the disciple drinks the combined fluids of the master and his consort, the third insight consecration is no less antinomian – after a series of physical and mental exercises, the disciple copulates with the female partner in order to generate the psycho-physiological realization of four levels of joy. The fourth consecration (*caturthābhiṣeka*) is an instruction on the nature of reality that contextualizes the previous sexual consecrations.⁴⁹¹ Davidson outlines a transformation of the significance of these sexual rituals from an earlier (eighth-century) sacramental model in which "the goal was the ritual experience of sanctified copulation" to a later (late eighth and early ninth-century) yogic model.⁴⁹² This yogic model involved ritual sexuality for the purpose of manipulating psycho-physical winds through energy channels within the subtle body in order to engender spiritual realization. Interestingly, this paradigm shift from sacramental to yogic or psycho-physiological ritualized sexuality mirrors a shift that David White articulates in the context of Hindu Tantra. White suggests that the earlier Yoginī Kaula tradition involving the ritualized ingestion of sexual fluids was replaced in the tenth to twelfth centuries by "an internalization, an aestheticization, and a semanticization of Kaula practice" in which the previously literal sexual practices became transmuted into an internal process taking place within the male Tantric practitioner.⁴⁹³ We will return to the psycho-physiological turn of Tantric sexual rites in the following section in which I describe the ways that Sera Khandro's presentation of the purposes for sexual yoga fit squarely in the later yogic model, although the earlier substratum involving the sacramental power of fluids does not disappear.

Given the unconventional and explicitly sexual nature of these Tantric initiation rites, it is not difficult to imagine the hermeneutical quandary they posed to Buddhist commentators. Indeed, for more than one thousand years, Buddhist scholars and practitioners in Tibet have endeavored to interpret the significance of the antinomian Tantras and to explain how they can be integrated with the other two systems of vows to form one coherent system of ethics. The most common interpretive mechanism used to understand the significance of these Tantric consecration rituals is to read them as metaphoric descriptions or as visualization instructions. Indeed, this is the way they are enacted in the contemporary context, using ritual substances to symbolize the sexual rite described in Tantric scriptures such as *The Hevajra Tantra*. However, there is evidence that these Tantric consecrations were once enacted literally. One indication of this is Atiśa's (982-1054 C.E.) famous proclamation in *A Lamp for the Path to Awakening* that "Those leading a celibate life should not accept the secret or insight / gnosis consecrations since *The Scripture of the Primordial Buddha* emphatically prohibits them."⁴⁹⁴ Atiśa's statement prohibits monks from accepting two of the four Tantric initiations because he argues that the (literal) sexuality involved in them violated monastic vows of celibacy.

On the other hand, later exegesis attempting to reconcile the three types of vows asserts their ultimate compatibility. For example, in his commentary on Ngari Panchen Pema Wangkyi Gyelpo's (1487-1542) text *Ascertaining the Three Vows* (*Sdom gsum rnam nges*), Dujom Rinpoché (1904-1988) articulates the ways in which these three sets of vows are not in conflict in terms of the role of sexuality in religious practice:

For example, one of the four root downfalls [of the monastic code] is sexual intercourse. If, according to the mantra words of honor, one engages in the

practice of the three recognitions, although externally the activity appears to be intercourse it does not qualify as such. A qualified mantra practitioner has transformed both object and subject into the recognition of male and female wisdom deities, so that the first of the four prerequisites is incomplete. If any of the four prerequisites is incomplete, the act does not constitute a defeat. If ordinary desire is transformed into the recognition of great bliss, the intention is incomplete. The activity of union is incomplete because one is maintaining the words of honor concerning method and wisdom. Ultimately, the loss of seminal fluid and the experience and attachment that arise from sexual satisfaction are transformed into the experience of primordial wisdom awareness, within which the essential fluid is maintained as the ultimate result. The prerequisite of the result is thereby incomplete as well.

When one recognizes that all dharmas arise from the nature of mind, like the experience of a dream, it will be impossible to contradict the essential point of mantra practice.⁴⁹⁵

Dujom Rinpoché's statement leaves open the possibility that if a monk who has received all three sets of vows has sexual intercourse but is able to perceive both subject and object as male and female wisdom deities, to transform his desire into the recognition of great bliss, and to transform his loss of seminal fluid and his attachment into primordial wisdom awareness, then his act is not a violation of any of his three sets of vows. While it is easier to claim one is transmuting desire and attachment than to actually do so, this reinterpretation of the meaning of maintaining monastic vows according to a Tantric view opens the door to multiple interpretations of the role of sexuality and celibacy in Tibetan Buddhism. Just as the lines between celibate monasticism and Tantric practice are more blurry than they initially appear, likewise, Sera Khandro's auto/biographical writings repeatedly describe tensions between monastic and non-celibate interpretations of religious ethics. As a female consort to male religious figures, Sera Khandro often found herself caught in the middle of a dialectic between the moral superiority of strict celibacy and the expedient means of sexual yoga, a polemic which preceded her by a millennium yet has rarely been addressed from the perspective of a female consort.

Although the Nyingma School includes the greatest number of non-celibate Tantric practitioners, in fact, within the highest Nyingma teaching, the Great Perfection (*Rdzogs chen*), there is also a degree of ambivalence regarding sexual yoga. In his important work systematizing the Seminal Heart (*Snying thig*) teachings of the Great Perfection titled *The Treasury of Words and Meanings* (*Tshig don mdzod*), the greatest thinker of the Nyingma school named Longchen Rabjampa (*Klong chen rab 'byam pa*, 1308-1364) suggested that sexual yoga fit into a category of lower teachings relating to “conventional seminal nuclei.” He argued that teachings about manipulating these lower channels and winds were only an “‘efficacious means’ for taking care of those otherwise blocked from the Great Perfection path, so that those people obsessively addicted to the conventional seminal nuclei can circuitously enter (the path of Great Perfection).”⁴⁹⁶ Longchenpa quotes from the *Tantra of Unimpeded Sound* (*Sgra thal 'gyur*) to support his point:

Since you desire to rely on the reality of seminal nuclei,
(I will discuss the contemplative techniques)
Relating to the ultimate and conventional (seminal nuclei).

(i) Those who for the time being desire Buddhahood
In reliance upon the conventional seminal nuclei should do as follows:

Your consort should have the complete requisite characteristics –
When you spot one with the perfect characteristics
Whether she be a goddess, demi-goddess, Brahmin,
Low caste, or a heretic,
You begin with the techniques for attracting her,
And then you must perfect your bodies
Via the object of reliance (i.e., consort), the channels,
And the focus of visualization (i.e., the seminal nuclei, etc.).

Then, you must bring the conventional seminal nuclei down, retain them, reverse them (back upwards)
Disperse them within the channels, and mix them with the winds;

You then must rely upon emptiness, eradicate your intellect,
And reverse your ordinary body and mind.

(ii) On the other hand, through reliance upon the ultimate seminal nuclei
You can meet with the objects of the empty Reality Body:

Stimulating the lamp of the empty seminal nuclei
You train on awareness' efflorescent dynamics,
And when you finally gain deep attunement such that (their luminosity
Is vividly clear) without ordinary distinctions between daytime and nighttime,
These (luminous nuclei) directly manifest without any exertion on your part –
This is the measure indicating experiential mastery (of this practice).⁴⁹⁷

Longchenpa concludes this quotation by unequivocally stating that the conventional seminal nuclei are not the real spiritual path. His words subordinating practices pertaining to the manipulation of conventional seminal nuclei via reversing their flow, i.e., semen retention, are particularly relevant for thinking about Sera Khandro's writings given that she was a Seminal Heart practitioner herself as well as the author of numerous commentaries on Breakthrough (*thregs chod*) and Direct Transcendence (*thod rgal*) practices that relate to these higher ultimate seminal nuclei. Not only is Sera Khandro closely aligned to Longchenpa's teachings, but also her consort Drimé Özer is strongly affiliated with him given that Drimé Özer is one of Longchenpa's names. Sexual yoga is thus not the highest practice in the Great Perfection system, which favored a rhetoric of uncontrived, natural simplicity beyond the complex and manipulative energetic practices that comprise sexual yoga.⁴⁹⁸ Despite this philosophical subordination of these practices involving manipulating conventional seminal nuclei (i.e., sexual yoga), Sera Khandro's auto/biographical writings present a different picture of their significance in the Treasure tradition, a picture grounded in the social realities of the communities in which she lived.

The Purposes of Consorts in Sera Khandro's Writings

Sexual yoga may have an ambiguous role in the broader context of Nyingma Buddhism, but in the Treasure tradition, having a consort is an essential element of the auspicious connections necessary for revelation. Rather than the older ritual sacrament model mentioned above, Sera Khandro's presentation of sexual yoga is bound up with the internal yogic physiology of manipulating the internal winds carrying seminal nuclei through the body's channels. She emphasizes three primary functions of sexuality in the Treasure tradition: 1) soteriological functions that incorporate sexual yoga into the Buddhist contemplative goal, 2) pragmatic functions such as curing illness, prolonging life, and dispelling obstacles, and 3) hermeneutical functions pertaining to discovering and decoding Treasures. These three functions may seem to operate on quite different registers, but they all share one purpose: to release energy blocks. Liberating ignorance, physical illness, and the "writer's block" that occurs when the Treasure revealer cannot retrieve or decode his or her Treasures all involve clearing away obstacles and revitalizing the circulation of energy in the body according to this understanding of Tantric physiology. Therefore, increasing the pliancy of the flow of seminal nuclei (*thig le*) through the channels of the body (*rtsa*) via wind (*rlung*), frees blockages and produces spiritual realization, physical health, and prolific revelation. Aside from its spiritual purposes, it is important to note that the single most common reason Sera Khandro's interlocutors give for why they must engage in sexual yoga is the pragmatic function of dispelling obstacles and increasing their lifespan. Sera Khandro's auto/biographical writings thus help to ground the exotic and elusive practice of ritualized sexuality in the

real-world context of early twentieth-century Golok, a world with no modern forms of healthcare in which the efficacy of ritual was paramount.

Before presenting Sera Khandro's representation of the purposes for consort practices, it is important to point out the caution with which she delineates the differences between conventional sexuality and sexuality that is a part of the spiritual path. She describes herself as "one in whom the great desire to have a husband does not arise" and one who "will not engage in negative libidinous acts."⁴⁹⁹ She writes,

Having seen the meaning of primordial wisdom without attachment,
I do not desire the bodies of householders who fornicate.
If I am involved in Dharma for the remainder of my life,
This is the supreme meaning of attaining a physical body.⁵⁰⁰

In this way, Sera Khandro draws a distinction between libidinous sexual acts that accompany the lay householder life she renounced and sexual yoga performed in her religious communities (purportedly) without lecherous attachment and with the proper intention to attain Buddhahood.

Soteriological Purpose of Sexuality, for Men and Women

From the late eighth century onwards, the Hindu and Buddhist Tantric understanding of the human body included a constellation of channels (*rtsa*) that come together in wheels (Skt. *cakra*, 'khor lo along the central axis of the body at the crown, throat, heart, navel, genitals, or a variation of this) in which energy (seminal essence, *thig le*) flows. This internal subtle body is more than the physical body; it is a microcosm of the universe in its pure, divine form. The human body is the abode of a host of deities, therefore sexual yoga involves complex visualizations of deities that serve to bring the Tantric practitioner closer to perceiving his or her body and the external world in its pure,

divine form. Sexual yoga involves reversing the flow of the sexual energies that conventionally flow downwards, outside of the body. This downward flow is analogized to aging, to losing one's vital energy, and ultimately to death.⁵⁰¹ By reversing the flow of sexual energy upwards through seminal retention practices that manipulate the channels and winds of the subtle body, the Tantric practitioner is able to draw up vital energy into successively higher energy wheels (*cakras*) until it reaches the crown of the head, resulting not only in physical longevity but in the complete realization of Buddhahood. In this way, sexual yoga operates on a paradigm in which spiritual realization and processes of physical vitality are intimately interconnected.

The many variations of sexual yoga over hundreds of years and multiple South Asian Tantric traditions exceed the bounds of the present study, but as one example of a prescriptive account of sexual yoga that would have been familiar to Sera Khandro, we return to the writings of the fourteenth-century Nyingma polymath Longchenpa. In his commentary on the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* titled *Dispelling the Darkness of the Ten Directions* (*Phyogs bcu mun sel*), Longchenpa describes the process of arousing the flow of seminal nuclei and drawing it upwards in a process of seminal retention. First, seminal fluid moves down from the crown of the male practitioner's head through the throat, heart, and navel along with the arising of successive stages of pristine cognition. Once the seminal fluid reaches the secret center (the energy center at the genitals), Longchenpa explains sexual yoga in a way characteristic of Buddhist Tantra:

Then the white and red seminal fluids are drawn in through the pathway of the vajra (penis), whence they fill the four centers and their petals from the navel as far as the crown. In this way they are visualized to be extended with unceasing bliss and pervaded with pristine cognition free from all conceptual elaborations.

As is said (Ch. 11, 9):

Those essences of attainment, sun and moon-fluids,
Are drawn by the tongue-like vajra into the *maṇḍala*.

Then in the energy channels, these (pure-essences) are arranged by means of the three essentials, namely, yogic exercises (*'khrul-'khor*), visualization and non-visualization; and they are determined in a natural disposition free from conceptual elaboration. This is the genuine pristine cognition of reality, the intention of Samantabhadra.⁵⁰²

Sexual yoga in this depiction can be understood as a reversal of conventional sexuality in which a man loses seminal fluid and (potentially) catalyzes a reproductive process that occurs entirely within the female body. His description of semen retention is characteristic of the vast majority of textual portrayals of sexual yoga in that the entire process takes place inside the male body. Indeed, it remains unclear what, if anything, the woman is doing internally during this process or how she could derive spiritual benefit from it. Nevertheless, Tantric literature includes copious detail regarding the various types of suitable female consorts. For example, in Longchenpa's commentary on Chapter Eleven of the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* titled "*Maṇḍala of the Feast Offerings*," we read:

Thus, (the *mudrās*) aged between twelve and fifteen are *devīs*. Those aged between sixteen and nineteen are *nāginīs* and those over twenty are subsumed by (beings of) inferior species. In addition, all of them should be beautiful in form, and most desirous. They should not befriend another, and they should be able to maintain secrecy. They should be learned in the skillful means of sexual union, and great in discriminative awareness. They should have respect for their respective accomplished masters; they should have faith, perseverance, and compassion, and they should possess the extraordinary energy channel of bliss. In association with these three kinds of female consorts who are the female consorts respectively of buddha-mind, buddha-speech, and buddha-body, accomplishment will swiftly be obtained.⁵⁰³

These sentences are only the tiniest fraction of Longchenpa's elaborate classifications of female consorts that precede his description of the actual sexual rite above. That these prescriptive texts were written by and for men is abundantly clear given the male-exclusive physiological and descriptive terminology they use.

Given the androcentrism of normative prescriptive accounts of sexual yoga, a fascinating element of Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* is that it is one of the very few sources that portrays sexual yoga from the perspective of the female body. Through recounting dreams and visionary experiences in which divine accomplished ones (*siddhas*) and *ḍākinīs* teach her, Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* contains instructions pertaining to sexual yoga that distinctly refer to female practitioners and to the female body as the locus of spiritual realization, instead of the more typical presentation of sexual yoga in which women are only sexual aides for the male subject. The longest and most detailed example of this is the dream that Sera Khandro recounts in the early part of her *Autobiography* in which the Accomplished One Kukurepa instructs the then fifteen-year-old Sera Khandro on how to manipulate the flow of seminal nuclei (*thig le*) via wind (*rlung*) in her body's channels (*rtsa*). Kukurepa's detailed explanation of channel and wind (*rtsa rlung*) meditation practices culminates in the following instructions:

“... Thirdly, regarding the method consort, excellently examine, seduce, and train a fully qualified hero who is an illusory emanation of the five [Buddha] families. First, having entered the door of ripening and liberation, [the hero] should be made to manifest signs and capability in outer, inner, and secret generation and perfection [stages]. Having excellently given him the body, speech, and mind commitments, his three doors [body, speech, and mind] won't do non-Dharmic actions even for a second. By [being empowered in] the third essential empowerment, [he is] established in ripening and liberation.

Then, visualize method and wisdom [male and female] as divine. In the middle of these bodies, visualize the three channels and the five wheels.⁵⁰⁴ In the method's [the man's] five abodes [i.e., his energy wheels or *cakras*], [visualize] five groups of heroes. In [that of] the wisdom [the woman], [visualize] five groups of heroines. Their four limbs are the gate keepers along with their consorts. All of the other channels and abodes appear as heroes and *ḍākinīs* like the five abodes [mentioned above]. In this manner, meditate on method and wisdom.

In the middle of the wheel of primordial wisdom at the crown of the head, meditate on a “*Ham*” on a moon disk. At the extremity of the central channel about four finger widths [below] the navel, in the middle of a channel knot of joy

and bliss that is like the sun's rays, meditate on a red short "a" [*a shad*] that is like the cut tip of a Chinese needle [i.e., very small] on which the flickering flame of primordial wisdom burns.

Then, having begun uniting the eight limbs which are the four method causes and the four wisdom conditions, when [method and wisdom, i.e., male and female] are established as one, this is the path of accumulation.⁵⁰⁵ The dominant condition becomes the physical sense consciousness and the supporting condition is the wavering clouds of *bodhicitta*⁵⁰⁶ at the crown of the head. Gradually experiencing the four joys is the path of joining.

Then, the method's [the man's] cloud of *bodhicitta* rains into the wisdom lady's secret space and the white and red⁵⁰⁷ meet. Having dispelled the eighty types of discursive thoughts into the expanse, the inexpressible primordial wisdom of equanimity manifests. This is called the display of the three realms of the lower door.⁵⁰⁸

The seminal nuclei having arrived from the [woman's] secret space into the pollen bed of the lotus [i.e., the womb], the wind of the first time period (*dus sbyor*) disappears and you attain the knowledge of the first ground.⁵⁰⁹ By pulling [the seminal nuclei] from the pollen bed up to the secret abode⁵¹⁰, the wind of the second time period disappears and you attain the second ground. By pulling [the seminal nuclei] between the secret [abode] and the navel, the wind of the third time period is purified and you attain the third ground. [The seminal nuclei] having reached the navel, the wind of the fourth time period is purified and you attain the fourth ground. By pulling it to between the navel and the heart, the wind of the fifth time period is purified and you attain the fifth ground. It having reached the heart center, the wind of the sixth time period is purified and you attain the sixth ground. By pulling it up to between the heart center and the throat, the wind of the seventh time period is purified and you attain the seventh ground. It having reached the throat, the wind of the eighth time period is purified and you attain the eighth ground. It reaching between the throat and eyebrows, the wind of the ninth time period is purified and you attain the ninth ground. Pulling the [seminal nuclei] between the eyebrows and the crown of the head, the wind of the tenth time period is purified and having attained the tenth ground, you will manifest as a spontaneously present Knowledge Holder [*rig 'dzin, vidyādhara*]. Again, the seminal nuclei having reached the crown of the head, this is the eleventh ground [called] pervasive light. When it reaches between the crown of the head and the crown protrusion,⁵¹¹ this is the twelfth ground [called] the One with the Lotus of Non-attachment. When [the seminal nuclei] mixes as one taste with the "Ham" at the crown protuberance, you will be established on the thirteenth ground of the Vajra Holder.

Having relied on the essential instructions on union according [to the above description], this is going on the excellent quick path in which liberation is instantaneous, not depending on all the gradual causes, fruits, grounds, and paths.

Practice according to this and having ripened the seminal nuclei in your body, you will manifest as an awareness body⁵¹² endowed with the seven aspects of union.⁵¹³ In this lifetime you will attain the level of Vajradhara in union [with his consort].”

As he said this, he [Kukurepa] transformed into a white seminal nucleus and disappeared into the crown of my head. When this appearance arose, I awoke from sleep.⁵¹⁴

This description of examining, seducing, and training a suitable male to be a consort by empowering him in esoteric Buddhist precepts is a reversal of the tomes of Tantric literature that detail the different types of suitable female consorts and the techniques to seduce them. Sera Khandro does not describe the attributes of suitable male consorts with the same level of typological objectification that other sources use to describe female consorts, but the import of consort practice appears to be the same: to engender spiritual realization through a process in which the spiritual practitioner draws up seminal fluids. Sera Khandro’s description of sexual yoga from a female perspective again reverses this Tantric reversal; in Sera Khandro’s vision of Kukurepa, seminal nuclei enter the woman’s body in a generative process in which the final outcome is not procreation but the realization of Buddhahood. Ironically, this association between drawing in seminal nuclei and engendering spiritual realization makes much more sense physiologically from this rare female perspective than the reversed process from the more normative male perspective. This is not lost on Sera Khandro, who makes analogies between the generation of children and the cultivation of spiritual realization. In fact, it is likely that children sometimes resulted from practices of this nature given that Sera Khandro never mentions birth control techniques and had three children. In Longchenpa’s and in Sera Khandro’s versions of sexual yoga, the implication seems to be that the male *or* the female practitioner is drawing in his or her partner’s seminal essence for the benefit of

her or his own spiritual realization. If Buddhist sexual yoga is about semen retention, then the cloud of *bodhicitta* raining into the woman's lotus in Sera Khandro's dream cannot be about her male partner's spiritual advancement.

If Sera Khandro's description of sexual yoga reverses more typical presentations such as that of Longchenpa, in which female consorts aid male subjects' spiritual realization, what are Sera Khandro's sources? One major source is clearly biographies of Sera Khandro's divine precursor, Yeshé Tsogyal. In fact, the passage from Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* above describing sexual yoga from a female perspective is nearly identical to the following passage in Yeshé Tsogyal's biography revealed by Taksham Samten Lingpa in the seventeenth century:

Now, in my practice upon pleasure, which is Primordial Wisdom, essence of empowerment, I continually increased the rhythm of the Four Joys and never allowed it to diminish. Moreover, to allow the bodhichitta to be spilled outside is like slaying the Buddha Amitābha. There is no one left to confess the fault to, and a karma leading to the hell of Torment Unsurpassed is generated. But I was able to reverse the bodhichitta upward, and, by pressing down the vital energy and drawing up the lower energy, I held the pleasure in the 'vase.' I remained attentive to the bliss but did not crave it, and thus I practiced, laying aside all mentally fabricated concentration. Not for an instant did I give way to laziness. When I fixed with mindfulness the bodhichitta in the lotus of the bhaga, ignorance was completely purified and the thousand and eighty wind-energies of the first time period ceased. Arriving on the Path of Seeing the Primordial Wisdom of the two knowledges, I attained the first ground. It was then that I obtained different kinds of clairvoyance. After that, I caused the bodhichitta to rise to the secret center and fixed it there. The interdependent link of conditioning factors was purified, and the wind-energies of the second time period ceased. Thus I attained the second ground. Then I fixed the bodhichitta between the secret and the navel centers. Consciousness was purified and the wind-energies of the third period ceased. Thus I attained the third ground. In the same way, as I held the bodhichitta at the navel, the interdependent link of name and form was purified, the wind-energies of the fourth period ceased, and I attained the fourth ground. Saṃsāra, nirvāṇa, ordinary mind, Primordial Wisdom, and Coemergent Joy were purified and I realized the Svabhāvikakāya. After this, I held the bodhichitta between the navel and the heart centers. The six sense faculties were purified, the wind-energies of the fifth period ceased, and I attained the fifth ground. As I held the bodhichitta at the heart, sense contact was purified, the wind-energies of the sixth

period ceased, and I attained the sixth ground. The mental state of ordinary sleep was purified, likewise Extraordinary Joy, and as the result, I attained the Dharmakāya. Then I held the bodhichitta between the heart and the throat. Feeling was purified, the wind-energies of the seventh period ceased, and I obtained the seventh ground. The bodhichitta was then held in the throat cakra. Desire was purified, the wind-energies of the eighth period ceased, and I attained the eighth ground. The dream state was purified, likewise Supreme Joy, and as the result I attained the Sāmbhogakāya. I held the bodhichitta between the throat and the forehead, the interdependent link of craving was purified, the wind-energies of the ninth period ceased, and I attained the ninth ground. Then I held the bodhichitta in the cakra of the forehead. The interdependent link of becoming was purified, the wind-energies of the tenth period ceased, and I attained the tenth ground. The five sense-consciousnesses of the waking state, the body's channels, and also the Primordial Wisdom of Joy were purified. And thus I attained the immaculate Nirmāṇakāya. Then I held the bodhichitta between the forehead and the ushnisha so that the birth process was purified. The wind-energies of the eleventh period were purified, and I attained the eleventh ground. Afterward, as I reversed the bodhichitta in the ushnisha and held it there, the twelve interdependent links, as far as old age and death, were purified. The twenty-one thousand six hundred wind-energies of the twelfth period ceased, and thus were purified the four impure states: the mental states of sexual climax, deep sleep, dream, and waking. Likewise were purified the channels, wind-energies, and the essence, the mind's support, as well as the Four Joys. Thus I attained the twelfth ground endowed with the Bodies and all the qualities of a Buddha. Becoming one who acts for the benefit of the infinitude of sentient beings, I gained mastery of all the qualities of a Buddha. Thus it was that in six months I realized the purpose of the third empowerment.⁵¹⁵

In her writings, Sera Khandro never specifies that she read Yeshé Tsogyal's biography, although she does mention one biography of Yeshé Tsogyal coming to her as a Treasure.⁵¹⁶ Yet clearly Sera Khandro was not only familiar with Yeshé Tsogyal's biography, but she also based parts of her own biographical writings on those of Yeshé Tsogyal. The quotation above from Taksham Samten Lingpa's version of Yeshé Tsogyal's biography may not have been the exact version of Yeshé Tsogyal's biography that Sera Khandro was familiar with, but the similarities between the two passages are unmistakable. This is not surprising, given that Yeshé Tsogyal was a very natural model, both literary and spiritual, for Sera Khandro, who knew of few other female Treasure

revealers and perhaps no other female autobiographers. Sera Khandro models her biographical writings after Yeshé Tsogyal's biography in another important way: just as Padmasambhava tells Yeshé Tsogyal to purchase an Indian male servant named Atsara Salé to be her male consort in addition to himself, Sera Khandro also engages with multiple male consorts for her own spiritual realization. Thus, although the concept of a female with multiple male consorts may appear to be a shocking reversal of the more common paradigm of male Treasure revealers surrounded by a host of female consorts, Sera Khandro found a strong precedent for her need of a consort to practice sexual yoga in the popular biographies of Yeshé Tsogyal. Sera Khandro and Yeshé Tsogyal's representation of a female subject describing spiritual realization via sexual yoga may be rare in literary sources, but I suggest the reason for this is the dearth of female-authored sources and not an indication that women did not engage in these practices for their own benefit.

Pragmatic Purpose of Sexuality: Curing Sickness and Prolonging life

The most common reason for consort practices according to Sera Khandro's auto/biographical writings is not the lofty goal of spiritual liberation, but the goal of curing others (and sometimes herself) from sickness, prolonging life, and dispelling obstacles. Sexuality, in this context, is not procreative of new life but is regenerative and restorative for Tantric practitioners' longevity. In Sera Khandro's writing, sexual yoga is by and large not about soteriological goals, but rather is concerned with the practical reality of preventing illness and death in a world in which there was little medical treatment aside from the power of prayer. While Sera Khandro does record experiencing

benefits to her own health and life through having consorts, she primarily writes about offering (or being asked to offer) her curative services as a renowned *ḍākinī* to other lamas in the Golok region. In several instances that I will cite throughout this chapter, Sera Khandro clarifies the connection between sexual yoga, prolonging life, and dispelling obstacles. For example, she recounts that when she was eighteen years old, in response to letters she received inviting her to visit Gara Tertön Dudül Wangjuk Lingpa, the Treasure revealer from Banak Monastery in Padma County, she tried to go there to help resolve obstacles to the old lama's life. However, because of the extreme jealousy of his consort Yakza, who sent scathing letters warning Sera Khandro not to come near, she wasn't able to go to the lama until it was too late. Observing the situation, a lama Sera Khandro knew named Kyilung Trülku commented, "Now, Yakza has no need for the lama. Right in front of me she said that if the lama dies, she will think nothing of it. If she acts like this, there will certainly be obstacles to the lama's life."⁵¹⁷ Kyilung Trülku interprets Yakza's jealousy as actually hastening her husband's death because she prevented him from receiving the elixir of Sera Khandro's life-saving influence. Gara Tertön's short biography in *Tartang Monastery's Lineage History (Dar thang dgon pa'i gdan rabs)* also mentions this problem, stating that Gara Tertön died after "the auspicious connections of the supreme consort in the *ḍākinī* prophecies named the Central Tibetan Lady Khandro Chönyi Dekyong Wangmo [Sera Khandro] were confused."⁵¹⁸

Sera Khandro is not only the bestower of health and longevity through consort practices, she is also the recipient. Accompanied by her life partner Gyalsé and her ailing young son, Sera Khandro recounts that she made a visit to see the object of her greatest affection, her consort Drimé Özer, who cured her son by giving him a protection cord.

Sera Khandro writes that after he performed life summoning rituals for her, “Having each relied on the other, the benefit was that the obstacles to both of our lives were dispelled.”⁵¹⁹ She clarifies what she means by “relying on each other” a few lines later, explaining that “He treated me with great love as if I were his main consort.”⁵²⁰ In another instance, after a brief sojourn visiting Adzom Rinpoché (*A ‘dzom rin po che*, ‘Gro ‘dul dpa’ bo rdo rje, 1842-1924), Sera Khandro writes,

In particular, the precious lama treated me with great love and having given me advice regarding the two aspects [worldly life and religion] and blessings, he dispelled blemishes regarding auspicious connections and he cured me of all my sicknesses.⁵²¹

The passages above are just a few examples of the pervasive link between consort practices and curing sickness/prolonging life, many more of which follow in subsequent sections of this chapter.

Hermeneutical Purpose of Sexuality: Treasure Revelation and Decoding

As we investigate the ways in which Sera Khandro describes consort practices in her writings, the major questions that arise are: Why do Treasure revealers require a consort to reveal Treasures? What is the link between sex and text? Before offering some thoughts about this intriguing quandary, first we will examine a few examples of the way Sera Khandro writes about the relationship between consorts and revelation. She expresses her need for consorts to reveal Treasures largely in the negative, by describing instances when she was unable to reveal Treasures due to not having a consort. A frequent litany in her *Autobiography* is comments like this one: “At that time, although I received a symbolic registry for a bit of profound Treasure, not relying on a consort, it got left behind and my body also was a little bit damaged.”⁵²² This comment highlights

the connections between revelation and the physical body, a subject to which we will soon return. In another instance, Sera Khandro recounts:

Then, when I was twenty-three years old, since there were [many] holy places gathered at *Chakri Öbar* on the *Mar* River,⁵²³ we went there for a few days. When we were circumambulating [the mountain], the land deity emanated as a crow and came [to me]. The people gathered there actually saw him give me a six-cornered crystal vessel with the profound pages of *Life Prolonging and Wish-fulfilling White Tārā*. Everyone spread the word that I was a Treasure revealer.

At that place although there was also a *Profound Accomplishment of the Guru Dharma Cycle*, profound pages of the *Condensed Intention of the Lama*, and three vessels made of turquoise, zi stone (*gzi*), and agate respectively, because a consort and a doctrine holder had not gathered there, the auspicious connection went away [and I could not reveal anything] aside from just Dharma medicine and saffron.⁵²⁴

Again, when Sera Khandro was hiding Treasures in the “black lake” in Nyithö (*Snyi stod*), she recounts that, “At that time although there was a wealth Treasure to take out, not relying on a consort, it got left behind.”⁵²⁵ Similarly, Sera Khandro writes of another instance in which she could not reveal all the Treasure due to not having a consort when she went along with her close disciples to her student Kardön’s (*Dkar don*) hermitage:

Although there was a *Vajrakīlaya Accomplishment [Practice called] Expanded Profound Essence of Complete Victory over Demons*, because I didn’t rely on a consort, I found a bit of a cycle on *Accomplishing Beneficial Deeds* and I wrote it down and propagated it and so forth in detail.⁵²⁶

Although passages such as this demonstrate that Sera Khandro could reveal portions of her Treasures without a consort, she makes it clear that having an actual physical consort present when revealing a Treasure is optimal. After describing a revelation sequence in which she engaged with a visualized consort instead of a real one, she reports that, “Because I didn’t have an actual consort or doctrine holder, I left behind the auspicious connections of the mind-support and beneficial action vessels.”⁵²⁷ In Drimé Özer’s *Biography*, Sera Khandro makes an interesting connection between having a consort and

being able to reveal earth Treasures when she recalls a dialogue between Drimé Özer and herself during one of her visits to him when she was still together with Gyalsé:

The Lord [Drimé Özer] said, “. . . In particular, don’t forget to find a way to let the Dharma cycles that are earth Treasures come to you.”

Dewé Dorjé [Sera Khandro] replied, “Because I am a female beggar, it is like what the Lord Milarepa said – although I was empowered in many earth Treasures, because I didn’t rely on a consort, I didn’t take out any earth Treasures aside from just three. Now, it will be okay for them to come. Now, the power of the Guru’s prayers having awoken, we, male and female partners, have met. Because I was lost under the power of another, I didn’t find a way to come to you as I have told you before.”⁵²⁸

Sera Khandro quotes herself in the third person voice in the biography she wrote of Drimé Özer, promising him that she will reveal the earth Treasures that she could not reveal earlier when she had been under the power of her repressive life partner Gyalsé. Although it is not clear exactly how her situation relates to what Milarepa said, the strong connection she makes between her consort relationship with Drimé Özer and her ability to reveal earth Treasures is intriguing.

Beyond inspiring auspicious connections, consorts have a more specialized role in the Treasure revelation process that begins to address our inquiry about the relationship of sex and text in the Treasure tradition. Female consorts are thought to aid the Treasure revealer in decoding the symbolic scripts in which Treasures often come. Symbolic scripts themselves are associated with the feminine in that they are encoded in *ḍākinī* scripts. One connection between Treasure scripts and *ḍākinīs* is the paradigmatic *ḍākinī* Yeshé Tsogyal, who is credited with remembering, transcribing, hiding, and encoding Padmasambhava’s Teachings. According to the explanation of the Treasure tradition by Drimé Özer’s brother the Third Dodrupchen Jikmé Tenpé Nyima, the link between having a consort and decoding text lies in the consort’s ability to arouse “spontaneously

arisen bliss (*lhan skyes kyi dga' ba*)” in the Treasure revealer.⁵²⁹ Just as in sexual yogic contexts in which bliss acts as a salve, increasing spiritual realization through untying the knots of energy blockages in the body’s channels, so too for a Treasure revealer, bliss serves to clarify the meaning of Treasures encoded in symbolic script.⁵³⁰ Given this connection between consorts and decoding Treasures, we should not be surprised to find that Sera Khandro writes in Drimé Özer’s *Biography* that during one of her visits to him,

At that time, since he could decode the profound Treasures that newly came to him extremely quickly, the Lord [Drimé Özer] thought that it was because he had met with Dechen Dewé Dorjé. During his evening [practice] session, when he recited the *dākinīs*’ feast offering, he visualized Dewé Dorjé and prayed that in this life and all his incarnations he would meet Dewé Dorjé and be her intimate consort.⁵³¹

But what about Sera Khandro – as a female Treasure revealer can she make use of a male consort in order to experience bliss and aid in her Treasure decoding process? According to Sera Khandro’s writings, the answer is yes. As a result of Sera Khandro and Drimé Özer’s union, Sera Khandro recounts similar benefits for both of their revelation processes:

In particular, it became extremely quick for both of us to decode our Treasures. Also, for me, by the power of the abundant auspicious connections, I elucidated and propagated the *Anu Yoga Esoteric Precept The Entrance to the Quick Path of Vajravārāhī’s Essential Drops* and the *Profound Explanation of the Meaning of the Great Bliss of the Upper Doors and Enjoying the Three Realms of the Lower Doors* that were teachings in the *Secret Treasury of Reality Dākinīs*.⁵³²

Sera Khandro does not give any further detail as to specifically what her male consort(s) did to augment her ability to decode Treasures, but she does suggest that the support of a consort was at times of mutual benefit, enhancing both her own and her male partner’s ability to decode their Treasures. She quotes Drimé Özer making this claim as well in his *Biography* after he tells her the prophecy that he will have one superior consort who will

benefit his Treasures: “On account of [our being equals], we can act as consorts for each other.”⁵³³ If the connection between consort practices and decoding Treasures is bliss, then it would make sense that a consort of either sex in heterosexual union with a Treasure revealer would boost the revealer’s decoding capacities. Yet if female consorts have a special relationship to the coded and symbolic *ḍākinī* language based on their shared femininity, this equation would make less sense and it would seem that female Treasure revealers would not necessarily need male consorts to decode Treasures. Sera Khandro’s biographical writings suggest that it is the auspicious connections garnered from a consort of *either* sex, male for herself, female for male Treasure revealers, that makes the difference in decoding Treasures.

Returning to our question of the relationship between sex and text in the Treasure tradition, according to Sera Khandro’s writings, I suggest that both sexuality and textuality are generative processes that rely on the physiology of the human body to produce something new, be it material or textual Treasures or, more conventionally, human offspring. The Treasure tradition draws on Tantric subtle body physiological processes of manipulating the flow of seminal nuclei in order to cultivate spiritual realization, emphasizing the connection between sexuality and realization by analogizing their products, progeny and textual/material revelations. Thus, the requirement of uniting with a consort in order to reveal Treasures in the Treasure tradition can be seen as an extension of previously strong Tantric correspondences between the physical and spiritual realms. The unique addition of the Treasure tradition to this Tantric equation is its distinctly material product.

In two instances that I have already mentioned, Sera Khandro makes the connection between the materially generative processes of sexuality and revelation explicit. To recapitulate, Sera Khandro humbly defers her disciples' exhortation to show them the new Treasure she has just revealed by telling them, "This is my daughter that I have taken out as a Treasure – I wonder if I can take out a son?"⁵³⁴ Her disciple, the nun Chötreng, is undeterred by this and insists on seeing the Treasure. On another occasion as well, Sera Khandro compares progeny to Treasures in a similar context when she humbly rejects Gotrül Rinpoché's statement that she is an extraordinary Treasure revealer. She tells him, "Aside from being one who can take out the Treasure of boys and girls, I don't have a way to take out vast earth Treasures."⁵³⁵ This statement is interesting because Sera Khandro specifically connects earth Treasures, not mind Treasures, to the production of children. She also connects earth Treasures in particular to her physical relationship with Drimé Özer when she tells him,

... although I was empowered in many earth Treasures, because I didn't rely on a consort, I didn't take out any earth Treasures aside from just three. Now, it will be okay for them to come. Now, the power of the Guru's prayers having awakened, we, male and female partners, have met.⁵³⁶

It is perhaps coincidental that Sera Khandro gave birth to three children (not by Drimé Özer) and also claims to have revealed three earth Treasures before she lived with him. Yet, here again, there is a link between the physicality of earth Treasures and the (potential) physical product of heterosexual sexuality. After all, Sera Khandro is able to reveal mind Treasures at times without the full benefit of a consort, but she cannot produce earth Treasures without Drimé Özer. The connections Sera Khandro makes between sexual production and textual production make more sense if spoken by a

woman. However, the Tantric psycho-physiological connection between drawing up the seminal nuclei of one's partner in order to produce spiritual realization also makes more sense from the perspective of female physiology, despite its rarity. Yeshé Tsogyal and Sera Khandro's biographies portray sexual yoga without the complex reversals that Longchenpa and the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* require to relate the process of drawing in seminal nuclei to male physiology. However, with a bit of maneuvering, the connection between sex and text as materially generative processes can relate to both male and female bodies.

Visions of Divine Encouragement

Sera Khandro's autobiographical writing is pervaded with accounts of her visionary interactions with hosts of divinities in their elaborate Buddhafields. These visionary sequences are more than spiritual interludes in an otherwise autobiographical account of Sera Khandro's life. In Chapter Three, I demonstrated the ways in which Sera Khandro's visions allow her to describe herself as an authentic Treasure revealer and as Yeshé Tsogyal's divine emissary without making arrogant claims in her own voice. Instead, Sera Khandro denies these lofty honors that others apply to her and in so doing, she crafts an autobiography that is simultaneously self-aggrandizing and self-humbling, humanizing and divinizing. One of the main topics of Sera Khandro's dialogic interactions with the *ḍākinīs* who reappear before her is consort practices and the role they should or should not have in Sera Khandro's life. *Ḍākinīs* urge her not to abandon her promise to fulfill their prophecies decreeing that she must seek and consummate consort relationships. Yet in her responses to their exhortations, Sera Khandro struggles

with ethical questions about the role of sexuality in religious practice and the relationship it has to monastic vows in what is a microcosm of larger debates within the Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism. In her *Autobiography*, Sera Khandro grapples with questions such as: how can one distinguish between conventional lust and sexuality for religious purposes? Is it acceptable to engage in sexual yoga with a monk if it will enhance his spiritual realization and prolong his life? Is it better to avoid the slippery slope between skillful means and sexual misconduct by living a chaste life? Sera Khandro's dialogic interactions with her divine counterparts give voice to these controversial topics. Through these conversations, Sera Khandro narrates her own apotheosis from human woman to divine *ḍākinī*. By emphasizing her divine backing, she removes herself from the constraints of conventional morality and justifies her unconventional use of male consorts as a part of her spiritual path. In this way, Sera Khandro portrays herself as a woman who is neither promiscuous nor arrogantly self-assertive, but who follows in Yeshé Tsogyal's footsteps as a *yoginī* who seeks her own spiritual realization via a Tantric path involving sexual yoga with male consorts.

The interactions Sera Khandro recounts on the subject of consorts in her biographical works take on a playful tone, with *ḍākinīs* almost teasing and taunting her. They remind her that she is not a nun, not a laywoman, but a Treasure revealer and Tantric practitioner who must fulfill her vows to act in accordance with their prophecies. Sera Khandro records that when she was a fourteen-year-old girl living in her father's house in Lhasa about to be given away in marriage by her father to a Chinese political leader, she had the following dream:

A young and beautiful ornamented woman saying she was Dorjé Yudrön asked the following: “Lady, who is your boyfriend? Do you know who he was [in his former] birth? How is his fortune?”

I said, “I don’t have a boyfriend whom I desire. Even though I don’t desire him, my parents and relatives say that I am one who has been given to the junior leader from Kitrong (*Skyid grong dpon chung*).”

She said, “The junior leader from Kitrong is a pleasing youth. It is not a mistake that he is your husband.”

My mind was not pleased and I sang this song:

“Hey, hey, deceiving girl –
You are definitely not Dorjé Yudrön.

This manner of desiring the bodies of men
Makes you a prostitute.

Although the Kitrong junior leader has a great body,
Impermanence is like summer flowers.
When autumn frost comes, their radiance fades.

Like this example, [he] is a transient phenomenon.
I don’t know the merit of his [previous] birth.
His appearance is as a householder.

Although he is a magnificent, radiant youth,
I, this girl, don’t want him – I give him to you.”

Again, she said, “Lady, don’t be angry! I spoke honest words.”

I replied, “If you don’t speak with liking for the junior leader of Kitrong, it is okay if I listen.”

She said, “Aside from sizing you up, I don’t have a need for a husband. Nevertheless, I have honest words to tell you. Listen and [these] thoughts will come true.”

Having cupped her hands to my ear so that others wouldn’t hear, she said this: “Next year it is certain that your Treasure consort from former lifetimes and lama from former lifetimes named Drimamépé Özer Thayé (Stainless Boundless Light Rays) who is an incarnation of Namnying, Vairo (*Vairocana*), and Yudra and who is an unrivaled Treasure revealer will come up from lower Dokham.⁵³⁷ If you stay together with him in the moon fortress at Gangri Thökar,⁵³⁸ it is certain that China

and Tibet will remain peaceful and happy for the next fifty years. If you don't do this, it will be time for you to go to the eastern direction of Dokham."⁵³⁹

The ḍākinī Dorjé Yudrön playfully irks Sera Khandro into confirming her disgust for worldly husbands before she prophesizes Sera Khandro's future consort Drimé Özer and her journey to Golok. This prophecy mentions the tenuous issue of peace between China and Tibet, demonstrating that this was an issue of concern for Sera Khandro in the late 1920s and early 1930s when she wrote her *Autobiography*. Visions such as this foreshadow events in Sera Khandro's narrative and provide an opportunity for her to clarify the distinction between worldly lust for men's bodies and having a prophesized relationship with a spiritual consort.

Although visionary figures frequently make prophecies about Sera Khandro's consorts, she responds to their visionary suggestions with suspicion and rejects their claims that she needs a consort. It is never Sera Khandro's idea that she needs a consort, but always something that other voices assert. For example, Sera Khandro writes of an interesting interaction she had with the ḍākinī Dorjé Zungma when she was nineteen years old and already living with Gara Gyalsé:

One day a vision arose in which I arrived at the feast row of the ḍākinīs of the three realms. Although I thought it was like this, I didn't have the capacity to distinguish [what it was]. The channels of my body were numb and it was as if my mind were suddenly dark. I asked someone who said she was Dorjé Zungma: "Although I have come to the ḍākinīs' feast row since I was young, I have never experienced anything like this before. My body is uncomfortable and it is as if my mind is shrouded in darkness – why is this?"

She answered, "This is because you are of a Treasure lineage and the time has come that you need to rely on a method consort. It is important to establish a noble man in ripening and liberation [instructions] and to rely on him as a consort. Because your channels are disturbed, your perception is like that."

Again I said, "In this area of Domey Golok, it seems that [men] are of poor ancestry with a ghostly pallor. They are ash-colored without food or clothes and

have rude, thorn-like personalities. Thinking that adhering to them would not bring the perfect realization of means and liberation, I let it go. Although a man of good lineage is like a winter flower, some have already gone away due to the influence of others, some hesitated because of their vows, and since some were rich, it was as if they didn't want me because I was poor. Now, whatever you say, needing a consort does not arise in me. Although there are method consorts superior to them with the vision of the secret esoteric instructions of the quick path whom I could rely on to bring me to actually realize the holy primordial wisdom of the self-liberation of lustful desire, I have no need or ability to attain them. If I meet with a man who is an unsuitable receptacle, it will be seen as a perversion of the path of mantra and will certainly be the cause for myself and others to go to the lower realms. Hence, I think I will make a pledge to live alone."

When I said this, she said,

"Enchanting woman who desires desirelessness –
Associate with a method consort and
The primordial wisdom of great bliss will manifest.

Through your pure karma and aspiration prayers, you are
empowered in Treasures.
If auspicious connections do not arise, the two benefits [of self and
other] will be difficult.

If the method, wisdom, prayers, and [the right] time coincide,
Abandon lazy people and those who save face.

You must be careful regarding finding a way for the auspicious
connections to arise.

Since you are not one who has a way to live alone,
Energize all men with bliss and
Show those who have desire the desireless clear light.

Find a way to bring [men] to the ground of union.
By this, the two benefits will arise, yoginī.

Although primordial wisdom free from desire manifests [in you],
If you meet with a consort of noble lineage,⁵⁴⁰
Having excellently attained the perfecting teachings,
The [energy] knots at the wheels of the five abodes will liberate.

All appearances will arise as the wheels with letters.⁵⁴¹
In this life you will attain the awareness body in union.
This is the dharma of great yogis of mantra.

There is nothing more profound than this quick path.

Seal it in the expanse of your heart.
 Show this path to those with the karma.
 It is certain that [they] will attain the union body of no more
 learning.⁵⁴²
 Keep it secret from those who are not receptacles [of this
 teaching].

Don't show it to the wind⁵⁴³ –
 This is the chariot to wandering in the lower realms.
 Your domain is marvelous.
 It is certain that whomever you connect with, it will be
 meaningful.⁵⁴⁴

Dorjé Zungma's explanation to Sera Khandro relies on the physiological yogic model of the purpose of sexual yoga; the symptoms of physical discomfort and mental dullness that Dorjé Zungma diagnoses require the cure of sexual yoga. Sera Khandro's response to this is not outright negation, but is rather a lamentation that in her area of Golok the men are rough, thorn-like, and almost barbaric without proper food or clothes. Her despair resembles that of a woman who is searching for the right man, for he is as rare as a winter flower and is either unavailable, monastic, or too wealthy to be interested in a poor woman like herself. Since consorting with a normal man not specially empowered in esoteric precepts would be a perversion of the Vajrayāna path, Sera Khandro concludes that she is better off staying alone. Dorjé Zungma's response emphasizes the importance of gathering auspicious connections (*rten 'brel*) to benefit both herself and others, and since having a consort is one of those necessary connections, she cannot live alone. She exhorts Sera Khandro to "energize all men with bliss." Yet those who benefit from this sexual yoga will be not only these fortunate men, but also Sera Khandro, whose energy knots will be liberated, resulting in her own complete realization of Buddhahood. Dorjé Zungma's remarks are thus words of encouragement, reminding Sera Khandro that no

matter how unattractive and raw the Golok men around her seem, she will have the good fortune to meet her prophesized consort.

Later in her *Autobiography*, Sera Khandro recounts that when she was twenty-five years old, another vision came to her in which a little bird emissary of the ḍākinīs appeared. The bird reassured her that despite the uncertainty of gathering all the auspicious connections necessary to reveal Treasures, in time Sera Khandro would find the appropriate consort and disciples she needed to accomplish her lofty spiritual purpose:

Then, in the twelfth month when I was doing a bit of teaching to my disciple Tupten Zangpo, the nun Chötreng, and the people of Getso (*Dge mtsho*) on the explanation of the *Cycle of Supplemental Esoteric Precepts on the Secret Path of the Knowledge Holders* from Gara Terchen Rinpoché's profound Treasure, a turquoise blue bird [from] Mon in the South said the following:

“Ki ki yogi,
Ki ki yogi!
Don't be distracted, listen to me with your ears!

I, this blissful blissful happy happy turquoise bird
Come from the city of great bliss ḍākinīs.

I carry a secret symbol of inexpressible bliss and emptiness.
Nevertheless, I will speak a bit about the way in which
The beneficial deeds of taming your disciples will arise.”

Thinking that this was a bird from the ḍākinīs' land, I said this:

“Incarnation coming from the divine with a beautiful form,
[Sitting] on top of a fragrant resplendent green tree trunk,
You ask me about my situation in a melodious voice.
You, messenger of the ḍākinīs with a good voice –
Don't be distracted and listen to the meaning of my words.

I, this girl with bad karma named Pema Drolkar,
Arrived at the negative, evil land of Golok.
I did not have the strength to rise above mediocrity with regard to taming
beings
Of this area [that is like] a muddy vessel of water.

This dharma to be taught that is like vital ambrosia
 Is sealed in my heart without a place to express it externally.
 This wealth given to me by ḍākinīs that is the vital essence of Treasures
 Is without anyone to teach it to because it becomes the basis for wrong
 views.

I bury it in the expanse of the white dressed ḍākinī of the realm of
 emptiness.
 This Treasure vessel for a later [time] that is a support for body, speech,
 and mind,
 I seal [it in an] immutable hidden vessel as a rediscovered Treasure.

[I], a servant always without leisure,
 Bought the suffering of physical and verbal hardship.
 Sick with an uncertain illness, several years went by.
 On the outside, I was always afflicted with physical illness.
 On the inside, I quarreled with my kind life partner.
 In-between, the people of the area criticized and insulted me,
 Saying bad words to me as if they saw me as their arch enemy.
 Good and bad things such as these and so forth have happened.
 I think that this is how my actions and beneficial deeds have occurred.
 Thinking and thinking [about this] is the basis for sadness to increase.
 Who has negative karma like me?

Although I attained freedom, I am without power to go to the
 Buddhafields.
 Although I want to help beings, I don't have the strength to tame those
 whom I have to tame.
 Although I am empowered in Treasures, I did not rely on the essential
 point of auspicious connections.

Because I have an inferior [female] body, all the husbands hate me.
 Method consorts who are supreme consorts of perfecting [practices] are
 [as rare as] stars in the daylight.
 There are more ordinary sinful consorts than trees.
 It is difficult to practice according to the dharma and [I] become the cause
 of ruin for myself and others.
 Having thought about the meaning of this, I maintained moral conduct.

Nevertheless, mother ḍākinīs always
 Said that I need to rely continuously on the one commitment that is
 The supreme method of examining, seducing, training, and [establishing
 in] ripening and liberation
 One with the supreme form of a hero who arouses bliss.

Repeatedly [this] was expressed in symbolic registries that came to me periodically:

‘Exhort the consort Bimarasmī⁵⁴⁵

Who is a great bodhisattva who maintains commitments and is endowed with residual prayers from many lifetimes.

By this and by the power of Dharma with a bit of auspicious connections, In a secret manner the two benefits [self and other] will gradually arise.’

Because of this, I tell this bit of my circumstances
To you, agreeable turquoise blue bird.”

[The bird] said:

“Ki ki yogi!

Ki ki yogi!

If you come around the habitat of the turquoise bird, the tree endowed with fruits,

It is carefree and pleasant.

It is the gathering place of the flock of pleasant sounding birds.

Thoughts in accordance with the Dharma will naturally arise.

If you rely on the one commitment of having a supreme method consort, [which is] the habitat of a Treasure revealer,

The auspicious connections of the excellent method will naturally come together.

[Like] a gathering of golden swans amassing,

Your actions and beneficial deeds will expand to the utmost.

Nevertheless, on account of sentient beings’ negative minds in this degenerate era,

[Beings] don’t know the enduring commitment that is in accordance with the Dharma.

Obstacles such as demonic powers and so forth will be great and

Because of inferior merit, [people] won’t behave in accordance with the Dharma.

They will have wrong views of those who adhere to the teachings

And will criticize, abuse,

Disrespect, and abandon them like a rock on the road.

[Beings] will uphold men blessed by demons with perverse prayers

As [they protect] the eyes in their forehead.

They will dedicate this life and the next [to them].

When I see behavior like this and so forth,

I cannot see you staying in this land.

Generate the intention for the time to come to go to the

Blissful, blissful, happy, happy land of the ḍākinīs.”⁵⁴⁶

The long-winded turquoise bird who is an envoy of the ḍākinīs continues his prophetic words, encouraging Sera Khandro by foretelling that she will prevail over the negative forces of this degenerate era. His words warning of the demonic powers that cause beings to have wrong views of those who adhere to the teachings and to “criticize, abuse, disrespect, and abandon them like a rock on the road” seem to suggest that the sexual yoga the ḍākinīs prophesize was not accepted by all in Sera Khandro’s milieu. The encouragement the bird gives Sera Khandro is apropos at this juncture in her narrative. It comes when her efforts to reveal Treasures were being stymied by her life partner Gyalsé, when she felt like she “did not rely on the essential point of auspicious connections” that the ḍākinī prophecies repeatedly pronounced. Sera Khandro acknowledges the divine prophecies exhorting her to follow the path of Secret Mantra, but she despairs at her inability to actualize their injunctions. She laments the distance between her divine dreams and her mundane reality filled with the sufferings of physical illness, quarrels with Gyalsé, and local people’s negative gossip about her. She projects a tone of uncertainty in her reflections, a tone of concern about the future and about her ability to fulfill the lofty goals she (and the ḍākinīs) have set for her. Yet divine figures such as this bird mitigate Sera Khandro’s disappointment with her mundane obstacles, encouraging her to pursue her dreams and reminding her that these dreams require sexual yoga.

As a result of her worldly sufferings, Sera Khandro repeatedly writes of wishing to leave this world of pain and misery in what reads almost like the words of a suicidal person. Divine visions are all that sustain her struggle to benefit beings in this world. She

is constantly looking forward, praying, hoping, and dreaming of a day when she no longer needs to endure her worldly sufferings, when her ḍākinī sisters will come down to escort her to her divine resting place alongside Yeshé Tsogyal in the Buddhafields. This yearning to leave the world is clear in the following dialogue with another visionary bird who comes to Sera Khandro when she is out on a mountain collecting wild garlic with her close disciple Tupten Zangpo. Sera Khandro, then twenty-four years old, converses with the little bird:

I wondered if this little bird came from the Copper-colored Mountain. Thinking that if this were the case the bird would certainly understand questions and answers, I said the following:

“Hey, hey illusory little bird –

Where are you from?
Was your journey long or short?
Do you feel weary from flying from your home?
Is your land pleasant?
[You] who bring secret words of clarity to me
What is the name of the ḍākinī [who sent you]?

I am a servant whose purpose is not accomplished.
It is decided that benefiting others will not happen.
Now I, this one with an inferior [female] body, desire to go
To the blissful, blissful land of the ḍākinīs.

Although I am empowered in extremely profound extraordinary Treasures
By the power of the prayers of Shelkar Tsogyal,
Because I am an inferior woman with little courage,
I did not find a way to attract a consort or a doctrine holder.

Although I am without hatred towards the high and low local people,
They demonstrate many types of unpleasantness towards me.
Their main topics of conversation are perverse views and blame.

Now in this area of the negative town of Banak,⁵⁴⁷
I will not propagate a single word of my profound Treasure.
Having re-hidden the [Treasure] vessels and profound pages,
I will go wander the country as an ordinary person.”

When I said this, again the bird said:

“Listen noble lady!
[I], a brilliant illusory Garuda,
Came from the directionless direction of the Glorious Mountain.
I am not weary from flying.
I came on a path of wind aided by deities.
The music of the *ḍākinī*’s symbolic words
Is the secret speech of Lekyi Wangmo.

The time for you [to go] to the *ḍākinīs*’ land
Has not arrived.
When you are satisfied with the horns of a bull,
The consort coming from no direction
With the radiant stripes of a tiger will come to welcome you.⁵⁴⁸
Continually apply yourself in numerous feast and sacrificial offerings
To the mother *ḍākinīs*.

Auspicious connections depend only on
[Your] good and bad actions.
When you meet with consorts and doctrine holders,
Do not be swayed by the *sapta* [demon] of laziness!

Act according to the *ḍākinīs*’ orders and
It is certain that the lantern of the teachings of the two Treasures⁵⁴⁹
Will shine in the east and south.
In time, the *ḍākinīs* will certainly give you symbolic images of
[what is to happen in] the future.
In time, we will meet
In the unmanifest land of the *ḍākinīs*.⁵⁵⁰

Here again Sera Khandro bemoans her inferior female body as the reason for her lack of courage and her inability to attract the proper consorts and doctrine holders. It is not that she doesn’t want to fulfill the *ḍākinīs*’ injunctions, but that she feels incapable of drawing together the requisite auspicious connections. Given Sera Khandro’s negative perception of her capacities, visions like these provide encouragement when she is on the brink of giving up. The tension between Sera Khandro’s self-doubt and *ḍākinīs*’ encouragement creates a sense of anticipation and suspense in the reader, who internalizes the uncertainty Sera Khandro projects while anxiously waiting for her to unfold the story of her

liberation. The worldly struggles that she laments in these visions humanize her as well as betray the level of contention that existed in her social communities regarding consort relationships, whether prophesized or not. *Dākinīs* and their emissaries come to remind Sera Khandro that although she is in this world, she is not of this world and that in due time, they will come to welcome her home.

As the passages above demonstrate, divine visions reassure Sera Khandro that she will find the consorts she needs to accomplish her spiritual goals. Even so, Sera Khandro represents herself as rejecting their exhortations to find a consort to the detriment of both her spiritual and physical health. Visionary divinities argue that since Sera Khandro is neither a nun nor a laywoman, engaging with consorts does not contradict her religious vows. What is at stake in these dialogues is more than Sera Khandro's bashfulness about taking on a consort, but rather relates to the larger question of how to uphold the proper morality in the context of Vajrayāna Buddhism. Sera Khandro's autobiographical representation of her dilemma between renouncing sexuality and engaging with consorts reflects larger tensions within Nyingma religious communities in Eastern Tibet between the lifestyles of non-celibate Tantric practitioners and celibate monastics. While the morality of maintaining celibacy vows is beyond reproach, the communities in which Sera Khandro lived in Eastern Tibet were (and still are) primarily headed by non-celibate Tantric masters, a circumstance that indicates their potential (but not guaranteed) higher status. In Sera Khandro's writings, engaging in sexual yoga is a dangerous endeavor; practicing the quick path of Secret Mantra leads to liberation, but it also leads to the hell realms if done with conventional lust. This tension between maintaining celibacy and

engaging with consorts on the Vajrayāna path to Buddhahood is clear in a dream Sera Khandro had when she was thirty-six years old:

That night in a dream, two mendicants who were traveling pilgrims, one big and one small, came to my place after nightfall.

They said, “How are you?”

I answered, “I’m fine. Are you two tired?”

The big mendicant replied, “Although we are not tired, for a long distance we didn’t find much to eat on the road. Nevertheless, having come before you, because we need to attain a teaching, we both offer our bodies to you. We need you to first give us food to fill us and later Dharma to liberate us.”

I said, “Having practiced completely pure dharma, if you two stay only on a secluded mountain, I will give you as much of the necessities of food and clothing as possible. Otherwise, although you give me your bodies, you don’t need to entrust yourselves [to me] as servants. It is acceptable if you assiduously practice on a secluded mountain.”

When I said this, the mendicant answered, “The meaning of our offering our bodies to you is not to think of a way to be your servant or to reside like a sage in rock caverns and mountain slopes! Because you are a Treasure revealer, for the purpose of being your consorts we thought we would stay [with you].”

Feeling great fear, I said, “Precious Lama think of me! Kind One, think of me!”

He said, “Although you don’t desire me, in any case, you need to take this small monk under your care.”

Because he repeatedly said this, I responded by saying, “I am not a Treasure revealer. I don’t need a consort. Before, I have never had disciples with deteriorated vows like you two. Still now I won’t take you on. You two, wherever you go, go [away]. Don’t stay in this land. Even if I have to kill you both, I won’t consider engaging [with you].”

Again, they said, “I know whether or not you are a Treasure revealer. Look in your [Treasure] registry – among your five main method consorts, one is this small monk. If you don’t take him on as a consort, you won’t be able to decode your Treasures as well. Hence, consider this.”

Becoming a bit confused, I asked, “What land are you two from?”

When I asked this, he replied, “We are from Nyakog (*Nyag khog*). The small monk’s name is X⁵⁵¹. Hence, because the Lotus Guru’s prophecies are undeceiving, [his] prayers and the [proper] time have gathered together.”

Again, I said, “Although the Guru’s prophecies are undeceiving, because I am of bad ancestry, I didn’t find a way to act in accordance with the prophecies. From one perspective, since I am a woman, even though I met with doctrine holders and method consorts, I didn’t dare recognize them [as such]. From another perspective, thinking that I would offend the one with the characteristics of a great bodhisattva whose body had received mantra, who exerted himself in unsurpassed practice, and who relied on the path of enhancement, means and liberation, and union without depending on successively traversing grounds and paths in order to attain an awareness body, I guard my commitment vows like the eyes in my forehead. Until I attain permission from this consort [i.e., Drimé Özer], even though it is in accordance with my Treasure prophecy, my mind is decided and I don’t think about associating with a single consort. Even still, despite the fact that I am not a Treasure revealer, I will certainly abide by commitments without [a difference between that which is] openly perceived and hidden.⁵⁵² Hence, from whatever perspective, you two go home.”

Then, the bigger mendicant having dissolved into the smaller one, both of their bodies disappeared and their voices spoke the following:

“Young ravishing beauty,
 Insatiable to look at, one with the body of supreme great bliss,
 One who speaks the truth, whose mind has abandoned
 deception,
 Greatly loving, powerful *ḍākinī*, you I praise.
 The supreme excellent path of accomplishing Buddhahood in one
 lifetime,
 [Is] adhering to the Vajra[yāna] path of accomplishing the two
 benefits [of self and other] at one time.
 Enjoy a consort who arouses bliss together with emptiness and
 May you stay together without separating for an instant.”

Having said this, they disappeared into the appearance of a red light in the direction of the sunset.

Then, an old woman came and asked, “Did you know those two mendicants?”

I said, “Although I don’t know them, they spoke about various strange things. Why is that?”

When I asked this, she answered, “The small monk was sent to you by your method consort [named] Akaré. The big mendicant is called Segyal. Hence, since you have a bit of obscurations between method and wisdom [i.e., between you

and your consorts], you need to be careful.” As soon as she said this, I awoke from sleep.⁵⁵³

This conversation between Sera Khandro and the two visionary monks highlights the tension between celibacy and sexual yoga. Sera Khandro haughtily rejects the monks she considers immoral for wanting to compromise their monastic vows, but in the end it turns out that Sera Khandro has rejected a consort who actually was prophesized in her Treasure registry. If this is the case, then Sera Khandro’s highly moral rejection of the mendicants’ untoward advances was not entirely the right choice for her. The separation between celibate monastics and non-celibate Tantric practitioners thus becomes blurred, an issue we will return to later in the chapter. Sera Khandro hesitates in her decision to reject the monks’ advances because the monks seem to know who she is despite her humble denials, yet ultimately she chooses the safer path of maintaining her chastity. In rejecting the small monk as a consort, the big monk tells her that she won’t be able to decode her Treasures as well as she might have. This example confirms that according to Sera Khandro’s writings, the connection between decoding Treasures and having a consort has to do with engendering bliss in sexual yoga, not with a shared feminine quality between female consorts and symbolic *ḍākinī* scripts.

Rejecting opportunities to engage with consorts results in not only difficulty decoding Treasures, but in actual physical illness. It is not only male religious adepts who search Sera Khandro out for her curative powers, but Sera Khandro herself who needs to engage in sexual yoga in order to stay healthy. As she makes clear, it is both a blessing and an obligation to fulfill Padmasambhava and Yeshe Tsogyal’s prophecies; she can reject their divine injunctions only at the risk of her very life. Sera Khandro writes of battling repeated bouts of illness throughout her life, illnesses that often appear to be

some type of arthritis (*'bam gzhi*) that particularly affected her legs. But that was not the only illness she faced, as the following conversation from the *Autobiography* between Sera Khandro and a visionary woman shows:

Then, in the tenth month of that year [c.a. 1927 when she was 35], I was oppressed with a terrible illness and was on the verge of death. At that time, on the night of the twenty second day of the twelfth month, in my erroneous perception an old woman with a good body, tormented by lustful desire, and with faultless sense faculties like [those of a] young woman came and said the following:

“Ya, ya – girlfriend, what sickness do you have?
Tell me the symptoms of your sickness.
If you are sick with lustful desire that is the cause of existence
I know a good medicine.”

To that, I replied,

“Older sister, neither an old woman nor a young girl,
I, neither a nun nor a wife, will tell you the way that I am sick.

From the time I was young, lamas took care of me.
They blessed my mind stream with both ripening and liberation
[instructions].

I am expert in the essential points of enhancement, means, and liberation.
I don't need to be bound by the noose of lustful desire.

By the kindness of my consort Wish-fulfilling Jewel [Drimé Özer]
The three types of [karmic] propensities⁵⁵⁴ are liberated from their base.
Saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are alike in awareness and emptiness.

I have seen the unsurpassed meaning
Of the desireless and free from desire primordial wisdom
In which bliss and emptiness are without meeting and parting.

I am not sick with the cause of existence.
My passion has been purified as great bliss.
Obtaining manifest co-emergent primordial wisdom
Ripens into the self-empty Truth Body.
I do not fear⁵⁵⁵ this sickness of lustful desire.

I am tormented by a sickness that is a combination of illnesses:

My heart is uncomfortable as if it is a large drum beating.
 My lungs are uncomfortable like bellows being blown.
 My gall bladder and spleen are like putting wild horses in order.
 The nerves of my two eyeballs are about to be cut.
 I can't hold up my head – it is heavier than a diamond.
 Blood and bile pervade like water in all my channels.
 My wind is not harmonious as if quarreling with an enemy rival.
 Long and short breath comes out of both my mouth and nose.
 This collection of elements that is my body is like inanimate matter.

This collection of various illnesses has gathered together.
 This mass of light that is the primordial wisdom of mind
 Is on the verge of going out via the path of the white silk channel.
 These are my symptoms.
 If you know how to diagnose, then diagnose this.”

She said:

“You, yoginī who is a doctor of channels and winds –
 One with a beautiful face whose body liberates into light,
 The origin of these various illnesses is
 Obscuration by the *sapta* [demons] regarding the method of
 auspicious connections.

Because [as] a youth, [you] abandoned sustaining your life and
 On account of deteriorated commitments, [these illnesses] and so
 forth are incited.
 When the time comes together, many negative conditions will
 afflict your body.

Although you see the meaning of not staying in [cyclic] existence,
 You have not purified subtle [karmic] propensities.
 On account of the mental illusions of hopes and fears,
 You didn't act in accordance with the prophecies.
 You abandoned [engaging with] a bodhisattva who adheres to the
 Dharma.

Why do you behave in the manner of the doctrine of the lesser
 vehicle with your three doors (body, speech, and mind)?
 You don't see attaining the results
 Of the extraordinary Dharma of the quick path of mantra?”

Again, I said,

“Listen older sister of similar lineage:

If [one] can practice the extraordinary Dharma of Secret Mantra,
 That quick self-fruit is reality itself,
 I have no doubt.
 I pray that in this and all my lives
 I meet with this quick path.

Nevertheless, these days in the Degenerate Age
 Peoples' desire burns like fire.
 Under the pretense of being *mantrins*, they practice non-virtue.
 They assemble false Treasures, which are the ruin of themselves
 and others.
 They throw away their seminal fluid through fornication
 Like spit in the dust.

Those who practice according to mantra are almost non-existent.
 Because of this, thinking that my female body
 Would become the basis for my own and others' ruin,
 I entered the path of physical discipline.⁵⁵⁶

Thinking I would be able to abandon having negative thoughts and
 negative [future] births,
 I abandoned wrongdoing and negative consorts for a long time.
 Who will I harm by the pleasant meaning of
 Entering into the path of the two truths?⁵⁵⁷

In response to Sera Khandro's explanation, the old woman gives her an elusive prophecy foretelling the places and the key figures who will aid her in accomplishing her divine purpose. In the passage above, Sera Khandro represents herself in a more self-confident tone befitting an older, more experienced woman as she unabashedly tells the visionary old woman of her spiritual realization. Yet the old woman is not convinced of Sera Khandro's excuses for not practicing sexual yoga; rejecting consorts may be morally irreprehensible, but it is also the cause of her physical illness according to the old woman's playful words. She claims that Sera Khandro has chosen to follow the discipline of the lesser vehicle (Hinayāna) even though she has the superior capacity to follow the quick path of Secret Mantra (Vajrayāna). For her part, Sera Khandro recoils from the potential moral dangers of the quick path. She rejects the old woman's allegation that she

suffers from an illness caused by desire that can only be cured by the medicine of engaging with a consort.

Sera Khandro's ambivalence regarding the morality of consort practices is a continuous theme. She recounts yet another playful visionary interaction with an old woman who appeared before her when she was thirty-eight.⁵⁵⁸

At that time, I got a strange illness that caused me extremely sharp pain in my lotus. On the tenth day of the twelfth month, during a practice session, a secret vision arose. An old woman came to me and said the following: "What kind of sickness do you have?"

I said, "I don't have a way to explain my sickness to you (because) it is in an embarrassing place."

She said, "I know a medicine that will benefit your sickness."

I asked, "What is the medicine like? Do you have something to give me?"

She said, "I don't have it, another person does, but you won't take it, right?"

I said, "Unless I can't find the medicine to take, when I find it if it is possible that it will help me, I will take it."

When I said this, she said,

"Ha ha, you won't take it! You won't take the medicine!
If you will take it, I will show you the supreme medicine!"

The ambrosia that conquers afflictive emotions abides
In the moonlight at the top of the 32 [channels]⁵⁵⁹
(In) a Vajra body possessing the six elements and five [*cakras*].

That which resides there comes down through the path of great emptiness
[i.e., the central channel].
By falling down through the four [*cakras*],
It emerges at the city of the 64 channels [i.e., the secret *cakra*].

If your lotus receives and is nourished by this sprinkling [of ambrosia],
Auspicious circumstances will come together and all [your] physical
sickness will be dispelled.

The king of medicine who possesses this [ambrosia]

Is the one with the name of Banza⁵⁶⁰ and so forth who is in the south.
 You will meet him at the place where the three rivers gather.
 By this, dangers to your life will temporarily be eliminated."

Again, I said,

"Listen old woman who talks [like a] monkey,
 I, the woman Dewé Dorjé,
 I am not sick because I haven't found a husband.

The four elements of my illusory body are agitated and
 Because I have not destroyed self-cherishing,
 I am always tormented by sickness.

If there is any possible way to cure this,
 I think I should rely on the protection of this supreme medicine.
 Nevertheless, it is decided that I will not rely on
 This perverse medicine of yours.

Don't speak these false words and
 Go away to whatever land you like."

She said, "Girlfriend, don't get angry! My words are definitive and are not monkey talk! If you do not rely on a method companion, even if you take other medicines for a lifetime, it seems that there will be no benefit and you won't find a way to cure your various illnesses."

I said, "If I am sick, I am the one who has to experience suffering. You do not need to experience it. Now I would like you to leave me alone. At the end of my life that is like a setting sun, aside from wondering if I can accomplish the completely pure Dharma, I don't think about needing to take on a consort."

Although our conversation was not finished, because of something else, I awoke from sleep.⁵⁶¹

In the passage above, Sera Khandro responds to the celestial old lady with an almost sassy attitude, rejecting her playful but serious words as if they were "monkey talk." But the instructions the old woman gives her are by no means trivial. The old woman describes a process of seminal nuclei descending down from the crown of the man's head through the other four energy centers of his body and into the woman's lotus. This description is reminiscent of Kukurepa's long visionary instruction to Sera Khandro in

the early part of her *Autobiography* in which he teaches her how to draw up seminal nuclei into successively higher parts of her body resulting in complete Buddhahood. The old woman's description of this medicinal "sprinkling of ambrosia" that Sera Khandro needs to cure her gynecological problem is interesting in that it emphasizes the explicitly fluid nature of this exchange. But if Buddhist sexual yoga is about semen retention, then how can Sera Khandro enact the old woman's advice without causing her consort harm by taking his seminal essence? Clearly there are multiple ways to engage in Buddhist sexual yoga beyond semen retention.

Regardless of what type of sexual interaction the old lady prescribes, Sera Khandro represents herself as wanting nothing to do with it. One way we can interpret Sera Khandro's flippant response to her divine interlocutor is modesty. As one of the only female autobiographers and female Treasure revealers to write so extensively about herself as a religious adept, Sera Khandro preempts potential criticism by representing herself as a skeptic who preferred to follow the moral high ground of virtuous discipline. But this is not the whole story, as divine figures such as the one below remind us. Just after the old woman above has failed to convince Sera Khandro, the mountain deity Nyenchen Tanglha (who Sera Khandro claims is her real father) appears to drive the message home:

Together with this, a person wearing a loose white woolen garment holding a jewel vessel in his right hand and a yak [hair] whip in his left riding a black horse with black fetlocks⁵⁶² and wearing a turban ornamented with silver mirrors came and said the following:

"Hello! How are you?"

I thought that he didn't seem to be human. "Do you know if I'm fine or not?"

He answered, "My knowing is okay. However, you didn't obey me."

Again, I said, “If you know, then that’s it. It isn’t important whether or not I obey you. You are not my lama.”

He said, “Although I am not your lama, I am the equivalent of your lama.”

Thinking that perhaps he was Nyenchen Tanglha, I didn’t say anything.

Hence, he said, “It is difficult for what you are thinking to happen – who has a way to repel the aspiration prayers of Guru Padma? Moreover, in accordance with the prophecies of the mother *dākinī*s, it is important to be skilled in the method of auspicious connections. When you don’t act accordingly, forget about finishing out your lifespan. Your body will become completely exhausted. Because I say this with good intentions toward you, examine this method. You are not a nun with Vinaya rules who needs to let auspicious connections go away to other powers. You are also not a cheating woman who engages in lustful sexual misconduct. When the circumstances of favorable conditions gather together, because there will be a great benefit to yourself and others, you need to think accordingly.”

Saying this, he gave me a Treasure vessel.

When I asked, “What is this?,” he answered, “It is a hidden registry which discloses a testament of Yeshé Tsogyal.” Saying this, he disappeared like a rainbow in the sky.⁵⁶³

As in the previous vision, initially Sera Khandro snubs this unknown apparitional figure as if to say she cannot possibly listen to all the suspect advice coming from visionary personages, ranging from demons to bodhisattvas, who appear before her. Yet, when she realizes the divine figure is her own father, the powerful mountain deity Nyenchen Tanglha, she cannot challenge the veracity of his words or the decency of his intent. She does not concede to him verbally, but rather gives him the last word. She allows him to articulate her in-between status as neither chaste nun nor sinful laywoman, but as a woman who must foster auspicious connections involving sexual yoga. In this manner, Sera Khandro weaves together her lengthy *Autobiography* using the voices of others who express her special status as a divine emissary, as a Treasure revealer, and as one who

must engage with consorts at the risk of her very life. By allowing others to utter superlative claims about the benefits of her role as a consort, Sera Khandro is free to deny her abilities, making herself appear all the more humble and believable to her readers. After all, who has the ability to defy Padmasambhava's command?

These ephemeral visionary voices articulate the different purposes for having a consort – spiritual realization, curing illness, and revealing Treasures – while, at the same time, their shared quality as somatic processes emerges. Through Sera Khandro's retorts, the dilemmas of her situation become clear: how can one differentiate between conventional lust and spiritually beneficial sexual practices? Where is a Tantric practitioner to draw the slippery line between the virtues of celibacy and the benefits of sexuality? Sera Khandro's visionary encounters point towards these quandaries, but her accounts of life in Golok religious encampments and monasteries develop these and other consort-related tensions as they manifested on a social level in the communities in which she lived.

Consorts and Community

Visionary interactions such as those I have described above emphasize the esoteric purposes of consort practices on the path of Secret Mantra, but Sera Khandro's accounts of the social dynamics in her religious communities ground consort practices in the mundane world. Interspersed between descriptions of her visionary experiences are passages in which Sera Khandro portrays tensions related to consort practices that were often very conventional and not particularly spiritually enlightened. These include unhappy relationships, patriarchal and nonconsensual exchanges of women between

powerful men, jealousy between women, and negative gossip. Her descriptions of consort practices go beyond physiological processes of manipulating channels and winds; she describes their human context in relationships with men and friendships and rivalries with other women. The detail Sera Khandro's works provide regarding the emotional relationships connected to consort practices offers new and previously un-researched information about consort practices, which have most often been understood in the context of philosophical religious doctrine divorced from the human communities within which they occurred. Also typical of the more mundane variety of human relationships, Sera Khandro's writing gives us glimpses into her private sentimental life, a life spent devoted to her lama and lover Drimé Özer, which will be the topic of the following chapter.

Trouble in Paradise: Consorts and Community Tensions

The social dynamics Sera Khandro portrays in the religious communities revolving around Treasure revelation in which she lived read almost like a cinematic drama including intense jealousy, competition, friendship, love, and sorrow. Sera Khandro records that after she escaped impending marriage in Lhasa, right from the beginning of her new religious life, she was confronted with the jealousy of religious community leaders' female consorts. Given her youth and great beauty, Sera Khandro seemed to threaten most of the women around her. When she traveled to Golok at the age of fifteen with the important Golok incarnate lama Drimé Özer, who remained the central inspiration for her spiritual and sentimental religious devotion throughout her life, she recounts tensions within the group of traveling pilgrims over her interactions with him:

Without letting his close entourage see, the Lord himself [Drimé Özer] gave me medicine for my wounds [sores from extreme cold] and food and drinks. Despite this, everyone said, “Because of this Central Tibetan girl, Akyongza [*A skyong bza*’, Drimé Özer’s consort] won’t come.” Because of this problem, I didn’t dare go before him and I prostrated to him from afar and circumambulated him.⁵⁶⁴

Sera Khandro’s identity as a threat to the consorts already connected to Drimé Özer such as the “Lady of Akyong” was clear to everyone from the beginning. Not only women discouraged Sera Khandro from interacting with Drimé Özer, but also male pilgrims despised this interloper from central Tibet’s proximity to their lama. Still on the road from Lhasa to Golok, Sera Khandro recounts:

Then, we gradually arrived at the Tsidam meditation cave where the Lord himself needed to take out a profound Treasure. If I went there, it was certain that he would take out the Treasure without leaving anything. Despite this, Tapen (*Rta pan*) said to me, “Why did you come here? It will be difficult for you to cross the Pen River (*Spen chu*),” and he didn’t let me go. I went together with Jikdrön (*Jig sgron*, her nun friend) before the Lord and it was just a middling auspicious circumstance.⁵⁶⁵

To the chagrin of men such as Tapen who were hostile to Sera Khandro’s entry into their religious encampment, Sera Khandro recounts perceiving herself, even at sixteen, to be Drimé Özer’s prophesized consort necessary for his successful Treasure revelation.

After arriving at Drimé Özer’s household (*bla brang*) in Golok that Sera Khandro refers to as both a Treasure encampment (*gter sgar*) and a monastery (*mgon pa*) named Dartsang (*Zlar tshang*), Sera Khandro wanted only to stay near Drimé Özer to study and practice Dharma, yet she was rebuffed primarily by supporters of Drimé Özer’s consort Akyongza who refused to allow Sera Khandro to live in such close proximity. Sera Khandro explains:

At that time the caretaker of the lama’s household named Akyap Trülku said, “The Central Tibetan girl is not allowed to live here. When she lives here, it is certain that Akyongza will not come back.”

Because he was angry, I said, “Since I am a good person, there is no reason why Akyongza won’t come. If I stay here, what harm will there be?” Saying this, I didn’t leave.⁵⁶⁶

Yet Sera Khandro soon saw the merits of avoiding Akyongza’s wrath by moving further away from Drimé Özer to work as a servant girl for a local Golok nomadic family connected to the Dartsang religious encampment. After working as a servant for a short while, the time came for Sera Khandro to return to Dartsang to request religious teachings from Drimé Özer. She recounts,

Then, gradually I came to know [how to do] the [servant] work and having understood the [Golok] language, after I stayed there for over a month, it became time for the religious teachings, so I went together with the nun from their [her employer’s] family named Tsüldrön to the monastery. At that time, because Akyongza had come to the lama’s residence, not daring to go before the Lord himself, I sent a message to Öbar asking what religious teaching I should request.⁵⁶⁷

Even though she states that her presence wouldn’t cause Akyongza any harm, her efforts to avoid Akyongza betray the tension between them.

During this time when Sera Khandro was working as a servant and doing the preliminary practices she requested at Dartsang from Drimé Özer and his brothers, she received a letter from Gara Tertön Dudül Wangjuk Lingpa (*Mgar ra gter ston bdud ‘dul dbang phyug gling pa*, 1857-1911) inviting her to visit him at Banak Monastery (which she also calls a Treasure encampment, *gter sgar*) in contemporary Padma County, Golok. As I have previously explained, the implication in Gara Tertön’s invitation was that the then seventeen-year-old Sera Khandro could help to cure his illnesses and propagate his Treasure teachings by acting as his consort. The problem with this, of course, was that fifty-odd-year-old Gara Tertön already had a consort, who did not appreciate having the young Sera Khandro as competition. Sera Khandro writes,

At that time because Gara Tertön's partner was Yakshulza (*Yak shul bza'*), she sent me a message saying, "You don't have to come to my area. If you come, this will happen to the Central Tibetan girl." I heard that she said she would certainly verbally and physically abuse me.⁵⁶⁸

Because of Yakshulza's threatening messages warning her not to come to Banak, the auspicious connections between Sera Khandro and Gara Tertön disappeared. However, after two years passed, again Gara Tertön invited Sera Khandro to visit Banak because, as he told her in a letter, she needed to make an auspicious connection with Drimé Özer whom he had also invited. At long last, Sera Khandro traveled with an old woman named Chöki (*Chos skyid*) to Banak when she was nineteen years old despite the threat of the wrath of Yakza. On their way, when they reached a place called Nyimdo (*Gnyi mdo*), they happened upon a person from Banak who gave them the following news in response to Sera Khandro's inquiry about Gara Tertön's health:

Oh, the lama and Yakza had a marital dispute and haven't spoken to each other for about two months. The lama says that because Yakza confused his auspicious connections, he's going to the Buddhafields. His health is extremely disturbed and although they have recited many rituals, since it is difficult to benefit him, it is certain that he will pass away.⁵⁶⁹

The confused auspicious connections that the passerby mentions refers to Gara Tertön's earlier request for Sera Khandro's services as a consort. Therefore, because Yakza prevented Sera Khandro from coming, she thwarted his only means of staying alive. This instance demonstrates that consorts were not only seen as aides to their male partner's longevity, but they could also be accused of causing their demise. Sera Khandro recounts with evident bitterness the negative reception she received upon her arrival at Banak as a nineteen-year-old servant girl coming from Dartsang:

When we arrived close by the lama's bedroom, two servant girls from the lama's residence were carrying empty barrels. Yakza's nun Tsöndru threw out ashes and

so forth. Knowing who I was, she harmed the auspicious connections as much as she could.

I called out to my mother and said the following:

“Ho, ho, listen Chöki –
This negative circumstance of the three – ashes, empty barrels, and
perverse prayers –
Gathering together at one time
Is a negative omen that [our] merit is exhausted.

Oh my – their thoughts
Are all prophetic.
Before anyone knew who I was,
Even though nobody said it was me,
They demonstrated types of things that corrupt auspicious connections.

If I think of the behavior of people in this negative time,
I pay the price of suffering.
Do you know this?”

She said, “Don’t speak like this. Since we are beggars, they will abuse us.”

Then we came up and went into the monastery asking if we could find lodging. Lama Tongpön Mönlam from before and Lama Naropa came and asked, “Are you two tired?”

I said, “I have no problem. Since the old lady is aged, she is very tired.”

Then, when they prepared the necessities of lodging, firewood, and so forth, again I asked Mönlam Gyamtso, “How is the lama’s health?” Did Trülku Drimé not come?”

He answered, “The lama’s health is extremely disturbed and it seems as if there is nothing to do. The Trülku [Drimé Özer] didn’t find a way to come. Now, we don’t dare tell Yakza that you have arrived. Since today the lama said that a guest of his would be arriving and he appeared joyous, it seems that he knew you were coming.”

Then, although I stayed a few days, they didn’t find a way for me to go before the lama. That year in the second month on the twenty-eighth day when the sun rose, I heard that the lama was about to pass away. Feeling sad, I went to a willow grove on the side of the monastery. At that time, a lot of people were calling my name. Wondering what it was, when I looked, the direct disciples of the lama including Dogé Lama Tenzin, Lama Naropa, Mönlam Gyamtso, and so forth were

leading a horse and saying, “You need to come. Since the lama is on the verge of death, Yakza says that it is okay if you come.”

Everyone said, “There is no way for you not to go.”

I said, “Long life to Yakza. What is the meaning of [her acting like] I would kill a boy in front of his mother?⁵⁷⁰ Before, I have been speaking important words to her for two years. During that time, she said I was not allowed to come. Now, after all the water has collected under the bridge,⁵⁷¹ it makes no difference whether I come or not. You all didn’t prepare conducive conditions in accordance with knowing that I had come here. Now, when the lama is about to pass away, since it is certain that I don’t have a way to do anything [to help him], I won’t go.”

Again, they said, “Although we knew you had arrived before, we didn’t have a way to tell Yakza. Aside from this, it is not that we didn’t prepare conducive circumstances.”

“If she dares to establish rules regarding the Treasure Revealer Lama, of course [you all could] dare to tell [her] that I have come. Now, although it is like this, I won’t go.”

Having applied religious vows, Lama Tenzin and Tsering Wangdü from Bangyül didn’t give me the freedom not to go. I went together with them and although everybody said, “How are you?,” I gave absolutely no reply and went up into the house.

The lamas, monks, and disciples were holding a feast offering. I thought that it was as if they were giving a traveler food for the road. Although it seemed that they were providing a feast offering as a way for the lama to depart, I didn’t say anything.

Then, the lama’s direct disciple, the renunciate Ngakwang Demchok came from the door of the lama’s bedroom and said to me, “Come before the lama,” and we went there. I offered prostrations and he looked upon me with the eyes of a mother, smiled, and gave me a nice silk scarf. With his right hand he held my left hand and prayed.⁵⁷²

Sera Khandro then made a supplication prayer to the Lama, shortly after which he passed away while holding her hand. She recounts feeling devastated by Gara Tertön’s passing because she felt that he had something to teach her but wasn’t able to due to the obstacles that his wife Yakza caused. Despite this, her wishes were fulfilled when he came to her in

a vision and granted her empowerments in his Treasure cycles and commanded her to maintain and propagate his teachings.⁵⁷³ The passage above dramatizes the bitter rivalry between Sera Khandro and Yakza. Her description of Yakza paints her not only as abusive towards her, but as the cause of her husband's death through her defiance of the *ḍākinīs*' prophecies. Sera Khandro's anger at the negligent and abusive way she was treated by women such as Yakza jumps out through the words on the pages of her *Autobiography*, adding a human touch to the often extraordinary tone of her autobiographical reflections.

In compliance with the prophecy of another lama named Kangdong Bönpo Gönwang who told her to spend time with Gara Tertön's son Gara Gyalsé, Sera Khandro then entered into what turned out to be a very turbulent relationship with her "life partner" (*tshe grogs*) Gyalsé. Problems in their relationship stemmed from the fact that Gyalsé disapproved of Sera Khandro's calling as a Treasure revealer. He punished her verbally and physically for revealing Treasures. Gyalsé felt that he was losing power to his woman as she became locally renowned as a *ḍākinī* and as a female Treasure revealer. Sera Khandro portrays him as being an irascible, difficult man with whom she often quarreled. Yet after giving birth to their daughter Chöying Drönma when she was twenty-two years old, Sera Khandro was tied to her family and stayed in their bitterly discordant relationship until she was thirty years old.

Another factor in Sera Khandro's unhappy relationship with Gara Gyalsé was the fact that her intense feelings of devotion and love for Drimé Özer never stopped even after she entered into a relationship with Gyalsé. Perhaps in response to this (Sera Khandro does not tell us), Gyalsé offered Sera Khandro to Drimé Özer as a consort,

exchanging ownership over her as if they were trading ownership of a precious object.⁵⁷⁴

Although Sera Khandro greatly desired to live with Drimé Özer, she writes of being extremely upset about being given away by Gyalsé and feeling humiliated and rejected by him and his community. During these difficult years living with Gyalsé (when she was twenty-two until thirty), although she traveled to see Drimé Özer on several occasions, she always returned home to Gyalsé's community in Banak despite her marital unhappiness. To make matters worse, by the end of Sera Khandro's time living with Gyalsé, he had taken on another wife named Saldrön (*Gsal sgron*) about whom Sera Khandro has nothing positive to say. Sera Khandro was replaced right before her eyes with another woman, this time a daughter-in-law who had the approval of Sera Khandro's bitter rival, Gyalsé's mother's Yakza.

While all these machinations were going on during the period that Sera Khandro was living at Banak with Gyalsé and his entourage, Sera Khandro developed an increasingly close friendship with a lama from Tartang Pelyül Monastery named Gotrül Rinpoché (*'Jigs bral chos kyi blo gros*, or *Dpal yul sgo chen sprul sku*).⁵⁷⁵ Gotrül Rinpoché plays a key role in Sera Khandro's narrative in that he is the one who first recognized her as an incarnation of Yeshé Tsogyal and popularized this during their first meeting when Sera Khandro was twenty-four years old.⁵⁷⁶ Gotrül Rinpoché strongly supported Sera Khandro's Treasure revelation and periodically requested that she give him her Treasures in order to improve his health. He often gave advice about what Sera Khandro needed to do to actualize her *ḍākinī* prophecies and to cultivate the proper auspicious connections, advising not only Sera Khandro but also Gyalsé and Drimé Özer about Sera Khandro's future. In this way he played a prophetic role almost like that of the

divine visions in Sera Khandro's life. Sera Khandro writes of times when Gotrül Rinpoché gave Gyalsé unsolicited advice, telling him in ways he did not appreciate that he needed to treat Sera Khandro better like the *ḍākinī* Treasure revealer that she was. For example, Sera Khandro narrates the following interaction that occurred when she was twenty-seven years old:

Then, in the dragon month [the third month], since a letter arrived from Gotrül, Gyalsé and I along with some attendants went to the area of Yütsi [*Gyu rtsi*] to see the Trülku. His arthritis⁵⁷⁷ having gotten worse, all the group of his disciples and attendants meditated on joy. Each of them stayed there exerting themselves in their own practice. When we met [Gotrül], he was revived with happiness as if meeting a person who came alive from the dead. Then, having stayed there for fifteen days, we spoke in detail with Gotrül until there was nothing more to say from all perspectives regarding worldly and religious affairs.

In particular, when Gotrül Rinpoché gave much advice regarding my present and future to the Gara Trülku [Gyalsé], it didn't agree with Gyalsé and he said the following: "It seems as though you are a noble *ḍākinī* who appears to be Yeshé Tsogyal and who someone like me is not empowered to have as a consort. Gotrül always says, 'It is not suitable [for you] to separate from your *ḍākinī* by various means.' Although a man must lose power to a woman, what is the meaning of my not having power over someone like you? An old worldly householder man will never have a way to take a[nother] layman's wife."

I also said, "Thinking that I was of a high birth, did Gotrül give you advice? According to your thoughts, since everyone can see that I am an old sinner from a polluted family who is inferior to Saldrön [Gyalsé's new wife], you don't need to say this. You have control. From one perspective, it is easy to take on a female body and from another perspective, my father's name is far away. From a third perspective, people who have a little pity [for me] are like the proverb "uncle rabbit's horns."⁵⁷⁸ Seeing me as an object of compassion, of course he [Gotrül] was speaking to you. You don't need to be upset and worried about this."⁵⁷⁹

Gyalsé smarted at the idea that Gotrül Rinpoché had such a high opinion of Sera Khandro. A subtext of his discomfort was that he wondered whether Gotrül Rinpoché had an ulterior motive for his laudatory treatment of her. The proverb Gyalsé uses that, "An old worldly householder man will never have a way to take a[nother] layman's wife," seems to imply this. As a way to appease Gyalsé's resentment, Sera Khandro responds

with typical self-humbling rhetoric, putting herself down (at least rhetorically) lower than even his second wife Saldrön in order to make Gyalsé feel superior. As the passage above suggests, Sera Khandro's relationship with Gotrül Rinpoché is murky – she never explicitly states that he was her consort, and given the fact that he was an important celibate monastic incarnate in her community, it would be unseemingly for her to do so. However, the way that she writes of her interactions with Gotrül Rinpoché suggests that they had an intimate relationship. Sera Khandro recounts the following experience she had with Gotrül Rinpoché when she was twenty-six years old:

. . . On account of his [Gotrül's] giving me an auspicious silk scarf, a silver ring, an expensive, high quality piece of coral, and in particular a vajra and bell as supports for secret commitments, although various uncertain signs arose such as all the large channels in my illusory body vibrating, fluttering and trembling, and a tapping sound like the sound of a horse's tail swishing and so forth, I let them go. When I did this, it was as if he knew. In the manner of possessing divine pride [manifesting] as Hayagrīva, he resided in the dimension of the great bliss of awareness and emptiness. Because of my sickness, for a long time I had a bit of realization that elucidated [what was in] other people's mind streams. Based on this, as soon as he visualized something, it became clear [to me]. Hence, having visualized [myself] in the form of a wisdom race, I exhorted the five root bodhisattvas and the sixteen goddesses. Having made offerings to the heroes and dākinīs residing in the self-emerging, spontaneously present palace, they were satisfied with the taste of bliss and emptiness. The teacher and students' minds became inseparably of one taste and [they] delighted in nondual space and primordial wisdom. As soon as that happened, all the previous visualizations disappeared into space like a dream when one wakes from sleep.⁵⁸⁰

Having a joint visualization like this with Gotrül Rinpoché including sensations in her subtle body channels does not necessarily mean that Gotrül Rinpoché was Sera Khandro's physical consort, but it hints as much. When Sera Khandro was twenty-eight years old, she was devastated when Gotrül Rinpoché passed away. Just before he died, he told Sera Khandro that the son she was carrying was his consciousness incarnate in her and that the boy could only be cared for by Drimé Özer or he would not live. Gotrül

Rinpoché was not explicitly declaring fatherhood of Sera Khandro's third-born child (who Sera Khandro claims was fathered by a hero who came to her in a vision), but the insinuation can hardly be ignored.⁵⁸¹

The final impetus for Sera Khandro's last departure from Gyalsé's community was an extremely serious case of arthritis that left her unable to walk and on the verge of death at the age of thirty. Unable to resist anymore, her disciples, including her trusted disciples Tupzang and Tsültrim Dorjé (her scribe), brought her to Drimé Özer, who himself was also ill. Because Sera Khandro and Drimé Özer were prophesized consorts, they were both able to gradually cure each other's illnesses and help decode each other's Treasures through igniting the auspicious connections of method and wisdom. Thus, Sera Khandro's sojourn in Golok went full circle, back to Dartsang where she had initially arrived with Drimé Özer's entourage at the young age of fifteen. Drimé Özer and Sera Khandro had a beautiful love affair in Dartsang, despite Drimé Özer's other consorts' displeasure at having to share their man and their community's resources with an outsider. This displeasure is evident in the following passage from Drimé Özer's *Biography* in which one of Drimé Özer's consorts named Pasham Taré (*Pa' sha'm ta re*) made a solemn promise to Drimé Özer not to continue to speak badly about Sera Khandro. Sera Khandro writes that in an attempt to cure him of an illness he got when he was forty years old just before Sera Khandro's arrival in Dartsang, Pashamtaré encouraged him, saying:

“Trülku, don't speak like this. No matter what provisions you need to find a way to support your life, stop creating obstacles to this! According to your orders, I certainly will do whatever actions you need done.”

In particular, since she prayed over and over for the Lord to find whatever way [he could] not to go and to stay for our benefit, the Lord thought of his commitment vows to his consorts and promised not to go to the Buddhafields.

Pashamtaré promised to do whatever the Lord wanted and in particular, she promised that even if Sukha Banzra [Sera Khandro] came near him, she wouldn't say a word.⁵⁸²

Sera Khandro's description of this scene depicts the displeasure that Drimé Özer's other consorts felt at the idea of Sera Khandro's increasing proximity to him. Indeed, this was a concern of Drimé Özer's as well and was one reason why he initially hesitated to take Sera Khandro on as a consort. During the momentous exchange scene in which Gyalsé offered Sera Khandro to Drimé Özer, Drimé Özer explained his concerns to Gyalsé saying "... Not only this, I wondered if my consorts and so forth would like it [if I took on Sera Khandro as a consort], so I let it go."⁵⁸³ Drimé Özer overcame these hesitations, and his other consorts at least tolerated Sera Khandro's presence in Dartsang while Drimé Özer was alive, despite the underlying dissatisfaction they felt.

Sera Khandro's happiness living with Drimé Özer was short-lived; when she was thirty-four, a plague struck Dartsang and both her young son Gyurmé Dorjé (the incarnation of Gotrül Rinpoché) and Drimé Özer became ill and died. No sooner had Drimé Özer passed away than his consorts expelled Sera Khandro from the lama's household. Once again, Sera Khandro, along with her daughter and close disciples Tupzang and Tsültrim Dorjé, was without a community in which to live or a place to call home. The recurrent experience Sera Khandro had of being unwelcome and forced out of households by other women is indicative of the many ways in which Sera Khandro was threatening to other women. With her half-Mongolian ancestry, Sera Khandro's skin color was most likely very pale compared to other Golok women, which in combination

with her youth and beauty seems to have made her a desirable consort. Her increasing stature as an extraordinary *dākinī*, visionary, Treasure revealer, skilled writer, and orator must also have caused her to have a higher status than her humble position as an outsider from an unknown family would suggest. Additionally, Sera Khandro and her two children posed economic concerns and potential family succession problems in the households in which she lived. In particular, Drimé Özer's other consorts wanted nothing to do with their household (*bla brang*) providing economic support for a woman with children who would then compete with their own for limited resources.⁵⁸⁴

Despite her lack of support from other women in her communities, Drimé Özer's closest disciple Sotrül Rinpoché (*Bsod sprul sna tshogs rang grol*), who was the incarnate lama of Sera Monastery not far from Dartsang, took Sera Khandro in and gave her a permanent home at Sera Monastery. Yet again, social problems followed Sera Khandro to this monastic setting. Sera Khandro writes, "At that time, I offended the perceptions of the local people. . . Some said that "Since she is a contentious woman, she will harm all of us."⁵⁸⁵ But due to Sotrül Rinpoché's strong support, Sera Monastery became a comfortable place for Sera Khandro to live. From her retreat hut near Sera Monastery, Sera Khandro wrote her biographical works and her four volumes of revelations. Indeed, Sera Khandro's close alignment with this monastery is evident given that it is the source of her name, the *Dākinī* from Sera.

The Exchange of Women

As this brief description of Sera Khandro's dramatic and frequent travels between Gara Tertön and Gyalsé's community at Banak, Drimé Özer's community at Dartsang,

and Sotrül Rinpoché's residence at Sera Monastery demonstrates, Sera Khandro lived a life full of instability, uncertainty, and difficult relationships. Not all of her recollections of community life are negative – she enjoyed positive and fruitful connections with many people who were true friends to her until she died, most notably (aside from Drimé Özer) her daughter Chöying Drönma and her disciples Tupzang, Tsültrim Dorjé, Sotrül Rinpoché, and the nun Chötreng. Yet along with these friendships, tumultuous dynamics related to consort practices characterized Sera Khandro's community life. Sera Khandro was exchanged or told to go serve as a consort to other men for the purposes of increasing their longevity and aiding their revelation processes multiple times in her life. If Sera Khandro's account of the events in her life can serve as an example, we can deduce that the nonconsensual exchange of women as consorts for male religious figures was a commonplace aspect of consort culture in early twentieth-century Golok and beyond. While this is a disturbing element of Sera Khandro's biographical writings, it should be interpreted as part of a larger story, a story in which Sera Khandro also had a degree of autonomy and agency regarding searching out her own choice of consorts, although much less so than the powerful men with whom she interacted.

The most prominent example of the exchange of women that Sera Khandro recounts in both her *Autobiography* and Drimé Özer's *Biography* is her narration of the circumstances in which Gyalsé gave Sera Khandro to Drimé Özer without her consent when she was twenty-four years old. Sera Khandro despairs that her life partner had thrown her away like a worn-out object, but the fact that these powerful men discussed the fate of her future without her consent is not even noteworthy to Sera Khandro, perhaps indicating that it was not unusual behavior. In her *Autobiography*, Sera Khandro

records that during a ceremony to consecrate a new large prayer wheel built by a lama named Hor Öchung in Golok, Gyalsé and Drimé Özer had a chance to meet and speak with each other:

When the two of them were there speaking amicably about worldly and religious affairs, the Wish-fulfilling Jewel [Drimé Özer] said to Gyalsé, “You should find a way to get clothing and jewelry for your consort (*mkha’ gro*). Don’t leave her in this bad way with no jewelry looking like a household servant! Otherwise, because she is your consort (*thabs grogs*) it won’t look good to other people [if she is not dressed well].”

Gyalsé replied, “Okay, of course I will get clothes and jewelry. Thinking that it wasn’t suitable to treat this girl with great reverence for fear that she would develop an attitude, I didn’t let her become powerful. Although I did whatever was necessary, I didn’t say a single excellent word [about her] and I forgot her clothes and jewelry and so forth [perceiving them] as insignificant. Otherwise, she is in a relationship with me because of my father’s former aspiration prayers – she is not one who is prophesized for me. Perhaps she is your prophesized consort. She constantly prays single-mindedly to you and your father [Dujom Lingpa]. In particular, when she hears your name automatically tears flow from her eyes and with goose bumps on her body she prays in a loud voice and sings hymns of sadness. In any case, if [you] do a retreat [with her], perhaps obstacles [regarding] your retinue and life force will be dispelled. I offer you this consort (*mkha’ gro*) of mine – aside from you, she has no husband.⁵⁸⁶ She has a gentle disposition, a lucid intellect, and she doesn’t associate with other men.”

Although he said many things, fearing too many words, I won’t write them [here].

Again the Lord [Drimé Özer] said,

“Your consort is unlike others. When she was fifteen years old, we came together to this area [back from Lhasa to Golok]. At that time she had great tolerance for the three sufferings of cold, hunger, and thirst and her mind turned one-pointedly towards only the holy dharma. Despite the fact that she is clearly prophesized in my registry, from one perspective, I wondered if I would be able to do a retreat. Not only this, I wondered if my consorts and so forth would like it [if I took on Sera Khandro as a consort] so I let it go. In particular, because she lived with you as your representative, thinking that we would go against each other, I didn’t say anything. Still now I wonder if I can enter a strict retreat for a few years.⁵⁸⁷

This passage portrays Gyalsé’s intentional disregard of Sera Khandro as well as the reasoning behind it: Gyalsé feared that Sera Khandro would have a conceited attitude,

that she would gain power over him if he treated her lovingly and gave her jewels and clothing befitting of her rank as his *ḍākinī* consort. Sera Khandro also portrays Gyalsé's lack of interest in her by his easy admission that she does not belong to him but rather has faith and devotion for Drimé Özer alone, a fact that could only have been a sore point between Gyalsé and Sera Khandro. Here the overlap between religious devotion and love in Sera Khandro's feelings for Drimé Özer comes to the fore: because of her signs of devotion for Drimé Özer including prayers, tears, and goose bumps, Gyalsé gave her away to him. The passage above also portrays the difficulties Drimé Özer faced taking Sera Khandro on as his consort. Sera Khandro explains that Drimé Özer had two dilemmas: one was his desire to do retreat, i.e., to live a celibate ascetic lifestyle, and the other was the problems he faced maintaining accord with his other consorts if he were to take her on as well.

Sera Khandro also represents this same scene in Drimé Özer's *Biography*:

Then, one day Gartrül [Gyalsé] said, "Although my *ḍākinī* is extraordinary, aside from the connection of my father lama's aspiration prayers, she is not prophesized for me. If you take care of her, it seems that it will benefit your longevity. She has immeasurable faith and devotion [in you] and at all times she prays to you and your father. Because she is praying to be reborn in service of [your] teachings, it is certain that she has residual karma [to be with you]."

The Lord [Drimé Özer] sat in equanimity and didn't say anything. When Gartrül said it again and again, the Lord replied, "What the Gara Trülku says is good. From now on, if it is agreeable to my consort(s) and my brothers, aside from me, this *ḍākinī* has no husband. You are not allowed to give her to anybody else. Although she is in my prophecies and registries about the future, from one perspective she was with you. From another perspective, wondering if I could go practice in a mountain hermitage I thought I needed to remember to be without things to do. Despite all this, because the Lotus Guru's prayers are undeceiving, for the sake of needing excellent auspicious connections, you say that I need to be together [with her]."

Gara Gyalsé said, "The *ḍākinī* is not my destined wife. I abide by my words giving her to you." Saying this, [they] spoke about many important things.⁵⁸⁸

In this way, Sera Khandro describes how she went from being Gyalsé's life partner to being one of Drimé Özer's consorts through no direct action of her own. She does not represent either herself or Drimé Özer as appearing too eager – only after Gyalsé offers Sera Khandro to Drimé Özer several times does he accept, according to the above passage in the *Biography*. Given Sera Khandro's love for Drimé Özer, one might think that she would be overjoyed with the opportunity to exit her unhappy relationship with Gyalsé and live with Drimé Özer, but this is not exactly the case. For one thing, the conversation in which Sera Khandro is exchanged occurs when she is twenty-four years old and she does not actually leave Gyalsé's community for the last time until the age of thirty. For another, she describes feeling threatened and humiliated by Gyalsé's move to get rid of her. Just after the exchange scene at Hor Öchung's consecration ceremony, in her *Autobiography* she recollects her reaction to this dramatic event:

When I told Tupzang all about the story of Gyalsé giving me to the Precious Incarnate [Drimé Özer], he said, "Because our family's chance to have the good fortune and merit to have someone like you is weak, we know that [Gyalsé] is preparing to expel you by whatever means. Nevertheless, expand your mind and don't forget to find a way to stay with Gara [Gyalsé]."

I replied, "As you say, wondering if a bit of benefit will come to Gara Tertön's seat, no matter what happiness or suffering comes my way, it is decided that I will live there."⁵⁸⁹

Sera Khandro represents herself as being determined to stay at Banak with Gyalsé rather than feeling relieved to escape him. In making this choice she appears almost obstinate, determined to fulfill her promise to benefit Gara Tertön's Treasure teachings by living at Banak. Just as she rejected much of the ḍākinīs' advice urging her to take on the proper prophesized consorts, by staying with Gyalsé, Sera Khandro appears to be turning her back on the ḍākinī prophecies that decree Drimé Özer to be her proper consort. Aside

from her promise to be the caretaker of Gara Tertön Treasure texts, another reason that could have contributed to Sera Khandro's obstinate desire to maintain her place in Gyalsé's community could be economic – with two children to care for, Sera Khandro relied on Gyalsé's family resources in order to sustain herself and her children. Moving to Drimé Özer's community meant being the newest of Drimé Özer's consorts, a position that may not have been very desirable or stable for Sera Khandro. Whatever the reason, she draws out her departure from Gyalsé over the course of six long years despite the heavy foreshadowing in her *Autobiography* foretelling her upcoming reunion with Drimé Özer. The result is a suspenseful drama filled with unhappiness, longing, and its eventual fulfillment when Sera Khandro and Drimé Özer are finally reunited.

While the above scenario in which Gyalsé and Drimé Özer exchange rights over Sera Khandro is complicated by the fact that Gyalsé's move to offer her to him may have been a reaction to Sera Khandro's strong emotional attachment to Drimé Özer, there are instances in which Sera Khandro is told by important men in her life to act as a consort to men that she didn't even know. One instance of this is when Drimé Özer sent Sera Khandro off to Adzom Rinpoché (*A 'dzom rin po che*, *'Gro 'dul dpa' bo rdo rje*, 1842-1924) when she was thirty-two years old during the time that he and Sera Khandro were living together at Dartsang. Despite Sera Khandro's protests, she records that she complied with Drimé Özer's command and went to the eighty-two-year-old Adzom for the benefit of all involved:

At that time, a messenger arrived from Adzom's encampment (*A 'dzom sgar*) with a written order saying that I needed to go to Adzom's encampment. I said the following to the Lord (Drimé Özer): "I won't go to Adzom's encampment. From one perspective, I am without [good] legs and since my little son is so young, I don't have a way to abandon him. On top of that, in any case, I have never made a decision [based on] a discursive thought and let myself go under another person's

influence. Although it seems like I have come to you, [this is in] accordance with your command. Aside from the fact that Gartrül [Gara Gyalsé] didn't want me, it wasn't my idea [to come here]. Because of this, now, no matter how I think about it, I think I won't do anything that is misleading for myself and others. In particular, after your lifetime, I wonder if I can practice assiduously on a secluded mountain. Aside from this, I have no thought of needing to live together with a consort. Now also I don't want to go. That is my answer.

Aside from this, since I am a helpless woman, it is easy for just about anyone to steer me around like a tied dog. Because Lama Adzom is a holy master renowned in all of China and Tibet, if a messenger brings a written command for an inferior one like me, of course I must go when I am summoned. Because I am narrow-minded, I feel uncomfortable going. In particular, because before we were under the influence of others, we didn't come together until now. Now negative circumstances have become friendly and we have the opportunity to be together at one seat. At this time, I cannot separate from you for even an instant. Like a child circles around his mother, my mind has become extremely attached to you. Hence, if I don't have to go, I would like it."

The Lord said, "I too am attached to you – if for one day I don't have to separate from you, I feel extremely happy if I can be with you, happier than if I had a house full of jewels. Yet, if you could be a consort endowed with auspicious connections and prolong his life not for one year but for one month, not for one month but for one day, in general the Buddhist teachings and sentient beings would be happy. In particular, it would be a resource for oneself and others to accumulate a vast store of merit. Especially, as it was previously expressed in your vajra prophecy, 'If the essential point of an auspicious connection with Akara bazra occurs, it is certain that benefit will arise for all of our life's Dharma and disciples and so forth.'" Hence, it was decided that I would go there.⁵⁹⁰

Sera Khandro employs striking similes to describe her situation and the intense emotions she felt: she is powerless to control her own destiny, led around like a tied dog to serve as another man's consort when all she wants to do is stay with her lover like a child desires to be around his mother. She is not the only one with emotional attachment; Drimé Özer, too, desires to be with Sera Khandro more than he desires a house filled with jewels. Yet, she has no choice but to comply with the orders of the powerful men Drimé Özer and the elderly Adzom Rinpoché. Hence, rather than staying in Dartsang enjoying her precious moments with Drimé Özer, Sera Khandro sets off to Adzom's encampment in Kham.

There, she exchanges teachings and nurtures auspicious connections with Adzom Rinpoché. When she returns from her journey two months later, her disciples are amazed by the fact that as a result of the auspicious connections Adzom and Sera Khandro cultivated, the arthritis in her leg is completely healed. Sera Khandro recounts, “Since my leg was not like it had been before, I [could walk] on my own. They [my Vajra siblings] were amazed and feeling great joy, their faith was nurtured.”⁵⁹¹ Hence, Sera Khandro may have protested being sent away from Drimé Özer to serve the needs of a famous geriatric lama she didn’t know, but she conveys the positive consequences of the experience as well as her initial reluctance and resentment.⁵⁹²

Monastic Versus Non-Celibate Tantric Lifestyles

In the examples above, Sera Khandro represents herself as a powerless object of exchange between important male religious figures. However, in other instances she also demonstrates that she had the power to veto would-be consorts whom she deemed unsuitable. On several occasions, Sera Khandro rejects monks who approach her for her services as a consort. Sera Khandro’s multiple rejections of would-be consorts who were monks relates to a pervasive tension evident in her writings between the Tantric value of having a consort in order to dispel obstacles to longevity and the monastic value of maintaining strict celibacy. Based on Sera Khandro’s narrative, the nuances between these two competing behavioral models were often complex and difficult to negotiate. On the one hand, Sera Khandro demonstrates great respect for the monastic goal of pure celibacy, but on the other she participated in a world of Tantric practice in which celibacy was sometimes an obstacle to spiritual realization. According to her writings, it often

came down to Sera Khandro to choose the correct path between avoiding immoral vow transgression and engaging in necessary consort practices. Sera Khandro's writings thus demonstrate that the line between monastic and non-celibate Tantric lifestyles was often unclear. Monastics sought Sera Khandro's services as a consort while Drimé Özer, a Tantric religious adept, experimented with the celibate monastic lifestyle. Sera Khandro herself struggled with maintaining an intermediate social position as neither nun nor married laywoman, beholden to neither nunnery nor family yet open to the criticism of all.

In contrast to the above instances in which Sera Khandro was exchanged between men entirely without her consent, in the following passages she demonstrates that she also had agency to choose with whom she would share her potent curative powers. In the exchange below, another powerful man in her life, this time Gotrül Rinpoché, exhorts her when she is twenty-seven years old to serve as a consort to a monk she doesn't know in order to dispel obstacles to his life:

At that time, Tibir Tuksa Trülku along with a few of his attendants was doing a retreat in the area. Gotrül said to me, "Now since you have the auspicious connections to be able to dispel the obstacles to Titrül's life, don't ignore finding some way to do this. Given that he is dressed as a monastic, last year he requested full ordination before Dodrup Rinpoché. The astrological signs were extremely disturbed. In particular, in the prophecies of Dzokchen Rinpoché and many other great masters, it is said that for the sake of stabilizing his life force, he needs to secretly have a liaison with an intelligent wisdom lady.⁵⁹³ Not only that, even though he is a Treasure revealer, since he is the leader of a big monastery, he didn't behave as a *mantrin* and [acted] in a very honorable manner [i.e., as a monk] and resided only doing meditation practice. Because there is no one better than you to maintain his life force, don't ignore this."

Again I said, "If he is without mistake a Treasure revealer, why does he need to be a hypocrite? The leader of Orgyen Minling is of course famous for being a Treasure revealer. Because of this, I don't know if it is certain that if one is not a monk, one cannot be the head of a monastery. I will not be his method to dispel the obstacles to his life force. From one perspective, I have a husband. Moreover,

because stealing the vows of a monastic is the cause for a great offence, certainly I will not do that.”

Again, Gotrül said, “For what reason do you have to make your body [his] receptacle? You have mastered the esoteric precepts of the three channels, seminal nuclei, and wind and you do not engage in perverse behavior. Moreover, aside from only being for the benefit of another person, if you are without selfishness and negative thinking, how could it be an offence? Since I am certain that Gyalsé has decided [that it is okay], from that perspective, I will be responsible for your not being affected by defilement. Now if he is without a method [to dispel his obstacles], it is certain that Titrül will not live beyond thirty-eight or thirty-nine years.”

Again I said, “Even if Gyalsé is agreeable, since more than him, I have an extraordinary root consort [Drimé Özer], if he does not agree, I will not take an important action. If I help him by just reciting a feast offering is that okay? Even if it isn’t okay, since I am without anything to do about it, I will not have manifest and hidden commitments.”⁵⁹⁴

He replied, “Now go together with one of my monks to Titrül and it will be beneficial for both of you.”

Then, I went according to his order. The incarnate himself [Titrül] established the wheel of the three seats [Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and wrathful ones] and taught in detail regarding worldly and religious matters such as the essential points regarding the three abodes of breathing in and exhaling wind, the stages of visualizing the three vajras, and so forth. In particular, he made the aspiration prayers to be held as a son of the *dākinīs* of the mother Tantras in this and all of his lifetimes. Having given me his porcelain cup and a long necklace made of various precious jewels, we left the actual auspicious connection for later.⁵⁹⁵

Then, having come before Gotrül, when I told him the whole story in detail, he said, “Being unaware that formerly he was your extraordinary consort, now your taking him on is greatly amazing! Still it is important for you both to be careful regarding methods. Like the proverb that says, “If deities are profound, then demons are profound,” it is unacceptable for you to let yourself fall under the influence of obstacles at any time.”

Having given me his silver coated porcelain cup, a secret meditation instruction, and many other substances, we [Sera Khandro and Gyalsé] returned home.⁵⁹⁶

This passage reveals a great deal about the blurred line between monasticism and consort practices at the same time as it presents an ambiguous picture of Sera Khandro’s relationship to Titrül. Gotrül Rinpoché urges Sera Khandro to have a secret liaison with

Titrül, citing prophecies of figures such as Dzokchen Rinpoché in support of his cause. Gotrül's words depict that it was not unheard of for monastics to be vow holders externally, but secretly engage in relationships with "wisdom ladies" who were the panacea for their illnesses and energy blocks. His words also underscore the close connection between being a Treasure revealer and being a non-celibate Tantric practitioner (a *mantrin* or *sngags pa*) in that he must offer Sera Khandro an excuse for Titrül's celibate status: since he is in charge of a large monastery, he had to be a monastic, implying that otherwise he would follow the more typical path of being a non-celibate Treasure revealer. Sera Khandro is suspicious of this equation, citing the example of the head of the important Nyingma Monastery in Central Tibet, Orgyen Mindroling Monastery, who was both a (non-celibate) Treasure revealer and the leader of a monastic community without hypocritical external and internal behavior. Indeed, in the contemporary context as well, it is not uncommon for Nyingma monasteries to be headed by non-celibate religious figures. Sera Khandro refuses Gotrül's exhortation to be the lama's consort on two counts: first, she already has a husband, and second, she fears destroying a monk's vows. It is noteworthy that even though this interlude occurs when she is still living with Gyalsé, she makes it clear that her primary allegiance is not to Gyalsé but to her "root consort" Drimé Özer. Regarding the question of preserving monastic vows, Gotrül Rinpoché rationalizes what is, according to Sera Khandro, Titrül's hypocrisy by explaining that since Sera Khandro has gained mastery over her channels, seminal nuclei, and winds, nothing she does is perverted behavior and therefore she won't be destroying the monk's vows. Sera Khandro is also less than convinced by this, and she reiterates that she is not one who maintains manifest and hidden commitments. In

other words, she is not one who presents herself as doing one thing in public for all to see while secretly engaging in something else.

However, despite her stand against the hypocrisy of acting as the monk Titrül's consort, she did go to see him. Given that her descriptions of consort practices are usually euphemistic, it is difficult to determine from her writing the exact nature of their exchange. Sera Khandro seems to indicate that she left the auspicious connections of acting as his consort for later while making enough of a connection with him to help him avert obstacles to his life and to satisfy the command of her close friend and supporter Gotrül Rinpoché, with whom she also had a highly ambiguous relationship. Hence, in the passage above Sera Khandro represents herself as having both satisfied the demands of Gotrül Rinpoché and having made a strong statement that she would not participate in sexual acts that controverted monastic vows.

In the following example, the borderlines between ethical behavior and esoteric Tantric practices appear a bit clearer, as does the strength of Sera Khandro's voice when she firmly rejects the untoward advances of a young monk:

At that time, one day a man named Gara Gyaltsen came and said again and again, "Since I have received permission from Gyalsé, we need to make a connection."

I thought that it was as if his mind had been inspired by demons. I said many times that from whatever worldly or religious perspective, based on pure ethics, one must accumulate a store of merit by the [six] perfections such as giving and so forth and [I said] it is unacceptable to waste a precious human body endowed with the [eight] freedoms.⁵⁹⁷ But because lust had arisen in his mind-stream, he ignored [my] meaning. He said many things that undermined cause and effect and related to mistaken behavior.

I was extremely depressed. Feeling sad about [people's] attitude in the degenerate era, I said the following:

"Lotus Born One, protector and refuge of the world,
Knowing One, Dakki Tsogyal of the changeless dimension,

Look upon me, this vagabond Dewé Dorjé, with compassion!
Bestow blessings that will dispel negative conditions and obstacles.

Listen you who are losing the vows⁵⁹⁸ of physical discipline –
Send your thought from your mind!
Examine your body, speech, and mind:
On the outside, your attire is that of [a monk's] three robes.
On the inside, you have great lustful desire equal to that of a bird.
The thought in your mind is like that of a petty thief or a bandit.
At all times, you enjoy the negative wealth of offerings [given to monastics]

I don't desire one with a negative body like you.
Even though I am one with an inferior [female] body,
If you look at my face, I am of a beautiful ḍākinī lineage.

Although I appear like a woman with childish intellect,
My mind sees the essence of the birthless three bodies.⁵⁹⁹

Although I engage in activities as if I am a person in cyclic existence,
I do not need to separate from the primordial wisdom of equality.

Having mastered the ten winds,
Everything that appears [exists as] the dimension of great bliss
[And] is liberated in the expanse of the dimension of evenly extensive
primordial wisdom.

I don't have a need for someone with a body like you.
In this life and the next both, I won't do negative things.
You, imprudent one, consider this properly.
Don't exchange your body endowed with a purpose for one with little
purpose.

When the fruits of karma undeceivingly ripen,
You will have done worthless things like this.
Now, control yourself regarding this meaning.”

Having said this, I was freed from obstacles.⁶⁰⁰

Sera Khandro thus adamantly rejects the advances of a monk whom she perceives to act out of lust. Passages such as this one have a pedagogical purpose in Sera Khandro's narrative – they serve as a message to her readership that consort practices must not be performed out of lust by unethical monastics who abandon practicing the six perfections

and who give up the fortunate condition of having a precious human birth endowed with freedoms. In responding to the monk, Sera Khandro emphasizes her own desireless state, as well as the dual nature of her status; on one level, she represents herself as only a woman of meager intellect who appears to be a householder, but underneath her humble stature she expresses that she has attained extraordinary realization. Her reaction to the lustful monk demonstrates that she is more than a sexual object being passed around by powerful men. The monk, whose name Gara Gyaltzen implies that he was Gyalsé's relative, attempts to seduce her by claiming that he received Gyalsé's permission. However, in this instance, Gyalsé's authority does not surpass her own.

Although this passage seems to set a clear boundary between proper ethical behavior for monastics and non-celibate *mantrins*, it is not without its own obscurity. Immediately after this interaction, she writes that a terrifying woman appeared before her and scolded her, saying,

From the time you were young, I have lovingly raised you as if you were my one child. Now, on the basis of one small situation, you abandon your *bodhicitta* [intention] to benefit others. What is the meaning of your putting forth this mental confusion?⁶⁰¹

Instead of being rewarded for her virtuous act of refusing to allow a monk to transgress his vows, Sera Khandro writes, "The collection of elements [of my body] was extremely disturbed and I became oppressed with an illness that was difficult to bear."⁶⁰² This is the illness that divine visionary *ḍākinīs* repeatedly diagnose as a sickness resulting from Sera Khandro's not engaging with a consort. Therefore, the passage above could also be read as another instance in which Sera Khandro rejects a consort that she was supposed to take on according to divine prophecy. Whether one interprets the passage above as correct behavior befitting a proper woman who rightfully rejects the immoral sexual advances of

a lustful monk or as a detour in defiance of *ḍākinī* prophecies that determine Sera Khandro's life, it again exemplifies the pervasive tension in Sera Khandro's writing between celibate and non-celibate interpretations of moral conduct for those on the path of Secret Mantra.

Drimé Özer's Dilemma

In Sera Khandro's auto/biographical writings, tensions between maintaining a life of celibate monasticism versus non-celibate life as a Tantric religious specialist (a *mantrin* or *sngags pa*) concern not only monks' transgressions but also those of non-celibate figures such as Drimé Özer. Sera Khandro depicts Drimé Özer as a person who struggled to determine what kind of life was appropriate for him. The following passage from Drimé Özer's *Biography* describing events in his seventeenth year addresses precisely this question of celibate versus non-celibate religious life:

Then, one day when [Drimé Özer] went to rest, he thought that it would be good if he were a monk. After a few days had passed, he went before a great monastic khenpo named Lama Chögyal who was ordained by Drimé Özer's holy direct disciple [named] Sotrül Rinpoché, who was a disciple prophesized by the Precious Lama [Dujom Lingpa] when he was in retreat. When he thought that he needed to become a novice monk, that night in his dream there was a woman with an ugly body who said, "Your cowardly behavior is wretched!" Saying this, she beat her chest and cried intensively.

The Lord asked, "Why are you so miserable?"

She answered, "What's wrong with me crying? It concerns the way people behave these days. Not only me, this old woman, but the *ḍākinīs* of sacred places and lands are angry."

Again, the Lord asked, "Why are the *ḍākinīs* of sacred places and lands disturbed?"

She replied, "If I explain [it to you], it is as if there is no limit to what there is to explain. If I tell you just a bit, you will understand your fault."

The Lord said, “What fault of mine has affected you?”

She said, “If [we] are not affected by [your] faults, it is good. Look at the signs of this negative degenerate era. Not protecting your vows to be a *mantrin* (*sngags pa*), you shave your head. Saying you are a fully ordained monk endowed with the three [i.e., Hinayāna, Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna vows], you enter into mantra. Although you are empowered in profound Treasures, on account of bad people, you have little courage and you let [your Treasures] go. These are the faults to your life as a Treasure revealer.”

The Lord answered, “Even if Treasure revealers enter monastic training, how does that harm Treasures? Before, even the Lotus Guru took monastic ordination before Kūngabo. Having received the name Shakya Sengé, he became one with a shaved-head and bare feet. Despite this, later, he guided all in the land of Tibet with Treasures.”

She replied, “I know the Lotus Guru’s experience. You don’t. Before, when the Guru resided in the Unsurpassed [Buddhafield], I worked [for him]. From the South Western Milky [Lake], having become unified with the mind of the Buddhas, he came as an emanation body. Not relying on the gradual grounds and paths [regarding] all the knowledge of what to abandon and attain, he attained mastery over all good qualities of omniscience and primordial wisdom. As a sign of this, he became sovereign as the Buddha of Orgyen and then he took the noble Öchak Lhamo as his wife. Having collected all the heroes and heroines of the sacred places and lands, he subdued them with his strength. Then, he resided as a yogi who behaved as an ascetic. Having practiced asceticism in eight charnel grounds including the Cool Grove charnel ground and so forth, it is true that he collected all the formless beings including the gods, men, demons, nāga spirits, nyen spirits, land deities, the eight classes of demons, and so forth under his power and established them in Dharma. If you become a shaven-headed monastic, I don’t know if you will be an ascetic [like him].”

Saying this, she disappeared.

Early the next morning when he was having breakfast, the body of the Lord himself was uncomfortable and he felt great pain. He thought that he had gotten a cold, but he kept it secret. After several days had passed, when the Lord got better from his cold, in the area near him a contagious disease arose and many people got sick. In particular, the Lord’s middle sister named Paltsé and her spouse became afflicted with illness and were on the verge of death. Two people from their locality came to summon the Lord himself and when he went there together with his attendants, his sister and her husband were on the verge of death. Hence, the Lord gave precious substances and having given the Precious Lama’s [Dujom Lingpa’s] blessing substance,⁶⁰³ he performed a body offering [ritual] and a meditation practice. The husband could not be saved from death and passed away.

His sister was cured from illness. Having given her worldly advice, the Lord himself came home. He performed a [ritual that] remedied the *dākinīs*' agitation and an offering ritual and so forth and then all the sickness in the land went away.⁶⁰⁴

Treasure revealers cannot be celibate monks because they will not be able to retrieve their Treasures according to this ugly *dākinī* who visits Drimé Özer and showers her dismay upon him. She is angry because he has failed to protect his vows as a *mantrin* and instead pursued the externally laudatory path of becoming a monk to the detriment of his vows as a *mantrin* and his ability to reveal Treasures. That Drimé Özer employs the example of the Lotus Guru, Padmasambhava, in defending his decision to become a monk demonstrates the power that figures central to the mythology of the Treasure tradition such as Padmasambhava and Yeshé Tsogyal had as models for Treasure revealers. The young Drimé Özer attempts to follow the ethical code exemplified by Padmasambhava, but he does so incorrectly; Padmasambhava is a maverick figure who embodies both ascetic discipline and the powers of Tantric subjugation. The reaction of the wrathful lady above indicates that Drimé Özer should not compare himself to the extraordinary deeds of the Lotus Guru and instead should take on vows appropriate for his status as a Treasure revealer. It was his fate to live as a *mantrin*, and as proof of that, Sera Khandro describes the plague that spread in Drimé Özer's local area. Not only did Drimé Özer's incorrect decision affect himself, it also affected his community and resulted in the death of his sister's spouse. Again we see the interrelationship between the divine (*dākinīs*' anger), community welfare (plague in the land), and the individual (Drimé Özer's incorrect behavior) that characterizes Sera Khandro's understanding of the role of the Treasure revealer in the world. It is only through proper conduct and proper ritual

intervention, in this case Drimé Özer's ritual offerings to the *ḍākinīs*, that harmony can once again be restored.

Sera Khandro also portrays Drimé Özer's dilemma between choosing a life as a monastic or a *mantrin* in the exchange scene in which Gyalsé gives Sera Khandro to Drimé Özer. When Gyalsé offers Sera Khandro to Drimé Özer, he accepts the offer and then explains that he hadn't approached Gyalsé earlier to ask for her because of two reasons: 1) he wanted to do a strict retreat, and 2) he was concerned that his other consorts would be displeased. If Drimé Özer's words are any example, life as a *mantrin* was no easy path – balancing the needs of multiple consorts left Drimé Özer hesitating to invite Sera Khandro into his household. His desire to do a strict retreat was a desire to escape the busyness of the social world by living as a monastic. Yet each time Drimé Özer sought to become a monk, visionary *ḍākinīs* prevented him by whatever drastic measures necessary. For example, towards the end of his life when he was thirty-eight (shortly before Sera Khandro lived with him), as a result of social disturbance in his community, Drimé Özer again yearned for the peace of monastic life:

At that time because a liar spoke much talk that annoyed the Lord, he set his mind on one yearning and thought that in his subsequent lifetimes he should be a monk. When he had this thought that he need to be a monk, one day in his dream he saw a gathering of many women.

When he wondered what this was, they said, “You don't know us?”

He answered, “I don't know [you].”

They said, “We are messengers of the mantra protectors. Since you are acting as a monk, because your head and limbs belong to us, its okay if we cut them.”

They aimed a knife at his head and were about to cut him and they displayed much other cruelty. They disturbed the channels [in his body]. Not giving him a chance to be comfortable, he awoke from sleep.⁶⁰⁵

The *ḍākinīs* indicate that his very body belongs to them and to Sera Khandro as their emissary; he is not free to become a monk because monasticism is tantamount to rejecting *ḍākinīs*. Through including visionary interludes such as these in Drimé Özer's *Biography*, Sera Khandro emphasizes that Drimé Özer's status as a *mantrin* is more appropriate and efficacious for him than being a monk would be.⁶⁰⁶ Although she portrays herself in a humble manner by denying her own need for male consorts (at the same time as she inscribes it through the voice of her visionary interlocutors), she has no hesitation portraying Drimé Özer as a *mantrin* who needed consorts in order to fulfill his prophesized destiny.

Sera Khandro is Neither Nun nor Laywoman

Sera Khandro represents her own social position vis-à-vis the dilemma between celibate and non-celibate religious life squarely in the non-celibate category. Unlike Drimé Özer, Sera Khandro was not drawn to monastic life. Although she wished to renounce the world, she recounts that from childhood, lamas told her that she should not be a nun because she was a *ḍākinī*. According to Changtrong Druptop Rinpoché (*Lcang grong grub thob rin po che*) who spoke to her and her family when she was eight years old,

This girl is without mistake an emanation of the Lady Sakya Hayagrīva (*Sa skya'i rta mgrin dbang mo*). Hence, neither being a householder nor a nun is appropriate. When it is time, her [*ḍākinī*] heritage will awaken, so until then do whatever you want.⁶⁰⁷

As a devout religious woman who was not a nun, Sera Khandro occupied an indeterminate social position between monastic and lay life, beholden neither to a

nunnery nor to a lay household. As she expresses to a beautiful woman who appeared before her later in her life when she was forty,

I am called neither nun nor wife (*nag*).
 I am not a nun, but I am as disciplined as a nun.
 My vows regarding the three trainings on the path⁶⁰⁸ are without deterioration.
 Without being impure (*nag med*), I am given the name “wife” (*nag mo*).
 As if I were impure (*nag can*), [others] expel me from the land and see me as something to abandon.
 But I don’t remember having a hair’s breadth of impure fault (*nag nyes pa*).⁶⁰⁹

Sera Khandro’s verse is a play on the deliberately parallel words for “laywoman” (*nag mo*) and impure or negative (*nag*). She figuratively places herself in both categories of being a nun and a laywoman; she is a nun in the sense of being disciplined and she is a laywoman in the sense that others see her as an impure person like a laywoman. But in a literal sense, she explains that she fits into neither category. This lead to many uncomfortable social situations for her because she was criticized both by nuns for being immoral without proper monastic vows and also by other Tantric consorts who by and large despised her out of jealousy, leaving Sera Khandro with only a few female friends.

Sera Khandro recollects an interaction she had with a nun that illustrates the difficulties of her position as neither nun nor laywoman. When she was seventeen years old and trying to extricate herself from her temporary stint as a servant girl in a Golok household, her employers introduced her to their relative, the nun Tsüldrön, and suggested she live with Tsüldrön in order to accomplish her religious goals. Sera Khandro writes,

[her employer said] . . . At the religious encampment, since our nun Tsüldrön is there, go and live there and don’t lose our horse.”

I acted according to his words and went to Tsüldrön’s place.

[Tsüldrön] said, “Now you need to go before Trülku Murasang and cut your hair and request vows. Otherwise, you can’t live at my place.”

I thought that since there was a rich household of [the man] named Sotrasang, that household would continuously give me some butter. At all times they periodically gave me a share of food that wasn’t meat⁶¹⁰ such as rice and wild sweet potatoes and so forth. Thinking that I was going to live with Sotrasang, Tsüldrön wondered if I would take [her share of the offering].

I said the following: “It is okay if I don’t cut my hair and take vows. It won’t harm your purity. Even when I think of the conduct of you completely pure nuns, someone like me who is young and without wealth would not make it on my own as a nun.”

She got mad and stood up. Having grabbed my shoulder, she led me before Murasang and said “Trülku, please take a tuft of her hair [i.e., make her a nun]. She has gone astray from the middle [way] and although she has a pure mind, she doesn’t listen to anybody and I don’t know what to do with her.”

The attendant said, “Stay here for a moment. Ask him after he drinks his tea.”

The Lama said, “Pity – you seem to be one with great merit and one with a big share of food.”⁶¹¹ He gave me a piece of meat with a joint in it.

Tsüldrön said, “The Central Tibetan girl doesn’t eat meat.”

Again he gave me some cheese and I thought that it was an accomplishment substance. Aside from just a little bit, he didn’t give her [Tsüldrön] any. I alone ate the [cheese] and the ensuing understanding was that I mixed my mind with the mind of the lama.

When I stayed there [like this] for a short while, the attendant said, “Amazing – This girl’s eyes are like those of a meditator! Before, who was your lama?”

Using the example of the sky for my awareness, I pointed to the sky.

He said, “She is a heretic – she says her lama is the sun.”

Again he asked, “Do you know the Dharma?”

As a symbol of self-emergent knowledge of the senses of the five doors of the ocean of various elements, I touched my hand to my eyes, nose, ears, tongue, and body.

[The attendant] didn’t understand and asked Tsüldrön, “What is this?”

She said, “Last winter she requested Dharma. Maybe [her] meaning is this? Otherwise, I don’t know.” Having said this, she didn’t have time and went away.

I stayed and after the lama had tea, I said this:

“From the time I was fifteen years old, I wondered if I could accomplish the genuine Dharma. Hence, don’t minimize directing your attention to [helping me] go on this path. Because I have a great purpose, it seems that it doesn’t matter whether I cut or don’t cut my hair. It was Tsüldrön’s idea. If this body of mine doesn’t go under the strong power of another, I will not engage in meaningless relationships with religious people, lay householders, and so forth. At all times, I will see if I can accomplish benefit for myself and others. Not becoming attached to food, clothing, or wealth, I will try to accomplish pure divine Dharma. If, on account of having an inferior [female] body, my thoughts do not go on this path, since I am not in opposition to you, please think accordingly.”

The lama said lovingly, “Oh, yes, not getting attached to food, clothing, and wealth, if you wonder if you will accomplish the pure Dharma, it seems you will accomplish the Dharma. If you have great attachment to cyclic existence, it seems you won’t accomplish the Dharma. These days religious people don’t direct their minds away from cyclic existence and in the summer, they delight in butter, in the winter, they beg for barley, and at all times it is as if they are ghosts carrying around [their own] dead bodies.”⁶¹²

He spoke about Dharma such as this and so forth and having put a golden statue on my head, he prayed. He gave me one of seven pills made from the powdered pieces of Patrül Rinpoché’s skull and other religious medicine and protection cords with the energy of mantra and so forth and he gave me advice.

Then, I came back and told Tsüldrön, “I promised not to have a physical relationship with lay people or with religious people without a purpose. Otherwise, I will not be a nun.”

She said, “Wow – it is as if you wear wild yak hair on your face.”⁶¹³ Who would dare say dirty words such as these to a lama like him?,” and she pinched my cheeks.

I said, “Since I said things that I am able to do, there is no ‘not daring.’ I wouldn’t dare [tell the lama about] trainings and vows”⁶¹⁴ becoming secretly deteriorated.”

She didn’t say anything.”⁶¹⁵

The reasons Sera Khandro gives for not taking monastic vows are both practical and more existential. She worries that “someone like me who is young and without wealth

would not make it on my own as a nun.” In a foreign land with no family support, Sera Khandro didn’t feel that she would have the ability to be independent as a nun. Thus, problems between Sera Khandro and the nun Tsüldrön arise not only over the merits of celibate versus non-celibate religious life; they are competing for the support provided by the wealthy Sotrasang family, and this leads Tsüldrön to become exasperated with Sera Khandro. Yet Sera Khandro and the nun Tsüldrön differ on a more existential level as well. Sera Khandro suggests that whether or not she is a nun will not ultimately affect her life’s purpose of trying to accomplish the completely pure Dharma. In a way, her words deny the necessity of Tsüldrön’s vows, since Sera Khandro suggests she can practice religion without the external structure of monasticism. Sera Khandro boldly asserts to Lama Murasang that she will not have sexual relationships with religious or lay people without a purpose, but in so doing, she is also asserting that she *will* engage in consort practices for religious purposes. Tsüldrön criticizes Sera Khandro for her overt statement, but Sera Khandro turns Tsüldrön’s criticism around and effectively silences her by insinuating that Tsüldrön is guilty of secretly transgressing her monastic vows. In this way, Sera Khandro defends her choice not to be a nun while at the same time she asserts a subtle claim that her non-celibate life is more ethical than that of a nun who cannot maintain the full three types of Vajrayāna vows. This exchange between Tsüldrön and Sera Khandro comes at a pivotal moment as just after this, Sera Khandro introduces her first account of being summoned to act as a consort to a prominent male religious adept, Gara Tertön of Banak Monastery. This argument between Tsüldrön and Sera Khandro thus exemplifies the negotiation that was going on between monastic and non-celibate visions of religious life in Sera Khandro’s early twentieth-century Eastern Tibetan

communities, a negotiation that is very much ongoing in the contemporary sphere of religious life in Eastern Tibet.

Negative Gossip

The nun Tsüldrön is not the only one who criticizes Sera Khandro for being a non-celibate female religious specialist; according to Sera Khandro's *Autobiography*, gossip within the communities in which she lived was a constant problem. Other scholars have analyzed the role of gossip in different contexts relating to Tibetan Buddhist women. Hanna Havnevik notes that in Dharamsala, she continually heard gossip about nuns breaking their vows and getting pregnant. Despite the popularity of jokes relating to the moral laxity of nuns, her informants claimed that nuns very rarely actually disrobe but those that do are always blamed for their moral transgression (and not the men involved).⁶¹⁶ In the case of contemporary Labrang society in Amdo, Charlene Makley suggests that negative gossip about nuns is significant because it represents Labrang resident's discomfort with the breach in gender roles that nuns embody:

Scandalous gossip about nuns thus worked to defrock them; gossips resolutely *re-sexed* nuns by sharply differentiating them from monks, and by claiming the uncontrolled and hence negative corporality of females to be typical of all.⁶¹⁷

In the case of Labrang nuns and Sera Khandro's reflections, gossip works as a form of social control; gossip is a sort of public opinion "barometer." Makley suggests that people in Labrang society gossiped widely about the alleged illicit sexuality of nuns as a way to remove them from their gender-crossing role of approximating high status men with their shaved heads and red robes. Likewise, Sera Khandro's repeated mentions of negative gossip swirling around her demonstrates the discomfort many in her Golok

society felt with her indeterminate status as neither nun nor laywoman. Sera Khandro's frequent comments about fearing gossip or experiencing its ill effects relate to her role as a woman who had not completely renounced sexuality but who spent time around monastic communities. According to Sera Khandro's self-representation, negative gossip about her as a potentially lascivious woman followed her each time she went anywhere near male monastic personages. She describes herself as a sort of social pariah, causing negative gossip to befall whichever male monastic she encountered. Thus, tensions in Sera Khandro's social life occurred not only in non-celibate communities with jealous female consorts, but also in monastic contexts prone to negative gossip about women.

Just after Yakza finally allowed the nineteen-year-old Sera Khandro to visit her husband Gara Tertön on his deathbed, Sera Khandro recounts going to see her friend Kitrül (*Skid sprul*), a lama she felt an affinity towards since he was also from Central Tibet. Yet again, she ran into insurmountable problems based on her identity as a non-celibate religious woman:

Then, I went before Kitrül and having stayed there for a few days, I told him all about my happy and sad circumstances. At this time, he said, "Now you don't have anywhere to go – live here at my place and you won't have to think of [finding enough] food and clothes."

When I thought I would stay there for a period of time, the Trülku's sister had negative thoughts and said, "Your actions are unacceptable. I don't know what our Trülku will consider. In his last life, Kilung Tukchok Dorjé was a mantra adept (*sngags 'chang*)." Also saying other negative words to me, she demoralized me.

I replied, "Why do you think like this? It is certain that the Trülku will not take me as a wife. He is old and moreover he is extremely strict regarding his monastic behavior. Why do you have wrong views regarding our [good] conscience?"

Even though I said this, still she didn't believe me and she constantly mentioned much unnecessary [negativity] to both the Trülku and me. Hence, one day,

because an old woman had died deep in the mountains, the Trülku went there. I secretly left and went to Karnang Gabma.⁶¹⁸

When Sera Khandro saw Kitrül again, she explained to him the reason for her surreptitious departure:

Then Kitrül came to beg for alms for a few days. On the way, he stopped to drink tea at the home of a mother named Taza Drönpo and her child. Because he sent a messenger to summon me there, I went before him along with the messenger. When I asked him how he was, the Trülku said, “Why did you secretly run off when I wasn’t there?”

I answered, “Sir, wherever I go, I harm everyone’s perception and become the basis for their wrong views. Hence, this is the reason why I didn’t stay.”

He also said, “If that is so, since I don’t know if we two will meet again and again, wherever you go you need to be careful regarding rivers, enemies, and dogs. In particular, if you want to go to Machen, it is not okay unless you have a good friend [to help you]. Since I have heard that it is difficult to become free from the mouths of dogs, beggars, and so forth, a danger to your hands will be a danger to your travels.” He gave me a protection cord, commitment substances, and so forth along with more than five [coins] for travel money, and then I returned home.⁶¹⁹

In non-celibate communities, Sera Khandro was the bane of other female consorts’ lives; around monastics, she was a threat to their monastic vows and a basis for others to develop wrong views (*log lta*) and harmful perceptions (*mig lam la gnod pa*). Kitrül’s sister is suspicious of his association with Sera Khandro, fearing that since in his last incarnation he was a non-celibate *mantrin*, he would remember this and take her on as his consort. No amount of convincing on Sera Khandro’s part can relieve Kitrül’s sister of her distrust, hence Sera Khandro decides to leave. Despite this, Kitrül himself treats Sera Khandro lovingly, accepting her decision not to stay with him and warning her of the many dangers of a life on the road in Golok including dogs, beggars, river crossings, and enemies (possibly bandits?). In this way, Sera Khandro is once again essentially expelled from a new home for being a non-celibate young woman threatening others’ monastic

vows. The didactic value of these repeated experiences of alienation is that they strengthen Sera Khandro's (and her intended readers') resolve to lessen attachments to the impermanent and misery-filled appearances of this world in favor of seeking spiritual liberation.

According to Sera Khandro's writings, negative gossip not only causes uncomfortable situations for Sera Khandro; it also causes her to modify her behavior in order to avoid gossip circulating about her. In this sense, gossip has a regulating effect that suggests the social mores of the communities in which she lived. This is particularly evident in relation to Sera Khandro's visits to Gotrül Rinpoché; his status as a celibate monastic hierarch at Tartang Pelyül Monastery makes him someone with whom Sera Khandro felt she shouldn't interact for fear of tarnishing his reputation. Yet, although she repeatedly mentions her fear of negative gossip affecting Gotrül Rinpoché, she always writes this in the context of her visits to him. For example, when a monk messenger comes to Banak to summon the then twenty-four-year-old Sera Khandro to Gotrül Rinpoché's presence so that he may ask her for some of her Treasure teachings, Sera Khandro fears that she will cause others to have wrong views of him:

Although I thought that among the four pillar doctrine holders [of my Treasures], [Gotrül] was the northern pillar named Dharmamati, because I had an inferior [female] body, others would have wrong views about the Trülku so I told Jikchö the following: "It seems as if your lama is one who doesn't know anything. He says I should send a letter including whatever this old lady remembers in her mind – best a prophecy, middling an accomplishment practice, and worst no less than a single four-line verse . . ." ⁶²⁰

The interest Gotrül Rinpoché expresses in Sera Khandro's revelations is among the first validating experiences Sera Khandro mentions, although she mitigates his praise for her by expressing her inferior position as a woman and suggesting that gossip about her could

harm the celibate lama. On another visit to see Gotrül Rinpoché, Sera Khandro again writes of her concern about bringing negative gossip upon the lama. Sera Khandro recounts that when she was twenty-six years old, because she suffered from an uncertain illness, another lama named Trado Lama (*Khra rdo bla ma*) predicted that Gotrül Rinpoché had the antidote to her illness. Sera Khandro writes,

Then, we gradually arrived at Pelyül Monastery. I thought that since I didn't have a big purpose with Gotrül, it was okay if I didn't go to his presence. When we were at our lodging above the monastery, my disciple Palden Gyamtso and Jikmé Chöpel both came and said, "The Trülku wants you to come. Accordingly, you should go quickly."

I said, "Aside from just meeting him earlier, I don't have a big reason to go. Moreover, it is not acceptable if I go because the gossip⁶²¹ will make him notorious."

The two of them said, "No matter what anybody says, let them say it. Let's go."

I replied, "I won't go. Why should I go? I won't act like a dog or a beggar wandering around a monastery for no purpose. If gossip affects him, because he is the ally of the area, it will be the cause of a great fault. Aside from this, for me, the best would be union in the sphere of reality, middling would be to make a [religious] connection, worst would be only causing [others] to gossip about him. In short, this is the knowledge of one who is of a *ḍākinī* lineage regarding producing the cause of attaining the supreme fruit of accomplishment. Nevertheless, don't say even a bit of these words to others. These are my secret words to travelers about to go." Saying this, I went to sleep. Hence, they couldn't do anything and left.⁶²²

Sera Khandro's illness that can only be treated by meeting Gotrül Rinpoché, her great hesitancy to go to him that stretches over several pages of her *Autobiography*, and her concern that she will bring negative gossip upon him all point towards the interpretation that he was her consort. The great lengths to which she goes to emphasize that she was concerned over gossip affecting Gotrül and that she was not particularly interested in visiting the lama almost overshadow the very strong statement she makes that from her perspective, it would be beneficial to make a connection with him. Her resistance to

going before him is finally worn down when two of his monks come and insist on taking her to him.⁶²³ After they visited for a while, Sera Khandro recounts,

When he told me that he had some good and bad words for me and to listen to his words, he told his retinue to go outside the door. Because we two were alone, I thought that gossip would affect him. We sat in front of the window in the room and having spoken in detail regarding worldly and religious affairs, he gave me advice.⁶²⁴

Though Sera Khandro feared the gossip her visit would bring upon Gotrül Rinpoché, for her, the visit was successful in that she was cured of illness. Gotrül Rinpoché encourages Sera Khandro to reveal her Treasures and also encourages Gyalsé (who is there with Sera Khandro) to help her accomplish her religious goals.

Sera Khandro may have had good reason to fear negative gossip affecting Gotrül Rinpoché if she indeed was having some type of relationship with him. However, problems related to gossip followed Sera Khandro to other monastic contexts as well in which she was completely innocent of the allegations against her. For example, when Sera Khandro was devastated by Drimé Özer's death, Sotrül Rinpoché invited her to live nearby at Sera Monastery. Sera Khandro mentions the following incident that occurred shortly after she moved to Sera Monastery at the end of her thirty-third year:

Then, we gradually arrived at Sera Monastery. Sotrül came to welcome us and brought food and so forth. At that time, although he said that I needed to put my sleeping quarters a bit close to Sotrül's, everyone from the outside and inside had wrong thoughts about this and so we didn't do it. I thought that it seemed that I wouldn't have the opportunity to stay there for long.⁶²⁵

Because of all the people's opinions, Sera Khandro suspects that she would soon be unwelcome at Sera Monastery as well. Fortunately, Sera Khandro is wrong, and Sera Monastery ends up being her home for much of the latter part of her life.

These small hints and mentions of the social difficulties Sera Khandro faced as a non-celibate religious woman demonstrate that being a female, a Treasure revealer, and a non-celibate religious adept was a combination unusual and problematic in Sera Khandro's communities. Based on the long list of social problems and tensions she enumerates, it appears that Sera Khandro disturbed many people she encountered, ranging from humble nuns to haughty female consorts to overly lustful monks to communities seeking to guard their monastic clergy's celibacy vows. In this, too, Sera Khandro is not alone, for Yeshé Tsogyal's biography includes similar woes. In the following passage, Yeshé Tsogyal laments to Padmasambhava her deplorable situation:

For I am a timid woman of scant ability; of lowly condition, the butt of everyone. If I go for alms, I am set upon by dogs; if food and riches come my way, I am the prey of thieves; since I am beautiful, I am the quarry of every lecherous knave; if I am busy with much to do, the country folk accuse me; if I don't do what they think I should, the people criticize; if I put a foot wrong, everyone detests me. I have to worry about everything I do. That is what it is like to be a woman! How can a woman possibly gain accomplishment in Dharma? Just managing to survive is already hard enough!⁶²⁶

Despite Sera Khandro's unusual status in her own communities, she has a model and a source of inspiration to draw from in Yeshé Tsogyal, a divine woman who prevailed over the social pressures and criticism she faced at every turn and who, like Sera Khandro, survived the vicissitudes of life as a female Treasure revealer, as a female consort, and a woman who had her own male consorts. It is fortunate for Sera Khandro that she found a model in Yeshé Tsogyal, for if her biographical writings can serve as an example, consort practices played a controversial role in both non-celibate Tantric communities as well as occasionally (and secretly) monasteries, but their position within both of these contexts was often fraught with social tensions, ambiguities, and secrecy.⁶²⁷

Conclusion: Consorts as agents or objects?

The question of the status of women in Tantric Buddhism has attracted the interest of numerous Western Buddhist Studies scholars. The enormous number of iconographic representations of female Tantric deities as well as the centrality of female consorts in sexual rituals leads some scholars to conclude that women in Tantra hold an exalted status. At one extreme, Miranda Shaw suggests that Tantric gender ideology is gynocentric, emphasizing the divinity of females more than males in reaction to the misogynist history of Buddhism in India. Shaw suggests that,

In the place of Mahāyāna neutrality in regard to gender dualism, Tantra highlights gender polarities. In this gendered discourse, the female pole receives more emphasis than the male.⁶²⁸

On the other hand, Serenity Young takes a strongly critical position of the role of women in Tantra, concluding that, “Tantra is a practice in which men sexually utilize women for their own spiritual benefit.”⁶²⁹ Young argues:

The male practitioner requires a female, any female, to complete his spiritual training or to speed it up. He takes her bodily fluids and the powers attributed to them into himself, for his own benefit, not hers . . . Most important, the emphasis on using the penis to extract women’s sexual fluids makes men the primary subjects and presents women as objects for their utilization.⁶³⁰

Sera Khandro’s representation of consort practices is an exception to this rule of male subjectivity. In contrast to both of these Western perspectives on the role of women in Tantra, Sera Khandro’s auto/biographical writings depict a view of consort practices that is neither gynocentric nor misogynist; her writings present a complex gendered world in which both men and women acted as agents and aides to each other on the spiritual path. In contrast to Young’s appraisal above, Sera Khandro’s writings explicitly represent the practice of sexual yoga from the perspective of a female subject gaining spiritual

realization for herself through the use of male consorts. For example, the vision she recounts in which Kukurepa gives her teachings on channel and wind practices involving the female sucking up male *bodhicitta*, i.e., semen, into her body as a way of engendering spiritual realization is a process that occurs entirely within a female subject. Given the emphasis on seminal retention in Buddhist practices involving sexual yoga, one could even conclude that Sera Khandro's description of sexual practices is oppressive to men because it takes their vitality in service of the woman's spiritual realization. Yet Sera Khandro's reversal of the typical Tantric paradigm in which women are objects for men's spiritual path has clear precedence in Yeshé Tsogyal's hagiography. In fact, much of Sera Khandro's description of consort practices resembles that of Yeshé Tsogyal's hagiography. Yeshé Tsogyal is abused, disrespected, and misunderstood by her society; she has multiple male consorts with whom she practices sexual yoga for her own benefit, but, ultimately, she has one primary consort who is her guru and the object of her spiritual devotion.

On the other hand, Sera Khandro's writings also portray a twentieth-century nomadic Eastern Tibetan social world in which Sera Khandro was exchanged between men at times against her will to act as a consort serving men's spiritual needs. A lucid example of this is her visit to Adzom Rinpoché forced upon her by Drimé Özer. Sera Khandro's life as a non-celibate female Tantric religious adept and Treasure revealer was not one of carefree independence; although she was beholden to neither nunnery nor lay marriage, she was tied down with the burdens of raising children and being stuck in a bitterly discordant marriage to Gyalsé. Her social world was hardly gynocentric – she was plagued by problems relating to the bitter jealousy of other female consorts with

whom she competed for the attention of powerful male religious figures such as Gara Tertön and Drimé Özer.

Beyond this, she portrays a world in which she was repeatedly beleaguered by negative talk and the fear of it each time she entered monastic contexts. I suggest this negative talk is indicative of larger tensions within Sera Khandro's early twentieth-century religious communities between monastic and non-celibate Tantric interpretations of ideal Vajrayāna conduct, tensions that female consorts such as Sera Khandro had to negotiate with care. Sera Khandro repeatedly found herself rebuffing the advances of lust-filled monks, but at the same time she was summoned to act as the secret consort to monastic hierarchs. This double standard reflects the controversial position of sexuality in Nyingma Buddhism. Does sexuality controvert monastic vows if done without lust for the purpose of transmuting desire? In practice, the answer to that question seems to correspond more closely to a monk's ecclesiastical rank than his internal spiritual accomplishments. In any case, the religious purposes for sexuality in Sera Khandro's narrative go far beyond the soteriological goals of transmuting desire into enlightened energy. The most common reason monks and non-celibate Tantric religious figures request Sera Khandro's consort services is to dispel obstacles to their longevity and to increase their physical health. In this sense, auto/biographical literature such as that of Sera Khandro emphasizes the strongly pragmatic element of the sexual practices that prescriptive literature tends to hypostatize into esoteric techniques leading to spiritual liberation. However, perhaps Longchenpa's placement of sexual practices involving the manipulation of channels and winds into a lower category of "conventional seminal nuclei," beneath Great Perfection contemplation practices, reflects their pragmatic

associations. Given the multi-layered roles sexuality plays in Nyingma religious practice, Sera Khandro's repeated accounts of the divine visionary voices who constantly cajoled her into pursuing consort relationships is one strategy she uses to present herself as morally irreprehensible (with divine backing) in light of these tensions between celibate and non-celibate interpretations of proper religious conduct.

Sera Khandro's position as a Treasure revealer and as a woman empowered to have male consorts was highly unusual in her social context. She does not mention meeting or knowing of any other female Treasure revealer aside from the hagiographic figures Künga Buma and Jomo Menmo. She mentions knowing only three other female religious specialists in her lengthy *Autobiography*: one nun (*a ne*), one ḍākinī (*mkha' 'gro*), and one married Tantric priestess (*sngags btsun*). Given her extraordinary status, I cannot suggest that her auto/biographical perspectives are representative of women's experience in Tantric communities. However, Sera Khandro's portrayal of consort practices suggests that at least some women did participate in mutually beneficial ways in Tantric practices involving sexuality. Sera Khandro's works may be one of the few sources that document women's active involvement in consort practices for their own gain and not only as vehicles for men's spiritual realization, but I suggest that the rarity of Sera Khandro's perspective is a product of the dearth of female-authored sources and not an indication that women were not agents within spheres of Tantric practice.

Chapter Five: The Divine Couple

In the Buddhist context, love is more often associated with attachment to the suffering of cyclic existence than with spiritual realization. From its Indian origins, Buddhism has been a tradition ideologically centered on renouncing householder society, whether it be in the form of the forest asceticism of early Indian Buddhism or the large institutional monasticism that developed in later centuries in India and then in Tibet. Perhaps this renunciate history is the reason why Buddhism never developed a strong tradition of devotionism based on metaphors of love between a man and a woman, or *bhakti*, that became so popular in other Indian traditions.⁶³¹ Steven Beyer drew attention to this point in his essay comparing the Buddhist Perfection of Wisdom literature (*Prajñāpāramitā*, beginning first century C.E.) with Indian texts such as the *Bhagavad-Gītā* (fifth to second century B.C.E.). He concludes that,

The [Buddhist] Pure Land texts manage to divorce visualization from devotion: the saving Lord remains impersonal and distant, a power to be tapped by vision and recitation, in a cool and dazzling ecstasy rather than in a genuine encounter of the human with a divine other.⁶³²

Beyer suggests that just as Indian Buddhism did not incorporate *bhakti* elements, in the later Tibetan tradition, *bhakti* devotionism never developed.⁶³³

Tibetan Buddhism may not have put a strong emphasis on *bhakti*-like metaphors in its forms of devotion, but there are contexts in which a practitioner cultivates strong emotive states of devotion for their guru. Perhaps the closest thing to *bhakti* in Tibetan Buddhism is the practice of guru yoga (*bla ma'i rnal 'byor*), the development of intensive devotion for one's root guru through visualization and mantra recitation practices that are an important part of preliminary practices (*sngon 'gro*) conducted before the main tantric

forms of contemplation. However, even in guru yoga, the cultivation of great love and devotion for one's guru is generally not described through metaphors of love between a man and a woman, but rather through metaphors of devotion for one's superior, such as for a loving parent. For example, the famous twentieth-century Nyingma teacher Dilgo Khyentsé Rinpoché used the following metaphors to describe the qualities of the guru to whom one should cultivate intensive devotion:

He is like a great ship for beings to cross the perilous ocean of existence, an unerring captain who guides them to the dry land of liberation, a rain that extinguishes the fire of the passions, a bright sun and moon that dispel the darkness of ignorance, a firm ground that can bear the weight of both good and bad, a wish-fulfilling tree that bestows temporal happiness and ultimate bliss, a treasury of vast and deep instructions, a wish-fulfilling jewel granting all the qualities of realization, a father and a mother giving their love equally to all sentient beings, a great river of compassion, a mountain rising above worldly concerns unshaken by the winds of emotions, and a great cloud filled with rain to soothe the torments of the passions. In brief, he is the equal of all the Buddhas.⁶³⁴

Nowhere in these evocative metaphors is there a hint of a sentiment of love between a man and a woman. Dilgo Khyentsé's guru is a guru who extinguishes the fire of the passions; he is unshaken by the winds of emotions and ready to soothe the torment of the passions. Thus, despite the strongly devotional quality of guru yoga, it too supports Beyer's point that *bhakti* devotionism did not translate from the Indian religious world into Tibetan Buddhism.

Beyond the powerful devotion to one's guru that all Tibetan Buddhists cultivate through practices such as guru yoga, another far more arcane arena within Tibetan Buddhism that would appear to lend itself to love metaphors is sexual yoga. Yet these practices are described in very technical terms, with complex manipulations of internal channels, winds, and seminal nuclei. In the literature describing sexual practices, they do not appear to involve themes of love. Janet Gyatso states,

But fulfillment yoga [involving consort practices] is also practiced by couples. When they do so, however, there is no talk of love, nor any celebration of the union of the sexes. We do not even find the kind of normative prescriptions for coupling that we might expect, given the pervasive Tantric symbolism of gender complementarity and male and female aspects of enlightened states. Sexual union in the context of fulfillment yoga is not a sacralization of the love act. When yogins such as Jigme Lingpa engage in fulfillment-phase sexual union, they do so for other reasons.⁶³⁵

Gyatso's conclusion that sexual yoga has nothing to do with talk of love or the sacralization of sexuality is based on her detailed examination of the writings of Jikmé Lingpa and many other figures. Yet I suggest that Sera Khandro's biographical writings are an exception to the rule. Sera Khandro's writings sacralize sexuality in the sense that they portray a love story between a woman and a man who was the love of her life and also her most important partner in sexual yoga. Thus, Sera Khandro's writings broaden our understanding of consort practices from the technicalities of physical exchanges to their interpersonal contexts involving sentiment and emotion between the partners. Because the object of Sera Khandro's love is also her guru, her version of guru yoga in the form of her devotion to Drimé Özer takes on an amorous tone similar to elements of *bhakti* devotionism. Love and sentimental attachment are no longer ties binding Sera Khandro to the sufferings of cyclic existence as they often are within Buddhist frameworks. Instead, Sera Khandro's love for Drimé Özer constitutes both her spiritual path and its goal of liberation.

Sera Khandro draws from what Gyatso describes above as "the pervasive Tantric symbolism of gender complementarity" to portray her love for Drimé Özer using expressions that double as both sentimental love and religious terminology. In particular, she understands herself and her consort through the religious terminology of the union of method and wisdom personified as the union of male and female. This duality dates back

to early Mahāyāna Perfection of Wisdom literature and is the standard Tantric nomenclature for describing male and female Tantric partners in sexual relationship.⁶³⁶ In Mahāyāna discourse, method, or skillfulness in means, (*thabs shes, upāya-kauśalya*) and wisdom (*shes rab, prajñā*) are a pair of qualities necessary for bodhisattvas that pervade the other six perfections including generosity, morality, patience, discipline, meditation, and wisdom. In later Indian Tantric interpretations such as those found in the *Hevajra Tantra*, the union of male method and female wisdom produces the bliss that the Tantric yogin needs to engender spiritual realization.⁶³⁷ As I have previously discussed, in the Tibetan Treasure tradition, this bliss is also necessary to aid the Treasure revealer (*gter ston*) in producing and decoding his or her Treasures. For this reason, Sera Khandro's visionary encounters with *ḍākinīs* and other celestial characters repeatedly remind her not to ignore the importance of gathering the requisite auspicious connections (*rten 'brel*) of uniting method and wisdom, or, in other words, of engaging in sexual yoga with a divinely prophesized consort. In Sera Khandro's writings, the dyad of method and wisdom takes parallel importance for both male and female Treasure revealers; she represents Drimé Özer and herself as mutually reliant upon each other for their ability to reveal Treasures. Thus, the traditional dyad of method and wisdom becomes an important way in which Sera Khandro articulates a vision of gender relations in the context of Treasure revelation that has a strongly egalitarian tone that is built on a premise of mutual necessity as much as she mitigates this with self-humbling rhetoric.⁶³⁸ In another sense, her entire biographical writing project reflects the inseparability of the dyad of male method and female wisdom in that she wrote two biographies, one about method, Drimé Özer's *Biography* (248 pages), and one about wisdom (her own, 407 pages). She may

have been only a humble woman, but she certainly had a great deal to say about herself! Sera Khandro's choice to write both her husband's life story and her own is not happenstance; as one of the contemporary incarnations of Drimé Özer in Golok today named Namtrül Jikmé Püntsok informed me, Sera Khandro's two biographical works are meant to be read together and cannot be analyzed separately because they embody male and female, method and wisdom.⁶³⁹ This viewpoint emphasizes the importance of a couple as the basic unit of operation in the Treasure tradition, as opposed to the emphasis on the individual as an independent actor within celibate monastic Tibetan Buddhism.

Consort practices may or may not have generally been linked with love, but in Sera Khandro's writings, the union of method and wisdom is a spiritual union that embodies both her life's religious purpose and the mainstay of her emotional sustenance. Beyond the technical elements of sexual yoga as a method to manipulate the flow of seminal nuclei through the body's channels, Sera Khandro's biographical writings depict her life with (and without) her consort as an epic drama pervaded by her emotional attachment to him. From the time that Sera Khandro's life partner Gara Gyalsé gives her to her prophesized consort Drimé Özer until the time she finally goes to live with him permanently, six years of Sera Khandro's life, including several visits back and forth, transpire over hundreds of Tibetan folio pages in both the *Autobiography* and the *Biography*. Sera Khandro's account of these long years of separation interspersed with joyful reunions is reminiscent of medieval troubadours' devotional poetry in which they analogized "love in separation" with the proper attitude of the worshipper towards God. As Edward Dimock, Jr. has compared troubadours' love poetry to that of the Indian Vaiṣṇava tradition, we too may borrow this concept of "love in separation" to describe

Sera Khandro's poetic expression of her love for her often inaccessible guru.⁶⁴⁰ After hundreds of pages of suspense in which she vacillates between responsibility to Gyalsé and love for Drimé Özer, Sera Khandro's narrative culminates in their long-anticipated reunion. This climax is not only the apex of their love relationship and the cure to their near-fatal illnesses, but it is the moment of Sera Khandro's spiritual enlightenment, her union with the divine in the form of her lover Drimé Özer.

Tragically, only four years after Sera Khandro and Drimé Özer begin their life together, their connubial bliss is cut short with Drimé Özer's death. Nevertheless, their love continues through the veil of death. As Padmasambhava lives on eternally in his Southwestern Buddhafeld, so too does Drimé Özer. Sera Khandro and Drimé Özer repeatedly vow to each other to remain together forever in all their future incarnations and in the Buddhafields. Thus, their unending love becomes Sera Khandro's primary metaphor for the permanent state of Buddhahood that both of them attain inseparably from each other. Sera Khandro and Drimé Özer's love story lives on in a reincarnational sense as well in contemporary Golok; the Treasure revealer Namtrül Jikmé Püntsok (b. 1944) and his late consort Taré Lhamo (1938-2002) describe themselves as incarnations of the divine couple Drimé Özer and Sera Khandro. Like Drimé Özer and Sera Khandro, Namtrül Jikmé Püntsok and Taré Lhamo are a Treasure revelation couple, following in the footsteps of their early twentieth-century counterparts and before them, the divine progenitors of the Treasure tradition Padmasambhava and Yeshé Tsogyal.

Sera Khandro and Drimé Özer's Love Story

Beginnings

From the first moment the fifteen-year-old Sera Khandro laid eyes on Drimé Özer from the distant window of her brother's home, she records that her perception transformed and she became fascinated by him:

Then in the tenth month, some people from Kham came to visit Central Tibet. Among those of the central encampment there was one who was said to be the incarnation of Dzokchen Palgé⁶⁴¹ from Dzagyal Monastery. As he asked my older brother to give him lodging, [my brother] gave him lodging and the guests arrived.

Watching from the sun-viewing glass window, I looked at the guests. Among them there was one lama with hair on his head. As soon as I saw him, my perception transformed. Thinking that he was really the one called Künkyen Longchen Rabjam, tears flowed from my eyes. On account of the goose bumps on my body, I put my palms together and prayed, "Don't lessen your compassion – in all my lifetimes may I never separate from you."⁶⁴²

Sera Khandro's spontaneous devotion for the traveling Golok lama did not go unnoticed by others in her family. As they stood watching the new arrivals from a window in Sera Khandro's brother's house in Lhasa, her brother's wife Drönkar chastised her for expressing so much amorous devotion for a man other than the young Chinese political leader to whom she was already betrothed. Sera Khandro writes:

My brother's wife Drönkar said the following: "Ho ho! It seems as if you are not one who has no thought of loving a man! You do have a man who you love – when you see that lama over there, lust arises in you and you say 'May we never part.' Not remembering the young Kidröng leader who is [handsome] like the full moon, what is the meaning of your becoming infatuated with this man from Kham with a long black beard?"

Singing a song, I said the following words:

"Listen, wife of my elder brother!

I am not one with a great love for a man.

[Since] it seems he is a holy man, a yogi,
 Involuntarily faith arose in me.
 I prayed that in this life and in the future we will be inseparable.

I am not one in whom lust for a man arises.
 I am a nun who is without desire.
 I will not do negative libidinous acts.

I will not fall under the influence of that negative companion,
 The young leader with a magnificent complexion [like] the moon.
 In the end, I pray that my actions will be to practice the Dharma.

I am like a flower of the fall and winter;
 Although I am here today, I am gone tomorrow.
 Sister, I don't know what will happen."

She said,

"Ho, ho, listen Kunga!

The inclination of a she-goat not to obey the shepherd
 Results in her killing herself.

The inclination of this girl not to obey her parents
 Is the basis for dispute.

Expel this thought from the depth of your mind.
 There are many different songs;

There are several words that cause mental doubt –
 Don't say unnecessary things like this!"⁶⁴³

Hence, from the very beginning of Sera Khandro's perceptions of Drimé Özer, others around her pick up on the multivalent tone of her devotion for him that is both sentimental and religious. After Drönkar gives her this warning, Sera Khandro pretends that her song's insinuations about being infatuated with the wild-looking lama from Golok were all in jest.

After Sera Khandro escapes from her brother's home and joins Drimé Özer's entourage of traveling pilgrims, her amorous devotion for Drimé Özer and his growing

interest in her do not escape the notice of her new community. Perhaps influenced by her youth and beauty, some members of Drimé Özer's community immediately perceive her to be a potential consort for Drimé Özer. Reacting against that, they try to bar her access to Drimé Özer. Reasons for the strong feelings some felt against Sera Khandro include allegiance to his other consort Akyongza, jealousy, and perhaps racial prejudice (because Sera Khandro was half-Mongolian and from Central Tibet). For these and other reasons, this early phase of Sera Khandro's life in Golok was characterized by her largely unrequited love for him; she always desired to be near him but he was unavailable. That others in Sera Khandro's community perceived her love interest in Drimé Özer is evident in the following interaction she had with her nun friend Ané Zangmo. After Gara Tertön's funeral when Sera Khandro was nineteen years old, she realized that she had a Treasure to reveal. She writes,

Thinking that my Treasure site was just there and that it seemed I needed a material substance as an auspicious connection, I went to Zangmo's place and said, "Ané Zangmo, do you have any of Trülku Drimé's hair or clothing to give me?"

She replied, "I have a bit. Why do you need it?"

I said, "I have a need for it."

She said jokingly, "Isn't it that you have a need for the actual Trülku? If it is sufficient to only have his hair, I'll give it to you."⁶⁴⁴

Not only did Sera Khandro yearn to be near Drimé Özer, but others in her community joked about her need to have him "in the flesh" beyond the symbolic tokens of him that she was able to garner.

During the following phase of Sera Khandro's life when she lived with Gara Tertön's son Gara Gyalsé from the age of twenty to thirty, her devotion to Drimé Özer

never diminished. When she was twenty-three years old living with Gyalsé at Banak Monastery before Gyalsé gave her to Drimé Özer, she recounts feeling intense craving to see him again:

Then, during that year in the ninth month, the Omniscient Lord of Refuge, the Wish-fulfilling Jewel himself was taking out Treasures in the lower Mar region including places such as Chakri Öbar, Tashi Gomang, Troma and so forth. While doing that, he went to beg for grain and hence he came near my place. When I heard that he had come near, although I desired to meet him as a person tormented by thirst wants water, I didn't dare tell Gyalsé.

When I was there [trying to] let it go, according to my hopes, the Lord himself together with some attendants came to see Gyalsé. They made a religious connection by giving each other empowerments and reading transmissions. At that time, the Lord himself gave me five pieces of turquoise and coral as precious substances together with a stainless scarf and gave me advice regarding worldly and spiritual matters. I incited a new profound Treasure to come that had great blessings and [caused] signs of accomplishment to come quickly. According to my hopes, because the Lord himself gave me instructions regarding profound Dharma, he nurtured my capacity to write and reveal profound Treasure.⁶⁴⁵

As a thirsty person wants water, Sera Khandro desired to see Drimé Özer, who had the power to nurture the requisite auspicious connections that enabled her to reveal her Treasures. Yet circumstances such as living with Gyalsé and looking after her daughter kept her based in Banak Monastery with Gyalsé for many more years.

When Sera Khandro was twenty-four years old, her life partner Gyalsé gave her away to Drimé Özer. For the six years between the ages of twenty-four and thirty, Sera Khandro was in limbo, both desiring Drimé Özer and fearing expulsion from Gyalsé's community. Her description of her limbo state during this long period of her life creates a suspense-filled narrative inspiring the reader to develop a stronger and stronger sense of anticipation waiting for the day in which she will be reunited with the man who holds the key to her spiritual realization and her worldly happiness.

Back and Forth

During this uncomfortable phase of her life with Gyalsé at Banak Monastery after he had already agreed to give her away to Drimé Özer, Sera Khandro and company traveled to see Drimé Özer on four different occasions. These trips included her children and her disciples Tupzang and Tsültrim Dorjé and at times also Gyalsé. Sera Khandro describes the momentous dialogues, religious exchanges, and love that they shared during each visit with tenderness in both Drimé Özer's *Biography* and her *Autobiography*. The first visit Sera Khandro recounts occurred when she was twenty-seven and Drimé Özer was thirty-eight, most likely in the year 1919. Although she describes the visit a bit differently in the two biographical texts, both texts express Sera Khandro and Drimé Özer's identity as prophesized consorts, Drimé Özer's dilemma regarding monastic life and life as a *mantrin*, and Sera Khandro's marital problems with Gyalsé. In her *Autobiography*, just after recounting the tragic events of her second pregnancy in which she gave birth to a stillborn son and endured her mother-in-law Yakza's cruel accusations of infanticide, she records:

At that time, from a household within the Gar [family] camp at Karnang Gabma, there was a man named Lama Lochö that was from near my land. He came to invite me to his house. When I went together with my child and Tupzang, not far and not close by the Wish-fulfilling Jewel [Drimé Özer] was in retreat in a place called Naidro Dorjé Dzong.⁶⁴⁶ Based on the exhortation of the *ḍākinī* prophecies and the words that Gotrül had spoken earlier [urging Sera Khandro to go to Drimé Özer], I wondered if a meaningful auspicious connection could arise.

Lochö showed me the way and my child and I went there [to Naidro Dorjé Dzong]. At first I met Khyentrül Rinpoché's⁶⁴⁷ son Trülku Rikzin Künzang Nyima and asked him if I could visit him [Drimé Özer]. He said, "Although no one else is allowed to go, of course you and your attendants are allowed to go. Now after his practice session is complete, I will come to give you a sign."

We prepared to stay on the other side [of the hill] next to a spring. While Lochö and Tupzang were raising our tent, I went with my daughter to a place where many flowers were growing. When I was there, because an evil land deity of that place caused hail to rain down on me, I visualized the form of the *mantrin* Dorjé Dujom. When the divine pride of the tutelary deity bound the land deity under his power, obstacles naturally dissipated.

At that time, the Lord himself's speech [practice] session finished, and someone came to call us. When we went with him and met [Drimé Özer], I offered him a prophecy regarding his life from a [revelation] cycle from my visionary experience. In that prophecy it said that on account of his consorts and local conditions, he had turned away from his inclinations [to be a *mantrin*]. Since he thought he would live in the guise of being a monastic, the *ḍākinīs'* prophecies were extremely harsh. Despite this, not thinking, he let [the *ḍākinī* prophecies] go. We spoke in detail about other religious and worldly affairs.

Then, I also said this: "Wish-fulfilling Incarnate, direct your attention towards me and offer me refuge. In particular, you who have profound instructions and explanations, may we be inseparable in all of this life, the next, and the intermediate states. Don't lessen your kindness to take care of me compassionately! From the time I was young until now, although I desired and wondered if I could accomplish a bit of the Guru and Consort's [Padmasambhava and Yeshé Tsogyal's] aspirations, consorts endowed with [the Guru's] aspiration prayers that I desired didn't desire me. A consort that I didn't desire [i.e., Gyalsé] of bad ancestry with small karmic residue pertaining to Secret Mantra desired me. He seduced me by means of various methods including [giving me] rare and difficult to come by material wealth. In this way, my actions became contradictory [to Dharma]. Perhaps the cause is that I did not rely on auspicious connections the way they were intended to be. Although [until] now I haven't been able to wander in an unknown place, not needing the anger of all the outer and inner [people], I have decided that this is my desire. Please pay attention to me, protect me, and don't lessen your kindness towards me!"

The Wish-fulfilling Jewel said, "Don't think like this. It is certain that benefit for beings will gradually come about. For the sake of expanding the scope of your beneficial deeds, I invoke the protectors of the three roots and also during the two important times [Guru Rinpoché day and *Ḍākinī* day], of course I think of you during the feast offering. Like your earlier request to think of you, in many of my Treasure registries, your Vajra prophecies are clear. Despite this, from one perspective, you were with Gyalsé. From another perspective, because your conduct was extremely virtuous, I didn't dare say whatever I thought. In particular, it was extremely difficult to maintain the consorts in my entourage. Because I was greatly irritated, I didn't follow through on all my actions. Not relying on prophecies, I let them go."

Again, I said, “Sir, I am not a person who thought I was good and acted virtuously out of arrogance. If I don’t have what is necessary, it is extremely difficult to maintain the commitments of Secret Mantra. Hence, I disciplined my three doors [body, speech, and mind]. Now also, from whatever worldly or religious perspective, I don’t have the thought to accomplish my own selfish interests. Having incited the prophecies of the mother *ḍākinīs*, I have no freedom [regarding] the future. From a human perspective, my life partner having a mistaken intellect, he didn’t want [me]. On the basis that [my coming to you] was in accordance with your thoughts, Gotrül Rinpoché also said, “Now you need to go,” so I came. Now if it seems that we won’t meet each other besides this time, Wish-fulfilling Jewel incarnate, [please] give me an extremely profound esoteric instruction of few words with condensed meaning. Although I don’t know anything, as an auspicious connection, I will offer you an extraordinary esoteric instruction hidden in my mind.”

When I said this, the Lord himself replied, “Of course we will meet each other again. Not staying with Gara Trülku, you could go however far away [you want]. Nevertheless, since your daughter is young, how could you find a way to abandon her? Since Gyalsé’s behavior is like one who has attained accomplishment, if for whatever reason you are not happy, stay in retreat in a comfortable dwelling place. I will provide whatever amount of provisions such as food and clothes that I can.”

Then, in accordance with the Lord’s desire, without keeping anything hidden or secret, as a cherished jewel I offered the esoteric instruction called *Drinking the Vajra Water* that is the innermost essence of the *Secret Quintessence Mother Tantra*. In particular, having relied on the *maṇḍala* of great bliss of the unfabricated secret space, together with the four meaning empowerments and an introduction to the great co-emergent Truth Body, I gave my secret consort the Wish-fulfilling Jewel all the esoteric instructions as if they were precious gems that came to my mind. I kept nothing hidden or secret such as the direct instruction on the essential teaching of the dimension of union and liberation that manifestly discloses that which is hidden and so forth . . .

[Sera Khandro recounts a dream she had in which a *ḍākinī* comes to her] . . .

Then, our minds in mutual accord, the Lord having loved me untiringly, we returned home.⁶⁴⁸

Sera Khandro’s description of her much anticipated visit with Drimé Özer expresses her devotion to him in a strongly religious tone, portraying their love through the religious discourse of auspicious connections, prophecy, and religious instructions. For Drimé Özer, prophecy decrees that despite his yearnings to escape the annoyances of

maintaining multiple consorts, he is not free to live and practice as a monk. For Sera Khandro, it means that despite the difficulties she faces coming to see Drimé Özer, the decision to pursue a consort relationship with him is out of her hands; it is divinely ordained. Yet Sera Khandro weaves religious prophecy with more conventional interests in her explanation of her choices. When Sera Khandro describes how she went astray and got caught up with Gyalsé, a man of bad ancestry with only a slight connection to the Dharma, she offers one compelling reason for her perplexing choice to settle with him: he seduced her by means of offering her material wealth that was difficult to come by. Perhaps this comment indicates that in her early years in Golok as a single young woman with no relatives to support her, Sera Khandro's poverty was one factor that motivated her to cultivate a relationship with Gyalsé even though he was not her prophesized partner and was the son of a woman who hated her from the very beginning. Drimé Özer also provides his own very practical reasons for why he did not comply with the *ḍākinī* prophecies exhorting him to pursue Sera Khandro as his consort: 1) she was with Gyalsé, 2) her conduct was virtuous, and 3) he already had enough trouble maintaining his consorts. His words thus add a pragmatic tone to the more standard esoteric and divine tenor of descriptions of consort practices.

Sera Khandro recounts the same visit to see Drimé Özer in his *Biography*. The following passage is focused more on introducing Sera Khandro as a religious figure and explaining her background, but in general the passages are recognizably similar:

Then, one day the Lord went out to the road. When he looked, in front of him sitting inside a tent there was a *mantrin* (*sngags pa*) whom he had never seen before. She was wearing a black hat and a cloak sitting in a dignified manner with a mirror and an arrow with silk on it in her two hands. The Lord thought that perhaps it was a magical emanation of Tseringma. He wondered what other *ḍākinī*

would emanate as one dressed as a *mantrin*? After her practice session was finished, he thought it was truly amazing that it was Dewé Dorjé [Sera Khandro].

When he went before the woman Dewé Dorjé, she prayed again and again, “Since I have a *ḍākinī* prophecy, I came before you. Hence, still for the sake of the teachings and sentient beings, you need to preserve your life.”

The Lord said, “Since I am not someone who has attained freedom over death, it is not certain when I will die.”

Dewé Dorjé put the *ḍākinī* prophecy in the Lord’s hands and said, “Sir, this is the sign of the truth of my words which lack any lies or deceit.”

The Lord looked at it. Thinking that it appeared that it wasn’t acceptable for him to reside in the clothing of a monastic, he smiled slightly. Other than that, he didn’t say anything.

Again, Dewé Dorjé said, “Although you know the meaning of this prophecy and I don’t have to tell you, firstly, I fell under the power of another. On account of not knowing if your consorts would be agreeable and being a powerless person from a remote land and so forth, I wasn’t able to find a way to come before you. Otherwise, from the time I was fifteen years old, I abandoned all my relatives in the manner of a renunciate and I prayed to you alone. Although I wondered if I would be able to accomplish the holy divine Dharma, because I am one with a negative body [i.e., a woman] with negative karma, I abandoned a great retinue [her aristocratic Lhasa family] and became distracted day and night by a small retinue [Gyalsé and company]. Now, without separation in this life, the next, and the intermediate state don’t lessen your kindness to pay attention to me, offer me refuge, and give me instructional explanations.” They also had many other discussions about Dharma and sentient beings.

Again, the Lord asked, “Because you are one who is empowered in profound Treasure, it is easy for me to teach you instructional explanations. Who was your first lama? In what oral instructions did you train? Who taught you how to read? When did you take out a Treasure registry? Tell me well without hiding or keeping anything secret – who are your Treasure consorts and doctrine holders?”

Dewé Dorjé said, “Since I was young, I had devotion for the Dharma but my parents didn’t give me permission [to practice Dharma] and they showed me the way to stay [at home]. Then, when I was twelve years old, in my dream an appearance saying he was the Great Accomplished One Sarahapa trained me in the yogic postures of channel and wind [practices] and said it was the dharma cycle of the formless *ḍākinīs*. Also, all the other esoteric instructions pertaining to the lower door of great bliss came from him. When I was thirteen, a *ḍākinī*’s prophetic registry came. Although all the locations of the consorts, Treasure sites, and doctrine holders were there, because I didn’t know how to write, I

temporarily let it go. At that time, Tseringma helped me and wrote down the registry [that the dākinī] spoke. When I was sixteen, although I wanted to go [home], when I was fifteen I prayed to you and came to the lower area [of Eastern Tibet]. When I was seventeen, although I had a prophecy about Gara Terchen, the auspicious connections went away due to other things. Then, when I was eighteen years old, when you went to Kargab because a leader died, Tongpön Zangmo and I both offered you tea at the upper mouth of the Do River. Although we requested you to stay there, powerful monks didn't let you stay. At that time because you gave me a material substance and you gave me advice and prayers and so forth, in Magyal I found the symbolic registry for three cycles of profound Treasure together with a Tsogyal Accomplishment Practice Dharma Cycle. When I was nineteen, on account of an illusory dream, when I awoke from sleep I knew how to read and write without needing to exert myself [in studying]. Otherwise, I didn't request the unsurpassed supreme Dharma that is the fruit of the clear light Great Perfection from anyone. Although I saw the teaching of incorporating appearances onto the path, since I was of inferior intelligence, I thought of the difficulty of it and wasn't able to request it."

The Lord asked, "Then, if you were not able to incorporate your perceptions into the path, what is the nature of the realization that you attained?"

Dewé Dorjé replied, "Sir, from the time I was thirteen until now, I never found a way to say that this was my practice. Perceptions of the outer objective sphere are undifferentiated and extremely clear. Inner intellect is uncontrived emptiness. In-between, the causal factor of conceptual thoughts cannot be changed – is this unimpededly open consciousness what is called mind? As the foundation of samsāra and nirvāṇa, it is not non-existent. Being inexpressible and abiding like the all-pervasive sky, it is also not existent. That which does not fall to either extreme of existence or non-existence, that which is primordially liberated and greatly inconceivable, I think this is the essence of awareness."

The Lord said, "Primordial wisdom that is non-dual clarity and emptiness is called awareness. It is okay if you practice this essence that is inseparable from natural expression."

They spoke much about Great Perfection Dharma. In particular, Dewé Dorjé offered the Lord without hiding or keeping anything secret the esoteric instruction on *Drinking the Vajra Water*, Treasure registries, [descriptions of] the origin of [her being] a Treasure revealer, and so forth.

The Lord said, "Although you appeared earlier in all of my registries and prophetic guides, the auspicious connections were not convenient. Despite this, since Gara Trülku has excellently given his permission, you need someone with the [karmic] connection of auspicious circumstances. Am I in your registry?"

Dewé Dorjé said, “I don’t know.” Although the Lord himself was displayed [in her registry] as her main consort, thinking that his other consorts wouldn’t like it, she let it go.

Then, the Lord said, “Because next year is my brother Kyentrül’s obstacle year, please direct your attention towards him. I am not afraid of death. In particular, since we have become lama and disciple, no matter what you will not break my command. Of course I desire to stay here, but my household says that I have to go quickly to tame disciples⁶⁴⁹ and so forth. Hence, when they say I have to do that, I cannot say that I will stay here.”

Again Dewé Dorjé said, “It is not acceptable for you to speak like this. Of course you can discuss this with the household. I beseech you to remain here for the benefit of the teachings and sentient beings.”

The Lord promised to stay there and then said, “Sometime next year bring your entire religious teachings here.” They each acted as each other’s consort. Having prayed that method and wisdom would be inseparable, they aroused reverence [for each other] as if their minds had become one.⁶⁵⁰

Divine prophecies may be the impetus decreeing the pattern of their life and love, but it is clear that Sera Khandro’s first journey to visit Drimé Özer was one in which she was offering herself to him as a consort. She is modest about this, phrasing everything via divine prophecy and explaining why she couldn’t comply with the prophecies earlier. But at the same time, her action of appearing before him is powerful and her voice is firm, demanding that he not live as a monk and that he not stray too far from home on his expeditions. The import of her words is not lost on Drimé Özer; he smiles slightly after she presents him the *ḍākinī* prophecy, realizing that she has come to be his consort. In this version of the story from Drimé Özer’s *Biography*, he comes to her tent instead of vice versa, but other than these points, the key aspects of their dialogue and religious exchanges are parallel. In both passages, Sera Khandro displays her profound level of insight into the philosophical view regarding the nature of mind according to Great Perfection teachings.

In her *Autobiography*, Sera Khandro records that the following year, when she was twenty-eight years old, Drimé Özer sent Gyalsé a letter requesting Sera Khandro's presence as an aide for his brother Kyentrül Rinpoché who was undergoing his obstacle year. Gyalsé accepted the invitation and traveled with Sera Khandro to Drimé Özer's residence for her second visit to see him after the two had already exchanged her. In her *Autobiography*, Sera Khandro writes,

Then I [along with our] group went to Drongkor. Gradually, we arrived before the Wish-fulfilling One. Having met with him, we stayed there for a few days. The Trülkus [Drimé Özer and Gyalsé] exchanged empowerments and reading transmissions. In particular, the Lord himself established me in ripening and liberation [practices] and he gave me a name. Not being able to resist the Lord's command, at that time I gave him the registry of my Treasure titled *Secret Treasury of Reality Dākinīs* and we nurtured many amazing auspicious connections. The Lord knew the meaning of a symbolic dākinī script that I had difficulty decoding. I elucidate this meaning in my Treasure scripture.

At that time, I told [Drimé Özer], "Gotrül told me that this year it would be good if you protect my child and me. Since he told me that otherwise it would be difficult for anyone else to help us, don't discard his opinion from your heart."

The Lord himself gave my child a protection cord and he performed longevity and life summoning rituals. Each one of us having relied on the other [as a consort], the obstacles to our live forces were dispelled.

Then, the Lord gave Gyalsé very expensive items and a rug adorned with auspicious things on it together with a nice offering scarf. He [Gyalsé] was extremely pleased and they restored their mutual agreement. He also took care of me with great love as if I were his main consort. In particular, he promised not to be irritated by regional and temporal conditions and to find ways to support his life force and so forth. I too said that no matter what, I wouldn't go to unknown places. By our minds becoming as if they were one, we made aspirational prayers for method and wisdom to be inseparable. Having done this, we returned home.⁶⁵¹

This passage depicts the ways that male religious figures shared consorts in Sera Khandro's social world. Drimé Özer seems to be requesting Sera Khandro's presence as a consort for his brother Kyentrül Rinpoché during his obstacle year, although once she arrives she only mentions her interactions with Drimé Özer. After Drimé Özer sends

Gyalsé a letter requesting their presence, Gyalsé acquiesces to the visit knowing that Drimé Özer wants Sera Khandro to be his temporary consort. In this above passage from the *Autobiography*, Sera Khandro emphasizes the friendly relations that both men cultivated through giving religious teachings to each other. Yet, their friendly relations involve a transaction in which Gyalsé exchanges Sera Khandro's consort services for Drimé Özer's expensive gifts. Although she describes the mutual accord between Gyalsé and Drimé Özer here, it is not to last. As Sera Khandro repeatedly prays when she is about to part from Drimé Özer, there are only two necessary facets of the spiritual path – method and wisdom. Drimé Özer is the one who can provide Sera Khandro with what she lacks. He is the man from whom she prays never to part even as she prepares to do just that yet again.

Interestingly, in Drimé Özer's *Biography*, Sera Khandro portrays quite a different dynamic between Drimé Özer and Gyalsé when describing the same visit. Although the chronology and many facets of the second visit scene are parallel, the theme of pleasant exchange between Gyalsé, Drimé Özer, and Sera Khandro is decidedly different in her first literary rendition of this visit (she wrote the *Biography* several years earlier than her *Autobiography*). In Drimé Özer's *Biography*, she writes that Drimé Özer sent Gyalsé a letter requesting the services of Sera Khandro as a consort to provide auspicious connections to help cure him of his illness. Via letters, the two men revisit their previous exchange discussion and Gyalsé reaffirms his willingness to give Sera Khandro to him. After this correspondence, Gyalsé, Sera Khandro, and company make the trip to Drimé Özer's place:

Then, after a few days, Gyalsé and his group all came. The Lord said, "Although the prophecies of the deities and lamas are like this [indicate that Gyalsé should

give him Sera Khandro], if you are not agreeable, it is as I said before [you don't have to give her to me]."

Gyalsé said, "Since this year her astrological chart is extremely disturbed, if you two act as consorts for each other and benefit arises, that is good. I stand by my earlier words, hence you are her husband (*bdag po*). Despite this, it is important that your household is in agreement with this."

The Lord said, "We male and female partners (*yab yum*) living together is in accordance with their [my consorts'] desires. For me also, from whatever worldly or religious perspective, I maintain [a situation in which] we all live together well in a mutually agreeable fashion. In particular, bearing in mind the commitment vows of the female consorts, we are all in agreement. Aside from this, although there will be no negative words regarding the suitability of the *ḍākinī* living at my place, because I am growing old [he is 39!], no matter what, I hope not to [need to] do a lot of work."

Then, the Lord said, "Ḍākinī Dewé Dorjé, bring me your religious scriptures."

According to the Lord's order, Dewé Dorjé brought the texts but keeping the registry secret, she didn't bring it. Hence, the Lord said, "Where is your first registry from when you were thirteen? Without hiding or keeping secrets, bring it to me."

If Dewé Dorjé said she didn't have a registry, it would be a lie. If she visibly offered it, since the Lord himself was clearly written in the registry, she wondered, "What will he think about an inferior person like me indicating that he is my consort?" In particular, she wondered, "Because I have not received permission from Gara Trülku [Gyalsé] to receive and write down Treasure texts, if he sees [my registry] now, I wonder if he will scold me and slap me?" Thinking this, she stayed there not saying anything. Despite this, because the Lord again commanded her, she gave the Lord all of her registry.

Hence, he said, "She is certainly a Treasure revealer. She has an amazing registry!"

Gartrül said, "We also have registries and prophetic registries like mine⁶⁵² and so forth. Is there anything amazing about this?"

The Lord replied, "We have lived in our own place and our own land and have found only rough [registries prophesizing] all our consorts and doctrine holders. Since the *ḍākinī*'s homeland is far away in Central Tibet, it is amazing that she has [a registry in which] all the doctrine holders and consorts from our land are clear."

At that time the Lord having looked at a symbolic registry of the *ḍākinīs* in which it said in a prophecy “Bird Dharma small bird Dharma,” he asked, “What is this term ‘bird Dharma’?”

Dewé Dorjé answered, “Sir, “bird Dharma” is a metaphor that others made. Hence, I also wrote it in accordance with this.

The Lord said, “It is a symbol that you will disappear into a Buddhafield.”

The male and female partners both acted as each other’s consort. Although there were many ways that they dispelled obstacles to their life forces, since they are elucidated in my Treasure scripture, fearing [too many] words, I didn’t write them here. Then, having relied on the *maṇḍala* of the *ḍākinīs*, the Lord gave Dewé Dorjé a detailed teaching on ripening and liberation. Since her flower landed in the middle, he gave her the name Künzang Dekyong Chönyi Wangmo (Queen of the All Good Bliss-Sustaining Nature of Reality). Then, Dewé Dorjé offered the reading transmission of her Tsogyal Dharma cycles from her Treasures. The Lord said, “You must confer empowerment on me,” but Dewé Dorjé thought that first she needed to offer the Lord the empowerment and reading transmission for the Dharma cycle of Vajravārāhī that had come as an earth Treasure. Because this was a single lineage empowerment, she said that she would offer this to the Lord. Then, Dewé Dorjé [gave the text] without all of the symbols and Treasure signs of Treasure texts as if it were a composed Dharma scripture.

Hence, the Lord said, “Aside from writing it as it is in your Treasure text with all of the symbolic letters and so forth, don’t modify it. In particular, don’t forget to find a way for earth Treasures to come.”

Dewé Dorjé [Sera Khandro] replied, “Because I am a female beggar, it is as the Lord Milarepa said – although I was empowered in many earth Treasures, because I didn’t rely on a consort, I didn’t take out any earth Treasures aside from just three. [Now] it will be all right for them to come to me. Now, we male and female partners having awakened the power of the Guru’s prayers, we have met. Despite this, since I was lost under the domination of another person, I wasn’t able to come to you as I have told you before. In general, for the sake of the Buddhist teachings, especially for the writing and propagating of profound Treasures as a way to complete the intentions of the Lama Treasure Revealer [Dujom Lingpa] and so forth, and in particular, for the sake of not throwing me out of your mind, please don’t forget to find a way to preserve your life!” Having said this, she put the crown of her head on his feet and made aspiration prayers.

Gyalsé together with the *ḍākinī* prepared to go back [home]. The Lord himself treated her lovingly as if she were his main consort. Because the *ḍākinī* had a son, he gave him a protection [prayer] wheel and so forth. All the disciples gathered there having been delighted by both [the Lord’s] worldly and religious deeds, Gyalsé and his whole group left.⁶⁵³

This representation of the second visit in Drimé Özer's *Biography* is a far more expanded version of the account in the *Autobiography*. The passage in her *Autobiography* reads as if it is a short summary of the events she had already recorded in the *Biography* in greater detail. The two passages share a great deal in content: Sera Khandro receives ripening and liberation teachings from Drimé Özer as well as a name, and she offers him her Treasure registry in return. Drimé Özer gives Sera Khandro's son things to protect him from inauspicious occurrences. They act as consorts for each other and nurture auspicious connections and he and Gyalsé have discussions. Yet, in contrast to the *Autobiography* passage, in the *Biography* passage Gyalsé and Drimé Özer are still negotiating their friendship. Drimé Özer treads lightly on the subject of having Sera Khandro as his consort, offering Gyalsé a way out of his prior agreement. In return, Gyalsé reminds Drimé Özer that it is important not only for him to want Sera Khandro, but to have agreement from his household for her to live with him. Drimé Özer's words convincing Gyalsé that all in his household will be agreeable to Sera Khandro's presence there read like "famous last words" in light of the magnitude of difficulties that later arise. In the *Biography*, Sera Khandro adds more detail about the uncomfortable dynamics of being with both Gyalsé and Drimé Özer at the same time, two men who related to her Treasure revelation activities in radically different ways. On the one hand, she wanted to give Drimé Özer her Treasure registry, but on the other she recounts fearing Gyalsé's disapproval. Instead of the amicable friendship she portrays between the two men in her *Autobiography*, in the *Biography* Sera Khandro depicts Gyalsé as being almost childishly petty in asking Drimé Özer what is so special about Sera Khandro's Treasure registry. In response, Drimé Özer highlights Sera Khandro's amazing ability to prophesize about

events in a distant land that she had yet to inhabit when she wrote the *ḍākinī* prophecies at the age of thirteen. One reason for these tonal differences in Sera Khandro's two works could be that the tensions between the two men were fresher in her mind when she was writing the first account in Drimé Özer's *Biography*, only a few years after the events transpired.

In the following passage from her *Autobiography*, Sera Khandro explains that the reason for her third visit to Drimé Özer was her son's ill health. When the child becomes ill, Gyalsé's community recalls the prophecy Gotrül Rinpoché had earlier spoken that Sera Khandro's son (who is his "consciousness") could only be protected from adversity by Drimé Özer. In the following passage from her *Autobiography*, Gyalsé, Sera Khandro, and others argue about her son's proper care when she is twenty-nine, just one year before she would make the final move out of Gyalsé's community:

[Sera Khandro speaking] "Earlier, Gotrül Rinpoché said, 'Remember this accordingly: other than Trülku Drimé as a source of protection, it will be difficult for others to do rituals to protect him.' Nevertheless, now whatever the reason is for Gyalsé's displeasure, it seems that it is not helping my son."

Jikmé Könchok [Gyalsé's brother] and Trala Nyendrak told this to Gyalsé and they had a discussion. They said that I and my child needed to go to the Wish-fulfilling Jewel [Drimé Özer] to request protection.

I said, "I won't go. Yesterday Saldrön [Gyalsé's new wife] told me that everybody is saying that I am preparing to go be the Treasure Revealer Trülku's [Drimé Özer's] consort. Because [Saldrön and everybody] told this to Gyalsé, still now I experience marital disputes⁶⁵⁴ like this. If I go there with my child, since various undesirable things such as not being permitted to come back and so forth are close at hand, I certainly won't go.

When I gave up [on going], my little son's sickness was extremely serious. They couldn't handle it and without harming the household, they got a horse and food. After they gathered the necessities together, I, mother and two children, together with my disciple Tupzang went to Chakok Naringma⁶⁵⁵ where the Lord himself had settled the religious encampment.

At that time I remembered an earlier dream and said the following to Tupzang, “Although we are going to see him, I am not sure if he will be there.”

Tupzang said, “If he isn’t there, where would he have gone? He won’t go to tame disciples.”

Again I said, “If he goes to tame disciples we will definitely have a way to see him. I wonder if he has gone far away to Kangri Tökar on account of our family’s marital disputes?”

Tupzang replied, “Is there a prophecy that says that?”

“Although I don’t know the prophecies that have not been displayed and so forth, in an erroneous appearance in my dream, I dreamed that meeting him was not as it had been before, which inspired me to feel extremely sad. I was not able to meet with him and I felt extreme suffering as if I had to separate from the inside of my heart. When I wondered if the Lord himself was going to the Buddhafeld, a *ḍākinī* came and said, ‘Girlfriend, you don’t need to think like this. Although your hero isn’t going to the Buddhafields, on account of a bad consort, he wants to go to Kangri Tökar. Despite this, until he meets with you, it seems he won’t go.’ Because I dreamt this for a while, I wonder if it’s true?”

Tupzang said, “It is certain that he will stay until you’ve arrived. Now he certainly is there. Although I don’t know what will happen from now on, if you speak to him with important [words], you two will be in agreement. Otherwise, from whatever perspective, since you have a greatly vast mind, [I] won’t criticize whatever you say.”

Then we arrived in Naringma. The Lord himself’s attendants Tsültrim Dorjé and Öbar came to welcome us. Having gradually met them, we went to see the Wish-fulfilling Jewel. He cared for us with great loving compassion. He offered my little boy expansive protection and so forth and he recovered from his illness. At that time, based on my earlier dream, I explained in detail the way I had suffered. Hence, he spoke about what he had wanted to do without hiding or keeping anything secret.

I also said again and again, “In particular, holding our speech pertaining to both [worldly and religious] affairs and our male and female partner (*yab yum*) commitments⁶⁵⁶ and desires as a witness, forget about going to the Buddhafields! It is unacceptable if you go to a far away place.” The Lord couldn’t resist and promised to act in accordance with what I had asked.

Then, I gave the Lord himself a profound empowerment in my Vajravārāhī Treasure as a single lineage and nurtured his happiness. The Lord bestowed a profound Tsogyal empowerment from his Treasures on my children and me. When the sign came that he should bless my small son, he asked, “Who is the

father of this small boy and what is his lineage?” When I told everything about his story without hiding or keeping anything secret, the Lord said, “Earlier, it is as if I gave him the name Rikzin Gyurmé Dorjé. Since it is certain that he will be a Knowledge Holder, you need to be careful regarding contamination of his food and clothes and so forth.”

Then, to prevent demonic obstructions from affecting the male and female partners [Sera Khandro and Drimé Özer], I had a Treasure [to reveal called] *Profound Pages of a Drolo Victory Over Demons* that was hidden separately in a reddish black vessel in a place called Dongtrom. Although the Treasure entrance and [revelation] time was clear to me, for the sake of auspicious connections, the opportunity to reveal the Treasure came to the Lord himself. The Lord having decided [upon revealing that Treasure], he nurtured the auspicious connections of method and wisdom. The male partner was empowered in the female partner's Treasure and the female partner was empowered in the male partner's Treasure and their intentions became one. At that time, the Lord cared for me with love. As supports for the inseparability of method and wisdom, he gave me a five-pointed vajra that came to him as a Treasure, a vajra and a bell, a vase for the sake of gathering disciples together with flowers, cloth for the eyes [for empowerments], clothing, a metal top, and a feather top for the vase, paper and ink as provisions for writing and propagating profound Treasure, and also many other expensive things as supports for outer, inner, and secret empowerments. By this, he made aspiration prayers that we, male and female partners, would be without separation for even an instant until we attained Buddhahood. We returned home.⁶⁵⁷

Sera Khandro's ambivalence between going to live with Drimé Özer or staying with Gyalsé comes through again in this passage. On the one hand, she bristles at Saldrön's action of telling everybody she was going to be Drimé Özer's consort, fearing that Gyalsé will expel her forever from his community if she leaves. But on the other hand, when she is alone with Tupzang, she describes her dream in which not seeing Drimé Özer felt like her heart being ripped out. From this, one could interpret that she was attempting to maintain a certain image in Gyalsé's community while at the same time secretly yearning to find a way to go to Drimé. In the case of this visit, her son's illness provides the perfect impetus for the journey, mitigating Gyalsé's quarrelsome attitude with the necessity of preserving the life of Sera Khandro's son. In this passage, Sera Khandro also describes the level of mutual involvement she and Drimé Özer had regarding each other's

Treasure revelations. Drimé Özer received Sera Khandro's Treasures and vice versa; they were a Treasure revelation couple in a sense of being not only consorts for each other, but also revealing and writing down each other's Treasures. This is a symbiosis also reflected in their more recent incarnations, the Treasure revelation couple Namtrül Jikmé Püntsock and Taré Lhamo.

In her accounts of the third visit to see Drimé Özer, Sera Khandro's two renditions of the visit in her *Autobiography* and *Biography* are consistent. Their main divergence is that instead of emphasizing her son's illness and the dispute she had with Gyalsé over his treatment, in Drimé Özer's *Biography* she accentuates her dismayed reaction to his surreptitious plan to go to Kangri Tökar as well as her love and devotion to him. Sera Khandro documents in Drimé Özer's *Biography* that in his fortieth year,

... all of a sudden Dewé Dorjé arrived. Hence, the Lord thought that perhaps she received a ḍākinī prophecy and thought that he needed to keep his departure [to Kangri Tökar] secret from her. Then, gradually when Dekyong Wangmo [Sera Khandro] did prostrations and came before the Lord, she said, "How are you?"

The Lord also said, "Are you not tired?"

She answered, "I am not tired. I felt great suffering wondering if I would see you."

The Lord replied, "Aside from you not coming here, I am not going anywhere else and am just staying here. I am in strict retreat."

She said, "I didn't think you were going to tame disciples. Of course you are in retreat. Thinking you were preparing to go to an uncertain far away place, I felt great suffering as if I had no way to remain here [in this world]. If you are not going away, I am not sure, but it seems that I have received signs that I will die."

Then, since the Lord certainly couldn't keep the secret hidden [that he was leaving], he thought that if he told her the story in detail, since she wasn't living at his place, she wouldn't ask him to delay. He told her the complete story including the beginning, middle, and end.

She said, “Of course the Treasure revealer’s household isn’t going to stop you [from leaving], but in general the happiness of the Buddha’s teaching and sentient beings depends on you. In particular holding, maintaining, and propagating the Lord Lama’s [Dujom Lingpa’s] profound Treasure depends on you. Specifically, for all the people of the lands of Washül Serta, the three districts of Akyong, the seven districts of Pemabüm, and so forth, you are the place the dead direct their consciousness. For the living, you are the source of refuge and the object of hope for this life and the next. The inner specific reason is that for this life, the next, and the intermediate state I have no other refuge but you alone, Trülku Wish-fulfilling Jewel. Don’t go to a faraway land! Stay here however you can happily. Tell your disciples without hiding anything or keeping anything secret what actions they can do to preserve your life. When you don’t find a way to preserve your life, you don’t care enough about our religious commitment as male and female partners and about all our desires.” Saying this again and again, she sobbed.

The Lord couldn’t bear it and said, “Don’t do this! We can talk about this.” Having said this, both male and female partners abided by their mutual commitment and [Drimé Özer] didn’t go far away. He said he wouldn’t let his life go away due to other [negative] influences.

Dewé Dorjé offered the Lord empowerment and reading transmission in her profound Treasure Vajravārāhī’s Dharma Cycle as a single lineage. In particular, as supports for his life force she offered her Treasure substances including a seal made of a ḍākinī’s life rock, Tsogyal’s blood, and seminal essence of the Guru taken from the Yutsé Chi Lake. The Lord also bestowed upon Dewé Dorjé the complete empowerment and reading transmission for his Treasure the *Tsogyal Accomplishment Practice of Realizing the Glorious Mountain*. After that, as supports for male and female partners not to separate, he gave her many very expensive material substances such as a five-pronged vajra that came as a Treasure, a vajra and a bell, a vase, medicine and blood [a ritual substances, *smān rak*] and so forth. In particular, because her son had worms (*ya ma*), he gave him a protection cord and gave him refuge . . . ⁶⁵⁸

This version of the third visit from Drimé Özer’s *Biography* is less about Sera Khandro’s son’s illness and more about Drimé Özer’s imminent departure. Sera Khandro detests Drimé Özer’s desire to go far away because it contradicts their religious commitment vows to be inseparable as male and female partners. Thus, not only monastics have vows to maintain, but also couples who are promised to each other in spiritual union have vows to each other. For them, separating, even due to illness or death, constitutes a

reprehensible breach of their promise to support each other's longevity and spiritual awakening. The strongly sentimental tone of Sera Khandro's writing about Drimé Özer is manifest in such passages as this when she despairs at the thought of Drimé Özer's departure and both of them insist with great ardor that they will not let each other slip away.

One year later, when Sera Khandro was thirty years old, her situation had reached a breaking point. Her recurring arthritis worsened, tensions with Gyalsé intensified, and battles with the invading Chinese forces caused the religious encampments (both Gyalsé's and Drimé Özer's) to repeatedly move. Sera Khandro writes that because the disciples who cared deeply about her knew that her life with Gyalsé was literally killing her and that Drimé Özer was the antidote to her illness and the catalyst for her revelations, they encouraged her to travel to him. On Drimé Özer's side as well, Sera Khandro indicates that he also suffered from serious illness and needed her to restore his health. In Drimé Özer's *Biography*, she summarizes this fourth and last visit that occurred when he was forty-one and she was thirty in approximately 1922:

Then, a few days later Dewé Dorjé suddenly became ill with a terrible illness. On the way back from Drongkor,⁶⁵⁹ she came before the Lord. Both male and female partners were overjoyed as if meeting a person raised from the dead.

Then, the Lord said to Dewé Dorjé, "Why are you ill?"

She answered, "Because of someone with broken commitment vows, in accordance with a prophecy, all of a sudden I became ill. I received a prophecy that at best, before the twenty-fifth of the Tiger month [the first month] I should come to see you and otherwise I needed to go to Drongdün. However, I thought that Gyalsé wouldn't agree so I let it go. At that time, on the eighteenth, I got really sick. My monk Tupzang, Gyalsé's brother Jikmé Könchok, and the man who became my doctrine holder named Trala Nyendrak did not allow me to stay and prepared provisions such as food for the road, pack horses, and so forth. On the nineteenth, Nyendrak escorted me up to the Mongolian Könchok Tsering's place. He lent me a good male horse and on the twenty-fifth I arrived at

Drongdün. On that day although I was on the verge of death and felt great suffering, a monk arrived and said, “I have been sent by Trülku Ledrel [Drimé Özer]. You need to abide by your male and female partner commitment vows. As he said this, a red light pervaded my perception and on account of this, I was revived from being [nearly] dead.”

The Lord said, “Why did you do this? Earlier at Narangma didn’t we promise not to let our lives go due to other factors?”

Having said, “It is as if neither of us adhered to those earlier promises,” Dewé Dorjé stayed there crying.

Although the Lord thought that it seemed she knew that he had desired to go to the Buddhafields, pretending he hadn’t, he said, “Why are you anxious? If you think that we are far away [from each other], if Gyalsé is agreeable, the household will be delighted if you can stay for one or two years or otherwise if you stay here permanently. Aside from this, since they have made big promises that they won’t oppose you by even a hair’s breadth, you need to keep this in mind.”

Dewé Dorjé said, “I am not thinking about that. I think it seems that you constantly direct your aspirations to [going to] the Buddhafields. You don’t consider all of us disciples and you consider letting yourself pass on due to other factors. Hence, I feel great suffering. In particular, from my perspective, I know what the household says.” She clearly told him all the earlier conditions.

The Lord asked, “Who told you this?”

Dewé Dorjé replied, “It certainly wasn’t a worldly human, or was it?” Then, both male and female partners gave each other much advice regarding worldly and spiritual matters.

The Lord also said, “According to our earlier commitment vow, I will not aspire to [go to] the Buddhafields. At that time, Dewé Dorjé had a Treasure that she had taken out from Drongdün that was a Treasure vessel made out of Chema Akyong.⁶⁶⁰ She offered it to the Lord and they performed continuous auspicious connections and she stayed there for a few days.

Then, everybody was fighting.⁶⁶¹ When they suggested that they needed to move the encampment base, the Lord said, “It seems there won’t be a problem but it is okay if we move it according to their suggestions.” In a *ḍākinī* prophecy it said that there was a hidden land to the west of Ser Drongri (Golden Wild Yak Mountain) under the power of a protector named Nyenchen Yusé. The encampment base relocated there and profound Treasures newly came to both male and female partners. They gave empowerments, reading transmissions, and so forth.

In particular, Dewé Dorjé told the Lord, “Don’t lessen your kindness to write down your Treasure, the profound Dharma Cycle of Guru Hayagrīva and Vajravārāhī.” Since she said this and prayed to him, the Lord promised to let it come [to him] and they had long, detailed conversations with each other.

Specifically, Dewé Dorjé prayed, “Because of the great power of being one with an inferior [female] body, it seems that it is uncertain what will happen. Wish-fulfilling Jewel – don’t ignore finding a way to sustain your life. Your main disciple Sotrül Natsok Rangdröl and his disciples have served you with the three kindnesses.⁶⁶² They are all ones who understand religious commitments – this is truly amazing! Aside from this, it is extremely rare for beings in this degenerate age to understand the good qualities of the Dharma and the lama’s kindness.” She offered various words about present and future occurrences in the manner of giving advice. She said, “In this life and in all my future lives, may I be inseparable from you, Wish-fulfilling Jewel. Having excellently practiced the profound Treasure Dharma, may the union of method and wisdom manifest as an Awareness Body.” After saying this, she put the crown of her head on his feet and acted with humility.

When she did this, the Lord wondered if it was true that Gartrül [Gyalsé] had no pity for her. He said, “Since I heard that it is like this, is it true?”

Thinking that they would develop animosity towards each other, although Gartrül had taken up a Golok lady named Saldrön as his wife and was getting ready to expel Dewé Dorjé, she said, “It isn’t like that,” and kept it secret. She said, “I want to go to an unknown place – please focus your mind and do rituals [for me].”

When she requested this, the Lord said, “According to my ḍākinī prophecies and so forth, you are my means to dispel obstacles to my life’s Dharma. So, don’t go far away. In particular, don’t forget to find a way to spend just a few years here at this encampment. It is certain that my household will not oppose to you.”

Dewé Dorjé replied, “Although I pray⁶⁶³ that in this life and all my future incarnations I will be without separation from you, it is difficult to find a way to be with you. From one perspective, there is Gartrül and from another, I don’t know if your retinue will stick to their word [regarding not opposing me]. I don’t need this. We male and female partners get along really well and from the time I was fifteen years old I prayed to you and held you as my crown jewel. Still also as in this life, the next, and the intermediate state I have no other refuge but you, don’t lessen your kindness not to expel me from your heart!” The homage she offered to the Lord’s body and the prayers she made and so forth are elucidated in [her] Treasure scripture. Then, Dewé Dorjé asked the Lord not to lessen his kindness to let profound Treasures come to him and she returned to her home.⁶⁶⁴

Life, death, the perpetual threat of illness, and the healing power of love are the consistent themes of this and most other passages in which Sera Khandro describes her relationship with Drimé Özer. On one level, Sera Khandro is describing technical religious commitments, ritual interactions, and the saving power of her lama amidst the tumultuous circumstances of their saṃsāric lives. But on another level, these passages depict the story of Drimé Özer and Sera Khandro's dramatic love affair. Being sick, dying, or traveling far away are all threats to the commitment vows that they have made to stay together as a couple. Theirs is a love so powerful that its fulfillment results in their manifestation as an Awareness Body, as inseparable and enlightened beings. Love for Drimé Özer and religious devotion to him are one and the same for Sera Khandro; she describes her love for him in the terminology of Secret Mantra in the following passage from the *Autobiography's* version of the fourth visit:

You look after me with great love (*bṛtse ba chen po*), taking me out of the rank of humans and establishing me in the rank of deities. You are the pillar who upholds my life force, my secret consort traversing the quick path, my hero who expansively tames beings with profound Treasure. You are the holy origin of all worldly and religious deeds. Before, I never found someone like you. Later I can forget about finding someone [like you] . . . ⁶⁶⁵

Thus, just as her brother's wife teased her those many years ago about falling in love with a ruffian from Golok as they observed him from behind the window of their palatial estate, Sera Khandro feels great love for her lama and consort Drimé Özer.

And yet, as always, there is trouble in paradise. The repeated promise Drimé Özer makes that his household will not oppose Sera Khandro's presence foreshadows the problems that lie ahead. Because of the combined problems of Drimé Özer's other consorts and the marital disputes she is embroiled in with Gyalsé, Sera Khandro still doubts whether she should actually move in to his encampment as he repeatedly invites

her to do. Despite all the prophecies and despite her feelings of devotion and love for him, Sera Khandro seems to have difficulty making the final break with Gyalsé. With each of her visits, it seems as if the moment of Sera Khandro's transition between the two men has finally come. But just after Drimé Özer and Sera Khandro renew their spiritual connection, she almost inexplicably departs again with Gyalsé, further delaying their final reunion. This vacillation Sera Khandro makes between Drimé Özer and Gyalsé seems almost like the behavior of a woman who wants a divorce but hesitates between plunging into an uncertain future or resigning herself to a miserable present. In these social dynamics, Sera Khandro is more than a sexual commodity exchanged back and forth between powerful men; as she represents it, both men in her life have opened up the opportunity for her to pursue the life of her dreams with Drimé Özer, but still she hangs back in the realm of her familiar but unhappy relationship with Gyalsé. As if to jar her from her indecision, after Sera Khandro's fourth visit with Drimé Özer when she is returning back home to Gyalsé, she has a dream in which a *ḍākinī* definitively pronounces that her time with Gyalsé is over:

Then, when we were coming back home, on the evening we reached a place called Rizap (*Ri zab*), in my dream a terrifying spontaneously-born woman came and said the following: "Why are you going towards those with deteriorated commitment vows? It is as if you have mistaken brass for gold, water for wine. You throw away your destined bodhisattva as unnecessary. You toss behind you [the responsibility of] maintaining your profound Treasure. You are distracted holding on to cyclic existence. From the time you were young until now, I have given you honest advice. I have given you the quintessence of the profound Dharma Treasures. Although I have reared you like a mother who loves her child, repelling negative conditions, outer and inner obstacles and so forth, still you are unable to be independent and you must fall only to other powers. What is the meaning of this?"

I replied, "Having thought a lot, I am not mistaken regarding who is my consort and who is not. Since I was unable to disobey the words of the deities and lamas, I abandoned my own purpose. Wondering if I could maintain Dūdül Wangchuk

Lingpa's [Gara Tertön's] profound Treasure, I have directed my mind towards that aspiration and so forth. Up until now, I have not accomplished my own purpose, In particular, my method consorts and Dharma holders have only gone away by others' influence. Since I am one with an inferior [female] body, I didn't find a way to meet them. Now, at this time, my response is that I have no power not to go [back to Gyalsé]."

When I said this, she responded, "Thinking that since you were of bad ancestry you needed to do all sorts of work without being selective, up until now you were left at Gara's side. From this year forward, you belong to us. The time for you to live with Gara is finished. Despite this, still, having aroused the minds of men with perverse aspiration prayers, I don't know what will happen to your life's Dharma and your disciples. As wind is to butter lamps, fire is to water, iron is to rock, you need to be careful." Together with this, I awoke from sleep.⁶⁶⁶

In response to the terrifying apparitional woman, Sera Khandro points out that she felt compelled to stay with Gyalsé because she was following her orders to maintain Gara Tertön's Treasures. Regardless, the *ḍākinī* straightens out her priorities and clarifies the direction in which she must go. The *ḍākinī*'s words are indelibly clear: without doubt the time has come for Sera Khandro to leave Gyalsé and to live with Drimé Özer.

The Grand Union

Despite these clear auguries, Sera Khandro still resists the increasingly strong signs that her life is not meant to be lived with Gyalsé. It is only near-death illness and the insistence of her disciples that forces her to comply with the *ḍākinīs*' prophecies. The following passage describing Sera Khandro's union with Drimé Özer is the climax of Sera Khandro's *Autobiography*, around which the entire narrative is structured. It describes not only the fulfillment of her love for Drimé Özer, but also her spiritual enlightenment. Her spiritual liberation is not about herself as an individual gaining enlightenment as it is most often perceived in Buddhist contexts, but rather about her and her consort Drimé Özer's joint enlightenment. After exhaustive build-up, Sera Khandro

describes the momentous events that transpired when she was thirty years old and Drimé Özer was forty-one:

Then, one day I went to shepherd the livestock⁶⁶⁷ in a place with extremely thick forest and trees with a great deal of dew on them. Since I didn't have rain clothes, I was tormented by snow and rain from above and I got wet inside and outside as if I had been sunk into water. On account of this, the next morning, when I stretched the muscles of my legs, I couldn't walk. Although Nyendrak and Gyalsé's aunt Samkyi and so forth said that he [Gyalsé] needed to call a doctor, he did not agree so they let it go. I too exerted myself, milking the livestock and doing all of whatever housework needed to be done as I had done before. At that time also I told Gyalsé's brother Jikmé Könchok the detailed story about how we needed to go to Dzongné. I said, "You need to say this to Gyalsé again and again." Although he said this [to Gyalsé] many times, he didn't find a way for us to go.

We arrived at a place called Nyimda Nyimalung (*Gnyi mda' nyi ma lung*). That day, on account of riding on horseback, my two legs became paralyzed and although I fell onto my bed, still I exerted myself. When I was there sewing all the fine clothing for Gyalsé's brother, my illness worsened. Although I was nearing death, [Gyalsé] neglected to do a healing ritual for me. Tupzang and Jikmé Könchok both attended to me, but when [Gyalsé] appeared as if he were unhappy with this, I told the two of them the following: "If I get better from this illness, I certainly won't live at the Gara household. From the time I was twenty years old until twenty-nine, with my forearms I have heaped together ashes and patted them with my hands."⁶⁶⁸ My whole life has been exhausted working as a servant. Now, although I am on the verge of death, he neglects doing healing rituals. Everyone from outside and inside the encampment circle and in particular Gyalsé thinks that I am faking illness. As it is clear to you two, I don't need to say it. Because Gara Lhachok is a doctor, we need to call him and ask him to do a medical evaluation [to see whether] my illness is fake or not.

At that time, the stewards of the Treasure revealer's household [Drimé Özer's household] Öbar and Jikmé Zangpo both returned from doing business. [They brought] a high quality handwritten scripture given to me by the Wish-fulfilling Jewel that I had requested earlier that was the complete generation and perfection stages of Guru Hayagrīva and Vajravārāhī tied together with wooden boards. Together with that, there were also a variety of prophecies from Dujom Dorjé and also other ḍākinīs of the three realms and so forth foretelling that the Lord himself would not live longer than his forty-second year. He sent a letter saying, "When I have to go to the Glorious Mountain, you don't need to feel misery. We two male and female partners are without separation for even an instant." Because of this, I didn't know what to do. On the outside being oppressed with illness and mentally being tormented with suffering, I sent a letter with sad words of lamentation and prayers [requesting] he remain as my protector.

Then one day, Tupzang's countrymen arrived. When they saw me, all of them cried and said, "Oh no! Now you are certainly dying. What did the doctor and the divinations say?"

I replied, "I have been suffering from this illness for about three years. It has gotten worse and for about a month I haven't been able to care for myself. At this time I haven't had a single dose of medicine or an ablution ritual. Jikmé Könchok and Tupzang [know this] clearly."

They discussed this and went to call Gara Lhachok. When he examined my pulse and urine, he said it was arthritis (*chu 'bam*) and since I had been sick for a long time, it was close to rising to the upper [part of my body]. At that time, although everyone believed me [that I was sick], the medicine didn't help. When I was nearing death, Lhapel and Gyalsé and his brothers had a discussion and said that they needed to escort my children and me to [Drimé Özer's] Treasure encampment.

I said, "You don't need to take me to a cemetery for human corpses. Why would you bring us, mother and children, to the Treasure revealer's household? In the early part of my life when I had [working] legs, you [said] I should be the servant of Gara [Gyalsé]. Now that I am about to die, there is no meaning in your telling me I need to go to someone else's place. If we mother and children harm you, it is okay if we go to Dzongné or Drongdün. Otherwise, when you took me to see the Treasure revealer Trülku, before what did you, Gara [Gyalsé], say? What speculations did you have? It is whatever one has in one's mind. You didn't pour water on top of me. You didn't burn fire under me. Other than that, however you view it, of course you know what you did to me."

Lhapel and Gyalsé both said, "Because in Drongdün and Dzongné there are no groups from our encampment circle, we must go to the Treasure encampment." [Gyalsé] sent Jikmé Könchok and his attendant both as escorts. In the eighth month on the third day of the iron bird year [1921] I, mother and children, together with Tupzang set out on the road. At that time, Gyalsé acted humbly and escorted us up to the lower part of the valley. Many uncertain signs arose such as a vulture landing on the tent I was staying in and a great gust of wind cutting a big rope that secured the tent. All the escorts felt miserable as if I were going to die. Then, Gara Lhapel escorted me up to the road for a while. Gyalsé and the others in his group returned home.

At that time, thinking that Gyalsé and I certainly wouldn't meet [again] in this life, I said the following to Lhapel and Jikmé Könchog: "Because of the severity of the illness that I have, it seems that I am dying and there is no cure. You two don't forget Gyalsé. Since Saldrön's way of speaking is harsh and Gyalsé has a bad character, I am not sure what will happen to them later on. You need to act

accordingly.” The two of them promised to do that. After we spoke in detail about happy and sad things and good and evil things and so forth, Lhapel went home.

Then, having gone onto the road, although I experienced great hardship, I exerted myself and went. The Lord himself was residing in the Kargab family place called Nyimalung. Having arrived there, at first we met the Lord’s direct disciple Sotrül Natsok Rangdröl. Then, when we proceeded to see [Drimé Özer], although I exerted myself, my body’s energy was exhausted and I wasn’t able to say anything aside from one or two words. The Lord couldn’t bear it and asked Jikmé Könchok, “Even though your *ḍākinī* was suffering with such a serious illness, why didn’t you care for her?”

He told the whole story. I gave him a sign but I didn’t dare say anything. Then, I spoke a few words without [intending] benefit or harm. The Lord himself did the requisite healing rituals and I gradually got better. At that time, [I remembered] Gotrül Rinpoché’s advice saying, “When you are thirty years old, you will need to eat meat. At that time, you don’t need to have doubt. The sentient beings that your mouth touches will certainly receive great benefit.” Accordingly, the Lord himself said I needed to eat meat. Having blessed the meat, he gave it to me. I didn’t have the energy to disobey his order and for the sake of my illness, I enjoyed a bit of the necessary food. The wind [in my body] that had earlier waxed and waned was restored. My channels and winds having improved, it caused them to become pliant.

Also, according the Lord’s command, when I was staying in a strict one-hundred day retreat, the deity of that land emanated in the various forms of continuously existing non-humans to harm me. I bound some with meditation, liberated some with compassion, and swore some to oaths. Thenceforth I rendered them unable to harm any being . . .

[a discussion with a harmful demon that she tames] . . .

Then, for three months, male and female partners together practiced the end of the esoteric instructions on *Drinking Vajra Water* that [I had] spoken earlier to the Lord himself. At that time, the signs in the outer environment were that day and night the mountains spoke, the earth quaked, a roaring was heard, the sound of a flute and cymbals came forth, a fragrant smell spread, and so forth. All the group of fortunate disciples actually saw this.

The inner signs of the domains of the channels, winds, and seminal essence becoming purified were that the knots of the head and throat became liberated. Not needing to train in and traverse the path, I understood all the Dharma vehicles completely. The essential meaning of the symbols of all the teachings in accordance with the disposition and devotion of beings from the hidden vessel of the intention of the profound Treasures became self-liberated. The ten winds became pliant and our bodies had youthful flesh and were light like cotton-wool.

When I spoke spontaneously-uttered hymns of vajra words, the seeds of the first concentration were planted in the mind-streams of those who heard them. By many small deeds such as this, benefit for sentient beings arose. In particular, the inexpressible understanding of awareness and emptiness that is the primordial wisdom of great bliss and emptiness without elaboration and endowed with the three liberations⁶⁶⁹ manifested [in me]. The two, method and wisdom, manifestly merged as one taste.

Having arrived in the feast row of the ḍākinīs of the three Bodies, during a pure vision, the Lord actually saw the extraordinary emanation of Shiwa Dorjé Tso herself. I saw the Omniscient Queens. There was an inconceivable celebration feast for completing the greatly secret quick path. In particular, there were enjoyments suitable to all in the three realms such as pleasant things that were non-dual, unfabricated, fabricated, and so forth. Within this, there were two gatherings: the joyous gathering of the knowledge holders and the youthful gathering of the ḍākinīs. The Lord said that [this was] the youthful ḍākinīs' gathering. I thought that it was a gathering of the ḍākinīs, but all that appeared became one taste and I decisively experienced the *maṇḍala* of the great bliss of appearance and emptiness.

[Our] developing freedom over the elements and [our] magical emanations for the sake of expanding the energy of our realization and so forth are clarified in the Lord's Treasure scriptures. At that time, I saw Vimalamitra and he gave me his accomplishment practice. The ḍākinīs of the three realms gathered method and wisdom together in one seat. The vajra offering song and praises of the six satisfactions [that they sang] is clarified in my Treasure [scripture].⁶⁷⁰

In particular, we became extremely quick in decoding our Treasures. Also, for me, by the power of the abundant auspicious connections, I elucidated and propagated the *Anu Yoga Esoteric Precept The Entrance to the Quick Path of Vajravārāhī's Essential Drops* and the *Profound Explanation of the Meaning of the Great Bliss of the Upper Doors and Enjoying the Three Realms of the Lower Doors* that were teachings in the *Secret Treasury of Reality Ḍākinīs*.⁶⁷¹

Sera Khandro's severe life-threatening illness finally ends her stubborn persistence in remaining at Banak with Gara Gyalsé. Her illness is not only a physical one, but also seems to be a powerful metaphor representing the neglect and hostility she experienced in her relationship with Gyalsé. Her resentment towards him for not believing she was ill and for expecting her to continue to do considerable manual labor is manifest in her words. She emphasizes the subservient role she had tending and milking the livestock,

sewing clothes, and doing all the housework, all traditional women's work. Until the last moment, Sera Khandro resists her exile to the Treasure revealer's encampment (*gter sgar*), as they call Drimé Özer's community. She condemns Gyalsé, complaining that after working her whole adult life serving him, the moment she is no longer useful, he casts her out to become another man's property like throwing away a corpse in a cemetery. Yet there is something ironic in this portrayal of her displeasure at being sent to Drimé Özer's encampment, given that Sera Khandro seems to be rejecting what she wants most of all, namely reunion with her beloved Drimé Özer. At the same time as her sufferings of illness and marital disputes with Gyalsé reach a fever pitch, she receives the final blow, a prophecy from Drimé Özer that he will not live longer than another year. Her despondency at this news hints at her true desire to be with him. Yet her dismay at Gyalsé's decision to send her away is not merely a performance. The resentment Sera Khandro expresses sounds like that of a rejected spouse who feels her efforts to support her partner have all been for naught.

The chapter with Gyalsé is finally closed (aside from ongoing child custody battles they conduct through arbitrators and via letters) when Sera Khandro arrives before Drimé Özer at the age of thirty. Just as Drimé Özer slowly cures Sera Khandro's misery and near-death illness, likewise, Sera Khandro cures Drimé Özer of illness and revitalizes his longevity. On a worldly level, Sera Khandro is released from the suffering of marital disputes and the death-grip of illness. On a spiritual level, method and wisdom merge as one taste, catalyzing their completion of the quick path of Secret mantra, resulting in spiritual liberation for both Sera Khandro and Drimé Özer together as a divine couple.

Love Medicine and the Im/permanence of Life and Death

Even after Sera Khandro and Drimé Özer's grand reunion, dramatic illnesses and the looming reality of death color their lives. Death is a theme in Sera Khandro's writings not only due to the ever-present danger of disease and demonic influence, but also in the sense that Sera Khandro continually yearns to return to the magnificent Buddhafields that manifest before her as visionary experiences. From the time she was an eight-year-old girl contemplating throwing herself in the river to the time she actually attempted suicide at fifteen by drinking opium and alcohol to escape her arranged marriage, the young Sera Khandro seems to have been drawn to the thought of dying. As an adult as well, Sera Khandro makes repeated references to wanting to return to the Buddhafields away from the illness and suffering of the world, to go back home to mother Yeshé Tsogyal who sent her into this world of suffering as her emanation. The thread that keeps her attached to this human realm is her promise to Drimé Özer to maintain their pledge to stay together and to fulfill the aspirations of Padmasambhava and Yeshé Tsogyal. The love between her and Drimé Özer is the root that keeps her grounded in this world, pulling her back from her visionary journeys flickering on the border between life and death.

In Sera Khandro's perspective, death can be at least partially controlled by powerful practitioners of Secret Mantra such as Drimé Özer and herself. Thus, it is a choice of sorts to abandon this world and journey to the heavenly Buddhafields. Sera Khandro portrays both the lure of death and the power of true spiritual love to defy death's inviting snare in the following passage from the *Autobiography*. In this passage, she recollects events that occurred when she was thirty-one after living one year with Drimé Özer. The following exchange emphasizes Drimé Özer's sentimental feelings

towards Sera Khandro when he finds a text she wrote pertaining to the transference of consciousness at death. Fearing that her death is imminent, Drimé Özer panics:

Again the Lord said, “[Even] if you periodically have oral instructions for me, what is the meaning of your explaining mixing and transferring the five elements at the time of death? No matter how I examine your actions, your physical body, and so forth, I don’t believe you. What is the meaning of your throwing both your son and daughter and in particular me from your heart and not staying in this world? Who will we rely on and who will we love? In particular, since you know that I have no other source of refuge and no other person who is both [my] consort and lama to rely on, how miserable that you would cast me from your heart!”

Because he felt great sadness, I couldn’t bear it and I told him the thoughts I had earlier without hiding or keeping anything secret. I offered a pledge that from now on I wouldn’t do anything like this again. I said, “Now although the extent of my life is not exhausted, the extent of my mind is nearly finished. Hence, be careful. By the great profundity of our prayers for us to meet in many lifetimes, benefit will certainly arise.”

Then, that month on the evening of the twenty-seventh, ḍākinīs came to welcome me . . .

[long explanation of ḍākinīs’ invitation and description of their appearance and of their delightful land filled with rainbow light] . . .

The four elements finally condensed and my body was as if empty. My mind was equal to the outer expanse. Discriminative insight became naturally purified. Hence, although I clearly saw saṃsāra and nirvāṇa without obscuration, it became difficult to distinguish appearances. At that time, the weeping and wailing of all of the entourage resounded, surrounded by the main figures the Lord himself and Sotrül. The others in the religious encampment gathered there also felt disturbed. As when a hawk destroys a bird’s nest, there was a commotion.

In particular, the Lord was sorrowful and he put my head on his lap and said the following: “Dear child, if you throw me from your heart and go to the Buddhafields, very soon I will certainly direct my intention towards being there with you. I will forget about maintaining and propagating all religion and Treasures and so forth until not even any remnants of them are manifest. You are the object of my hopes in this life and the next. You are the great chariot for traversing the quick path. You are my method consort, jewel of my heart. In all my rebirths and successive lives may I be without separation from you!”

When [Drimé Özer] was grieving, a big tear fell into my ear. It was as if [it] hit my heart. When this happened, although my external breath had not yet ended, I seemed to have a bit of consciousness. Again, the Lord himself touched his face

to my ear and said again and again, “Dear child, don’t forget me. Direct your attention to three [letters] “A Nri Hung” and your consciousness will become clear.”

After this, I remembered the words of the Wish-fulfilling Jewel and when I focused my attention on him, all of the previous appearances of light went further and further away and disappeared. All the things of this world became as if they were sometimes clear and sometimes unclear. My illusory body also became like a frozen rock. Like a person who was abruptly awakened from sleep, I forgot all of the things that had appeared before. Not knowing what anything was, since my eyes could see a little bit, I looked around. The entire house was filled with butter lamps. Sotrül and Tupzang were warming my feet with fire. The Lord still had my head on his lap and although he performed [rituals] to stabilize my sense faculties and to summon my life, I didn’t have the energy to say anything as if I had become mute. They did all the other healing rituals and so forth. When I was drawn towards death, early in the morning, by the great blessings and power of my secret consort the Wish-fulfilling Jewel, [since] the fruits of my negative karma had not been exhausted, he gradually resuscitated me from being on the verge of my external breath stopping. All of the group of disciples gathered there, especially the Lord himself and Sotrül, were extremely joyous and rejoiced as if meeting someone raised from the dead.⁶⁷²

Drimé Özer tells Sera Khandro that she is his one consort and his only hope for this life and future lives; he prays to her with devotion and sorrow using the same sentimental language that she uses to pray to him. Sera Khandro’s depiction of the high level of praise he has for her is noteworthy given that he is male, eleven years her senior, a renowned incarnate lama, and the son of the famous Golok Treasure revealer Dujom Lingpa.⁶⁷³ Just as *ḍākinīs* come to welcome her to their Buddhafield, just as she slips away to their joyous land, the tear drop of his love falls into her ear and touches her heart, reminding her that she cannot slip away from their commitment to stay together. By the power of Drimé Özer’s love, Sera Khandro gains the strength to resist the *ḍākinīs*’ enchanting invitations. He gives her a reason to live that is stronger than the death-wish she seems to have had for her whole life. In this case, the old adage “love prevails” proves true yet again.

Unfortunately for Sera Khandro, the *ḍākinīs*' invitations beckoning Drimé Özer to the Buddhafields overcome her abilities to hold on to his impermanent physical form. Although she successfully restores Drimé Özer's health and cures his illnesses as he does for her for a period of time, ultimately she can not repel his death. Tragedy strikes in 1924 when Drimé Özer is forty-four years old, only four years after their happy reunion. Due to an outbreak of a contagious illness that spread throughout Drimé Özer's encampment in the Dartsang/Nyilung area, suddenly, within one week, both Sera Khandro's young son and Drimé Özer succumb to illness in a striking demonstration of the impermanence of life. In Drimé Özer's *Biography*, Sera Khandro records the conversations they had when he was in his forty-fourth year leading up to his passing. Drimé Özer told her,

"... Now if I need to fulfill your aspirations, don't feel worried. Since we have never opposed each other by even a hair's breadth, in our rebirths and future incarnations and in all of this life, the next, and the intermediate stage, we certainly will be without parting. Now since I am sick, my life will not remain. Hence, I am ready to go to the Glorious Copper-colored Mountain." His eyes stared into space.

Dewé Dorjé hugged his neck and said, "Earlier we spoke male and female partner commitment vows saying that still we need to stay here for the benefit of the teachings and sentient beings. In particular, why are you abandoning me and leaving?" Saying this, she wept intensively.

When she acted as if she were about to faint, the Lord couldn't bear it. His intentions relaxed and he said to Dewé Dorjé, "Okay, dear child, don't do this. Earlier, when I was 'The karmically connected one' (*Las 'brel*) [referring to a previous incarnation of Longchenpa], because I didn't get free from someone with deteriorated vows, now, this is the [result]. Now, since our auspicious connections have gone due to other forces, there is nothing to do about it; it is certain that I must go..."⁶⁷⁴

Sera Khandro despaired that she could do nothing to save him from death. Her portrayal of the painful moments when Drimé Özer's life begins to fade focuses on the Buddhist

theme of impermanence. In his *Biography*, she recounts the following exchange between the two of them that occurred shortly before his death:

He looked into space and said the following:

“Although this *maṇḍala* that is the sun’s clear light
Originates from the east, [it goes] to the direction of the western mountain.
This is like a display of impermanence.

During the three summer months, in the meadows plants flourish;
During the three autumn months, frost and hail vanquish their zeal.
This too is like a display of impermanence.

The assembly of disciples is like [a group of] guests;
Although they were here earlier, they are gone later.
This too is like a display of impermanence.

This illusory body is like a rainbow in the sky;
When that which appears is free of darkness, it disappears into the sky.
This too is like a display of impermanence.

The Truth Body of Pema Ledrel
Manifests as a Buddha in the Glorious Mountain Buddhafield.
This too is like a display of impermanence.

You, Künzang Chönyi Wangmo,
Don’t miss my body.
Meditate on all that appears as the lama’s body.
Recite sounds as great bliss mantra.
Make your conceptual mind, in nature one with reality,
Nondual with my mind.

I bless you to always be inseparable [from me].
Later I will come to welcome you and to lead you
To the direction of the Glorious Mountain.
Until then, according to your aspirations and pledges,
Perform vast benefit for the teachings and sentient beings.”

Having said this, he put his two hands on Dewé Dorjé’s head and prayed. Although Dewé Dorjé felt extreme suffering, she endured it. Seizing the Lord’s hand, she said the following:

“Father Omniscient Pema Ledreltsel⁶⁷⁵ –
Think of me with great love.

By the power of the former prayers of Tsogyal and Shelkar and
 Now by the pure karmic remainders [of those prayers],
 Having become a fortunate one who was near you, protector,
 You took me on as your heart's consort.

From the time I was thirty, our union has helped the teachings and sentient
 beings
 And we have performed vast actions and beneficial deeds.

At this time, because of the demonic influence of perverse prayers,
 Your body's solar *maṇḍala* is setting into the expanse.
 What will we blind people do?

If the *ḍākinīs* guide [away] father Wish-fulfilling Jewel,
 Who will spread happiness to mother sentient beings?

If our protector goes to the Buddhafields of the Buddhas of the three
 times,
 Who will guide sentient beings who grasp on to duality?

Father Pema Ledrel is departing for the Glorious Mountain –
 Who will protect fortunate disciples?

The consort Wish-fulfilling Jewel not staying here,
 Who will become the source of refuge and hope for
 Me, Dekyong Wangmo, the one with an inferior [female] body?

Actual manifestation of the Lotus Born Protector, you depart into the
 expanse.
 Who will maintain the two Treasures?

The Lord himself not manifestly staying here,
 Now I will have to pray to a statue of you.

Without the spoken words of your profound oral instructions,
 I will need to consult texts containing your words.

You not nurturing me lovingly,
 I will have to meditate without clarity on mixing our minds.

Not nurturing the fortunate entourage of disciples,
 I will need to go to the pleasant land where you are.

Now, no matter how I think about it, please don't lessen your kindness
 for me to be inseparable from you, Protector."

Having said this, she prayed again and again. The Lord also gave her much advice. Then, the two, male and female partners, spoke a great deal about the practices pertaining to primordial purity and spontaneous presence.⁶⁷⁶

Sera Khandro's despondency and Drimé Özer's advice to see his passing as a sign of impermanence evokes the dialogue between Yeshé Tsogyal and Padmasambhava as he prepared to ride a beam of light to his Southwestern Buddhafield. The references to this happening are explicit: Sera Khandro is an incarnation of Yeshé Tsogyal and her emanation Shelkar Tso and Drimé Özer is an "actual manifestation of the Lotus Born One," Padmasambhava. Drimé Özer is not preparing to die but rather is embarking on a journey to Padmasambhava's Buddhafield, the Southwestern Glorious Copper-colored Mountain. Sera Khandro longs to go with him and is devastated by his departure. The last earthly speech Drimé Özer pronounces to her the moment before his passing emphasizes their divine unity as inseparable method and wisdom:

. . . The Lord put his two hands on Dewé Dorjé's head and said,

A ham. I am the supreme method, the great bliss Heruka.
 You are the great mother of wisdom of the expanse of emptiness.
 By the meditation of enjoying non-dual union,
 In the immense Buddhafield in which the three – appearances, sounds, and awareness – are purified,
 In the expanse of inseparable form and primordial wisdom,
 As the form of Hayagrīva and Vajravārāhī in indestructible union,
 May we attain the fully-awakened youthful vase body of
 Buddhahood.⁶⁷⁷

Just as Guru Rinpoché departed from Tibet to abide eternally in a deathless state in his Glorious Copper-colored Mountain Buddhafield in the southwestern direction, similarly, Drimé Özer's death marks not only the impermanence of earthly life, but also his entry into the permanent state of Buddhahood. Just as Sera Khandro's spiritual liberation is dependent on Drimé Özer, in the above quotation he, too, describes attaining

Buddhahood along with Sera Khandro in the form of the indestructible union of Hayagrīva and Vajravārāhī. Sera Khandro is completely devastated by Drimé Özer's death, but gradually comes to understand that their connection as the unity of method and wisdom endures beyond the separation of death. Sera Khandro and Drimé Özer's physical relationship must end with his death, but their love is synonymous with the realization of Buddhahood itself, the only permanent state possible in a Buddhist philosophical view of the world.

Though she despairs at their corporeal separation, Drimé Özer returns in visionary form to instruct the grieving Sera Khandro on how to move beyond attachment to the false appearances of this world toward realizing the true nature of their inseparability. After the trauma of Drimé Özer's and her small son's sudden deaths, she learns that Drimé Özer's other consorts desired her, her daughter, and her close disciple Tupzang to leave immediately. Just as she is overwhelmed by anguish, Drimé Özer appears before her as a miraculous apparition just days after his death when she was thirty-three. In his *Biography*, Sera Khandro writes:

At that time Dewé Dorjé thought that what the Lord had said before was certainly true.⁶⁷⁸ Thinking that, "Even though I am alone, they don't let me stay here. From now on, there is nobody who has negative karma like I do," she went towards the cairn on the rear mountain. She threw her body down on the ground and wailed in a loud voice. Having cried out in despair to the Lord, on account of fierce wind, when she was about to faint, some wind blew on her. When she opened her eyes a bit, her eyesight was blurry. After wiping her eyes a little, she looked and the Lord himself had actually come and was breathing on her face. Dewé Dorjé was extremely overjoyed and hugged the Lord's neck.

She said, "Because you had passed away, I felt extreme suffering." She clearly explained all the good and bad events and said, "Now I will be inseparable from you."

The Lord said, "I wander from land to land but I have never gone anywhere. Why are you feeling this much suffering about what you perceive now that is like an

illusory dream? Aside from your having the perception that we, male and female partners, have separated, why would we separate by even a hair's breadth? Having decided that all phenomena are just an illusory dream, restrain [this perception] in the great non-dual primordial wisdom. It is not difficult for the sameness of the three Bodies to manifest the way it really is. Now you come later. I have to go earlier." Having treated me lovingly, he went.⁶⁷⁹

Drimé Özer underscores the illusory quality of all phenomena in Sera Khandro's conventional perception, urging her to see through false, dream-like appearances to the ultimate reality in which the two male and female partners, *yab* and *yum*, are inseparable. After Drimé Özer's death, as Sera Khandro struggles to perceive the illusory nature of the suffering she feels at his loss, Drimé Özer again appears before her. In his *Biography*, Sera Khandro writes:

When I was praying to the Lord, on account of a fierce wind [arising in my body], when I was about to faint, right in front of me, inside of a seminal drop with five colors of light [in it], two *ḍākinīs* saying they were Dewé Gocha and Rikpé Reltri appeared together with the Wish-fulfilling Jewel. As soon as [I saw that], I became really sad and my senses became dark. At that time, a *ḍākinī* saying she was Künselma called me three times and she said:

"Alas! Noble *ḍākinī* –
Not letting your hearing be distracted, listen to me!

All phenomena of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* are illusory emanations;
Abandon attachment to objects of perception.

Adhere to the fortress of changeless awareness.
Whatever appears is without rejecting or accepting; negating or affirming.

All phenomena have the nature of reality itself.
Whatever arises and whatever appears is the ornament of awareness.

Unceasing appearances are the display of the heroes.
Inexpressible emptiness is the wisdom mother.
The seal of [their] union is without coming together or separating.

In the interdependent arisings of illusory conventional truth,
You will [perceive us] to be separated for just a moment.

In the expanse of great bliss, method and wisdom are without coming

together or separating.
Stay and we will go to see the hero.”

Having said this, because she pointed at and touched my heart, the excellent appearance of a Buddhafield temporarily became visible. When I looked around, the Wish-fulfilling Jewel came to me and asked, “How are you? You are not fatigued? In general, the phenomena of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are greatly amazing. In particular, isn’t it amazing that illusory appearances [such as] we seem to have dissolved into the expanse?”

Although he spoke about many reasons for impermanence, I believed in them [as real]. Sobbing, I spoke many sad words, including, “Why did you leave us behind and go to the Buddhafield? Specifically, as you know, everyone mistreats me and does whatever they can to harm me. You know this. Now without a protector and refuge, what will I do?” and so forth.

He said, “Don’t do this. We two are not separated for even an instant. In general, [we are separated because of] the characteristics of compounded phenomena and specifically, because we both have nurtured the teachings. Because of the outer and inner negative circumstances and the weak merit of beings in these times of great and powerful change, although the appearance that we have separated arises, it is just an illusion of conventional truth. The [ultimate] truth is that because of the great profundity of our connection from former prayers and currently because of our great connection from mutually pure conduct, we lack any separation even for an instant. In the expanse of clear light, we two will always meet.”⁶⁸⁰

Drimé Özer’s death, just like the Buddha’s death, is a manifestation of the impermanence of illusory phenomena, but this is not the whole story. Death is not the final separation, although it is a poignant reminder not to be attached to phenomena that are bound to the cycle of birth and death. Drimé Özer exhorts Sera Khandro to see beyond conventional reality, to see the illusory quality of what she takes to be real, and to realize the ultimate truth of their inseparability. After all, he is a hero of unceasing appearances and she is a wisdom mother of inexpressible emptiness. Just as form cannot exist without empty space from which to differentiate it, just as compassionate action and empty awareness form an essential dyad in order to realize Buddhahood, so too Drimé Özer and Sera Khandro are inseparable. Sera Khandro thus explains the transcendental nature of her

relationship with Drimé Özer by drawing on powerful Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna Buddhist understandings of the essential nonduality of male method and female wisdom.

Her biographical writings themselves operate on both a conventional and ultimate level. On the level of conventional reality, they are filled with tales of jealousy and disputes related to consort practices. At the same time, they portray the ultimate realization of Buddhahood through a decidedly sentimental, *bhakti*-like depiction of her love relationship with her consort and guru Drimé Özer. Love is the power that transcends the illusory divides between conventional and ultimate truth, life and death, and saṃsāra and nirvāṇa. Hers is a Buddhist model of enlightenment built not on solitary renunciation, but on the divinization of love between a man and a woman as both the Buddhist path and its ultimate goal.

The Divine Treasure Revelation Couple Incarnate

Sera Khandro and Drimé Özer's vows of eternal love and prayers to be together in all their future lives have not been forgotten by those who inherited the Treasure tradition in contemporary Golok. Despite the radical breaks of tradition and social upheaval caused by the Chinese invasion of Tibet and the ensuing Cultural Revolution (1967-1977), the memory of Sera Khandro and Drimé Özer as a divinely prophesized couple who revealed Treasures lives on in Golok. Just as Sera Khandro drew on the mythic origins of the Treasure tradition in the form of the divine couple Padmasambhava and Yeshe Tsogyal to present herself and Drimé Özer as a Treasure revelation couple, the contemporary figures Namtrül Jikmé Püntso (b. 1944) and his recently deceased consort Taré Lhamo (1938-2002) draw on Sera Khandro's writings to frame their own vision of

themselves as a divinely prophesized couple who are reincarnations of Drimé Özer and Sera Khandro.⁶⁸¹ That they are renowned as a Treasure revealing couple primarily, and as individual persona secondarily, is evident by the fact that their biographies are not separate but rather combined into one text titled *The Biography of Namtrül Jikmé Püntsok and Khandro Taré Lhamo*. Their biography, published in 1997, is written by Pema Ösel Thayé (*Padma 'od gsal mtha' yas*), who is a learned monk originally from Dujom Lingpa's home area of Dartsang.⁶⁸² Namtrül Rinpoché and Taré Lhamo are one contemporary example of the ways in which the Treasure revelation communities that Sera Khandro depicted in her biographical writings live on today and maintain continuity with their traditional pasts despite the radical changes that followed Golok's incorporation into the People's Republic of China.⁶⁸³

Namtrül Jikmé Püntsok describes himself as an incarnation of Drimé Özer and his late consort Taré Lhamo as an incarnation of Sera Khandro.⁶⁸⁴ He clarifies that others suggest he is the body incarnation of Padmasambhava, the speech incarnation of Yeshé Tsogyal, and the mind incarnation of Namkhai Nyingpo.⁶⁸⁵ Additionally, he explains that he is a beneficial action (*phrin las*) incarnation of Taré Lhamo's father Apang Tertön (*A pang gter ston dpa' bo chos dbyings rdo rje*, 1895-1945). Although Pema Ösel Thayé does not mention that Namtrül Rinpoché is an incarnation of Drimé Özer in his biography, Namtrül Rinpoché himself emphasized this to me in conversation. Namtrül Rinpoché currently resides in his Monastery called Nyenlung Monastery (*Snyan lung dgon pa*) in Serta County, Golok.⁶⁸⁶

Taré Lhamo was the daughter of the well-known Treasure revealer Apang Tertön whose main seat was Tsinda Monastery (*Rtsis mda' dgon*) in Padma County, Golok.⁶⁸⁷

According to Pema Ösel Thayé's biography of her, she was an incarnation of Yeshé Tsogyal, Sera Khandro, and Tra Gelong Rinpoché Tsültrim Lodrö (*Khra dge slong rin po che tsul khrims blo gros*).⁶⁸⁸ In Taré Lhamo's biography, Pema Ösel Thayé includes a complete version of Sera Khandro's condensed autobiography from her Treasure cycle.⁶⁸⁹ Nearly half of Taré Lhamo's biography is Sera Khandro's condensed autobiography, which demonstrates Taré Lhamo's strong identification with her Golok *dākinī* predecessor.

Namtrül Rinpoché highlights the connection that both he and Taré Lhamo and Drimé Özer and Sera Khandro share as divinely prophesized Treasure revelation couples. Namtrül Rinpoché stresses that it is not desire that brought these couples together, but rather the power of previous karmic propensities. Just as Sera Khandro had an incredible urge to be near Drimé Özer, Namtrül Rinpoché explains that Taré Lhamo had an inner calling to go to him and hence left her home in Padma County to come to Nyenlung Monastery in Serta.⁶⁹⁰ Even if that urge was not desire according to Namtrül Rinpoché, he paints a decidedly sentimental picture of what it means to be a couple involved in Treasure revelation:

In the case of Drimé Özer and Sera Khandro, they write about each other in their biographies; they are not two separate beings. They are Namkhai Nyingpo and Shelkar Dorjé Tso. Since these two united in Lhodrak Karsha, they have been in union. They will function in union even in death; they are together in a sacred bond.⁶⁹¹

Namtrül Rinpoché's expression of this sacred bond is analogous to the language Sera Khandro used to represent her relationship with Drimé Özer. Although the sacred bond between a man and a woman does not necessarily imply monogamy in the context of Treasure revealer's communities in Golok and both Drimé Özer and Namtrül Rinpoché

(as well as Sera Khandro and Taré Lhamo) had/have other consorts, they all have one central partner integral to their Treasure revelation activities. Namtrül Rinpoché clarifies that the relationship between a male and a female Treasure revealer is not just a relationship between a man and a woman, but rather signifies the union of method and wisdom, as Sera Khandro's writings emphasize. He states that, "method and wisdom are like your two eyes and two hands; just as those eyes and hands operate as a pair, likewise the two male and female partners operate together."⁶⁹² He explains that monks can reveal only one of eighteen different types of Treasure called "hand Treasure" (*lag gter*) and that they are not able to reveal other types because they don't rely on the auspicious connections of male method and female wisdom.⁶⁹³

Like their predecessors Drimé Özer and Sera Khandro, the sacred bond that Namtrül Rinpoché and Taré Lhamo shared involved revealing their Treasures together as a partnership. Pema Ösel Thayé's depiction of Namtrül Rinpoché's life emphasizes this in his repeated descriptions of male and female partners (*yab yum*) going together to reveal Treasures, give teachings, and so forth. In the longer part of their biography that is the section on Namtrül Rinpoché's life, Pema Ösel Thayé continually refers to him in the plural, addressing them as "male and female partners" (*yab yum*) or as "the sovereign male and female partners" (*rje yab yum*) in a way that accentuates his identity as a part of a sacred couple and not as an individual agent. Namtrül Rinpoché himself explains that, "We [myself and Taré Lhamo] wrote the Treasure texts together and we both propagated empowerment and reading transmissions of them together."⁶⁹⁴ At times when he and Taré Lhamo were separated, he claims that they wrote identical revelations. Namtrül Rinpoché recalls that during his courtship years with Taré Lhamo, they exchanged a series of letters

without ever having met each other due to travel restrictions over the Sichuan/Qinghai border that separated them. He recollects that often their letters would have the same meaning, just as their revealed Treasures did. Namtrül Rinpoché explains that both he and Taré Lhamo became literate in the same miraculous way – without having to study, both spontaneously became able to read.⁶⁹⁵ Thus, they were not only consorts for each other for sexual purposes, but according to Namtrül Rinpoché and his biography, they participated in the revelation and teaching process together as a couple.⁶⁹⁶ That there are male and female Treasure revealers who act jointly to reveal Treasures is only natural according to Namtrül Rinpoché's perspective, for they are all Padmasambhava and Yeshe Tsogyal's emissaries.

Conclusion

Although the emphasis within Buddhism on monasticism and renunciation has resulted in a relative absence of *bhakti*-like devotional themes in Buddhist literature compared to other South Asian literary traditions, Sera Khandro's biographical writings remind us that love metaphors can also be found in Tibetan Buddhist literature. Sera Khandro's relationship with Drimé Özer as her consort and her guru is the centerpiece of her story of spiritual liberation. She represents her love for him in quintessentially Buddhist ways through the terminology of the gendered dyad of method and wisdom. Sera Khandro's flowing tears and her desperate attempts to convince Drimé Özer to live longer and stay near her lend a strongly sentimental tone to her narrative. Yet her story is not only sentimental; it filled with the angst of marital dispute and separation from her first partner Gara Gyalsé as much as it is her extraordinary love and devotion for Drimé

Özer. The tension produced by this push and pull between the two most powerful men in her life creates an engaging and suspense-filled narrative that documents both the conventional anger, abuse, and sorrow Sera Khandro experienced with Gyalsé as well as the ultimately transcendental power of her love for Drimé Özer. Rather than being a source of attachment to the sufferings of cyclic existence as it is in monastics' writing, the passionate love between herself and Drimé Özer provides the energy that enables Sera Khandro to cut through her delusion and to gain spiritual realization.

That Sera Khandro's auto/biographical writings are one of the only sources written by a female Treasure revealer and that they include the strongly sentimental themes I have elaborated upon above beckons the question: is there a relationship between Sera Khandro's female gender and the sentimentality of her writing? Even though the scarcity within Tibetan literature of metaphors based on love between a man and a woman reflects the predominantly monastic proclivities of the majority of Tibetan authors, it is not possible to draw any meaningful connection between Sera Khandro's female gender and the sentimentality of her writing. Certainly Sera Khandro's experience as a female Treasure revealer with children was radically different than that of the powerful male Treasure revealers with whom she interacted. Yet, whether those differences imply that female Treasure revealers have a more sentimental perception of sexual yoga and consort relationships than male Treasure revealers do is an unanswerable question until more writings by female and male Treasure revealers can be explored.

Given the compelling love story that Sera Khandro's writings depict, it is not surprising to find that Sera Khandro and Drimé Özer's memory lives on in contemporary Golok. Although much of Sera Khandro's religious lineage was broken during the

Cultural Revolution and it appears that Drimé Özer's writings were lost, contemporary figures such as Taré Lhamo and Namtrül Rinpoché conceptualize themselves as a divinely prophesized Treasure revelation couple in sacred union, following the example of their previous incarnations Sera Khandro and Drimé Özer and before them, Yeshé Tsogyal and Padmasambhava. Just as love prevails over death in Sera Khandro's auto/biographical writings, Namtrül Jikmé Püntsock and Taré Lhamo demonstrate the ongoing vitality in eastern Tibet of Sera Khandro and Drimé Özer's legacy as a divinely prophesized Treasure revelation couple.

Conclusion

Despite the tomes of dubious materials available in the English language that purport to explore Tantric sexuality, very little is known about the sociology of historical Tantric communities, and even less is known about the position of women within these communities.⁶⁹⁷ Sera Khandro's auto/biographical writings chronicling her life as a female religious practitioner, as a Treasure revealer, and as a participant in consort relationships make an important contribution to our understanding of these intriguing topics. The details Sera Khandro provides about her interpersonal relationships and the social dynamics of her religious communities ground the esoteric phenomena of Treasure revelation in the practical realities of life in early twentieth-century Golok. Sera Khandro's personal recollections lend insight into the life of an extraordinary woman who rose above multiple adversities to become one of the very few female Treasure revealers and autobiographers in all of Tibetan history. Yet her writings are not just about one woman's perceptions; they portray elements of her social world along with her individual transformation from suffering woman to spiritually liberated *ḍākinī*.

In exploring Sera Khandro's richly textured accounts of her revelations, visions, journeys, and many conversations, the focus of this study has been twofold: 1) we have examined her auto/biographical writings as literature, analyzing the ways she crafted her self-narrative, and 2) we have read her writings as a resource for understanding more about the community contexts of Treasure revelation and its associated consort practices. The five chapters of this study interwove our two focuses, literature and society, in mutually illuminating ways. Chapter One narrated the dramatic plot of Sera Khandro's

Autobiography, emphasizing the ways she described her involvement in community life. Chapter Two explored Sera Khandro's relationship to the mythological history of the Treasure tradition and demonstrated the correlation between Treasure revelation and social and environmental well-being in early twentieth-century Golok. Chapter Three focused on literary analysis, exploring the ways in which Sera Khandro articulated her autobiographical self. Chapter Four portrayed how consort practices fit into Sera Khandro's community life, replete with the jealousies and love that always accompany human relationships. Chapter Five presented Sera Khandro's representation of her relationship with Drimé Özer, bringing the subject of consort practices out of the sterile domain of religious dictum and into the uncharted territory of a Buddhist love story.

Chapter One, "Sera Khandro's Autobiography," recounted the storyline of Sera Khandro's autobiographical narrative, highlighting the perennial problems Sera Khandro faced finding a home within the Golok religious communities in which she sought acceptance. Recurrent themes such as community tensions, problems getting along with other jealous women, visionary encounters with *ḍākinīs*, revelation experiences, depression, sorrow, and love characterize Sera Khandro's dramatic tale. Chapter One emphasized the hardships she experienced, in particular social problems with other female consorts such as Drimé Özer's consort Akyongza and Gara Tertön's spouse Yakza, who both feared (for good reason) that Sera Khandro would usurp their men. Sera Khandro's repeated social problems reflect her unusual status as a female Treasure revealer who had gained a reputation as a visionary by her late teens. This in combination with her youth and beauty seems to have brought her more female foes than friends throughout her life, reminding us that Sera Khandro's account is not a feminist story of

women's liberation in the nomadic alpine Tantric communities of pre-modern Tibet. Rather, it is an account of one woman's rise against all the odds. If this is so, then what factors enabled Sera Khandro to defy conventional gender expectations to become one of the few female Treasure revealers in Tibetan history to write the story of her life? The personality that comes through her writing is one of a courageous, assertive, inspired, eloquent, and highly intelligent woman. This strong charisma in addition to the connections she forged with powerful male hierarchs in the Golok world of Treasure revelation no doubt contributed to her extraordinary achievements.

Another contributing factor to Sera Khandro's successful rise as a female Treasure revealer is her alignment with the most well-known female figure in the tradition, Yeshé Tsogyal. Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* carefully places her life story in the larger context of Yeshé Tsogyal's enlightened activities in the world. Her relationship with Drimé Özer as well as her descriptions of her genesis as a Treasure revealer closely relate to the hagiographies of her divine predecessor, thus paving the way for her own apotheosis as a *ḍākinī*. Chapter Two, "The Process of Revealing Treasures in Sera Khandro's Golok," introduced the history of the Treasure tradition with a particular focus on exploring the ways in which Sera Khandro's portrayal of herself and Drimé Özer is modeled on the tradition's paradigmatic divine couple, Yeshé Tsogyal and Padmasambhava. Additionally, this chapter illustrated that in addition to acting as catalysts for enlightenment, Treasure revelations also had pragmatic applications involving maintaining the health and well-being of people and their communities in early twentieth-century Golok. Treasure revealers lived in religious encampments (*chos sgar*), which were mobile communities centered on a charismatic Treasure revealer comprised

of both celibate and non-celibate religious specialists. Like the monasteries (*dgon*) in which celibate monastics lived in permanent structures, religious encampments were supported in part by the Golok laity in exchange for their ritual interventions.

Chapter Three, “Autobiography, Gender, and the Self,” drew attention to the ways in which Sera Khandro wrote about herself. The chapter focused on three important aspects of her writing: 1) her repeated reference to her inferior female body, 2) the dialogic nature of her writing, and 3) the role of visions in her self-formulation. Sera Khandro’s litany of derogatory comments about her female gender demonstrates the difficulties she faced as a woman in early twentieth-century Golok occupying a religious role generally reserved for men. Her repeated comments about her inferior female body also work to mitigate any accusation of hubris on her part for writing such a long account of her life. Yet, the self-denigrating comments about her gender that are peppered throughout her writing are more than a way to express her humility; paradoxically, they invite the many other voices populating Sera Khandro’s narrative to refute her, offering their positive encouragement for her religious pursuits. Accentuating this confirmation are the many celestial *ḍākinīs* whose visionary appearances offer their undivided support, urging Sera Khandro to pursue her destiny as a Treasure revealer and as Yeshé Tsogyal’s emissary. In Sera Khandro’s writing, *ḍākinīs*’ prophetic speech may be elusive, but their message is unequivocally ego-boosting, helping her to formulate her identity as a Treasure revealer and counteracting the disapproval of others in her conventional reality. That Sera Khandro looks to divine female role models for encouragement is not surprising given that she never had human female role models or a supportive female community in her mundane reality.

Chapter Three also raised the provocative question: how much of Sera Khandro's writing style relates to her position as a female author? A brief comparison between Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* and the Tibetan language autobiographies of two other women, Orgyen Chökyi and Jetsün Lochen, reminded us of the problems with generalizing about writing style and an author's gender given the many other factors that determine an author's subjectivity including race, class, geographic background, and monastic versus non-celibate status. Sera Khandro's writing style reflects her Golok linguistic and cultural context and her involvement in visionary revelation more than it reflects her female gender. That said, certain thematic elements of her work including her refusal of lay marriage, her lack of a Tibetan-language education, the misogyny she experienced, and her struggles balancing housework and animal husbandry/farming responsibilities with religious pursuits are features often found in accounts of and by Tibetan women.

Chapter Four, "Consorts and Treasure Revelation Communities," addressed the controversial questions of the role of sexuality and the status of women in Tibetan Tantric communities from the previously unheard perspective of a woman who was herself a consort and a religious specialist who had male consorts. Sera Khandro's writing contains some of the only references in all of Tibetan literature to sexual practices from the perspective of a female subject, aside from those found in Yeshé Tsogyal's biographies, which are clearly her literary source. Her writings demonstrate that despite the lack of literary record attesting to it, at times women did engage in sexual practices for their own benefit, and not simply for the spiritual and physical betterment of their male partners. At the same time, the bitterly discordant dynamics of jealousy and aggression between

female consorts that pervade Sera Khandro's recollections belie any idealistic interpretation of women's exalted status in her Tantric communities. Female consorts competed with each other not only for the attention of their men, but also for limited financial resources. Her presentation is thus neither wholly gynocentric nor misogynist, but rather presents a balanced view of women's agency and objectification within early twentieth-century Golok religious encampments.

Sera Khandro's writing outlined many different purposes for the role of sexuality in Tibetan religious practice: 1) soteriological functions relating to manipulating the internal psycho-physical energies of the body in order to engender spiritual realization, 2) pragmatic functions relating to dispelling obstacles and increasing longevity, and 3) hermeneutical functions specific to the Treasure tradition in which sexuality and the production/decoding of text are analogized as two generative processes rooted in the body. Although prescriptive accounts of sexual yoga tend to highlight the soteriological role of sexuality, Sera Khandro's writing emphasizes its pragmatic functions in her Golok society. In a world where ritual interventions were the only available form of medical care, sexuality with its associated life-enhancing powers was sometimes used as an antidote to physical illness. According to Sera Khandro's writings, the curative potential of sexuality at times clashed with monastic celibacy; she recounts numerous occasions in which the onus fell on her to distinguish between lustful breaches of monastic vows and virtuous applications of sexual yoga. Yet aiding her in this dilemma were always the prophetic *dākinīs*, whose message was crystal clear: despite Sera Khandro's misgivings and fears about engaging in harmful sexual misconduct, she had to fulfill Padmasambhava and Yeshé Tsogyal's command by engaging in sexual yoga with

appropriately prophesized consorts for both her own and her partner's benefit. The *dākinīs* exhortations thus acted as divine backing, allowing Sera Khandro to demonstrate the purity of her moral conduct at the same time as she described acting as a consort to multiple male religious hierarchs in Eastern Tibet.

Chapter Five, "The Divine Couple," explored Sera Khandro's depiction of her love for her main consort, Drimé Özer. Perhaps Sera Khandro's female gender, but certainly her non-monastic status, contributed to her portrayal of the Buddhist spiritual path in which her love for Drimé Özer was both the path and the goal of her spiritual journey. Sera Khandro's writing thus moves beyond the technical, physiological elements of sexual yoga to represent the human relationships that accompanied these practices. The sentimental tone of her writing stands in contrast to the more typically negative Buddhist evaluation of emotions, which tend to focus on the triadic designation of afflictive emotions including anger, lust, and hatred. In addition to the one emotion that is valorized in Buddhist contexts, namely compassion, Sera Khandro also valorizes the love between prophesized partners as an important part of the spiritual path. Her *Autobiography* and Drimé Özer's *Biography* can be read on multiple levels: they portray the union of method and wisdom and the religious importance of consort practices for Treasure revelation, but they also depict a dramatic love story. For Sera Khandro, the culmination of the quick Secret Mantra path is spiritual liberation through union with the divine in the form of Drimé Özer. For Drimé Özer as well, according to Sera Khandro's portrayal of him, Sera Khandro is his equal in a spiritual partnership. Sera Khandro thus applies the Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna understanding of method and wisdom as nondual elements of Buddhahood to her understanding of her relationship with Drimé Özer. In

this, as in all things, her model is the founding divine couple of the Treasure tradition, Padmasambhava and Yeshé Tsogyal. Just as these Imperial period Tibetan saints live on eternally and inseparably in the Buddhafields, so, too, do Sera Khandro and Drimé Özer live on in sacred partnership, as their contemporary incarnations continue to exemplify.

Sera Khandro's auto/biographical writings open a window into one woman's account of Treasure revelation and consort practices in the religious encampments of early twentieth-century Golok. Yet there are still many more layers of the literary and social world her writings invoke left to explore. Remaining questions include: 1) How do Sera Khandro's auto/biographical writings relate to her prolific Treasure revelations? 2) How do Sera Khandro's writings fit into a larger conversation with those of the other important authors from the Treasure revelation encampments in which she lived, including Dujom Lingpa, Gara Tertön, and their descendants? 3) How does Sera Khandro's memory live on today in the form of her incarnations and the maintenance of her religious lineage?

Beyond her auto/biographical writings, Sera Khandro wrote more than two thousand pages of Treasure revelations, many of which express more detailed information about her visionary encounters. Given the frequency with which she directs her *Autobiography* readers to her revelation cycles, a study on Sera Khandro and her visionary world can be deepened through analyzing these materials. In order to better understand the role of her revelations in early twentieth-century Golok society and to investigate the ephemeral boundaries between writing the self and revealing the divine, I plan to continue my research on her revelation cycles.

Sera Khandro's writings do not stand alone, but rather comprise one part of a much larger corpus of literature associated with Dujom Lingpa and his eight sons (see Appendix II for a list of Dujom Lingpa's descendants), many of whom were prolific Treasure revealers in their own right. Despite their importance for the Treasure tradition in Golok, very little research has been conducted on his lineage. A complete understanding of Sera Khandro's works requires a wider study of Dujom Lingpa's writings (which Sera Khandro redacted and surely was influenced by), Drimé Özer's writings (if they can be located), Gara Tertön and Gara Gyalsé's writings from Banak Monastery, and more.

Additionally, a study on Sera Khandro's presentation of herself and her society in early twentieth-century Golok invites us to explore how her writings and her memory live on in the contemporary world of Treasure revelation in Golok. In particular, I plan to continue my research on her incarnations and those who maintain her lineage, investigating how they apply the powerful metaphors of method and wisdom that defined Sera Khandro's world to their contemporary lives.

Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* exposes a world removed from our own in time, space, language, and thought. The many conversations she records invite us to observe her social and religious world as well as her perceptions of herself, bridging her geographic and temporal distance through the vitality of her words. Her writings are an offering to those who come after her, but this offering is not without strings. Through all the insights and provocative issues her writings contribute to our academic conversations, we must ask ourselves, if Sera Khandro were listening to us talk about her, would she recognize herself? Would she welcome this new attention to her life and works? After all,

in the last lines of her *Autobiography*, she cautions the protectresses of the profound Treasures to whom she has entrusted her *Autobiography*: “Give this Dharma to fortunate ones with aspiration prayers . . . Don’t propagate this teaching to those without commitments who have wrong views. If you give it to them, quickly show them a sign.”⁶⁹⁸ It is my belief that opening up Sera Khandro’s auto/biographical writings to English language readers contributes to deepening our understanding of the lived practice of Buddhism, beneficial to both the academically inclined and the personally devoted. With this aim in mind, may this study of Sera Khandro’s writings not offend the protectors of the Dharma, but rather add greater insight into her spiritual and social world!

Appendix I: Main Characters in Sera Khandro's Autobiography

People Associated with Dartsang/Sera Monastery:

Akyongza (A skyong bza'), Drimé Özer's consort before Sera Khandro
 Chödrön (Chos sgron), a female friend
 Dodrup Rinpoché (Rdo grub rin po che), one of Drimé Özer's brothers
 Dorjé Drandül (Rdo rje dgra 'dul), one of Drimé Özer's brothers
 Lhachen Topgyal (Lha chen stobs rgyal), one of Drimé Özer's brothers
 Namkha Jikmé (Nam mkha' 'jigs med), Drimé Özer's younger brother
 Öbar ('Od 'bar), Drimé Özer's attendant
 Sotrül Rinpoché (Bsod sprul sna tshogs rang grol), Drimé Özer's disciple, Sera trülku
 Tsüldrön (Tshul sgron), nun related to A bstan household where she worked as a servant
 Tsültrim Dorjé (Tshul khriims rdo rje), attendant to Drimé Özer and Sera Khandro, her scribe

People Associated with Banak:

Chötreng, (Chos phreng), a nun friend
 Gara Tertön (Mgar ra gter ston bdud 'dul dbang phyug gling pa), Gyalsé's father
 Gara Gyalsé (Mgar ra rgyal sras), her spouse (*tshe grogs*), son of Gara Tertön
 Gotrül Rinpoché (Dpal yul sgo chen sprul sku 'jigs bral chos kyi blo gros), lama friend
 Jikmé Könchok ('Jigs med dkon mchog), Gyalsé's younger brother
 Saldrön (Gsal sgron), Gyalsé's second wife
 Tupzang (Thub bzang), a monk who is Sera Khandro's close attendant and disciple
 Yakza (Yak shul bza'), Gara Tertön's wife (*yum*)

Appendix II: Dujom Lingpa's Family Tree

(from Padma Theg mchog rgyal mtshan. *Rdzong gter kun bzang nyi ma'i gsung chos yongs rdzogs kyi thob yig gter gyi bum bzang*)

Dujom Lingpa (Gter chen khrag 'thung bdud 'joms rdo rje)'s Eight Sons and their Children:

1. Rdo grub rin po che III 'Jig med bstan pa'i nyi ma
2. Grub chen sprul sku Padma rdo rje
3. Mdo mkhyen brtse ye shes rdo rje'i yang sprul 'dzam gling dbang rgyan
children:
 - a. Dpa' bo nus ldan rdo rje (popularly known as Rdzong gter kun bzang nyi ma)
children:
 - i. Dri med 'od zer gyi sprul sku shes rab thog med
 - ii. A phang bla ma pad nor gyi sprul sku mi 'gyur rdo rje (or 'od gsal snying po)
 - iii. Sprul sku padma rdo rje'i yang srid padma theg mchog rgyal mtshan
 - iv. A bos bsod rgan sprul sku'i yang sprul thub dga'
4. Che bo'i rig 'dzin chen mo'i sprul sku mi pham rdo rje
5. Klong chen pa'i sprul sku mchog sprul **dri med 'od zer**
children:
 - a. Bsod nam lde'u btsan (his mother was Dbang chen sgron ma)
children:
 - i. Mchog sprul rta mgrin dbang rgyal
 - ii. Padma dbang rgyal
 - iii. Gzhan phan nyi ma
 - iv. Mdo sngags nyi ma
6. A phang sku chen gyi yang sprul lha chen stobs rgyal
children:
 - a. Stan 'dzin bzang po
 - b. Dri med kyi sprul sku bkra po
 - c. Dam pa rgya gar
 - d. Rdo grub rin po che'i sprul sku padma lung rtogs rgya mtsho (or Nyi zla)
7. Rdza dpal sprul gyi yang sprul nam mkha' 'jigs med

children:

- a. Kun bzang lung rtogs
- b. Bstan pa'i gsal byed
- c. Sras mo kun bzang dbang mo

8. Gsang bdag gi sprul ba rdo rje dgra 'dul
children:

- a. Mchog sprul bstan 'dzin nyi ma

Appendix III: Colophon of Sera Khandro's Autobiography

English Translation of Autobiography Colophon

This is called “*The Biography of the Central Tibetan Woman Dewé Dorjé: A Reliquary for Fortunate and Faithful Ones [Serving as] a Chariot Leading to Renunciation.*” Additionally, although it is also difficult to express the name of the Omniscient Lord of Refuge, if I speak it for the purpose of [expressing my] meaning, the Lord of Siddhas Rikzin Pema Ösel Drodül Sangngak Lingpa [Drimé Özer] [gave me] a silver mirror, a crystal vase full of stainless nectar, precious things with the luster of red, white, and blue, and precious red-colored brocade and implored me [to write this text]. Although I didn't have the power to decline this request that descended upon the crown of my head, based on many conditional factors and in particular, based on the fact that I was a plain, ordinary being without even a hint of good deeds or virtuous qualities, I let [his request] go.

At that time, the disciple of the prophesized Dharma Lord Guru Vimala who was an emanation of the union of the Dharma King (Trisong Detsen) and Namnying⁶⁹⁹ and who upheld the Vinaya and was a master scholar of extremely clear intellect [named] Norbu Wangyal⁷⁰⁰ offered silver and a gleaming Banares silk scarf to the lama. In particular, having offered his body, speech, and mind to the lama, he abandoned non-religious activity. He maintained the tradition of the teachings of intellectual study and contemplative practice and also diligently practiced my accomplishment practices.⁷⁰¹

Having accomplished their quintessence, by offering [this realization], he implored me repeatedly and with great persistence [to write this text].

The lama from Akyap (*A skyabs*) named Karma Dondrüp also implored me [to write this text] by means of [offering me] a good-sized golden statue of Pakma Nampar Gyalma⁷⁰² and a silver inner offering⁷⁰³ [skull cup] and so forth.

Those close to me, my prophesized scribe, the virtuous Tsültrim Dorjé, the bud of my own lineage, my daughter Chöying Drönma, my disciple Tupten Zangpo, and so forth implored me [to write this text] with intense longing. In particular, I was unable to resist the repeated and intensive requests of Khenpo Norbu Wangyal and Tsültrim Dorjé who left me no choice but to do this.

This account in which my faults and good qualities are mixed was begun during an auspicious month when I was thirty-five by me, the lowest of all the great Treasure revealer lama's retinue, the one who was merely his consort who has the Degenerate Age Treasure name Dechen Dewé Dorjé or the vagabond woman from Amdo (*Mdo med*) who has destroyed confusion named Künzang Dekyong Chönyi Wangmo. I finished it when I was thirty-six on the first day of the eleventh month in the female fire hare year [1927] in the supreme place where the natural *ḍākinīs* gather, the isolated mountain hermitage of Sera Monastery. My disciple of intact commitment Tsültrim Dorjé acted as the scribe.

In all the directions in which this Dharma spreads, may all the excellences spontaneously emerge such as long life, absence of disease, the spreading of the Dharma, and so forth! May all be auspicious!

Accordingly, regarding these lying words of a secular lama,
As I said before, for the sake of the noble doctrine holders,
Up to the age of thirty-six,

I wrote about my circumstances in detail, leaving nothing out.

I left the auspicious connections of future circumstances for later.

Although I wanted to abandon this which is a cause for laziness for myself and others,

The Treasure-guarding *ḍākinīs* exhorted me symbolically with their purpose.

Also, the doctrine holders with whom I had karmic connections from previous aspirations –

The emanation of Drenpa Namkha named Ayu (*A yu*),⁷⁰⁴

The emanation of Odren (*O bran*) named *Birgya*⁷⁰⁵

The one blessed by Tsogyal [named] Akashila,⁷⁰⁶

The emanation of Mati (*Ma ti*) with the name Sam (*bSam*)⁷⁰⁷ and so forth,

And also those men who came from the land of Riwoché in Khams

Along with a radiant sky blue scarf and

Insistent fervent yearning and faith

Exhorted me for a long time again and again [to write this text].

Because of this, my heart could not bear it and this perpetual liar,

This guide of degenerate age beings who holds a degenerate age Treasure name,

Who is an object of pity as one who behaves as a householder,

This inferior one who yearned for the isolated hermitage of a homeless one,

The lowest of all, Dewé Dorjé,

From age thirty-six to forty-three

Wrote a bit about the circumstances of my actions.

By the power of this, may the doctrine holder's obstacles be dispelled!

May those who adhere to the teachings extend their life and may the benefactors' power increase!

May sentient beings always practice the Dharma with happiness and joy!

May the two purposes [benefit for one's self and others] ripen like the fruit of a wish-fulfilling tree!

May the extent of [good] deeds and enlightened activity expand and may [all be] auspicious!

I wrote this myself.

Virtue! Virtue! Virtue! Well done! All is auspicious!

Tibetan Transliteration of Autobiography Colophon

[405] ཅེས་ནས་པར་ཐར་པ་ངེས་འབྱུང་འདྲེན་པའི་ཤིང་རྟ་སྐལ་ལྡན་དད་པའི་མཆོད་སྤྱོད་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་འདི་
 ཡང་སྐྱབས་ཇེ་ཐམས་ཅད་མཁུན་པ་མཆོད་བཅོད་པར་དགའ་ནའང་དོན་གྱི་སྤྲད་ཏུ་སློབ་ན་བྱུང་དབང་
 རིག་འཛིན་པ་སྤྲོའོད་གསལ་འགྲོ་འདུལ་གསལ་སྤྲུགས་སྤྱིང་པས་རིན་ཆེན་གཉིས་པའི་མེ་ལོང་དང་།
 ཤེལ་བུམ་བྱི་མ་མེད་པ་བཅུད་ཀྱིས་བཀའ་བ་། དགའ་དམར་མཐེང་གའི་མདངས་འཛིན་རིན་པོ་ཆེའི་
 རིགས་ལ་སོགས་པ་དང་། པཱུ་དབང་མདོག་སྐྱེས་བཅས་བཀའ་བསྐུལ་སྤྱི་བོར་ཕེབས་པ་བརྒྱུ་ཏུ་མ་
 རུས་ཀྱང་། གནས་དུས་ཀྱི་རྒྱུན་མང་གིས་བསྐྱར་བ་དང་། བྱུད་པར་ཐ་མལ་སོ་སྐྱེས་བདག་ལྟ་བུ་ལ་
 ལེགས་བྱས་ཡོན་ཏན་ཟུར་ཅམ་ཡང་མེད་པ་ལ་གཞི་བྱས་ནས་བཏང་སློམས་སུ་བཞག་ཡོད་[405.5]སྐབས།
 ལུང་ཟིན་ཆོས་ཀྱི་བདག་པོ་གྲུ་བྱི་མ་ལས་ཇེས་སུ་བཟུང་བ། ཆོས་རྒྱལ་ནམ་སྤྱིང་བྱུང་སྐལ་འདུལ་བ་
 འཛིན་པ་མཁས་པའི་དབང་པོ་སློ་བྲོས་རབ་ཏུ་གསལ་བ་ནོར་བུ་དབང་རྒྱལ་ནས་རིན་ཆེན་གཉིས་པ་དང་།
 ལྷ་རེག་ཀ་ཤིའི་མདངས་འཛིན་དང་། བྱུད་པར་སློ་བྲོ་གསུམ་སྤྱི་མའི་ཕྱོགས་སུ་ཕུལ་ནས་ཆོས་མེན་གྱི་བྱ་བ་
 སྤངས་ཏེ། བཤད་དང་སྐྱབ་པའི་བསྟན་པའི་སློལ་འཛིན་པ་དང་། རང་ཡང་སྐྱབ་པ་ཉམས་ལེན་ལ་
 བརྩན་འབྱུས་མཛད་ནས་སྤྱིང་པའི་སྐྱབ་པས་མཆོད་པས་བསྐུལ་བ་ཡང་ཡང་ནན་ཏན་ཆེན་པོ་མཛད་པ་དང་།
 ལ་སྐྱབས་སྤྱི་མ་གཟུ་དོན་འབྱུང་གིས་ཀྱང་། རིན་ཆེན་དང་པོའི་འཕགས་མ་ནམ་པར་རྒྱལ་མའི་སྐྱེ་ཆད་
 ལྡན་དང་། རིན་ཆེན་གཉིས་པའི་ནང་མཆོད་སྤྱོད་ལྡན་སོགས་ཀྱིས་བཀའ་བསྐུལ་ཕེབས་པ་དང་། ཉེ་
 ཆར་རང་གི་ལུང་ཟིན་ཡི་གའི་རིས་བྱེད་དགོ་བཅུན་སྐྱེས་བྱུང་མ་པ་རྩལ་གྲིམས་དེ་ཇེ་དང་། རང་གི་
 རིགས་ཀྱི་སྐྱུ་གྲུ་བུ་མོ་ཆོས་ཀྱིས་དབྱིངས་སློན་མ་། སློབ་བྱ་བུ་བསྟན་བཟང་པོ་སོགས་ཀྱིས་མོས་ཉེན་
 དྲག་པོའི་བསྐུལ་བ་དང་། [406]བྱུད་པར་མཁན་པོ་ནོར་བུ་དབང་རྒྱལ་དང་། རྩལ་དོར་གཉིས་ཀྱིས་
 མི་བྱི་རང་དབང་མ་སྟེར་ནས་ཡང་ནས་ཡང་དུ་བཀའ་བསྐུལ་ཟབ་པར་བགྱིས་པའི་བརྒྱུ་ཏུ་མ་རུས་པར་རང་
 གི་སློན་ཡོན་འདྲེས་མའི་གཏམ་འདི་ཡང་གཏེར་ཆེན་སྤྱི་མའི་འཁོར་འབངས་ཡོངས་ཀྱི་ཐ་ཤལ་བ་གཟུངས་
 མའི་ཆ་ཅམ་འཛིན་པ་སྤྲུགས་དུས་གཏེར་མིང་བདེ་ཆེན་བདེ་བའི་དེ་ཇེ་འམ་། མདོ་མེད་འཆོལ་མོ་འབྱུལ་
 ཞིག་ཀྱན་བཟང་བདེ་སྤྱོད་ཆོས་ཉིད་དབང་མོས་རང་ལོ་སོ་ལྷའི་ལོར་བཀྲ་ཤིས་རྒྱ་བར་དབུ་བཞག་ནས།
 རང་ལོ་སོ་དུག་ལོའི་དུས་འཛིན་མེ་མོ་ཡོས་ཀྱི་ལོའི་རྒྱ་བ་བཅུ་གཅིག་པའི་ཡར་ཆོས་གཅིག་གི་ཉིན་རང་བཞིན་

མཁའ་འགྲོ་འདུ་བའི་གནས་མཆོག་སེར་དགོན་དབེན་རིའི་བྲོད་ནས་ཚོགས་པར་བགྱིས་པ་། ཡི་གའི་
 རིས་བྱེད་དམ་ལྷན་སློབ་བུ་ཚུལ་བྲིམས་དེ་རྩིས་བགྱིས་པའོ། ཆོས་འདི་དར་བའི་ས་ཕྱོགས་ཀུན་ཏུ་ཆོ་རིང་
 ནད་མེད་ཆོས་འཕེལ་བ་སོགས་ཕུན་སུམ་ཆོགས་པ་རང་བྱུང་དུ་འབྱུང་ནས་བཀྲ་ཤིས་པར་གྱུར་ཅིག།

དེ་ལྟར་མི་ཆོས་སྒྲ་མའི་རྩོན་ཆོག་འདི།

[406.5]གོང་དུ་སློབ་བཞིན་ཆོས་བདག་སྐྱེས་བུའི་རོང་།

ལོ་གངས་སུམ་བཙུ་ཅ་དུག་བར་དག་ཏུ།

རང་གི་གནས་ཚུལ་མ་ལུས་ཞིབ་པར་བྲིས།

འབྱུང་འགྱུར་གནས་ཚུལ་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་རྩིས་སུ་བཞག།

རང་གཞན་ལེ་ལོའི་རྒྱ་འདི་སྤངས་འདོད་ཀྱང་།

གཏིར་བདག་མཁའ་འགྲོས་དགོས་ཆེད་བདུས་བསྐྱེལ་དང་།

སློན་སློན་ལས་ཀྱིས་འབྲེལ་བའི་ཆོས་ཀྱི་བདག།

བྲན་པ་ནམ་མཁའི་སྐྱེལ་པ་ཨ་ཡུའི་མིང་།

འོ་བྲན་སྐྱེལ་པ་བི་རྒྱའི་མིང་མཐའ་ཅན།

མཆོ་རྒྱལ་བྱིན་ཐོབ་ཨ་ཀུ་ཤི་ལ་དང་།

མ་རྟེའི་སྐྱེལ་པ་བསམ་གྱི་མིང་འཛིན་སོགས་།

ཁམས་ཀྱི་རི་ཆེའི་ཡུལ་ནས་བྱོན་པ་ཡི།

སྐྱེས་བུ་དེ་དག་ནམས་ཀྱི་ཡུན་རིང་ནས།

མཐིང་མདོག་ནམ་མཁའི་མདངས་འཛིན་རིག་བྱ་དང་།

དད་དང་མོས་གུས་དྲག་པོས་ལྷན་པཅས་།

ཡང་ནས་ཡང་དུ་བསྐྱེལ་བ་ཟབ་ཕྱིར་དུ།

སྤིང་ནས་མ་བཟོད་དུས་ཀུན་ཞལ་རྩོན་མཁན་།

སྤིགས་དུས་འགྲོ་འདྲེན་སྤིགས་མའི་གཏིར་མིང་འཛིན་།

སྤིང་རྩེའི་ཡུལ་གྱུར་བྲིམ་པའི་[407]བརྟུལ་ལྷགས་འཆང་།

བྲིམ་མེད་དབེན་བྲོད་སྤིགས་པའི་གྱིན་བ་།

ཀུན་གྱི་ཐ་ཤལ་བདེ་བའི་རྩི་ཡིས།
 ལུམ་བུ་ཅ་ཏུ་གནས་བཟུང་ཞེ་གསུམ་བར།
 ལས་དང་བྱ་བའི་གནས་ཚུལ་བྱར་ཅམ་གྱིས།
 འདིས་མཐུས་ཆོས་བདག་སྤྲེས་བུའི་བར་ཆད་སོལ།
 བསྟན་འཛིན་ཆོ་བསྲིང་སྤྲིན་བདག་མངའ་ཐང་རྒྱས།
 སེམས་ཅན་བདེ་སྤྲིད་ཏུ་ཆོས་ལ་སྤྲོད།
 དོན་གཉིས་འབྲས་བྱ་དཔག་གསལ་ཤིང་ལྟར་སྤྲིན།
 མཇེད་པ་སྤྲིན་ལས་མཐའ་རྒྱས་བཟུང་གིས་ཤོག།
 ཅས་པའང་ཁོ་མོ་རང་ཉིད་ཀྱིས་བྲིས་པའོ།
 དགའོ། དགའོ། དགའོ། ལེགས་སོ། སུ་མཛྲ་ལམ།

Endnotes

Introduction

¹ Sera Khandro (*Se ra mkha' 'gro*) is a name derived from the Sera valley, the location of Sera Monastery, in Serta County, Golok, where she spent much of her later life. Sera Khandro's disciples in Tibetan diaspora communities commonly call her Sera Khandro. In Golok, Sera Khandro is referred to as Uza Khandro (*Dbus bza' mkha' 'gro*), meaning the Dākinī Lady of Central Tibet. Sera Khandro calls herself Dewé Dorjé (*Bde ba'i rdo rje*, Blissful Vajra) in her biographical writings, a name that she explains is her Treasure name (*gter ming*). Another name she uses is Khandro Dekyong Chönyi Wangmo (*Mkha' 'gro bde skyong chos nyid dbang mo*), meaning Dākinī Bliss-Sustaining Reality Queen. Her childhood names include Kalzang Drönma (*Skal bzang sgron ma*), Künga Wangmo (*Kun dga' dbang mo*), and Pema Drönkar (*Padma sgron dkar*).

A note on Tibetan transliteration: This study follows the Tibetan and Himalayan Digital Library system of Simplified Phonetic Transcription in order to make Tibetan words pronounceable to non-Tibetologists. I include Wylie transliterations for names and places the first time they appear. See www.thdl.org for more information about this transliteration system.

² See Havnevik 1997; 1999 on the other early twentieth-century Tibetan female-authored autobiography written by Jetsün Lochen Rinpoché (1865-1951) of Shuksep Nunnery near Lhasa in Central Tibet. See Schaeffer 2004; 2005 for a study on the autobiography of a nun from Dolpo named Orgyen Chökyi (1675-1729). *Bde chen* 1985 is an early twentieth-century collection of religious biographies exclusively of women compiled by Dechen Chökyi Wangmo (*Bde chen chos kyi dbang mo*, b. 1868) being studied by Gyatso forthcoming and Rossi forthcoming. Other Tibetan women who have auto/biographies include Minling Jetsün Mingyur Paldren (*Smin gling rje btsun mi 'gyur dpal sgron*, 1699-1769), Sonam Paldren (*Bsod-nams dpal dren*, c.a. 1388-1432, currently being studied by Suzanne Bessenger), Minling Jetsün Gyurmé Trinlé Chödrön (*Smin gling rje btsun 'gyur med phrin las chos sgron*, early 19th century), Samding Dorjé Pakmo Chöying Dechen Tsomo (*Bsam sdng rdo rje phag mo chos dbyings bde chen mtsho mo*, 19th century), Gyakari Dorjé Pakmo Dekyong Yeshé Wangmo (*Rgya gar ri rdo rje phag mo bde skyong ye shes dbang mo* (1886-1909), Kachö Deden Wangmo (*Mkha' spyod bde ldan dbang mo*, n.d.), etc. There are also several female-authored *delok* ('*das log*) accounts, which are accounts of visiting and returning from the realm of the dead. See Epstein 1982; Pommaret 1989; Delog Dawa Drolma 1995.

³ I use the term auto/biography to refer to both Sera Khandro's autobiography and the biography she wrote of her consort Drimé Özer. I combine the two terms autobiography and biography into one word as auto/biography intentionally, signifying the overlap between these two genres, which are particularly close in Sera Khandro's case given that Drimé Özer's biography contains her own first person reflections as well as her portrayal of Drimé Özer's life.

See Appendix II for a list of Dujom Lingpa's eight sons and their descendants.

⁴ The terrain in which Sera Khandro lived the majority of her life is in the contemporary Serta County, Ganze Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan and Padma County, Golok Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai. The three main communities in which she lived in Golok are 1) Drimé Özer's father Dujom Lingpa's seat Dartsang Monastery (*Zlar tshang dgon*) in Serta County (GPS N: 32 47.505 ft. E: 100 04.097 ft. elevation 13711 ft.), 2) Gara Tertön (*Mgar ra gter ston bdud 'dul dbyang phyug gling pa*)'s seat Banak Monastery (*Pan nag dgon*) in Padma County (GPS N: 32 54.129 ft. E: 100 46.338 ft. elevation 11,924 ft.), and 3) Sera Monastery (*Se ra theg chog 'khor gling*) in Serta (GPS N: 32 28.703ft. E: 99 50.441ft. elevation 13,407ft.). See Figures 3, 8, and 9 for photographs of these three places.

⁵ This study of Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* joins a growing number of studies helping to fill the lacuna of research on women in Tibet to which Barbara Aziz drew scholars' attention twenty years ago (Aziz 1988). Other recent additions to the study of Tibetan and Himalayan women in English include Diemberger 1991, 1999; Gutschow 1997, 2000a, 2000b, 2001, 2004; Gyatso and Havnevik 2005; Havnevik 1989, 1997, 1999, 2002; Makley 1997, 1999, 2002a, 2002b, 2003; Schaeffer 2004; and Tsomo 1999, 2000, 2004. For

an interesting study in Tibetan published in the Tibetan Autonomous Region dedicated to correcting the dearth of sources on the history of women in Tibet, see Ra se dkon mchog rgya mtsho 2003.

⁶ Calculating until Drimé Özer's death on page 230 of 248 pages (because the following pages are written in the first person by Sera Khandro), his *Biography* is 52% visions and dreams.

A note on page references regarding Drimé Özer's *Biography*: in order to maintain consistency with Sera Khandro's *Autobiography*, I use the Tibetan folio page numbers for both texts, not the western numbering that is only written on the manuscript pages of Drimé Özer's *Biography*.

⁷ I am thinking primarily of Mason in Olney 1980 and Jelinek 1986. For more contemporary treatment of this topic see Miller 1994 and Eakin 1999.

⁸ In her excellent study on the Treasure revealer Jikmé Lingpa, Janet Gyatso analyzes what she refers to as "diffident autobiography" in which there is a tension between self-aggrandizing and self-humbling rhetoric. Gyatso 1998: 105.

⁹ See *Autobiography* 376b.1-3 for one example of Sera Khandro's self-description as neither nun nor married woman. I translate this passage in Chapter Four on p. 294, endnote 609.

¹⁰ Geary 1994: 11.

¹¹ I am thinking particularly of scholars such as Michael Aris who is well known for jumping into the age-old Tibetan debate over the authenticity of Treasure revelation as a valid form of Buddhist scriptural transmission. In his study on the famous Bhutanese Treasure revealer Pema Lingpa (1450-1521), Aris asks of Pema Lingpa, "For how could he look himself in the face and still engage in the conscious charlatanry of manufacturing his treasures?" Aris 1989: 98. See Doctor 2005: 31-51 for an informed discussion of the long-standing debate over the authenticity of Treasures. My study of Sera Khandro seeks to investigate how Sera Khandro understands Treasure revelation and how she portrays it as a community process in her writings, not to elaborate my opinion of the validity of her words.

¹² Gusdorf in Olney 1980: 48.

¹³ Sayre 1994: 13.

¹⁴ This is soon to change. Two Tibetan editors are currently preparing publications of Sera Khandro's *Autobiography*. In November of 2006, 'Ju skal bzang plans to publish the text under the name *Dbus bza' mkha' 'gro ma'i rnam thar* as a part of a series of volumes published under the name *Mgo log dpe rnying dpe tshogs*. These volumes are produced by the *Mgo log khul mi rigs skad yig bya ba'i gzhung las khang*. 'Ju skal bzang's edition of Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* is based on a manuscript from Bkra legs Monastery. Additionally, Humchen of the Xining-based Sngags mang shib 'jug khang plans to publish a version of the *Autobiography* that will also come out in the fall of 2006.

¹⁵ I have two manuscript versions of Sera Khandro's *Autobiography*, one given to me by Chatral Rinpoché, and one given to me by an informant in Serta, Golok. Both of the manuscripts I have are photocopies of handwritten originals. The page numbers in this study are based on the manuscript copy Chatral Rinpoché lent me. The two manuscripts I have are identical in content as far as I have been able to determine, but they are written by different scribes on differently sized paper. Because of these variations, the Golok manuscript copy is 436 folio pages long whereas Chatral Rinpoché's copy is 407 pages long.

¹⁶ Bde ba'i rdo rje. 1934. *Dbus mo bde ba'i rdo rje'i rnam par thar pa nges 'byung 'dren pa'i shing rta skal ldan dad pa'i mchod sdong*. Unpublished manuscript.

¹⁷ Sera Khandro's condensed *Autobiography* is in Bde ba'i rdo rje 1978 vol. 4: 103-129.

¹⁸ Bya bral sangs rgyas rdo rje, 1976, *Dbus bza' mkha' 'gro bde ba'i rdo rje'i rnam thar chen mo'i mjug gi kha skong nyung du g.yu yi phra tshom* (unpublished manuscript): 5.

¹⁹ Many of Sera Khandro's writings mention the involvement of her scribe, who was both her and Drimé Özer's close disciple named Tsültrim Dorjé. Tsültrim Dorjé was a monk and was one of her main doctrine holders (*chos bdag*) who traveled with her throughout her life. It is not unusual in the context of pre-modern Tibet for authors to have scribes. Sera Khandro never clarifies whether she spoke her words orally to him or whether she wrote them and Tsültrim Dorjé copied them. Interestingly, there are two sections of her *Autobiography's* colophon, one that mentions Tsültrim Dorjé's involvement, and one that does not. Perhaps this indicates that Sera Khandro wrote the latter part of her *Autobiography* that recounts her life from age thirty-six to forty-three herself without using a scribe.

Three main points of proof that she is in fact the author of her works include 1) the fact that she clearly states so in her colophons; 2) The denigrating language with which she represents herself, which no

disciple of hers would have authored; and 3) the fact that her *Autobiography* is exclusively written in the first person voice with no third person slippages. In contrast, Drimé Özer's *Biography* does include slippages in which she begins to refer to herself as "I" and then switches back to writing of herself in the third person (and after his death she writes entirely in the first person). There is also a great deal of internal consistency between the two biographical works concerning events and language style, indicating that they were authored by the same person. Although extraordinary, it is not unreasonable to conclude that Sera Khandro gained expertise in Tibetan literacy over time from the religious communities in Golok in which she lived, despite her lack of formal education. She mentions issues related to writing and her educational background several times in her *Autobiography*, which I will describe in Chapter One.

²⁰ Reasons Sera Khandro's lineage and manuscripts are rare in Tibet include: 1) Sera Khandro did not have a blood lineage heir to carry on her teachings although she did have close disciples who maintained the manuscript versions of her works. The reincarnation of Sera Khandro's life partner (*tshe grogs*) Gara Gyalsé named Lama Gelek in Padma County, Golok, told me that Sera Khandro's one child who lived past childhood, her daughter Chöying Drönma, had one son named Dolé Nyima. After he was killed during the Cultural Revolution, Sera Khandro's blood line ended. 2) Shortly after Sera Khandro's death in 1940, Golok was increasingly embroiled in turmoil due to Chinese incursions. Perhaps this political and economic climate caused Sera Khandro's religious lineage and her manuscripts to become relatively obscure in Tibet aside from the few communities in which they were maintained, notably Riwoché (*Ri bo che*) and Tralek Monastery (*Bkra legs dgon*) in Kham. I explain why the *Autobiography* is also rare in Tibetan diaspora communities below.

²¹ Chatral Rinpoché has rejected Tibetans' and Westerners' offers to publish the *Autobiography* as a Tibetan manuscript. He confers empowerment in Sera Khandro's religious lineage only extremely sparingly. During the summer of 2000 in Pharping, Nepal, Chatral Rinpoché lent me a photocopied manuscript version of the *Autobiography* and allowed me to read it. In January, 2001 in his monastery in Salbari, India, he gave me permission to translate and publish the *Autobiography* in English. In the fall of 2004, he showed me his original manuscript version of the *Autobiography* that was written by Sera Khandro's scribe Tsültrim Dorjé, but he did not allow me to reproduce the original.

²² The only published translation of any part of Sera Khandro's writings in English is a translation of a short biography of Padmasambhava from the first of Sera Khandro's four volumes of Treasure cycles (*gter skor*), Bde ba'i rdo rje 1978: 35-54, by Ngawang Zangpo in *Guru Rinpoche: His Life and Times*. Ithaca: Snow Lion, 2002. The same author is currently preparing an English translation of Sera Khandro's commentary on Dujom Lingpa's *Buddhahood Without Meditation* that has also recently been published in Tibetan under the name *Snang sbyang dbus 'grel*, ed. Lcags khung ngag dbang blo bzang. Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2002.

²³ Mkha' 'gro Bde skyong dbang mo. 1981. *Skyabs rje thams cad mkhyen pa grub pa'i dbang phyug zab gter rgya mtsho'i mnga 'bdag rin po che padma 'gro 'dul gsang sngags gling pa'i rnam par thar pa snying gi mun sel dad pa'i shing rta ratna'i chun 'phyan utpala'i 'phreng ba*. Damchoe Sangpo, Dalhousie.

²⁴ Drimé Özer's *Biography* 241b.6-242a.3:

འཇགས་འགྲན་རྣམས་ཐར་བ་སྤྱིར་གྱི་སྤྱན་སེལ་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་ཞལ་ལུང་འདི། རྒྱལ་པར་རྒྱལ་བའི་ལྷགས་ཀྱི་བསྐྱུགས་སུ་མི་རུས་
བདག་འདྲའི་སྤྱོད་ཅི་དགོས། ཟུར་ཙམ་གདུལ་བྱའི་དད་པའི་ཤིང་རྩ་འདྲེན་མྱིར་དགོངས་པའི་ཚོས་སྡེ་ལས། ཀུན་རྟོག་སྒྲོ་ཡིས་
བཅའ་བཙུགས་ཏེ་མས་མ་སྤྲུག་རང་བྱུང་བད་ཡི་འཕྲུལ། རིག་འཛིན་སྒྲ་མའི་ཐུགས་རྗེའི་གདུགས་དཀར་བསེལ་གྱི་བ་ལ་བརྟེན་བདག་
གིས་བྲོལ།

²⁵ Chapter Three will explore the ways Sera Khandro represents herself through the genre of Tibetan autobiography. For informative discussions of biography and autobiography as genres of Buddhist literature, see Gyatso 1992a, 1998; Penny 2002; Reynolds and Capps 1976; Robinson 1996; Schober 1997; and Williams 1982.

²⁶ I was also influenced by the suggestion of Drimé Özer's contemporary incarnation in Serta, Golok named Namtrül Jikmé Püntsok (*Nam sprul 'jigs med dkon mchog*) of Nyenlung Monastery (*Snyan lung dgon pa*) who insisted that a study of Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* had to be complimented by a study of her consort's *Biography*, since, he said, the two texts are meant to be read together as a representation of the male and female, method and wisdom. He seemed to intuit my interest in women's studies by cautioning that, "Sera Khandro is not more amazing because she is female – remember the union of wisdom and skillful means. Study Drimé Özer and Sera Khandro's biographies together. Don't think of Sera Khandro as a female Treasure revealer but as a Treasure revealer." Personal communication in Selitang, Padma County, Golok, August 2004. I try to take his advice to heart in this study. In this effort, I have translated Drimé Özer's *Biography* into English in full in addition to my translation of Sera Khandro's *Autobiography*.

²⁷ *The Secret Treasury of Reality Dākinīs* (*Chos nyid mkha' 'gro gsang mdzod*) is Bde ba'i rdo rje 1978 vol. 1-2 and *The Reality Dākinīs' Heart Essence* (*Chos nyid Mkha' 'gro thugs thig*) is Bde ba'i rdo rje 1978 vol. 3-4.

²⁸ There is much more to be said about this overlap and interplay between Sera Khandro's literary accounts of divine revelation and self-representation. Both her *Autobiography* and Drimé Özer's *Biography* include extensive cross-references to her Treasure revelations. Sera Khandro writes in at least 27 different places in her *Autobiography* something to the effect of, "For fear of too many words, I won't write this here but it is elucidated in my Treasure scriptures." See *Autobiography* 115, 118b, 138, 236, 240b, 245b, 254, 262b, 263b, 264, 274, 286.5, 295, 303b, 306b, 308, 309, 312, 327b, 348b, 351b, 360, 365, 366b-367, 372, 379b, 390. The same is true in Drimé Özer's *Biography*, although it is often not clear whether she is referring the reader to her own Treasure revelations or to his. She refers the reader to his (?) Treasure revelations for more detail in at least 12 different places; see *Biography* 112b, 125, 166b, 174, 177, 189, 190b, 196b-197, 197b, 203b, 213b, 218. This intertextuality between Sera Khandro's accounts of her (and his) divine revelations and their auto/biographical narratives highlights the significance of divine visions to her understanding of selfhood and agency as well as the murky distinction between divine revelation and self-authored literature. I plan to explore these ideas further in future research on Sera Khandro's Treasure revelations (*gter chos*).

²⁹ Dbus bza' mkha' 'gro ma 2002.

³⁰ Dbus bza' mkha' 'gro ma 2002: 199.

³¹ When I mention the prevalence of male authors in representing women's lives, I am thinking in particular of Medieval Christian female mystics whose visions and biographies were written almost exclusively by male clerical interpreters. See Mooney 1999: 7.

The greatest bibliographer of Tibetan Studies, Gene Smith, has been unable to locate the works of Drimé Özer, and Chatral Rinpoché has also told me that he does not have them. Aside from a few fragments of Drimé Özer's *gter chos*, Dujom Rinpoché's student Lama Rinchen Püntsok in Bouda, Nepal does not have them. I was not able to find them in Golok, although I suspect there are more private libraries to explore in Golok before determining with certainty that they are lost.

Chapter One: Sera Khandro's *Autobiography*

³² *Autobiography* Tb.2-5 (see below for Tibetan).

The palace name Gyarakashar is very similar to the name of the Lhasa noble family known as Dokhar (*Mdo mkhar*) or Ragashak (*Ra kha shag*), also spelled Ragashar (*Ra kha shar*), whose palace was to the West of the Jokhang. See Petech 1973: 70-87 for a description of this family. Petech directs us to Waddell 1906: 331 for a map of the location of the Rakashar Palace. Another connection between Sera Khandro's account and the Rakashar family is that both were affiliated with Taklung Monastery (*Stag lung dgon*) and its abbots including Ma Rinpoché who is the first lama mentioned in Sera Khandro's *Autobiography*. I would have to conclude, however, that the evidence connecting Sera Khandro with the Ragashar Tibetan nobility family is weak considering that Sera Khandro's father is Mongolian and not Tibetan and considering that the genealogy of the Ragashar family in the early twentieth century is well known. I have seen no other source connecting Sera Khandro to this family.

རྒྱ་གར་དོན་གདན་གྱི་བྱང་ཕྱོགས། འཕགས་མཆོག་སྤྱན་རས་གཟིགས་གྱི་སྤྱལ་པ་ཆོས་རྒྱལ་སྲོང་བཙན་སྐུ་མ་པོའི་གདན་ས།
 བོད་ཡུལ་ཁ་བ་ཅན་གྱི་ཤར་ཕྱོགས། ར་ས་འཕུལ་གྱི་རྩ་ཁང་གི་རྩལ་ཕྱོགས་སྤྱོད་མཐེལ་ཞེས་པ། ས་འཛིན་དོན་གཡུ་
 སྒྲོན་མས་མཛད་པ། ཡུལ་རྟེན་གྱི་གཙོ་བོ་ཐོག་སྤྱན་རྟེན་སོགས་ངོ་མཆར་གྱི་སྤྱུ་རྟེན་སྤྲོ་ཆོགས་བཞུགས་པའི་ཉེ་ཆར་དུ།
 ཡུལ་གྲོང་ཐམས་ཅད་ལས་འཕགས་པ། རྒྱ་ར་ག་ཤར་ཞེས་པའི་ཕོ་བྱང་དུ་

³³ Gesar's younger sibling.

³⁴ *Autobiography* 7b.5-6:

རྒྱ་ར་ག་ཤར་ཞེས་པའི་ཕོ་བྱང་དུ་དཀར་པོ་ལྷ་ཡི་རིགས་ཞེས་སོག་པོ་དབང་གི་གདུང་རྒྱུད་དུ་གཏོགས་བཙན་ཕུག་འཕན་དར་དང་ལྷན་
 པའི་མི་དབང་ལྷ་སྐུ་སྐྱུ་མ་མགོན་པོ་ཞེས་ངོང་ཆའི་སྤྱལ་པར་གྲགས་པ་དགོངས་གཏོར་ལ་དབང་ཞིང་གྲུབ་རྟགས་སོགས་ཐོགས་
 མེད་དུ་སྟོན་ཅིང་བྱིས་པའི་ཚུལ་དུ་ཡོད་

³⁵ *Autobiography* 17a.2. Chatral Rinpoché also describes Sera Khandro's father as Chinese, although he adds that her true father was not this man but was the Buddhist mountain deity Nyenchen Tanglha (*Gnyan chen thang lha*). Personal communication, Pharping, Nepal, March 2005. For reference to Nyenchen Tanglha being Sera Khandro's father see *Autobiography* 17, 19.

But what does Sera Khandro mean when she calls her father Chinese? What groups of Chinese people were in Lhasa at the turn of the century? Sera Khandro's father is not a foreigner or an outsider to Tibet; just like the suitor he later chooses for her, Sera Khandro's father is a man who wears Chinese attire (*cha lugs rgya nag*) but is a devout Tibetan Buddhist practitioner within the Seminal Heart lineage (*chos lugs snying thig*) who appears to be fluent in both literary and spoken Chinese and Tibetan (*Autobiography* 27b-28).

It is not particularly surprising to find people with Mongolian ancestry residing in Lhasa during the early twentieth century given that Mongols have been a major imperial force in the power plays involving Tibet as far back as the late twelfth century when Tibet began paying tribute to Genghis Khan's newly unified Mongolia in exchange for peace. In the thirteenth century, the famous Sakya lama Sakya Pandita and Genghis Khan's grandson Godan Khan established what would characterize Mongol-Tibetan relations for centuries: the priest/patron relationship (*yon bdag*) in which the Tibetan lamas provided religious instruction, divination, astrology, and rituals in exchange for military protection and material support from the Imperial polity. Godan's successor Kublai Khan went on to conquer China in 1279, thus founding the Yuan Dynasty in which Tibet and China were both subsumed under Mongol leadership. When the Yuan dynasty fell in 1368 to the ethnically Chinese Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), the Ming emperors no longer exerted any administrative authority over Tibet. Yet the priest/patron relationship between Mongol powers and Tibet was not over; in the sixteenth and seventeenth century in order to gain a foothold in Tibet's internal sectarian power politics, Tibetan Geluk ecclesiasts sought the political backing of the Mongols in order to overtake the Kagyü sect's power and the associated Tsang king of Tibet. In 1640, with the military backing of Gushri Khan, the chief of the Qoshot tribe of Western Mongols, the Geluks successfully took power in Tibet. However, their patrons, Gushri Khan and his army, did not simply turn over power to their priests, the Geluks, but rather established themselves as the rulers of Tibet and settled in the Lhasa region. While the Geluks were consolidating their power as regents of Tibet with their powerful Mongol backing, the Manchus successfully conquered China in 1644 thus establishing the Qing Dynasty which would last until the time of Sera Khandro's Lhasa, finally succumbing in 1911. Relations between the Mongols and the Geluk regents of Tibet fell apart during the time of the controversial sixth Dalai Lama, who refused to live the monastic life decreed by protocol. This ended with Lhabsang Khan attacking the Geluk regent in Lhasa, becoming King of Lhasa, and agreeing to make regular tribute payments to the Qing in return for protection. Thus, Tibet entered a relationship with the Manchu Qing Imperialists as a

subordinate state controlled by the Mongolian Khans. Yet again the Geluks turned to a different set of Mongol patrons, the Dzungars, for aid in reclaiming Tibetan sovereignty from the King of Tibet Lhabsang Khan. Their 1717 victory was quickly defeated by the Qing emperor who placed the seventh Dalai Lama in power over a Tibet that was subsumed under the Qing Empire. Thus, from the eighteenth to the early twentieth century, the Dalai Lamas ruled Tibet under the Qing Dynasty, whose imperial rulers demonstrated their involvement in Tibetan government by the two Manchu imperial residents, or *amban*, stationed in Lhasa along with varying numbers of Manchu Qing troops. The Qing's Manchu *ambans* exercised varying amounts of control in Tibet ranging from phases in which they had very little control to crack down periods such as the 1792 regulations during which time the *ambans* shared power equally with the Dalai Lama. Yet throughout the period of Qing control they made no effort to absorb Tibet into China; Tibet had its own language and government and did not pay tribute to China (Goldstein 1997: 20). By the late nineteenth century when the Qing Dynasty was drawing to a close, plagued by problems in other areas, the *ambans* in Tibet had very little real control so that the Thirteenth Dalai Lama and those in power before him were able to manage Tibetan state affairs with no interference from the Qing. This stage of freedom from Qing overlordship changed as a reaction to the British Younghusband expedition of 1904, but before the Qing had time to strengthen their sovereignty over Tibet, it fell and once again the Thirteenth Dalai Lama regained control and sought to make Tibet an independent state (Goldstein 1997: 3-21).

I include this brief political history of Mongol/Tibetan/Qing relations as background to suggest that it seems likely that Sera Khandro's father was a descendant of the Mongol Khans who settled in Lhasa. This is corroborated by the fact that Sera Khandro mentions that she was a descendant through her father's ancestry of Chögyal Ngakyi Wangpo (1736-1807), a famous Nyingma Lama who himself was a descendant of Gushri Khan.

So why does she call her father Chinese (*rgya*)? Sera Khandro was not necessarily drawing a distinction between Mongol and Manchu political leaders when she describes the "Chinese leaders" (*rgya dpon*) in Lhasa. In any case, there was most likely some overlap between those two ethnicities stemming from their previous alliance against the Dzungar Mongols.

³⁶ In page 8 of the *Autobiography* Nup is spelled *gnub*, which is most likely a variant spelling of *gnubs*, one of the six royal Tibetan clans dating from the Imperial period. Yeshé Tsogyal is also said to be from this ancestry. See Gyalwa Changchub and Namkhai Nyingpo 1999: 8.

³⁷ Perhaps this refers to a birth in which the placenta is wrapped around the baby's body.

³⁸ *Autobiography* 8a.4-8b.1.

³⁹ *Autobiography* 9a.1-3.

⁴⁰ Taklung Maha Rinpoché (*Stag lung ma ha rin po che*) is also mentioned numerous times in the other Tibetan female-authored autobiography we have from this time period written by the Shuksep Jetsünma Ani Lochen, researched by Hanna Havnevik. Taklung Rinpoché was an incarnate lama from the Kagyü center north of Lhasa in the Tiger (*stag*) Valley affiliated with the Ragashar or Dokhar family. See Havnevik 1999: 79-80.

⁴¹ *Autobiography* 9a.5- 9b.1:

ད་སྐྱེ་འོས་པ་ལ་བྱ་དང་བྱ་མོ་མང་པོ་ཡོད་ཀྱང་སྤྱེ་གཉིས་པོ་ནི་ག་མཁོན་བྱེད་སྤྱོལ་མེད། ད་ལན་གྱི་བྱ་མོ་འདི་ཀ་སྤྱེ་དཔོན་གཉིས་ཀྱི་དུག་གས་ཤིང་ཡིན་པར་འདུག་པས་གཞན་ཞིག་ཏུ་སྦྱོན་དགོས་ཟེར་བས།

⁴² Her father's interest in educating her in literary Chinese for work as a female political leader (*dpon mo*) is curious for a number of reasons. First, it is somewhat unusual to hear of Chinese education in Lhasa, although not unheard of. Second, it is extremely unusual to hear of a female political leader in early twentieth-century Lhasa.

A main location of Chinese literacy in Lhasa during the period Sera Khandro lived there between 1892-1907 was the Manchu *amban* offices, which were active during this time period and were staffed by employees who were literate in both Tibetan and Chinese. In the interesting autobiography of the Chinese man Ts'an-chih Chen, who was born in Lhasa only one year later than Sera Khandro in 1893, he recounts that as a boy he studied Chinese at a Chinese school for boys in Lhasa in preparation for work in Chinese and Tibetan government at the *amban's* office. He records that while he was in school, his sisters were

taught [in literary Chinese] by private tutor at home (Richardus 1998: 165, 168. Thanks to Gray Tuttle for directing me to this source). This is not so different than Sera Khandro's mention of studying literary Chinese privately with some other girls. Thus, Sera Khandro and Ts'an-chih both document the education of girls from "Chinese" families in literary Chinese in turn-of-the-century Lhasa when Tibetan literacy was common only for upper class boys, monks, and fortunate nuns.

Although I have seen no records indicating that other Manchu or Mongolian women held leadership positions in Lhasa that were affiliated with the *amban* offices, Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* appears to be indicating that it was this that Sera Khandro's father and his cohorts had in mind for her.

⁴³ *Autobiography* 12b.3-5:

དེ་ནས་མ་ཡུམ་གྱིས་བུ་མོ་འདི་ལ་བོད་ཡིག་བསྐྱབ་དགོས་གསུང་གྱང་། ས་ཡི་བཀའ་མ་གནང་བར་ཐོག་མར་རྒྱ་ཡིག་བསྐྱབ་
དགོས་གསུང་། རྒྱ་ཡིག་དང་རྒྱ་སྐད་ལ་ཤིན་ཏུ་མ་ཁས་པའི་བྱང་ཡིག་པ་ཞིག་གི་མདུན་ལ་རྒྱ་ཡིག་བསྐྱབ་པར་བཏང་།
བདག་ནི་ཡིད་ལམ་ཞིང་ཡབ་ལ་ནི་ཞུ་མ་པོད།

⁴⁴ *Autobiography* 13a.3-4:

གྲོགས་གཞན་རྣམས་ལས་འཕགས་པའི་ཡི་གེ་ཤེས་པར་བྱང་བས། ཡུལ་སྡེ་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་སྤྲུལ་མོ་འདིས་དཔོན་ས་ནོན་
ངས་ཀྱི་ཤེས་རབ་ཅན་རེད་ཅེས་གྲིང་།

Note on Tibetan transliterations: I am reproducing the manuscript exactly and am not correcting spelling errors/variants because it is at times difficult to determine the difference between regional orthographic variation and scribal errors. Above, I am quite sure the last word is supposed to read "gleng."

⁴⁵ *Autobiography* 13a.4-6.

⁴⁶ *Autobiography* 7b.6.

⁴⁷ *Autobiography* 20a.3.

⁴⁸ Avalokiteśvara's mantra, *Om ma ni pemé hūm*.

⁴⁹ *Autobiography* 10b.3- 5.

⁵⁰ *Autobiography* 14b.1-6.

⁵¹ "rgya shog dpon khag bco brgyad." The *Tshig mdzod chen mo*'s definition for *dpon khag* includes firstly the Chinese term *thu'u si*, which is defined as "During the Yuan, Ming, and Qing Dynasties, a hereditary leadership rank as the chieftain of minority peoples in the northwest and southwest (of China)." *Tshig mdzod chen mo* 1993: 1176. Hence, I interpret this Chinese group of leaders to refer to Qing Dynasty Manchu leaders.

⁵² *Autobiography* 11b.5-12a.1:

བུ་མོ་འདི་ནི་ས་སྐྱའི་རྩ་མགོན་དབང་མེད་སྤུལ་པ་འབྲུལ་མེད་ཡིན་པས་བྱིས་ཐབས་དང་བཙུན་གཟུགས་གཉིས་ཀ་མི་འོས།
དུས་ལ་བབས་ཆེ་རིགས་ས་ད་འོང་བས་དེ་བར་ལ་གང་བདེར་ཞོག་གསུངས།

⁵³ *Autobiography* 21a. 4-21b.3:

དེ་ནས་ཞབས་ཆ་ཤས་ནས་རྒྱ་ཤོག་དཔོན་ཁག་བཅོ་བརྒྱད་ཀྱི་ཕྱི་སྡོན་ནང་སྡོན་སྤུལ་བྱ་དང་རྒྱ་སྡེ་བོད་སྡེ་འོག་གས་དཔོན་རྣམས་འདུས་ཏེ་
བཀའ་བྲོས་མཛད་ཅིང་བདག་ལ་ས་ཡི་གདན་ས་འཛིན་དགོས་ཟེར། བདག་གིས་སྤྲུལ་པ་བྱིས་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་ང་ལ་ཁ་ཆོད་བྱེད་
མི་དགོས། ཅི་བྱེད་ཅི་མཐའ་སྡོན་ལས་ཀྱི་ཤེས། ལ་ཇོ་དང་ལ་ཆེ་གཉིས་ལ་ས་ཡི་ཐོབ་ཐང་གཏོད་དང་དེའི་
དགའ་སྤྲུལ། སྡོན་རྣམས་ན་རེ། བྱིད་ཀྱི་ཇོ་གཉིས་དང་ལ་ཆེ་རྣམས་ལ་གཞི་སྐྱལ་དང་དཔོན་ཐོབ་གཏད་ཆར་

ཏི། ཁོང་རང་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་བྱ་བ་ཅི་དགོས་བསྐྱེད་ནས་བཞུགས་ཡོད་པ་འདི་ཀ་རེད། བྱིད་ནི་མིང་སྤིང་ཀྱན་གྱི་རྒྱུང་བ།
 དཔོན་དང་དཔོན་མེད་གཅིས་ལྷན། བྱ་རྒྱུང་ཐོབ་ཀྱི་བདག་པོ་ཡིན་པས་དེ་ལྷན་དགོས་ཟེར་ནས་ཤོམ་ར་བྱིད་འདུག།
 བདག་གིས་ཨོ་རྒྱལ་ཆེན་པོ་དང་ཡེ་ཤེས་མཆོ་རྒྱལ་གཉིས་ལ་གསོལ་བ་འདེབས་ཤིང་ཁོང་རྣམས་ལ་ཆོག་ལན་ཅི་ཡང་མ་སྒྲུབ་པར་
 བསྐྱད་ཆོ།

⁵⁴ *Autobiography* 23b.1.

⁵⁵ Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* contains 88 visions, which comprise 46% of the text. Out of the 88 visions she describes, 55% of them are visions of female divinities, 27% of them are male divinities, and 16% include both male and female divinities (or neither in the case of formless visions and visions of animals not distinctly gendered).

This breakdown is similar to Drimé Özer's *Biography*, in which visions comprise 52% of the text. Out of 80 different visions, 58% of them are of female divinities, 31% male divinities, and 10% include both male and female divinities (or are genderless, i.e., animals or formless voices).

⁵⁶ *Autobiography* 13b.4-5.

⁵⁷ *Autobiography* 14b, 15b-16.

⁵⁸ Nyenchen Tanglha is an important protector of the Nyingma Teachings of Tibetan Buddhism and is also the name of a mountain range in Central Tibet north of Lhasa, south of Namtso Lake (*Gnam mtsho*), and west of Damshung ('*Dam gzhung*).

⁵⁹ *Autobiography* 16b.5- 17a.6.

⁶⁰ *Autobiography* 22. This is one example of many in which genealogy is of central importance in determining whether Sera Khandro has the authority to assume or not to assume various roles including that of a political leader and that of a Treasure revealer.

⁶¹ *Autobiography* 27b.3-5.

⁶² *Autobiography* 31a.1-6.

⁶³ *Autobiography* 27b.6:

དེ་དག་བོད་སྐད་ཡིན་པས་མ་གཞིར་ནས་རྒྱ་རྒྱུ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཕྱིར་སྤྲད།

⁶⁴ "Chinese leader" is a translation of *gya sde'i dpon khru'u*, a leader from the Chinese group. *Khru'u* is an abbreviation of *Khru'u zhi* is a Chinese word rendered in Tibetan meaning "the chairman" or "the highest ranking official."

⁶⁵ *Da lo yi* is a Chinese honorific title transliterated into Tibetan meaning something to the effect of "great old gentleman." It appears to be a very minor title meaning "your honor, his honor," given to local leaders as a polite way to refer to a Prefect, Department, or District magistrate. It was not an official rank in the Qing system but rather was a respectful form of address that came to command respect in the official's local community. Thanks to Gray Tuttle for the above information. Tuttle also notes that he has seen it several times as a Chinese title given to local Tibetans in the Muli region of Kham. Sperling 1998: 331 translates it as "his honor," in his context a title of a translator to the Qianlong emperor in the late eighteenth century.

⁶⁶ This could refer to the place *Skyid grong* in the 'On region near *Bsam yas mchims phu*.

⁶⁷ *Autobiography* 27b.6-28a.1:

རྒྱ་བློགས་སྤྱིད་ལུང་གོང་ཆེན་ཟེར་བ་རྒྱ་སྤྱིད་དཔོན་ཀྱུ་དེ་ལོ་ཡིད་ཞེས་པ་ཆ་ལུགས་རྒྱ་ནག་དང་། ཆོས་ལུགས་སྤྱིད་ཐེག་

པ་རང་རྫོང་འདྲ་བ། བསོད་ནམས་ལོངས་སྤྱོད་ལྡན་པ་ཞིག་

⁶⁸ *Autobiography* 28a.5-6:

སྤོན་འབངས་ཀྱན་གྱིས་བཀའ་གྲོས་མཛད་ཅིང་། ཁོང་ཆོ་བྱི་སྤྱིད་བདག་པོ་ཡིན་པས་ཐོབ་གཉིས་ནོན་བྱིད་ན་ཆོག།

Perhaps “both ranks” (*thob gnyis*) refers to that of both Sera Khandro’s area and that of her betrothed.

⁶⁹ *Autobiography* 28b.1-2:

ང་རང་ནི་ཡིན་ཤིང་རྒྱ་ཁྱིམ་ལུས་སྒྲིག་བྲལ་ན་ཅི་མ་རུང་སྐྱམ་ནས་ཉིན་མཚན་མིན་པར་སྐྱབས་བསྐྱེད་ཁོན་ལ་དུས་འདས་བའི་ཆོ།

⁷⁰ *Autobiography* 33b.3- 34a.2.

⁷¹ *Autobiography* 37b.4-38b.6.

⁷² *Autobiography* 38b.6-40b.5.

⁷³ *Autobiography* 42a.5-44a.4.

⁷⁴ *Autobiography* 34a.3-35b.3.

⁷⁵ *Autobiography* 45b.1-3.

⁷⁶ *The Secret Treasury of Reality Dākinīs* (*Chos nyid mkha' 'gro gsang mdzod*) and *The Dākinīs' Heart Essence* (*Mkha' 'gro thugs thig*) are the names of Sera Khandro’s two main Treasure cycles.

⁷⁷ *Autobiography* 48b.2- 49b.6:

ཉིན་གཅིག་མི་ལམ་ལ་ཡུལ་ཡིན་དུ་འོང་བ་སྤང་ལྟོང་ས་དང་ནགས་ཚལ་མེ་ཏོག་རྒྱས་པ། བྱ་དང་རི་དྲགས་མང་པོས་ཅེ་
 འཛོལ་བྱེད་ཅིང་སེམས་བག་ཐེབས་པར་གནས་པ། དེའི་དབྱས་སུ་བྱུང་མེད་མི་འདྲ་བ་མང་པོ་འཚོགས་འདུག། བདག་གི་
 བསམ་པ་ལ་ཡག་གི་བྱུང་མེད་རྣམས་ཀྱི་གྲུལ་དུ་ཨ་མ་ཨོ་ཡོད་སྐྱམས་ནས་བྱུང་མེད་རྣམས་ཡོད་སར་སོང་བས། ཨ་མ་ནི་
 མི་འདུག། ཁོང་རྣམས་ཀྱང་ངོ་མི་ཤེས་པ་ཤ་སྐྱབས་རེད་སྐྱམ་ཆོ། ཁོང་རྣམས་ཀྱི་ནང་ནས་སྤར་མི་གྱི་སྐྱབས་
 འཆི་བའི་གདམས་པ་བསྐྱབ་པའི་བཅུན་མ་དང་། ས་ར་ཉ་པའི་བྱུང་དུ་འགྲོས་རོགས་ཀྱི་བྱ་མོ་གཉིས་ཀ་དང་བཅས་པ་ངའི་སར་
 འོང་ནས། ཁྱོད་འོ་བརྒྱལ་ལམ། ད་ལན་འདིར་ཐོན་པ་ངོ་མཚར་ཆེ་ཟེར། བདག་གིས་ཁྱོད་རྣམས་སྐྱ་
 ཁམས་བདེ། བྱ་ཅག་མཇལ་རྒྱ་ཡོད་པ་ངོ་མཚར་ཆེ་ལགས་ཞུ་ནས་ཕྱག་ལུལ་བས། ཁོང་རྣམས་ན་རེ་བྱ་ཅག་སྐྱེ་བ་
 གཅིག་པས་ཕྱག་མི་འོས། དཀྱིལ་འཁོར་གྱི་གཙོ་མོ་ལ་ཕྱག་ལུལ་དང་། རང་ཉོར་དངོས་གྲུབ་ལོན་པའི་དུས་ལ་བབ་
 པ་ཡིན་ནོ་ཟེར། ཡང་བདག་གི་བྱ་ཅག་སྐྱེ་རྒྱུ་ཅིའི་ཕྱིར་གཅིག་པ་ཡིན་ལགས་སྐྱེས་པས། ཁོང་རྣམས་ན་རེ་བཅུན་མ་འདི་
 ཀུན་དགའ་འབྱུང་མ་ཡིན་ནོ། སྐུ་ཁ་སིངྒཱ་དང་རྩི་བྱ་ཏ་རེ་དེད་གཉིས་ཡིན་རབས་ཡོད་གསུངས་ནས་གར་སོང་མེད་པར་གྱུར་ཏོ།
 ཡང་བདག་གིས་ཁོང་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་གསུངས་པ་ལྟར་གཙོ་མོ་ལ་ཕྱག་ལུལ་བས། གཙོ་མོ་གདན་ལས་བཞེངས་ཏེ་ཁོང་གི་ལྗེ་བ་
 གྱི་གྲག་གིས་དམར་ལམ་མེར་ཁ་ཕྱེས་འདུག་པས། ང་རང་ཤིན་ཏུ་སྐྱབས་སྐྱེ་མིག་གིས་བལྟ་མ་བཟོད་ནས་ཨ་མ་ཞེས་འཕྲོད་འོང་
 བྲལ་ཅིང་ཕྱིར་འོང་བྲལ་བས་ཆོ། ཡང་བྱུང་མེད་རྣམས་ན་རེ། ཁྱོད་ཀྱིས་འདི་ལྟར་མ་ཟེར་ཞིག། མིག་ཕྱེས་
 ནས་ལྟོས་དང་སྐྱོན་མེད། རང་བྱུང་ཡོངས་གྲུབ་ཀྱི་དཀྱིལ་འཁོར་ཆེན་པོ་མཇལ་བའི་དུས་ལ་བབས་སོགས་ཀྱང་ས་པས།
 བདག་གི་མིག་ཕྱེས་ནས་དལ་གྱིས་བལྟས་ཆོ། བྱུང་མེད་ཐམས་ཅད་ནས་འགྱུར་ནས་མ་ཁལ་འགྲོའི་ཆ་ལུགས་ཅན་ཤ་སྐྱབས་
 ཏུ་སོང་འདུག། གཙོ་མོ་ཡང་དོན་ཅུག་མེད་སྐྱེ་རྣམས་པར་གྱུར་ནས་ལུས་དཀྱིལ་སྐྱེ་མཚོད་ཀྱི་ལྗེ་ཚོགས་ཀྱི་དབང་བསྐྱར་ཅིང་ངོ་

སྒྲུབ། ཆོས་ཉིད་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་གསང་མཛོད་དང་། མཁའ་འགྲོ་བླ་མ་ཐེག་གཉིས་ཀྱི་བཟང་དབང་བསྐྱར་ཅིང་།
 ཆོས་འདི་གཉིས་སྟོན་པའི་དུས་དང་། དར་བའི་གནས། ཆོས་འཛིན་གྱི་སྦྱིས་བྱ། གདུལ་བྱའི་ཡུལ།
 རྟོན་འབྲེལ་གྱི་འཆར་སྒྲོ། ཐབས་གྲོགས་དང་བཅས་པའི་ཁ་བྱང་དང་ལུང་བྱང་རྣམས་བསྐྱལ་ཏེ། བྱོད་ཀྱི་ཆོས་འདི་
 རྣམས་ཀྱི་འགྲོ་དོན་དུས་ལ་བབ་པ་ཡིན་པས། ཁ་བྱང་གི་དོན་རྣམས་མ་བརྗེད་པར་ཡིད་ལ་བྱུངས་ཤིག་དང་། བྱོད་པོ་ཡོན་ཡིན་
 པས་བསྟན་འགྲོའི་དོན་ངང་གིས་འབྱུང་བར་ངེས་པོ་གསུངས་ཏེ།

⁷⁸ *Autobiography* 50a.1-50b.5. This passage is translated in Chapter Three on p. 152.

⁷⁹ Kukurepa is one of the 84 Indian siddhas, or accomplished masters. Sera Khandro spells his name Kukurepa, while the Sanskrit spelling is Kukkuripa.

⁸⁰ The Kukurepa vision is *Autobiography* 57b.3- 65b.6. Chapter Four pp. 226-230 includes a translation and discussion of this passage from the Kukurepa vision and the relevant passage from Yeshé Tsogyal's hagiography.

⁸¹ *Autobiography* 51b.4-52a.3.

⁸² *Autobiography* 56a.2-3.

⁸³ The central encampment (*dbus sgar*) is the name Sera Khandro uses to refer to Drimé Özer (and his brother's) religious community. For a discussion on the nature of these religious encampments, see Chapter Two.

⁸⁴ *Rdzogs chen dpal dge* is another name for Patrül Jikmé Chöki Wangpo (1808-1887), the famous Patrül Rinpoché who wrote *The Words of My Perfect Teacher*. Contextually this comment seems to apply to Drimé Özer whom Sera Khandro is about to introduce, but actually it was his brother Namka Jikmé (*Nam mkha' 'jigs med*) who was the incarnation of Patrül Rinpoché.

⁸⁵ *Kun mkhyen klong chen rab 'byams*, the famous polymath who lived from 1308-1363 who systematized the Great Perfection Seminal Heart teachings of the Nyingma School.

⁸⁶ *Autobiography* 66b.2-67a.1:

དེ་ནས་ཡང་རྒྱ་བ་བརྩུ་པའི་ནང་དུ་ཁམས་སྟོགས་ཀྱི་དབྱས་མཇལ་བ་དུ་མ་འོང་འདུག་པས། དེ་དག་གི་ནང་ནས་རྒྱ་ཆུལ་
 དགོན་པའི་རྒྱལ་ཆེན་དཔལ་དགེ་སྤྱོད་སྐྱེ་རེད་ཟེར་བའི་དབྱས་སྐར་བ་ཞིག་ཐོན་ནས། ལ་ཇོས་ལ་གནས་ཆང་གཡར་དགོས་
 ཞུས་ནས་གནས་ཆང་གཡར་བས་མགོན་པོ་རྣམས་ཐོན་བྱུང་། བདག་གིས་ཀྱང་ཉི་མཐོང་གི་ཤེལ་སྒྲེའི་ནང་ནས་མགོན་པོ་རྣམས་
 ལ་བསྐྱས་པས་དེ་དག་གི་ནང་ན་སྒྲ་མ་དབྱ་སྒྲ་ཅན་ཞིག་འདུག་པས། དེ་མཇལ་མ་ཐག་སྐར་བ་གནས་འབྱར་ནས་ཀྱན་མ་བྱེན་
 བྱོང་ཆེན་རབ་བྱམས་ཟེར་བ་དེ་དངོས་རེད་བསམ་ནས་མིག་མཆི་མ་འབྱུགས། ལུས་བསྐྱེད་པའི་སྟོབས་ཀྱིས་ཐལ་མོ་
 སྐར་ནས་བླ་མ་རྒྱལ་ཆེན་མ་རྒྱུད་ཆོ་རབས་ཀྱན་ཏུ་འབྲལ་བ་མེད་པར་ཤོག་སྐྱས་པས།

⁸⁷ *Autobiography* 68a.5-68b.1:

སྤྱོད་སྐྱེ་ཡིད་བཞིན་ནོར་བུའི་མཆོད་དང་བཅས་པ་ཡིན་པར་ཐོས་པའི་དགའ་སྟོ་ཆད་ལས་འདས་པ་བྱུང་ཡང་། སྐྱེ་མཁའ་ལ་འགྲོ་བྱེད་
 རིང་རང་མང་འཐང་མཐོ་བས་སྐབས་མ་ལྟན། ཉི་མཐོང་ཤེལ་སྒྲེའི་ནང་ནས་ཡིད་བཞིན་ནོར་བུ་དེ་ཉིད་ཅོག་བུའི་ཕྱི་ནང་ལ་ཕར་
 བྱོན་ཆུར་བྱོན་མཛད་པ་མཇལ་འདུག་པས་སྟོ་གསུམ་གཅིག་རྒྱུ་གསུམ་གསུམ་ལ་བཏབ་ཅིང་ལུས་ཀྱི་ཕུག་རྒྱུའི་གཙོ་བོ་བྱས་ཏེ་བླ་མ་

ཡིད་བསྐྱེས།

⁸⁸ *Autobiography* 71b.2-73a.3.

⁸⁹ *Autobiography* 73a.3-73b.1:

ཀུན་གྱིས་གཏམ་ལབ་ཀྱང་ང་རང་གིས་ཚུར་མི་གོ། ཕར་བཤད་ཀྱང་ཁོང་ན་མས་གྱིས་མི་གོ་བར་འདུག། ང་རང་གི་བསམ་པ་
ལ་འདི་ན་མས་གཞུགས་ནི་མི་རེད་ཏ། གོས་ནི་གོ་བ་གོན་འདུག། གཏམ་བཤད་དུས་ནི་མཐའ་འཁོབ་པ་ལྷ་ལྷོ་ཞིག་དང་
འབྲ་བས་དེ་དག་གི་ཡུལ་ལ་ཆོས་ཚུགས་པ་ཆེན་པོ་ཞིས་པ་དེ་དར་བར་དཀའ་འདུག། འོན་ཀྱང་སྤྱི་མི་མེད་འོད་ཟེར་ཁོང་ལ་
གསོལ་བ་བཏབ་ནས་སོང་ན་གི་ཆོས་ན་མ་དག་ལོས་འགྱུབ། མིན་ཀྱང་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་ཁོང་ལྷ་བྱའི་གཟིགས་ལམ་དུ་བདག་ཆེ་འཕོས་
སོང་ན་མི་གནས་གྱི་གཏན་སྤྱིད་ཟིན་ངེས་ཡིན་སྟུང་སྟེ།

⁹⁰ *Autobiography* 74b.3-4:

ཨ་ཅེ་བྱ་མོ་མཛོས་མ་ཁྱོད་གཞུགས་བྱུང་ལེགས་པས། བྲི་ཁ་ནས་ཐར་རུང་། སྟེས་པ་ན་མས་གྱི་འོག་ནས་ཐར་དཀའ་བ་
གདའ་ཟེར།

⁹¹ *Autobiography* 76a.6-76b.1:

དོགས་མ་གྱི་སྤྱོད་དུ་ཨ་ལི་འཇུག་ནས་ཚུ་སྟུགས་ཅིང་ཇ་ཐོབ་ལ་མི་བཞག་ན་ཇ་ཁོལ་འོང་ཟེར།

⁹² *Autobiography* 76b.2-3.

⁹³ *Autobiography* 77b.6-78b.5.

⁹⁴ *Autobiography* 76a.4.

⁹⁵ *Autobiography* 75b.6-76a.2.

⁹⁶ Akyongza was Drimé Özer's consort in Golok.

⁹⁷ *Autobiography* 79b.3-4:

ཀུན་གྱིས་དབུས་མོ་འདིའི་ལན་གྱིས་ཨ་སྟོང་བཟའ་མི་འོང་ཟེར་བའི་སྟོན་གྱིས་སྟུ་མདུན་ལ་གཙམ་མ་ཕོད།

⁹⁸ *Autobiography* 82b.4-83a.2:

ཁྱོད་སྐར་ཕྱོགས་གཅིག་པ་ཡིན་པས་ཁོང་ན་མས་གྱི་གལ་དུ་སོང་ན་ལོས་ཆོག། ང་རང་ནི་སྤར་རྟ་པན་དང་འཇིགས་བསམ་གཉིས་
གྱིས་རྒྱ་ལམ་ལ་འགྲོ་མི་ཆོག་ཟེར་བས། ད་ལན་བྲི་སྟོན་ཁར་ཡོང་ཅི་ལ་བཅུག་ང་མི་འགྲོ་སྟུང་ཆོ། མོ་ན་རེ་ ཁྱོད་གྱིས་
སྤྱིད་མ་ཁྱུག་ནས་སྟུག་ཉི་ནི་རེད། ཕ་ཡུལ་བདེ་སྤྱིད་ཕུན་སྟུང་ཆོགས་པ་དེ་དགོས་མེད་བྱས་ནས། ད་པན་ཆེན་དང་
འཇིགས་བསམ་གཉིས་གྱི་དོད་ཀར་ནག་ལ་དོགས་བྱེད་དགོས་པ་དེ་ཁྱོད་རང་ལན་པར་རེད། སྤྱང་ཟས་ཨི་རག་བསམ་འདུག་
པ་ལས་རང་ཡུལ་ལ་རྒྱལ་པོ་བྱས་ཏེ། དཔོན་སྤྱིད་བཟུང་བསྟུང་ན་འདི་འདྲའི་སྟུག་བསྟུལ་མི་དགོས་ཟེར།

⁹⁹ The eight worldly dharmas refer to ordinary human reactions to 1) gain and loss, 2) fame and infamy, 3) praise and blame, and 4) happiness and sadness.

¹⁰⁰ *Autobiography* 83a.3-83b.6. This song is in seven syllable per line verse, a common style Sera Khandro employs. I include this entire song to demonstrate the different writing styles Sera Khandro uses in her *Autobiography* – there is a frequent shift from Golok dialect influenced colloquial prose writing when she

is recording everyday events (like many of the quotations above) to songs and poems in this style of “philosophical poetry” that often includes dialogic interactions between Sera Khandro and many divine interlocutors.

ཨ་མོ་ཉིན་དང་ཆོས་ཀྱི་སྒྲོན། བྱ་མོང་ཡི་རྒྱལ་ཐོབ་ནི། ཀུན་དང་མི་མཐུན་བྱུང་པར་འཕགས། འགྱུར་བ་མེད་པའི་
དཔོན་ཐོབ་ཡོད། གདོད་ནས་རང་རིག་སྒྲོམ་དང་བྲལ། ལྷན་རྒྱུགས་ཡེ་ཤེས་ཆེན་པོའི་རྩལ། ཀུན་བྱུང་བཤེལ་བའི་
ས་གཞི་ལ། འཁོར་འདས་གཉིས་མེད་བྱང་སེམས་མཁའ་པ། སྒྲོང་ཡངས་བྱུང་བཤེལ་རྩེ་མོ་མཐོ། སྒྲོལ་སྒྲུབ་
བྲལ་བའི་འཕགས་སྒྲོལ་ཡངས། རང་སྤང་ལྷན་བྱུང་རྒྱུན་བཞུགས་མཛེས། རིག་དབྱིངས་འགྱུར་མེད་རྒྱལ་པོ་མཆོག། རྩེ་
བདུན་ལྷན་བྲི་ལ་བཞུགས། རང་གནས་ཡེ་ཤེས་བཙུན་མོ་དང་། འདུ་འཕྲོའི་སྤང་བ་སྤྲུལ་དང་འཁོར། དབྱིངས་
དང་ཡེ་ཤེས་དབྱིར་མེད་ལས། རོལ་རྩལ་ཅིར་ཡང་འཆར་བའི་རོར། ཡང་འཁོར་བུན་དང་འབངས་ཀྱི་སྒྲེ། རང་
གསལ་བདེ་ཆེན་སྒྲོང་དུ་རྩེགས། ཀ་དག་གཤངས་ལས་ལྷན་བྱུང་འཕྱུལ། ཡུལ་དུག་འདོད་ཡོན་བཞུགས་པར་ཤར།
ཞེན་མེད་རང་གྲོལ་རང་དུ་རོལ། སྤང་སྤྱིད་ཀུན་ལ་མངའ་དབང་བསྐྱུར། འདི་འདྲའི་རྒྱལ་སྤྱིད་བདག་གིས་ཐོབ།
སྒྲུ་མའི་ཡུལ་ལ་ང་མི་ཆགས། ས་མཁའ་བདུད་ཀྱི་བཙུན་ཁང་འདྲ། ཉོན་མོངས་ཆོས་བརྒྱུད་འཕེལ་བའི་རྒྱ།
ས་ཐོབ་འཁོར་བའི་གཏིང་དོ་འདྲ། དུག་ལྷ་རང་ཁར་སྒྲོད་པའི་གཞི། ས་ཡུལ་ཐར་པའི་ལྷགས་སྒྲོགས་འདྲ།
རང་གཞན་དུས་ཀུན་ཆགས་སྤང་འཕེལ། དེ་འདྲའི་གྲོང་ཡུལ་ངས་མི་འཛིན། ཆོས་སྒྲོན་སེམས་ལ་དེ་ལྷར་ཞོག།

¹⁰¹ *Autobiography* 85b.6-86a.2:

དེ་སྐབས་སྒྲུང་གི་ཐུགས་བྱུང་པ་ཨ་སྒྲུབས་སྒྲུལ་སྒྲུ་ཞེས་པ་ཞིག་འདུག་པས། ཁོང་གི་ཞལ་ནས། དབྱས་མེད་ཀར་
འདུག་མི་མཆོག། འདིར་བསྐྱེད་ཆེ་ཨ་སྒྲོང་བཟའ་རྩེར་མི་འོང་ངེས་པ་ཡིན་གསུངས་ནས་ཐུགས་ཁྲིའི་འདུག་པས། བདག་
གིས་ད་དུང་ང་རང་མི་དཀར་ཡིན་པས་ཨ་སྒྲོང་བཟའ་མི་ཡོང་དོན་མེད། ང་འདུག་ནི་གི་ཅི་གཞོད་སྤྲུལ་ནས་མ་སོང་བས།

¹⁰² *Autobiography* 85b.5-6.

¹⁰³ *Autobiography* 86a.2-4:

སྒྲོད་དགུན་འདིར་ཆོས་ལྷ་བསམ་ན། བདག་གིས་བྲིམས་ཆང་ཞིག་ལ་སྒྲོད་བཞག་ཆད་བྱས་ཡོད། དེ་ཀར་སོང་ལ་
གཡོག་གིས་དང་ཁོང་སང་གིས་ཆོས་ལྷ་དུས་གོ་བསྐྱེད་ཟེར་བས་དེའི་དགའ་འདུག། ཆོས་ཐུན་རན་དུས་ང་རང་གིས་སྒྲོད་བསྐྱེད་
ཐབས་འོང་བེད།

¹⁰⁴ *Autobiography* 86b.3-5:

བདག་གིས་སེམས་སྒྲུག་བསྐྱེད་གིས་ཉོན་ཅིང་མིག་མཆི་མས་གང་ནས་ལམ་མ་རིག་ནས་ལྷ་མ་གོན་པའི་རྩལ་བྱས་ཤིང་ས་རུང་ཟད་
བསྐྱེད་པས། ཨ་བསྐྱེད་ན་རེ། སྒྲོད་ལམ་འདི་གིས་ལ་བྱུང་སོང་དང་། ང་སྒྲུལ་སྒྲུལ་བྱུག་མོ་ཞིག་འདེབས་དགོས་

ཟེར་ནས་རྟ་ལ་ལྷགས་ཀྱིས་རྒྱབ་ནས་བྱད་སོང་། ང་རང་ནི་འགྲོ་སྤྱིང་འདོད་ཀྱང་འགྲོ་མ་ཡོད།

¹⁰⁵ *Autobiography* 87a.1-2:

དེ་སང་མགོ་ལོག་གི་དྲུང་ཚང་ཞིག་ཡིན་འདྲག་པས། ཐོག་མར་སྐད་མི་གོ་ཞིང་བྱ་བ་ཐམས་ཅད་ལ་ཆ་ཞིབ་མེད་པའི་རྒྱུན་གྱིས་
དག་འཆོག་ས་ཆེན་པོ་མྱོང་། དེ་ནས་རིམ་གྱིས་ལས་ཀ་རྣམས་ཀྱང་ཤེས། སྐད་ཀྱང་གོ་བར་བྱུང་ནས་རྒྱ་བ་ལྷག་ཅམ་
བསྐྱད་རྗེས་ཆོས་ཐུན་ལ་ཐོན་བྱུང་བས།

¹⁰⁶ This Purifying Appearances teaching would have been a commentary on Drimé Özer's father Dujom Lingpa's famous *snang byang* teaching, translated into English by Richard Barron and Susanne Fairclough as *Buddhahood Without Meditation: A Visionary Account Known as Refining One's Perception (Nang-jang)*, Junction City: Padma Publishing, 2002. This is the text about which Sera Khandro wrote a commentary. Here, she describes receiving the teaching herself for the first time at the age of sixteen. See Dbus bza' mkha' 'gro ma 2002.

¹⁰⁷ *Autobiography* 87a.6-87b.1.

¹⁰⁸ *Autobiography* 87b.4-5:

དེ་མིན་གཉིད་ཐུན་རྒྱུ་ཆུང་དུ་ཞིག་གི་བར་མ་གཏོགས། ཏུས་ཀྱན་ཕྱག་འཆལ་ནས་ཁར་འབབ་པ་དང་ལྷག་པས་འབྲུག་པ་སོགས་ལ་
དག་འཐུབ་བྱས་ཏེ། ཉིན་ཞག་བཅུ་བདུན་གྱི་ཕྱག་འབྲུམ་འགྲོ་ངེས་བྱས།

¹⁰⁹ As the Gyalrong Khenpo Sangyé informs me, in early twentieth-century Golok, Tibetans did not have socks; they put grass/straw inside their leather shoes instead.

¹¹⁰ *Autobiography* 87b.5-88a.3:

དེ་སྐབས་སུ་རྟ་ལྷལ་བན་རྒྱུ་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་སྤོན་འགྲོ་བྱུ་འདྲག་པས། དེ་དག་གིས་ང་རང་ལ་ཕྱག་འཆལ་དུས་དུས་མོ་འདི་
འབྲུག་ནི་དང་ཤོ་ནི་སོགས་མི་ཤེས་པ་ནོར་ལྷ་བྱ་རེད་ཟེར་ནས། ཁོ་རང་ཆོའི་ལྷམ་ཚང་གི་རྩ་དང་། གཞན་དགོན་གསེབ་
གྱི་རྩ་ཏུ་བ་བསྐྱས་ནས་རྒྱབ་དུ་ཁུ་འདྲག་བལྟ་ཞིང་། ལ་ལས་བདག་གི་མགོ་ཐོག་ནས་ལྷོག་པས་མཉོན། ལ་ལས་སྐྱོན་ལ་རྩ་
རྒྱགས་ནས་ཁྱོད་གྱི་ཁ་ལ་འདི་རྒྱུ་ཟེར། ཡང་ལ་ལས་འདི་ལ་གཙང་བཙོག་མི་འདྲག་ཁྱི་དང་འདྲ་ཟེར་ནས་མི་དང་ཁྱི་ལ་སོགས་
པའི་མི་གཙང་བ་རྣམས་ཐུར་མས་བབྱང་ནས་བདག་གི་སྐྱོན་དང་མགོ་ལ་སོགས་པར་བཞག་འདྲག།

¹¹¹ *Autobiography* 89a.6-89b.2:

དེ་ནས་ཆོས་ཐོན་མཐར་ཐུན་ནས་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱིས་བླ་བྱང་གི་འདུ་ཁང་ནང་དུ་ཆོག་མཆོག་འཁོར་བྱེད་འདྲག་པས། དེ་དག་གི་གྲལ་མཐའ་
ཞིག་ཏུ་ང་རང་བསྐྱད་ནས་ཡི་གེ་མི་ཤེས་ཀྱང་སྤོན་ལམ་བཏབ་ནས་ཡོད་པས། དགེ་བསྐྱོས་ཀྱིས་ཁྱོད་སྤྱང་མོ་རེད་མར་སོང་འདུ་
ཁང་ནང་དུ་མ་འདྲག་ཟེར་ནས་ཕྱི་རོལ་ལ་ཕྱད་བྱུང་།

¹¹² *Sapta* demons (*bdud sabta*) refers to hindrances and obstacles along the religious path.

¹¹³ *Autobiography* 90b.1-6:

ཁོང་ཡིད་བཞིན་ནོར་བུ་ལྷ་བྱ་འདི་ནི་རིག་མའི་དབང་ལ་ཤོར་འདྲག་སྐྱམ་ནས་འདི་སྐད་སྐྱས། དབྱིངས་མི་འགྱུར་ནས་མཁའི་

ཁྲོད་དཀྱིལ་ནས། གཞུགས་མི་མངོན་སྤྱེལ་སྤྱད་འགྱུར་གྱི། ལུང་བསྟན་པའི་དོན་དེ་ངས་འགྲུབ་དགའ། ཁྲིད་
 དབྱིངས་ལ་འཁྱུལ་པ་མི་མངའ་ཡང་། བདག་ཉམས་ཐག་བྱ་མའི་དོན་ཕྱིར་དུ། སྤྱི་སྤྱི་མའི་རོལ་གར་མ་མཇོད་ན།
 ཁོང་གྲང་ཆན་ལྟ་བུའི་སྤྱན་མོངས། ལས་ཅི་འགྱུར་ཐབས་མཁས་བྱེད་མི་ཤེས། བདུད་སྤྱིའི་དབང་དུ་འགྲོ་སྤྱིང་འདུག།
 ཁྲོད་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་ཚོགས་ཀྱིས་གྲོགས་དམ་མཛོད། ཅེས་སྤྱིས་ནས། ཡང་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་ལུང་བསྟན་ལྟར་དོན་
 ཨོ་འགྲུབ་སྤྱུ་མ་ནས། རྒྱུ་ཉིད་ཀྱི་སྤྱི་མཁའ་ལ་སོང་བའི་མ་ཐོན་ཏེ། དང་པོའི་དགོས་ཆད་བཏང་སྟོམ་ལ་སོང་།

¹¹⁴ *Autobiography* 93a.5-6.

¹¹⁵ *Autobiography* 95b.1-2 (note: a full translation and an analysis of this passage is included in Chapter Four on pp. 301-303):

མི་སྤྱི་དང་དོན་མེད་ཀྱི་སྤྱི་སེར་རྣམས་ལ་བདག་གིས་ལུས་འབྲེལ་མི་བྱེད་པར་ཁས་སྒྲུང་ཡོད། དེ་མིན་ང་རང་གིས་ཇོ་མོ་མ་བྱེད་

སྤྱིས།

¹¹⁶ Gara Tertön (1857-1911) was a Treasure revealer whose main seat was near the county center of Padma County, Golok, called Banak Monastery (*Ban nag dgon pa*). Sera Khandro also refers to his community as a Treasure revelation encampment (*gter sgar*), perhaps indicating that it included both monastic and non-celibate religious practitioners. See Chapter Two for more discussion about the distinctions between a monastery (*dgon*) and an encampment (*sgar*). There is a short biography of Gara Tertön in *Dar thang dgon pa'i gdan rabs* 1999: 364-382. Banak Monastery is still in operation, and a newly rebuilt version of the house in which Sera Khandro and Gara Gyalsé lived is still standing. The monastery is accessible by road, a few kilometers outside of Selitang, situated on a hillside by the Mar (*Smar*) River. See Figures 9 and 10.

¹¹⁷ *Autobiography* 95b.5-6:

བདག་ཁོང་གི་ཐབས་གྲོགས་སུ་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་ལུང་བསྟན་ཡོད་ཚུལ་ང་རང་གི་ཁ་བྱང་དང་མཚུངས་པར་འདུག་པས། དེ་ཀར་ཁྱེ་

བ་བཅུ་གཅིག་པའི་ནང་དུ་འགྲོ་ཆས་བྱས་ཆོ།

¹¹⁸ *Autobiography* 96a.2-3.

¹¹⁹ The *Dar thang dgon pa'i gdan rabs* also states that just before Gara Tertön's death, "Finally, the auspicious connections (*rten 'brel*) of the supreme consort in the *Dākinī* prophecies named the Central Tibetan Lady Khandro Chönyi Dekyong Wangmo were confused (*'chugs pa*)."
Dar thang dgon pa'i gdan rabs 1999: 379. This is an example of the life prolonging effect that union with a consort has according to this tradition; the implication is that because Sera Khandro wasn't able to be Gara Tertön's consort, he passed away.

¹²⁰ *Autobiography* 100a.2- 5:

ཁྱེ་ཅག་གཉིས་ཀྱི་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་གཞན་དབང་དུ་སོང་བའི་བྱ་ཐབས་བྲལ་བ་ཡིན་པས། འོན་ཀྱང་སྤྱི་མ་གཏེར་སྟོན་གྱི་ཐུགས་སྤྱིས་དྲི་

མེད་འོད་ཟེར་ཁྲིད་གཉིས་ལ་སྟོན་ལམ་ཟབ་འབྲེལ་འདུག་པས། དྲི་མེད་ཁོང་ཡང་ངའི་སར་བྱོན་འོང་བར་ཡོད་པས་ཁྲོད་ཀྱང་མ་

འགྲུང་བར་སྤྱར་དུ་བདག་གི་སར་ཐོན་ཐབས་བྱས་དང་། ཁྱེ་ཅག་གཉིས་ལ་དོན་ཆེན་ཡོད་ངེས་ཡིན། བདག་གི་ཟབ་གཏེར་

གྱི་གཏེར་མཚུག་ཁྲིད་གཉིས་ལ་དབང་བ་ཡིན་པས། འཛིན་སྟོངས་ཀྱི་བསྟན་པ་ཁྲོད་གཉིས་ལ་གཏད་དགོས་པ་ཡིན་སོགས་

གསུངས་འདུག་པས།

Sera Khandro also recounts the story of Gara Tertön's invitation to herself and to Drimé Özer in his *Biography*, 259-263.

¹²¹ *Autobiography* 105.

¹²² *Autobiography* 107a.1:

དེ་ནས་བཟུང་ལྷོ་ཐག་ཉེ་རིང་ཀུན་གྱིས་ང་རང་གིས་མིང་དོར་ནས་མཁའ་འགྲོ་མ་ཞེས་བཏགས་སོ།

¹²³ *Autobiography* 107b.6-108a.6.

¹²⁴ *Autobiography* 113a.6-113b.5:

ཁྱེད་རང་ཁ་བཞིག་དང་མི་འདྲ་ཞིང་ཕྱི་ནང་གསང་གསུམ་གང་ལ་དཔུང་ན་ཡང་རྒྱལ་ཁོ་རིགས་ཅན་ཡིན་ངེས་དང་། ཁྱེད་པར་

བོད་ཀྱི་ཚོ་མོ་ཡི་ཤེས་མཚོ་རྒྱལ་གྱི་སྤྱལ་པ་འབྲུལ་མེད་ཡིན་འདུག་པས། ད་ནི་ཁྱོད་བན་ཡག་ལ་སོང་ནས་མགར་ར་རྒྱལ་སྤུས་

དང་གནས་སྐབས་རེ་ལ་ལྷན་དུ་བཞུགས་ཏེ། གཏིར་ཆེན་གྲོང་ཡངས་སང་གི་གཏིར་ཆོས་རྣམས་ཁྱེད་ཀྱིས་བདག་པོ་བྱེད་

རོགས་མ་བྱས་དུས། ལྷ་མའི་བསྟན་པ་གཏིར་ནས་ལྷན་ལྷོ། དཔེ་ཆ་རྣམས་ཆོ་ཁང་ནང་དུ་ཐོན། གཏིར་

རྒྱས་ཐམས་ཅད་ཐག་པ་རྣམས་ཀྱི་མཚན་བསྟུང་དུ་ཉེ་ཆོང་བྱེད་པ་སོགས་མ་བྱས་དུས། བདག་གིས་ཁམས་སྤུམ་སེམས་ཅན་ཐམས་

ཅད་བསྐྱས་པ་ཡིན། དེའི་ཕྱིར་ན་ཁྱེད་གནས་སྐབས་ཙམ་མགར་ར་སང་གི་བྱར་དུ་འགྲོད་གོས་པ་འདྲ་གསུང་ནས།

¹²⁵ *Autobiography* 113b.5-6:

བདག་ནི་འགྲོ་འདུན་མེད་ཀྱང་དབང་ཐོབ་ཀྱི་སྒྲ་མའི་བཀའ་ལ་བསྒྲོག་ཐབ་མ་རྟེན་ནས་དེ་ཀར་འགྲོ་བར་ཁས་སྒྲངས་བ་སོགས་བྱས་སོ།

¹²⁶ *Autobiography* 115a.5-115b.3.

¹²⁷ I.e., people say that her cures are coming from her own artifice and are not divinely inspired. Sera Khandro didn't learn how to read or write Tibetan as a child because her father forced her to learn Chinese instead. In Drimé Özer's *Biography*, she records telling Drimé Özer, "When I was nineteen years old due to an illusory dream, when I awoke I effortlessly knew how to read and recite text." *Biography* 163b.6-164a.1:

ལོ་བཅུ་དགུའི་དུས་མི་ལམ་འབྲུལ་སྤང་ཞིག་ལ་རྒྱུན་ནས་གཉིད་ལས་སང་ཆོ། ཡི་གེ་བྲི་འདོན་ལ་འབད་རྩོལ་མ་དགོས་པར་

ཤེས་པ་སོགས་བྱུང་།

¹²⁸ *Autobiography* 115b.4-5.

¹²⁹ *Autobiography* 121a.5.

¹³⁰ *Autobiography* 138a.3:

ལྷ་མ་རིན་པོ་ཆའི་གཏིར་ཆོས་དང་གཏིར་རྒྱས་རྣམས་ལ་ངས་བདག་བྱེད་ཆོག་ན་ཁྱེད་བཞུགས་དང་ཆོག། དེ་བདག་པོ་མི་ཆོག་

ཆོ་ཁྱེད་ངའི་སར་བཞུགས་མི་ཉན།

¹³¹ Sera Khandro describes Gyalsé as her "life partner," (*tshe grogs*). She never recounts any sort of marriage ceremony, but it is clear in later passages that she "belongs" to Gyalsé. When she finally leaves Gyalsé's community, she mentions going through an arbitration process in which they debated over child custody and finances in a manner not unlike a divorce court.

¹³² *Autobiography* 139a.3:

དབུས་མོ་འདི་ཡུལ་ཐུང་བྱེད་དགོས། རྒྱལ་སྐུ་དང་ལྷན་དུ་སྡོད་བཅུག་མི་ཉན་ཟེར།

¹³³ *Autobiography* 139a.5-6; For Milarepa's black magic use, see Lhalungpa 1977: 22. Sera Khandro does not specify what undesirable occurrences her incantations caused.

¹³⁴ *Autobiography* 139b.3-140a.3: (Note: This poem is in eight syllable verse, unusual for Tibetan poetry that is most often in odd-syllable verse. Many of Sera Khandro's verses are in either six or eight verse poetry)

ཉི་ལུག་ ཤར་རྟ་བདུན་དགྱིལ་འཁོར་འོད་པོ་ཆེས། འགྲོ་ཁམས་གྱི་སྤྱན་པས་སྒྲིག་སེལ་གྱང་། རྒྱ་འཛོན་གྱིས་བསྐྱིབ་པས་
ཡོལ་ལ་ལྷོས། མ་རྒྱལ་འི་པོ་ཉ་མི་མོ་ཁྱེད། ཟབ་གཏེར་གྱི་སྒྲོན་ལམ་འཕྲོ་ལྷན་གྱང་། དོན་གཉིས་གྱི་རོར་བྱ་
འདས་དུ་འཕྱང་། གསེར་ར་གན་མདངས་གྱིས་བསྐྱས་ལ་ལྷོས། རང་རྒྱལ་གྱི་སེམས་དཔལ་འདྲུར་སྒྲིག་འཛིན།
ཐོག་མ་ཡི་མིང་འཆར་ཉེ་ཆར་གནས། སྤིང་ཐད་ན་དྲོ་ཁྱེད་འི་མོ་གསལ། དེ་སྐུས་རྒྱལ་གྲོགས་སུ་འཕྲད་གྱུར་ན།
ཁྱེད་མོ་ཆོས་བསྟན་པ་དར་བར་ངེས། གནས་གཅིག་ཏུ་བསྐྱེད་ན་ཆོས་དང་། གདུལ་བྱ་སོགས་རྒྱ་ཡི་མོ་འདྲ།
མ་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་ཞལ་ལུང་ཇི་བཞིན་དུ། གནས་ངེས་མེད་འགྲིམ་ལ་འགྲོ་དོན་མཛོད། དམ་ཉམས་པའི་མི་ལ་འབྲེལ་བ་སྤོང་།
གྲོགས་ངན་པའི་ངག་ལ་མ་ཉན་པར། གནས་དབེན་པར་རང་གཏེར་སྒྲིབ་པ་མཛོད།

¹³⁵ I explore this theme further in Chapter Three.

¹³⁶ *Autobiography* 140b.1-3:

སྤྱི་ཕྱི་ལུང་བསྟན་གང་ལ་བསྟན་གྱང་། མགར་ར་སང་གི་བྱུང་ལ་བདག་མི་ཆགས་ངེས་པ་ཟེད། འོན་གྱང་ལས་དབང་
གིས་རྒྱལ་སྐུ་དང་འབྲེལ་སོང་བས། ད་ནི་ལས་བྱ་བ་ཅིར་འགྱུར་ཡང་ཁོང་གི་བྱུགས་ལ་མི་བབ་པ་མི་བྱེད་སྟུང།

¹³⁷ *Autobiography* 141a.2-3. This is the second reference to Milarepa's hagiography, suggesting that it could have had some influence on the way she framed her narrative self-representation.

འདི་ཅི་རྟེན་གསུངས། བདག་གི་བསམ་པ་ལ་བྱང་ཞུ་བྱས་ན་ཁོང་མར་པ་ལྟ་བུའི་བྱུགས་བྲག་བཙན་པས་སྒྲིག་འབབ་ཡི།

གནང་སྐུ་ནས་བྱང་རྒྱན་འབྲེས་མའི་གཏམ་ཞིག་ཞུས་ཆོ།

¹³⁸ *Autobiography* 141a.3-4. His words make a reference to 'Jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha' yas (1813-1899)'s *Gter ston rgya rtsa* (One Hundred Treasure Revealers), a nineteenth century compilation that includes both Jo mo sman mo and Kun dga' 'bum ma as female Treasure revealers.

སྤར་གཏེར་ཆེན་བརྒྱ་རྩེ་སྤྱི་རིང་ལ་གཏེར་མོ་གཉིས་བྱོན་པ་མཐོང་ཆོས་སུ་སྤྱང་། དེངས་སང་སྤྱིགས་དུས་འདིར་གཏེར་མོ་

ཡོད་པ་མ་མཐོང་གསུངས་པས།

Note: "These days," *Deng sang* is spelled *dengs sang* in the *Autobiography* manuscript.

¹³⁹ *Autobiography* 141a.5. This is the first mention of Sera Khandro writing her Treasures instead of finding a scribe to write them for her, and at this point in the text she is twenty-two years old.

དེ་ཕྱིན་ཆད་རང་གཏེར་གསང་ཐབས་གྱི་བྱི་ཕབ་བྱས།

¹⁴⁰ *Autobiography* 146a.5-146b.2:

ལོ་བྱིས་པ་དཀར་ལྷོ་རྒྱ་དང་པོའི་ནང་དུ་བྱིས་པའི་ངོ་མཚང་བའི་དུས། སུར་མགར་ར་གཏིར་ཆེན་གྱིས་བདུད་ལུང་དུ་ཟིན་པ་
 ཁོང་གི་ཉི་གནས་ཆོས་ལྷན་ཞེས་པ་དེ་ལ་གཟན་སོང་བ་ལ་རྒྱུན་བྱས་ཏེ། སྐད་དུག་པོའི་འབོད་ཅིང་དམོད་མོ་བྱེད་པ་སོགས་ལ་
 རྒྱུན་བྱས་ཏེ། བྱིས་པ་སྤང་ལོག་ནས་བུ་མོར་སོང་འདུག། དེ་དུས་རྒྱལ་སྤྱོད་ཐུགས་འབྱོར་ཆེ་ཞིང་བུ་མོ་འདི་འཆི་
 སོང་བས་དགའ་གསུངས་བྱིས་པ་ལ་ཐུགས་གནག་འདུག་པས། བདག་གི་སེམས་ལ་མ་བབས་ཀྱང་ཅི་ཡང་མ་ཞུས་པས།

¹⁴¹ Sera Khandro refers to her daughter more commonly as Chöying Drönma, *Chos kyi dbying sgron ma*.

¹⁴² The Buddhafield of Guru Rinpoché, *Zangs mdog dpal ri*.

¹⁴³ *Autobiography* 147b.6-148a.2: (note: This song is also in eight syllable verse)

གནས་མི་མངོན་ཟངས་མདོག་དཔལ་རིན། མ་ཀུན་མ་བྱེན་ཡེ་ཤེས་མཆོ་རྒྱལ་དང་། དཔལ་བོ་དང་དཔལ་མོ་དགོངས་
 དུ་གསོལ། མ་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་མངག་པའི་ཕོ་ཉང་། ལུས་མ་དག་ཟ་མོ་ལུས་སྦྱིས། ལས་མ་དག་འཁོར་
 བའི་ཁ་འཛིན་བྱེད། ལུལ་མ་དག་མགོ་ལོག་སྤོན་པོའི་གླིང་། བྱ་མ་དག་ཆོགས་ངན་རྒྱན་དུ་བྱེད། ལས་འདི་
 འབྲའི་རྒྱ་རྒྱུན་ཅི་ལས་བྱུང་།

¹⁴⁴ *Autobiography* 148b.5-149a.3 (note: this is an example of six syllable verse):

ཨི་མ་ཨི་མ་རྣལ་འབྱོར་མ། རང་བྱུང་ཡེ་ཤེས་ཆེན་པོ། ཅོལ་སྦྱབ་བྲལ་བ་ཨི་ནམ། མ་སྦྱིས་རང་བྱུང་ལྷན་གྲུབ།
 འཁོར་འདས་གཞི་རྩ་ཨི་ནམ། བཟང་ངན་བདེ་སྦྱག་སྤྲང་བ། ཆོས་ཉིད་རོལ་པར་ཨི་ནམ། ཆོས་བརྒྱད་ཉ་ལའི་ཀུ་མུད།
 མི་འགྲུང་སྤང་བ་ཨི་ནམ། རང་ཉོར་རྒྱའི་ཐུགས་བཅུད། དུས་སྤྱོད་ལོན་པ་ཨི་ནམ། བཟན་དང་འགྲོ་བའི་དོན་གཉིས།
 ལྷོ་ནས་འབྱུང་བ་ཨི་ནམ། འདི་སྤང་སྦྱུ་མའི་འཕུལ་ལ། ཐུགས་སྦྱོར་སྤྱོད་ལ་མི་དགོས། བདུན་ཞེས་ཆེ་མི་འགྱུར།
 དུས་སྤྱོད་ལམ་འཛོམས་ངེས།

¹⁴⁵ *Autobiography* 144a.3.

¹⁴⁶ Solung Drakar (*Bswo lung brag dkar*) is a holy site within a few kilometers from Banak Monastery. It is located just off the modern road between the Padma County seat Selitang and Banak Monastery.

¹⁴⁷ *Autobiography* 153a.5-6:

ད་མི་འགྲོད་ལྷ་འཁོར་ཆེ་སོང་ན་རྒྱལ་སྤྱོད་སང་གི་བཀའ་བཀྲོན་གནང་འོང་། མིན་ཀྱང་དབྱངས་ཅན་སྦྱོན་མ་བྱུང་བཟང་ལ་
 བཅོལ་ཡོད། དེ་དུས་ནི་གོན་རྒྱལ་སྤྱོད་ནས་བཀའ་བཀྲོན་གནང་ངེས་པ་ཡིན་སྦྱས་ནས།

¹⁴⁸ *Autobiography* 144a.4:

བདག་གིས་ཀྱང་དམན་ས་བཟུང་སྟེ་ཟབ་གཏིར་གྱི་ཕབ་བྱེད་པ་སོགས་གསང་རྒྱ་དམ་པོ་བྱས་ཡོད་སྐབས།

¹⁴⁹ By Sera Khandro's "associates," I am referring to her daughter, her very close and trusted monk attendant Tupzang, and some of their friends. Sera Khandro never had an exclusively female group of companions as many female religious specialists do; throughout her life, her closest associates were Tupzang, her scribe Tsültrim Dorjé, and her daughter Chöying Drönma. She also mentions her nun friend Chödrön repeatedly.

¹⁵⁰ The phrase is “driven by *shog skya rlung*” but the meaning of *shog skya* is unclear to me.

¹⁵¹ *Autobiography* 213a.4-213b.3:

དེ་ནས་ཉི་མ་ཤར་བ་དང་དུས་མཉམ་དུང་རང་གི་ལྷོ་བའི་ནང་ནས་སྤྱི་རྒྱ་མ་རལ་བར་བྱ་ཆེ་དུས་འདས་སོང་བས། བདག་
གི་བསམ་པ་ལ་ད་ནི་རྒྱང་གི་རྒྱས་པ་ལ་རེ་མ་བཅས་ན་སྤྲོད་རིམ་གྱོ་ཁོང་གིས་མི་མཛད། གལ་ཏེ་དེ་ལྟར་མཛད་ཀྱང་བྱའི་རོ་
ལྷོ་བ་ནས་ལོན་མི་འོང་སྟེ་མ་ནས། རྒྱང་གི་རྒྱལ་འབྱོར་ཁོན་ལ་འབད་པས་ལན་རེ་ནད་ཤྱགས་དྲག་པའི་སྟོབས་ཀྱིས་དུན་པ་
ཉམས་ལ་ཁད་པ་བྱེད། ལན་རེ་བྱའི་རེ་རྒྱང་གིས་བསྐྱོད་ནས་ལྷོ་བའི་སྟོད་སྤྲད་གཡས་གཡོན་ན་མས་སུ་ཤོག་སྐྱ་རྒྱང་གིས་དེང་
པ་བཞིན་འགྲུལ་སྐྱོད་བྱེད་ཅིང་འདྲག་པ་ལ་བྱ་ཐབས་བྲལ་ནས། ལྷ་བསྐྱེད་ཀྱི་མི་བཙུང་ནད་ལ་བཞག་ནས་རྒྱང་རིག་གཡོ་མེད་དུ་
མཉམ་པར་བཞག་སྟེ།

¹⁵² “Golok Lady” probably refers to Gyalsé’s new spouse named Saldrön (*Gsal sgron*) who he took on as a wife while living with Sera Khandro when she was about twenty-seven years old.

¹⁵³ *Autobiography* 215a. 4-215b.2:

དབྱས་མོ་བསོད་ཟད་ཡིན་པའི་བྱ་འཆི་སོང་། ད་དུང་མོ་རང་ལ་མགོ་ལོག་གཟུང་དང་། རྒྱལ་སྤྲས་གཉིས་ཀྱིས་སྟུག་ཅི་
འབྲུ་མི་གཏད། མོ་རང་གིས་བྱའི་རོ་མགོ་མཇུག་མ་ལོག་པར་ངོ་མཐོང་ཟེར་བ་དང་། ལྷོ་བའི་ནང་ནས་བྱ་ཤི་བ་ཡིན་
ཟེར་རྒྱ་ཐམས་ཅད་རྒྱན་ངེས་པ་རེད། འབྲིའི་ལྷོ་བར་བེའུ་ཤི་སོང་བ་ན་མས་ཀྱང་མ་བྱ་ལྟན་དུ་འཆི་འགྲོ་བ་མཐོང་ཆོས་སུ་འདྲག་
ན། མའི་ལྷོ་བར་བྱའི་རོ་མེད་དུ་ཤི་མ་སོང་། མོ་རང་ནི་མ་ཤི་བར་འདྲག་པས། བྱའི་རེ་ཕྱིར་ལོན་ཐབས་གཏན་
ནས་མེད་ཟེར་

¹⁵⁴ This passage is interesting not only because it represents the deep rifts in Sera Khandro’s community while she was living with Gyalsé, but also because it suggests the danger associated with childbirth and the prevalence of childbirth related mortality in early twentieth-century Golok. When Sera Khandro gave birth to her three children (two of whom did not survive past childhood), she had no medical treatment of any kind aside from ritual interventions and she does not mention having any help with the birth, implying that she gave birth alone.

¹⁵⁵ *Autobiography* 158b. 4-5. This is a common litany in Sera Khandro’s *Autobiography*. From these comments, we can deduce that gossip swirled around Sera Khandro because each time she records interacting with a celibate monastic, for example Kitrül Rinpoché, Sotrül Rinpoché, Gotrül Rinpoché, etc., she fears people’s negative gossip.

ང་རང་སྤྱི་ལུས་དམན་པའི་དབང་གིས་སྤྲུལ་པའི་སྤྱི་དེ་ཉིད་ལ་གཞན་གྱིས་ལོག་ལྷ་བྱེད་འོང་སྟེ་མ་ནས་

¹⁵⁶ *Autobiography* 162b.3-4:

མཁའ་འགྲོ་འདི་ཡེ་ཤེས་མཚོ་རྒྱལ་གྱི་གསུང་གི་སྤྲུལ་པ་ངེས་པ་ཅན་ཡིན་སྟེ་མ་གི། རྒྱུད་ཅག་གི་ལོག་ལྷ་སྤངས་ལ་དད་པ་ཞོག་
དང་། འདིའི་མི་བསྐྱེད་མ་ཡིན་གསུངས་འདྲག།

¹⁵⁷ *Autobiography* 155b.3-4:

ང་རང་གིས་མཇལ་དུ་འགྲོ་འདུན་སྒྲོམ་པ་ཆུ་ལ་གདུང་བ་ལྟ་བུར་ཡོད་ཀྱང་།

¹⁵⁸ *Autobiography* 161b.2-3:

བདག་གིས་ཀྱང་རྩུན་མ་ཤོང་ནས་གཏིར་སྒྲོམ་རང་གི་ལུང་ལོ་དང་།

ལྷ་རེག་དྲི་བལ་གྱི་སྒྲིམ་བཅས་རྗེ་དེ་ཉིད་ལ་ཕུལ་བས་

ཐུགས་དབྱིས་པ་ཆེན་པོར་མཇེད་ཅིང་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་གྱི་གསོལ་སུ་གྱུར་ཏོ།

¹⁵⁹ *Autobiography* 164a.1-165a.4. See Chapter Four in the section titled “The Exchange of Women” for a full translation of this passage in which Drimé Özer and Gyalsé discuss exchanging Sera Khandro between the two of them.

¹⁶⁰ *Autobiography* 211b.2-212a.1.

¹⁶¹ *Autobiography* 228a.3-4. Gotrül Rinpoché who was a celibate monk is not claiming fatherhood (although this would not be inconceivable), only that the child is his incarnation. In Drimé Özer’s *Biography*, Sera Khandro writes of the way she became pregnant with this son in greater detail. Sera Khandro responds to Drimé Özer’s question asking who the child’s father is, saying, “This son of mine has no corporeal father. Last year on the tenth day of the monkey month [7th month] during the periodic feast offering when it became time to invite [the deities], my perception transformed. On account of my enjoying blissful union with a hero who was wearing a tiger skin and bone ornaments who sometimes said he was Sarahapa and sometimes said he was Shamigocha, as soon as this happened, my body felt bliss and it was as if everybody there knew it. Gyalsé, his brother Jikmé Kõnchok and all the monks asked me, “Are you sick at all?” I said, “With what sickness? I am reciting the feast offering prayer.” Although I was extremely sick, I kept it secret.” Drimé Özer *Biography*, 183a.1-5:

ངའི་བྱ་འདི་ལ་དངོས་བཅས་གྱི་པ་མེད། ན་ནང་སྤྲེལ་སྒྲུབ་ཆེས་བཅུའི་ཉིན་དུས་མཆོད་འཚོགས་ཡོད་སྐབས་ཆོགས་གྱི་སྤྱིན་ནང་དུ་

ཐོན་ཆོ་བདག་གི་སྤྲང་བ་འབྱུར་ནས། ལེན་རེས་ར་ཏུ་པ་ཡིན་ཟེར། ལན་རེ་ཤ་མི་གོ་ཆ་ཡིན་ཟེར་བའི་དཔའ་བོ་སྐྱག་ཤས་

རུས་རྒྱན་གསོལ་བ་ཞིག་གིས་བདེ་སྦྱར་ལ་རོལ་བའི་རྒྱན་གྱིས། དེ་མ་ཐག་པར་ང་རང་གི་ལུས་ལ་བདེ་བར་སོང་བ་དེར་འདུས་

ཐམས་ཅད་གྱིས་ཏུ་གོ་བ་ལྟར་བྱུང་པས། རྒྱལ་སྤྲེལ་དང་། སྤྱི་རྒྱུས་འཛིགས་མེད་དགོན་མཆོག་དང་གྲ་བ་ལ་སོགས་པ་ཀུན་

གྱིས་ཅང་ན་ནམ་ཨོ་རེ་ཟེར་བས། བདག་གིས་ང་ཅི་ན་ཆོགས་འདོན་གྱིན་ཡོད་སྐབས་ནས་ཤིན་ཏུ་ན་ཡང་སྤྲེལ་གསང་བུས་ཡོད་

སྐབས།

(Note on transliterations from Drimé Özer’s *Biography*: spelling inconsistencies/variants are very common in this manuscript and will appear in these transliterations; I am not correcting/altering the Tibetan.)

¹⁶² *Autobiography* 233a.6-233b.3:

གསང་ཐབས་ཅམ་ལ་འགྲོ་བ་མ་གཏོགས་ཀྱན་གྱིས་མཛོན་གྱུར་དུ་འགྲོ་བལ་མ་བུས་ན་སྒྲུལ་གྱི། ད་ཕན་ཆད་ང་རང་ལ་ཡང་

བསམ་དགོས་རེ་ཡོད་པས། བྱ་བ་གང་ཐད་ནས་གཏིར་སྒྲོམ་སྒྲུབ་ལ་ང་རང་སྤྱིན་ཡོད་ཟེར་བ་དེ་མ་བསྐྱགས་ན་སྒྲུལ་གྱི་སྤྱིས་ཆོ།

ཁོང་གཉིས་གྱིས་ཀྱང་དེ་ལྟར་བསམ་ཀྱང་འོ་སྒྲོལ་རྒྱལ་སྤྲེལ་སང་གི་མི་སྐྱད་མི་ཤིས་པ་འདྲ་ཟེར།

¹⁶³ Contextually Kargab Garkor (*Mkhar ‘gab mgar skor*) appears to be an area near Drung ri (‘Brong ri), the abode of the main mountain deity in Serta, Golok.

¹⁶⁴ Sera Khandro repeats this phrase “being without the backing of my father’s name” (*rgyab pha ming med pa*) and others like it in various places in the text. Her meaning is that her father is far away in Lhasa and therefore without her father’s support and influence, nobody was there to “back her up” or “stand up for

her” when her status in the community was threatened. This highlights the importance of family lineage in Golok society; Gelek 1998: 52 notes that “. . . the strength of the idea of descent, that is of descent as conveyed by the ‘bone’ or Rus in the male line, is one of the most singular traits of these nomadic people. Almost every Washu Serthar family knows its Ru.” Sera Khandro was a single foreign woman in Golok descended from a father’s line that had no relation to Golok society, which contributed to her insecure status in Golok communities.

¹⁶⁵ *Autobiography* 233b.5-234a.1:

ང་རང་སྤར་བསྐྱལ་པ་ཡོས་བྱའི་ལོར་གཏིར་སྟོན་སང་ལ་སྦྱོན་རབས། རྒྱལ་པ་མིང་མིང་པའི་རྒྱུན་གྱིས་གསལ་སྟོན་ཁབ་ཏུ་
བཞེས་ནས་གཟུང་སྒྲུག་གཏད་རབས། རྒྱུ་རྒྱུ་ལ་ཁྱད་ཕྱེས་ནས་རྒྱལ་སྤྱུག་གི་ཕུག་རྒྱུ་འདྲ་མ་བྱལ་ལོངས་སྟོན་མི་ཆོག་རབས་
ཐམས་ཅད་བཤད་ནས།

¹⁶⁶ This is one example of the way Sera Khandro repeatedly cross-references her autobiographical reflections with her revealed Treasure scriptures.

¹⁶⁷ Method and wisdom in this context refers to male and female; Sera Khandro is praying that she and Drimé Özer remain inseparable. See Chapters Four and Five for further discussion of the gendered dyad of method and wisdom.

¹⁶⁸ *Autobiography* 235a.6-235b.2:

ཁྱད་པར་ང་རང་རྗེ་དེ་ཉིད་གྱིས་སྦྱོན་གྲོལ་ལ་བཞོད་ནས་མིང་གི་ཅོད་པན་སྦྱལ། དེ་ནས་རང་གཏིར་ཆོས་ཉིད་མཁའ་འགྲུའི་
གསང་མཛོད་གྱི་ཁ་བྱང་རྗེའི་བཀའ་མ་བཟོད་ནས་ཕུག་ཏུ་ཕུལ་བས་ངོ་མཆར་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་དུ་མའི་གསོས་སུ་མཛད། ང་རང་ལ་
མཁའ་འགྲུའི་བརྟེན་འབྲེལ་དོན་འབྱེད་དཀའ་བ་ཞིག་ཡོད་པ་དེ་ཀའི་དོན་རྗེ་དེ་ཉིད་གྱིས་དགོངས་ཏེ། དོག་ལན་མཛོད་པ་གཏིར་
གཞུགས་དུ་གསལ།

Autobiography 235b.4-236a.4:

ང་རང་ལ་ཆོ་དབང་ཆོ་འགྲུགས་སོགས་མཛད་ཅིང་གཅིག་ལ་གཅིག་བརྟེན་ནས་དེའི་རེའི་ཡན་གྱི་སྦྱོར་ཆོ་བར་ཆད་ཞི་བར་བྱུང་ངོ་།
དེ་ནས་རྗེ་དེ་ཉིད་གྱིས་དངོས་རྒྱུ་རིན་ཐང་ཆོ་བདད་། བཀྲ་ཤིས་པའི་རྒྱུ་གྱི་རི་མོ་བཀྲ་བའི་བཞུགས་གདན་ལྷ་རེག་
བཟང་པོས་སྦྱོས་བཅས་རྒྱལ་སྤྱུག་སང་ལ་ཕུལ་བས། ཁོང་ཕུགས་ཤིན་ཏུ་དབྱེས་པར་མཛད་ཅིང་པན་ཚུན་ཕུགས་མཐུན་
གཞུགས་བཟང་གི་གསོས་སུ་སྦྱོན་པ་དང་། རང་ཡང་ཅུ་བའི་གཟུངས་མ་ལྷ་བྱར་ཕུགས་བརྟེན་བ་ཆེན་པོ་རྗེས་སུ་བཟུང་ཞིང་།
ཁྱད་པར་ཡུལ་དུས་གྱི་རྒྱུན་གྱིས་ཕུགས་སུན་མི་མངའ་ཞིང་སྦྱོར་ཆོ་ཞབས་པད་བརྟེན་ཐབས་སོགས་ཞལ་གྱིས་བཞེས། རང་ནས་
ཀྱང་ཐབས་གང་དག་གི་ངས་མིང་གྱི་གནས་སུ་མི་འགྲོ་བྱས་ཏེ། ཕུགས་ཡིད་གཅིག་འདྲེས་ལྷ་བྱའི་སྟོན་ཐབས་ཤིས་འདུ་འབྲལ་
མིང་པའི་ཕུགས་བསྐྱེད་སྟོན་ལམ་མཛོད་ནས།

¹⁶⁹ *Autobiography* 236b.4.

¹⁷⁰ *Autobiography* 242a.6-242b.2.

¹⁷¹ *Autobiography* 250a.3-4.

¹⁷² *Autobiography* 254a.1-2. Yusé Chawa (*G.yu bswe bya ba*) is another location in the Serta/Padma County area.

དེ་ནས་བྱང་རྒྱའི་ཕྱར་ཟེང་གི་རྒྱུན་གྱིས་ཉེ་འཁོར་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་གྲོས་ཐག་བཅད་ནས། རྗེའི་བཞུགས་གནས་གཡུ་བསྟེ་བའི་

གནས་དེ་ཀར་སྤར་ཏེ།

¹⁷³ Autobiography 251b.2- 6.

¹⁷⁴ Autobiography 253a.3:

དེ་སྐབས་རང་ནས་ཀྱང་ཤི་གསོན་འཕྲད་པ་ལྟ་བུའི་དགའ་སྟོན་

¹⁷⁵ Autobiography 253b.1-4:

ཁྱེད་ཀྱིས་བདག་ཐུགས་བརྩེ་བ་ཆེན་པོའི་རྗེས་སུ་བརྩེང་སྟེ། མི་གྲུལ་ནས་བྱད་པ། ལྷ་གྲུལ་དུ་བཀོད་ནས།

ཆོ་སྟོག་འཛིན་པའི་ཀ་བ། སྤྱར་ལམ་བསྟོད་པའི་གསང་གྲོགས་། ཟབ་གཏོར་གདུལ་བྱ་རྒྱས་པའི་དཔའ་བོ།

ལུགས་གཉིས་བྱ་བ་ཀྱན་གྱི་འབྲུང་གནས་དམ་པ། ཁྱེད་ལྟ་བུ་ཁོ་མོ་བདག་གིས་སྤར་ཡང་མ་རྟོད། ཐུའི་ནས་རྟོད་པ་

ལྟ་ཞོག།

¹⁷⁶ Autobiography 258a.1-2.

¹⁷⁷ Autobiography 261a.6- 261b.3.

¹⁷⁸ The three liberations are emptiness, signlessness, and wishlessness.

¹⁷⁹ Autobiography 262b.3-263a.6:

དེ་ནས་ཡང་རྗེ་དེ་ཉིད་ལ་སྤར་གྱི་གདམ་པའི་མཛུགས་དོན་རྒྱ་འཕྲང་མན་ངག་རྣམས་གདན་ཐོག་གཅིག་དུ་ཡབ་ཡུམ་གཉིས་ཀྱིས་རྒྱ་བ་

གསུམ་གྱི་བར་དུ་ཉམས་ལེན་མཛད། དེ་སྐབས་སུ་ཐུ་ཡུལ་གྱི་རྟགས་སུ་ཉིན་མཚན་མེད་པར་རི་དྲར་བ་དང་། ས་གཡོ་

བ་དང་། སྒྲ་ཕྱར་བ། སྒྲིང་བྱ་དང་། རོལ་མོའི་སྒྲ་སྟོགས་པ། དྲི་བཟང་གི་དང་ལྡང་བ་སོགས་

བྱུང་བ། ལས་ལྷན་སྟོབ་འབངས་ཀྱན་གྱིས་མཐོང་ཆོས་སུ་གྱུར་པ་དང་། རང་ཅ་རྒྱུང་ཐིག་ལེ་གནས་སུ་དག་པའི་རྟགས་

སུ་དབུ་མགྲིན་གྱི་མཉུན་རྒྱ་གྲོལ་ནས། ལས་སྤངས་བསྟོད་ལ་མ་ལྟོས་པར། ཐིག་པའི་ཆོས་རྒྱལ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཆགས་ཐོག་

མེད་པར་མཐུན་ཅིང་། ཟབ་གཏོར་དགོངས་པའི་གཤམ་སྟོན་ལས། འགོ་བའི་ཁམས་དང་མོས་པ་དང་མཐུན་པའི།

གདམ་པའི་གནད་དོན་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱིས་བདེ་རང་གྲོལ་དུ་བྱུང་བ་དང་། རྒྱུང་བཅུ་ལས་སུ་རུང་ཞིང་། ལུས་གཞོན་ཅུ་ག

དང་ལྷན་ཅིང་ཤིང་བལ་ལྟར་ཡང་བ། དག་དོན་རྗེའི་ཆོག་རང་དོལ་དུ་མགྱུར་མ་བྱས་ཆོ། དེའི་སྒྲ་ཐོས་ཚད་ཀྱི་རྒྱུད་ལ་

བསམ་བསྟན་དང་པོའི་ས་བོན་འཛོག་པ་སོགས་ལས་ཐུན་དུ་མས་འགོ་བའི་དོན་འབྲུང་ཞིང་། ཁྱེད་པར་བདེ་ཆེན་སྟོང་པའི་ཡི་

ཤེས་སྟོས་བྲལ་རིག་སྟོང་རྣམ་ཐར་གསུམ་ལྷན་རིག་སྟོང་བསམ་བརྟུན་ལས་འདས་པའི་དགོངས་པ་མངོན་དུ་གྱུར་ཅིང་།

ཐབས་ཤེས་གཉིས་ཀྱི་ཐུགས་ཡིད་མངོན་སུམ་དུ་རོག་ཅིག་དུ་འབྲེས་ནས།

¹⁸⁰ Autobiography 264a.2- 5:

This sentence documents the intertextuality between the two works as well as their sequence; Sera Khandro had already written Drimé Özer's *Biography* when she was composing her own autobiography and she chose to elaborate or not elaborate on particular topics based on what she had written previously. Instead of repeating her words, she directs her readers to her other works. See *Biography* 229b-230 for detailed description of Drimé Özer's death. I translate a passage from this deathbed dialogue in Chapter Five in the section titled, "Love Medicine and the Im/permanence of Life and Death."

¹⁹¹ *Autobiography* 295a.4-5:

དེ་ནས་ང་རང་ནི་སྐྱབས་མེད་མགོན་མེད་ལོང་ང་ཐང་དགྱིལ་དུ་ལུས་པ་ལྟ་བུའི་སྐྱག་བསྐྱེད་ཆེན་པོ་ནོན་སྟེ་བྱ་ཐབས་དང་བལ་ཡོད་

སྐབས།

¹⁹² *Autobiography* 296b.4:

ཟབ་གཏིར་འདི་ཤིན་ཏུ་ཟབ་ཆེ་བའི་དབང་གིས་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་བཏང་སྟོམས་ལ་འགྲོ་བ་དང་།

¹⁹³ Sera Monastery, full name Se ra theg chog 'khor gling is not associated with the famous Geluk Monastery in Lhasa by that name. It is a small monastery north of the Serta County seat founded in 1736. See 'Jigs med bsam grub, ed. *Khams phyogs dkar mdzes khul gyi dgon sde so so'i lo rgyus gsal bar bshad pa thub bstan gsal ba'i me long*, vol. 2, 353-361. Driving there in a land cruiser from the Serta County seat takes about 5 hours; there is no road leading to the monastery for the last several kilometers of the drive as of 5/2005.

¹⁹⁴ *Autobiography* 303b.2-3.

¹⁹⁵ *Autobiography* 305b.4-6:

དེ་སྐབས་ལུལ་མི་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་མིག་ལམ་དུ་གཞོད་ནས། ལ་ལས་དབུས་མོ་བསོད་སྐྱེལ་སང་གི་གཟུངས་མ་རེད།

ལ་ལས་སྐྱེལ་སྐྱེལ་སང་ནར་ལོན་པའི་རྒྱུན་གྱིས་མོ་རང་འདི་ཀར་མི་འདུག་པ་འདྲ་ཟེར། ལ་ལས་བྱོད་མོ་ཡིན་པས་ཁྱ་ཅག་ཀུན་ལ་

གཞོད་ཡོང་ཟེར་ནས།

¹⁹⁶ *Autobiography* 307a.3-4:

སྐྱེལ་སྐྱེལ་བཀའ་རིན་ཅན་གྱིས་བསྟན་པ་འཛོལ་སྟོང་བྱིད་རང་ལ་ཐུག་པ་དང་།

¹⁹⁷ I am interpreting this as a spelling mistake for *dgon pa*.

¹⁹⁸ *Autobiography* 309a.6:

སྐབས་ཇེ་ཡབ་སྐས་ཀྱི་གཏིར་བྱོན་མ་བསྟོམ་སངས་རྒྱས་ཀྱི་ཕྱི་སྐྱེལ་སངས་དང་། རྩོགས་ཆེན་ཡང་ཏིག་གི་བྱིད་ལ་སོགས་པ་ལའད།

Sera Khandro teaches *Ma bsgom sangs rgyas* to Sera Monastery monastics 312, *Ma bsgom sangs rgyas* to others 343, 390, *Snying thig ya bzhi* 348b, 371.

¹⁹⁹ *Autobiography* 309b.1-2. Perhaps the significance of Sera Khandro specifying in this case that she taught laywomen to recite *mani* prayers is that since they were uneducated, it wasn't appropriate to confer the Treasure empowerments on them that she gave to monastics and lamas.

²⁰⁰ *Autobiography* 314b, 343, 357b-358, Sera Khandro teaches all of Dujom Lingpa's *gter chos* 366b, both father and son *gter chos* 370b, *rtsa gsum khros ma* cycle of, 385, entire father and son *gter chos* 388b-389, at Vairocana cave Mkha' 'gro yang rdzong entire father and son *gter chos* 392b-393, 399b-400, 400b.

²⁰¹ *Autobiography* 337b. This comment is interesting because at present Drimé Özer's Treasure volumes are lost, but apparently at one time they totaled 18 volumes.

²⁰² *Autobiography* 315, 343, 357b-358, 370b, 372b, 385, 388b-389.

²⁰³ *Autobiography* 351b.6.

²⁰⁴ *Autobiography* 379b.2-3.

²⁰⁵ *Autobiography* 383b.5-384a.5.

²⁰⁶ For a very elaborate description of her visionary experience interacting with Guru Rinpoché and Yeshe Tsogyal, see *Autobiography* 318b.1-335a.1.

²⁰⁷ *Autobiography* 361b.5-6. This would have been an enormous task, as this Treasure cycle contains approx. 20 volumes, depending on edition. The names Dujom Dorjé and Dujom Lingpa refer to the same figure.

སྒྲུབས་ཤིང་བསོད་སྒྲུབ་རིན་པོ་ཆའི་མདུན་ནས་གཏིར་ཆེན་བདུད་འཛམས་དོན་འཛིན་ཟབ་ཆོས་ཆ་ཚང་འབྲི་རྒྱ་དམ་བཅའ་ཕུལ་ཡོད་པས་

²⁰⁸ *Autobiography* 362a. 6- 362b.2:

རང་གི་བསམ་སྒྲིབ་ཐམས་ཅད་སྒྲུབ་ནས་གཏིར་ཆེན་ཡབ་སྐུས་རྣམས་ཀྱི་བསྟན་ཞབས་ལ་ལྷག་པ་ཡིན་པས། ཆོས་དང་མཐུན་པ་

རེ་འོང་ན་འཇིག་རྟེན་གྱི་བྱ་བའི་སྒྲིབ་སྒྲུབ་ཅི་བྱུང་ཡང་བཟོད་མི་དགོས་ཅི་ཐབས་སྒྲུབ་ནས།

²⁰⁹ *Autobiography* 362b.5:

གྲོགས་མཆོད་བྱ་སྒྲོབ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱིས་ཤི་གསོན་འཕྲད་པ་ལྟ་བུའི་དགའ་སྟོན་ཆོད་པོ་མཛད།

²¹⁰ This term “correcting” (*dpe ched*) is not in any dictionary that I could locate, but Gyalrong Khenpo Sangyé, with whom I did a detailed study of this text, told me that *dpe ched* means to verify, examine, and confirm the veracity of a text whereas he said that “editing” (*zhu dag*) means to compare an original and a new copy of a text.

²¹¹ *Autobiography* 363a.3-4. It is clear from these statements that it was Sera Khandro herself that was doing the editing and correcting along with her companions. This demonstrates her high level of Tibetan literacy and supports my argument that Sera Khandro is in fact the author of her *Autobiography* despite the involvement of her scribe Tsültrim Dorjé as transcriber of her texts.

དེད་ཅག་རྣམས་སྐྱབ་བ་གཅིག་ལྷག་ཙམ་དུ་གནས་དེ་གར་བསྟན་ནས་ཞུ་དག་དང་དཔེ་ཆེད་སོགས་ཞིབ་རྒྱས་སུ་བྱ་བ་ཤིང་།

²¹² *Autobiography* 365a.5-6.

²¹³ *Autobiography* 388b.4-6.

²¹⁴ Sera Khandro does mention having texts printed in addition to hand-copying texts, but not as often. She writes that she received sponsorship from the Lingkar Dharma King (*Gling dkar chos rgyal*) and his family to publish (*spar du bzhengs pa*) Dujom Lingpa and Drimé Özer’s complete teachings, the complete texts on tenth and twenty-fifth day (ritual practices), and Breakthrough (*khregs chod*) and Direct transcendence (*thod rgal*) teachings. *Autobiography* 400b.6-401a.2. Probably the distinction between publishing and hand-copying was economic; with royal sponsorship, the more expensive option of wood-block publishing was possible. Given that this comment suggests that Drimé Özer’s teaching cycles were carved into wood blocks along with his fathers, it is curious that they are lost.

Sera Khandro also mentions in the *Biography* a large wood-block printing project that Drimé Özer began at the close of his life to publish his father Dujom Lingpa’s entire Treasure collection. Drimé Özer ordered his close disciples to gather 1000 wood blocks and sent his student from Dege back home to bring ten wood carvers back to carve the wood. It is unclear from the *Biography* whether this project was completed at this time or not because Drimé Özer died shortly after this and Sera Khandro was expelled from the community. See *Biography*, 218b-219.

²¹⁵ *Autobiography* 390a.4-5.

²¹⁶ *Sngar tshig dar gyi mdud pa de/ da lan nam mkha’ mdzes ma’i gzugs*, i.e., the previous discussions no longer exist.

²¹⁷ There are two possible interpretations of this metaphor: 1) like two sides of a drum never can meet each other, she never meets her previous home and friends; 2) They are two-faced, not always nice to her, as the damaru drum has two sides.

²¹⁸ Gyalrong Khenpo Sangyé says the meaning of *spos rgya’i ris* is that it is an interlocking pattern, never-ending.

²¹⁹ The eight worldly concerns (*chos brgyad*) are reactions to 1) gain, 2) loss, 3) fame, 4) infamy, 5) praise, 6) blame, 7) happiness, and 8) sadness.

²²⁰ *Autobiography* 363a.5-364b.3. I include this song to give an example of the many songs that Sera Khandro interweaves into her narrative, many of which at the end of her *Autobiography* are reflections on impermanence like this one.

གྲུ་འདུས་བྱས་འཁོར་བའི་ཆོས། གནས་ཚུལ་འདི་ལ་ཡི་རེ་སྟག། སྤར་སོར་རིགས་ལྡན་མི་སོང་།
 དེ་ནི་ཀུན་གྱིས་སྤར་བྱར་མཐོང་། སྤར་ཆོག་དར་གྱི་མདུད་པ་དེ། ད་ལན་ནམ་མཁའི་མཛེས་མའི་གཟུགས།
 སྤར་གྱི་འདོད་ཡོད་བཞོད་པ་ནམས། ད་ལྟ་སྟག་གི་སྟོན་པ་རེད། སྤར་འབྲེས་མཆེད་གྲོགས་དམ་ལྡན་ནམས།
 དབང་མེད་བུལ་ཆེ་སྟག་བསྟུལ་རྒྱ། སྤར་གནས་ཡུལ་མི་སྡེ་འཁོར་ནམས། ད་ལྟ་རྩ་རྩེ་གཉིས་འདྲ། དེ་ལྟར་
 ལས་དང་བྱ་བ་ཀུན། འགྱུར་བའི་ཆོས་ཉིད་འདི་མཐོང་ཆོ། སྤྱིང་ཆེའི་ཡུལ་གྱུར་བྱ་མོང་འདི། སྟག་བསྟུལ་འདི་འདྲ་སྟ་
 ཡིས་བཟོད། གྲུ་མ་གྱི་རྟུང་དགོན་མཆོག་གསུམ། འདི་སྤྱིའི་རེ་ལྟོས་བདག་ལ་མེད། གྲོགས་མེད་གཅིག་
 སྤར་ཉམས་རེ་ཐག། ཡུལ་མེད་ས་མཐར་བྱི་བཞིན་སྟད། བདག་མེད་ཀུན་གྱི་བརྟན་སྟོང་བྱེད། བསམ་བཟང་ཆོས་
 དང་མཐུན་བྱས་ཀྱང་། ཆོས་མིན་རྟེན་ངན་བྱགས་གྱིས་སྤར་། མགོན་པོ་ཆེ་སྤྱི་མཁའི་དུ་གཤེགས། བྱ་གཅིག་
 སྤར་མ་ནག་གཤིན་ཆེ་བྱིད། དེད་མ་བྱ་ཉམས་ཐག་ས་མཐར་སྟགས། ཁོང་བསོད་ནམས་ལྡན་ནམས་ལྡན་དུ་ཆོགས།
 དཔལ་བདེ་སྤྱིད་གོང་མ་ལྟ་དང་འདྲ། དའི་གནས་ཚུལ་སྟག་བསྟུལ་ཀུན་གྱི་གཞི། སྤར་གྱི་འཛོམ་པའི་བཞོད་པ་
 ནམས། དེ་རིང་མི་རྟག་མཁན་པོར་མཛོད། རྒྱུ་རི་མི་རྟག་ཅི་ཡིང་སྟམ། ལུང་པ་མི་རྟག་ཨ་བུའི་གནས།
 ཁང་བྱིས་མི་རྟག་གྱུར་པལ་སོང་། བྱ་སྟོབ་མི་རྟག་ཡུལ་གཞན་འགྲིམ། གཟུང་ཆང་མི་རྟག་སོ་སོར་གྱིས།
 འདི་འདྲའི་བཞོད་པ་སྤར་བའི་ཆོ། སེམས་གཏིང་སྟག་གིས་ནོན་པར་སོང་། གྲུ་མ་གྱི་རྟུང་འདུས་བྱས་ཆོས།
 གང་ལ་བསམ་ཀྱང་སྤྱིང་པོ་མེད། ཅི་ལ་བསམ་ཀྱང་སྟུ་མའི་འཕྲུལ། ཟེན་མེད་བྱ་བ་སྟོས་རྒྱུའི་རིས།
 ཆོས་བརྒྱད་འཁོར་བའི་ལྷགས་སྟོགས་འདི། སྤར་ས་ནས་དམ་པའི་ལྷ་ཆོས་ཞིག། བསྟུལ་ན་ཆེ་འདིར་དོན་ཆེན་སྟེད།
 བླ་མའི་སྟུང་ནི་འདི་ཡིས་སོད། འཁོར་སྟོབ་བྱགས་འདུན་དེ་ཡིས་དབྱེས། རང་གཞན་དོན་གཉིས་དེ་ཡིས་འགྲུབ།
 དེ་སྤྱིར་སྟོན་གསུམ་ཆོས་ལ་འབད། མི་ཆོས་མེད་ཀྱང་ཞོ་སྟོབ་དེ། མི་གལ་བྱད་ཀྱང་རང་དོན་འགྲུབ། ཀུན་གྱིས་
 བརྟེས་ཀྱང་ཀུན་ལས་རྒྱལ། ས་མཐར་སྟག་ཀྱང་སེམས་མཐའ་ཆོད། འགྱུར་མེད་གཞུག་མའི་རང་ཞལ་མཐོང་།
 རང་རིག་བླ་མ་དབྱེར་མེད་རྟོགས། བྱགས་ཆེ་ཉི་རིང་ཡོད་མི་སྟེད། བྱིན་རྒྱ་བས་སྟོན་གསུམ་བུམ་པར་བསྟུལ།
 ཀུན་བཟང་ཆོས་སྤྱིའི་རྒྱལ་ས་རྒྱ། མི་རིང་བསྟོད་ལ་ཅི་ཆ་ཡོད།

²²¹ Sera Khandro notes in her colophon that she wrote her *Autobiography* in two phases, one up to the age of 36 and one from the ages of 36-43. See Appendix III for a translation of the colophon in which the two sections, the first in prose and the second in verse, are distinct. Although the colophon clearly marks the two different phases in which she wrote her *Autobiography*, the *Autobiography* itself reads seamlessly. There are no stylistic, tonal, or grammatical differences between the sections of her narrative leading up to the age of 36 and those afterwards. Interestingly, in the latter colophon she concludes with the words, “I wrote this myself,” without citing the involvement of Tsültrim Dorjé, the scribe for the earlier section. *Autobiography* 407a.4:

ཅེས་པ་འདྲ་ཁོ་མོ་རང་གི་དབྱིས་བྲིས་པ་འོ།

This last line is an indication that Tsültrim Dorjé was not involved in the writing of the latter section. If this is the case, it is further evidence that his role was entirely scribal, as Sera Khandro states, and not authorial since the two sections are clearly the work of one author.

²²² *Autobiography* 368a.6-368b.1; entire passage is *Autobiography* 367a.3-368b.2. I translate this passage in full in Chapter Four, pp. 258-259.

²²³ Tshul khriims rdo rje. Rgyal yum ye shes mtsho rgyal mi mngon nam thar bzhengs pa mkha’ ‘gro rin po che bde ba’i rdo rje’i ‘das rjes kyi rnam thar don bstan su bkod pa. Unpublished Manuscript, 1948. This text is handwritten in cursive (yig nag) Tibetan as his other manuscripts are, but it appears to have been written quickly or casually – mistakes are crossed out and the handwriting is very messy, unlike his meticulously neat transcriptions of Sera Khandro’s works.

²²⁴ Bya bral sangs rgyas rdo rje. *Dbus bza’ mkha’ ‘gro bde ba’i rdo rje’i rnam thar chen mo’i mjug gi kha skong nyung du g.yu yi phra tshom*. Unpublished manuscript, 1976.

²²⁵ Bya bral sangs rgyas rdo rje 1976: 5b.3-6a.2; Tshul khriims rdo rje 1948: 2a.2-5.

²²⁶ Tshul khriims rdo rje 1948: 2b.1-3.

²²⁷ Tshul khriims rdo rje 1948: 3a.2-4:

ཁྱེད་པར་ཐབས་ཤེས་སྤྱད་ལམ་ལ་བརྟེན་པས་དུས་ཐབས་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་གྱིས་བེ་ཕུག་མོར་བྱ་བྱ་མཆོ་ནས་སྤྱན་ངངས་བའི་ཐུགས་ཐེག་མཆོ་

ཁྱུ་ཐུགས་སྤྱབ་སོགས་གྱིས་ཟབ་གཏོར་རྣམས་བརྟེན་འབྲེལ་ཆོ།

²²⁸ Bya bral sangs rgyas rdo rje 1976: 7a.5-6.

²²⁹ Tshul khriims rdo rje 1948: 5a.5-5b.2:

དེ་རྗེས་ཆུ་ཡུལ་དུ་དཀར་བསོད་བྱོན་སྐབས། གཏུལ་བྱ་ཀུན་ལ་རང་རང་དང་མཆོམས་པའི་ཆོས་འབྲེལ་སྤྱོད་ཆོགས་གསུངས་

²³⁰ Bya bral sangs rgyas rdo rje 1976: 8a.6-8b.2; Tshul khriims rdo rje 1948: 6a.4-6b.1.

²³¹ Bya bral sangs rgyas rdo rje 1976: 8b.4-9a.2.

²³² Bya bral sangs rgyas rdo rje 1976: 10a.3-11a.4.

²³³ Tshul khriims rdo rje 1948: 9a.2-9b.1:

དབང་གི་སྤྱོད་པ་ལྟར་དུས་སྤྱོད་ཡོད་གྱི་ཕྱི་རྒྱ་མ་ཤེས་རབ་དང་། ད་གཉིས་ལ། མཁའ་འགྲོ་རིན་པོ་ཆེའི་ཞལ་ནས།

ཆོ་འདི་ཕྱི་གཉིས་གྱི་བར་ལ་ཐག་རིང་ཞིག་ཡོད་པ་མིན་ཏེ། ཕུ་ཅག་གི་བར་གྱི་ཡོད་པ་ཕྱི་ནང་ཙམ་མེད་གསུངས་པ་དང་།

ཡང་བར་སྐབས་ཞིག་ལ། ཕུ་ཅག་རྣམས་གྱིས་སྒྲ་མའི་ཡབ་སྐུན་པ་ལ་འཛིན་སྦྱོར་བཟང་པོ་ཞིག་འབྲུབ་འདུག།

ད་ནི་རང་རྟེན་མས་ལ་ཆོ་ཅི་ཡོད་མི་ཤེས་གསུངས་ནས་སྤྱོད་པ་ལྟར་དུ་ཞི་བྱེད་ལྟ་ཆོགས་རྣམས་རིམ་བཞིན་ཤར་ནས་རྗེས་སེང་བ་ཡིན་

²³⁴ Tshul khriims rdo rje 1948: 10b.5-11a.1:

དེ་སྐབས་ཁོང་ལ་སྤྱིན་མཆོམས་ནས་འོད་གདངས་མཆོད་པའི་ནང་དུ་ཞི་བྱེད་ལྟ་ཆོགས་རྣམས་རིམ་བཞིན་ཤར་ནས་རྗེས་སེང་བ་ཡིན་

གསུངས།

²³⁵ Tshul khirms rdo rje 1948: 11a.4-11b.1:

ཆེ་ཉི་ཤེད་ཉི་མ་ཐུང་པོལ་ཙམ་དུ་རྟེན་སྒྲུབ་དཔེ་མཛད་པའི་རྒྱུན་གྱིས་ཞིང་ཁམས་སུ་གཤེགས་པ་ཡིན། འདས་མ་ཐག་དུ་

གསུང་གི་སྒྲུབ་གདངས་ཞིག་གྲགས་པ་དང་ཅག་གི་ཐོས་ཀྱང་དོན་ཅི་ཡིན་མ་གོ།

²³⁶ Tshul khirms rdo rje 1948: 11b.3-12a.1:

སྒྲིན་འཇའ་འཁྲིགས་པ། སྒྲུབ་བ་སོགས་འབྱུང་ངོ། ཉིན་ཆ་ཤས་གདུང་མཆོད་སོགས་བྱས་ནས། ཆེ་ཉི་མ་

ལུང་ཉིན་རི་བོ་ཆེའི་རྒྱབ་དུ་གི་གང་ས་ཕྱོགས་ཀྱི་ས་དཔལ་བཟང་པོར་སྒྲུབ་གདུང་ཞུགས་སུ་འབྱལ་ནས་བཞུགས་ཆོ། སྒྲུན་གཅིག་

ལྷོ་ཕྱོགས་ནམ་མཁའ་འཕྱར་ནས་སོང་བ་སོགས་གདུང་རྟགས་ངོ་མཚར་བ་དུ་མ་འབྱུང་ངོ།

²³⁷ Bya bral sangs rgyas rdo rje 1976: 14b.5:

སྒྲུབ་གདུང་འོད་དུ་དེངས་པའི་ལྷག་མ་གྱིས་པ་ལོ་བརྒྱད་ཀྱི་ཆོད་ཙམ་ལས་མ་ལུས།

²³⁸ Bya bral sangs rgyas rdo rje 1976: 15a.6-15b.4. I am not sure which encampment Chatral Rinpoché is referring to when he writes the “*Mdo smad gter sgar*.” It could refer to Riwoché, but it could also refer to Drimé Özer’s Treasure encampment or perhaps another location. I have not had the good fortune to find Sera Khandro’s reliquary. When I asked about it in Dartsang, Serta County, Golok, where Drimé Özer’s Treasure encampment used to be, locals told me they didn’t know where it was.

Chapter Two: Treasure Revelation in Golok Society

²³⁹ Germano 1998: 54.

²⁴⁰ Gyatso 1993: 99-100.

²⁴¹ For studies on the contemporary revival of Treasure revelation and its relationship to the rebuilding of a sense of Tibetan identity and nationalism in contemporary P.R.C. Tibet, see Germano 1998: 55; Dreyfus 1998; Terrone 2002. Terrone and Jacoby plan a book-length study of the role of Treasure revelation in contemporary Tibet based on extensive fieldwork tentatively titled *Buddhism Revealed: The Search for Treasures in Modern Tibet*.

²⁴² Thondup 1986: 61. My discussion of Treasure revelation will draw heavily from Trülku Thondup’s *Hidden Teachings of Tibet*, which is a translation of the Third Dodrupchen Jikmé Tenpé Nyima’s (*Jigs med bstan pa’i nyi ma*, 1865-1926) *Wonder Ocean: An Explanation of the Dharma Treasure Tradition* (*Las ‘phro gter brgyud kyi rnam bshad nyung gsal ngo mtshar rgya mtsho*, also known as *Gter gyi rnam bshad*) because this presentation of the Treasure tradition is the most closely aligned with the Treasure revelation milieu in which Sera Khandro participated. Jikmé Tenpé Nyima was in fact the brother of Sera Khandro’s consort Drimé Özer and she may have known him personally, although she does not state this in her *Autobiography*. Ironically, Trülku Thondup himself is a family relation of Drimé Özer’s contemporary incarnation Trülku Jikmé Püntsok, so his work is doubly “all in the family.” This is not mere coincidence; Treasure revelation is and was predominantly a family-inherited tradition in Golok.

²⁴³ Mayer 1994: 533-34, 536, 538.

²⁴⁴ Mayer 1994: 542.

²⁴⁵ Germano 1998: 75. See Germano 1994 for a detailed presentation of the development of the Seminal Heart system.

²⁴⁶ Gyatso 1998: 152.

²⁴⁷ Thondup 1986: 149.

²⁴⁸ Thondup 1986: 61, 90.

- ²⁴⁹ Gyatso 1993: 102.
²⁵⁰ See appendices in Thondup 1986 for more information about categories of Nyingma scriptures.
²⁵¹ Thondup 1986: 47. Dharmakāya, Sāmbhogakāya, and Nirmāṇakāya refer to three dimensions of Buddhahood that can be described as having the essence of emptiness, the nature of spontaneous presence, and the dynamism of compassion.
²⁵² Thondup 1986: 67-68.
²⁵³ Perkins 1995: 3.
²⁵⁴ Perkins 1995: 6.
²⁵⁵ Dujom Rinpoché 1991: 746.
²⁵⁶ Thondup 1986: 60-61.
²⁵⁷ See Blondeau 1980 for a more detailed description of different types of Padmasambhava biographies, which she separates into those in which he is miraculously born (*rdzus skyes*), which tend to be revealed Treasure literature, and those in which he is born from a womb (*mngal skyes*).
²⁵⁸ Tsogyal 1993: 145.
²⁵⁹ Tsogyal 1993: 209.
²⁶⁰ Tsogyal 1978: 746.
²⁶¹ Dujom Rinpoché 1991: 746. Perhaps this can also be detected from *The Autobiography* of Guru Chosdbang (1212-1270) in which, Janet Gyatso notes, there is no reference to Jo-mo sMan-mo, the famous female Treasure revealer who later sources assert was his consort. See Gyatso 1994: 283.
²⁶² Bstag sham nus ldan rdo rje (b. 1655), *Bod kyi jo mo ye shes mtsho rgyal gyi mdzad tshul rnam par thar pa gab pa mngon byung rgyud mngas dri za'i glu phreng*. Kalimpong: Zangs mdog dpal ri Monastery, 1972. I choose this version because it is a well known and paradigmatic example of Yeshé Tsogyal's hagiography, although there are other versions and I do not know precisely which version(s) Sera Khandro would have read or heard. In her *Autobiography*, Sera Khandro recounts writing a Yeshé Tsogyal biography, but she records that due to the critical words of one of Gyalsé's monks, she became angry and threw the manuscript into the fire. See *Autobiography* 144a.5-145a.3. As far as I have seen, her collected works do not contain a Yeshé Tsogyal biography although they do contain Yeshé Tsogyal Accomplishment Practices (*sādhana*s), feast offerings, a fire offering, and an empowerment.
²⁶³ Gyalwa Changchub and Namkhai Nyingpo 1999: 132; Stag sham nus ldan rdo rje, *Bod kyi jo mo*, f. 89b.1-2; 3.
²⁶⁴ Gyalwa Changchub and Namkhai Nyingpo 1999: 132-133; Stag sham nus ldan rdo rje, *Bod kyi jo mo*, ff. 89b.6- 90a.3.
²⁶⁵ Gyalwa Changchub and Namkhai Nyingpo 1999: 133-134; Stag sham nus ldan rdo rje, *Bod kyi jo mo*, ff. 90b.2-5.
²⁶⁶ *Autobiography* 3a.1-4a.1:

རོ་ཡིས་མཉེས་པར་མཛད་ཅིང་བདེ་སྟོང་ཡེ་ཤེས་ཆེན་པོའི་དགོངས་པར་བཞུགས། རྗེ་ཕག་མོའི་ཐུགས་བརྒྱད་བསྐྱེད་པའི་བོད་
 མི་གཤོང་དམར་འདུལ་བའི་ཕྱིར་དུ། སྐུ་གསུང་ཐུགས་ཡོན་ཏན་མིན་ལས་དེ་ཁོཅ་ཉིད་དེ་སྐུ་ལ་པ་བྱུག་ཏུ་འབྱེད་ཅིང་གུ་རུ་འི་
 དབྱུས་སྡེ་མོ་མཛད། དེ་དག་གཅིག་ཏུ་བསྐྱེད་པའི་བདག་ཉིད་ལྷ་མོ་དབྱངས་ཅན་མ་དེ་ཉིད་དཀྱིལ་འཁོར་གྱི་དབྱུས་ནས་བཞེངས་ཏེ་
 མཁའ་འགོ་མ་རྣམས་ལ་གསོལ་བ། བདག་ནི་འཇིག་རྟེན་གྱི་ཁམས་སུ་གདུལ་དཀའ་བ་མི་སྲིན་བོད་དང་། ལྷོ་རུབ་སྲིན་པོའི་
 ཡུལ་གླིང་དང་སུ་ཐྱེགས་བོན་སྡེ་ལ་སོགས་སངས་རྒྱུ་གྱི་བསྟན་པ་ལ་འཆོ་བྱེད་རྣམས་འདུལ་བ་དང་། དར་དཀའ་བ་གསང་
 ཐུགས་རྗེ་ཐེག་པའི་བསྟན་པ་ཡུན་དུ་དར་ལ་སྦྱོང་བ་དང་། གུ་རུ་འི་སྐུ་འི་ཐུག་རྒྱ་དང་བཀའ་ཡི་བསྟུ་བ་མཛད་པའི་དུས་ལ་
 བབ་སོགས་ལྷངས་ཏེ། ཉིད་ལས་མི་གཞན་པའི་སྐུ་ལ་བལ་ཡུལ་དུ་ཀལ་སློང་དང་མོན་མོ་བྲག་ཤིས་སྤྱི་འདྲིན། དབྱུས་གཙང་
 ཐུགས་སུ་ཤེལ་དཀར་རྗེ་མཆོ་སོགས་སྐུ་ལ་ཏེ། རང་ཡང་བདེ་ཆེན་ཡེ་ཤེས་མཆོ་རྒྱལ་མའི་སྐུར་བཞེངས་ཏེ། གསང་ཐུགས་
 བཀའ་ཡི་བསྟུ་བ་པོ་མཛད་ཅིང་སྲིན་ལས་གུ་རུ་ཉིད་དང་མཉམ་ཞིང་མཛད་པ་སྲིན་ལས་ས་གསུམ་དུ་འབྲན་ཆེད་བྲལ་བར་མཛད་ཅིང་།

²⁶⁷ *Autobiography* 4a.5-4b.1:

ཞེས་གསུང་མ་ཐག་ཏུ་བྲག་ཤིས་སྤྱི་འདྲིན་ཡུལ་སྡེ་པོ་འདབས་མ་བརྒྱད་པའི་དབྱུས་སུ་རྒྱུ་དང་། འདབས་འཁོར་རྣམས་སུ་
 ཕན་བརྒྱུད་ཡོད་པ་ཞིག་ཏུ་གྱུར་ནས་མཆོ་རྒྱལ་གྱི་ཐུགས་ཀ་གཡམས་སུ་ཐིམ། ཀལ་སློང་པ་དམར་པོ་འདབས་མ་བརྒྱུད་པའི་
 དབྱུས་སུ་རྒྱུ་འདབས་མ་རྣམས་སུ་ཨ་ལི་བརྒྱུད་པའི་མཚན་པ་ཅན་དུ་གྱུར་ནས་མཆོ་རྒྱལ་གྱི་ཐུགས་ཀ་གཡོན་ཐུགས་ལ་ཐིམ་མོ།

²⁶⁸ Gyalwa Changchub and Namkhai Nyingpo 1999: 197-198; Stag sham nus ldan rdo rje, *Bod kyi jo mo*, ff. 128b.4-6:

ཐུག་གཡམས་པས་མོན་མོ་བྲག་ཤིས་སྤྱི་འདྲིན་ལ་རེག་པས་ཡུལ་སྡེ་པོ་འདབས་མ་བརྒྱད་པ་ཞིག་ལ་རྒྱུ་ཕན་ དབྱུས་མཚན་པ་
 ཞིག་ཏུ་གྱུར་ནས་རྗེ་མོའི་ཐུགས་ཀ་གཡམས་སུ་ཐིམ་ ཐུག་གཡོན་པས་བལ་འབངས་ཀྱི་སློང་ལ་རེག་པས་པ་དམར་པོ་
 འདབས་མ་བརྒྱུད་པ་ཨ་ལི་བརྒྱུད་དང་རྒྱུ་མཚན་པ་ཞིག་ཏུ་གྱུར་ནས་ཐུགས་ཀ་གཡོན་དུ་ཐིམ་པར་གྱུར་ཏོ།

²⁶⁹ *Autobiography* 5a; 11b.

²⁷⁰ Jomo Menmo (*Jo mo sman mo*) was a thirteenth-century female Treasure revealer and consort of the Treasure revealer Guru Chöki Wangpo. See Dujom Rinpoché 1991: 771.

²⁷¹ Having unmediated access to the divine is not specific only to Treasure revealers, as those who receive Pure Vision teachings or even more generally those who master generation and completion stage meditation practices can also be understood in this way.

²⁷² Thondup 1986: 68.

²⁷³ In numerous publications, Janet Gyatso has demonstrated the ways in which these visions, as well as the larger project of writing autobiography, serve to legitimize the Treasure revealer's role as an authentically prophesized revealer. See Gyatso 1986, 1992a, 1992b, 1993, 1994, 1996, 1998.

²⁷⁴ *Autobiography* 327a.2-327b.2:

དེ་ནས་འདུ་བ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱིས་ཆོགས་ཀྱི་འཁོར་ལོ་རྒྱ་ཆེན་པོ་མཛད་ཅིང་། བྱད་པར་བཀའ་འདུས་ཆོས་ཀྱི་རྒྱ་མཆོའི་དཀྱིལ་འཁོར་

གྲིཞལ་བྱས་ནས། རྗེ་འབངས་རང་རང་ནམས་ལ་སྤྲིན་གྲོལ་སྤྲུལ་ནས་བཀའ་ཡི་བསྟུ་བ་མཛད་ཅིང་། དཔེ་མཛོད་ཐམས་ཅད་
འཕྲུལ་གྱི་ཟ་མ་དོག་ལ་རྒྱས་གདབ་ནས། རྗེས་སུ་འབྲུག་པ་ནམས་ལ་པ་ཤོག་ཏུ་གནང་ཞིང་བྱགས་བསྐྱེད་མཛད་པ་སོགས་དང་།
བྱུང་པར་ཡིད་བཞིན་ཞོར་བྱེད་རང་གི་སྤྲུབ་སྒྲེལ་དཔའ་བོ་མཛད་ཅིང་སྤྲིན་གྲོལ་ལ་བཀོད་ནས། ཡེ་ཤེས་མཆོ་རྒྱལ་གྱིས་བྱགས་
བརྩེ་བ་ཆེན་པོ་རྗེས་སུ་བཟུང་སྟེ། ཡང་གསང་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་བྱག་ཏིག་གི་ཆོས་སྒྲོར་བམ་པོ་ལྟ་བུ་ཅ་བརྒྱད་གྱི་ཤོག་མེར་
ནམས་སྤྲན་བརྒྱད་གྱི་ཚུལ་དུ་བདག་ལ་གཏད་ནས་བདེ་དབང་བསྟར། གསང་མཆོན་དུ་མཁའ་འགྲོ་དབྱེས་པའི་དོན་རྒྱུ་བཏགས་
ནས་གཏད་རྒྱ་སྒོན་ལམ་མཛད་དོ།

²⁷⁵ Eliade 1954: 89.

²⁷⁶ Janet Gyatso also notes the Eliadian quality of temporality in the Treasure tradition, but concludes that the Treasure tradition differs from Eliade's understanding of the myth of eternal return given the intermediary stages in Treasure revelation including the transmission from primordial Buddhas to Imperial Tibetan mytho-historical figures such as Padmasambhava and then to Treasure revealers. Gyatso 1993: 112. Sera Khandro's biographical writings seem to collapse the stage of transmission between primordial Buddhas and Padmasambhava, making Padmasambhava and Yeshé Tsogyal the primordial figures from which Sera Khandro, as their prophesized emissary, receives direct instruction.

²⁷⁷ Drimé Özer *Biography* 184a.4- 184b. 4:

དེ་ནས་བདེ་བའི་དོན་རྗེ་ལ་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་བདེ་བྱང་ཞིག་ཡོད་པ་དེ་རྗེའི་བྱག་ཏུ་ཕྱུལ་ནས་འདིའི་དོན་བྱེད་ཀྱིས་དགོངས་སམ་ཞུས་ཆོ།
རྗེས་གཟིགས་པར་མཛད་ནས་བྱེད་གྱི་གཏེར་སྒྲལ་ཞིག་བདག་གིས་ལོན་པར་འདུག་གསུངས། བདེ་བའི་དོན་རྗེ་ན་རེ་དེ་ཅིའི་ཕྱིར་
ཡིན་ལགས་ཞུས། རྗེའི་ཞལ་ནས་བྱ་ཅག་གཏེར་ཁ་མ་བྱ་ཡིན་པ་དང་། བྱུང་པར་རང་ལ་གཏེར་འཁོར་བཞི།
གཏེར་ལ་ཕན་པའི་གྲོགས་གསུམ་ཡོད་པའི་ལུང་བསྟན་འདུག་སྟེ། དེ་དག་གི་ནང་ནས་གཏེར་ལ་ཕན་པའི་གྲོགས་བྱུང་པར་བ་
རང་དང་མཉམ་པ་ཞིག་ལུང་དུ་གསལ་པོར་ཡོད་པ་འདི་བྱེད་ཡིན་པས། དེའི་རྒྱུན་ལས་གཅིག་གྲོགས་གཅིག་གིས་བྱེད་པ་རེ་
གསུངས། བདེ་བའི་དོན་རྗེས་དམན་པ་བདག་ལྟ་བུའི་སྤྲུལ་སྤྲུ་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་དང་མི་མཉམ་ངེས་པ་ཡིན་ཀྱང་། རྗེན་འབྲེལ་གྱི་
དགོས་ཆེ་དུ་ཅི་ཡང་མ་ཞུས་པ་ལགས་སོ་ཞུས། དེ་ནས་ཡབ་ཡུམ་གཉིས་ཀྱིས་ལྷགས་གཉིས་ཀྱི་གསུང་གྲོས་ཞལ་ཏ་
སོགས་ཞིབ་པར་མཛད་ནས་བདེ་བའི་དོན་པར་བྱོན།

²⁷⁸ "One with the Power of a Karmic Link (to the Lotus Born One)" is an epithet of Drimé Özer, who by this time in Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* has already passed away. Sera Khandro's constant interaction with figures in her life who have died is another example of her access to a timeless dimension via her visionary experiences.

²⁷⁹ According to Chatral Sangyé Dorjé Rinpoché, "*sapta*" demons refer generally to obstructions that hinder virtuous activities. Personal communication, September, 2005. Sera Khandro mentions *sapta* demons very frequently, in almost every prophecy she records. Interestingly, an incarnate lama in contemporary Golok defined *sapta* demons in Sera Khandro's writings as "Chinese people," suggesting his view of what obstructs religious accomplishment, although Chatral Rinpoché does not agree with this definition and suggested it is a more general term for hindrances. *Sapta* is Sanskrit for "seven," which

raises the question of whether this term for demons could have a link to the Sanskrit *Saptamātrikā* (Seven Mothers)?

²⁸⁰ *Gter gnyis*, two Treasures, refers consistently to Dujom Lingpa and Drimé Özer's Treasure cycles, both of which Sera Khandro was empowered to teach.

²⁸¹ Benefiting oneself and others.

²⁸² That is, later you will be reborn in Padmasambhava's Buddhafield called The Glorious Copper-colored Mountain.

²⁸³ *Sgra brgya'i gdong gis bsus 'ong*. *Sgra brgya* could be a metaphor for thunder but it doesn't seem to fit contextually here.

²⁸⁴ *Autobiography* 355b.4-356b.1:

མི་མི་གནས་མཆོག་དཔལ་རིའི་སྒྲིང་ནས། འོང་བའི་འཕྲུལ་ལྟན་གསེར་བྱ། གྲོགས་གཅིག་ལས་འབྲེལ་ཅུལ་གྱིས།
 ཁྱོད་ལ་ངག་གསལ་སྟོན་ཡོད། བདེ་བདེ་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་གྲོང་ཁྱེར། རང་བྱུང་དབྱིངས་ཀྱི་རྒྱན་ལས།
 འོག་ན་མེད་པ་ཨི་ནམ། སྤང་ཆ་ཐབས་མཆོག་དཔལ་གྱི། སྒྲིང་དབྱིངས་ཤེས་རབ་བཙུན་མོ། འདྲ་འབྲལ་མེད་
 པ་ཨི་ནམ། སྟོན་སྟོན་ལས་འཕྲོ་སད་པའི། སལྱའི་དབང་དུ་མ་གཏོང་། བདེ་ཆེན་འབྱུང་གནས་སེམས་མ།
 སྒྲིང་འཛིན་ལྷགས་ཀྱའི་ལས་སྟོར། མི་རིང་སྤར་དུ་བཙུན་ན། རྒྱགས་མེད་རྒྱགས་ནས་འཕྲད་ངེས།
 དེའི་མཐུས་གཏིར་གཉིས་བསྟན་པ། ཤར་དང་སྟོན་ནས་དར་ངེས། བྱ་ཆེན་རྒྱ་པ་ཤི། མི་རིང་རང་གི་རྒྱགས་ནས།
 ཡོས་བྱས་བརྩུ་བག་མེད་ཆོ། དོན་གཉིས་སྤང་བེས་འབྱུང་མིད། པད་འབྱུང་མཆོ་རྒྱལ་གཉིས་ལ། ཅི་གཅིག་
 གསོལ་བ་བཏབ་ན། རིམ་མཐོང་མཛོད་དུ་གྱུར་ནས། བྱི་མ་དཔལ་རིང་འཁོད་ངེས། བསྐྱེད་འཇའ་ཆོན་རིམ་མོར།
 སྒོ་གཏད་དོན་གཉེར་བྱས་ཆོ། ཆོས་བརྒྱད་དུག་གི་མེ་ཏོག། སྤྲ་བརྒྱའི་གདོང་གིས་བསྐྱེད་འོང་། ལྷ་དང་སྤང་
 མ་འབྲུན་ས། མི་འདོད་དབང་སྟོར་གསལ་ལ། ཅི་ཆ་ཅི་འབྱུར་མ་ངེས། ལུབ་ནས་ཀྱན་བཟང་མིང་གིས།
 བད་དོན་ལས་ལ་བསྐྱེད་ཆོ། ཤེས་རབ་མདའ་མོ་མ་ཞན། རྟོན་འབྲེལ་གནད་གཟབ་གལ་ཆོ།

²⁸⁵ This is similar to the famous female Treasure revealer's biography from the thirteenth century, Jomo Menmo (*Jo mo sman mo*), who also received a prophetic vision from Vajravārāhī when she was thirteen that began her career as a Treasure revealer. See Dujom Rinpoché 1991: 771-772.

²⁸⁶ See dissertation p. 25-26 for the English translation of this full passage.

²⁸⁷ *Autobiography* 49a.6-49b.6. Tibetan transcribed in Ch. 1 endnote 77.

²⁸⁸ As quoted in Mitchell 2002: 39.

²⁸⁹ *Autobiography* 209a.6-209b.3:

དེའི་སྐབས་སུ་གཏིར་ཁ་དུ་མའི་རྟོན་འབྲེལ་བཏང་སྟོམས་ལ་སོང་ཞིང་། ཁྱད་པར་བྲག་དཀར་སྤེལ་རྫོང་གི་ཟབ་གཏིར་མཁའ་
 འགྲོ་དགོངས་པ་འདུས་པའི་ཆོས་གཏིར་རྣམས་བཏང་སྟོམས་ལ་ལུས། དེའི་སྐབས་གཏིར་སྤང་དངོས་སུ་འོང་བ་དང་།
 རྟོན་འབྲེལ་གཞན་རྟོན་ལ་ཤོར་བ་རྣམས་དེར་འདུས་ཀྱན་གྱི་མཚོང་ཆོས་སུ་གྱུར་ཡང་། གནས་དུས་བསོད་ནམས་དམན་པའི་

དབང་བཅན་པས་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་བཏང་སྟོམས་ལ་མི་འགྲོ་ཐབས་མེད་པ་ལྟ་བུར་བྱུང་ངོ་།

²⁹⁰ Solung Drakar (*Bswo lung brag dkar*) is a Treasure revelation site a few kilometers outside of the current Padma County seat Selithang off of the road that leads to Banak Monastery, Gara Tertön's seat, where Sera Khandro lived for many years and where she raised her daughter Yangchen Drönma.

²⁹¹ *Autobiography* 152b.3-153a.4:

རང་ཡང་ཤིང་ཐུ་རུ་སོང་བས། ཆོས་ཐོང་ན་རེ་ བྱོད་གྱི་སྒྲུལ་བའི་ཤིང་ར་རང་གིས་བྱས་ཡོད་ཟེར། ཡང་བདག་གིས་
ཤིང་ཐུ་མ་དགོས་ན་ཁུ་ཅག་གཉིས་བསྟོན་ལུང་བྲག་དཀར་ཡོད་ས་དེ་ཀར་ཨི་འགྲོ་སྒྲུལ་ཆོ། མོ་ན་རེ་ འགྲོ་དང་ཆོག་གི།
གནས་དེ་ཀར་སྤར་མགར་ར་སྒྲུ་མས་ཀྱང་ཁོང་གི་གཏེར་གནས་ཞིག་ཡིན་གསུངས་པ་ཐོས་སྟེ་ཕྱིར་ཟེར། དེ་ཀར་ངེད་གཉིས་སོང་
བའི་ལམ་ཁ་ན་སྒྲུ་སྟོར་གྱི་མི་ཞིག་དགོན་ནང་ལ་སོང་སྟེ་ཡར་འོང་བ་དང་འཕྲད་པས། མི་དེའི་ལ་ཁ་ཤོ་འདུག། མིང་ལ་
དོན་རྒྱུ་མས་ཟེར་བ་ཞིག་ཡིན་ཀྱང་། ར་རང་གི་ཐབས་གྲོགས་མ་ཡོན་པ་དང་། ཁོ་ཡི་ལ་ཁ་མེད་པ་གཉིས་དུས་འཛོམས་པ་
ལ་རྟེན་ནས། བདག་གིས་འདི་ལྟར་བསམ་བྱུང་། སྟེ་བ་འདི་རུ་ལས་ཅི་ལ་བཙོན་ཀྱང་མགར་ར་གཏེར་ཆེན་གྱི་ཟབ་
གཏེར་རྒྱུ་མས་ལ་བདག་གི་འཛོམས་སྟེ་ཕྱིར་ཟེར་གྱི་ཞབས་ཞུ་འོང་དཀར་འདུག་སྒྲུལ་ནས། གནས་དེ་ཀར་ཟབ་ལམ་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་
གསང་མཛོད་གྱི་ཆོས་སྟེ་ཕ་ཁྱིད་ཡེ་ཤེས་ལམ་ཟབ་གྱི་ཟབ་ཤོག་བསྟོན་སྟེ་མ་ཆོས་སྒྲུན་དང་བཅས་བཞུགས་ཀྱང་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་གཞན་དབང་
ལ་སོང་བས། བདག་སྤར་བར་ཕྱིར་ཡོག་དགོས་སྒྲུལ་པས། མོ་ན་རེ་ ཁུ་ཅག་གཉིས་བྲག་དཀར་ཡོད་སར་འགྲོ་
དགོས་པ་འོ་ཡིན། ད་ཐག་ཡེ་མེད་པའི་དེ་ཀར་འགྲོ་ཟེར། ཡང་བདག་གིས་ད་མི་འགྲོ་ད་ལྟ་འགོར་ཆེ་སོང་ན་རྒྱལ་སྤྲུལ་སང་
གི་བཀའ་བརྟེན་གནང་འོང་། མིན་ཀྱང་དབྱངས་ཅན་སྟོན་མ་བྱུང་བཟང་ལ་བཙོན་ཡོད། དེ་དུས་ནི་གོ་ན་རྒྱལ་སྤྲུལ་ནས་
བཀའ་བརྟེན་གནང་ངེས་པ་ཡིན་སྒྲུལ་ནས་ངེད་གཉིས་གྱིས་འབྲུད་ཤིང་ཁྱུང་ནས་ཕྱིར་འོང་བས།

²⁹² See Chapter One pp. 39-41 for more information on Gara Tertön.

²⁹³ Thondup 1986: 107

²⁹⁴ There are also some cases of Treasure revealers who were monks and did not have consorts. For example, see Germano 1998: 68-70 for a discussion of the Serta Treasure revealer Khenpo Jikmé Püntso (1934-2003) and the importance he placed on monastic vows. The incarnate of Sera Monastery in Serta named Sera Yangtrül (Se ra yang sprul, 1925-1988), who was the incarnation of the close disciple of Sera Khandro and Drimé Özer Sotrül Rinpoché, was also a monastic Treasure revealer. See Bsod nams nyi ma 1994 for a biography of Sera Yangtrül. Although there are some examples of monastic Treasure revealers, there is a pervasive idea that monastics cannot reveal all of their prophesized Treasures because of not relying on a consort and therefore not having all the auspicious circumstances necessary for their revelations. See Chapter Four for more information on this point.

²⁹⁵ Thondup 1986: 130.

²⁹⁶ *Autobiography* 326a.1-3:

མཁའ་འགྲོའི་ཞལ་ལུང་བཞིན་དུ་བསྒྲུབ་དང་། རིང་ཅག་ནས་གྲོགས་ལྡན་བྱེད། བྱོད་པར་གཏེར་སྟོན་གྱི་ཕྱིན་ལས་

ཐབས་གྲོགས་ཆོས་བདག་ལ་རག་ལས་ཡོད་པས།

རྟེན་འབྲེལ་བྱུང་སྟོམས་ལ་མ་བཞག་པར་ཚུལ་བཞིན་དུ་སྟོང་པ་གཤམ་ཆེ་

གསུངས།

²⁹⁷ *Bi ma rasmi'i dbu ljon gyis dkris pa'i rdo rje'i brda byas pa'i tshe*. The meaning of this is unclear. If *dkris* was spelled *bkris*, it would be an abbreviation of *bkra shis*, hence it would change the meaning to "auspicious vajra." The import of this phrase seems to be that *Bi ma rasmi*, i.e., Skt. *vimala* (stainless) + *raśmi* (ray of light) or Tib. *Drimé Özer* made a sign that enabled the Treasure entrance to open.

²⁹⁸ *Autobiography* 203a.4-205a.2:

དེ་ནས་རྟེན་ཆེག་ལ་ཁའི་ཐད་དུ་སྒར་བསྐྱད་སྐབས།

མ་རྒྱལ་སྟོམས་དབང་ཕྱག་མ་བདུན་གྱི་བདེ་བྱང་བསྐྱལ་བ་ལ་བརྟེན་ནས།

དགྲའ་མོ་དབང་གི་དུས་སུ་བཙུན་མ་ཆོས་ཕྱིར་དང་།

མ་ཁའ་སྟོང་སྟོན།

བདེ་ཆེན་སྟོན་མ།

རང་གི་བྱ་མོ་ཆོས་དབྱིངས་

སྟོན་མ་དང་།

དམ་ཆོག་གི་རྟེན་དུ་མགར་གཏེར་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་འཁྱུ་སྤྲུལ་འདུལ་བ་འཛིན་པ་འཇིགས་མེད་དགོན་མཆོག་བཅས་

གངས་རིའི་ཉེ་ཆར་དབང་ཕྱག་མ་བདུན་གྱི་གནས་སུ་སོང་ཆོ།

བར་སྒྲུང་ཐམས་ཅད་འཇའ་ཡི་སྟོན་དཔུང་གྱིན་འབྱེད་དང་།

ཅིབ་གྲུག།

ཆུ་གམ།

པདྨའི་དབྱིབས་ཅན་ལ་སོགས་པས་གང་འདུག་པའི།

ཁོང་རྣམས་ན་རེ་

འདི་ནི་ལ་མཚན་གྱི་རྟེན་ཆེ་བ་ཞིག་གཤའ་བས་བྱ་ཅག་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་དངོས་གྲུབ་ཞིག་འོན་པ་འདྲ་ཟེར།

བདག་གིས་ཅི་ཡང་མ་སྤྲུལ།

དེ་ནས་གཏེར་སྟོལ་ཡོད་སར་ཐོན་སོང་བའི་སྤྱིར་ཉེ་ཆར་སྟོན་རྣམས་ཀྱི་སྤྱིར་དུ་མཆོད་པའི་ལྷ་མོའི་སྤྱོད་གཞུགས་ལྷ་བྱའི་ཕྱག་ན་མཆོད་མཆོ

ད་རྒྱས་ཐོགས་པ་འདྲ་བ་མང་པོ་གཏེར་གནས་ལས་རྩུང་ཟད་དམའ་བའི་གཡས་གཡོན་དུ་འབྱེད་ཅེས་གནས་འདུག་པས།

ཁོང་རྣམས་ངོ་མཚར་ནས་དེ་དག་གི་སྟོགས་སུ་ཕྱག་འཚལ་ཞིང་སྟོན་ལམ་བཟབ་པ་སོགས་བྱེད་འདུག།

དེ་སྐབས་ལམ་ཐག་

རིང་བའི་སྟོབས་ཀྱིས་ཉི་མ་མེད་པ་ཡིན་པའི་སྟོན་གསེབ་རྣམས་ནས་ཉི་མའི་འོད་ལྷ་བྱའི་ངོད་ཅག་གི་ཉེ་འཁོར་དང་།

བྱུང་པར་

གཏེར་སྟོལ་ཐོང་སྤྱང་གསལ་བས།

བདག་གིས་ཁོང་རྣམས་ལ་འདི་སྐད་སྤྲུལ།

བྱེད་རྣམས་སོང་ལ་བྲག་འདི་

ལ་བསྟོར་བ་གྱིས་དང་།

བྱ་མོན་རྩུང་བ་དང་།

ང་རང་རྒྱུ་པ་ངན་པའི་སྟོར་མི་ཐུབ་པ་འདྲ་ན་གནས་འདི་གཞས་

བྱེད་ཅག་སྤྱུག་འདུག་སྤྲུལ་ཆོ།

ཁོང་རྣམས་བསྟོར་བ་ལ་བྱུང་སོང་བའི་རྒྱུ་སྤྱོད་ལ།

བདག་གིས་གཏེར་སྟོར་གསང་གྲོགས་

མི་མ་རྩིའི་དབུ་ལྗོན་གྱིས་དཀྱིས་གིས་པའི་དོན་རྒྱུ་འདྲ་བའི་ཆོ།

དེ་མ་ཐག་པར་གཏེར་སྟོར་ཆུ་གམ་ལྷ་བྱ་ཞིག་ཕྱིས་སོང་

བའི་ནང་ནས་དོན་རྒྱུ་མེད་ཟེ་ཐབས་ལྟོས་ཆུ་ཅན་གྱི་གཏེར་སྟོར་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་བསྟེ་ཡི་སྟོར་བྱ་གཅིག་དང་།

དབྱངས་ཅན་མའི་

སྤྱོད་ཀྱི་མ་རྩུ་པ་ལས་གྲུབ་པའི་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་མཚུབ་གང་གི་ཆོད་ཅམ་དང་།

གསང་བྱེད་ལ་བཞིའི་གཏེར་ཤོག་རྩུབ་མི་སྤྱིར་བྱུན་

མཐོག་པ་གཅིག་དང་།

གཡུ་སྟོན་།

མཆོང་སྟོན་།

ལྷ་སྟོན་གསུམ་དང་།

གཞན་ཡང་ཆོས་སྤྲུལ།

བྱར་གྱུམ། མྱོང་གྲོལ་གྱི་རིལ་བྱ་རྣམས་སྤྲོད་བྲངས་ནས་གཏིར་ཚབ་ཕུལ། ཐུགས་རྟེན་དང་ཕྱིན་ལས་གྱི་སྒྲོམ་རྣམས་
 ཐབས་གྲོགས་དང་ཚོས་བདག་དངོས་མ་ཕྱན་ནས་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་ཆེས་མཐུན་དུ་ལུས། དེའི་སྐབས་ལུང་པར་དྲི་བཟང་གི་དང་ལུང་
 ཞིང་གཏིར་གནས་ནས་བྱུང་ཆུ་བཞོལ་བ་དང་། ས་གཡེ་ཞིང་སྤྱིར་བ་སོགས་བྱུང་བའི་ཆོ། ཁོང་རྣམས་ཀྱང་ཅི་
 ཡིན་སྐྱུལ་ནས་སྤྱར་བར་ཐོན་བྱུང་བས་འདི་སྐད་ཟེར། བྱིད་ཀྱིས་གཏིར་ཞིག་བྱངས་ཡོད་ངེས་པ་རེད། རེད་ཅག་ལ་མཇུག་
 ཁ་སྟོན་རོགས་དགོས། བདག་གིས་ང་རང་གི་བྱ་མོ་ཞིག་གཏིར་ནས་ཡོན་ཡོད་འདི་རེད། ད་བྱ་ཞིག་ཨོ་ཡོན་སྐྱུལ་གི་
 སྐྱུས་ཆོ། ཆོས་ཕྱང་ན་རེ་ བྱིད་ཀྱི་སྤྱུལ་མོས་གཏིར་མཇུག་ཆར། ད་ལན་དྲི་བཟང་གིས་བྱུང་བའི་གཏིར་དེ་མཇུག་
 དགོས་ཡང་ཡང་ཟེར། བདག་གིས་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་དམ་ཚིག་ལ་བསམ་ཞིང་རྩོན་ངེས་པ་བཤད་མ་ཡོད་ནས། ད་བྱིད་
 ཅག་གིས་སྤྱིན་གསེབ་གྱི་ལྟ་མོ་རྣམས་ལ་ནི་ཕུག་ཕུལ་ཆར་བས། དང་རང་དང་གནས་འདི་ལ་ཕུག་ཕུལ་དང་།
 བདག་གིས་བྱུང་ཆུ་ཞིག་གཏིར་གྱི་ཚུལ་དུ་བཏོན་ཡོད་པས། དེ་ལ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱིས་ཁ་རྟེན་གྱིས་དང་། གནས་གྱི་དངོས་
 བྱུང་རེད་སྐྱུས་ཆོ། ཁོང་རྣམས་ན་རེ། ཐུག་སྐྱུལ་འདི་ལྟ་བུ་ནས་ཆུ་མིག་རང་བྱུང་གྲོ་བྱར་དུ་ཐོལ་བ་དེ་ཀ་ལོ་མཚར་ཆེ་ཟེར།
 ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱི་བདུད་རྩི་ཁ་རྟེན་བྱས་ཆོ་རོ་ལྟས་ཀྱང་མི་འདྲ་བ་དང་། དྲི་བཟང་གི་དང་པ་ལུང་འདུག་ཟེར།

²⁹⁹ It is interesting to consider whether this focus on male and female partnership is related to Sera Khandro's identity as a female Treasure revealer, although there is insufficient research to date to draw any conclusion about this. Another example of a Treasure revealer couple who suggest they need each other to reveal their Treasures is Sera Khandro and Drimé Özer's incarnations Namtrül Jikmé Püntso and Taré Lhamo, who draw from Sera Khandro's writings to formulate their identity as a divinely prophesized Treasure revelation couple. In this couple as well, both figures are renowned for being Treasure revealers in their own right, yet Namtrül Jikmé Püntso explains that they revealed their Treasures together as a couple. I discuss this further in Chapter Five.

³⁰⁰ Here in Drimé Özer's *Biography*, Sera Khandro refers to herself as the Tibetan word for ḍākinī, khandroma, and also by her Treasure name Dewé Dorjé.

³⁰¹ Drimé Özer *Biography* 210b.5- 212a.4:

དེའི་སྐབས་སུ་བདེ་བའི་རྫོང་ལ་བཞུགས་པར་ཞོང་མ་ན་མཁའ་འགྲོ་དགོངས་འདུས་གྱི་ཆོས་སྒྲོར་
 ཞིག་གཏིར་དུ་ཡོད་པ་དེ་འདོན་པའི་དུས་ལ་བབ་ནས། བཞུགས་ཆེའི་ཕུག་དུ་ཕུལ་ཆོ། ཆེའི་ཐུགས་ཤིན་དུ་དབྱེས་ཏེ་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་དུས་
 དང་ལྡན་དགོས། བྱ་ཅག་གཉིས་ཡོན་དུ་འགྲོ་གསུངས། མཁའ་འགྲོས་ཀྱང་ལགས་སོ་ཞུས་ནས་ཞག་ཆ་ཤས་གྱི་གཏིར་
 འདོན་པའི་དུས་ལ་བབ་སྟེ། ཡབ་ཡུམ་གཉིས་ཀ་གསང་ཐབས་གྱི་བྱོན། མཁའ་འགྲོའི་རྒྱུ་བའ་ན་པའི་ག་ལེར་སོང་།
 ཆེས་ཁོང་གི་གཏིར་སྒྲོ་གར་ཡོད་གཟིགས་གསུངས་ནས་སྟོན་དུ་བྱོན་སོང་བས། དེའི་ཅུང་ཞིག་གི་ཆེ་ཕྱིར་ཐེབ་བྱུང་བས།
 མཁའ་འགྲོས་བྱིད་ཅེའི་ཕྱིར་བྱོན་པ་ཡིན་ཞུས་ཆོ། ཆེའི་ཐུགས་ལ་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་བསྐྱེད་མི་ཉན་དགོངས་ཤིང་། ང་རང་

གིས་གཏིར་ལོན་ནས་བྱེད་བསུ་བར་འོང་བ་ཡིན་གསུངས་ཏེ་ས་སྤྲུག་གཅིག་ལ་སྟོན་དུ་བྱོན། དེ་ནས་རྗེའི་ཞལ་ནས་གཏིར་
 གནས་ལ་ཉ་སྤལ་མང་པོ་འཛོགས་འདུག་པས་དེ་ཅི་རེད་གསུངས། བདེ་བའི་དོ་རྗེས་འདིའི་སྤྱིའི་གཏིར་སྤང་སྤྱུ་བཅན་ཞིག་
 ཡིན་འདུག་པས་དེའི་ཆོ་འཕྲུལ་རེད་ལགས་ཞུས། དེ་ནས་ཡར་གཏིར་སྒྲོར་ཉེ་འགྲོ་ཁར་ངྷི་བཟང་འབྲུལ་བ་དང་། ནམ་
 མཁའ་ནས་རྒྱུ་ཉི་འཛུལ་འཛུལ་བྱེད་ཅིང་སྒྲིན་སྒྲིན་སྒྲོགས་པ་སོགས་བྱེད། དེ་ནས་ཡབ་ཡུམ་གཉིས་ཀ་གཏིར་སྒྲོར་ཐེབ་
 ནས། རྗེས་ཆོག་བདུན་གསུངས་བཞིན་བཞུགས་ཏེ། བདེ་བའི་དོ་རྗེས་གཏིར་སྒྲོ་བྱས་ཏེ་གཏིར་སྒྲོམ་གསུམ་འདོན་ནས།
 རྗེའི་སྤྲུག་ཏུ་སྤལ་བས་ངོ་མཆར་ཆེ་གསུངས་ཏེ། དབང་ལེན་མཛད་ཅིང་བྱུགས་དབྱེས་དབྱེས་མཛད་ནས་གཏིར་ཆབ་བཞག་སྟེ་
 གཏིར་སྒྲོ་བཅོམས། དེ་ནས་བདེ་བའི་དོ་རྗེས་རྗེ་ལ་གསོལ་བ། ང་རང་གཏིར་གསང་གཏིར་ཡིན་པས་གཞན་ལ་
 ལོན་རབ་གསུངས་མི་ཉན་ཞུས་ཆོ། རྗེའི་ཞལ་ནས་བྱེད་གཏིར་སྟོན་ཡིན་པ་ཀུན་གྱི་སྒོས་ཡོད་པས། ང་རང་གི་མ་བཤད་
 ནའང་གོ་འགྲོ་ངེས་པ་ཡིན་གསུངས། དེ་ནས་བདེ་བའི་དོ་རྗེས་ད་ནི་བྱེད་ཀྱིས་ཟབ་གཏིར་ཞིག་བཞེས་དགོས་ཡང་ཡང་ཞུས་པས།
 ཉིན་གཅིག་དུ་ཡན་ལ་ཡབ་ཡུམ་གཉིས་ཀ་བྱོན་པས། རྗེས་ད་རེས་ང་རང་གི་གཏིར་ལོན་དགོས་པ་ཨ་མ་ཆར་དུ་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་ཞིག་
 བཞུགས་དགོས་གསུངས་ནས། བདེ་བའི་དོ་རྗེས་སྤུས་ལ་ངོག་ལྷ་ལོན་པ་ཞིག་ཡོད་པ་དེ་ལ། རྗེའི་ཞལ་ནས་བྱེད་
 གཏིར་སྟོན་ཨི་བྱེད་གསུངས། སྤས་ཀྱིས་ང་གཏིར་སྟོན་བྱེད་འདྲ་འདྲ་བྱེད་ཟེར། རྗེས་རིགས་ཀྱི་བྱ་འདི་ལྷར་ལོས་ཡིན་
 གསུང་། དེ་ནས་གནས་དེའི་ངོས་ནས་བྱེད་པ་ཨ་ཁྱོང་ལས་གྲུབ་པའི་དབྱངས་ཅན་རིགས་ལྷའི་གཏིར་སྟོན་ཆེ་བ་གཅིག་བཞེས་ནས་ངོ་
 མཆར་བའི་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་དུ་མ་རང་བྱུང་དུ་འབྱུང་།

³⁰² *Autobiography* 245a.2-3.

³⁰³ This is an alternative name for Drimé Özer meaning "Place of Secret Mantra that Tames Beings."

³⁰⁴ *Autobiography* 357a.4- 357b.1:

ལོ་བྱིས་དེའི་རྒྱ་བ་བཅུ་པའི་ཉེར་ལྷའི་དུས་ཆེན་ལ། སྤྱབས་རྗེ་ཐམས་ཅད་མཁྱེན་པ་འགྲོ་འདུལ་གསང་སྤྲུགས་སྤིང་
 པའི་ཡེ་ཤེས་སྤྱུ་མའི་སྤྱིའི་བྱུགས་རྗེ་ལ་བརྟེན་ནས། གངས་རི་མོད་དཀར་གྱི་གསང་གཏིར་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་བྱུགས་བཅུད་གསང་
 བ་གཤམ་ཐིག་གི་ཟབ་ཤོག་ཞིང་སྤྲུགས་ངོས་ལ་བེ་རོས་ཕུག་བྱིས་གསེར་བྱིས་བདེ་གྲོང་ཆོ་བཅུ་གསུམ། བསུ་སྟོམ་གྱི་གྲུག་གི་རྒྱ་ཅན།
 མཆོ་རྒྱལ་གྱི་རྟ་འོད་ཟེར་ལ། དབང་སྤྲུག་གི་རོར་བྱ་རིན་ཆེན་གསུམ་ལས་བྱས་པའི་སྟོམ་བྱ་བཅས་ལག་ཏུ་འབྱོར་
 ནས་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་ཕུན་སུམ་ཆོགས་པ་བྱུང་ངོ་།

³⁰⁵ See Blondeau and Steinkellner 1996; Blondeau 1998; Huber 1994a; Karmay 1998a.

³⁰⁶ Traces of the hegemonic conversion of Tibet to Buddhism beginning in the eighth century are still visible today in this rhetoric of subjugating and controlling the local deities.

³⁰⁷ Lharik Nyentsé (*Lha rig gnyen rtse*) is the name of a mountain deity affiliated with the Golok mountain range Nyenpo Yutsé in Jiktril County, Golok, just over the county line from Padma County and nearby Pelyül Tartang Monastery. Nyenpo Yutsé is the principal holy mountain of Golok, revered as the birthplace of the Golok tribes.

³⁰⁸ *Autobiography* 342b.1-343a.2:

དེ་ནས་ཁྱེད་ཀྱི་ཡེ་ཤེས་ལྷ་མོ་ཉི་ཤེས་ཀྱི་ལྷ་བཟང་དང་། རང་གི་བྱ་མེ་ཆོས་དབྱིངས་སྒྲོན་མ་བཅས་
བསྐྱེད་ཀྱིས་དང་ལྷ་ན་དུ་འཛིན་པའི་ལུང་དགོན་དུ་སོང་ནས་དེ་ཀྱང་གནས་བཅས་ཡོད་སྐབས། ཡུལ་སྤྱོད་ལྷ་རིག་
གཉིན་ཅེ་ཡིན་ཟེར་བའི་མི་དཀར་རྩ་དཀར་ཅན་ཞིག་འོང་ནས་འདི་སྐད་ཟེར། བྱིད་ཀྱིས་ངེད་ཅག་ལ་གསོལ་མཆོད་གྱིས་དང་།
ཅི་འདོད་ཕྱིན་ལས་བསྐྱེད་འོང་ཟེར་ནས་ཐལ་ལོ། བདག་གི་བསམ་པ་ལ་ང་རང་རྒྱུང་ལོང་བཅུ་ནས་བཟུང་ད་བར་ལ་དགོན་
མཆོག་རྣམ་གསུམ་ལ་སྒྲོག་གཏད་ནས་གསོལ་འདེབས་བྱེད་པ་མ་གཏོགས། ཡུལ་སྤྱོད་གཞི་བདག་སོགས་ལ་སྐྱབས་བཅོལ་བ་
དང་མཆོད་གསོལ་བྱེད་པ་སོགས་མི་དར་བ་ལྟ་བུ་ཡིན་གྱང་། ད་ལན་ཁོ་རང་བདག་གི་གཏིར་སྤང་ཡིན་པས།
གནས་མཁྱོན་གྱི་དམ་ཆོག་གི་རྟེན་དུ་སྐྱེས་ནས། ཁོ་རང་ལ་དམིགས་ནས་མཆོད་གསོལ་ཕྱན་བྱ་ཞིག་བྱས་ཆོ།
ཅི་དགོས་ཀྱི་མཐུན་རྐྱེན་ཐམས་ཅད་འགྲུབ་པར་བྱུང་ངོ།

³⁰⁹ Sangngak Lingpa is an epithet of Drimé Özer, but here the name does not refer to him but a different figure named *A skyes gsang sngags gling pa*. Since Sera Khandro almost always refers to Drimé Özer as “The Lord himself” (*rje de nyid*) or as “The Wish-fulfilling Jewel” (*vid bzhin nor bu*), in any case it would be unusual for her to call him by this name.

³¹⁰ *Autobiography* 309b.5-310b.1:

དེ་སྐབས་སྤར་གཏིར་སྒྲོན་གསང་སྤགས་སྤྱིང་པའི་གདན་སའི་ཉི་ཤེས་ན་གཏིར་ཁ་རེ་སྐྱེན་བྱངས་རྒྱུ་ཡོད་པས། དེ་ཀྱང་
ངེད་དཔོན་གཡོག་སོང་བས། བླ་མོ་ཞིག་གིས་དབུས་མོ་བྱིད་ན་ནང་འདས་སོང་ཟེར་བཅོས་པས། བྱིད་ཤིམ་
སོང་བ་ཨི་ཡིན་ཟེར། ལྷ་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱིས་ངོ་ནག་ངམ་ངམ་བྱིད། བདག་གིས་མོ་རང་ལ་ང་མ་གྱི་ནས་འདི་ཀྱང་
ཐོན་ཡོད་སྐྱེས་གྱང་། མོ་རང་ཡིད་མ་ཆོས་ནས་ཡང་ཡང་དེ་ལྟར་ཟེར་འདུག་པས།
བདག་གི་བསམ་པ་ལ་ད་ལན་རང་གཏིར་བཏང་སྒྲོམས་ལ་འགྲོ་ངེས་ཡིན་གྱང་། ལ་སྐྱེས་གསང་སྤགས་སྤྱིང་པའི་
གཏིར་མཚུག་བདག་གིས་བྱ་བ་བྱིད་པའི་ལུང་བསྐྱེད་ཡོད་པས། དེ་ཀྱང་སྐྱབས་ལྷན་ཨི་འོང་སྐྱེས་ནས། སྐྱ་གོན་
བྱས་ཆོ་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་བཏང་སྒྲོམས་ལ་སོང་བས། གཏིར་སྤང་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་འབྲུ་ལྷོག་བྱས་ནས། རེད་ཅག་ལ་མི་
འདོད་པ་རེ་སྒྲོ་བྱུང་དུ་བྱུང་བས། བདག་གི་ཡུལ་སྤྱོད་ལྷ་རིག་གཉིན་ཅེ་ལ་ཕྱིན་ལས་བཅོལ་བས། བྲག་བཅན་ཁོ་རང་
དམ་ལ་གནས་པ་བྱུང་ངོ། དེ་ནས་འདུས་སྡེ་མཆོག་དམན་ཀུན་ལ་གང་འདོད་ཀྱི་བསྐྱབས་བྱུང་། གདམས་བྱིད་ཀྱི་

ལན་ངག་ནམས་ཞིབ་རྒྱས་སུ་འགྲེལ་ནས་དད་མོས་ཀྱི་གསོས་སུ་གྱུར།

³¹¹ “Compound metal” refers to a compound of gold, silver, zinc, and iron called *li khra*.

³¹² Drimé Özer Biography 58b.3-60a.2 (see endnote 316 for more discussion of the significance of Gesar references):

སྤར་ཨ་ཁུ་ཁྱོ་ཐུང་གི་གདན་སའི་ཤུལ་ཡོད་ས་དེར་ཐེབ་སྟེ། ཁྱོ་ཐུང་ལ་ལྷ་རྟ་མགྲིན་དམར་པོས་གནང་བའི་རལ་གྱི་བཏབ་པ་
ལེན་མེད་དམ་སྟོགས་གསུམ་གཡུལ་བརྒྱུག་གཏིར་དུ་སྤྲས་ཡོད་པ་དེ་ཆེ་ཉིད་ཀྱི་གཏིར་སྤྲལ་མིན་གྱང་། སྤར་གྱིང་གི་དུས་སུ་
ཆེ་རྒྱུད་ཀྱི་རྒྱུང་བརྒྱུད་ལ་སྤྲུག་གཏད་པའི་རིམ་པ་ནམས་བྱགས་ལ་ཤར་ཆོ། དེ་ལ་རྒྱུན་བྱས་ཏེ་རལ་གྱི་དེ་གཏིར་ནས་
བཞེས་པས། རྒྱ་གནམ་སྤྲུགས་ལི་བྲ་ལས་བྱས་པ། རི་བྲག་གང་དུ་གཟིར་གྱང་རང་དབང་མེད་
པར་ཤིག་ཤིག་ཡོལ་ཡོལ་བྱས་ཤིང་འགྲུལ་བ། ཚད་ནི་གཞུ་འདོམ་གཉིས་ཅམ་ཡོད་པ་ཞིག་འདུག་པས། རྗེའི་
བྱགས་དགོངས་ལ་འདི་སྤྲས་གསང་ནི་དགའ་འདུག། བྲ་པ་གཉིས་པོ་ཁ་ངན་པའི་ཨི་འཇིགས་དགོངས་ནས་ཡར་བཞག།
ཡང་གཏིར་རྗེས་ཡིན་པས་སྟོན་མེད། ཨ་མཚར་ཅམ་དུ་བྲ་པ་གཉིས་པོ་ལ་བསྟན་དགོས་དགོངས་ཏེ་ཕྱག་བསྐྱམས་མཛད་ནས་
བྱོན་ཆོ། བྲག་རོས་ལམ་དོག་མེ་ཞིག་ཡིན་པས། རྗེས་གཤམ་མཛད་དེ་བྱོན་འོང་བའི་ལམ་ཁ་དེ་ལ་མི་ལུས་པོ་ཐམས་
ཅད་མིག་གིས་གང་བ་མདོག་ནག་ལ་སྟོ་མདངས་ཆགས་པ་ཞིག་འོང་ནས་བསྐྱེད་འདུག། རྗེའི་ཞལ་ནས་ཁྱོད་ཡར་སོང་ང་
འགྲོ་དགོས་གསུངས། ཁོ་ན་རེ་ཁྱོད་གཤོགས་པ་ཡོད་ན་གནམ་ལ་འཕྱར། སྤར་མོ་ཡོད་ན་ས་ལ་འཇུས།
སྤྱབ་ཐོབ་ཡིན་ན་ཟང་ཐལ་དུ་སོང་། ང་འདུག་ས་འདི་ཡིན་པས་མི་འགྲོ་ཟེར། ཡང་རྗེའི་བྱགས་ལ་འདི་ཅི་ཡིན།
གཏིར་བདག་ཨི་ཡིན། སྟོང་ཚད་ཨི་ཡིན་དགོངས་ནས་རུང་ཟད་དགོངས་པར་བཞགས་པས་གཏིར་བདག་ཡིན་པར་དགོངས།
ཡང་རྗེས་ཁྱོད་སོང་གསུངས་གྱང་མི་འགྲོ་བར་འདུག། ཁོ་ན་རེ་ཁྱོ་ཀྱིས་ངས་ནོར་ཁྱེར་སོང་པས་དེ་སྟོན་ན་ང་འགྲོ་མིན་ན་མི་
འགྲོ་ཟེར། རྗེས་ངས་བྲ་པ་གཉིས་ལ་ལྷ་རྟ་བརྟུག་ནས་ཡང་ཕྱིར་སྤྲད་འོང་གསུངས་པས། ཁོ་ན་རེ་ང་གི་ནོར་ཕྱིར་མི་
བསྐྱར་ཟེར། ཡང་རྗེའི་ཞལ་ནས་ཁྱོད་ཀྱི་ནོར་འདི་འདི་བདག་པོ་སུ་རེད་གསུངས་པས། རྗེས་ཆེན་དཔོན་སྟོབ་ཞེས་པ་
དེ་རེད། ད་ལན་སྤྲབས་ཨི་ལྷན་མི་ཤེས་ཟེར། སྤྲབས་མི་ལྷན་པ་ཅི་རེད་གསུངས་ཆོ། ཁོ་འདུལ་བ་འཛིན་པ་ཡིན་ཟེར་
སྟེ། རང་སེམས་བྱོགས་པོ་མ་འདུལ་ན་འདུལ་བ་ཟེར་གྱང་དོན་སྟོར་ཆུང་ཟེར། རྗེའི་ཞལ་ནས་ད་ཁྱོད་ཀྱི་ནོར་འདི་ཁྱེར་
ལ་སོང་གསུངས་ནས་ཁོ་ཡི་ལག་དུ་གནང་ཆོ། ཁོ་སྤྲུལ་ཞིག་དུ་གྱུར་ནས་རལ་གྱི་ཁ་ནང་དུ་བཟུང་སྟེ་ཁྱེར་སོང་བའི་རྗེས་སུ་
གཟིགས་ཆོ། རལ་གྱི་རྒྱུང་དུ་ལ་སོང་སྤྲུལ་ཆེ་རུ་ལ་སོང་བར་གཏིར་སྟོའི་ནང་དུ་སོང་བས། དེ་མ་ཐག་པར་བྲག་སྟེལ་ནས་

གཏེར་སྒྲོ་མི་སྤྲེལ་བར་གྱུར།

³¹³ Another interesting element of Drimé Özer's Treasure revelations is that he revealed not only Buddhist, but also Bön Treasures according to Sera Khandro (see Prats 1980: 250 and Blondeau 1984 for other examples of Treasure revealers who revealed both Buddhist and Bön Treasures). In Drimé Özer's *Biography*, Sera Khandro writes,

[Drimé Özer] gave whatever Dharma empowerments, reading transmissions, and so forth that were in accordance with the monk's own [Buddhist] system. Having given the Bön practitioners the explanation and reading transmission for the *Dharma Cycle on the Seminal Essence of the "A" Explanation*, he fulfilled all their hopes without remainder. Having upheld [Drimé Özer] as their crown jewel, the [Buddhist] monks and Bön practitioners offered him many [types of] service doing whatever pleased him (*Biography* 108b.2-5, see below for Tibetan).

From this comment, it appears that there was no great animosity between Buddhists and Bön practitioners and that it was coherent for one lama to be affiliated with both traditions. In fact, we should not be too surprised by this because the Bön religion had a very active role in Golok society in the early twentieth century and before. According to Gelek, "The religious structure [of Serta] followed the military structure in that for every thousand households there was a senior Bön spirit-medium called *Lha dPon* and a junior Bön spirit-medium called *Lha Pa* for each combat group" (Gelek 1998: 54).

Biography 108b.2-5:

བན་གྱི་སྤྱི་རྒྱུ་རྣམས་ལ་རང་ལྷགས་དང་མཐུན་པའི་ཆོས་ཀྱི་དབང་ལུང་སོགས་གནང་། བོན་རྣམས་ལ་ཨ་ཁྲི་ཐིག་ལའི་ཆོས་

སྒྲོ་རྒྱུ་ཁྲི་ཐིག་ལྷགས་མཛད་ནས་ཁོང་རྣམས་ལི་གྱི་རེ་བ་མ་ལུས་པ་བསྐྱངས་སྟེ། བན་བོན་རྣམས་ཅད་ཀྱིས་གཞུག་གི་རྩོམ་བྱ་

འཆང་ནས་ཞབས་ཏོག་དུ་མས་ཅི་མཉེས་སུ་བསྐྱབ་པར་བྱས་ཏེ།

³¹⁴ See Gelek 1998: 53-54, 56 for the importance of 'Drung ri for the Washül Serta tribal group.

³¹⁵ Despite the radical changes that centralized Chinese government has made on this equilibrium between local deities and local villages through the bridge of their village leaders, annual propitiation rites still exist and are faithfully observed throughout Golok. Each village has their own special offering site, to be used by no other group, and it is almost always only men who are allowed ritual interaction with the local deities through making offerings, although in recent years women also circumambulate these sites. I was present in the early summer, 2005, at Drungri for the annual propitiation rite of the Washül (*Wa shul*) tribe of Serta lead by the son of the former Washül Serta leader named Tsedrup Göñ (*Tshe grub mgon*). Only men attended the rite (I had to stand far away because I was a foreigner and a female), which consisted of offering new prayer flags, wind horses, and copious amounts of incense to the Washül cairn, riding around the cairn on horseback many times yelling invocations to the gods, and competing against each other in bareback horse races.

This annual mountain deity propitiation rite retains a separation between Buddhist elements, conducted in a separate "shrine" tent by monks, and mountain cult elements, conducted by the laymen at the cairn. However, the whole ritual takes on a Buddhist tone when all the men including the Washül leader gather, sitting in a wide circle, for a sermon given by their community's monastics.

Drungri is in the middle of nomadic grasslands and high mountains populated only by seasonal nomads' black yak hair tents. There is no Chinese road leading to Drungri as of August 2005. The only access is paths on the grasslands accessible by horseback or rugged four-wheel-drive vehicles. A local Tibetan Serta government official told me that he had successfully lobbied against building a road to the sacred mountain because he feared that a road would bring too much Chinese presence to the site. See Karmay 1998a: 428-429 for a description of a similar mountain cult ritual; Karmay 1998a: 432-450 for the

political significance of mountain deity cults. See Blondeau and Steinkellner 1996; Blondeau 1998 for studies on mountain cults.

³¹⁶ Drimé Özer *Biography* 181a.3-6 (see below for translation). There is a strong relationship between narratives about the mythical Tibetan hero Gesar, reminiscent of the Arthurian legends of England, and narratives of Tibetan nationalism. See Karmay 1998a: 465-501; Dreyfus 1994: 210-212 for more on the relationship of Gesar and Tibetan nationalism. As a Tibetan warrior whose myth originates in the Amnye Machen region of Amdo, Gesar's memory is extremely popular in Golok. He appears in contemporary Eastern Tibet via an ongoing tradition of bards who sing stories about him and monastic dances ('chams) dedicated to re-enacting his epics. Also, he is related to Treasure revelation via the Treasure texts attributable to him such as this one given to Drimé Özer. Also, Gesar is channeled by Tibetan spirit mediums (*lha pa*), who are sometimes also Treasure revealers, although since ca. 1959 when spirit possession was outlawed he has appeared with less regularity. In Serta, Gesar possessed at least two of the handful of famous contemporary Treasure revealers including Trülku Jikmé Püntso and Rikzin Nyima. Drimé Özer *Biography* 181a.3-6:

དེསྐབས་སྤྱིན་གསེབ་ནས་སང་ལུ་མ་ལུག་མེ་ཡིན་སྐད་པས་ཤོག་སེར་གཅིག་གཏད་པ། དེའི་གཏད་ཀྱི་ཟད་ནས་ཕྱི་སྐབ་གི་སར་ནོར་
བྱུང་བ་འདྲེལ་གྱི་སྐབ་པ། ནང་སྐབ་ཨོ་རྒྱན་ནོར་ལྷ་འི་ཆོས་སྐོར་རྣམས་གཏན་ལ་ཕབ་ནས། སྐབ་ལ་དོན་གྱི་གནོད་འཆོ་
བྱུང་ཞིང་ཕྱགས་ཉམས་སོང་བས། དེར་གི་སར་གྱི་གཡང་སྐབ་གསུང་པས་གོང་འཕེལ་དུ་བྱུང་།

³¹⁷ Drimé Özer *Biography* 176a.2-6:

རང་གཏོར་ཟབ་ཆོས་གསར་ཕབ་རྣམས་གྱི་དབང་ལུང་བྱིད་སོགས་གསུངས་སྐབས་དབྱིངས་གྱི་མཁའ་འགོ་འབྲུག་ནས་ཇེ་ལ་སྒོ་བྱུང་དུ་
བསྐྱུན་གཞི་ཞིག་བྱུང་བས། ཇེས་ཅི་ཡིན་དགོངས་ཆོ་དྲེ་འི་མཆོད་གོགས་གཉིས་སེམས་མཁོན་བྱས་འདུག་པ་དེ་ལན་པར་མཁྱེན་
ཀྱང་། མ་མཁྱེན་པའི་ཚུལ་གྱིས་ཅི་ཡང་མ་གསུང་ནས་དབང་བྱིད་རྣམས་ཞིབ་རྒྱས་སུ་གསུངས་པས། ཇེའི་སྐུ་ཁམས་ཇེ་
འབྲུག་དང་། གཞན་ཡང་མི་འདོད་པ་སྐྱོ་ཆོགས་འབྱུང་ཉི་བར་མཁྱེན་ནས་དབང་བྲལ་གྱི་བྱ་སྒོ་བ་རྣམས་ལ་བཀའ་བཀྲོན་ཕྱག་
བསྐྱེགས་སོགས་བྱགས་དྲག་པོའི་སྦྱོད་པ་དུ་མ་མཛད་མཐར། མཁའ་འགོ་དེ་འབྲུགས་པ་རང་ཞིབ་དང་། དྲོ་ཇེའི་མཆོད་པོ་
གཉིས་གྱི་སེམས་མཁོན་རང་འགྲིགས་ལ་སོང་ནས། ཇེས་ཇི་མེ་ཆོགས་མཆོད་བཏང་རྒྱལ་སོགས་མཐའ་རྒྱས་སུ་བྱས།

³¹⁸ *Autobiography* 383a.2-6:

དེ་ནས་ལོ་བྱིས་དེའི་རྒྱ་བ་བརྒྱད་པའི་ཉིན་ལྷ་འི་ཉིན་ངེད་དཔོན་གཡོག་ཕྱིར་རང་ཡུལ་ལ་ལམ་དུ་ཞུགས་སྐབས། ནུང་ར་
བྲག་དཀར་གྱི་གཏོར་སྐུ་རྒྱ་མཆོད་གསུམ་གྱིས་གཏོར་གྱི་ཟུར་བབ་ལུང་བསྐྱུན་ཕན་བུ་རེ་བྱུང་ཡང་བཏང་སྒོམས་ལ་བཞག་རྒྱུན་
གྱིས། ངེད་རྣམས་ལ་སེར་བ་དྲག་དུ་ཕབ་ནས་ཐོག་འབྲུག་སྒོག་གསུམ་གྱི་འཇིགས་པ་བཟོད་དཀའ་བའང་བྱུང་བས།
རང་གིས་རྒྱ་མ་ལ་གསོལ་བ་བཏབ་ནས་མཉམ་པ་ཉིད་གྱི་དོན་དང་མ་བྲལ་བར་གནས་པས་ཉིར་འཆོ་ཆེར་མ་བྱུང་ཡང་། དགོངས་
མོ་བྱུང་མེད་ཞིག་གིས་ལུང་བསྐྱུན་ལྟ་བུའི་ལོག་ལམ་གྱི་བསྐྱབ་བྱུང་མ་བྱིད་འདུག་པས།

³¹⁹ *Autobiography* 380a.2-3:

དེ་སྐབས་གཏོར་ཁ་ཕྱར་བུ་ཡོད་ཀྱང་བཏང་སྟོམས་ལ་བཞག་པའི་རྒྱུན་གྱིས་ཆོས་སྦྱོར་འབྱུངས། རང་གི་སྟོབ་བུ་མིགས་བཟང་ལ་
སྟོབ་བུ་གི་ནད་ཞིག་བྱུང་ནས་ཞག་ཆ་ཤས་ལ་རེ་མདའ་ཞེས་པའི་ལུང་པར་བསྐད་ཡོད་སྐབས།

³²⁰ Drimé Özer *Biography* 107a.2-5:

དེ་ནས་རིམ་བཞིན་བྱོན་པའི་ཞག་འགབ་འགྲོ་སྐབས་སུ། རྗེ་མ་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་གསུངས་གཏོར་གྱི་བད་སྐད་ཀྱང་གཞན་རྒྱུན་ལ་
བཞེན་ནས་བཏང་སྟོམས་སུ་སོང་བའི་གཏོར་སྐད་གི་འབྱུངས་ཀྱིས་ནས་གཏོར་སྟོན་ཆོས་བདག་གཉིས་ཀྱི་སྒྲར་བཞི་ལ་ཆོམ་རྒྱན་
སོགས་མི་འདོད་པ་རེ་བྱུང་ཆོ། རྗེ་དེ་ཉིད་ཀྱིས་སྤར་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་ཞལ་ལུང་བཞིན་ཟབ་གཏོར་གྱི་སྐད་མ་ལས་ལ་བསྐྱལ་བའི་
རྟགས་མཚན་མངོན་གསུམ་དུ་འབྱུང་བས་ཉེར་འཆོ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཞིབར་བྱེད་དོ།

³²¹ Sera Khandro uses the term Treasure revelation encampment (*gter sgar*) and religious encampment (*chos sgar*) interchangeably. Both seem to refer to a mobile community of monastic and non-celibate practitioners gathered around a charismatic Treasure revealer. See the discussion below regarding the definition problems regarding religious encampments versus monasteries. In the contemporary context, it is much more common to hear the term *chos sgar* (religious encampment) than Treasure revelation encampment (*gter sgar*). See Terrone forthcoming for an informative discussion of the role of *chos sgar* in contemporary Eastern Tibet. In the contemporary context, *chos sgar* are not necessarily mobile, but in Sera Khandro's writings *chos sgar* are by definition mobile, comprised of non-celibate and celibate religious specialists living in yak hair tents. They can, however, be linked to permanent structures such as monasteries. The two primary communities Sera Khandro refers to with the term *gter sgar* are 1) Dujom Lingpa/Drimé Özer's area called Dartsang and 2) Gara Tertön/Gyalsé's area called Banak.

³²² Gelek 1998: 47. Much of my discussion of Golok will focus on Serta, but actually Sera Khandro also lived and traveled in other parts of Golok as well, most notably Banak Monastery in Padma County. Although I do not have statistical data on Padma County, their nomadic social structure would have been similar to that of Serta. Drimé Özer's *Biography* also contains more information about Serta because it is the location of his Treasure encampment.

³²³ Rock 1956: 127 as reproduced in Gelek 1998: 47.

³²⁴ Oral interview, June 2005 conducted in Serta, Golok (the names of my informants are withheld for their security).

³²⁵ Rock 1956: 127.

³²⁶ Gelek 1998: 53.

³²⁷ Gelek 1998: 52-53.

³²⁸ Gelek 1998: 50.

³²⁹ Oral interview May 2005 conducted in Serta, Golok.

³³⁰ Drimé Özer *Biography* 197b.3:

དེའི་སྐབས་ས་གྲོང་པ་ལྷུ་དཔོན་གྱིས་འགྲིགས་ཐབས་བྱས་ཏེ་ཡིགས་པར་ཕན་རྒྱུན་མཐུན་པར་གྱུར་ནས་མཁོན་པ་ཞིབར་འབྱུང་།

³³¹ Gelek 1998: 54.

³³² This distinction is a generalization and I am making the point here that the line between monastery (*dgon*) and religious encampment (*sgar*) is blurry; in fact one place can sometimes be referred to by both of these names, and religious encampments are not always mobile, especially in the contemporary context. A contemporary example of this is the Treasure revealer Rig 'dzin nyi ma's *sgar* in Nyenlung, Serta near the border between Sichuan and Qinghai, which is a permanent community comprised of monks and headed by a non-celibate Treasure revealer who has a consort. On the other hand, just up the road is another permanent community comprised of monks, the non-celibate Treasure revealer Trülku Jikmé Püntso's residence, which is called Nyenlung Monastery (*Sryan lung dgon pa*). Perhaps the difference between a

sgar and a *dgon* pertains to the type of religious community who originally founded the site.

In contemporary Tibet, the distinction between a monastery and a religious encampment has significant political ramifications. Germano had demonstrated how the most famous contemporary encampment, Larung Gar, founded in 1980 by Khenpo Jikmé Püntsock, has been able to grow exponentially, follow its own academic curriculum, and avoid political indoctrination campaigns and population limitations because it is not formally registered as a monastery, but is registered as an academy Germano 1998: 63.

Terrone traces the history of religious encampments back to the fourteenth century to the large outdoor religious encampments organized on the occasions of the teachings and empowerments given by the fourth Karmapa Rol pa'i rdo rje (1340-1383). Terrone argues that religious encampments have gained in popularity in post-Mao Tibet because they offer a way to escape the "patriotic education campaigns" enforced since 1996 in monasteries. In contrast, religious encampments offer traditional religious education without restrictive government control. Terrone argues, "The revitalization of religious communities such as the religious encampments and of activities such as Treasure revelation represent a growing need to find sources of authority, legitimacy, and prestige claims by Buddhist practitioners elsewhere than in the formal religious institutions recognized by the government." Terrone forthcoming: 16.

³³³ Levine 1998: 70.

³³⁴ Sera Khandro does mention performing typical nomad woman's domestic responsibilities such as milking livestock (*nor*) and churning butter as part of her regular duties when she lived in Gara Gyalsé's encampment. See *Autobiography* 257. Throughout her writing she describes going out and collecting firewood, which is often what she is doing when her divine visions come to her. Thus the lines between lay nomadic householder pastoralist work and religious encampment ritual work are blurry especially when it comes to women's work. However, the central difference between the lay and religious communities Sera Khandro describes in early twentieth-century Golok is that religious encampments (*chos sgar*) had ritual expertise and were commissioned by local lay nomadic encampments (*ru skor, tsho ba*) for their religious skill.

³³⁵ In Golok, I saw an old photo from the early 1980s of Serta showing the tents surrounding the Gogentang Stupa with no visible permanent structures aside from the Stupa itself.

³³⁶ See *Biography* 25b for one description of moving and pitching tents etc. from Drimé Özer's childhood when he helps Dujom Lingpa move to Lungkhama (*Lung kha ma*), a location in upper Dartsang (here spelled *Bdar tshangs* instead of *Zlar tshang*).

³³⁷ My translation of 'nas 'go'i *dbon po* is tentative in this passage. The word *dbon po* could mean "male relative," or it could mean "Tantrist" as it does in parts of Amdo. However, Sera Khandro does not use the term *dbon po* to refer to a Tantrist any other place in her auto/biographical writing. I wonder if the term *dbon po* could be a misspelling for *dpon po*, which means leader and comes up frequently in her writing. Hence, I have tentatively translated the passage as "the leader of the head of the land in Drongdün." Drongdün literally means "in front of Drong," i.e., Drongri, therefore this village was very close to the sacred mountain.

³³⁸ This appears to be an epithet for Longchenpa.

³³⁹ Sotrül Rinpoché was Drimé Özer's closest disciple. He was the incarnate lama of Sera Monastery also in Serta, and before his death, Drimé Özer charged Sotrül Rinpoché with caring for Sera Khandro for the rest of her life.

³⁴⁰ *Gdul byar byon*, i.e., had gone out to gather resources by performing rituals/giving religious instruction.

³⁴¹ Drimé Özer *Biography* 197a.2-197b.4:

དེ་རུ་བ་མན་ལ་ལམ་ལ་མཁའ་འགྲོ་ཀུན་ཁྱབ་དབང་མོ་ཡིན་སྐད་པས་བད་བྱང་དང་ལུང་བསྟན་བྱང་བ་ལ་བརྟེན་ནས་ཁམས་སེང་གི་
གནས་འཕྲོང་གི་ཟབ་གཏོར་གྱི་རྩ་རྟེན་ལག་གི་ཆོས་སྒྲོར་གཏན་ལམ་མཛད་སྐབས། སྤར་འབྲོང་རིའི་ལུང་བསྟན་བྱང་བ་ལ་གཞི་
བྱས་ནས་མ་གྲུབ་དཔོན་གྱི་འདོད་དོན་དུ་འབྲོང་རིའི་གཏོར་བྱས་བཞག་པ་དང་། ལྷ་ཆེན་གྱི་སྒྲུབ་པ་གསུང་ནས་མཐའ་རྒྱས་སུ་
མཛད་ཅིང་གཏོར་ཁ་ཆ་གས་ཀྱང་སྟུན་བྱངས། དེ་སྐབས་འབྲོང་མདུན་ན་གནས་འགྲོའི་དཔོན་པོ་ཞེས་པའི་བླ་མ་མཆོམས་པ་

ཞིག་ཡོད་པ་དེ་མེ་ལ་བྱིད་ཀྱན་བཟང་གི་སྐྱལ་བ་ངེས་པ་ཡིན་འདུག་པས། ང་རང་གི་མི་ལམ་བཟང་པོ་རྩིས་པ་སོགས་གསུངས།
 མེ་ལ་ཆོས་འབྲེལ་སྒོན་ལམ་སོགས་ལྷན་ནས་རྟོན་འབྲེལ་གྱི་དངོས་རྒྱུ་ལ། དེ་ནས་རིམ་གྱིས་བྱོན་ནས་གདན་སར་ཕེབ།
 བསོད་སྐྱལ་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་མེ་ལ་སྐྱེ་འཆབས་ལ་གདུལ་བྱར་བྱོན་ཡོད་པ་དེ་ཚུར་ཕེབ་ནས་འབུལ་སྟུང་ཐམས་ཅད་བྱ་བྱང་ལ་གནང་བ་ལ་
 སོགས་པ་མཛད། དེའི་སྐབས་ས་བྱོད་མ་ཤུལ་དཔོན་གྱིས་འགྲིགས་ཐབས་བྱས་ཏེ་ལེགས་པར་ཕན་ཚུན་མཐུན་པར་གྱུར་ནས་
 མཁོན་པ་ཞིབར་འབྱུང་། དེའི་སྐབས་སུ་བླ་མ་རིན་པོ་ཆེའི་ཞལ་གཟིགས་ནས་ལུང་བསྟན་སྒྲོར་དུ་མ་ཡོད་ཀྱང་གཏེར་
 གཞུང་དུ་གསལ།

³⁴² A field research anecdote: After several months in Serta conducting research in the spring and summer 2005, I needed to return to Chengdu on a specific day to pick up friends there. The night before my departure there was a massive rainstorm all throughout the Serta area, and I was distraught to realize the next morning that the road to Chengdu was impassable due to a landslide (an unfortunately common occurrence). Dismayed, we returned to Serta. I insisted that my driver find an alternate route to get me to Chengdu. There were only a few options, all involving dangerous roads, potential landslides, and high mountain passes. My driver made some phone calls (presumably to his driver friends or local road authorities) and after a while came back to me gleefully happy, telling me he had found a passable road! We set out immediately. As we were winding our way up the mountain, my driver told me that there could be no problem: he couldn't reach any other drivers or authorities to find out about the road conditions, but he had called the lama at one of Serta's local monasteries and had received a favorable divination indicating that certainly the road was open! Prophecy is thus a determining element of life even today in Serta and beyond in Tibet. Despite some doubting minds, I can report that the road *was* open, and I made it to Chengdu tired but unharmed.

³⁴³ Autobiography 197b.2 (transcribed above in endnote 341).

³⁴⁴ Biography 128b.4-129a.1.

³⁴⁵ Levine 1998: 70.

³⁴⁶ Biography 128.

³⁴⁷ Biography 192a.3-4:

དེ་སྐབས་ཨ་སྤྱིང་ལ་རྒྱལ་ཡི་འཇིགས་པ་འོང་ནས་ཁུར་ཁུར་ཟེང་ཟེང་བྱེད་ཅིང་སྐར་གཞི་ཡུལ་གཞན་ཞིག་ཏུ་འགྲོ་དགོས་ཞེས་ཡུལ་མི་ཉི་
 འཁོར་བྱ་བྱང་ལ་སོགས་པ་ཡང་ཡང་ཟེར་ཡང་། རྗེ་དེ་ཉིད་བཏང་སྒོམས་སུ་བཞུགས།

³⁴⁸ This name means Golden Wild Yak.

³⁴⁹ Biography 195a4-6:

དེ་ནས་ཀྱན་གྱིས་ཁུར་ཟེང་བྱེད་ཅིང་སྐར་གཞི་སྐར་དགོས་ལྷན་ཆེ། རྗེས་སྒོན་མེད་པ་འདྲ་ཡང་ཁོ་རང་ཆོའི་བསམ་པ་ལྟར་
 སྐར་སྐར་ན་ཆོག་གསུངས་ཏེ། རྒྱ་གྲིའི་ལུང་བསྟན་གྱི་གནས་གསེར་འབྲོང་རིའི་རྒྱབ་གྱི་སྒོ་སྟུང་གཉིན་ཆེན་གཡུ་བསེ་ཟེར་
 བའི་དབང་གི་སྐུས་གནས་ཞིག་ཡོད་པ་དེ་ཀར་སྐར་གཞི་སྐར་དུ་བྱོན་ནས། ཡབ་ཡུམ་གཉིས་ཀས་ཟབ་གཏོར་གསར་ཐབ་དང་
 དབང་ལུང་སོགས་མཛད།

³⁵⁰ Thondup 1986: 121.

³⁵¹ Biography 48b.6-49a.6:

སྒྲུ་མའི་ཞལ་ནས་གནས་དུས་ཀྱི་འགྲོ་བ་རྣམས་ལོག་ལྷ་ཆེ་ཞིང་བསོད་ནམས་ཞན་པ་དང་། དུས་ཀྱི་དམག་འབྲུག་ནད་ཡམ་
 ལུ་གེ་སོགས་མང་བོའི་རྒྱུ་དང་། བྱེད་པར་ཀུན་མོ་དང་རང་འཆི་ཆེ་མཐའ་ཡི་རྒྱ་ཉེར་གྱི་འཇིགས་པ་ཉེ་འོང་ངེས་པ་ཡིན་
 པས། དུས་ཀྱི་འཕོ་འགྲུར་སོགས་ཅི་འོང་ཅི་ཆ་ཅི་ལ་ཡོད། དེའི་སྐབས་སུ་འགྲོ་བ་རྣམས་ཀྱི་ཤེས་རྒྱ་དང་དུས་བསྐྱབས་
 རྣམས་རང་གཞན་སྤང་ལ་སྦྱར་བ་དང་། མཐའ་མི་གྲུ་ཁྲིའི་ཁ་དར་ནས་བསྐྱར་འཛིན་གྱིས་སྦྱོས་བྱ་རྣམས་ཀྱི་སྦྱོ་ཆེ་མཛད་ཕྱིན་ཐམས་
 ཅད་རྒྱུན་དབང་དུ་འགྲོ་བ་མང་བས་དེ་ལ་བྱ་ཐབས་དཀའ་མེད། དེའི་ཕྱིར་ན་ཁྱོད་ཀྱང་བསྐྱར་འགྲོའི་གསོས་སུ་སྦྱར་པའི་
 སྦྱོས་བྱ་ཞིག་འདུག་པས་གནས་དུས་ཀྱི་བསྐྱར་པས་བདུད་དབང་ལ་གཟབ་དགོས། རང་ཡོད་ཆེ་ཁྱེད་སྦྱོན་དབང་རན་པའི་མི་
 རྒྱུ། སྦྱིའི་ར་ཕན་ཁྱོད་ཀྱི་ལེགས་ཉེས་ཐམས་ཅད་མ་དང་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་ཞལ་ལུང་ལྟར་སྦྱབ་དང་རང་གཞན་གྱི་དོན་ཆེན་པོ་འབྱུང་
 འོང་གསུང་།

³⁵² Biography 80a.4-80b.1:

སྦྱོན་བསམ་ཡས་སུ་གྱུ་རུ་པསྒྲུའི་བྱུང་། ལུ་ཅག་རྣམས་ཉིན་འབྲེལ་ལྷན་དུ་འཛོམ། རས་ཐུགས་བསྐྱེད་དང་སྦྱོན་ལམ་རྒྱ་ཆེ་བའི།
 དུས་ད་བར་ཁྱོད་ཀྱི་གྲོགས་སུ་ཤར། ཡུལ་རྒྱ་པོད་ཀྱི་རྒྱད་པ་མཐའ་དག་སེལ། པད་འབྱུང་དང་མཚོ་རྒྱལ་ཐུགས་བཞེད་
 འབྲུག། མ་དབྱིངས་ཡབ་ཡུམ་མཚོ་རྒྱལ་སྦྱུ་འཕུལ་གར། རས་ཐུགས་ཀྱི་འོད་ཟེར་མི་མོན། གཉེར་གསུམ་གྱི་སྒོ་
 འཕར་གྲོགས་སུ་ཤར། མ་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་ཕྱིན་ལས་ཟབ་མོའི་མཐུས། ཁྱེད་ཐབས་ཤེས་འབྲལ་མེད་འཛོམ་པ་ན།
 བདུད་གྲུ་ཁྲིའི་འཕེལ་ཁ་ལོ་བརྒྱ་པར་བསྒྲོག།

³⁵³ Autobiography 250a.3-6:

དེའི་ལོར་བྱང་རྒྱ་ཁ་དར་ནས་ལུར་ལུར་ཟིང་ཟིང་བྱེད་པས། ཀུན་གྱིས་རུ་ཕྱོགས་གཞན་ཞིག་ཏུ་འགྲོ་དགོས་བསྐྱུགས་ཆོ།
 བན་ནག་ནས་དཔོན་རིག་འཛིན་དང་། མགར་ར་གཉེར་ཆེན་གྱི་དངོས་སྒོའ་བྱ་བལ་བ་བན་ལུལ་སྒྲ་མ་དག་དབང་བདེ་མཚོག་
 རྣམས་ཀྱིས་བཀའ་གྲོས་མཛད་ནས། སྒྲ་བྱང་ཁག་གཉིས་ཀྱིས་ཁྱོད་འགྲིགས་ཐབས་མཛད་ནས། རྒྱལ་སྤྲུལ་སང་གདན་
 སར་འཁོད་དགོས་གསུངས་ནས་ཐག་བཅད་ཆོ།

³⁵⁴ Autobiography 254a.1-2:

དེ་ནས་བྱང་རྒྱའི་ལུར་ཟིང་གི་རྒྱུན་གྱིས་ཉེ་འཁོར་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་གྲོས་ཐག་བཅད་ནས། རྗེའི་བཞུགས་གནས་གཡུ་བསྐྱེ་བའི་
 གནས་དེཀར་སྤར་ཏོ།

Chapter Three: Autobiography, Gender, and the Self

³⁵⁵ Another way of describing this tension between confident and self-humbling self-representations following the terminology of Reynolds and Capps's work analyzing spiritual biography is that the tone of some biographies "humanizes" the biographical subject by reflecting her common human weaknesses while others "spiritualize" the subject by removing all human foibles from their narrative self-presentation. Reynolds and Capps 1976: 3. Sera Khandro paints a human, albeit extraordinary, vision of herself but completely spiritualizes her portrayal of Drimé Özer. However, the focus of this chapter will be on Sera Khandro's *Autobiography*.

³⁵⁶ Geary 1994: 11.

³⁵⁷ This discussion of self-humbling and self-aggrandizing rhetoric is informed by Janet Gyatso's study on the autobiography of another Treasure revealer, Jikmé Lingpa. See Gyatso 1998: 105, also Gyatso 1992a. My addition to Gyatso's portrayal of the tension between self-humbling and self-aggrandizing autobiographical rhetoric concerns the role that Sera Khandro's gender plays in this dialectic in her writings.

³⁵⁸ Smith and Watson 1998: 27.

³⁵⁹ Lejeune 1989: 4.

³⁶⁰ Weintraub 1978: xvii.

³⁶¹ Sayre 1994: 10.

³⁶² Sayre 1994: 3. Sayre cites Thomas Cooley, *Educated Lives: The Rise of Modern Autobiography in America* (Columbus: Ohio State Univ. Press, 1976: 3) for the earliest usage of "autobiography."

Despite the relatively late origins of the term autobiography, self-referential religious writing, what we today term spiritual autobiography, has far older roots, originating in the Western literary tradition in Classical Antiquity with St. Augustine's *Confessions* (see chapter 1 of Weintraub 1978). Interestingly, in the context of European spiritual autobiography, medieval women's biographical writings play a prominent role, including the writings of Margery Kempe, Julian of Norwich, Hildegard of Bingen, Catherine of Siena, Clare of Assisi, and others. Ancient and medieval European spiritual autobiographies differ from the later post-Enlightenment genre of secular autobiography in that they record the religious journey of the soul towards God instead of the later secular autobiographical focus on the social struggles of the self. Theorists commonly delineate the turning point between these forms of autobiography with the *Confessions of Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (1712-1778) in which the author's achievements and social interactions take center stage instead of the earlier focus on the movement towards God's salvation (Jones 2005: 699).

³⁶³ Gusdorf in Olney 1980: 29-30.

³⁶⁴ The sentences in this paragraph are paraphrases of Gyatso 1998: 101.

³⁶⁵ Wu 1990: 8.

³⁶⁶ Gyatso 1998: 114-117. See Gyatso 1992a, 1998, and Robinson 1996 for more information about Tibetan biography and autobiography as a genre of Tibetan literature.

³⁶⁷ Sera Khandro describes her autobiography using the term *namtar* and not *rangnam* in the title of the work. However, Sera Khandro explicitly claims authorship of the work in several places, and I see no reason to doubt the veracity of her claim especially given that the text is narrated entirely in the first person voice and includes pervasive self-humbling rhetoric characteristic of self-written accounts.

³⁶⁸ Smith and Watson 2001: 14.

³⁶⁹ Paul de Man 1979: 920.

³⁷⁰ Gyatso 1998: 104.

³⁷¹ Gyatso 1998: 146-147.

³⁷² Gyatso 1992a: 476.

³⁷³ Here I am drawing from Geertz's famous statement in "Religion as a Cultural System" that, "Unlike genes, and other non-symbolic information sources, which are only models *for*, not models *of*, cultural patterns have an intrinsic double aspect: they give meaning, i.e., objective conceptual form, to social and

psychological reality both by shaping themselves to it and by shaping it to themselves.” Geertz 1973 : 8. Schober (1997: 2) also applies Geertz’s terms to Buddhist biography.

³⁷⁴ Keyes 1982: 13.

³⁷⁵ “Realizations” is a translation of *rtogs brjod*, literally “realization expression.” It is one word for biography and can be used to refer to autobiography as well. This term shares with its more common term *namtar* an etymology that links telling one’s life story with a teleological narrative expressing one’s realization (*rtogs*) or liberation (*thar*), thus defining biography in the Tibetan tradition as a story documenting the subject’s religious realizations leading to spiritual liberation.

³⁷⁶ *Autobiography* 7a.6-7b.2:

རང་ཉིད་སྐྱེ་ལུས་དམན་པའི་དབང་གིས་དོན་གཉིས་ཀྱི་ཕྱིན་ལས་འབྱུང་ཚུལ་དང་། ས་ལམ་བསྐྱོད་པའི་རྟོགས་བརྗོད་ཀྱི་གནས་
ལས་དབེན་ཀྱང་། གོང་དུ་སྒྲོམ་པ་བཞིན་སྐྱལ་ལྡན་ཆོས་ཀྱི་བདག་པོ་དང་། རྗེས་འབྲུག་གཏུལ་བྱུར་བྱུར་པ་རྣམས་ཀྱི་
དང་བ་འབྲིན་ཕྱིར་དུ། ལོ་རྒྱུས་རྒྱུང་ཟད་བརྗོད་པ་ལ་ནི་

³⁷⁷ See Aziz in Willis 1987: 79-81 for further elaboration on this term *skye dman*. The most common colloquial term for woman in Golok dialect Tibetan is the non-honorific term *mo* or *nag mo* although *skye dman* is also used.

³⁷⁸ Bynum 1986: 277.

³⁷⁹ Furlong 1996: 14.

³⁸⁰ *Autobiography* 13b.1-3:

ཀྱི་མ་ སྐྱབས་གནས་ཀྱན་འདུས་ཨོ་རྒྱན་པ་སྤྲེལ་བྱུང་། ཨ་མ་མཚོ་རྒྱལ་རྗེ་བཙུན་འཕགས་མ་སྒྲོལ། གསོལ་བ་
འདེབས་སོ་བདག་ལ་བྱུགས་རྗེས་གཟིགས་། སྤྱི་དམན་བདག་གི་ལུས་འདི་ཁོར་བའི་གཞི། ཟག་བཅས་མི་གཙང་
ལུས་ངན་འདི་ཐོར་ནས། དལ་འབྱོར་ལུས་རྟེན་ཐོབ་པར་བྱིན་གྱིས་སྒྲོབས། སྐྱེས་མ་ཐག་དུ་ཆོས་དང་འཕྲད་ནས་
ཀྱང་། ཚུལ་བཞིན་སྐྱོད་པའི་རང་དབང་ལྡན་པར་ཤོག།

³⁸¹ The Buddha who preceded Śakyamuni Buddha.

³⁸² *Autobiography* 105a.6- 106a.2:

ང་རང་ལུས་དམན་གྱི་དབང་གིས་འཇིག་རྟེན་དུ་འགྲོ་དོན་ཁོར་བར་དཀའ་བས། ངས་ལུས་འདི་དོར་ནས་ལུས་ལྡན་སྐྱེས་བུ་
ཞིག་གི་ལུས་ཐོབ་ཐབས་བྱས་ན་འགྲོ་དོན་རེ་ཨི་འོར་སྐྱུ་གི་ཞུས་ཆོ། ལྷ་མས་ཁྱོད་ཀྱི་དེ་ལྟར་མ་བསམ་ཞིག། ལུས་ལྡན་
གྱི་ལུས་འདི་སེམས་མ་ཆེན་མོ་རྒྱལ་ཀྱན་བསྐྱོད་པའི་ལུས། ས་ལམ་བསྐྱོད་པའི་ཤིང་རྩ། མདོ་སྤྲུགས་འཛིན་པའི་སྐྱེས་བུ་
སྒྲོལ་བའི་གཞི་མ། རྒྱ་ལོག་གངས་ལ་བྱུག་པ་བཞིན། སྤོང་དབྱིངས་གསང་ཆེན་ལུས་གྱི་མཁའ་གྲོང་ནས་ཆོས་ཉིད་ཀྱི་
མཁའ་ལ། ཐུགས་རྗེའི་བྱུགས་ཀྱི་འགྲོ་ཞིང་འཁོར་འདས་གཉིས་ཀྱི་འབྱུང་གནས་དམ་པ་ཡིན་པས། ཁྱོད་ཀྱི་
ལུས་རྟེན་འདིའི་འགྲོ་དོན་གྱི་ལྷག་གོ། རི་ལྟར་ལྷག་སྐྱུ་ན་སྤོན་སངས་རྒྱུས་འོད་སྤང་གི་དུས་ཁྱོད་བུམ་ཟེའི་བུ་མོ་ནམ་མཁའ་
སྒྲོན་མ་བྱ་བ་ཡིན་དུས་བྱང་རྒྱལ་མཚོ་གཏུ་སེམས་བསྐྱོད་པའི་བྱུགས་བསྐྱོད་རྣམ་པར་དག་པའི་གཞི་དང་། རྗེ་མོ་མཚོ་རྒྱལ་གྱི་

སྒོན་ལམ་གྱི་སྒོ་བས་གྱིས་ཁྱོད་གྱིས་བསྟན་འཛིན་གྱི་སྒྲིབ་བྱ་ནམས་གྱི་སྒྲིབ་ཆེན་པོ་ཆད་ན་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་དངོས་དང་དངོས་མེད་གྱི་ཚུལ་
 ཏུ་སེལ་ཞིང་བསྟན་པའི་རྒྱལ་མཚན་བསྐྱེད་བ་དང་། སེམས་ཅན་ལ་ཐབས་དང་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་གྱི་སྒྲོ་ནས་བདེ་སྲིད་སྤེལ་ཞིང་བདེ་ལ་
 འགོད་པ་དང་། ཁྱད་པར་ཉམས་ཐག་གི་སེམས་ཅན་རྣམས་གྱི་མ་ལུ་བྱུར་བྱུར་ནས་འགྲོ་དོན་བསམ་གྱིས་མི་བྱུང་པ་རིམ་གྱིས་
 འབྱུང་བར་ངེས་སོགས་སྐྱབས།

³⁸³ *Autobiography* 174b.5- 175a.4:

བདག་ནི་ལུས་དམན་འབྱུང་འདུས་རྟེན་ལ་གནས། ལྷག་བསམ་དཀར་ཡང་དུས་ངན་འགྲོ་འདུལ་དགའ། གཏིར་དང་འཕྲད་
 གུང་ཐབས་མཁས་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་སྟུག། ཤེས་རབ་རྒྱུད་བས་བརྟེན་གྲོ་བར་དགའ། སྒྲིབ་ལུས་དམན་པའི་སྒྲོ་མིའི་ཁས་
 མི་ཐར། རྒྱལ་ཁམས་འགྲིམ་ཆེ་བྱི་ཁར་མི་ཐར་ཞིང་། གང་བྱས་འགྲོ་བའི་མིག་ལམ་མི་འགྲོ་སོགས།
 འབྱུང་ཆེ་ལུས་རྟེན་དོར་དགོས་ཡ་མིང་། བྱང་རྒྱལ་སེམས་ལ་ཕོ་མའི་བྱུང་མེད་གུང་། གདུལ་བྱའི་སྤང་དོར་བདག་གི་
 ལུས་རྟེན་དམན། ལུས་མཆོག་དཔའ་བོའི་རིགས་སུ་བདག་གྱུར་ནས། མ་གྱུར་འགྲོ་བའི་དོན་ཆེན་འབྱུང་ངེས་སྟུག།
 དེ་ལྟར་མིན་ན་སྒྲིབ་ལུས་འདི་ཉིད་གྱིས། བསྟན་འགྲོའི་དོན་ཆེན་འོང་ཐབས་ཇི་ལྟར་བྱེད། ཁོ་མོ་བྱུང་གྱིས་བདག་ལ་བགའ་
 གནང་སྟེ།

³⁸⁴ I am thinking in particular of the statement in Myers and Powell 1999: 329 also cited by Kurtis Schaeffer in Gyatso and Havnevik 2005: 107 that, "... there is no gender-linked ambiguity about the man's worthiness to be a subject. In general, men's accounts do not employ sex as a category for establishing the significance of the story or its outcome. Gender is not even discussed; a man's biographer might focus on the subject's extraordinary charity or favored state as receiving divine mercies, but in no way are these held out as unusual for his sex in particular. Accepted as normative, the male subject's masculinity is, therefore, literally unremarkable. In narratives about women, by contrast, gender is a central concern. In fact, much of the drama in these narratives-and the justification for taking the time to attend to a woman's life, whether one's own or someone else's-derives from the amazing spectacle they present of a woman managing to live a praiseworthy life in spite of her sex." Considering the focus Sera Khandro placed in her autobiographical writing on her gender and its influence on her ability to reveal Treasures, Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* can certainly be used as an example in support of Myers and Powell's insight that women's writings must articulate why they managed to live extraordinary lives in spite of their female gender.

³⁸⁵ Female Treasure revealers are rare, but not entirely unheard of. 'Jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha' yas (1813-1899)'s *Gter ston rgya rtsa* includes mention of Jomo Menmo (*Jo mo sman mo*) and Kunga Buma (*Kun dga' 'bum ma*) as female Treasure revealers. Some recent examples of female Treasure revealers (*gter ston ma*) other than Sera Khandro include the recently deceased Bön woman Khandro Khachi Wangmo (see Hanna 1996), Taré Lhamo (1938-2002, who was recognized in Golok as being an incarnation of Sera Khandro), and Künzang Wangmo, a contemporary figure residing in Dzachuka who is the daughter of Namkha Jikmé, the brother of Sera Khandro's partner Drimé Özer (I plan to conduct future research on Künzang Wangmo). Hanna Havnevik (1999: 12) also mentions that Jetsün Lochen Rinpoché (1865-1951) revealed mind Treasures (*dgongs gter*).

³⁸⁶ The Dharma King Ngaki Wangpo (*Chos rgyal ngag kyi dbang po*, 1736-1807) was of royal Mongolian ancestry, just as Sera Khandro describes her father. He was a descendant of Gushri Khan (1592-1654) who

lived in the Kokonor region of Amdo. He renounced his claim to Gushri Khan's kingdom and became a prominent Nyingmapa Master. He was the teacher of Shabkar Tsokdruk Rangdröl (1781-1851). See Ricard 1994: 565-568 for a description of his family genealogy. This reference to Ngaki Wangpo as one of Sera Khandro's paternal ancestors strengthens the case that her "Chinese" father of "royal Mongolian ancestry" who was a Seminal Heart practitioner was a descendant of the Mongolian Khans who migrated to Lhasa.

³⁸⁷ *Autobiography* 17b.3- 4:

ཁྱེད་ཀྱིས་དེ་ལྟར་མ་ཟེར། སྤར་ཡབ་མེས་གོང་མ་ནས་བཟུང་ཆོས་ཀྱི་རྒྱལ་པོ་དག་གི་དབང་པོའི་སྐུ་རིང་ནས་ད་བར་ལ་གྲུབ་པ་
ཐོབ་པ་དུ་མ་ཡོད། བྱད་མེད་ཡིག་གཏེར་ལོན་པ་མི་སྲིད་པས་རྒྱལ་པོའི་ཆད་པ་ཉེ་འོང་པས་ཁ་ཤོག་སྡོད་གསུངས།

³⁸⁸ *Autobiography* 141a.3-4 (see Tibetan below). This seems to be a reference to 'Jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha' yas (1813-1899)'s *Gter ston rgya rtsa* (One Hundred Treasure Revealers), the 19th century compilation mentioned above that includes both Jo mo sman mo and Kun dga' 'bum ma as female Treasure revealers.

སྤར་གཏེར་ཆེན་བརྒྱ་ཅུ་འི་སྐུ་རིང་ལ་གཏེར་མོ་གཉིས་བྱོན་པ་མཐོང་ཆོས་སུ་སྤང་། དེངས་སང་སྤྲིགས་དུས་འདིར་གཏེར་མོ་
ཡོད་པ་མ་མཐོང་གསུང་པས།

³⁸⁹ *Autobiography* 144a.3-145a.2:

བདག་གི་ཀྱང་དམན་ན་བཟུང་སྤྱི་ཟབ་གཏེར་གྱི་ཕབ་བྱེད་པ་མོགས་གསང་རྒྱ་དམ་པོ་བྱས་ཡོད་སྐབས། ཉིན་གཅིག་རྒྱལ་སྤྲུལ་
སང་ཁོང་གི་སྐུ་ཅུས་འབྲིང་བ་འཇིགས་མེད་དཀོན་མཆོག་ཅེས་པ་དེ་དཔལ་ཡུལ་དགོན་དུ་ཐུ་པར་བཞུགས་ཡོད་པའི་དེའི་སར་བྱོན་
སོང་། ང་རང་གཅིག་ཕུར་མ་གཏོག་སུ་གཅིག་ཀྱང་མེད་པས། ངར་གཏེར་སྤྲན་བརྒྱུད་ཀྱི་ཆོས་སྒྲོར་མཆོག་རྒྱལ་ཞལ་
ཆེམས་གཏེར་འབྲུང་ནས་ཐར་དང་བཅས་པ་ཆག་མེད་དུ་ཡོད་པ་ཞིག་སྤར་ནས་གཏན་ལ་ཕབ་སྤྱི་མཐུག་མ་ཆོགས་པ་ཞིག་ཡོད།
དེ་གཏན་ལ་ཕབ་ཅིང་བསྐྱད་ཡོད་པའི་ཆོག་མཆོམས། ཁོ་མོ་བདག་ནི་འགྲོ་བའི་དོན་ལས་མེད། མོར་བྱ་རིན་ཆེན་
འདས་གྲིས་གོས་མི་སྲིད། ཆོས་རྣམས་ཉེན་ཅིང་འབྲེལ་འབྲུང་ཁོ་ནར་རག། ཅེས་བྲི་ཞིང་ཡོད་སྐབས་སྒྲོ་བྱར་དུ་སྐྱུ་ག་ཀྱན་
བཟང་ཞེས་པའི་བན་གན་ཞིག་ཡོད་པ་དེ་ཐོན་བྱུང་ནས། ཁོང་གིས་བདག་ལ་ཐོག་ཕུད་ཡིན་ཟེར་ནས་ཐོས་བསྐྱར་མ་གང་
འོང་འདུག། ཁོ་རང་གིས་བདག་གི་ཡི་གེ་བྲི་བ་མཐོང་སོང་བས་ཡི་གེ་དེ་ཅི་རེད་ཟེར། བདག་གིས་གཏེར་ཆོས་ཞིག་རེད་
སྤྲུལ། ཁོ་ན་རེ་ མགར་ར་སྤྲུལ་པའི་གཏེར་ཆོས་ཁྱེད་ཀྱི་བདག་པོ་བྱས་པ་དེ་མཆོར་གི་དང་། སྤྲུལ་རྒྱལ་སྤྲུལ་ཁྱེད་ཀྱིས་ཆུད་
བཏང་བ་དེ་མ་ཉན་ཟེར། བདག་གིས་ཁྱེད་སང་གི་རྒྱལ་སྤྲུལ་གྱི་ད་ལྟ་བུའི་ནག་མོ་ཞིག་ལོན་ན། བོང་ལིའི་མགོ་ལ་
གསེར་སྲབ་བཞག་པའི་དཔེ་དང་མཚུངས། བདག་གིས་ཁྱེད་སང་གི་རྒྱལ་སྤྲུལ་ལ་གནོད་བསྐྱུལ་མེད། དཀྱིལ་
འཁོར་བཤམས་ཡག་གི་སྤྲིང་ན་བྱས་པ་བཅུད་ལྡན་ཟེར་བ་བཞིན་ནང་དོན་གྱི་ཡི་གེས་ལ་ཕན་པ་མ་གཏོགས་གནོད་བྱས་མེད།
གལ་ཏེ་ཁྱེད་ཀྱི་བདག་གི་རྒྱལ་སྤྲུལ་ལ་གནོད་ཡོད་སྐྱེམ་ན། ང་མིན་རུང་སྤར་ནས་ཁྱེད་ཀྱི་རྒྱལ་སྤྲུལ་ཆུད་ཆར་ངེས་རེད་

སྒྲུབ་པས།

³⁹⁰ *Autobiography* 145a.5-6:

སྒྲུབ་པས་དམན་པས་འགྲོ་དོན་འོང་དགའ་བར་འདུག་པས། དན་མེས་ཅན་ལ་ཕན་ངེས་ཀྱི་བརྒྱུད་འཛིན་ཞིག་ཡོད་ན་དེའི་

དགའ་གི་སྒྲུབ་པ་བྱུང་ཆོ།

³⁹¹ Chapter One p. 46 includes a translation of this interesting birth story in which Sera Khandro emphasizes their negative perception of the female gender.

³⁹² In the *Autobiography*, 187 pages are representations of Sera Khandro's visionary and dream experiences and 219 pages of the *Autobiography* represent her this-world life experiences.

³⁹³ See complete translation of this passage in Chapter One, pp. 25-26.

³⁹⁴ *Autobiography* 50a.1-50b.2:

བདག་ལ་དབང་དང་གདམས་པ་བསྐྱལ་བ་ནམས་ནི་ཡིན་ཏུ་བཀའ་བློ་ཆེ་སྟེ། ང་རང་སྒྲུབ་པས་དམན་པའི་དབང་གིས་
བསྐྱན་འགྲོའི་དོན་འབྲུབ་དགའ་བའི་ཇི་ལྟར་བྱས་ན་དགའ་ལགས། ཟབ་གཏོར་འདི་གཉིས་ཀྱི་ལས་འབྲོ་བདག་ལ་ཅིའི་ཐུར་
དབང་བ་ཡིན་ལགས་ཞུས་ཆོ། རྒྱུ་སྒྲིལ་ན་རེ། རིགས་ལྷན་མ་ཁྱོད་ཀྱི་ལུས་དམན་པ་མ་ཡིན་ནོ། སྟོན་མཆོ་
རྒྱལ་གྱིས་ཞུས་ལན་དུ། ལྷ་རྩས་བཀའ་སྐྱལ་པ། ལུས་མེད་ལུས་མཆོག་སེམས་མ་ཉིད་ཀྱི་ལུས། ཆོགས་
ཆེན་ཡོ་རྒྱུས་བདེ་གཤམས་དབྱིས་བསྐྱེད་ལུས། སྟོང་དབྱིངས་ཤེས་རབ་དོན་ཆེ་བཅུན་མོ་ཆོ། ལུས་མཆོག་འདི་འདྲ་
ཐོབ་པའི་ཐུགས་བསྐྱེད་མཛོད། དུས་གསུམ་རྒྱལ་བའི་ཐོན་ལས་ཆུ་རྒྱུའི་གར། གདུལ་བྱའི་མོས་ངོར་གཟུགས་
ཀྱི་སྒྲུབ་བཞེངས་པ། འབྲུང་གནས་དོན་ཆེ་བཅུན་མོའི་ཆུ་རྒྱུས་ཞལ། སངས་རྒྱལ་བསྐྱན་གཞི་སྟོན་པའི་ལྷ་གྲ་
བཞིན། བྱད་མེད་ལུས་འདི་མི་དམན་ལུས་འདི་བཟང་། མཆོ་རྒྱལ་ཁྱོད་ཀྱི་ནམ་ཡང་ལུས་འདི་དང་།
མི་འབྲལ་ཐུགས་བསྐྱེད་སྟོན་ལམ་རྣམ་དག་དགོས། གསུང་པ་བཞིན་ཡིན་པས་ལུས་དམན་མ་ཡིན་ནོ།

³⁹⁵ I have not yet found a passage in Yeshé Tsogyal's hagiography from which this could be quoted, but its positive interpretation of women is reminiscent of the following passage in which Padmasambhava tells Yeshé Tsogyal:

"*Kyema Ho!*

Yogini seasoned in the Secret Mantra!

The ground of Liberation

Is this human frame, this common human form –

And here distinctions, male or female,

Have no consequence.

And yet if *bodhicitta* graces it,

A woman's form indeed will be supreme!" (Gyalwa Changchub and Namkhai Nyingpo 1999: 91)

³⁹⁶ Schaeffer also raises this point about whether or not the *Life of Orgyen Chökyi* was subversive: "Was the Life of Orgyen Chökyi a 'voice of opposition,' that represented or provoked any real change in the status of religious women during or after Orgyen Chökyi's time, or simply an 'alternative voice,' easily usurped by her master or other lamas?" (Schaeffer 2004: 103). Answering this question in reference to Sera Khandro's *Autobiography*, the fact that many women in Golok after Sera Khandro's death consider themselves or

were considered to be emanations of Sera Khandro may allude to the fact that Sera Khandro's precedence as a female Treasure revealer did pave the way for future women to pursue religious careers.

³⁹⁷ *Autobiography* 147b.6-148a.2:

མ་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་མངག་པའི་ཕོ་ཉ་ང་། ལུས་མ་དག་ཟ་མ་མོ་ལུས་སྐྱེས། ལས་མ་དག་འཁོར་བའི་ཁ་འཛིན་བྱེད།
ཡུལ་མ་དག་མགོ་ལོག་སྤྱིན་པོའི་གླིང་། བྱ་མ་དག་ཚོགས་ངན་རྒྱན་དུ་བྱེད།

³⁹⁸ *Autobiography* 165b.6:

ངེད་མ་བྱ་ལུས་དམན་པས་ལས་འགྲོ་ཞན་པས་འགྲོ་སྐབས་མ་བྱུང་ནས།

³⁹⁹ *Autobiography* 165b.6- 166b.3:

གནས་མི་མངོན་དཔལ་རིའི་ཕོ་བྲང་ན། རྗེ་དུས་གསུམ་སངས་རྒྱུ་འགྲོ་བའི་མགོན། དཔལ་ཨོ་རྒྱུ་མཚོ་སྐྱེས་རྗེ་
མཁྱིན། བདག་གསོལ་བ་འདེབས་སོ་སྤྱན་གྱིས་གཟིགས། སྤོན་ནམ་སྒྲིང་བརྗེ་སྤོན་ལམ་མཐུས། ལས་རྣམ་
དག་ཟབ་མོ་གཏིར་ལ་དབང་། མ་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་ཚོགས་ཀྱིས་བྱ་བཞིན་བརྒྱུངས། ཆོས་ཟབ་མོ་སྤྱན་རྒྱུད་གདམས་
པ་རྣམས། གཅེས་ནོར་གྱི་རྩལ་དུ་བདག་ལ་གནང་། རོན་གཉིས་ཀྱི་མཇེད་ཕྱིན་རྒྱས་པ་དང་། མཚོ་སྐྱེས་རྗེའི་བྱགས་
བཞེད་འབྲུག་ཕྱིར་དུ། འཕྲུལ་མ་ངེས་བརྟུན་བདག་ལ་བསྐྱར། རོན་གཉིས་ཀྱི་མཇེད་པ་ལོས་འོང་སྐྱུམ།
མ་རྒྱུ་འཁོར་བཀའ་བཞིན་གཤམ་ཕྱགས་སུ། ཡུལ་སྤྱིན་པོའི་གནས་སུ་གཅིག་པུ་རུ། འབྲུང་འདུས་ལ་ངལ་དུ་བཞེ་ཡང་འོང་།
དུས་ངན་གྱི་སྒྲུབ་ཀྱིན་བསྐྱེད་ནས། ལས་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་སྤྱོད་ཁ་ཅོམ་ལགས། ད་དོན་གཉིས་འབྲུང་བ་ཡར་ཞོག་དང་།
རང་ལུས་དམན་ཁས་ཞན་དབང་གིས་ནི། ཆོས་ཟབ་མོ་ཐོབ་པའི་སྐྱེལ་བ་ཞན། ཁོང་ལས་ལྷན་ཀྱང་ཡར་འགྲོ་ཆོས་
ལམ་དེངས། ང་བདེ་བའི་རྗེ་འཁོར་བར་འབྱུངས། ད་དེ་དོན་བསམ་ནས་སྤྱོད་བསྐྱེས། གནས་ཟངས་
མདོག་དཔལ་རི་ཡང་ཡང་དྲན། རྟེན་སྐྱེལ་པའི་ལུས་འདི་དོར་ལ་སྤྱོད། ཅུ་ཤེལ་གྱི་ཀ་བའི་ནང་བརྒྱུད་ནས།
འབྲུར་མེད་གྱི་རིག་པ་དབྱིངས་སུ་བསྐྱེད། མ་མཚོ་རྒྱལ་ཐུགས་དང་དབྱེར་མེད་པར། རོན་རང་སྤྱང་འོག་མིན་ཞིང་དུ་འགྲོ།

⁴⁰⁰ *Autobiography* 167b.1.

⁴⁰¹ *Autobiography* 360b.1-3:

དེ་ནས་རང་ལོ་སོ་བརྒྱུད་གྱི་དུས་གཞན་རྒྱུན་ལུགས་དྲག་པ་ཞིག་ལ་རྒྱུན་ནས་ཡིད་སྤྱོད་བའི་རང་ནས་བདག་ལྟ་བུའི་ལུས་ངན་པ་དམན་པ་
མགོན་མེད་སྐབས་དང་བྲལ་བ་ཡར་ལ་གཅེས་པར་བརྒྱུངས་ཀྱང་རྩེར་རང་བཞིན་གྱིས་སྤང་བ་ལ་སྤོ་སྤྱོད་ཡོད་སྐབས།

⁴⁰² *Autobiography* 361a.5-361b.4:

ཕ་གཅིག་རྟོགས་ལྷན་སྤྱོད་པའི་བྱིན་གྱིས། རང་རིག་ཆོས་སྤྱོད་གནས་ལུགས་མཐོང་བས། གནས་དགའ་འབྲུག་སྤྱུག་ཅིས་
གདབ་མི་དགོས། གང་གར་ཡེ་ཤེས་རོལ་པར་མཉམ་བཤམ། འཛིན་རྩལ་བཅེས་མའི་སྤོམ་ལ་མི་རེ། གོ་སྤྱོད་

རྟོག་པའི་ལམ་རྟགས་མཛོན་གྱུར། ཡིད་གཉིས་ཐེ་ཚོམ་རེ་དོགས་མི་དགོས། སྐྱ་གསུམ་དབྱེར་མེད་གཞི་ལ་རྫོགས་པའི།
 བསྐྱོམ་དང་བསྐྱོམ་བྱེད་དམིགས་གཏད་བོར་ཐལ། སྤང་བ་མ་འགགས་དཔེ་རུ་ཤར་བས། ཡིག་སྐྱ་མང་པོའི་ཚིག་རེ་མི་བསྟུ།
 ཆགས་བྲལ་ཡེ་ཤེས་དོན་དེ་མཐོང་བས། ཆགས་སྤོད་བྱིས་པའི་གཟུགས་ལ་མི་ཆགས། མི་ཆེད་ལྷག་མ་ཆོས་ལ་བྲིལ་ན།
 ལུས་རྟེན་ཐོབ་པའི་དོན་མཆོག་རེད་སྟུམ། ཨོ་གོ་ཨོ་ཚོར་འཕྲུལ་ལྡན་བྱིས་ཆུང་།

⁴⁰³ My comments about Jetsün Lochen Rinpoché and her autobiography rely on Hanna Havnevik's extensive doctoral study and translation of her autobiography, Havnevik 1999. Although Jetsün Lochen and Sera Khandro's dates overlap, they do not mention each other in their autobiographies. Given that Sera Khandro left Central Tibet at the age of fifteen, it is likely that at least Jetsün Lochen never knew of Sera Khandro.

⁴⁰⁴ Havnevik 1999: 143, 145, 163; Sera Khandro *Autobiography* 8-8b, 10b.

⁴⁰⁵ Havnevik 1999: 163, 167, 389; Sera Khandro *Autobiography* 194b.

⁴⁰⁶ Havnevik 1999: 155, 245, 325; Sera Khandro *Autobiography* 76-76b, 78, 80-81, 85-87, 87b-88.

⁴⁰⁷ Havnevik 1999: 285; for Gyalsé's criticism of Sera Khandro's visionary writings see *Autobiography* 141, 143.5, 144, 147.

⁴⁰⁸ Havnevik 1999: 157, 283, 365, 423, 535, 603, 635, 659, 661; for some of the most important *dākinī* visions Sera Khandro records see *Autobiography* 37b-40b, 48b-49b, 97b-100, 108b-110, 122b-125, 166b-171b, 184-189, 237b-239b, 275-277, 303b, 349-351, 367-368b.

⁴⁰⁹ Havnevik 1999: 409, 421, 523; Sera Khandro *Autobiography* 34-35b.

⁴¹⁰ Havnevik 1999: 497; Sera Khandro *Autobiography* 45b-46.

⁴¹¹ Havnevik 1999: 625, 627.

⁴¹² *Autobiography* 403a.1-2:

ཁྱིམ་མི་བྱེད་རང་དབང་མ་མཆིས་ཡང་། ལུས་དམན་བདག་གི་སྒྲོག་གསུམ་གང་ཐད་ནས། ཡོན་ཏན་རིལ་འབྱུང་མ་ཞིག་
 མི་སྲིད་པའི།

⁴¹³ Havnevik 1999: 58, 60.

⁴¹⁴ Chapter Four elaborates on the jealousies and suspicion that surrounded Sera Khandro wherever she went, particularly when she interacted with monastics and stayed in monasteries.

⁴¹⁵ Havnevik 1999: 149; Sera Khandro *Autobiography* 145b-147.

⁴¹⁶ My analysis of Orgyen Chökyi's writing is based on Kurtis Schaeffer's insightful study and translation of her autobiography. See Schaeffer 2004.

⁴¹⁷ Schaeffer 2004: 180.

⁴¹⁸ Schaeffer 2004: 142.

⁴¹⁹ Schaeffer 2004: 143.

⁴²⁰ Schaeffer 2004: 96.

⁴²¹ Schaeffer 2004: 98.

⁴²² Schaeffer 2004: 91.

⁴²³ Liz Wilson (1996) has elaborated on this connection between cyclic existence and the female body in the context of early Indian Buddhism.

⁴²⁴ Mooney 1999: 13.

⁴²⁵ Schaeffer 2004: 143; *Autobiography* 13b.2:

སྐྱེ་དམན་བདག་གི་ལུས་འདི་འཁོར་བའི་གཞི། ཟག་བཅས་མི་གཙང་ལུས་ངན་འདི་

⁴²⁶ Schaeffer 2004: 103 raises the question of whether or not we can interpret a subversive element to Orgyen Chökyi's *Life*.

⁴²⁷ Schaeffer 2004: 131.

⁴²⁸ Schaeffer 2004: 132.

⁴²⁹ Schaeffer 2004: 150.

⁴³⁰ Schaeffer 2004: 98.

⁴³¹ Schaeffer 2004: 170.

⁴³² Schaeffer 2004: 102.

⁴³³ Schaeffer 2004: 168.

⁴³⁴ The few female religious teachers she does mention include a famous incarnation of Machik Labdrön named Ané Zangmo (*A ne bzang mo*) who Sera Khandro was unable to meet because she died when Sera Khandro was twenty years old. See *Autobiography* 122b-123a. Later in her narrative, Sera Khandro recounts that, “When I was thirty-nine years old, Khenpo Norbu Wangyal and the Tantric priest Nyima Drönma (*sngags btsun nyi ma sgron ma*) and so forth invited me to come seek alms in their land.” *Autobiography* 368b.2-3. Khenpo Norbu Wangyal is the contemporary Nyingma Master Chatral Sangyé Dorjé Rinpoché’s uncle, who was from Absé (*A bswe*) in the Nyarong region of Kham. The title *sngags btsun*, Tantric priest, used in reference to a woman is noteworthy; it would be interesting to explore how often this title is used in reference to female figures. Sera Khandro mentions one other khandroma, the *ḍākinī* from Tromgé named Dawa Drönma (*Khrom dge’i mkha’ ‘gro zla ba sgron ma*), who, Sera Khandro writes, wanted to meet her and traveled with her to Dzakhok (*Rdza khog*) when Sera Khandro was forty-one years old. *Autobiography* 381b2-4.

⁴³⁵ *Autobiography* 6a.6-6b.2:

པསྐ་མཚོ་སྤྱིད་དམ་ཐོ་མོ་སྤྱིན་མེད་དག་སྤྱང་ཞལ་ཆེམས་ལས། མ་འོང་ང་སྤྱལ་ཡོས་འམ་འབྲུག་ལོ་པུ། བྱིས་པའི་ཚུལ་
འཛིན་སྤྱལ་བཟླ་ཞེས། སྤྱིན་དབང་གིས་མདོ་སྤྱིད་གནས་ཡུལ་འགྲིམ། ཡང་གསང་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་ཐུགས་སྤྱབ་
ཆོས་གཏར་འབྱེན། ཆོས་དབང་སྤྱལ་པ་རིགས་ཀྱི་སྤྱུ་གྱུར་སྤྱིད།

⁴³⁶ Gyatso 1994: 283.

⁴³⁷ Dujom Rinpoché 1991: 771.

⁴³⁸ *Autobiography* 122b.2-123a.5:

དེའི་ལུབ་སྤྱོད་མ་ལྟ་གསོལ་བ་བཏབ་ནས་གཉིད་དུ་སོང་བའི་མི་ལམ་ལ་མ་ཅིག་ལབ་སྤྱོད་ཡིན་སྟེ་པའི་མཁའ་འགྲོ་མ་མཛོས་ཤིང་
ཡིད་དུ་འོང་བ་སྤྱལ་མཐོང་ཤམ་དང་དྲི་མེད་རས་གཟན་དཀར་པོ་མནལ་པ། དབྱ་སྤྱུ་སེལ་བྱར་སྤྱུ་རྒྱབ་དུ་འཕྱང་བ། ཐུག་ཡས་
རྒྱ་མ་རུ་དང་གཡོན་པས་དདུལ་དཀར་གྱི་དྲིལ་བྱ་དགོལ་ཞིང་། སྤྱིན་པའི་དབྱངས་ཀྱི་གདངས་ལས་ཆོག་འདི་ལྟར་བྱུང་ངོ་།
ཆོས་སྤྱུ་རྒྱལ་བ་ཡུམ་ཆེན་མོ། སྤྱི་མེད་མ་ལ་གསོལ་བ་འདེབས། འོངས་སྤྱི་དྲེན་ལ་འབྱོར་མ། འགགས་མེད་
མ་ལ་གསོལ་བ་འདེབས། སྤྱལ་སྤྱུ་མཚོ་རྒྱལ་ལབ་སྤྱོད་མ། ཀྱན་བྲབ་མ་ལ་གསོལ་བ་འདེབས། བདག་
འཛིན་འབྲུལ་པ་ཅུད་ནས་ཆོད་པ་དང་། བདག་མེད་ཤེས་རབ་རྟོགས་པར་བྱིན་གྱིས་སློབས། ཡུལ་མེད་ཟང་ཐལ་མཐོང་བར་
བྱིན་གྱིས་སློབས། རྒྱན་དན་བྲོགས་སུ་འཆར་བར་བྱིན་གྱིས་སློབས། བྱང་པོ་གཟན་བསྐྱར་རུས་པར་བྱིན་གྱིས་སློབས།
ཡུམ་ཆེན་དགོངས་པ་རྟོགས་པར་བྱིན་གྱིས་སློབས། འབྲེལ་ཆད་དོན་དང་ལྷན་པར་བྱིན་གྱིས་སློབས། ཆོས་སྤྱུ་གཏར་སྤྱིད་
ཟིན་པར་བྱིན་གྱིས་སློབས། ཡེན། ཡེན། ཡེན། ཞེས་གསུང་མ་ཐག་དུ་བདག་གི་སྤྱང་བ་གནས་འགྱུར་ཏེ།

གྲོགས་མཁའ་འགྲོ་གཉིས་དང་བཅས་གནས་དང་ཡུལ་གྱི་ཞིང་ཁམས་མང་པོ་སྤུལ་སྤྲང་འཆར་ཡང་།

⁴³⁹ Harding 2003: 80.

⁴⁴⁰ See Epstein 1982; Pommaret 1989; Drolma 1995 for accounts by and about this predominantly female role of experiencing temporary death-like states in which the *delok* travels to the realm of the dead and returns with moral tales advocating virtuous living through illustrating the variegated sufferings of the Buddhist hells. *Delok* accounts are the only form of Tibetan biographical literature whose subjects are more commonly female.

⁴⁴¹ *Autobiography* 33b.6-43a.5; Sera Khandro's written *delok* account is not in her *gter chos* as published in Bde ba'i rdo rje 1978. It is a fifteen folio page text titled *Nyams byung skor las bar do'i mthong snang nges 'byung gsal sgron*. In the colophon, Sera Khandro signs it as Künzang Chönyi Wangmo and states that it is an account of a vision she had when she was twenty-one years old. She specifies that two women, her daughter Chöying Drönma and her disciple Sherab Drönma, exhorted her to compose the text.

⁴⁴² Schaeffer 2004: 59-60.

⁴⁴³ Kim Gutschow notes that the Zanskar nuns she studied extensively explained that women participate in the fasting rite more often than men because they have a greater need for merit and purification. Gutschow 2004: 214. See Losang Kalsang Gyatso 1995: 193-196 for a summary of Gelong Palmo's life based on Yeshe Gyaltzen's 1760 composition of her biography.

⁴⁴⁴ Harding 2003: 32.

⁴⁴⁵ Bynum 1986: 259.

⁴⁴⁶ Havnevik 1999: 41.

⁴⁴⁷ See A bu dkar lo, ed. 2002. *Khrag 'thung bdud 'joms gling pa'i rnam thar*. Zi ling: Zi ling mi rigs par khang.

⁴⁴⁸ *Autobiography* 388b.5-6.

⁴⁴⁹ Smith and Watson 2001: 121.

⁴⁵⁰ Gusdorf in Olney 1980: 29.

⁴⁵¹ Eakin 1999: 48.

⁴⁵² Mason in Olney 1980: 210.

⁴⁵³ Mason in Olney 1980: 231.

⁴⁵⁴ Jelinek 1986: xiii.

⁴⁵⁵ Jelinek 1986: xiii.

⁴⁵⁶ Jelinek 1986: xv.

⁴⁵⁷ Eakin 1999: 49.

⁴⁵⁸ Miller 1994: 4.

⁴⁵⁹ Smith and Watson 2001: 177.

⁴⁶⁰ Smith and Watson 2001: 174.

⁴⁶¹ Stanton 1987: 15.

⁴⁶² Bakhtin 1981: 276.

⁴⁶³ Bakhtin 1981: 277.

⁴⁶⁴ Smith and Watson 1998: 109.

⁴⁶⁵ The *Life of Shabkar*, the autobiography of the nineteenth-century wandering yogi from Rebkong, Amdo, with its songs, dialogues, and letters written back and forth is one example that demonstrates that dialogic interaction is not exclusive to Tibetan women's writing. The interesting point to examine regarding gender and dialogic interactions concerns what is at stake in the dialogues that Sera Khandro recounts, which are often issues related to her legitimacy as a female Treasure revealer.

⁴⁶⁶ This is also very much true about her visionary encounters, which are the subject of the following section. Here I confine myself to dialogic interactions that Sera Khandro records having taken place during her worldly life.

⁴⁶⁷ *Autobiography* 162a.5-163a.4:

དེ་ནས་བདག་གིས་མཇལ་རྟེན་དུ་གཤམ་སྤྲུལ་ལྡན་ཞིག་ཡོད་པས་དེ་ཁ་དོག་ལྡན་གྱི་དར་སྤྲུང་གིས་ལུང་བྱས་ཏེ། ལྷ་རེག་ངེ་

བུལ་བཅས་ཕུལ་ནས་ཕུག་བཅས་སྒྲིམས་བཟང་ལགས་ཞུས་ཆོ། སྐུལ་པའི་སྐྱེ་དེ་ཉིད་ཆོག་གི་དབུས་ནས་ཡར་བཞེངས་
 ཏེ། བདག་ལ་རིན་ཆེན་གཉིས་པ་དང་། ལྷ་རེག་ཉིན་མོ་བདེ་ལེགས་ཞིག་གནང་བར་མཇེད་པས། དེར་
 འདུས་གྱི་སྒྲིམ་མི་སྐྱེ་པོ་མོ་ཐམས་ཅད་གྱིས་ཅི་ཡིན་ཆ་མ་ཆོད་ནས། གཅིག་གིས་གཅིག་དོ་ལ་བལྟ་ཞིང་ཅི་ཡང་མི་སྐྱེ་བར་
 འདུག་པས། ཡང་སྐུལ་སྐྱེ་སང་གི་ཞལ་ནས་བྱིད་ཅན་ནམས་ཡིད་ཆོས་མི་དགོས། མཁའ་འགྲོ་འདི་ཡི་ཤེས་མཆོ་
 རྒྱལ་གྱི་གསུང་གི་སྐུལ་པ་ངེས་པ་ཡིན་སྟེ་གི། བྱིད་ཅག་གི་ལོག་ལྷ་སྤངས་ལ་དད་པ་ཞེས་དང་། འདིའི་མི་བསྐྱེ་དོ་མ་
 ཡིན་གསུངས་འདུག། བདག་གི་བསམ་པ་ལ་དེ་སྤྲོད་དཔོན་གཡོག་ཞལ་མཇལ་གསུང་ཐོས་མ་སྤྱོད་བལ་ང་མཆོ་རྒྱལ་
 ཡི་ཡིན་ཅི་གོ། མིན་གྲང་ང་རང་ལྷ་བྱའི་ལུས་དམན་བྱེ་ཐོས་རྒྱ་རྒྱུང་བ། རང་བསྐྱེད་རྫོགས་ལ་སྒོ་རྫོངས་པ།
 ལས་གང་བརྩམས་འཁོར་བའི་བྱ་བ་ལས་མི་འདའ་བ་དེ་ལྷ་བྱའི་མཁའ་འགྲོ་ཞིག་ཡོད་ཅི་ལ་སྤྲོད་སྟེ་མཆོ། ཁོང་གི་ཞལ་ནས།
 བྱིད་གྱིས་བསྐྱབ་སྤྱང་ལ་འབད་རྩོལ་མ་དགོས་པར་བསྐྱེད་རྫོགས་གྱི་ལམ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཁོང་དུ་རྒྱབ་པ་དང་། ཐན་ཡི་གི་འབྲི་འདོན་
 སོགས་སྤྱང་མ་དགོས་པ་དེ་ཀ་སྤྱོད་སྤྱངས་ལས་འཕྲོས་དཔ་རེད། འོན་ཀྱང་རང་གཏིར་བཏང་སྟོམས་ལ་མ་བཞག་པར་གྱི་
 སྤེལ་རེ་མཇེད་དགོས་མ་གཏོགས། བྱིད་རང་ལ་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་བཀའ་ཆད་འབྱུང་ཉི་གསུངས། བདག་གི་ང་རང་
 གཏིར་སྟོན་མིན་ལགས། ཆོས་སྐྱ་གཅིག་གྲང་ཐོབ་མ་སྤྱོད་བའི་བསྐྱེད་རྫོགས་མི་ཤེས་ལགས་ཞུས་པས།

⁴⁶⁸ *Autobiography* 163b.4-5:

བདག་གིས་གྲང་གང་ཤེས་གསང་ཐབས་མ་བྱུང་ནས་ཁོང་ལ་ཞུས་པས་ཕན་ཚུན་ཉམས་ལེན་གྱི་གསོས་སུ་གྱུར་ཏོ།

⁴⁶⁹ This discourse of relying on each other for the benefit of sentient beings is suspiciously close to the way that Sera Khandro describes engaging in consort practices. This would be surprising, however, since Gotrül Rinpoché was a monastic hierarch at Pelyül Tartang Monastery. Indeed, she alludes that she and Gotrül were close, but her comments appear to be purposefully vague. In Chapter Four, I return to this question of the nature of their relationship.

⁴⁷⁰ *Autobiography* 198a.3-199a.3:

ཡང་ཁོང་གི་ཞལ་ནས་འདི་སྐད་གསུངས། བྱིད་ཡི་ཤེས་མཁའ་འགྲོ་དངོས་ཡིན་ཡང་མི་རུས་ངན་པ་དཔོན་ལ་གཏོགས་
 སོང་བའི་རྒྱུན་གྱིས་བྱིད་ཀྱི་བཟང་ངན་ཅི་བསམ་ཡོད་གོ་དཀའ་བར་འདུག་པས། དེ་ལྷར་མ་བྱེད་པར་སྦྱིགས་དུས་གྱི་འགྲོ་རྩོ་
 དང་བསྟན་ཏེ། རང་གཞན་གྱི་དོན་རེ་འབྱུང་ཐབས་རེ་མ་དགོས། བྱིད་པར་ད་ལན་གནས་སྟོར་ནས་རྩར་བྱོན་དུས་ང་རང་
 ལ་ཕ་འབབ་དུ་སྐྱེ་གསུང་ཐུགས་ཡོན་ཏེན་ཕྱིན་ལས་གྱི་རིགས་གང་ཡིན་པས་གཅིག་གཏིར་ནས་བཏོན་ཏེ་བྱིད་པར་འོང་ཐབས་མ་འཆུག་
 རེ་མ་རེ་གསུང་ནས། རིན་ཆེན་གཉིས་པ་དང་། ལྷ་རེག་དབང་གི་མདངས་འཛིན་བཅས་གནང་སྟེ་ཐུགས་བསྐྱེད་
 སྟོན་ལམ་མཇེད་འདུག། བདག་གིས་ང་བྱ་དང་བྱ་མོའི་གཏིར་ཡོན་མི་ཞིག་ཡིན་མ་གཏོགས། རྒྱ་རྒྱེ་བས་ཡི་གཏིར་

ལོན་ཐབས་མི་འོང་འང་ཞུས་ཆོ། ཡང་ཁོང་གིས་བྱིད་གཏིར་སྟོན་བྱེད་འདོད་མེད་ཀྱང་གཏིར་གྱི་ལས་ལ་དབང་བ་ཡིན་པས་
 སྤྲུལ་གསལ་མི་བྱལ་ཅིང་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་གཞན་རྟེན་དུ་ཤོར་ངེས། དེ་བས་མ་གསལ་བར་ང་ལ་དྲང་པོར་སྟོས་དང་། ལུ་ཅག་སྟེ་
 སྟོན་སྟོན་ལམ་ལས་གྱིས་འབྲེལ་བ་ཡོད་པས་ན་གཅིག་ལ་གཅིག་བརྟེན་ནས་འགྲོ་དོན་རེ་འབྱུང་འོང་སྟེ་མ་པས་དེ་ལུགས་དགོས།
 དེ་མིན་ང་རང་ཡང་གཏིར་ལ་དབང་བའི་རིགས་ཡིན་ཡང་། ཅུ་བའི་བླ་མའི་བཀའ་བཅད་ནས་གནང་བ་མ་ཐོབ་པས།
 ཁ་བྱང་དང་ཡང་བྱང་རྣམས་དགོན་ཁང་གི་གྲང་ལོག་ན་སྤྲུལ་ཡོད་པས། བྱིད་རང་གི་ལག་རྒྱ་རྩེས་སོར་འབྲོད་དུ་འོང་།
 བདག་གིས་བླ་མའི་བཀའ་བཅག་མ་རྣམས་མི་ཆོ་ཐ་མལ་དུ་ཟད་དོ། ད་ལོ་ཕོ་ལོ་བཞི་བརྒྱ་ཞེ་གཉིས་ལ་ཐོན་སོང་བ་ཡིན་པས།
 ཕད་འབྱུང་གི་བྱུགས་བཞེད་ལུས་རྟེན་འདིར་འབྱུང་ཐབས་མ་བྱུང་ཡང་། སྤྱིའི་ནས་འབྱུང་པའི་ཐབས་སྟོན་ལམ་རྣམས་པར་དག་པ་
 ལ་གཞི་བཟུང་ནས་ཡོད་པས། བྱིད་གྱིས་ཀྱང་དེ་ལྟར་བྱགས་ལ་བཟུང་དགོས་གསུངས། ཡང་བདག་གིས་ང་
 རང་གཏིར་སྟོན་མིན་ངེས་པ་ཡིན་ཀྱང་། བྱིད་གྱིས་རེད་དགོངས་པ་ཡིན་འདུག་པས། ད་ཕན་ཆད་བདག་གིས་འབྲུལ་
 སྤྱང་ཡེ་གའི་རིས་སུ་བགྱིས་པ་ཐབས་གང་དྲག་གི་མེད་དུ་མི་བྱེད་ལགས།

⁴⁷¹ Autobiography 280b.2-281a.6:

དེ་ནས་འགྲོ་འདུལ་དཔའ་བོ་དྲི་དང་མཇལ་འཕྲད་མཛད་སྐབས། བླ་མའི་ཞལ་ནས་ བྱིད་ད་ལན་འདིར་བྱོན་སྐབས་
 འོང་བ་ཤིན་ཏུ་བཟང་། རང་གཞན་ཀུན་ལ་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་གྱི་འཆར་སྟོན་མ་ཡོད་པ་དང་། བྱིད་པར་བྱིད་རང་མཁའ་འགྲོ་
 ཀུན་དགའ་འབྲུམ་མེད་སྟེ་སྤྱིད་ཡིན་པ་དུས་སྤྱི་མོ་ནས་རང་གི་སེམས་ལ་ཤར་ནས། ལྷ་ངག་ལ་སོགས་པའི་ཉེ་འཁོར་རྣམས་ལ་
 གསལ། དེ་རྩེས་མགོ་ལོག་སྟེ་གསལ་ན་ནག་མོ་གཏིར་སྟོན་ཞིག་འདུག་ཟེར་བ་ཐོས་ཆོ། འབྲུམ་མའི་རྣམས་ལ་ཡིན་པར་
 ཐག་བཅད་ཡོད་སྐབས།

⁴⁷² Autobiography 281a.4- 282b.6:

བླ་མའི་ཞལ་ནས་ བྱིད་གཏིར་སྟོན་རེད་གསུངས་ནི་བླ་མ་སུ་བྱུང་བ་ཡིན་གསུངས། བདག་གིས་ང་མོ་ལོ་སུམ་བརྒྱ་ལ་མ་ཐོན་
 བར་དུ་བླ་མ་དང་འཕྲད་མ་སྟེང་བ་ཡིན་པས། ང་གཏིར་སྟོན་ཨི་རེད་འདྲི་འོངས་མ་བྱུང་། ཅུང་ལོ་བཅོ་ལྔ་ནས་
 བཟུང་སྟེ་གང་དྲག་ཡིག་རིས་དང་སྤྱི་རྒྱ་རྒྱངས་བ་ཡིན། དེ་མིན་གཏིར་སྟོན་ཡིན་མིན་རྟོག་དཔྱད་མ་བྱས། ཆོས་ཉིད་
 གྱིད་དོན་རྟོགས་ན་སྤྱང་སྤྱིད་བརྟེན་པའི་རྩལ་དུ་ཤར་དར་གི་ལགས། ང་རང་དབྱུག་པ་ཅན་ལ་ཅི་བྱུང་ཡང་སྤྱང་འབབ་མེད་པ་
 ཡིན་པས། གང་ཤར་ཡིག་རིས་སུ་བགྱིས་པ་དང་། གང་ཤིས་མན་ངག་རྒྱ་བཤད་པ་ཡིན་ཞུས་ཆོ། བླ་མས་
 བྱིད་གཏིར་སྟོན་རང་མཛོང་ཅན་ཞིག་ཡིན་པ་འདྲ་མ་གཏོགས། ཁོང་གཏིར་སྟོན་གཞན་རྣམས་སུ་ཡིན་ཀྱང་། རང་གི་ཅུ་

བའི་སྒྲ་མཁའ་། གཞན་ས་ཐོབ་སྤྱིས་བྱ་ན་མས་ཀྱིས་གཏིར་སྟོན་དུ་མཚན་གསལ་བ་མ་གཏོགས། རང་གིས་རང་གཏིར་
 སྟོན་ཡིན་ཟེར་བ་མ་ཚོར་གསུངས། ཡང་བདག་གིས་ཁོང་གཏིར་སྟོན་ན་མས་རྒྱ་གོང་མས་འབངས་ལ་ཐོབ་གཏད་པ་ལྟར།
 གཞན་ཞིག་གིས་ཁྱོད་ནི་གཏིར་སྟོན་ཐོབ་སོ་ཟེར་བ་ཡིན་ཐང་ལགས། དེ་ལྟར་བརྟེན་པ་ཅམ་གྱིས་གཏིར་སྟོན་ཡིན་མིན་ཆ་ཚོད་
 པར་ཤིན་ཏུ་དགའ་སྟེ། དེང་དུས་ཡི་གེ་འདོན་ཤིས་པ་ཅམ་དང་། སེམས་ཀྱི་བྱུང་རྒྱུ་ལ་བརྟེན་ནས་རྒྱ་མཚམས་རེ་བསྟུང་པ་
 ཅམ་མ་གཏོགས། དངོས་དང་དངོས་མེད་ཀྱི་མཚན་ལྟན་སྒྲ་མའི་ཞབས་ལ་མ་གཏུག། བསྐྱེད་རྫོགས་ཟབ་མེད་རང་རྒྱུད་
 མ་སྟོན། འཁོར་བའི་བྱ་བ་ཆོས་བརྒྱུད་ཀྱི་འདུན་པ་མ་བོར། སྟོན་དང་དམ་ཆོག་ཚུལ་བཞིན་བསྟུང་མ་དགོས་པ་
 སོགས་ཀྱི་བྱ་བ་མཐོང་ཆོས་སྤྲོད་ཀྱང་། ད་དུང་གཏིར་སྟོན་བྱས་ཏེ་ཡི་གེ་མང་པོ་འབྲི་བ་ཤིན་ཏུ་མང་བས། གཏིར་
 སྟོན་རེད་བརྟེན་པ་ཅམ་གྱིས་ཅི་འགྱུར་མི་ཤིས་སྟེ། དེའི་ཕྱིར་ན་དམན་པ་ང་རང་ལྟ་བུ་ནི་གཞན་ཞིག་གིས་གཏིར་སྟོན་ཡིན་མིན་
 ཇི་ལྟར་བརྟེན་ཀྱང་། རང་སེམས་གཡོ་སྤྱོད་མེད་ཅིང་དམ་ཆོག་ལ་མ་དོན་སྟོན་མེད་པ་དང་གཅིག། ནས་དང་ཡུག་པོའི་ས་
 བོན་རྒྱུད་ནས་བྱུང་པར་ཡོད་པ་ལྟར། ང་རང་རྒྱུད་ལོ་ངོག་བརྒྱུད་ནས་རྒྱ་མ་མཁའ་འགྲོས་རྗེས་སུ་བཟུང་སྟེ། སྟོན་གྲོལ་
 ལ་བཀོད་པ་དང་གཏིས། བད་ཤོག་ཡོད་པ་དང་མེད་པ་གང་ཡིན་ཀྱང་། རང་བཟོས་སྒོ་ཡིས་བཅའ་བཅོས་ཐེ་ཆོས་མེད་
 པར་གཏིར་དཔེ་ལྟར་གྱིས་པ་དང་གསུམ། ཐབས་གྲོགས་དང་ཆོས་བདག་འདུལ་ཞིང་ལ་སོགས་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་ལུང་བྱང་གསལ་པོ་
 དུ་མ་ཡོད་ཀྱང་། སྟོན་གྱི་སྟོན་ལམ་གྱི་དུས་ལ་མ་བབ་བར་དུ། རང་འདོད་ཀྱི་རྩོལ་བ་ཆེན་པོ་འབད་པ་མེད་པ་སོགས་
 ཀྱི་གཞི་བྱས་ནས། གཞན་ཞིག་ལ་ང་གཏིར་སྟོན་ཨི་རེད་ཟེར་རྒྱུ་མ་བྱུང་བ་ཡིན་མ་གཏོགས། ང་རང་ཡོན་ཏན་ཀྱན་ཟད།
 སྟོན་ཀྱན་ལྟན། མི་ཡི་བླན་མགར་ར་སང་ཟེར་བའི་གཡོག་མོ་ཞིག་ཡིན་པས། རང་མཐོང་རང་གི་གོ་རྒྱུའི་ཡོན་ཏན་སྤྱོད་
 ཅམ་ཡང་མེད་ལགས། དེང་སངས་རྗེ་མིན་ནག་མིན་ཅམ་འོང་བ་འདི་བདག་གི་འདྲིན་སྟོན་དམ་པ་སྤྲུལ་སྤྱོད་བཞིན་ནོར་
 བུའི་བཀའ་རྒྱུ་ལས་བྱུང་བ་ཡིན་ཞུས་ཆོ། རྒྱ་མའི་བྱགས་ཤིན་ཏུ་དགུས་པར་མཇོད་ཅིང་། ས་བཟང་གི་བྱ་མོ་ཁྱོད་འདི་ལྟར་
 ལུས་ཡིན།

⁴⁷³ The point here is that Gyalsé's religious encampment (*chos sgar*) picked up and moved camp to the location of his family (the Gar family's) camp (*Mgar skor*).

⁴⁷⁴ *Autobiography* 255b.1- 5:

དེ་ནས་ངེད་རྣམས་སོང་བའི་སྒྲ་བྱང་གི་སྒྲར་གཞི་མགར་སྟོར་ནང་དུ་བྱོན་སོང་འདུག་པས། བདག་གིས་སྤུབ་བཟང་ལ་ད་ལོ་
 སྒྲར་གཞི་མགར་སྟོར་ནང་དུ་བྱུང་སོང་བ་དེ། ལུང་བསྟན་བཟང་པོ་ཞིག་མེད་པས་རྟོན་འབྲེལ་མ་ལེགས་སྟེ། སྤུབ་བཟང་

ན་རེ་ རེད་སྤར་རྒྱལ་སྤུལ་སང་རྒྱ་མེད་ཟད་མེད་ཡིན་དུས། ལུ་རུ་མགར་སྒོར་རེད་ཟེར་བ་མཐོང་མ་སྤྲོང་།
 དེང་སང་བྱིད་ཀྱིས་རྒྱ་རྒྱ་རྒྱ་རྒྱ་ལོངས་སྤྱོད་དང་ལྷན་ཡོང་དུས། མགར་ར་སང་གི་རིགས་སང་ནས་རྒྱལ་སྤུལ་ལ་བདག་
 པོ་བྱེད་འདུག་ཟེར། བདག་གིས་བྱིད་མི་རྒྱུད་བྱིས་པའི་སྒོ་ཅན་ཡིན་པས་ཅི་ཡང་མི་ཤེས་དེ་ལྟར་ཟེར་མི་ཉན། ཁོང་རྣམས་
 ཀྱིས་གོ་སོང་ན་ཆོག་ངན་བྱེད་འོང་སྤྲུལ།

⁴⁷⁵ The second most common type of visionary figure Sera Khandro encounters are (male) *siddhas*, or Accomplished Masters, including Guru Rinpoché, Sarahapa, Taranatha, Kukurepa, Dujom Lingpa, Drimé Özer, Gara Tertön, and Gotrül Rinpoché, the latter four coming to her in visions after their deaths. These and other *siddhas* appear about twenty times. Thirdly, she interacts with many classes of non-human spirits including land deities, most often Nyenchen Tanglha, *nāgas*, and various classes of demons in approximately eleven visions.

⁴⁷⁶ Gyatso 1998: 254.

⁴⁷⁷ Gyatso 1998: 220-221.

⁴⁷⁸ This distinction between *dākinī* visions reminding a male subject of the undecidability of his experience, of the unformulatedness of his selfhood, and *dākinī* visions offering a female subject support, encouragement, and advice without much emphasis on destabilizing her newly bolstered sense of self is reminiscent of the point within contemporary feminist theory that postmodern theories deconstructing a coherent sense of selfhood are only liberating if one already has a strong enough sense of self to be deconstructed, something that women, racial or sexual minorities, and poor people are not always privileged enough to have.

⁴⁷⁹ Germano and Gyatso 2000.

⁴⁸⁰ *Autobiography* 17b. 4-18a.1:

དེའི་རྒྱབ་སྒྲིལ་ལ་མཁའ་འགྲོ་རྩས་རྒྱན་གསལ་བ་དར་དང་རིན་ཆེན་སྒྲ་ཚོགས་སྤྲུལ་པ་ཞིག་བྱོན་ནས། ཆང་ཐོད་ཕོར་གང་
 གནང་ཞིང་རིགས་ལྷན་མ་བྱིད་ཀྱིས་འདི་གསལ་དང་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་ཚོགས་སྤྲུལ་རེད་གསུངས། བདག་གིས་ལྷས་པ་མཁའ་
 འགྲོའི་ཚོགས་གལ་དུ་མ་ཐོན་ན་ཚོགས་སྤྲུལ་ཙམ་གྱིས་ཅི་ཕན་ལུས་ཆོ། མཁའ་འགྲོའི་ཞལ་ནས་ཁོད་ཀྱི་དྲི་ཕུང་པོའི་འཕུལ་
 འཁོར་ལ་སྒྲོབ་དང་། མཁའ་འགྲོ་རྒྱུད་སེམས་ཀྱི་ཆོ་འཕུལ་ཡིན་པས་མི་འགྲུང་བར་མཇུག་འོང་གསུངས་ཏེ་ཐལ།

⁴⁸¹ *Autobiography* 22b.5-23b.1:

དེ་ནས་ང་རང་གཟིམ་རྒྱུད་ཉི་འོད་སྤྲིད་དུ་སོང་ནས་བསྐད་ཡོད་ཆོ། མཁའ་འགྲོ་ཡེ་ཤེས་མཆོ་རྒྱལ་ཡིན་གསུངས་པའི་བྱད་མེད་
 ཡིད་དུ་འོང་བ་རིན་པོ་ཆེའི་རྒྱན་དུ་མས་སྤྲུལ་ཤིང་དེ་བཟང་གིས་གནས་ཁང་ཐོ་ཕྱི་ཀུན་བྱུང་པ་ཞིག་བྱོན་ནས་འདི་སྐད་གསུངས།
 སྤྲུལ་ལྷན་མ་བྱིད་ཀྱིས་ང་འཁོད་དོན་ཅི་ཡིན་གསུངས། བདག་གིས་ང་ཡི་འོ་དོད་འཁོད་པའི་དོན་ནི། བྱིད་ཡེ་
 ཤེས་དབྱིངས་བཞུགས་རྣམས་ལ་བྱུགས་ཆེ་དང་རྩས་སྒྲོབས་ཆེ་པས། བདག་བྱིས་ནས་བྱིས་མེད་པར་དབེན་པའི་རི་སྤུལ་དུ་
 ཡང་དག་པའི་ཆོས་ཞིག་བསྐྱབ་སྤྲུལ་ཡོད་པས་དེ་བསམ་པ་ཇི་བཞིན་འགྲུབ་པ་དང་། ས་མ་ཉེ་འབྲེལ་ཀུན་གྱིས་འཁོར་བའི་བྱུབ་
 བརྒྱུད་དགོས་གསུངས་ཏེ་བཀའ་བཅན་དུ་མ་ཐེབས་ཡོད་པས་དེ་སེལ་ཐབས་ལ་ཅི་དགོས་ལགས་ལུས་ཆོ། རྒྱུ་ཤི་ཞལ་ནས།

ཁྱེད་ཀྱིས་ཉིན་མཚན་དུས་དྲུག་ཏུ་གསོལ་བ་འདི་ལྟར་ཐོབ་དང་བར་ཆད་ཞི་བར་ངེས་སོགས་ལྟེ་སྐྱེ་མི་སྤང་ཞིང་གསུང་གི་གདངས་
ལས་འདི་སྐྱད་ཐོས། ཡི་མ་རྟེ་ སྐབས་གནས་ཀྱན་འདུས་མཁའ་འགྲོ་མཚའ་རྒྱལ་མར། བཟོད་མེད་གདུང་
ཤུགས་དཔག་པོས་གསོལ་བ་འདེབས། སྤྱི་ནང་གསང་བའི་བར་ཆད་ཀྱན་ཞི་ཞིང་། བསམ་པ་ལྟན་གྱི་འབྲུག་པར་བྱིན་གྱིས་
སློབས། ཞེས་གསུངས་པས། བདག་གིས་ཀྱང་དུས་རྒྱུན་དུ་འདི་ལ་བརྩོན་པས་སྡེ་དཔོན་ཀྱན་གྱི་སློ་ལོག་ནས་ང་རང་
གིས་དཔོན་ཐོབ་འཛིན་མི་འཛིན་གང་བདེ་བྱེད།

⁴⁸² *Autobiography* 35a.2-5:

རིགས་ལྡན་མ་ཁྱོད་ང་ཡི་ཕྱིན་ལས་གྱི་གཞུགས་སུ་ཤར་བ་ཡིན་པས། ད་དུང་འགྲོ་དོན་མཛོད་ལ་འཇིག་རྟེན་དུ་ཕྱིར་སོང་ཤིག།
ནམ་ཞིག་དུས་ལ་བབ་ཆོ་ཁོ་མོས་ལམ་འབྲེན་དུ་འོང་ངོགས་ལས། དེ་ནས་དགྱིལ་འཁོར་གྱི་དུས་སུ་ཤེལ་གྱི་བུས་པ་ཞིག་
འདུག་པ། དེའི་ནང་ནས་བདག་ལ་འཆི་མེད་བདུད་རྩི་ར་ས་ཡ་རིང་གསུངས་ནས་སྤྱད་པས། དེ་ཁ་ལ་རག་མ་ཐག་
གཉིད་སང་པ་ལྟར་རང་གི་བེམ་པོར་ཐོན་འདུག་པས། ཕ་མ་ཉེ་འབྲེལ་ཀྱན་གྱིས་མཆི་མ་འབྲུག།

⁴⁸³ *Gtum mo* is a yogic practice in which the meditator cultivates heat in his or her body.

⁴⁸⁴ *Autobiography* 97a.3- 99a.6:

གཏུམ་མའི་འོད་གསལ་ཉམས་ལེན་བྱས་ཏེ་བསྐྱད་ཡོད་ཆོ། སྤང་བ་གནས་འབྲུར་ནས་ཐིག་ལེ་ཆེ་བ་ཞིག་གི་ནང་དུ་ཡུལ་རྒྱ་ཆེ་
ལ་ཁོད་སྐྱམས་པ། མེ་ཏོག་དང་རྩ་མཚའ་ཡིད་དུ་འོང་བའི་སྤྱུ་སྤྱད་དུ་འཁོར་བ། དེའི་དུས་སུ་འཇའ་ཡི་གྲར་ཁང་
རྒྱ་ཆེ་ལ་ཁྱོད་ཡངས་པའི་ནང་ན་མཚོད་རྩལ་དུ་མ་དང་། སྤྱད་པར་སྐྱེ་གསུམ་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་འདུ་ཆོགས་རིང་ཟེར་བའི་ཆོགས་
འཁོར་ཞིག་བཤམས་ནས། དེ་ལ་དཔའ་བོ་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་འདུ་ཆོགས་ལྟ་མིའི་ཁྱོམ་འཆོགས་པ་ལྟར་འདུག་པས།
བདག་གི་ཅི་ཡིན་སྐྱུ་མ་ནས་གྲར་ཁང་[97b]གི་སྒྲིའི་བར་ལ་སོང་ནས་བལྟས་ཆོ། མཁའ་འགྲོ་ཡེ་ཤེས་མཚའ་རྒྱལ་གྱིས་ཆོགས་
དཔོན་མཛོད་ནས་བཀའ་འདུས་ཆོས་ཀྱི་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་དགྱིལ་འཁོར་ཞེས་ཐུས་འདུག་པས། བདག་ནི་ཤིན་ཏུ་དགའ་ནས་ཕྱག་འཆལ་
ཞིང་འདི་སྐྱད་གསོལ། ན་མོ་ ཆོས་ཉིད་མཁའ་དབྱིངས་དགའ་པའི་གྲོང་དགྱིལ་ནས། ཐབས་མཁས་ཐུགས་རྗེའི་འགྲོ་བའི་དོན་
མཛོད་པ། རྒྱལ་ཀྱན་བསྐྱེད་ཡུམ་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་ལྟ་ཆོགས་ལ། བདག་གིས་སློ་གསུམ་གྲུས་པས་ཕྱག་འཆལ།
ཆེ་སྟོན་སྟོན་ལམ་བཟང་པོའི་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་མཐུས། དེ་རིང་མ་དང་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་ཆོགས་གྲུལ་མཇལ། ཇི་སྟེང་འཁོར་བའི་རྒྱ་
མཚའ་སྟོང་བར། དེ་སྟེང་བདག་ཅག་འགྲོ་ཀྱན་རྗེས་བཟུང་ནས། མཁའ་འགྲོ་མཚའ་རྒྱལ་མ་དང་དབྱིར་མེད་ཤོག།
ཅས་སྟོན་ལམ་བཟང་མཐར། མཁའ་འགྲོ་ཀྱན་གསལ་མ་དང་ བདེ་བའི་གོ་ཆ་ཡིད་སྐྱད་པའི་མཁའ་འགྲོ་གཉིས་ཕྱོན་

ནས་འདི་སྐད་གསུངས། ཨེ་མ་སྐལ་བཟང་ལས་འཕྲོ་ཅན། བདེ་བདེ་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་གྲོང་བྱིར་ན། གྲོགས་
 ཁྱོད་འོང་བའོ་མཚར་ཆེ། རང་སྐལ་ཆོས་ཀྱིས་གསང་མཛོད་ཀྱིས། [98] སྟོན་ལམ་དུས་ལ་བབ་པ་ཡིན། ལས་འཕྲོ་
 ལྷན་ནི་རིགས་ལྷན་མ། ཞེས་ཟེར་ནས་ཁོང་རྣམ་གཉིས་ཀྱིས་བདག་ལ་ཁྱུས་བྱས་གོས་བཞེ་བ་སོགས་མཛོད་ནས་གྱུར་
 ཁང་ནང་དུ་སོང་བས། ཨེ་མ་མཚོ་རྒྱལ་གྱིས་ཞལ་འཇུག་པ་དང་བཅས་འདི་སྐད་གསུང་། རིགས་ལྷན་མ་ཁྱོད་ཀྱིས་འགྲོ་དོན་
 ཅི་འདྲ་བྱུང་། འཇིག་རྟེན་དུ་དཀའ་ཆོགས་ཆེན་པོ་ཨེ་འབྱུང་གི། སྐྱུ་མའི་གནས་ཡུལ་ལ་བདག་གིར་མ་བྱས་སམ་
 གསུང་ཆོ། ང་རང་ཡུལ་ཕྱོགས་ནས་འོང་དུས་སྤྲུག་བསྐལ་ཆོར་བ་དང་། མདོ་ཁམས་ལ་ཐོན་ཕྱིན་ཆད་སྤྲུག་བསྐལ་ཕྱོད་
 བ་ལ་བསམ་ནས་ཆེ་མོའི་ཞབས་ལ་བརྟུང་དེ་འདི་སྐད་གསེལ། ཀྱི་མ་དགོངས་མཛོད་ཡི་ཤེས་སྤྲུན་ལྷན་མ། ལུས་དམན་བདག་
 གི་གནས་ཚུལ་བྱར་ཅམ་ཞུ། འོ་ངོག་བརྒྱད་ནས་མཁའ་འགྲོས་རྗེས་སུ་བབྱུང་། དངོས་ཉམས་མི་ལམ་ཀུན་ལ་དབྱགས་
 དཔྱུང་མཛོད། བཅུ་གཉིས་དུས་སུ་བྱུབ་པའི་རིག་འཛིན་རྗེ། ས་ར་ཉ་ཡིས་རྗེས་བབྱུང་། [98b] སྟོན་གྲོལ་སྤུལ།
 བཅུ་གསུམ་ལོན་དུས་རྒྱུ་འཛིན་རྒྱུད་ཀྱི། ཟབ་གཏིར་ཁ་བྱུང་འཁྲུལ་མེད་ལག་ཏུ་སོན། བཅུ་བཞི་ནས་བབྱུང་གཞན་དོན་ཁོ་
 ནར་འབད། བཅོ་ལྷར་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་བཀའ་བཞེན་ཤར་གྱི་ཕྱོགས། མདོ་ཁམས་སྟོན་པོའི་གྲོང་འདྲའི་ཡུལ་དུ་འོང་།
 མ་གྲིག་སོན་ལ་དཔྱལ་བའི་སྤྲུག་བསྐལ་ཕྱོད་། སྟོན་སྟོན་ལས་འཕྲོ་དུས་སུ་འཛོམ་སྟིང་གྲང་། སྟོ་བྱར་སྤྱའི་དབང་དུ་
 ཡང་ཡང་སོང་། དག་མེད་བདུད་ཀྱི་ཡུལ་དུ་བདག་འདྲ་བས། འགྲོ་དོན་ཡར་ཞོག་ཉམས་པའི་གྲིབ་རྒྱུན་གྱིས། རང་དོན་
 ཁྲིམས་གཙང་འོང་བ་དཀའ་མོ་མཆིས། ཟབ་གཏིར་གྲོགས་དང་ཆོས་བདག་སྐྱེས་བུ་རྣམས། གཞན་རྒྱུན་གནང་བཀའ་ཚུལ་
 འཆོས་ལ་ཤོར་ནས། སྐྱེད་མན་བདག་ནི་སྤངས་བྱའི་གནས་སུ་མཐོང་། དོན་གཉིས་མི་འབྱུང་རྒྱུ་འཛིན་པའི་འབྲུག་
 ལས་ངན་བདག་འདྲ་མཐོང་ཐོས་མི་འདུག་པས། ད་ནི་འཇིག་རྟེན་ཁམས་སུ་བདག་མི་འགྲོ། ཞེས་དུ་ཞིང་ལྷས་པས།
 རྒྱུ་འཛིན་ཞལ་ནས། ཉོན་ [99a] དང་སྐལ་བཟང་ལས་འཕྲོ་ཅན། སྐྱུ་མའི་ཡུལ་ལ་བྱགས་མ་སྟོ། འབྱུར་མེད་རིག་པའི་བཅོན་
 ས་བྱུངས། བདེ་སྤྲུག་མི་ལམ་གྲོང་བྱིར་འདྲ། རིག་སྟོང་ལམ་བྱིར་རུ་ལ་མ་ཞན། སྐྱུ་ལུས་སྟོང་རའི་དལ་རུ།
 བདེ་སྟོང་ཐོག་འདོན་ཕུག་རྒྱ་བསྟེན། པདྨའི་སྟོན་ལམ་མཐུ་བཅོན་པས། གྲོགས་དང་ཆོས་འཛིན་རིམ་གྱིས་འཕྲད།
 ལས་དང་སྟོན་ལམ་དུས་འཛོམ་པའི། གཏུལ་བྱའི་ཞིང་ལྷ་ཐབས་ཀྱིས་འདུལ། རིགས་ལྷན་དཔའ་བོ་ཐབས་ཀྱི་གྲོགས།
 མན་ངག་སྟོང་འཛོན་ལྷགས་རྒྱུའི་བཀའ་ལྷན། ཆོས་བརྒྱད་ཆོས་ཀྱི་འགལ་རྒྱ་དེ། བདག་མེད་ཤེས་རབ་རལ་གྱིའི་གཅོད།

གཉིས་འཛིན་བདུད་གྱི་སོ་པ་དེ། གཉིས་མེད་ཆོས་སྐུའི་དགོངས་རྒྱས་ཐོབས། དགའ་སྟུག་སེམས་ཀྱི་འབྲུ་འཕྲོ་ཀྱན།
 གསལ་སྟོང་རིག་པར་རྟོགས་པར་མཛོད། མཁའ་འགྲོའི་ཕོ་ཉ་ལས་འཕྲོ་ཅན། མི་འདོད་བཞིན་དུ་འགྲོ་ལ་ཡན།
 རོར་བུ་རིན་ཆེན་ཇི་བཞིན་དུ། ངན་སྦྱད་^[99b]ལོག་ལྟའི་གོས་མི་སྲིད། སྤ་བརྟན་ས་ལས་ཆུ་བདོལ་བཞིན། དོན་
 གཉིས་མཛོད་པ་ངང་གིས་འབྲུག། ཁྱོད་ནི་ད་དུང་འཇིག་རྟེན་དུ། གདུལ་བྱའི་ལྷག་མ་མ་ཆོགས་པའི། ཐུགས་
 བསྐྱེད་དམ་བཅའ་དཔང་བསྐྱེད་ལ། བདུད་སྲིན་མདོ་ཁམས་མ་ངེས་ཕྱོགས། གང་འདུལ་ཐབས་ཀྱིས་བདེ་ལ་བཀོད།
 ཉི་ཤུ་བར་ལ་སྤྲས་ཚུལ་བྱང་། ཐ་མལ་སྐྱེས་བྱའི་བདེ་བ་སྟོང་། གཞུགས་ཅན་མི་དང་གཞུགས་མེད་ལ།
 རྟེན་འབྲེལ་རྒྱས་ཀྱི་འགྲོ་དོན་མཛོད། ཟབ་གཏེར་བཀའ་རྒྱ་མ་རལ་དགོས། དེ་ཕན་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་གནད་ལྡན་ན།
 དོན་གཉིས་རོར་བུ་ལོན་པར་ངེས། ཞེས་གསུངས་ནས་ཆང་ཀ་པུ་ལ་གང་བདག་ལ་གནང་ནས། འདི་ལྷག་མེད་དུ་
 འབྲུང་དང་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་དངོས་བྱུང་གྱི་རྒྱས་ཡིན་པས། ཁྱོད་ཀྱི་ཤེས་བྱའི་ཆོས་ཐམས་ཅད་རྩོལ་མེད་དུ་ཤེས་པར་ངེས་སོ་
 གསུངས།

⁴⁸⁵ *Autobiography* 98a.5-6:

ལོ་ངོག་བརྒྱད་ནས་མཁའ་འགྲོས་རྒྱུ་བྱང་། དངོས་ཉམས་མི་ལམ་ཀྱན་ལ་དཔུགས་དཔྱང་མཛོད།

⁴⁸⁶ *Autobiography* 147b.6- 149a.3:

གནས་མི་མདོན་ཟངས་མདོག་དཔལ་རིན། མ་ཀྱན་མཁྱེན་ཡེ་ཤེས་མཆོ་རྒྱལ་དང་། དཔལ་ལོ་དང་དབང་མོ་དགོངས་
 དུ་གསོལ། མ་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་^[148a]མངག་པའི་ཕོ་ཉ་དང་། ལུས་མ་དག་ཟམ་མོ་ལུས་སྐྱེས། ལས་མ་དག་
 འཁོར་བའི་ཁ་འཛིན་བྱེད། ཡུལ་མ་དག་མགོ་ལོག་སྲིན་པོའི་གླིང་། བྱ་མ་དག་ཆོགས་ངན་རྒྱན་དུ་བྱེད། ལས་འདི་
 འདའི་རྒྱ་རྒྱུན་ཅི་ལས་བྱང་། ང་ཉོན་མོངས་དུག་ལྡེ་རྒྱུད་བསྐྱངས་ཏེ། རྒྱལ་སྲིད་གྱི་བྱིས་ཐབས་འཛིན་པ་མིན།
 ལྷ་བླ་མའི་ཞལ་ལུང་ཇི་བཞིན་བྱས། བསྟན་འགྲོ་བའི་དོན་ཞིག་ལོས་འབྲུག་སྟུང་། ད་གཞན་དོན་འབྱུང་བ་ལྷ་ཅི་
 སྟོས། རང་རྒྱུད་ཀྱང་རྒྱུད་ཆོས་འགྲོ་ཉི་བས། མ་དབྱིངས་སྟོན་རྒྱུ་ཤིའི་མཐུ་དཔྱང་བསྐྱེད། རྒྱུན་ངན་པའི་བར་ཆད་
 བརྒྱུག་དུ་གསོལ། གནས་མ་དག་འཁོར་བའི་རྒྱ་མཆོ་འདི། དཔལ་པུ་འོད་དུ་བྱིན་གྱིས་སྟོབས། ལུས་མ་དག་
 གདོས་བཅས་ཕྱང་པོ་འདི། དབྱིངས་ཟག་མེད་འཇའ་སྐྱར་བྱིན་གྱིས་སྟོབས། སེམས་སེམས་བྱང་འབྲུལ་པའི་འཁོར་ལོ་
 འདི། ངང་ཡེ་ཤེས་ཆེན་པོར་གྲོལ་བྱིན་གྱིས་སྟོབས། འབྲུལ་མ་རིག་གཉིས་^[148b]འཛིན་རུ་མ་འདི། དབྱིངས་
 ཡུལ་མེད་ཟང་ཐལ་ཆེན་པོར་སྟོལ། ང་སྟོས་མེད་དོན་གྱི་སྤྱང་མོལ། མདོ་འདི་འདྲ་མ་ཡི་ཉམས་ཞིག་ཤར།

ཆོ་རོག་སྒྲུང་དང་མ་སྒྲུང་མེད། འཁོར་བར་ལྷུང་དང་མ་ལྷུང་མེད། སྒྲུ་ལུས་གྲོལ་དང་མ་གྲོལ་མེད། སེམས་ཅན་འབྲུལ་
 དང་མ་འབྲུལ་མེད། ཞིང་ཁམས་མཐོང་དང་མ་མཐོང་མེད། སངས་རྒྱུས་ཐོབ་དང་མ་ཐོབ་མེད། ལྷ་བ་ཤེས་དང་
 མ་ཤེས་མེད། སྒྲོམ་ཉམས་ཉེགས་དང་མ་ཉེགས་མེད། འབྲུལ་པ་བྲལ་བའི་སེམས་ཉིད་ལ། འབྲུལ་གཟུགས་སྒོ་
 ཡིས་བཅོས་མི་གཞུགས། མཁའ་ལྷ་རྩལ་དག་ཕྱོགས་ལྷུང་བྲལ། སྒྲོས་མེད་ཐིག་ལེ་ཉལ་གཅིག་གོ།
 མདོ་འབྲུང་མ་ཡི་གླུ་ལན་ཡིན། ཞེས་སྒྲུས་ཆོ། ནམ་མཁའ་ནས་གཟུགས་མེད་ལ་སྒྲུ་འདི་བཞིན་ཐོས། ཡི་མ་ཡི་མ་རྣལ་
 འབྱོར། རང་བྱུང་ཡི་ཤེས་ཆེན་པོ། ཅོལ་སྒྲུབ་བྲལ་བ་ཡི་ནམ། མ་སྒྲིས་རང་བྱུང་ལྷན་གྲུབ། འཁོར་འདས་
 གཞིར་ཡི་ནམ། བཟང་ངན་བདེ་སྤྱད་སྒྲུང་བ། ཆོས་ཉིད་རོལ་^[149a]པར་ཡི་ནམ། ཆོས་བརྒྱུད་ཉ་ལའི་ཀུ་མུད།
 མི་འབྲུང་སྒྲུང་བ་ཡི་ནམ། རང་ཉོར་རྒྱུ་འཁྱེད་ཐུགས་བཅུད། དུས་སྤྱོད་ལོན་པ་ཡི་ནམ། བསྟན་དང་འགྲོ་བའི་དོན་གཉིས།
 ལྷོ་ནས་འབྲུང་བ་ཡི་ནམ། འདི་སྒྲུང་སྒྲུ་མའི་འཕུལ་ལ། ཐུགས་སྤྱོད་སྒྲོ་ངལ་མི་དགོས། པདྨ་འཁོར་ཆེམ་མི་འབྲུར།
 དུས་སྤྱོད་ལོན་ལམ་འཛོམ་ངེས། ཞེས་ཟེར།

⁴⁸⁷ *Autobiography* 50a.4-5:

ཆོགས་ཆེན་ཡི་རྒྱུགས་བདེ་གཤེགས་དབྱིས་བསྐྱེད་ཡུམ།

Chapter Four: Consorts and Treasure Revelation Communities

⁴⁸⁸ By “normative ideas” of the role of consorts I am referring to presentations such as that of the Third Dodrupchen Rinpoché named Jikmé Tenpé Nyima (1865-1926) who was an older brother of Sera Khandro’s main consort Drimé Özer and who wrote a famous nineteenth-century explanation of Treasure revelation translated by Thondup 1986. See the section titled “Consorts” in Chapter Two for a description of the role of consorts according to Jikmé Tenpé Nyima.

⁴⁸⁹ Davidson 2002: 123-127.

⁴⁹⁰ Snellgrove 2002: 258.

⁴⁹¹ Davidson 2002: 198.

⁴⁹² Davidson 2002: 199.

⁴⁹³ White 2003: 219.

⁴⁹⁴ Davidson 1995: 301.

⁴⁹⁵ Dujom Rinpoché 1996: 144.

⁴⁹⁶ Klong chen rab ‘byams pa 1983: 258; David Germano, trans. (unpublished manuscript): Chapter Four, p. 10.

⁴⁹⁷ Klong chen rab ‘byams pa 1983: 258; David Germano, trans. (unpublished manuscript): Chapter Four, p. 10-11.

⁴⁹⁸ This stands in contrast to the Geluk system, which holds that without consort practices (real or visualized), one cannot gain enlightenment in this body. Because the great patriarch of the Geluk school Tsongkhapa (1357-1419) preserved his monastic vows and did not engage in consort practices, it is said that only after his death did he gain enlightenment through practicing the latter stages of Highest Yoga Tantra. See Cozort 2005 [1986]: 97.

⁴⁹⁹ *Autobiography* 67a.4:

བྱ་མོང་ཕོ་དགའ་ཆེ་བ་མིན།

Autobiography 67a.6:

ཆགས་མྱེད་གྱི་བྱ་ངན་ངས་མི་བྱེད།

⁵⁰⁰ *Autobiography* 361b.2-4:

ཆགས་བྲལ་ཡེ་ཤེས་དོན་དེ་མཐོང་བས། ཆགས་སྤོད་བྱིས་པའི་གཟུགས་ལ་མི་ཆགས། མི་ཆོའི་ལྷག་མ་ཆོས་ལ་བྲིལ་ན།

ལུས་རྟེན་ཐོབ་པའི་དོན་ཆོག་རེད་སྟེ།

⁵⁰¹ This connection between holding in seminal fluid and maintaining physical energy and spiritual power is one psycho-physiological reason for celibacy in Tibetan Buddhism. Another reason is that celibacy allows men and women freedom to study and practice religion away from the demands of lay life.

⁵⁰² Dorje 1987: 909.

⁵⁰³ Dorje 1987: 900-901.

⁵⁰⁴ The three channels (*rtsa gsum*) include the central channel (*dbu ma*) with the taste lady (*ro ma*) and lone lady (*rkyang ma*) to either side, in males on the right and left respectively and reversed for females. The five wheels (*cakras*) are located in the center of the body along the central channel at the crown of the head, the throat, the heart, the navel, and the genitals.

⁵⁰⁵ The path of accumulation (*tshogs lam*) is the first of five paths, traversal of which results in Buddhahood. The other four (respectively) are the path of joining (*sbyor lam*), seeing (*mtshong lam*), cultivation (*yongs byang lam*), and no more learning (*sgrol lam*).

⁵⁰⁶ *Bodhicitta*, here a translation of its abbreviated form “*sems*,” (Skt. *citta*) is a word with two meanings: the literal translation is “mind of enlightenment” but actually in channel and wind (*rtsa rlung*) practices, *bodhicitta* is a euphemism for seminal fluid and can refer to male or sometimes female fluids. Because of these two meanings, there is no good English translation and I will render the term in its Sanskrit form “*bodhicitta*.”

⁵⁰⁷ The white is the man’s semen and the red is the woman’s blood. These are considered to be equivalent fluids in the man and woman’s bodies.

⁵⁰⁸ The three realms comprise the whole world, including the desire realm (*‘dod khams*), the form realm (*gzugs khams*), and the formless realm (*gzugs med khams*). The “lower door” refers to the lower door of the human body, the genitalia.

⁵⁰⁹ There are thirteen grounds on the *bodhisattva* path, each ground referring to an additional level of realization. Here, the gradual drawing up of the seminal nuclei into the woman’s body is linked to successive stages of attaining the *bodhisattva* grounds.

⁵¹⁰ The secret abode is the secret wheel (*cakra*), the lowest one of five *cakras* located at the genitalia.

⁵¹¹ The crown protrusion (*gtsug tor*) is the protuberance at the top of the Buddha’s head, one of the thirty-two major marks of a Buddha.

⁵¹² “Awareness body” is a translation of *rig sku*, but Gyalrong Khenpo Sangyé suggests this is a misspelling in the *Autobiography* that is meant to be *rigs sku*, which would translate as Buddha body, or lineage body.

⁵¹³ The seven aspects of union (*kha sbyor yan lag bdun*): 1) complete enjoyment (*longs spyod rdzogs pa*), 2) union (*kha sbyor*), 3) great bliss (*bde ba chen po*), 4) no self-nature (*rang bzhin med pa*), 5) completely filled with compassion (*snying rjes yongs su gang ba*), 6) uninterrupted (*rgyun mi chad pa*), and 7) unceasing (*‘gog pa med pa*).

⁵¹⁴ *Autobiography* 64a.4-65b.6:

གསུམ་པ་ཐབས་གྱི་ཕྱག་རྒྱ་ནི་མཚན་ཉིད་དང་ལྷན་པ་རིགས་ལྔའི་སྒྲུ་འཕྲལ་གྱི་དཔའ་བོ་བརྟགས་པ་དང་འགྲུགས་པ་དང་སྦྱངས་པ་

སོགས་ལེགས་པར་བྱས་ཤིང་། ཐོག་མར་སྤྲིན་གྲོལ་གཉིས་གྱི་སྒྲོར་བཙུང་ནས་སྤྱིན་གསང་གསུམ་གྱི་བསྐྱེད་ཚྭ་གསལ་

ལུས་པ་དང་རྟགས་ཐོན་པར་བྱེད་དུ་བརྟག་ལ། སྐྱེ་གསུང་བྱགས་ཀྱི་དམ་ཚིག་གི་གནས་ནམས་ལེགས་པར་བསྐྱེལ་ནས་སྒོ་
 གསུམ་གྱི་བྱ་བ་ཚོས་མིན་སྐད་གཅིག་ཀྱང་མི་འགྲོ་བར་བྱས་ཏེ། དོན་དབང་གསུམ་པས་སྤྲིན་གྲོལ་ལ་བཀོད་དོ། དེ་ནས་
 ཐབས་ཤེས་ལྟར་གསལ་བའི་སྐྱེ་དབྱས་སུ་ཅུ་གསུམ་འཁོར་ལོ་ལྟ་དང་བཅས་པ་གསལ། [64b]ལ། གནས་ལྟར་ཐབས་ལ་དཔའ་
 བོ་སྤྲེ་ལ། ཤེས་རབ་ལ་དཔའ་མོ་སྤྲེ་ལ། ཡན་ལག་བཞི་ལ་སྒོ་བ་ཡབ་ཡུམ། གཞན་ཡང་ཅུ་གནས་ཐམས་ཅད་
 དཔའ་བོ་དང་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་རྣམ་པར་གནས་ལྟ་ལྟར་ཐབས་ཤེས་ཀྱི་རྒྱལ་དུ་བསྒྲོམ་མོ། གཙུག་རྒྱུ་ཡེ་ཤེས་ཀྱི་འཁོར་ལོའི་དབྱས་
 སུ་ཁྲི་གདན་ལ་རྟོ་དང་། ལྷོ་བ་ནས་སོར་གཞིའི་མཚམས་སུ་དབྱུ་མའི་མར་སྤེལ་དགའ་བ་དང་བདེ་བའི་ཅུ་མདུད་ཉི་ཟེར་ལྟར་
 ཡོད་པའི་དབྱས་སུ་ཨ་ཤར་དམར་པོ་རྒྱ་ཁབ་ཀྱི་ཅེ་བཅད་པ་ལྟ་བུ་ལ་ཡེ་ཤེས་ཀྱི་མེ་ཁུག་ཁུག་དུ་འབར་བ་ཞིག་བསྒྲོམ་། དེ་ནས་
 ཐབས་ཀྱི་རྒྱ་བཞི་དང་། ཤེས་རབ་མའི་རྒྱུན་བཞི་སྟེ། ཡན་ལག་བརྒྱད་ལྟར་གྱི་སྒྲུང་བ་བརྩོམ་ནས་གཅིག་དུ་འཁོད་པ་
 ཚོགས་ལམ། ལུས་ཀྱི་དབང་ཤེས་ཀྱི་བདག་རྒྱུན་བྱས་ཏེ། སྤྱི་བོར་བདུད་ཅིའི་སེམས་སྤྲིན་གཡོས་པ་དམིགས་པའི་རྒྱུ་དུ་
 འགྱུར་ཞིང་། དགའ་བ་བཞི་རིམ་གྱིས་སྒྲུང་བ་ནི་སྒྲུང་བའི་ལམ་ཡིན་ནོ། དེ་ནས་ཐབས་ཀྱི་སེམས་སྤྲིན་ཤེས་རབ་མའི་
 མཁའ་གསང་དུ་བབ་ནས་ [65]དཀར་དམར་ཞལ་མཇལ་ཏེ། ཀྱན་རྟོག་བརྒྱད་ཅུའི་རྟོག་པ་དབྱིངས་སུ་བཅོམ་ནས་བརྗོད་བྲལ་
 མཉམ་ཉིད་ཀྱི་ཡེ་ཤེས་མངོན་དུ་གྱུར་པ་དེ་ལ་འོག་སྒོ་ཁམས་གསུམ་རོལ་པ་ཞེས་བརྗོད་པ་ཡིན་ནོ། ཐིག་ལེ་མཁའ་གསང་
 རས་པ་སྒྲའི་ཟེུ་འབྱུར་ཐོན་པས་དུས་སྒྲུང་གཅིག་གི་རྒྱང་ལྷབ་ནས་ས་དང་པོའི་ཡོན་ཏན་ཐོབ། ཟེུ་འབྱུར་ནས་གསང་གནས་སུ་
 འདྲེན་པས་དུས་སྒྲུང་གཉིས་ཀྱི་རྒྱང་ལྷབ་ནས་ས་གཉིས་པ་ཐོབ། ལྷོ་གསང་གི་བར་དུ་འདྲེན་པས་དུས་སྒྲུང་གསུམ་པའི་རྒྱང་དག་
 རས་ས་གསུམ་པ་ཐོབ། ལྷོ་བར་ཐོན་པའི་དུས་སྒྲུང་བཞི་པའི་རྒྱང་དག་ས་བཞི་པ་ཐོབ། སྤྲིང་ལྷོའི་བར་དུ་འདྲེན་པས་དུས་
 སྒྲུང་ལྟ་པའི་རྒྱང་དག་ས་ལྟ་པ་ཐོབ། སྤྲིང་གར་ཐོན་པའི་དུས་སྒྲུང་དྲུག་གི་རྒྱང་དག་ས་དྲུག་པ་ཐོབ། སྤྲིང་ག་དང་མགྲིན་
 པའི་བར་དུ་འདྲེན་པས་དུས་སྒྲུང་བདུན་པའི་རྒྱང་དག་ས་བདུན་པ་ཐོབ། མགྲིན་པར་ཐོན་པས་དུས་སྒྲུང་བརྒྱད་པའི་རྒྱང་དག་ས་
 བརྒྱད་པ་ཐོབ། མགྲིན་པ་ནས་སྤྲིན་ [65b]མཚམས་བར་ལ་ཐོན་དུས་སྒྲུང་དགུ་པའི་རྒྱང་དག་ས་དགུ་པ་ཐོབ། སྤྲིན་
 མཚམས་ནས་སྤྱི་བོར་བར་ལ་འདྲེན་པའི་དུས་སྒྲུང་བརྒྱུ་པའི་རྒྱང་དག་ས་བརྒྱུ་པ་ཐོབ་ནས་སྤྲིན་གྱིས་གྲུབ་པའི་རྟག་འཛིན་མངོན་དུ་བརྟེས་
 པ་ཡིན་ནོ། ཡང་ཐིག་ལེ་སྤྱི་བོར་ཐོན་པས་ས་བརྒྱ་གཅིག་ཀྱན་དུ་འོད་དང་། སྤྱི་བོར་དང་གཙུག་རྒྱུར་བར་ལ་ཐོན་པས་ས་
 བརྒྱ་གཉིས་མ་ཆགས་པ་སྤྲེ་ཅན་དང་། གཙུག་རྒྱུར་རྟོ་དང་རོ་གཅིག་དུ་འདྲེན་པས་ས་བརྒྱ་གསུམ་རྟོ་རྩེ་འཛིན་པའི་ས་དུ་འགོད་པ་

ཡིན་ནོ། དེ་ལྟར་སྒྲོང་བའི་གནད་ལ་བརྟེན་ནས་སྒྲོལ་བ་རྒྱ་དང་འབྲས་བྱས་ལམ་ཐམས་ཅད་རིམ་པར་མི་སྒྲོལ་པར་གཅིག་
 ཆར་དུ་བསྒྲོད་པའི་སྒྲུང་ལམ་དམ་པ་འདི་ཡིན་ནོ། དེ་ལྟར་ཁྱོད་གྱིས་ཉམས་སྲུང་ཡོངས་དང་ཐིག་ལེ་སྐུ་ཅུ་སྟོན་ཏེ་ཁ་སྒྲོར་ཡན་ལག་
 བདུན་གྱི་རིག་སྐུ་མཛོན་དུ་གྱུར་ནས་ཟུང་འཇུག་དེ་ཆེ་འཆང་གི་གོ་འཕང་ཆོ་འདིར་ཐོབ་པར་འགྱུར་རོ། ཞེས་གསུངས་པ་དང་
 མཉམ་དུ་འོད་གྱི་ཐིག་ལེ་དཀར་པོ་ཞིག་དུ་གྱུར་ནས་རང་གི་སྤྱི་པོར་དུ་ཐིམ་སྤང་འཆར་ཆོ་གཉིད་ལས་སད་དོ།

⁵¹⁵ Gyalwa Changchub and Namkhai Nyingpo 1999: 42-44; Stag sham nus ldan rdo rje, *Bod kyi jo mo*, ff. 28b.4-30a.3.

⁵¹⁶ See Chapter Three pp. 150-151 for Sera Khandro's account of how she became upset and threw her unfinished biography of Yeshé Tsoygal into the fire.

⁵¹⁷ *Autobiography* 96b.6-97a.1:

ད་ལག་བཟའ་ལ་སྒྲུ་མ་མཁོན་མ་རེད། མོང་རང་གི་མིག་གི་མཐོང་ས་འདི་ཀར་སྒྲུ་མ་འདས་མོང་ན་བསམ་རྒྱ་མེད་ཟེར་བས།

ཇི་ལྟར་བྱས་ཀྱང་སྒྲུ་མའི་སྐུ་ཆོལ་བར་ཆད་བྱེད་ངེས་པ་རེད་གསུངས་”

⁵¹⁸ *Dar thang dgon pa'i gdan rabs* 1999: 379.

⁵¹⁹ *Autobiography* 235b.4-5:

གཅིག་ལ་གཅིག་བརྟེན་ནས་དེའི་རེའི་ཡན་གྱི་སྐུ་ཆོལ་བར་ཆད་ཞི་བར་བྱུང་ངོ།

⁵²⁰ *Autobiography* 236a.1:

རང་ཡང་རྩ་བའི་གཟུགས་མ་ལྟ་བུར་བྱགས་བཅེ་བ་ཆེན་པོས་རྩེས་སུ་བཟུང་ཞིང་།

⁵²¹ *Autobiography* 283b.1-2 (I discuss this visit to Adzom Rinpoche in greater detail later in the chapter):

ཁྱེད་པར་སྒྲུ་མ་རིན་པོ་ཆེའི་ཐུགས་བརྩེ་བ་ཆེན་པོ་རྩེས་སུ་བཟུང་སྟེ། ལུགས་གཉིས་ཀྱི་བསྐབ་བྱ་དང་། བྱིན་

བརྒྱབས་མཛད་ནས་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་གྱི་ཉེས་པ་སེལ་བས། རང་གི་ནད་ཐམས་ཅད་གྲོལ་བར་མཛད་པ་དང་

⁵²² *Autobiography* 352a.1-2:

དེ་སྐབས་ཟབ་གཏིར་ཕན་བྱ་རེའི་བན་བྱང་འབྱོར་ཡང་། ཁྱོགས་དང་མ་ལྟན་ནས་བཏང་སྟོམས་སུ་ལུས་པས།

རང་ཡང་འབྱུང་འདུས་ལ་ཉར་འཛེ་རུང་ཟད་རེ་བྱུང་བས།

⁵²³ *Lcags ri 'od 'bar* is a sacred mountain in Padma County, Golok by the *Smar* River just outside of the county seat on the road to Banak Monastery where Sera Khandro lived with Gyalsé when she was twenty-three.

⁵²⁴ *Autobiography* 149a.4-149b.2:

དེ་ནས་རང་ལོ་ཉར་གསུམ་ལོར་སྤྱར་གྱི་གནས་ལུགས་རི་འོད་འབར་ལ་གནས་འདུས་ཡོད་པས། དེ་ཀར་སོང་ནས་ཞག་ཆ་ཤས་

སྒྲོར་བ་བྱེད་གྱིན་ཡོད་སྐབས། གནས་བདག་བྱ་པོ་རིག་ལ་སྤྱུལ་ནས་འོང་སྟེ། སྒྲོལ་དཀར་ཡིད་བཞིན་ཆོ་འཕེལ་གྱི་ཟབ་

ཤོག་ཤེལ་སྒྲོམ་ཟུར་དུག་པ་ཞིག་དངོས་སུ་བདག་ལ་གཏད་པ་དེར་འདུས་གྱི་མཐོང་ཆོས་སུ་གྱུར་པས། ཀྱན་གྱིས་ང་རང་ལ་

ཁྱེད་གཏིར་སྟོན་རེད་ཅེས་གྲགས་སོ། གཞན་ཡང་གནས་དེ་ཀར་གྱུ་རུའི་ཟབ་སྤྱོད་ཀྱི་ཆོས་སྒྲོར་སྒྲུ་མ་དགོངས་པ་འདུས་པའི་ཟབ་

ཤོག་གཡུ་གཟི་མཆོང་གསུམ་གྱི་སྒྲོམ་བྱ་གསུམ་འདུག་ཀྱང་། ཐབས་གྲོགས་དང་ཆོས་བདག་མ་འཛོམ་པའི་དུས་དབང་གིས་ཆོས་
སྒྲོམ་དང་གྲུར་གྲུམ་ཙམ་ལས་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་བཏང་སྒྲོམས་ལ་སོང་།

⁵²⁵ *Autobiography* 316a.5-6:

དེ་སྐབས་ནོར་གཏིར་ཞིག་སྒྲུན་བྱངས་རྒྱུ་ཡོད་ཀྱང་། གྲོགས་མ་ལུན་ནས་བཏང་སྒྲོམས་ལ་ལུས།

⁵²⁶ *Autobiography* 378a.4-5:

ཕུར་སྐྱབ་བདུད་ལས་རྣམ་རྒྱལ་གྱི་ཟབ་བཅུད་རྒྱས་པ་ཡོད་ཀྱང་གྲོགས་མ་ལུན་ནས། སྒྲིན་སྐྱབ་གྱི་སྒྲོར་ཅུང་ཟད་ཆེད་པས་གྱི་སྒྲེལ་
སོགས་ཞིབ་རྒྱས་སྤྱད་སོ།

⁵²⁷ *Autobiography* 204a.6-204b.1 (I translate this interesting Treasure revelation passage in full in Chapter Two on pp. 103-105):

ཐུགས་རྟེན་དང་སྒྲིན་ལས་གྱི་སྒྲོམ་རྣམས་ཐབས་གྲོགས་དང་ཆོས་བདག་དངོས་མ་ལུན་ནས་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་རྒྱུ་མཐུད་དུ་ལུས།

⁵²⁸ *Drimé Özer Biography* 174b.3-6:

བྱུང་པར་ས་གཏིར་གྱི་ཆོས་སྒྲོར་འབབས་ཐབས་མ་འཛུགས་གསུངས་པས། དེ་བའི་དོན་རྒྱུ་འདྲ་མོ་ཡིན་པས། རྒྱུ་མི་ལ་
རས་པའི་གསུངས་བཞིན་འོང་བར་མ་གཏོག། ས་གཏིར་དུ་མར་དབང་ཡང་གྲོགས་མ་ལུན་ནས་ས་གཏིར་གསུམ་ཙམ་ལས་
མ་ལོན། དེ་ཕབ་རྒྱུ་འགྲིགས་འོང་གི། དེ་བྱུང་ཕག་ཡབ་ཡུམ་གྱི་རྒྱུ་ལམ་གྱི་སྒྲོབས་སད་ནས་འཕྲད་པ་ཡིན་ཀྱང་།
ང་རང་གཞན་དབང་ལ་ཤོར་བས་བྱིད་གྱི་སྒྲུ་མདུན་ལ་འོང་སྐབས་མི་ལུན་ཡང་སྤར་ཞུས་པ་ལྟར།

⁵²⁹ Thondup 1986: 107, 130.

⁵³⁰ Gyatso 1998: 255-256 elaborates on this link between *dākinīs*, bliss, language, and Treasure revelation.

⁵³¹ *Drimé Özer Biography* 166a.4-6:

དེ་སྐབས་སུ་ཟབ་གཏིར་གསར་ཕབ་སོགས་ལ་བདེ་ཁོལ་ཤིན་ཏུ་སྒྲུར་བར་སོང་འདུག་པས། རྒྱུ་ལམ་གྱི་སྒྲོབས་ལ་བདེ་ཆེན་བདེ་བའི་
དོན་རྒྱུ་འཕྲད་པས་ཡིན་པར་འདུག་དགོངས་ནས། རྒྱབ་སྐྱབས་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་ཆོགས་མཆོད་གསུང་དུས་བདེ་བའི་དོན་རྒྱུ་ཡིད་རྒྱ་
མཛད་ནས། བདག་སྐྱེ་བ་འདི་ནས་ཆོར་བས་ཀུན་ཏུ་བདེ་བའི་དོན་རྒྱུ་ཡི་གྲོགས་སུ་འཕྲད་པར་སྒྲོན་པས།

⁵³² *Autobiography* 264a.2-5:

བྱུང་པར་ཕན་ཚུན་ཟབ་གཏིར་གྱི་བདེ་ཁོལ་ཤིན་ཏུ་སྒྲུར་ཞིང་། རང་ནས་ཀྱང་དེ་སྐབས་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་ཕུན་སུམ་ཆོགས་པའི་མཐུས་
ཆོས་ཉིད་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་གསང་མཛོད་གྱི་ཆོས་སྤེ། ཟག་ཏིག་དོན་ཕག་མའི་སྒྲོའི་སྒྲུར་ལམ་ཨ་རུ་ཡོ་གའི་མན་ངག།
སྤང་སྒོ་བདེ་བ་ཆེན་པོའི་དོན་དང་། འོག་སྒོ་ཁམས་གསུམ་རོལ་པའི་ཟབ་བྱིད་རྣམས་གསལ་བྱུང་སྤེལ་བ་སོགས་བྱས་པའོ།

⁵³³ *Drimé Özer Biography* 184b.2:

དེའི་རྒྱུན་ལས་གཅིག་གྲོགས་གཅིག་གིས་བྱེད་པ་རེད་གསུངས།

⁵³⁴ *Autobiography* 204b.3 (see Chapter Two pp. 103-105 for a full translation of this passage):

བདག་གིས་ང་རང་གི་བུ་མོ་ཞིག་གཏིར་ནས་ཡོན་ཡོད་འདི་རེད། ད་བུ་ཞིག་ཨི་ཡོན་སྐྱམ་གི་སྐྱུ་མོ།

⁵³⁵ *Autobiography* 198b.1-2 (see Chapter Three pp. 187-188 for a full translation of this passage):

བདག་གི་ང་བུ་དང་བུ་མོ་འདི་གཏིར་ཡོན་མི་ཞིག་ཡིན་མ་གཏོགས། རྒྱ་ཆེ་བ་ས་ཡི་གཏིར་ཡོན་ཐབས་མི་འོང་འང་ཞུས་ཆོ།

⁵³⁶ Drimé Özer *Biography* 174b.3-6. See Chapter Five pp. 327-329 for translation, endnote 653 for Tibetan.

⁵³⁷ Dokham (*mdo kham*) refers to Amdo and Kham, whereas Domé (*mdo smad*) refers to Amdo.

⁵³⁸ *Gang ri thod dkar* is a famous pilgrimage site near Shuksep Nunnery known for being the fourteenth-century Nyingma polymath Longchenpa's hermitage site.

⁵³⁹ *Autobiography* 53b.1-54b.2:

མི་ལམ་ལ་དྲོཾ་གཡུ་སྟོན་མ་ཡིན་སྐད་པའི་ན་རྒྱུ་མོ་རྒྱན་ལྡན་མཛེས་མ་ཞིག་གིས་འདི་སྐད་ཟེར། ཨ་ལྷུ་མ་ཁྱོད་ཀྱི་གྲོགས་པོ་སུ་

ཞིག་བྱ་བ་ཡིན། དེ་སྟེ་བ་སུ་རེད་ཨི་ཤེས། ལས་མཐའ་ཅི་འདྲ་རེད་ཟེར། བདག་གིས་ང་ལ་གྲོགས་པོ་རང་

འདྲོད་ཀྱི་སྐྱེས་པ་ནི་མེད། མ་འདྲོད་བཞིན་དུ་པ་མ་ཉི་འབྲེལ་ནས་ཀྱིས་སྐྱིད་གྲོང་དཔོན་རྒྱུང་ལ་སྐྱིན་ཡོད་རབས་རེད་སྐྱུ་མོ།

ཁོང་ན་རེ། སྐྱིད་གྲོང་དཔོན་རྒྱུང་གཞོན་ནུ་ཡིད་དུ་འོང་བ་ཞིག་རེད། ཁྱོད་ཀྱི་ཁྱོ་པོ་མ་ནོར་བར་འདུག་ཟེར། བདག་གིས་

མེས་མ་མ་དག་འནས་སྐྱུ་འདི་སྐྱུ་མོ། ཉེ་ཉེ་བུ་མོ་གཡོ་ཅན་མ། ཁྱོད་དྲོཾ་གཡུ་སྟོན་མིན་ཐག་ཆོད། སྐྱེས་པའི་

གཟུགས་ལ་ཆགས་རྩལ་འདི། ཁྱོད་སྐད་འཆོང་མ་ཞིག་ཡིན་པར་གདའ། སྐྱིད་གྲོང་དཔོན་རྒྱུང་གཟུགས་ལེགས་ཀྱང་།

མི་རྟག་དབྱར་གྱི་མེ་ཏོག་འདྲ། སྟོན་བ་མོ་ཐོན་དུས་^[54]གཟེ་མདངས་ཉམས། དཔེ་འདི་བཞིན་འགྱུར་བའི་ཆོས་ཉིད་རེད།

ཁོའི་སྐྱེ་བ་བསོད་ནམ་ངས་མི་ཤེས། ལས་རྣམ་པ་བྱིས་པའི་ཆ་ལུགས་རེད། ཁོང་གཞོན་ནུ་གཟེ་བཞིན་མདངས་ལྡན་

ཀྱང་། མོང་ལ་དགོས་མེད་ཁྱོད་ལ་སྐྱིན། ཞེས་སྐྱུ་མ་པས། ཡང་ཁོང་ན་རེ། ཨ་ལྷུ་མ་ཁྱོད་ཀྱི་ཁོང་ཁྱོ་མ་བྱེད་

དང་ངས་གཏམ་བྱང་པོ་སྐྱུ་ཟེར། བདག་གིས་ཁྱོད་སྐྱིད་གྲོང་དཔོན་རྒྱུང་ལ་དགའ་བྱོངས་མ་བཤད་ན་ང་ཡིས་ཉན་དང་ཆོག་

སྐྱུ་མ་པས། ཁོང་ན་རེ། ང་ཡི་ཁྱོད་ཀྱི་རྒྱུད་ཆོད་བརྟག་པ་ཡིན་མ་གཏོགས་ཁྱོ་པོ་དགོས་པ་མིན། འོན་ཀྱང་

བདག་གིས་ཁྱོད་ལ་གཏམ་བྱང་པོ་ཞིག་བཤད་ཀྱིས་ཉན་དང་བསམ་པ་འགྲུབ་འོང་བེད་ནས། བདག་གི་ན་བ་ལ་མཆུ་གཏད་

ནས་གཞན་གྱི་མི་གོ་བ་ལྟ་བུར་བྱས་ཏེ་འདི་སྐད་ཟེར། སང་པོད་ཁྱོད་ཀྱི་ཆོར་བསས་སྟོན་གྱི་གཏིར་གྲོགས་ཆོར་བསས་ལས་ཀྱི་སྐྱུ་མ་

མཚན་དྲི་མ་མེད་པའི་འོད་ཟེར་མཐའ་ཡས་བྱ་བ། རྣམ་སྟིང་དང་པོ་རོ་གཡུ་སྐྱུ་རྒྱུང་གི་སྐྱུ་ལ་པ་གཏིར་སྟོན་འགན་རྒྱ་དང་^[54b]

བྲལ་བ་ཞིག་མདོ་ཁམས་སྐད་ཕྱོགས་ནས་ཡར་འོང་ངེས་པས། དེ་དང་ལྡན་དུ་གངས་རི་ཐོད་དཀར་རྒྱ་བའི་ཆོད་དུ་གནས་བཅས་ན།

རྒྱ་པོད་ལ་བདེ་སྐྱིད་མི་ལོ་ལྷ་བཅུ་འེ་བར་དུ་འབྱུང་བར་ངེས་ཀྱང་། དེ་ལྟར་མ་ལྡན་ན་ཁྱོད་ཀྱང་མདོ་ཁམས་ཤར་ཕྱོགས་སུ་འགྲོ་བའི་

དུས་ལ་བབ་པ་ཡིན་ནོ་གསུངས།

⁵⁴⁰ In Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* 109b.5-6, this line is actually "If you *don't* meet with a consort of noble lineage," (*rigs ldan gyi grogs dang ma 'brel na*) but what follows makes no sense if this line is negative because Dorjé Zungma's main point is that Sera Khandro needs to engage with a consort.

⁵⁴¹ The wheels or *cakras* of the body each have letters (*yi ge*), or Sanskrit syllables, associated with them.

⁵⁴² "No more learning" (*mi slob*) is the fifth and final of the five paths of a bodhisattva equal to the realization of Buddhahood.

⁵⁴³ *Rlung phyogs tsam yang ma ston cig*, i.e., don't even breathe a word of this; don't let others hear about this.

⁵⁴⁴ *Autobiography* 108b.1-110a.4:

ནིན་གཅིག་དུས་སྐྱུ་གསུམ་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་ཚྭ་གསལ་ལ་ཐོན་སྐྱེད་འཆར་གྱང་། འདི་ལྟ་བུ་ཞིག་རེད་སྐྱེས་པའི་སྐྱེད་བའི་
སྐབས་འབྱེད་མི་རུས་ཤིང་། ལུས་ཀྱི་རྩ་ཐམས་ཅད་སྤྱིད་ཅིང་སེམས་ཁམས་ནག་ཐུམ་མི་བ་ལྟ་བུར་བྱེད་འདུག་པས། བདག་
གིས་དོ་རྩེའི་གཞུངས་མ་རེད་ཟེར་བ་ཞིག་ལ་འདི་དྲིས། ང་རང་སྤར་ནས་ན་སོ་རྩེད་དུས་ནས་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་ཚྭ་གསལ་དུ་
འོང་འདུག་གྱང་། ད་ལན་སྐབས་ལྟར་ལུས་གནས་མི་བདེ་ཞིང་སེམས་ཁམས་ཁྱད་དུ་སྐྱེད་པ་འཐོབ་པ་ལྟ་བུར་འོང་མ་སྤོང་འདི་ཅིས་ལན་
པ་ཡིན་དྲིས་ཆོ། ཁོང་ན་རེ། འདི་ཁྱོད་གཏིར་རིགས་ཡིན་པས་ཐབས་ཀྱི་ཕྱག་རྒྱ་བརྟེན་དགོས་པའི་དུས་ལ་བབ་པ་ཡིན།
རིགས་ལྡན་གྱི་སྐྱེས་བུ་སྤྱིན་གྲོལ་ལ་བཀོད་ཅིང་གྲོགས་སུ་བརྟེན་པ་གལ་ཆེ། ཁྱོད་ཀྱི་རྩ་ཐམས་འབྲུགས་པའི་རྩེན་གྱིས་
སྐྱེད་ཆ་ཡང་དེ་དང་འདྲ་མཚུངས་པ་ཡིན་ཟེར། ཡང་བདག་གིས་མདོ་སྤྱད་མགོ་ལོག་ཕྱོགས་འདིར་མི་རུས་ངན་པའི་[109]
མོ་མདོག། ཟས་གོས་མེད་པའི་ཐལ་མདོག། མི་གཤིས་གྱོད་བཆོར་མ་ལྟ་བུ་ཡིན་པས། བདག་གིས་དེ་དག་རྩེས་
སུ་བཟུང་ནས་ཐབས་གྲོལ་གྱི་དགོངས་པ་མཐར་ཐུན་ཞིག་འོང་བར་མ་བསམ་ནས་བཏང་སྟོམས་སུ་བཞག་པ་ཡིན། རིགས་
བཟང་གི་སྐྱེས་བུ་དགུན་དུས་ཀྱི་མེ་ཏྲོག་ལྟ་བུ་རེ་ཡོད་གྱང་། ལ་ལ་ནི་གཞན་དབང་ལ་སོང་ཆར་བ་དང་། ལ་ལ་ནི་གནང་
བཀགས་ཀྱི་བྱིས་པ་ལ་དོགས་པ་དང་། ལ་ལ་ནི་ཁོ་རང་ཆོ་རྒྱ་ཟས་འབྱོར་བས་བདག་ཉམས་ཐག་ཡིན་པས་མི་འདོད་པ་འདྲ།
ད་ནི་ལྟར་བཤད་གྱང་ང་རང་ལ་གྲོགས་ཀྱི་དགོས་པ་མི་སྐྱེད་། སྐྱེད་ལས་གསང་བའི་མན་ངག་སྐྱེད་ཆ་ཐབས་ཀྱི་གྲོགས་ལ་
བརྟེན་ནས་འདོད་ཆགས་རང་གྲོལ་གྱི་ཡེ་ཤེས་དམ་པའི་རང་ཞལ་མདོན་དུ་གྱུར་པ་དེ་ལས་ལྷག་པ་སྐྱེས་པ་ལ་འགྲོགས་གྱང་གོ་རྒྱུ་དང་
ཐོབ་རྒྱུ་མེད། སྤོང་མིན་གྱི་སྐྱེས་བུ་དང་འཕྲད་ན་སྤྲུགས་ལམ་ལ་ལོག་པར་བལྟ་ཞིང་རང་གཞན་ངན་སོང་གི་རྒྱུ་འགྲོ་
[109b] དེས་པ་ཡིན་པས། རང་གཅིག་ཕུར་འདུག་ཐབས་ལ་དམ་བཅའ་བྱེད་བསམ་གི་སྐྱེས་ཆོ། ཁོང་ན་རེ།
ཆགས་མེད་ཆགས་པས་ཡིད་འཕྲོག་མ། སྐྱེད་བ་ཐབས་ཀྱི་གྲོགས་དང་འགྲོགས། བདེ་ཆེན་ཡེ་ཤེས་མདོན་གྱུར་གྱང་།
ཁྱོད་ལས་སྟོན་དག་པས་གཏིར་ལ་དབང་། རྟོན་འབྲེལ་འབྲུང་མེད་ན་དོན་གཉིས་དཀའ། ཐབས་ཤེས་རབ་སྟོན་ལམ་དུས་
འཛོམས་ན། ལེ་ལོ་དང་མི་ཡི་ངོ་བསྐྱེད་ཐོར། རྟོན་འབྲེལ་འབྲུང་འོང་ཐབས་སྐབས་གཟབ་དགོས། ཁྱོད་གཅིག་ཕུར་

འདུག་ཐབས་གནས་དབེན་པས། སྐྱེས་བུ་ཀུན་བདེ་བའི་རྩལ་བསྐྱེད་ལ། ཆགས་ཅན་རྣམས་ཆགས་མེད་འོད་གསལ་སྟོན།
 ཟུང་འཇུག་གིས་ལ་འདྲེན་ཐབས་མཛོད། དེས་དོན་གཉིས་འབྱུང་ངོ་རྣལ་འབྱུང་མ། ཆགས་བྲལ་གྱི་ཡི་ཤེས་མཛོད་གྱུར་
 ྱང་། རིགས་ལྷན་གྱི་གྲོགས་དང་མ་འབྲལ་ན། བོག་འབྱེན་གྱི་བསྟན་པ་རབ་ཐོབ་ནས། གནས་ལྡ་ཡི་འཁོར་འའི་
 མདུད་རྒྱ་གོལ། སྤང་ཆ་ཀུན་ཡི་གའི་འཁོར་^[110]ལོར་ཤར། ཟུང་འཇུག་གི་རིག་སྐྱེ་ཆོ་འདིར་འགྲུབ།
 འདི་སྤྲུགས་གྱི་རྣལ་འབྱུང་ཆོ་ཆས་ཡིན། སྤྱང་ལམ་འདི་ལས་ཟབ་པ་མེད། ཁྱོད་གྱི་ཅི་ཏྲའི་གྲོང་དུ་རྒྱ། ལས་ཅན་རྣམས་
 ལ་ལམ་འདི་སྟོན། མི་སྟོབ་ཟུང་འཇུག་སྐྱེ་ཐོབ་ངེས། སྟོད་མིན་རྣམས་ལ་གསང་རྒྱ་མཛོད། ཟུང་ཕྱོགས་ཅམ་ཡང་
 མ་སྟོན་ཅིག། རན་སོང་འགྲིམ་པའི་ཤིང་རྟོ་བྱེད། ཁྱོད་གྱི་སྟོད་ཡུལ་མདུད་དུ་བྱུང། གང་འབྲལ་དོན་དང་ལྷན་པར་
 ངེས། ཞེས་གསུངས་ཤིང་།

⁵⁴⁵ Bimarasmī is the Tibetan spelling of the Sanskrit vimala (stainless) and raśmī (ray of light), the Sanskrit translation of Drimé Özer (*Dri med 'od zer*).

⁵⁴⁶ *Autobiography* 178a.6-180a.4:

དེ་ནས་ཁྱེད་བཅུ་གཉིས་པའི་ནང་དུ་སྟོབ་བྱ་བྱུབ་བསྟན་བཟང་པོ་དང་། བཅུན་མ་ཆོས་ཐེང་། དག་མ་ཆོ་རྣམས་ལ་
 མགར་ར་^[178b]གཏིར་ཆེན་རིན་པོ་ཆའི་ཟབ་གཏིར་རིག་འཛིན་གསང་ལམ་གྱི་མན་ངག་འཐོར་བུའི་སྟོར་གྱི་ཁྱིད་བཤད་ཅུང་ཟད་བྱེད་
 སྐབས། ལྟོ་མོན་གཡུ་བྱ་སྟོན་མོ་ཞིག་གིས་འདི་སྟན་ཟེར། ཀི་ཀི་རྣལ་འབྱུང་། ཀི་ཀི་རྣལ་འབྱུང་། མ་ཡིངས་སྤྱོད་
 འཛིན་དབང་པོའི་ཉོན་དང་། བདེ་བདེ་སྦྱིད་སྦྱིད་གཡུ་བྱུང་རང་། བདེ་ཆེན་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་གྲོང་ནས་འོང་བའི། བདེ་སྟོང་
 བཛོད་བྲལ་བན་གསང་བསྐྱར་ཡོད། འོན་ཀྱང་ཁྱོད་གྱི་གདུལ་བྱ་མཛོད་མིན། ཇི་ལྟར་བྱུང་རྩལ་ཅུང་ཞིག་སྟོས་དང་།
 ཞེས་ཟེར་བས། བདག་གི་སྤང་བ་ལ་འདི་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་སྦྱིང་གི་བྱ་ཞིག་ཡིན་པར་འདུག་སྟེ་མ་ནས་འདི་སྟན་སྤྱོད་སྤྱོད་
 འོད་འབར་དྲི་ཞིམ་སྟོང་པོའི་སྟོང་། ལྷ་ལས་བབ་པའི་འཕྲུལ་ལྷན་གསུགས་མཛོས་མ། སྟོན་དབྱངས་ངག་གིས་བདག་གི་
 གནས་རྩལ་ངེས། ཁྱོད་ནི་རྒྱ་གྲིའི་ཕོ་ཉ་མཁྱིན་བཟང་མ། མ་ཡིངས་བདག་གི་ངག་ཆོག་དོན་འདི་ཉོན། ལས་ངན་
 བྱ་མོ་པདྨ་སྟོན་དཀར་ང་། ཡུལ་ངན་ནག་ཕྱོགས་མགོ་^[179]ལོག་གནས་སུ་ཐོན། གདུལ་ཞིང་རྩལ་སྟོན་སྟོག་དང་མ་བྲལ་བའི།
 གདུལ་བྱེད་ཐ་མལ་བ་ལས་འཕགས་མ་རུས། སྟོན་བུའི་ཆོས་བཅུད་བདུད་ཅི་ལྟ་བུ་འདི། སྦྱིང་གི་རྒྱ་ལས་ཕྱི་གསལ་ཡུལ་
 དུ་དབེན། གཏིར་བཅུད་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་གཏད་པའི་གཅེས་ནོར་འདི། སྟོན་པའི་ཡུལ་མེད་ལོག་ལྟའི་གཞིར་གྱུར་
 པས། སྟོང་དབྱིངས་གོས་དཀར་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་གྲོང་དུ་སྤྱོད། ཇེས་གཏིར་སྟོན་དང་སྤྱོད་གསུང་བྱགས་གྱི་རྟེན། ཡང་

གཏེར་མི་འགྱུར་གསལ་སྒྲོམ་གཏད་ཀྱི་བྱས། ཏུས་ཀུན་དལ་མེད་མི་ཡི་བྲན་ཁོལ་ཏེ། ལུས་ངག་ངལ་དུ་བ་སྟག་བསྟལ་
 རིན་གྱིས་ཏོས། མ་ངས་ནད་ཀྱིས་ཐེབ་ནས་ལོ་འགའ་སོང་། སྤྱི་ནས་འབྱུང་འདུས་ནད་ཀྱིས་རྟག་ཏུ་མཞན། ཞང་ནས་
 ཆོ་རོགས་བཟང་པོས་འཐབ་མཁའོན་བྱེད། བར་ནས་ཡུལ་མི་ཀུན་གྱིས་བརྟེས་དམོད་དང་། དབྱ་མི་ཤ་བོ་མཐོང་ལྟར་ཆོག་
 རན་བྱེད། དེ་ལ་སོངས་པའི་ལོགས་ཉེས་དུ་མ་འོང་། གཏུལ་^[179b]བྱ་མཛད་ཕྱིན་ཇི་ལྟར་འབྱུང་གི་སྟེ་མ།
 བསམ་ཞིང་བསམ་ན་སྒྲོ་བ་འཕེལ་བའི་གཞི། ཁོ་མོ་བདག་འདྲའི་ལས་ངག་སྟེ་ཞིག་ཡོད། རང་དབང་ཐོབ་ཀྱང་ཞིང་དུ་
 འགོད་བང་མེད། འགྲོ་དོན་བསམ་ཀྱང་གཏུལ་ཞིང་འདུལ་མ་ཏུས། གཏེར་ལ་དབང་ཡང་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་གནད་མ་ལྟན།
 སྒྲེ་ལུས་དམན་པས་ཁྱོ་མོ་ཀུན་གྱིས་ལྟང་། ཐབས་གྲོགས་བོག་འདོན་གྲོགས་མཆོག་ཉིན་སྐར་ཙམ། ཐམས་ལྟེན་ག་
 གྲོགས་ཅི་ཤིང་ལས་ཀྱང་མང་། ཆོས་བཞིན་སྦྱོད་དཀའ་རང་གཞན་ཕྱང་བའི་རྒྱར། དེ་དོན་བསམ་ནས་ཚུལ་ཁྲིམས་ཇི་
 བཞིན་བསྟངས། འོན་ཀྱང་མ་དང་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་ཏུས་ཀུན་ཏུ། བདེ་བསྦྱོད་དཔའ་བོ་སེམས་དཔའ་མཆོག་གི་གཟུགས།
 བརྟགས་འགྲུགས་སྦྱངས་དང་སྒྲིན་གྲོལ་ཐབས་མཁས་ཀྱིས། འབྲལ་མེད་དམ་ཆོག་གཅིག་ཏུ་བརྟེན་དགོས་ཞེས།
 ཡང་ཡང་ཏུས་བབ་བདེ་བྱང་གསལ་བ་ལ། དམ་ཆོག་རྟེན་དུ་དཔའ་བོ་སེམས་དཔའ་ཆེ། སྒྲེ་ཕྱིང་དུ་མར་སྒྲོན་ལམ་འཕྲོ་ལྟན་པ།
 བེམ་རྒྱུ་ཡིད་ཀྱི་^[180]ཕྱག་རྒྱར་བསྟུལ། དེ་མཐུན་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་ཕན་བྱའི་ཆོས་དབང་ནས། སྤྱོད་པའི་ཚུལ་གྱིས་དོན་
 གཉིས་རིམ་གྱིས་འབྱུང་། དེ་ཕྱིར་བདག་གི་གནས་ཚུལ་ཟུར་ཙམ་འདི། ཡིད་མཐུན་གཡུ་བྱ་སྒྲོན་མོ་ཁྱོད་ལ་སྟེས།
 ཞེས་སྟེས་ཆོ། ཁོན་རེ། ཀི་ཀི་རྣལ་འབྱོར་ ཀི་ཀི་རྣལ་འབྱོར། གཡུ་བྱའི་རྟེན་གནས་ལྟོན་ཤིང་འབྲས་ལྟན།
 དེ་ལ་འཁོར་ན་བག་ཐེབས་ཡིད་སྟོ། སྐད་མཐུན་བྱ་ཡི་བྱ་ཆོགས་འདུ་ཞིང་། ཆོས་མཐུན་བསམ་པ་ངང་གིས་སྦྱོས་འོང་།
 གཏེར་སྟོན་གནས་རྟེན་ཐབས་ཀྱི་གྲོགས་མཆོག། ཚུལ་ལྟན་དམ་ཆོག་གཅིག་ཏུ་བརྟེན་ན། ཐབས་མཁས་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་ངང་
 གིས་འགྲིགས་ནས། གསེར་ལྟན་ངང་པའི་བྱ་ཆོགས་འདུས་ཏེ། མཛད་པ་ཕྱིན་ལས་མཐའ་ནས་རྒྱས་འོངས། འོན་ཀྱང་
 སྟིགས་དུ་འགྲོ་སྟོང་ན་པས། ཆོས་མཐུན་གཞུང་བཟང་དམ་ཆོག་མི་ཤེས། བདུད་དབང་སོང་བའི་བར་ཆད་མང་ཞིང་།
 བསོད་ནམས་དམན་པས་ཆོས་བཞིན་མི་སྦྱོད། བསྟན་འཛིན་རྣམས་ལ་ལོག་པར་བསྟར་ཞིང་། བརྟེན་དམོད་སྤྱིང་མའི་
 གནས་སྟུབྱེད་ཅིང་། ཅིས་མེད་ལམ་ཁའི་དོ་བཞིན་སྤང་འདུག། སྟོན་ལོག་བདུད་ཀྱིས་བརྒྱབས་པའི་སྦྱོས་བྱ། དཔལ་
 བའི་མིག་བཞིན་གཙུག་ཏུ་བསྟར་ཞིང་། འདི་ཕྱི་ལོ་སྟོང་མིང་གིས་ཁོལ་འདུག། དེ་ལ་སོགས་པའི་སྦྱོད་ངན་མཐོང་ཆོ།

བྱིད་ཀྱང་ཡུལ་འདིར་བཞུགས་པར་མི་སྤང་། བདེ་བདེ་སྦྱིད་སྦྱིད་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་གླིང་ན། བསྐྱོད་པའི་དུས་བབ་དགོངས་པ་
བསྐྱོད་མཛོད།

⁵⁴⁷ This line rhymes in Tibetan: “*da ni ban nag grong nag yul la.*”

⁵⁴⁸ This type of elusive, symbolic speech is common in the *ḍākinī* prophecies Sera Khandro includes in her writing. The symbolic metaphors often relate to the natural world, to different animals and environmental phenomena.

⁵⁴⁹ *Gter nyid* (the two Treasures) refers to the Treasure cycles of Drimé Özer and his father Dujom Lingpa in Sera Khandro's writings.

⁵⁵⁰ *Autobiography* 156b.6-158a.2:

བདག་གི་བསམ་པ་ལ་བྱིའུ་འདི་དཔལ་རིན་པོ་འདྲེ་བ་ཡི་ཡིན། དེ་ཡིན་[157]ན་ངི་བ་ངི་ལན་ཞིག་བྱས་ན་གོངས་པ་ཡིན་
སྐམ་ནས་འདི་སྐད་སྒྲུབ། ཡི་མ་ཡི་མ་འཕྲུལ་ལྟན་བྱིའུ་རྩུང་། བྱིད་ཡུལ་གང་གི་ཕྱོགས་ནས་བྱོན་པ། ལམ་ཐག་རིང་
ངམ་ཉི་བའི་ཕྱོགས་གང་། འཕྱོན་པར་གཤོག་ཅུལ་ངལ་དུ་བ་ཡི་བྱུང་། བྱོད་ཀྱི་ཡུལ་ཕྱོགས་བདེ་སྦྱིད་ལྟན་ནམ།
ང་ལ་ངག་གསལ་གསང་ཆོག་བསྐྱར་མཁན། རྒྱུ་འདི་མཆན་ལ་ཇི་འདྲ་ཟེར་ལགས། རང་དོན་མི་འགྲུབ་མི་ཡི་བྱན་གཡོག།
གཞན་དོན་མི་འོང་ཁོ་ཐག་ཆོད་ལགས། ད་ནི་བདེ་བདེ་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་གླིང་དུ། ལུས་དམན་བདག་ནི་འགྲོ་སྦྱིང་འདོད་བྱུང་།
ཤེལ་དཀར་མཚོ་རྒྱལ་སྤོན་ལམ་སྟོབས་ཀྱིས། ཡང་ཟབ་བྱུང་པར་གཏོར་ལ་དབང་ཡང་། བདག་ནི་ལུས་དམན་
སྟོབས་པ་རྩུང་བས། བྲོགས་དང་ཆོས་འཛིན་ཐབས་ཀྱིས་མི་འགྲུགས། ཡུལ་མི་མཆོག་དམན་སྦྱི་འགྲོ་
ནམས་ལ། ཕར་ལ་སྤང་མེམས་སྦྱོར་བ་མེད་ཀྱང་། རྩུང་ལ་མི་འདོད་སྤྲུལ་སྤོན་ཅིང་། འོག་ལྟ་བསྐྱར་
འདེབས་[157b] གླིང་གཞི་བྱེད་འདུག། ད་ནི་བན་ནག་གོང་ནག་ཡུལ་ལ། ང་ཡི་ཟབ་གཏོར་ཆོག་གཅིག་མི་སྟེལ།
སྒྲོམ་དང་ཟབ་ཤོག་ཡང་རྒྱར་སྤྲོས་ནས། བྱི་ནི་འུ་ཀྱིས་རྒྱལ་ཁམས་འགྲིམ་འགྲོ། ཞེས་སྤྲོས་ཆོ། ཡང་བྱིའུ་འི་
སྤྲོས་པ། གསོན་དང་རིགས་ལྟན་དབང་མོ། འཕྲུལ་གྱི་མཁའ་ལྗིང་འོད་འབར། ཡུལ་ཕྱོགས་ཕྱོགས་མེད་ལྟ་ལྟན།
དཔལ་རིའི་བྱོད་ནས་འོང་བ། གཤོག་ཅུལ་ངལ་དུ་བ་མ་བྱུང་། ལྟ་ལམ་རྩུང་དང་འགྲོགས་འོང་། མཁའ་
འགྲོའི་བདེ་ཆོག་རོལ་མོ། ལས་ཀྱི་དབང་མོས་གསང་གཏམ། བྱོད་ནི་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་གླིང་དུ། རི་ཞིག་དུས་ལ་མ་
བབ། སྤང་གི་རྩ་ཅོང་མས་དུས། ཕྱོགས་མིན་ཕྱོགས་ཀྱི་བྲོགས་འདི། འཕྱུ་དུག་མདངས་ཀྱིས་བསྐྱས་འོང་།
མ་དང་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་དཔལ། རྒྱན་དུས་ཆོགས་གཏོར་གངས་འབྱུངས། བཟང་ངན་ལས་ཀྱིས་བྱེད་པ། རྟེན་འབྲེལ་
ཁོ་ནར་རག་ལས། བྲོགས་དང་ཆོས་འཛིན་འཕྲད་དུས། ལེ་ལོས་སྤྲུའི་མ་བསྐྱར། རྒྱུ་འདི་བཀའ་[158]བཞིན་སྤྲུབ་
དང་། གཏོར་གཏིས་བསྐྱར་པའི་སྤོན་མེ། ཤར་དང་སྟོན་ནས་འབྱུང་ངེས། འབྱུང་འབྱུར་བདེ་ཡི་རི་མོ། དུས་སྤུ་

ང་རང་མི་རུས་ངན་པའི་རྒྱུན་གྱིས་ལུང་བསྟན་ཇི་བཞིན་པར་བསྟུབ་ཐབས་འོང་བ་མིན། གཅིག་ཐད་ནས་ང་རང་སྤྱི་ལུས་དམན་
 པས། ཆོས་བདག་དང་། ཐབས་གྲོགས་སུ་དང་འཕྲད་ཀྱང་ངོས་འཛིན་བྱེད་མ་ཤོད། གཉིས་ཐད་ནས་ལུས་ཉིན་སྟགས་
 ལ་ཞུགས། ཉམས་ལེན་བྱ་ན་མེད་ལ་བཙོན། ས་ལམ་རིམ་བསྐྱོད་ལ་མི་སྟོས་པར་བོགས་འདོན་ཐབས་གྲོལ་བྱང་
 འཇུག་གི་ལམ་ལ་བཞུན་ནས་རིག་སྤྱོད་འགྲུབ་པའི་ཐབས་སེམས་དཔའ་ཆེན་པོ་གཅིག་གི་ཁྱད་ཆོས་ཡིན་པས་ན། དེའི་ཐུགས་དང་
 འགལ་བ་འགྲོ་སྟེན་ནས་དམ་ཚིག་དཔལ་བའི་མིག་ལྟར་བསྟངས་ཏེ། གྲོགས་དེའི་བཀའ་གནང་བ་མ་ཐོབ་པར་གཏིར་^[354]
 ལུང་དང་མཐུན་པར་ཡོད་ཀྱང་རང་སྤྱོད་ཆོད་བྱས་ནས་གྲོགས་གཅིག་དང་འགྲོགས་པ་མི་དྲན། ད་དུང་ཡང་གཏིར་སྟོན་མ་འོང་
 ཡང་དམ་ཚིག་ལ་མ་འོང་སྟོག་མེད་པ་བྱེད་ངེས་པ་ཡིན་པས། ཁྱིད་གཉིས་གང་ཐད་ཀྱི་རང་གནས་ལ་མོང་ཞིག་སྟེན་པས།
 ཡང་དགེ་སྦྱོང་ཆེ་བ་དེ་རྒྱུད་བ་ལ་ཐེམ་ནས་གཉིས་ཀའི་ལུས་མི་སྟངས་བར་སྐྱད་ཀྱི་གདངས་ལས་འདི་སྐྱད་ཟེར། བཞིན་མཛེས་ལང་
 ཆོ་ལྷན་པའི་ཡིད་འཕྲོག་མ། བལྟ་བས་མི་ངོམས་བདེ་ཆེན་མཆོག་གི་གཟུགས། བདེན་པར་སྟེན་ཞིན་གཡོ་སྐྱུར་སྟངས་
 པའི་ཐུགས། བརྟེ་ཆེན་དབང་ལྷག་རྒྱུ་ཁྱིད་ལ་བསྟོད། ཆོ་གཅིག་སངས་རྒྱུས་འགྲུབ་པའི་ལམ་བཟང་མཆོག། ཏུས་
 གཅིག་དོན་གཉིས་འགྲུབ་པའི་དོན་འཛིན། ལྷན་ཅིག་བདེ་སྦྱོང་བསྐྱེད་པའི་གྲོགས་འབྱེད་ཅིང་། སྐད་གཅིག་མི་འབྲལ་ཆོགས་
 སུ་འཁོད་པར་ཤོག། ཟེར་ནས་ཉི་མ་རྒྱབ་སྟོགས་འོད་དམར་གྱི་^[354b]ནམ་པར་མི་སྟངས་བར་གྱུར་ཏོ། ཡང་ཀན་མོ་ཞིག་
 འོང་ནས་ཁྱིད་ཀྱི་དགེ་སྦྱོང་གཉིས་ཨི་ཤེས་ཟེར། བདག་གིས་མི་ཤེས་ཀྱང་གཏམ་མ་ངེས་པ་སྟོམས་བཤད་འདུག་པས་ཅི་
 ཡིན་སྟེན་གྱི་སྟེན་ཆོ། མོན་རེ། བན་རྒྱུད་དེ་ཀུན་གྱི་ཐབས་གྲོགས་ཨུ་རས་བཏང་བ་རེད། དགེ་སྦྱོང་ཆེ་བ་དེ་
 བསྟེ་རྒྱལ་ཡིན་རབས་ཡོད་པས། ཁྱིད་ཐབས་ཤེས་བར་ལ་བར་ཆད་རྒྱུད་ཟད་ཡོད་པར་འདུག་པས་གཟབ་དགོས་ཟེར་བ་མཉམ་དུ་
 རང་གཉིད་ལས་སད་དོ།

⁵⁵⁴ *Rnam gsum bag chags* refers to the karmic propensities, or instincts, of body, speech, and mind according to Rigzin 1986: 179.

⁵⁵⁵ Gyalrong Khenpo Sangyé says that *ya mi* means to fear but I did not find it in any dictionary.

⁵⁵⁶ I.e., she lived as a celibate practitioner.

⁵⁵⁷ *Autobiography* 335a.1-337a.1:

དེ་ནས་ལོ་བྱིས་ས་དེ་ཀའི་རྒྱ་བ་བཙུ་པའི་ནང་དུང་རང་ནད་དྲག་པོ་ཞིག་གིས་མནར་ནས་འཆི་ལ་ཉི་བཟུང་ཆོ། རྒྱ་བ་བཙུ་གཅིག་པའི་
 ཆོས་ཉིར་གཉིས་རྒྱབ་འབྲུལ་སྟངས་ལ། ཀན་མོ་གཟུགས་མི་བཟང་བ་ཉམས་ཐག་འདོད་སྟེད་ཆེ་བ་དབང་པའི་སྟོན་རྣམས་གཞིན་རུ་
 མ་ལྟ་བུར་སྟོན་དང་བྲལ་བ་ཞིག་འོང་ནས་འདི་སྐྱད་ཟེར། ཡ་ཡ་གྲོགས་མོ་ཁྱིད་ཅིན། ན་བའི་ན་ལུགས་ང་ལ་སྟོས།

འདོད་སྲིད་སྲིད་པའི་རྒྱུ་ན་ན། སྒྲན་དབྱུང་བཟང་པོར་ཡིས་ཤེས། ཟེར། དེ་ལ་བདག་གིས།
 གན་མིན་གཞིན་མིན་གྱི་ཨ་ཆེ་མ། རྩོམ་མིན་གན་མིན་ངའི་ན་རྩལ་ལགས། ང་རྒྱུང་ནས་བྱ་མས་རྩེས་སུ་བཟུང་།
 སྒྲིན་གྲོལ་གཉིས་ཀྱིས་རྒྱུད་བྱིན་རྒྱབས། བོག་འདོན་ཐབས་གྲོལ་གནད་ལ་མ་ཁས། འདོད་སྲིད་ཞགས་པས་འཆིང་།^[335b]
 མ་དགོས། གྲོགས་ཡིད་བཞིན་ནོར་བུའི་སྒྲུ་བྲིན་གྱིས། རྣམ་གསུམ་བག་ཆགས་གཞི་རྩུ་གྲོལ། འཁོར་འདས་རིག་
 རྟོང་མཉམ་པ་ཉིད། བདེ་རྟོང་འདུ་བུལ་མེད་པ་ཡི། ཆགས་མེད་ཆགས་བུལ་ཡི་ཤེས་གྱི། དོན་དེ་བླ་མེད་བདག་གིས་
 མཐོང་། སྲིད་པའི་རྒྱུ་ཡི་ང་མི་ན། འདོད་ཆགས་བདེ་བ་ཆེན་པོར་སངས། ཉར་ལེན་ལྷན་སྒྲུས་ཡི་ཤེས་དངོས།
 འཛིན་པ་རང་སྟོང་ཆོས་སྒྲུར་སྒྲིན། འདོད་སྲིད་ནད་ལ་ཡ་མི་ང་། ང་ན་བ་འདུ་བའི་ནད་གྱིས་མནར། སྲིད་མི་བདེ་ང་
 ཆེན་བརྟུང་འདྲ་བྱེད། སྒོ་མི་བདེ་སྒྲུད་པ་རྒྱབ་འདྲ་བྱེད། མཁྲིས་མཆོར་གཉིས་རྟ་གོད་གཤིབ་འདྲ་བྱེད། མིག་འབྲས་
 གཉིས་དབང་ཅ་ཆད་བྲལ་བྱེད། མགོ་མི་ཐེག་པ་ལ་མ་རྟོལ་ས་ལྷི། བྲག་མཁྲིས་གཉིས་རྩ་ལྟར་ཅ་ཀྱང་བྲལ། རྒྱུང་
 མ་མཐུན་དབྱ་གཤེད་འཐབ་པ་འདྲ། རྒྱགས་རིང་བྱང་ཁ་སྒྲུ་གཉིས་ནས་རྒྱ། ལུས་འབྱུང་འདུས་སེམས་མེད་^[336]བེམ་པོ་
 ལྟར། ནད་མ་ངེས་འཆོགས་པ་སྒྲུད་ནས་འདུག། སེམས་ཡི་ཤེས་འོད་གྱི་གོང་བུ་འདི། ཅ་དར་དཀར་ལ་མ་ནས་བསྐྱོད་
 ལ་ཁད། བདག་ན་བའི་རྩལ་འདི་དེ་ལྟར་ཡིན། བྲིད་བརྟགས་དབྱུང་ཤེས་ན་དེ་ལ་དཔྱོད། ཅེས་སྒྲུས་ཆོ། མོ་ན་རེ།
 བྲིད་ཅ་རྒྱུང་སྒྲན་པའི་ན་ལ་འབྱོར། ལུས་འོད་དུ་གྲོལ་བའི་བཞིན་ལེགས་མ། ནད་མ་ངེས་འདི་དག་འབྱུང་བའི་རྒྱ།
 ཐབས་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་སྒྲུས་བསྐྱེབ་པ་དང་། ལུས་འཆོ་བྱེད་གཞིན་རྩ་སྒྲུངས་བ་དང་། དམ་ཉམས་པའི་རྒྱེན་གྱིས་བསྐྱེལ་བ་
 སོགས་། དུས་འཛོམ་ཆོ་འབྱུང་འདུས་རྒྱུན་མང་སྒྲུང་། བྲིད་སྲིད་པར་མི་གནས་དོན་མཐོང་ཡང་། སྤ་བའི་
 བག་ཆགས་མ་དག་ནས། རེ་དོགས་སེམས་གྱི་ཆོས་འཕུལ་གྱིས། ལུང་བཞིན་སྒྲིད་པར་མ་བྱས་ཤིང་། སེམས་
 དཔའ་ཆོས་འཛིན་བཏང་སུ་ལུས། ཐེག་དམན་བྲལ་མཐའི་རྩལ་སྒྲིད་ལ། སྒོ་^[336b]གསུམ་འཇུག་སྲིད་ཅིའི་བྱིར་ཡིན།
 ལྟར་ལམ་སྒྲགས་གྱི་བྲུད་ཆོས་གྱིས། འབྲས་བུ་ཐོབ་པ་མ་མཐོང་ངམ། ཞེས་ཟེར་ཡང་བདག་གིས། ཉོན་དང་རིགས་
 མཐུན་ཨ་ཆེ་ལོ། གསང་སྒྲགས་བྲུད་ཆོས་ཉམས་བྱངས་ན། རང་འབྲས་སྒྲུར་བ་ཆོས་ཉིད་ལ། བདག་གིས་ཐེ་ཆོས་
 བྱས་པ་མིན། སྒྲིད་ང་ཆོ་རབས་ཐམས་ཅད་དུ། ལྟར་ལམ་འདིར་འཕྲད་སྒོན་ལམ་འདེབས། འོན་ཀྱང་དེང་དུས་
 སྒྲིགས་མ་ལ། མི་རྣམས་འདོད་སྲིད་མི་ལྟར་འབར། སྒྲགས་ལ་ཁ་གཡར་མི་དག་སྒྲིད། རང་གཞན་གཉིས་སྤང་

གཏིང་རྩུན་འདོམས། སྔགས་སྒྲོ་སྒྲོར་བྱང་རྩལ་སེམས། མཆིལ་མའི་ཐལ་བ་བཞིན་དྲོད། ལྷགས་བཞིན་སྒྲོད་པ་
 སྒྲིད་མཐའ་ཙམ། དེའི་ཕྱིར་དམན་བདག་གི་ལུས། རང་གཞན་ཕུང་བའི་རྒྱར་འགྲོ་སྒྲུམ། ལུས་སྒྲོད་འདུལ་བའི་
 ལམ་ཞུགས་ནས། བསམ་ངན་སྦྱིས་ངན་སྤངས་རྩལ་བསམ། ལྷག་སྒྲོད་གྲོགས་ངན་རྒྱང་སྤངས་ནས། [337]
 བདེན་གཏིས་ལམ་ལ་འཇུག་སྒྲོ་བའི། རོན་དེའི་སྤྱལ་ཡང་ཅིའི་ཕྱིར་གཞོད།

⁵⁵⁸ The following vision appears right after Sera Khandro notes that her disciple Khenpo Norbu Wangyal (*Mkhan po nor bu dbang rgyal*, the contemporary Nyingma Rinpoché Chatral Sangyé Dorjé's uncle) didn't arrive for a teaching she gave at Sera Monastery on Drimé Özer and Dujom Lingpa's Treasure cycles. Gyalrong Khenpo Sangyé interprets that the following vision implies that because Khenpo Norbu Wangyal didn't come to Sera Khandro's teaching, the auspicious connections she needed did not fully come together and as a result, she became ill.

⁵⁵⁹ This refers to the wheel at the crown of the head.

⁵⁶⁰ I.e., Drimé Özer.

⁵⁶¹ *Autobiography* 367a.3-368b.2:

དེའི་སྐབས་ང་རང་གི་རྒྱུས་ལ་ནད་མ་ངེས་པ་རྒྱག་རྩུ་ཤིན་ཏུ་ཆེ་བ་ཞིག་བྱུང་ཡོད་པས། རྒྱ་བ་བརྩུ་གཏིས་པའི་ཆོས་བརྩུའི་
 ཉིན་ཐུན་གསང་ཞིག་གི་སྤང་ཆར། བྱང་མིང་ཤན་མོང་མ་ཞིག་འོང་ནས་འདི་སྒྲོད་ཟེར། བྱིན་ཏུ་ཅི་འདྲ་ཞིག་ཟེར་
 བས། བདག་གིས་ང་རང་གི་ནད་འགྲ་ཐབས་མིང་པ་ངོ་ཆ་བའི་ཡུལ་ཞིག་ཟེར་སྒྲུས་པས། མོ་ན་རེ།
 བྱིན་ཏུ་ནད་ལ་ཕན་པའི་སྒྲན་ཞིག་ང་རང་གི་ཤེས་ཟེར། བདག་གིས་སྒྲན་ཅི་འདྲ་ཞིག་ཟེར། བྱིན་ལ་སྒྲིན་རྒྱ་ཡི་ཡོད་སྒྲུས་
 པས། མོ་ན་རེ། ང་རང་ལ་མིང་གཞན་ཞིག་ལ་ཡོད་དེ་བྱིན་ཏུ་སྒྲིན་མི་འཐུང་འདྲ་ཟེར། བདག་གིས་འཐུང་རྒྱ་མ་
 རྟེན་མ་གཏོགས་རྟེན་ཆོ་ཕན་པ་འཐུང་སྒྲིད་ན་སྒྲན་འཐུང་ན་ཆོག་གི་སྒྲུས་ཆོ། མོ་ན་རེ། ཏ་ཏ་མི་འཐུང་བྱིན་ཏུ་མི་འཐུང་།
 འཐུང་ན་སྒྲན་མཆོག་ང་ཡིས་བསྐྱུ། ཉོན་མོངས་འཛོམས་པའི་ཡུ་མི་ཏ། ཁམས་དྲུག་ལྷན་པ་དྲོ་རྩེའི་ལུས།
 ལྷ་ལྷན་སྤུམ་རྩུ་ཅ་གཏིས་ཀྱི། ཅི་འཛོན་རྒྱ་བའི་འོད་ལ་གནས། བཞུགས་པ་སྒྲོང་ཆེན་ལམ་ནས་ཐོན། འབབ་
 པ་བཞི་ཡི་གནས་བརྒྱན་ནས། དྲུག་རྩུ་ཅ་བཞིའི་གྲོགས་ནས་འཐུང་། ལེན་པ་རྒྱུས་གསོས་བྱན་ན། ཉིན་འབྲེལ་འཐུང་
 འདུས་ནད་ཀྱན་སེལ། འདི་ལྷན་སྒྲན་པའི་རྒྱལ་པོ་ནི། བཟླ་མིང་སོགས་སྒྲོན་ཡོད། རྒྱ་གསུམ་འདུས་པའི་གནས་སུ་
 འཕྲད། དེ་ཡིས་རེ་ཞིག་ཆོ་འཕྲང་སེལ། ཞེས་ཟེར། ཡང་བདག་གིས། ཉོན་དང་ཤན་མོ་སྤེལ་གཏམ་ཅན།
 ཁོ་མོ་བདེ་བའི་དྲོ་རྩེ་ང་། བྱིན་མ་རྟེན་ན་[368]པ་མིན། སྤྱུ་ལུས་འཐུང་བཞི་འཐུགས་པ་དང་། རང་གི་གཅེས་འཛོན་
 མ་ཞིག་པས། དུས་ཀྱན་ནད་ཀྱིས་མནར་བ་ཡིན། དེ་ལ་ཕན་ཐབས་ཅང་མྱིད་ནི། སྒྲན་པ་མཆོག་ལ་སྐྱབས་བརྟེན་
 སྒྲོམས། འོན་ཀྱང་བྱིན་ཏུ་སྒྲན་ལོག་འདི། མི་བརྟེན་ངེས་པ་ཐག་གི་ཆོད། བདེན་མིང་གཏམ་འདི་མི་སྒྲུ་བར།

ཁྱོད་རང་གང་དགའི་གནས་སུ་མོང་། ཞེས་སྒྲུབ་པས། མོན་རེ། གྲོགས་མོ་ཁྱོད་ཁོང་ཁྱོ་ལང་དང་།
 བདག་གིས་ལའང་པ་དེ་དག་ངེས་པ་ཡིན་མ་གཏོགས་སྤྱེལ་གཏམ་མིན། ཁྱོད་ཀྱི་ཐབས་གྲོགས་མ་བརྟེན་ན་མི་ཆོ་གཅིག་ལ་སྒྲུན་
 གཞན་འབྱུང་ཡང་ཕན་པ་མི་འབྱུང་བའི་ཁར་མ་ངེས་པའི་ནད་བཅོས་ཐབས་མེད་པ་འདྲ་བའོང་ཐང་གི་ཟེར་བས། བདག་གིས་
 ནད་བྱུང་ན་སྒྲུག་བསྐྱེད་རང་གིས་སྤོང་དགོས། ཁྱོད་ཀྱིས་ནི་སྤོང་མི་དགོས། དང་སྤོང་རྒྱུག་དང་དགའ། ཆོ་མཇུག་
 ལ་ཁའི་^[368b]ཉི་མ་ལྟ་བུ་འདིར་ཆོས་རྣམ་དག་ཞིག་ཨི་འབྱུབ་སྒྲུམ་གི་མ་གཏོགས། གྲོགས་པོ་ཞིག་ལོན་དགོས་མི་བསམ་
 སྒྲུབ་པས། གཏམ་མཇུག་མ་ཇོགས་ཀྱང་གཞན་རྒྱུན་ཞིག་གིས་ཉམས་ལས་སད་དོ།

⁵⁶² Two of my teachers, Khenchen Tashi (Khenpo Chödrak's close disciple in Tagong) and Gyalrong Khenpo Sangyé told me that they think this passage should read "holding a jewel vessel in his left hand and a yak hair whip in his right and riding a black horse with white fetlocks," but I have translated exactly what is written in Sera Khandro's *Autobiography* 368b.6-369a.1.

⁵⁶³ *Autobiography* 368b.6-369b.5:

དེ་དང་མཉམ་དུ་མི་ལྷ་བ་དཀར་པོ་གཡང་ལྷགས་སུ་^[369]ཁྱོན་པ་ལག་གཡས་ནོར་གཞོང་དང་གཡོན་སྒྲུབ་ལྷགས་འཛིན་པ་། ཉན་ག་
 ཉིང་ནག་ལ་ཞོན་ཅིང་། དབུ་ལ་ལ་ཐོད་དང་དུལ་གྱི་མི་ལོང་དག་གིས་བརྒྱན་པ་ཞིག་ཐོན་བྱུང་ནས་འདི་སྒྲུང་ཟེར།
 ཨ་རེ་ཨ། ཁྱོད་སྒྲུ་ཁམས་བཟང་ལགས་ཟེར། བདག་གི་བསམ་པ་ལ་འདི་མི་མ་ཡིན་ཞིག་འདྲ་སྒྲུམ། ང་རང་
 བདེ་མི་བདེ་ཁྱོད་ཀྱིས་ཤེས་སམ་སྒྲུབ་པས། དེ་ན་རེ། ཤེས་ཀྱང་ཆོག་སྟེ་ཁྱོད་བདག་གི་ཁ་ལ་མི་ཉན་འདྲ་ཟེར།
 ཡང་བདག་གིས། ཤེས་ན་དེ་རེ། ཁ་ཉན་མི་ཉན་བལྟ་དོན་མི་གདའ། ཁྱོད་རང་བདག་གི་སྒྲུ་མ་ནི་མིན་སྒྲུམ་ཆོ།
 དེ་ན་རེ། སྒྲུ་མིན་ཀྱང་སྒྲུ་འདྲ་ཞིག་དང་མཉམ་ཟེར། བདག་གིས་ཁོ་གཉན་ཆེན་ཐང་ལྷ་ཡིན་པར་འདྲ་སྒྲུམ་ནས་ཅི་ཡང་
 མ་སྒྲུབ་པས། ཁོ་ན་རེ། ཁྱོད་ཀྱི་བསམ་པ་ལྟར་འོང་དགའ་སྟེ། གུ་རུ་པ་སྤྱི་ལོན་ལམ་ལ་བརྒྱུག་ཐབས་གཡེལ་
 དེ་བས་མ་དང་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་ལུང་བསྟན་པ་བཞིན་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་གྱི་ཐབས་^[369b]ལ་མཁའ་པ་གཡེལ་ཆོ། དེ་ལྟར་མ་བྱས་ཆོ་ཁྱོད་
 རང་ཆོ་མཐར་ཕྱིན་པ་ལྟ་ཞོག། འབྱུང་ལུས་ལ་འོ་བརྒྱལ་ཆེན་པོ་འོང་ཐང་གི། བདག་གིས་ཁྱོད་ལ་བསམ་པ་དཀར་བ་
 ཡིན་པས་དེ་ལྷགས་རྟོགས་དཔྱོད་མཛོད་དང་། རྟེན་འབྲེལ་གཞན་དབང་དུ་གཏོང་དགོས་པ་ཁྱོད་རང་གནང་བཀའ་ཅན་གྱི་བཅུན་
 མ་ནི་མ་ཡིན། འདོད་ལོག་སྤྱོད་པའི་མོ་ཁམ་ཀྱང་མ་རེད། རྟེན་ཅིང་འབྲེལ་བའི་མཐུན་རྒྱུན་འཛོམས་ཆོ་རང་གཞན་
 གྱི་དོན་ཆེན་པོ་འོང་བ་ཡིན་པས། དེ་ལྟར་དགོངས་མཛོད་ཟེར་ནས་གཏིར་སྒྲོམ་ཞིག་གཏད་བྱུང་བས། བདག་གིས་འདི་ཅི་རེད་
 སྒྲུམ་ཆོ། ཁ་བྱང་སྒྲུབ་པ་མངོན་འབྱེད་མཆོ་རྒྱལ་ཞེས་ཆེས་རེད་ཟེར་བ་དང་མཉམ་དུ་ནམ་མཁའ་འཇའ་ལྟར་ཡལ་སོང་།

⁵⁶⁴ *Autobiography* 79b.2-4:

རྒྱུ་ཉིད་ཀྱིས་ཀྱང་ཉེ་འཁོར་གྱི་མ་ཐུག་པར་མཛད་ནས་ང་རང་ལ་མ་སྤྲོད་དང་། བཟའ་བཅའ་རེ་གནང་སྤྲོད་མཛད་ཀྱང་།
 ཀྱན་གྱིས་དབྱས་མོ་འདིའི་ལན་གྱིས་ཨ་སྤྱོད་བཟའ་མི་འོང་ཟེར་བའི་སྤྲོད་གྱིས་སྤྲོད་ལ་གཅར་མ་ཡོད། ཐག་རིང་པོ་ནས་ཕྱག་
 ཕུལ་ཞིང་བསྐོར་བ་རེ་བྱེད་དུས།

⁵⁶⁵ *Autobiography* 81b.2-4:

དེ་ནས་རིམ་གྱིས་འོང་བའི་རྩི་དམ་པའི་སྤྲོད་ཕྱག་ནས་རྒྱུ་ཉིད་ཀྱིས་ཟབ་གཏིར་ཞིག་བཞེས་དགོས་པར་འདུག་པས། དེར་ང་
 རང་སོང་ནས་ཁོང་གིས་གཏིར་ཁ་ལུས་པ་ལོན་ངེས་ཡིན་ཀྱང་། ཏྲ་པན་གྱིས་བདག་ལ་ཁྱོད་སྤྲོད་ཀྱི་ལས་ཐར་དཀའ་བའི་
 ཅི་ཕྱིར་འོང་ཟེར་ནས་འགོ་དབང་མ་སྤྲོད། འཇིགས་སྤྲོད་དང་ལྷན་དུ། རྒྱུ་ཉིད་ཀྱི་ལས་ཐར་བའི་རྩི་འབྲེལ་འབྲིང་
 ཅམ་བྱང་།

⁵⁶⁶ *Autobiography* 85b.6-86a.2:

དེ་སྐབས་སྤྱོད་གྱི་ཕྱགས་ཁྱུང་པ་ཨ་སྤྲོད་སྤྲོད་ཀྱིས་པ་ཞིག་འདུག་པས། ཁོང་གི་ཞལ་ནས། དབྱས་མོ་དེ་ཀར་
 འདུག་མི་ཆོག། འདིར་བསྐྱེད་ཆོས་སྤྱོད་བཟའ་ཆུར་མི་འོང་ངེས་པ་ཡིན་གསུངས་ནས་ཕྱགས་ཁྱོ་བྱེད་འདུག་པས། བདག་
 གིས་ད་དུང་ང་རང་མི་དཀར་ཡིན་པས་ཨ་སྤྱོད་བཟའ་མི་ཡོང་དོན་མེད། ང་འདུག་གི་ཅི་གནོད་སྤྲོད་ནས་མ་སོང་བས།

⁵⁶⁷ *Autobiography* 87a.2-4:

དེ་ནས་རིམ་གྱིས་ལས་ཀ་རྣམས་ཀྱང་ཤེས། སྤྲོད་ཀྱང་གོ་བར་བྱུང་ནས་ཁྱེད་བསྐྱེད་ཅམ་བསྐྱེད་རྒྱུ་ཉིད་ཀྱི་ཐོན་བྱང་
 བས། ཁོང་སང་གི་ཐོན་ཐོན་ལ་སྤྲོད་དང་ལྷན་དུ་དགོན་ནང་ལ་འོང་བས། དེའི་དུས་སྤྱོད་བཟའ་སྤྱོད་ནང་དུ་
 བྱོན་འདུག་པས། ང་རང་རྒྱུ་ཉིད་ཀྱི་སྤྲོད་ལ་འགོ་མ་སྤྲོད་པར། འོད་འབར་ལ་ངག་གསལ་བསྐྱེད་ནས་བདག་
 གིས་ཆོས་ཐུན་ཅི་ཞུ་དགོས་ཞུས་པས།

⁵⁶⁸ *Autobiography* 96.1-3:

དེ་དུས་མགར་ར་གཏིར་སྤྲོད་གྱི་ཡུམ་ཡག་ཤུལ་བཟའ་ཡིན་འདུག་པས། དེས་ང་རང་ལ་ཆོག་བསྐྱེད་ནས་ཁྱོད་དེད་ཀྱི་ཐུར་ལ་འོང་
 དགོས་མེད། འོང་ཆོ་དབྱས་མོ་ལ་འདི་བྱས་འདུག་ཟེར་བའི་ཁ་རྒྱས་ལག་རྒྱས་ཞིག་བྱེད་ངེས་པ་ཡིན་ཟེར་བ་ཐོས་པས།

⁵⁶⁹ *Autobiography* 101a.3-5:

ཨོ་སྤྲོད་དང་ཡག་བཟའ་གཉིས་གཟའ་འཁོན་བྱས་ཏེ་ཁ་གཏམ་མ་ཡོད་ནས་ཁྱེད་བསྐྱེད་ཅམ་ཡིན། སྤྲོད་མས་ཁོང་གིས་རྩི་
 འབྲེལ་ཡག་བཟའ་འཇུག་ནི་ཡིན་པས། ཁོང་ཞིང་ཁམས་ལ་འགྲོ་ནི་ཡིན་གསུངས་ཏེ། སྤྲོད་ཁམས་ཀྱང་ཤིན་ཏུ་འཇུག་ས་
 ཅིང་ཞབས་བརྟེན་དུ་མ་འདོན་ཀྱང་ཕན་པར་དཀའ་འདུག་པས་ཞི་བར་གཤེགས་ངེས་པ་རེད་ཟེར་།

⁵⁷⁰ *Nga ma sngun dub u bsad dgos don ci yod* is an idiomatic expression meaning, "Why do you think of me as a horrible person?"

⁵⁷¹ *Da chu zam 'og la 'dus pa ltar byed rjes* is a very similar idiomatic expression to the English expression, "Now, it's all water under the bridge," i.e., it's behind us now; it's too late.

⁵⁷² *Autobiography* 101a.6-103b.3:

སྐྱམ་ལིག་ཟེམ་ཁང་གི་ཉེ་སར་ཐོན་འདུག་པས། [101b] བླ་བྱ་དང་གི་གཞི་གཞི་མོ་གཉིས་ཀྱི་ཐོམ་སྒྲོང་བྱུང་། ཡག་བཟའི་
 ལཱ་ནེ་བརྩོན་འགྲུས་མཆོ་ཞེས་པས་ཐལ་བ་གཏོར་བ་སོགས་བྱས་ནས། ང་རང་ཡིན་པར་གོ་ནས་རྟོན་འབྲེལ་ལ་གང་གཞོན་བྱེད་འདུག་
 པས། བདག་གི་མར་བོས་ནས་འདི་སྐད་སྒྲུབ། ཉེ་ཉེ་ཉེ་དང་ཆོས་སྤྱིད་ལོ། ཐལ་བ་ཐོམ་སྒྲོང་སྒྲོན་ལོག་གསུམ།
 དུས་གཅིག་འཛོམ་པའི་རྒྱ་རྒྱུན་འདི། བསོད་ནམས་ཟད་པའི་ལྷས་ངན་རེད། ལཱ་ཙཱ་འདི་ཆོའི་བསམ་ལུག་ལ།
 མངོན་ཤེས་ཡོད་པ་གསུག་རེད། ང་ཡིན་སུ་ཡི་མ་གོ་གོང་། ང་རེད་སུ་ཡིས་མ་བརྗོད་ཀྱང་། རྟོན་འབྲེལ་ལོག་པའི་
 ལྷ་གཏད་བྱས། དུས་ངན་མི་ཡི་བྱ་སྤྱོད་ལ། བསམ་ན་སྤྱག་བསུལ་རིན་གྱིས་ཉི། དེ་སོ་བྱོད་གྱིས་ཨི་ཤེས་ལོ།
 ཞེས་སྒྲུབ་པས། མོ་ན་རེ། བྱོད་གྱིས་འདི་ལྟར་མ་ཟེར། ལུ་ཅག་སྤང་པོ་ཡིན་པས་བདུང་བཅོག་བྱེད་འོང་ཟེར།
 དེ་ནས་ཡར་ལང་ནས་དགོན་ནང་ལ་སོང་སྟེ་གནས་ཆང་ཞིག་ཨི་རྟེན་བསམ། [102] ཡོད་ཆོ། སྤར་གྱི་སྒྲོང་དཔོན་སྒྲོན་ལམ་དང་
 བླ་མ་ན་རོ་པ་ཞེས་པ་གཉིས་བྱོན་ནས། བྱོད་གཉིས་དཀའ་ཨི་ཐེར། བདག་གིས་ང་རང་མ་སྒྲོན་མཁོ་ན་སོ་ལོན་པའི་
 སྒྲོན་གྱིས་དཀའ་ཆོགས་ཆེ་ཐུགས། དེ་ནས་ཁོང་གཉིས་གྱིས་གནས་ཆང་འབྲུད་ཤིང་སོགས་གྱི་མཐུན་རྒྱུན་བྱས་ཆོ། ཡང་
 བདག་གིས་སྒྲོན་ལམ་རྒྱ་མཆོལ་བླ་མ་སྐྱུ་ཁམས་ཅི་འདྲ་གི། སྤུལ་སྤྱོད་མེད་སང་མ་བྱོན་པ་ཨི་ཡིན་སྒྲུབ་པས། ཁོང་ན་རེ།
 བླ་མ་སང་སྐྱུ་ཁམས་ཤིན་ཏུ་འཁྲུགས་ཆེ་བས་བྱ་ཐབས་བུལ་བ་ལྟ་བུ་རེད། སྤུལ་སྤྱོད་སང་བྱོན་སྤྱབས་མ་ལུན་པ་རེད། ད་རེད་
 ཅག་གི་ཡག་བཟའ་ལ་བྱོད་ཐོན་ཡོད་ཟེར་མ་མོད། བླ་མས་ནི་དེ་རིང་ཁོང་ལ་མ་བྱོན་པོ་ཞིག་ཐོན་རན་གསུངས་ནས་བྱགས་དགའ་
 བ་ལྟ་བུ་མཆོད་འདུག་པས་བྱོད་བྱོན་ནི་དགོངས་པ་འདྲ་ཟེར། དེ་ནས་བདག་ཞིག་ཆ་ཤས་བསྐྱད་ཀྱང་ཁོང་ནམས་གྱིས་ང་རང་བླ་
 མའི་མདུན་ལ་ཐོན་ཐབས་མ་འོང་། ལོ་བྱིས་པ་དེའི་སྐྱོ། [102b] བ་གཉིས་པའི་ཉེར་བརྒྱུད་གྱི་ཉི་ཤར་མཆོམས་ལ་བླ་མ་ཞི་བར་
 བཤེགས་འགོ་གི་བྲགས་འདུག། ང་རང་ནི་སེམས་སྒྲོན་ནས་དགོན་པའི་ཡ་བྱར་ལ་ལྷང་ར་ཞིག་འདུག་པས་དཀའ་སོང་ཡོད་ཆོ།
 མི་མང་པོས་ང་རང་གི་མིང་ནས་འབོད་འདུག། བདག་གིས་ཅི་ཡིན་སྒྲུབ་ནས་བསྐྱས་ཆོ། ཁོང་ནམས་གྱི་ནང་ནས་བླ་མའི་
 དངོས་སྒོལ་རྟོག་བླ་མ་བསྐྱན་འཛིན་དང་ བླ་མ་ན་རོ་པ་ སྒྲོན་ལམ་རྒྱ་མཆོལ་སོགས་བྱ་སྒོལ་དུ་མས་ཏེ་བྱིད་ནས་ང་རང་ལ་
 བྱོད་བྱོན་དགོས། བླ་མ་ནི་འདས་འགོ་བཤོད་པས། ཡག་བཟའ་བྱོད་བྱོན་ཆོག་ཟེར་ཞིང་ཐམས་ཅད་གྱིས་བྱོད་མ་འོང་
 བར་ཐབས་མེད་ཟེར། བདག་གིས་ཡག་བཟའ་སྐྱོ་ཆོ་རིང་ཏ། ང་མ་སྤྱན་དུ་བསྐྱབས་དགོས་དོན་ཅི་ཡོད། སྤར་ངས་

ཁོ་རང་ལ་ཆོག་དོན་ཆེན་བཤད་ནས་ལོ་གཉིས་ཡིན། དེ་དུས་ནི་ང་འོང་མི་ཉན་ཟེར། ད་ཆུ་ཟམ་འོག་ལ་འདུས་པ་ལྟར་བྱེད་
 རྒྱུ་ལ་རང་ཐོན་མ་ཐོན་གཉིས་ལ་ཁྱད་པར་མེད། དེའི་ཁར་བྱེད་ཅག་ནམས་ཀྱིས་ཀྱང་ང་ཡོང་ཡོད་ནི་ཤེས་བཞིན་དུ་ [103] མཐུན་
 རྒྱུན་མ་བྱས། ད་སྐབས་འདས་རན་དུས་ང་རང་གིས་ཅི་ཡང་བྱ་ཐབས་མི་ཐོན་ངས་པ་ཡིན་པས་མི་འགོ་སྐྱེས་ཆོ། ཡང་ཁོང་
 རྒྱུས་ཀྱིས་སྤར་བྱེད་བྱོན་ནི་གོ་ཡང་ཡག་བཟའ་ལ་ཟེར་ཐབས་མ་འོང་པ་ཡིན་མ་གཏོགས། མཐུན་རྒྱུན་མ་བྱས་པ་མིན་ཟེར།
 བྱེད་ཅག་གིས་སྐྱ་མ་གཏེར་སྟོན་ལ་མོ་བྲིམས་འཛོག་པོད་སར་ང་འོང་ཡོད་གི་ཟེར་ལོས་པོད། ད་ཇི་ལྟར་ཡིན་ཀྱང་ང་མི་འགོ་སྐྱེས་
 པས། སྐྱ་མ་བཟུན་འཛིན་དང་། བོང་ཡུལ་ཆེ་རིང་དབང་འདུས་གཉིས་ཀྱིས་ཆོས་དམ་ཆོག་འཕང་ནས་མི་འགོ་རང་དབང་
 མ་སྟེར་ཞིང་། བདག་ཁོང་རྒྱལ་ས་དང་ལྷན་དུ་སོང་བས། ཀྱན་ཀྱིས་ཁམས་བཟང་ཟེར་འདུག་ཀྱང་ལན་ཅི་ཡང་མི་སྐྱེས་ནས་
 ཁང་སྟེང་ལ་སོང་བས། སྐྱ་མེར་བུ་སྟོབ་རྒྱལ་ས་ཀྱིས་ཆོག་ས་འཁོར་བྱེད་འདུག། བདག་གི་བསམ་པ་ལ་མགོན་པོ་འགོ་ཁའི་
 ལམ་རྒྱ་སྟེར་བ་བཞིན། འདི་རྒྱལ་ས་ཀྱིས་སྐྱ་མ་བྱོན་ཐབས་ལ་ཆོག་ས་འཁོར་འབྱུལ་འདུག་སྐྱེས་ཡང་ཅི་ཡང་ [103b] མ་སྐྱེས།
 དེ་ནས་སྐྱ་མ་ཁོང་གི་དངོས་སྟོབ་བུ་བྱུལ་བ་ངག་དབང་བདེ་མཆོག་ཅེས་པ་དེའི་སྐྱ་མའི་གཟིམ་ཁང་གི་སྟོལ་འོང་ནས་ང་རང་ལ་བྱེད་སྐྱ་
 མའི་སྐྱ་མ་དུན་ལ་ཤོག་ཟེར་བའི་དེ་ཀར་སོང་ནས། བདག་གི་ཕྱག་ཕུལ་བས་མར་སྐྱུན་ཀྱིས་གཟིགས་ཤིང་ཞལ་འཇུག་པའི་རང་
 རྒྱུ་ས་དར་ཁ་བཟང་པོ་ཞིག་བདག་ལ་གནང་ནས། ཕྱག་ལས་པས་ང་རང་གི་ལག་གཡོན་ལ་བཟུང་སྟེ་སྟོན་ལམ་མཛད་པ་ལྟར་
 བྱས་ཏེ།

⁵⁷³ See Chapter Three pp. 146-147 for a partial translation of the dialogue that ensued between the visionary Gara Tertön and Sera Khandro in which he encourages her, telling her that she can accomplish her goals even though she is a woman.

⁵⁷⁴ In the following section titled “The Exchange of Women,” I explain this exchange scene between Gyalsé and Drimé Özer in greater detail along with relevant translated passages from Sera Khandro’s writings.

⁵⁷⁵ See *Dar than dgon pa'i gdan rabs*, pp. 392-393 for a short biography about *Sgo chen 'jigs bral chos kyi blo gros*.

⁵⁷⁶ See Chapter Three p. 186 for a translation of this interaction.

⁵⁷⁷ ‘*Bam gzhi*’ is some type of gout or rheumatoid arthritis. Both Gotrül Rinpoché and Sera Khandro had this illness.

⁵⁷⁸ I.e., the horns of a rabbit don’t exist; there isn’t anybody who has even a little pity for Sera Khandro.

⁵⁷⁹ *Autobiography* 221a.6-222a.6:

དེ་ནས་འདུག་སྐབས་ནི་ནད་དུ་སྟོ་སྐྱུ་ལ་སང་ནས་གསུང་ཤོག་ཐོན་བྱུང་བས། རྒྱལ་སྐྱེས་སང་དང་དེད་དཔོན་གཡོག་ཆ་ཤས་བཅས་
 [221b] གཡུ་ཅི་འི་གནས་ནད་དུ་སྐྱུ་ལ་སྐྱུ་འི་མདུན་ལ་སོང་བས། ཁོང་གི་འབམ་གཞི་ཐེ་དངས་ལ་སོང་ནས་སྟོབ་འབངས་ཏེ་
 འཁོར་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱིས་དགའ་བ་བསྟོམ་ཏེ། རང་རང་གི་ཉམས་ལེན་ལ་བརྩོན་པར་བྱེད་ཅིང་གནས་འདུག་པས། དེད་ཅན་

མཇལ་འཕྲད་བྱས་ཆོ་གི་གསོན་འཕྲད་པ་ལྟར་དགའ་སྤོས་གསོས་སུ་གྱུར། དེ་ནས་དེ་ཀར་ཉིན་བཙུམ་པར་དུ་བསྐྱེད་ནས་སྒོ་
སྤྱུལ་སང་དང་ལུགས་གཉིས་གང་ཐད་ནས་སྒོ་ལྷག་མེད་པའི་གསུངས་མཛད་ཞིབ་རྒྱས་སུ་འོང་། བྱེད་པར་སྒོ་སྤྱུལ་འོན་པོ་ཆེས་
མགར་ར་སྤྱུལ་སྤྱུལ་ང་རང་གི་ཐད་ནས་འབྱུང་དང་འབྱུང་འབྱུར་གྱི་ཞལ་ཏ་དུ་མ་མཛད་ཆོ། རྒྱལ་སྤྱི་ཤིས་ཐུགས་ལ་མ་འཕྲོད་
ནས་འདི་སྒྲིབ་གསུང་། བྱེད་རང་ནི་བདག་ལྟ་བུའི་གྲོགས་སུ་མི་དབང་བའི་རིགས་ཅན་ཡེ་ཤེས་མཆོ་རྒྱལ་འདྲ་བའི་མཁའ་འགྲོ་
མོ་ལུས་ཞིག་ཡིན་པ་འདྲ་མ་གཏོགས། སྒོ་སྤྱུལ་སང་གིས་ནམ་དང་དུས་ཡིན་ཀྱང་བྱེད་ཀྱིས་མཁའ་འགྲོ་མ་འདི་ལ་ཐབས་སྤྱོ་
ཆོགས་ཀྱི་སྒོ་ནས་འབྲལ་བ་ཡོད་མི་ཉན་གསུང་སྟེ། མོའི་དབང་མོ་ལ་ཤོར་[222]དགོས་པར་འདུག་ཀྱང་། བྱེད་ལྟ་བུ་
བདག་ལ་མི་དབང་དོན་ཅི་ཡོད། དེ་ན་འཇིག་རྟེན་བྱིས་ཐབས་ཀྱི་རྟེན་བུ་མི་སྤྱོ་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་ནག་མོ་ལོང་ཐབས་གཏན་ནས་མི་ལོང་
ཨང་གསུངས། ཡང་བདག་གིས་སྒོ་སྤྱུལ་སང་གིས་བདག་སྤྱོ་བ་མཐོ་བ་ཞིག་རེད་དགོངས་ནས་བྱེད་ལ་ཞལ་ཏ་གསུངས་པ་ཨི་
ཡིན། བྱེད་ཀྱིས་དགོངས་བཞིན་སྟེ་གཞན་དམེ་བོའི་རིགས་གསལ་སྒོན་ལས་བདག་གི་སྤྱོ་བ་དམན་པ་ཀྱན་གྱིས་མཐོང་ཆོས་
བཞིན་ཞུ་མི་དགོས་པར་བྱེད་ཀྱིས་མངའ། ང་རང་གཅིག་ཐད་ནས་ཟམ་མོ་ལུས་ཀྱིད་བཟུང་སྤྱོ་བ་དང་། གཉིས་ཐད་ནས་ཡ་
མིང་ཁ་ཐག་རིང་བ། གསུམ་ཐད་ནས་གཙུག་ལོན་ཆུང་བྱེད་མི་ཨ་ཁུ་རི་བོང་གི་གཙུག་ལོན་གྱི་དཔེ་ལྟ་བུ་ཡིན་པར་དགོངས་ཏེ།
སྟིང་ཇིའི་ལུལ་དུ་གཟིགས་ནས་བྱེད་ལ་ཡར་ཞུ་བུལ་བ་ལོས་ཡིན། དེ་ལ་ཐུགས་ངལ་དང་ཐུགས་བྲེལ་མི་དགོས།

⁵⁸⁰ Autobiography 193a.5-193b.6:

བཀྲ་ཤིས་པའི་ལྟ་རྟེན་དང་རིན་ཆེན་གཉིས་པའི་སོར་གདུབ་རིན་ཐང་ཆེ་བའི་བྱ་བུ་སྤྱུས་ལྡན་དང་། བྱེད་པར་གསང་བའི་དམ་ཆོག་
གི་རྟེན་དེ་རྩིས་བྱ་བཅས་གནང་བ་ལ་རྒྱུན་ནས། བདག་གི་སྤྱོ་ལུས་ཀྱི་རྩ་ཆེན་ཐམས་ཅད་ཤིག་ཤིག་ཡོམ་ཡོམ་དུ་འགྱུལ་བ་དང་
རྟེན་བཅད་པའི་སྤྱོ་[193b]ལྟ་བུར་ཐག་ཐག་ཟེར་བ་སོགས་རྟགས་མ་ངེས་པ་སྤྱོ་ཆོགས་བྱུང་ཡང་བཏང་སྟོམས་ལ་བཞག་ཆོ། ཁོང་
གི་མཁུན་བཞིན་དཔལ་རྟ་མཆོག་རྩོམ་པའི་ང་རྒྱལ་དང་ལྡན་པའི་ངར་ནས་རིག་སྟོང་བདེ་བ་ཆེན་པོའི་དགོངས་པ་ལ་བཞུགས་འདུག་པ་
ས། ང་རང་ནད་ཀྱི་རྟེན་ལས་གཞན་རྒྱུད་གསལ་བའི་རྟོགས་པ་རུང་ཟད་དུས་རིང་མོ་ནས་ཡོད་པ་ལ་གཞི་བྱས་ཏེ། ཁོང་གི་
དགོངས་ཉམས་ཅི་འདྲ་ཡིན་པ་དེ་མ་ཐག་པར་གསལ་ཅོམ་བྱུང་བས། བདག་གིས་ཀྱང་རིགས་དེའི་ཤེས་རབ་ཀྱི་སྒྲུར་གསལ་ནས་རྩ་
བའི་སེམས་དཔའ་ལྟའི་ལྟ་མོ་བཙུན་བསྐྱུལ་ནས་འབྱུང་ལྟ་རྣམས་པར་དག་པའི་ཕྱོགས་རང་བྱུང་ལྟར་བྱུང་བཞུགས་པའི་དཔའ་བོ་
དང་མཁའ་འགྲོ་རྣམས་ལ་མཆོད་པ་ལུལ་བས་ཐུགས་བདེ་སྟོང་གི་རོས་ཆོམ་ནས་སྟོན་ལ་ཁོར་དགོངས་པ་དབྱེར་མེད་རོ་གཅིག་ཏུ་གྱུར་ཏེ་
དབྱིངས་དང་ཡེ་ཤེས་གཉིས་མེད་དུ་རྩོམ་བས། དེ་མ་ཐག་པར་སྤྱར་གྱི་ཉམས་སྤྱང་ཐམས་ཅད་གཉིད་སད་པའི་མི་ལམ་ལྟར་

བྱེད་པ་དང་གདུང་དབྱངས་ཀྱི་མགུར་མ་ལྟ་བུ་ཡང་ཟེར་འདུག། མིན་ཀྱང་སྤྱི་མཆོམས་རེ་བཞུགས་ན་མདུན་གཡོག་དང་སྤྱི་ཆེའི་
བར་ཆད་སེལ་ཐང་གི། བདག་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་འདི་བྱེད་ལ་ཕུལ་བ་ཡིན་པས་མོ་རང་ལ་བདག་པོ་བྱེད་མི་མིད། མོ་རང་
གཞི་རྒྱ་བ་འཇམ། གློ་ཤེས་རབ་གསལ། གཞན་གྱི་སྤྱིས་བྱ་དང་མི་འགྲོགས་སོགས་གསུངས་མཛད་དུ་མ་ཡོད་ཀྱང་
ཡི་གེར་དོགས་ནས་མ་བྲིས། ཡང་རྗེའི་ཞལ་ནས་བྱེད་ཀྱི་མཁའ་འགྲོ་འདི་གཞན་དང་མི་འདྲ་བ་ཞིག་ཡིན། ཁོང་དགྲུང་
ལོ་བཅོ་ལྔ་ཡིན་དུས་འདི་ཕྱོགས་ལ་བྱོན་སྐབས་རེད་ཅག་ལྟ་དུ་འོང་བ་རེད། དེའི་སྐབས་སུ་འབྲུག་ལྷོག་སྒྲོམ་གསུམ་གྱི་སྤྱི་ག་
བསུལ་ལ་བཟོད་བསུན་ཆེ་ཞིང་དམ་པའི་ཆོས་ཁོན་ལ་སྒྲོ་ཅེ་གཅིག་དུ་ཕྱོགས་པ་ཞིག་རེད། མིན་ཀྱང་ང་རང་གི་ཁ་བྱང་
ནམས་སུ་ཁོང་ལུང་གིས་གསལ་བོར་ཟིན་འདུག་ཀྱང་། གཅིག་ཐད་ནས་ང་རང་[165]མཆོམས་སྤྱི་བ་ཞིག་ཨི་འོང་སྤྱི་མ་པ་
དང་། མིན་ཀྱང་གཟུངས་མ་སོགས་ཀྱི་སེམས་བབ་ཡོད་མེད་སྤྱི་མ་ནས་བཏང་སྒྲོམས་ལ་བཞག། བྱེད་པར་བྱེད་ཀྱི་སྤྱི་
རྩ་བ་ལ་བཞུགས་ཡོད་པས། བྱ་ཅག་པན་རྒྱན་འགལ་བ་འགྲོ་སྤྱི་མས་ནས་ཅི་ཡང་མ་ཞུས་པ་ཡིན། ད་དུང་ཡང་ནི་ང་རང་
གིས་ལོ་ཆ་ཤས་ལ་མཆོམས་དམ་པོ་ཞིག་བྱས་ནས་སྤྱི་བ་རྒྱུག་རེ་ཨི་ཟིན་སྤྱི་མ་གི་སོགས་གསུངས་ཆོ།

⁵⁸⁸ Drimé Özer Biography 145b. 6- 146b.4:

དེ་ནས་ཡང་ཉིན་གཅིག་མགར་སྤྱི་ལ་[146] གྱི་ཞལ་ནས་ང་རང་གི་མཁའ་འགྲོ་འདི་བྱེད་པར་བཞིག་ཡིན་ཀྱང་། ང་དང་ནི་པ་
ཡབ་བླ་མའི་སྒྲོན་ལམ་གྱིས་འཕྲད་པ་མ་གཏོག་ང་རང་གི་ལུང་ཟིན་ནི་མིན་པས། བྱེད་ཀྱིས་བདག་བྱས་ན་སྤྱི་ཆོ་ལ་པན་ཐོག་ཡོད་
ཐ། མོ་རང་གིས་དད་པ་དང་མོས་གུས་ཆད་མེད་པ་ཞིག་འདུག། ནམ་དང་དུས་ཀུན་བྱེད་ཡབ་སྤྱི་མས་ལ་གསེལ་བ་འདེབས་
པ་དང་། བསྐྱར་ཞབས་ལ་སྤྱི་བའི་སྒྲོན་ལམ་བཏབ་ཀྱིན་འདུག་པས་ལས་འཕྲོ་རེ་ཡོད་རེས་རེ་གསུངས། ཡང་རྗེ་བཏང་སྒྲོམས་
པ་བཞུགས་ནས་ཅི་ཡང་མི་གསུང་པས། མགར་སྤྱི་ལ་མིན་གྲངས་མང་པོའི་བར་དུ་ཡང་ཡང་ཞུས་ཆོ། རྗེ་དེ་ཉིད་ཀྱིས་
ཀྱང་མགར་ར་རྒྱལ་སྤྱི་མ་གསུང་ལྟར་ལེགས་སོ། ད་པན་ང་རང་གི་གཟུངས་མ་དང་སྤྱི་མ་ནས་སྤྱི་མེམས་ལ་བབ་ཆོ་
མཁའ་འགྲོའི་བདག་པོ་ང་རང་ལས་མིད། བྱེད་ཀྱིས་གཞན་ལ་གནང་མི་ཆོག། ང་རང་གི་སྤྱི་མ་སྤྱི་ཀུན་དུ་[146b]ལུང་བསྐྱར་
ཁ་བྱང་ནམས་སུ་ཟིན་ཡོད་ཀྱང་། གཅིག་ཐད་ནས་བྱེད་ཀྱི་སྤྱི་མ་དུ་མེད་པ་དང་། གཅིས་ཐད་ནས་ང་རང་གིས་དབེན་རིང་
སྤྱི་བ་རྒྱུག་རེ་ཨི་ཟིན་སྤྱི་མ་པ་ཡིན་པས་བྱ་བ་མང་པོ་དུན་དགོས་མེད་བསམ། ད་རྗེ་ལྟར་ཡིན་ཀྱང་གྲུ་པ་སྤྱི་མས་ལ་བསྤྱི་བ་
མེད་པ་ཡིན་པས་རྗེ་དེ་ཉིད་ལེགས་པའི་དགོས་ཆེད་དང་འཕྲུལ་བ་རེ་འབྱུང་ན་བྱེད་ཀྱིས་དེ་ལུགས་དགོས་གསུང་། མགར་ར་
རྒྱལ་སྤྱི་མ་གྱི་ཞལ་ནས་མཁའ་འགྲོ་ང་རང་གི་ཡུམ་སྤྱི་མ་མ་རེད། བྱེད་ལ་སྤྱི་མ་པའི་ཆོག་ཐོག་ལ་ང་ཡོད་གསུངས་ནས་ཆོག་ཆེན་

མང་པོ་བཤད།

⁵⁸⁹ *Autobiography* 165a.6-165b.4:

བདག་གིས་བྱུང་བཟང་ལ་ང་རང་རྒྱལ་སྤྱོད་ནས་སྤྱོད་ཅིན་པོ་ཆེ་ལ་སྤྱོད་པའི་ལོ་རྒྱུས་ཐམས་ཅད་^[165b]སྤྱོད་ཆོ། ཁོང་ན་རེ་
འོ་སྤྱོད་མང་གི་ཁ་རྒྱུ་དབང་ཐང་ལ་བྱིད་ལྟ་བུ་དབང་བའི་སྤྱོད་པ་ཞུན་པའི་རྒྱུ་ཁྱིས། ཐབས་གང་དག་ནས་བྱིད་ལྟ་བུ་གྲུ་བྱུར་
བྱིད་འདུག་པ་དེད་ཅག་གིས་ཤེས་ཀྱང་། ད་དུང་བྱིད་ཀྱི་ཐུགས་རྒྱ་བསྐྱེད་ནས་མགར་ར་སང་གི་ཟུར་ལ་བཞུགས་ཐབས་མ་འཕྲུག་
ཟེར། བདག་གིས་ཀྱང་ཁོང་གི་ཟེར་བ་ལྟར་མགར་ར་གཏོར་ཆེན་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་བསྟན་པ་ལ་ཕན་ཐོག་ཅུང་ཟད་རེ་ཡི་ཡོང་སྤྱོད་ནས།
རང་ལ་སྤྱིད་སྤྱུག་ཇི་ལྟར་བྱུང་ཡང་དེ་ཀར་འདུག་ཐག་བཅད་དོ།

⁵⁹⁰ *Autobiography* 277b.3-279a.2:

དེ་སྐབས་ཨ་འཛོམ་སྤྱར་ནས་བང་མི་ཐོན་ནས། ང་རང་ཨ་འཛོམ་སྤྱར་ལ་འོང་དགོས་པའི་བཀའ་ཤོག་ཐོན་བྱུང་བས།
བདག་གིས་རྗེ་ལ་འདི་སྤྲད་ཞུས། ང་རང་ཨ་འཛོམ་སྤྱར་ལ་མི་འགྲོ། གཅིག་ཐད་ནས་ང་རང་ལ་རྒྱུང་པ་མེད་པ་
དང་། བྱ་རྒྱུང་ནར་བའི་སྤྱར་ཐབས་བྲལ་བ་དང་། མིན་ན་བྱ་བ་གང་ཐད་ནས་ད་སྡེ་རང་སྤྱོད་ཆོད་ཐུས་ཏི་གཞན་དབང་
དུ་བཏང་མ་ཐོང་། བྱིད་ཀྱི་སྤྱོད་མཐུན་ལྟ་བུ་ཡིན་ཀྱང་ཐུགས་ལ་^[278]མངའ་བཞིན། མགར་སྤྱོད་ཁོང་གི་བདག་
དགོས་མེད་ཐུས་པ་མ་གཏོགས་རང་སྤྱོད་མིན། དེའི་ཕྱིར་ན་ད་ལན་ཀྱང་བདག་གི་བྱ་བ་གང་ལ་བསམ་སྤྱོད་ཐུས་ཀྱང་། ད་ནི་
རང་གཞན་འབྲུལ་པའི་བྱ་བ་མི་བྱི་སྤྱོད་པ་དང་། བྱིད་པར་བྱིད་ཀྱི་སྤྱོད་ཅིན་ཆད་རང་གཅིག་ཕྱར་དཔེན་རི་ལ་སྤྱོད་ཅུག་ཞིག་
ཡི་ཟེན་སྤྱོད་པ་ལས། ཐོགས་ཞིག་དང་མཉམ་དུ་འདུག་དགོས་སྤྱོད་པ་མེད་པས་ན། ད་ལན་ཡང་འགྲོ་འདུག་མེད་པ་
དེའི་ལན་གྱིས་ཡིན་མ་གཏོགས། བདག་སྤྱོད་མཉམ་ཉམས་ཐག་སྤྱོད་པ་ལྟར་བྱི་སྤྱོད་ཀྱང་བྱི་སྤྱོད་ལྟར་བྱི་སྤྱོད་པ་དང་།
སྤྱོད་པ་ཨ་འཛོམ་སང་རྒྱ་བོད་ཡོངས་གྲགས་ཀྱི་སྤྱོད་ཆེན་དམ་པ་ཡིན་པས། དེའི་དམན་པ་བདག་ལྟ་བུ་ལ་བང་མི་བཀའ་ཤོག་བསྐྱར་
ནས་འབོད་པ་བྱུང་དུ་ལོས་འགྲོ་དང་། ང་རང་སྤྱོད་རྒྱུང་བས་འགྲོ་ལན་མ་བདེ་བར་སྤྱང་། བྱིད་པར་སྤྱར་རང་ཅག་གཞན་
དབང་ལ་སོང་ནས་དུས་ད་བར་དུ་ལྟན་དུ་མ་^[278b]འཛོམ། ད་ལན་རྒྱུན་རན་ཐོགས་སྤྱོད་འགྱུར་ནས། ལུ་ཅག་གཞན་ཐོག་
གཅིག་དུ་འཛོམ་ཡོད་པའི་གནས་སྤྱོད་པས་འདིར། བདག་བྱིད་དང་སྤྲད་གཅིག་ཅུ་ཡང་འབྲལ་མི་བྱུང་ཅིང་། ཐུས་པ་
མ་ལ་འཁོར་བ་ལྟ་བུར་བྱིད་ལ་སེམས་ཤིན་དུ་ཆགས་འདུག་པས་འགྲོ་མ་དགོས་ན་དགའ་ཞུས་ཆོ། ཇི་ཞེས་ནས་
ང་རང་ཡང་བྱིད་ལ་ཡིད་འབྲེང་ནས་ཉིན་གཅིག་ལྟ་བུ་ལ་ཡང་འབྲལ་མ་དགོས་ན་གནས་ཁང་ནོར་གྱིས་གང་བ་ལས་དེས་དགའ་སྤྱོད་ཤིན་
དུ་ཆེ་ཡང་། སྤྱོད་པ་ཨ་འཛོམ་གྱི་སྤྱོད་ཆོ་ལོ་གཅིག་མ་དགོས་སྤྱོད་པ་གཅིག་། སྤྱོད་པ་གཅིག་མ་དགོས་ཉིན་གཅིག་བཞུགས་

པའི་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་གྱི་གྲོགས་ལྷན་བྱུང་ཆོ། སྤྱིར་སངས་རྒྱལ་གྱིས་བསྟན་པ་སེམས་ཅན་གྱི་བདེ་སྤྱིད། སྒོས་རང་གཞན་
 རྣམས་གྱིས་བསོད་ནམས་གྱི་ཆོགས་རྒྱ་ཆེན་པོ་བསགས་པའི་མཐུན་རྒྱུ་ཏུ་འགྲོ་བ་དང་། བྱུང་པར་བྱེད་རང་གི་སྤར་ནས་དོ་
 རྗེའི་ལུང་དུ་གསལ་བ། ཡ་ཀླ་ར་བཟླ་དང་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་^[279]གནད་ལྡན་རིད་བྱུང་ན། ཡན་ཅུན་ཀྱན་གྱི་ཆོ་ཆོས་གདུལ་བྱ
 ཐམས་ཅད་ལ་ཡན་ཐོགས་འབྱུང་ངེས་པ་ཡིན་སོགས་གསུངས་ནས་དེ་ཀླར་འགྲོ་ཐག་བཅད།

⁵⁹¹ *Autobiography* 284b.5-6:

ང་རང་གི་རྒྱུད་པ་སྤར་མ་ཡིན་པར་རང་མགོ་ཐོན་པ་བྱུང་བས། ཁོང་རྣམས་དགའ་སྤྱོད་པོའི་ངོ་མཚར་ཞིང་དང་པའི་གསོས་སྤྱ
 བྱུང།

⁵⁹² Noteworthy, also, is the positive reception that Sera Khandro received not only from Adzom Rinpoché himself, but also from his consort and children. This is a nice counter-example to the trouble Sera Khandro had with jealous female consorts. After she concludes nurturing auspicious connections with Adzom, she writes, “Then, his wife, child, and retinue escorted me [away] with great loving. His daughters Künzang Chimé and Apel both escorted me a very far distance away.” *Autobiography* 283b.5-6:

དེ་ནས་ཡུམ་སྤྱུ་ལ་ཁོར་དང་བཅས་པས་ཐུགས་བརྩེ་བ་ཆེན་པོས་སྤྱུལ་བྱུང་མཛད། སྤྱུ་མོ་ཀྱན་བཟང་འཆི་མེད་དང་།

ཡ་དཔལ་གཉིས་ཀྱི་རྒྱུད་རིང་པོའི་སར་སྤྱུལ་མ་མཛད་པ་དང་།

⁵⁹³ “Intelligent wisdom lady” is a translation of *shes rab ma rig can*. Perhaps it is supposed to read *shes rab ma rigs can*, “noble wisdom lady”?

⁵⁹⁴ I.e., she won’t promise one thing overtly and do another secretly.

⁵⁹⁵ I interpret this to mean that Titrül gave her teachings and precious objects and in return her presence was helpful towards dispelling his obstacles, but that they left the actual auspicious connection of engaging in sexual yoga for later because of Sera Khandro’s misgivings relating to having a liaison with a monastic and having a liaison without Drimé Özer’s permission.

⁵⁹⁶ *Autobiography* 222b.2-224b.2:

དེ་སྐབས་གནས་ནང་དུ་རྟེན་ལྷན་ལྷན་དཔོན་གཡོག་ཆ་ཤས་སྤྱོད་མཚམས་ལ་བཞུགས་འདུག་པས། སྒོ་སྤྱུལ་སང་གི་ཞལ་

ནས་ད་ལན་བྱེད་གྱིས་རྟེན་སྤྱུལ་སང་གི་སྤྱོད་ཆེད་བར་ཆད་སེལ་བྱུང་པའི་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་ཡོད་པས། བྱེད་གྱིས་དེ་ལྷགས་གྱིས་ཐབས་

གང་དྲག་རེ་མཛད་རོག་མ་འཁྱག་དང་། ཁོང་ཆ་ལྷགས་འདུལ་བ་འཛིན་པ་ཡིན་པས། ན་ནིང་དོ་བྱུང་ཅིན་པོ་ཆེད་སྤྱོད་

མཐུན་ནས་བསྟེན་རྟེན་ལྷན་ལྷན། མོ་རྩིས་ཤིན་ཏུ་འབྱུགས་ཅིང་། བྱུང་པར་རྟེན་ཆེན་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་དང་སྤྱུལ་ཆེན་མང་པོས་

ལུང་བསྟན་ལ། སྤྱོད་ཆེན་ལྷན་ལྷན་པོས་རབ་མ་རིག་ཅན་ཞིག་ལ་གསང་ཐབས་གྱིས་འབྲེལ་དགོས་སོགས་གསུངས་པ་དང་།

མིན་ཀྱང་ཁོ་རང་^[223] ཡང་གཏིར་སྟོན་ཞིག་ཡིན་འདུག་ཀྱང་། དགོན་ཆེན་གྱི་བདག་པོ་ཡིན་པས་སྤྱུལ་སྤྱོད་མ་མཛད་ཅིང་

ཚུལ་ཤིན་ཏུ་བཅུན་པར་མཛད་ཅིང་སྤྱུལ་པ་ཉམས་ལེན་ཁོན་ལ་བཞུགས་པས། དེའི་སྤྱོད་ཆེན་ཐབས་ལ་བྱེད་ལས་དྲག་གཅིག་

ཀྱང་མེད་པས་ན་མ་འཁྱག་གསུངས། ཡང་བདག་གིས་ཁོང་གཏིར་སྟོན་འབྲེལ་མེད་ཡིན་ན་ཚུལ་འཆོས་བྱེད་ཅི་ལ་དགོས།

མོ་རྒྱལ་སྤྱིན་སྤྱིང་གི་དགོན་བདག་གཏིང་སྟོན་ཡིན་རབ་སྟོན་ལོས་ཡོད། དེའི་ཕྱིར་ན་འདུལ་འཛིན་མ་ཡིན་ན་དགོན་བདག་མི་འོང་
 བའི་ངེས་པ་ཨི་ཡོད་མི་ཤེས། ང་རང་གིས་ཁོང་གི་སྐྱེ་ཆའི་བར་ཆད་སེལ་ཐབས་མི་འོང་། གཅིག་ཐད་ནས་ང་རང་བདག་པོ་
 ཅན་རེད། མིན་ཀྱང་འདུལ་བ་འཛིན་པའི་སྟོམ་པ་འཕྲོག་ན་ཉེས་པ་ཆེན་པོའི་རྒྱ་བྱེད་པ་ཡིན་པས་དེ་ལྟར་མི་བྱེད་ངེས་པ་ཡིན་
 ལུས། ཡང་སྟོ་སྐྱལ་ཞལ་ནས། བྱེད་ལུས་ཁོང་དོག་མོ་དེ་ལྟར་བྱེད་ [223b] ཅེའི་ཕྱིར་དགོས། བྱེད་རང་ཙ་ཐིག་རྒྱུང་
 གསུམ་གྱི་མན་ངག་ལ་རང་བྱན་ཚུད་ཅིང་ལོག་སྟོད་ནི་མི་བྱེད། མིན་ཀྱང་བྱེད་རང་གི་གཞན་དོན་ཁོ་ན་མ་གཏོགས་རང་འདོད་སྟོ་
 ངན་ཡང་མེད་ན་ཉེས་པ་འབྱུང་དོན་ཅི་ལ་ཡོད། རྒྱལ་སྐྱེས་ཀྱི་ཐག་ང་རང་གིས་ཆོད་ངེས་པ་ཡིན་པས། དེ་ཀའི་ཐད་ནས་བྱེད་
 ལ་ཉེས་སྤྱིབ་མི་འབྱུང་བའི་ཁག་ང་རང་གིས་བྱུར། ད་ལན་སྐབས་ལྷན་མ་བྱུང་ཆོ། ཉི་སྐྱལ་སང་དབྱང་ལོ་སོ་བརྒྱུད་སོ་དགུ་
 ཕན་མི་བཞུགས་ངེས་པ་རེད་གསུང་། ཡང་བདག་གིས་རྒྱལ་སྐྱེས་སང་གིས་བྱགས་བབ་ཡོད་ཀྱང་། དེ་བས་ལྷག་པའི་ང་
 རང་ལ་ཙ་ཐའི་གྲོགས་བྱུང་པར་བཞིག་ཡོད་པས་དེའི་བྱགས་བབ་མེད་ཆོ། བྱ་བ་ཆེན་པོའི་ལམ་དུ་མི་འཇུག། ཆོགས་འཁོར་
 རེ་ཙམ་འདོན་རོག་བྱས་ན་དེའི་ཆོག་གམ། མ་ཆོག་ཀྱང་བྱ་ཐབས་ཅི་ཡང་མེད་པས་དམ་ཆོག་ལ་མ་འོན་ལྟོ་གཉིས་མི་བྱེད་ལུས་ཆོ།
 ཡང་ཁོང་གི་ཞལ་ནས་ད་བྱེད་རང་བདག་གི་ཐ་པ་ཞིག་དང་ [224] ལྷན་དུ་ཉི་སྐྱེས་སྐྱེ་མཁུན་ལ་བྱོན་དང་། ཕན་ཚུན་གཉིས་ཀར་
 གོ་རྒྱུ་ཡོད་གསུངས། དེ་ནས་ཁོང་གི་བཀའ་བཞིན་སོང་བས། སྐྱལ་པའི་སྐྱེ་དེ་ཉིད་ཀྱིས་གདན་གསུམ་འཁོར་ལོའི་
 བཀོད་པ་དང་། རྒྱུང་གི་འབྲིན་འཇུག་གནས་གསུམ། རྩོམ་གསུམ་གྱི་དམིགས་ཤིང་གིས་གནད་དོན་སོགས་ལུགས་
 གཉིས་ཀྱི་གསུང་ཞིབ་དུ་མ་མཛད། བྱེད་པར་སྐྱེ་དང་ཆོ་རབས་ཐམས་ཅད་དུ་མ་རྒྱུད་མ་ཁལ་འབྲེའི་སྐྱེས་སུ་འཛིན་པའི་བྱགས་
 བསྐྱེད་དང་སྟོན་ལམ་མཛད་ནས། ཁོང་གི་གསོལ་དཀར་དང་། རིན་པོ་ཆེ་སྐྱེ་ཆོགས་དོ་ཤལ་གྱི་རྟེན་དུ་གནང་ནས་རྟེན་
 འབྲེལ་དངོས་རྗེས་སོར་དུ་བཞག་གོ། དེ་ནས་སྟོ་སྐྱལ་གྱི་མཁུན་ལ་འོང་ནས་ལོ་རྒྱུས་ཐམས་ཅད་ཞིབ་རྒྱུས་སུ་ལུས་ཆོ།
 ཁོང་གི་ཞལ་ནས་བྱེད་རང་གི་གྲོགས་བྱུང་པར་བདེ་དུ་ཡོད་པ་མ་ཆོར། ད་ལན་བྱེད་ཀྱིས་ལོན་པ་འདི་ངོ་མཚར་ཆོ།
 ད་དུང་ཕན་ཚུན་གཉིས་ཀའི་སྐབས་གཟབ་པ་གལ་ཆོ། ལྷ་ཐབས་བདུན་ཐབ་ [224b] ཟེར་བའི་དཔེ་བཞིན་བར་ཆད་ཀྱི་དབང་དུ་ནམ་
 དང་དུས་ཀྱན་དུ་གཏོང་མི་ཉན་གསུངས། ཡང་ཁོང་གི་གསོལ་དཀར་དཔལ་ཤན་མ་དང་། བྱགས་དམ་བཀའ་རྒྱ་མ།
 གཞན་ཡང་དངོས་རྗེས་དུ་མ་གནང་ནས་ངེད་ཅག་རང་ཡུལ་དུ་ལོག་གོ།

⁵⁹⁷ The eight freedoms include freedom from being born in the hells, in the hungry ghost realm, as an animal, a long-lived god, or a barbarian, freedom from having wrong views, from being born where there is no Buddha, and freedom from being born deaf and mute. See Patrul Rinpoche 1994: 20.

⁵⁹⁸ *Nyon dang btsun lus mdo shor bo*. Here I am translating *mdo* in the sense of rule or axiom, hence in this context as “vow” according to Gyalrong Khenpo Sangyé’s suggestion.

⁵⁹⁹ Refers to the three dimensions of Dharmakāya, Sāmbhogakāya, and Nirmāṇakāya.

⁶⁰⁰ *Autobiography* 172b.6-173b.6:

དེསྐབས་སུ་ཉིན་གཅིག་མགར་ར་རྒྱལ་མཚན་ཞེས་པ་དེ་འོང་ནས་ཁྱོད་ང་རང་ལ་རྒྱལ་སྤྱུ་ནས་གནང་བ་ཐོབ་ཡོད་པས་སྤྱོད་པ་འབྲེལ་
 དགོས་ཡང་ཡང་ཟེར་འདུག་པས། [173] བདག་གི་བསམ་པ་ལ་ཁོ་རང་གི་སྒོ་སེམས་བདུད་ཀྱིས་བརྒྱབས་པར་འབྲས་སྒྲིམ་སྟེ།
 ལུགས་གཉིས་གང་ཐད་ནས་རྒྱལ་སྤྱུ་སེམས་རྣམ་པར་དག་པས་གཞི་བརྒྱུད། སྤྱིན་སོགས་པ་རོལ་ཏུ་ཕྱིན་པས་ཚོགས་བསགས་
 དགོས་པ་སོགས་ཀྱིས་དལ་ཉེན་རྒྱུ་ཆུང་ཆུང་སྤྱོད་མི་ཉན་པའི་རྣམ་གྲངས་དུ་མ་བཤད་ཀྱང་། ཆགས་སྤྱོད་ཀྱིས་རྒྱུད་བསྐྱང་
 བའི་སྒོ་བས་ཀྱིས་གོ་དོན་འབྱུང་བ་ཡར་ཞོག། རྒྱུ་འབྲས་ཁྱུད་གསལ་དང་སྤྱོད་པ་འཚོལ་སྒོལ་གི་གཏམ་མང་པོ་བཤད་པ་ལ།
 བདག་གི་ཡིད་རབ་ཏུ་ཡམ་ཞིང་སྤྱིགས་དུས་ཀྱི་བསམ་སྤྱོད་ལ་སྤྱོད་ནས་འདི་སྐད་སྒྲིམ། རྒྱུ་བས་འཁོར་བའི་མགོན་པོ་པདྨ་འི་འབྱུང་།
 དོན་མི་འགྱུར་རྒྱུ་མཚོ་རྒྱལ་མཁྱེན། སྤྱང་བདེ་བའི་དོན་རྒྱགས་རྩེས་གཟིགས། རྒྱུན་བར་ཆད་སེལ་བར་བྱིན་ཀྱིས་
 རྒྱོབས། ཉིན་དང་བཅུན་ལུས་མདོ་ཤོར་བོ། ཁྱོད་བསམ་སྒོར་བའི་སེམས་ལ་ཐོང་། བརྟགས་དཔྱོད་ལུས་
 རག་སེམས་ལ་གྱིས། ཕྱིའི་ཆ་ལུགས་ཚེས་གོས་གསུམ་ལ་བརྟེན། རང་འདོད་སྤྱོད་ཆེ་བ་བྱ་དང་མཚུངས།
 སེམས་ [173b] བསམ་པ་རྒྱན་བྱེད་པ་བཞིན། དུས་རྟག་པར་དཀོར་ནག་ཟས་ལ་སྤྱོད། དེ་ལྟ་བུའི་ལུས་ངན་ངས་མི་
 འདོད། ང་སྤྱོད་ལུས་དམན་པ་ཐ་མལ་ཡང་། བཞིན་ལྟ་ན་སྤྱུག་པ་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་རིགས། རྒྱོམ་ལ་རྒྱུད་མེད་སྤྱང་སྤྱང་
 ཡང་། སེམས་སྤྱོད་མེད་སྤྱོད་གསུམ་པོ་ཐོབ་ཐོང་། ལས་བྱུང་དེ་འཁོར་བའི་རྒྱལ་བརྒྱུད་ཡང་། མཉམ་ཉིད་ཀྱི་ཡེ་ཤེས་བྲལ་
 མ་དགོས། རྒྱུད་བཅུ་ལ་རང་བྱུན་རྒྱུད་པ་ཡིས། གང་སྤྱང་ཀུན་བདེ་བ་ཆེན་པོའི་ངང་། དབྱིངས་ཡེ་ཤེས་མཉམ་བཤལ་
 རྒྱོད་དུ་གྲོལ། ཁྱོད་ལྟ་བུའི་སྤྱིས་ལུས་དགོས་པ་མེད། ཆོ་འདི་སྤྱི་གཉིས་སྤྱུག་ངས་མི་བྱེད། མདོ་མེད་ཁྱོད་བསམ་སྒོ་
 ལེགས་པར་ཐོང་། དོན་རྒྱུད་དང་དོན་ལྡན་ལུས་མ་བཞེ། ལས་འབྲས་བྱུ་བསྐྱུ་མེད་སྤྱིན་པའི་དུས། སྤྱིང་མེད་ཁྱོད་ཇི་
 ལྟར་བྱེད་རྒྱུ་ཡིན། ད་དེ་དོན་བསམ་པ་ལ་རང་ཚོད་རྒྱགས།

⁶⁰¹ *Autobiography* 174a.3-5:

ཁྱོད་རྒྱུད་ནས་ད་བར་དུ་ང་རང་གི་བྱ་གཅིག་ལྟར་བཅེ་ཞིང་ནར་སོན་པར་བྱས། ད་ཁྱོད་ཀྱི་ཡུལ་རྒྱུན་ཕན་བྱ་རེ་ལ་གཞི་བྱས་ཏེ་གཞན་
 ཕན་བྱང་རྒྱལ་གྱི་སེམས་དོར་ནས། རང་དོན་ཡིད་བྱེད་ཀྱི་སྒོ་འཕྲལ་འགྲུག་པའི་དོན་ཅི་ཡིན་ཟེར་ཞིང་།

⁶⁰² *Autobiography* 173b.6-174a.1:

འབྱུང་འདུས་ཞིན་ཏུ་འབྱུགས་ཅིང་བཟོད་དཀའ་བའི་ནད་ཀྱིས་མནར་བ་དང་།

⁶⁰³ “Blessing substance,” is *tshag sbyar*. The exact meaning of this is unclear.

⁶⁰⁴ Drimé Özer Biography 32b.6-35a.3:

དེ་ནས་ཉིན་གཅིག་སྐྱོ་སངས་ལ་བྱོན་སྐབས་སྤྱགས་དགོང་[33]ལ་འདུལ་བ་འཛིན་པའི་སྤྱི་བུ་ཞིག་ཡིན་ན་དགའ་དགོངས་ནས་ཞག་ཆ་
ཤེས་ཅམ་སོང་ཆོ། དེ་ཆའི་རི་ཁྲོད་དུ་སྒྲུ་མ་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་ལུང་ཟིན་གྱིས་བུ་སྤོབ་དམ་པ་ཇི་ཉིད་གྱི་དངོས་སྤོབ་བསོད་སྤུལ་རིན་པོ་ཆའི་
རབ་བྱུང་གི་མཁའ་པོ་འདུལ་བ་འཛིན་པ་ཆེན་པོ་དེ་ཆོ་སྒྲུ་མ་ཆོས་རྒྱལ་ཞེས་པའི་བྱུང་དུ་བྱོན་ནས་དགོ་རྒྱལ་བསྐྱབ་དགོས་དགོངས་ཆོ།
དེ་རྒྱལ་གཟིམ་ལམ་ལ་བྱུང་མེད་གཞུགས་མི་སྤྱག་པ་ཞིག་གིས་དུས་གྱི་ཁྲག་པོའི་སྤྱོད་པ་འདི་ཐབས་སྤྱག་ཟེར་ཞིང་བྱང་བྱུང་སྤྱི་བུ་
དུ་དུས་གྱིན་འདུག་པས། ཇི་ཞེ་ཞལ་ནས་ཁྲོད་འདི་ཅམ་གྱིས་སྤྱག་བསྐྱལ་ཅི་ལ་བྱེད་གསུངས་པས། མོ་ན་རེ་དང་བུ་བལ་
ཁག་ཅི་ཡོད། དེང་སང་གི་མིའི་སྤྱོད་པ་འདི་ལ་སྤོས་དང་། རྒན་མོ་དེའི་མི་ཚད་གནས་དང་ཡུལ་གྱི་མཁའ་འགོ་རྣམས་ཀྱང་
སྤྱགས་ཁྲིལ་བར་འདུག་ཟེར། ཡང་ཇི་ཞེ་ཞལ་ནས་གནས་ཡུལ་གྱི་མཁའ་འགོ་རྣམས་འབྲུག་དོན་ཅི་[33b]རེད་གསུངས།
མོ་ན་རེ་བཤད་ན་བཤད་ཆོད་མེད་པ་འདྲ་ཡང་། ད་ཁྲོད་ལ་བྱུར་ཅམ་སྤྱི་ན་རང་མཚངས་ལ་གོ་འགོ་ཟེར། ཇི་ཞེ་ཞལ་
སྤྱི་རང་རང་མཚངས་ལ་ཅི་ལ་སོག་གསུངས། མོ་ན་རེ་མཚངས་ལ་མ་སོག་ན་བཟང་གི་དྲ། དུས་ངན་སྤྱིགས་མའི་
རང་རྟགས་ལ་སྤོས་དང་། སྤྱགས་པའི་དམ་མི་བསྐྱང་བར་མགོ་རག་གྱེ། དགོ་སྤོང་གི་གསུམ་ལྟན་ཡིན་ཟེར་ཞིང་
སྤྱགས་སུ་ཞུགས། ཟབ་མོ་གཏིར་ལ་དབང་ཡང་མི་ངན་པའི་རྒྱུན་གྱིས་ངོ་མོད་རྒྱུང་བས་བཏང་སྤོམས་སུ་ཤོར་བ་དེ་སོ་ཁྲོད་
གཏིར་སྤོན་ཆོ་མཚངས་རེད་ཟེར་ཞིང་། ཇི་ཞེ་ཞལ་ནས་གཏིར་སྤོན་རྣམས་འདུལ་བའི་བསྐྱབ་པ་ལ་ཞུགས་ཀྱང་གཏིར་ལ་ཅི་གཞོད།
སྤོན་གྱ་རུ་པརྒྱས་ཀྱང་ཀྱང་དགའ་བོའི་མདུན་ནས་རབ་དུ་བྱུང་སྤྱི། ལྷ་ཀྱང་སང་གའི་མཚན་གསོལ་ནས་དབུ་རག་ཞབས་ཇིན་
མཛད་པ་ཡིན་ཀྱང་། མཐར་ཐོད་ཁམས་ཐམས་ཅད་གཏིར་གྱིས་འབྲེན་པ་ཡིན་གསུང་། [34]མོ་ན་རེ་ངས་གྱ་རུ་པརྒྱས་
ཆ་རྒྱུ་ངས་ཤེས། ཁྲོད་གྱིས་མི་ཤེས། གྱ་རུ་སྤྱར་འོག་མིན་གིན་བཞུགས་དུས་ང་ལས་བྱེད་ཡིན། སྤོན་ལོ་མ་ཅན་
ལ་རྒྱལ་བ་རྣམས་གྱི་དགོངས་པ་གཅིག་དུ་བྲིལ་ནས་རང་བྱུང་སྤུལ་པའི་སྤྱི་བུ་བྱོན། སྤྱང་ཐོབ་གྱི་ཡོན་ཏན་ཐམས་ཅད་ས་ལམ་གྱི་
རིམ་པར་མི་སྤོས་པར་མཁྱེན་གཟིགས་ཡི་ཤེས་ཡོན་ཏན་ཐམས་ཅད་ལ་མངའ་བ་རྟེན་པའི་རྟགས་སུ། ཨོ་རྒྱན་རྒྱལ་བའི་རྒྱལ་སྤྱིད་
གཞུངས་ནས་རིགས་ལྟན་འོད་འཆང་ལྷ་མོ་ཁབ་དུ་བཞེས་ནས། གནས་དང་ཡུལ་གྱི་དཔའ་བོ་དང་དཔའ་མོ་ཐམས་ཅད་གྱི་དབང་
དུ་བསྐྱུས་ནས་སྤྱིད་གསུམ་ཟིལ་གྱིས་གཞོན་པར་མཛད། དེ་ནས་བརྒྱལ་ཞུགས་གྱི་སྤྱོད་པའི་རྣལ་འབྱོར་ལ་ཞུགས་ནས་དུར་
ཁྲོད་བསིལ་བའི་ཆལ་ལ་སོགས་པ་དུར་ཁྲོད་བརྒྱུད་དུ་བརྒྱལ་ཞུགས་གྱི་སྤྱོད་པས་ལྷ་འདྲེ་མི་གསུམ་གྱུ་གཉིན་ས་བདག་སྤྱི་བརྒྱུད་
འབྱུང་བོ་ལ་སོགས་པ་གཞུགས་མེད་ཐམས་ཅད་དབང་དུ་བསྐྱུས་ནས་མངའ་འོག་[34b]དུ་ཆོས་ལ་བཀོད་པ་བདེན། དགོ་སྤོང་

མགོ་རག་བྱས་ནས་བརྟུལ་ཞུགས་འོང་བ་ངེས་མི་ཤེས་ཟེར་ནས་མི་སྤྲང་བ་སོང་ངོ་། དེ་ནང་ནང་སྤྲོ་སྤྲོ་ཆ་གསོལ་ཆེ་དེ་ཉིད་
 གྱི་སྤྲོ་ཁམས་མི་བདེ་བར་བྱུག་དུ་ཆེན་ཆེན་པོ་ཞིག་བྱུང་འདུག་པས། རྗེ་འཇམ་དཔལ་ལྷན་གྱི་ཞུགས་པ་ལྷན་གྱི་ཞུགས་པ་ལྷན་གྱི་ཞུགས་པ་
 གྱང་། གསང་བྱ་མཛད་ནས་ཞག་ཆ་ཤེས་ཅམ་སོང་རྗེས། རྗེ་དེ་ཉིད་བརྟུངས་ལས་གྲོལ་སྤྲོ་བས་ཡུལ་སྤྲོ་གསལ་དེའི་ཉེ་ཆར་དུ་
 སྤྲོ་ལམས་གྱི་ནད་ཤུགས་ནས་འགོ་བ་མང་པོ་ན་བ་དང་། བྱུང་པར་རྗེ་ཉིད་གྱི་ལྷ་མ་སྤྲིང་འབྲིང་པོ་དཔལ་མཆོ་ཞེས་པའི་གཟུང་
 མི་གཉིས་ཡོད་པ་དེ་ནད་གྱིས་མནར་ནས་འཆི་ལ་ཐུགས་པར་ཡོད་པས། དེའི་ཡུལ་མི་གཉིས་བྱུང་ནས་རྗེ་དེ་ཉིད་འབོད་པ་ལ་འོང་
 སྟེ་དཔོན་གཡོག་བཅས་དེ་ཀར་ཐེབ་ཆོ། ལྷ་མ་སྤྲིང་མོ་དང་སྤྲོ་པོ་གཉིས་ཀ་འཆི་ཁ་ལ་ཐུགས་ཡོད་པས། རྗེས་དམ་རྗེས་དང་སྒྲ་
 མ་རིན་པོ་ཆེའི་ཆག་སྤྲོ་སྤྲོ་[35]ནས་ལུས་སྤྲོ་དང་བཀའ་བསྐྱོམ་མཛད་པས། སྤྲོ་པོ་འཆི་བ་ལས་མ་གྲོལ་ཏེ་ཤི་སོང་།
 ལྷ་མ་སྤྲིང་མ་ནད་ལས་གྲོལ་ཏེ་འཇིག་རྟེན་གྱི་ཞུལ་ཏ་མཛད་ནས། རྗེ་དེ་ཉིད་ཕྱིར་བྱོན་ནས་མཁའ་འགོ་འབྲུག་བསྐྱང་དང་གསོལ་
 ཁ་སོགས་མཛད་ནས། ཡུལ་དེའི་ནད་ཐམས་ཅད་ཞི་ལ་སོང་ངོ་།

⁶⁰⁵ Drimé Özer Biography 160a.1-6:

དེ་སྐབས་རྩུན་བྱེད་མཁན་ཞིག་གི་རྗེ་ལ་ཐུགས་སྤྲོ་གི་གཏམ་མང་པོ་ཞུས་པ་ལ་རྩུན་བྱས་ནས་ཐུགས་འདུན་ཞིག་དུ་གཏད་པ་དང་།
 སྤྲོ་བྱེད་ཕྱི་མཛད་འདུལ་བ་འཛིན་པའི་སྤྲོ་བྱེད་དགོངས་ནས་དགེ་སྤྲོང་བསྐྱབ་དགོས་དགོངས་ཡོད་ཆོ། ཉིན་གཅིག་མནལ་
 ལམ་ལ་བྱུང་ཐེད་མང་པོ་འཆོགས་ཡོད་པར་གཟིགས་ནས་འདི་རྣམས་ཅི་ཡིན་དགོངས་ཆོ། ཁོང་རྣམས་ན་རེ་ངོ་ཆོ་ཁྱོད་
 གྱིས་མི་ཤེས་སམ་ཟེར། རྗེའི་ཞུལ་ནས་མི་ཤེས་གསུང་། ཡང་མོན་རེ་ངོ་ཆོ་སྤྲོ་གསུང་མའི་པོ་ཉི་ཡིན། ཁྱོད་
 གྱིས་འདུལ་བ་འཛིན་པ་བྱེད་གྱིན་ཡོད་པས་མགོ་དང་ཡན་ལག་རྣམས་ངོ་ཆོ་ཡིན་པས་བཅད་ན་ཆོག་ཟེར་ནས། རྗེའི་དབུ་ལ་
 གྱིས་ཆད་ནས་གཅོད་གཤམ་བྱེད་པ་དང་། གཞན་ཡང་གཏུག་རྩུབ་དུ་མ་བསྐྱར་ཅིང་ཅུ་ཁམས་འབྲུག་ལྟེ་བདེ་བའི་སྤྲོ་བས་མ་སྤྲོ་
 ནས་མནལ་ལས་སད་དོ།

⁶⁰⁶ The strong connection Sera Khandro emphasizes in Drimé Özer's *Biography* between a non-celibate life and the capacity to reveal Treasure stands in contrast to the recent figure Khenpo Jikmé Püntsok of Larung Gar in Serta, Golok, who, as Germano points out, emphasized celibacy and monastic ethics even for someone like himself who was a Treasure revealer. Khenpo Jikmé Püntsok recounts rejecting a female consort who was connected to him through prophecy in favor of maintaining his monastic vows. See Germano 1998: 68-72.

⁶⁰⁷ *Autobiography* 11b.6-12a.1. For Tibetan, see Chapter One endnote 52.

⁶⁰⁸ The three trainings on the path are discipline, concentration, and knowledge.

⁶⁰⁹ *Autobiography* 376b.1-3:

ངའི་མིང་ལ་ཇོ་མིན་ནག་མིན་ཟེར། ཇོ་མིན་དང་རྩུལ་ལྡན་ཇོ་མོ་ཡིན། ལམ་བསྐྱབ་གསུམ་སྤྲོ་དམ་ཉམས་པ་མིད།

ནག་མེད་དང་ནག་མེད་མིང་དུ་བཏགས་། ནག་ཅན་བཞིན་ཡུལ་ཕུད་སྤང་བྱར་མཐོང་། ནག་ཉེས་པ་སྤྱོད་མེད་མིང་ན།

⁶¹⁰ Sera Khandro mentions in two places in her *Autobiography* that she did not eat meat. See *Autobiography* 94a.3. An exception to this was that when she was thirty, Drimé Özer urged her to eat meat to cure her illness. Sera Khandro records that she did this as a special dispensation from her normal vegetarian diet, see *Autobiography* 261-261b.

⁶¹¹ Tentative translation of *Sha tsha li khyed so gnam sto yangs pa/ sa kha che ba'i mi yin ni 'dra 'dra gsungs nas*.

⁶¹² *Dus rgyun du gshin po'i ro dum khur*.

⁶¹³ I.e., you have no shame.

⁶¹⁴ Trainings and vows (*bslab sdom*) refers to the three types of vows pertaining to the monastic, bodhisattva, and Secret Mantra paths.

⁶¹⁵ *Autobiography* 93a. 4-95a.4:

ཆོས་སྒྲུབ་གྱི་ཐོག་ལ་འོ་སྒྲོལ་གྱི་ཇོ་མོ་ཚུལ་སྒྲོན་ཡོད་པས། དེའི་སར་འདུག་ལ་རྟ་བོར་མི་འགྲོ་བ་གྱིས་ཟེར་བས། བདག་
གིས་ཀྱང་ཁོ་རང་གིས་ངག་ལྟར་ཚུལ་སྒྲོན་གྱི་སར་སོང་བས། མོ་ན་རེ། ད་ལན་བྱོད་གྱིས་སྤྲུལ་སྤྲུལ་རུ་སང་གི་མདུན་ནས་སྤྲུ་
བཅད་སྒྲོམ་ཞུ་དགོས། དེ་མིན་ངེད་སང་གི་ཟུར་ལ་བྱོད་མི་འདུག་ངེས་པ་རེད་ཟེར། བདག་གི་བསམ་པ་ལ་བསོད་
བགྲ་སང་ཟེར་བའི་^[93b] དུད་ཆོང་ཕྱག་ཆེན་ཞིག་ཡོད་པས། དེ་སང་གི་ང་རང་མར་ཞབས་ལ་མི་བཅད་ཅིང་། དུས་ཀྱན་
བར་བར་ལ་འབྲས་དང་གྲོ་མ་སོགས་ཤུགས་མེད་པའི་ཟས་རེ་ཡོད་དུས་ང་རང་གི་སྒྲུལ་བ་མ་བཅད་ཅིང་སྤྱོད་འདུག་པས། ཚུལ་
སྒྲོན་གྱིས་བདག་བསོད་བགྲ་སང་ལ་འདུག་གི་སྒྲུལ་ནས་ཕྱོག་བྱེད་པ་འདྲ་བསམ་སྟེ། བདག་གིས་འདི་སྤྲད་སྤྲུལ། ངའི་སྤྲུ་
བཅད་སྒྲོམ་ཞུ་མ་བྱས་རུང་བྱོད་ཆོང་ས་ལ་མི་གཞོད། བྱོད་ཇོ་མོ་ཡང་དག་པ་རྣམས་ཀྱི་བྱ་སྤྱོད་ལ་བསམ་ནའང་། བདག་ལྟ་
བུའི་ན་རུང་རྒྱ་མེད་གྱི་ཇོ་མགོ་མི་ཐོན་ངེས་པ་ཡིན་སྤྲུལ་ཆོ། མོ་རང་ཆོག་པ་ཟོས་ནས་ཡར་ལང་སྟེ་ང་རང་གི་ཕྱག་ནས་བཟུང་
ཞིང་སྤྲུ་རུང་མདུན་ལ་བྱོད་ནས། ལགས་སྤྲུལ་སྤྲུལ་སང་བྱོད་གྱིས་འདིའི་སྤྲུ་ཕུད་བཞེས་རོགས་མཛོད། མོ་རང་
དུས་འབྲུར་ཞིག་རེད་དང་། སེམས་དཀར་བྱས་ཀྱང་སྤྱི་ཁ་ལ་མི་ཉན་ཅིང་འདིས་ཅི་བྱེད་མི་གོ་གི་ལགས་ཟེར། མདུན་
གཡོག་གི་ཞལ་ནས་^[94] ཟུང་ཟད་ཞིག་སྤྲོད་དང་། གསོལ་བཅའ་འདི་མཛོད་ཇེས་གསུང་རོགས་ཞུ་ཟེར། ལྷ་མའི་ཞལ་ནས་
ཤ་ཆ་ལི་བྱོད་སོ་གནམ་སྒྲོ་ཡངས་པ། ས་ཁ་ཆེ་བའི་མི་ཡིན་ནི་འདྲ་འདྲ་གསུངས་ནས། གསོལ་བའི་ཤ་ཞིག་འདུག་པ་
དེའི་ནང་ནས་ཤ་ལྟ་དུས་ཞིག་བདག་ལ་གནང་བས། ཚུལ་སྒྲོན་གིས་དུས་མོས་ཤ་མི་བཟ་གི་ལགས་ཞུས་ཆོ། ཡང་བྱུང་
ཞིག་གནང་བའི་ང་རང་གི་དངོས་གྲུབ་ཡིན་སྤྲུལ་ནས། མོ་རང་ལ་ཟུང་ཟད་ཀྱང་མ་བྱིན་ཏེ་རང་གཅིག་ཕུའི་ཟོས་ནས་ཇེས་ཤེས་
ལྷ་མའི་ཕྱགས་དང་རང་སེམས་གཉིས་མེད་དུ་བསྐྱེས་ནས་ཟུང་ཟད་བསྐྱད་ཆོ། མདུན་གཡོག་གི་ཞལ་ནས་མཆར་རེ་བུ་མོ་འདི་
སོའི་མིག་ནི་བསམ་གཏན་པ་ཞིག་དང་འདྲ་འདུག། བྱོད་ལ་ད་སྤྲུལ་མི་འདྲ་ཞིག་ཡོད་ཟེར། བདག་གིས་རང་གི་རིག་པ་ནམ་

མཁའ་མཚན་གཞི་བཞག་ནས། ནམ་མཁའ་ལ་མཚུབ་མོ་གཏང་པས། ཁོ་ན་རེ། ཟུ་ཟུགས་པ་ཞིག་ཡིན་པར་
 འདུག། སྒྲ་མ་ཉི་མ་ཡིན་ཟེར་སྒྲས། ཡང་[94b]ཁོང་གིས་ཁྱོད་ཀྱི་ཆོས་ཨི་ཤེས་ཟེར། ཡང་བདག་གིས་སྒྲ་ཆོགས་ཆོས་
 ཁམས་རྒྱ་མཚོ་སྒྲོ་ལཱའི་འདོད་ཡོན་རང་བྱུང་ཤེས་པའི་བདེ་རུ། མིག་སྒྲ་ན་བ་ལྟེ་ལུས་རྣམས་ལ་ལག་པ་གིས་རེག་པའི།
 ཁོ་རང་གིས་དོན་མ་གོ་ནས་རྒྱལ་སྒྲོན་ལ་ཅི་རེད་ཟེར། ཁང་སང་དགུན་ཆོས་ཞིག་ཞུས་ནི་རེད། དེའི་དོན་ཟེར་ནི་ཨི་ཡིན་ན་དེ་
 མིན་མི་གོ་གི་ལགས་ཟེར་ནས་མོ་རང་མ་ཁོམས་ནས་བྱུང་སོང་། ང་རང་བསྐད་ནས་སྒྲ་མས་གསོལ་རྩེས་འདི་སྐད་ཞུས།
 ལགས་བདག་ནི་རྒྱུང་མོ་ལོ་བཙོ་ལྟ་ནས་ལྷག་བསམ་རྣམ་དག་གི་ཆོས་ཞིག་ཨི་འབྱུབ་བསམ་པ་ཡིན་པས། དེ་ལམ་དུ་འགྲོ་བ་ལ་
 ཟུགས་གཏང་མ་རྒྱུང་། ང་དོན་ཆེན་རེ་ཡོད་པ་ཞིག་ཡིན་པས་སྒྲ་བཅད་མ་བཅད་མེད་པ་འདྲ་ལགས་། རྒྱལ་སྒྲོན་མོ་རང་གི་
 བསམ་པ་རེད། བདག་གིས་ལུས་འདིའི་རང་ལ་གཞན་དབང་བྲག་པོའི་མ་བསྐྱར་རྒྱུ་ཆོ། རང་བསམ་གྱི་དོན་མེད་ཀྱི་སྒྲ་སེར།
 བྱིམས་བདག་གི་མི་སྒྲུ་ལ་སོགས་པར་མི་འགྲོགས་ཅིང་། དུས་ཀུན་རང་[95] གཞན་གྱི་དོན་རེ་ཨི་འབྱུབ་བསྐྱེད་ཆེད་ཟས་གོས་
 རོར་ལ་མི་ཆགས་པར་སྒྲ་ཆོས་རྣམ་དག་ཞིག་ཨི་འབྱུབ་བྱེད་ལགས། གལ་ཏེ་ལུས་དམན་རྒྱུ་གྱིས་བསམ་པ་ལམ་དུ་མ་སོང་
 གྱུང་བྱེད་དང་ནི་འགལ་བ་མིན་པས་དེ་ལྟགས་དགོངས་མཛོད་ཞུས་རྒྱུ་ཆོ། སྒྲ་མའི་ཟུགས་བཙེ་བའི་རྒྱལ་གྱིས་ཨི་རེད་ཁྱོད་ཀྱིས་
 ཟས་གོས་རོར་ལ་མ་ཆགས་པར་ཆོས་ཡང་དག་ཞིག་ཨི་འབྱུབ་བསམ་པས་ཆོས་འབྱུབ་ནི་འདྲ་འདྲ། འཁོར་བ་ལ་ཞེན་
 ཆགས་ཆེ་ནི་ཆོས་མི་འབྱུབ་ནི་འདྲ་འདྲ། དེང་སངས་ཆོས་པ་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་འཁོར་བ་སྒྲོས་མ་ཐོང་བར་དབྱར་མར་བསོད།
 དགུན་ནས་སྤང་དང་། དུས་རྒྱུན་དུ་གཤམ་པོའི་རོ་དུམ་ཁྱུར་ནི་འདྲ་འདྲ་གསུངས་ཏེ། དེ་ལ་སོགས་པའི་ཆོས་མཁའ་དུ་
 མ་མཛད་ཅིང་གསེར་སྒྲ་ཞིག་བདག་གི་མགོ་ལ་བཞག་ནས་སྒྲོན་ལམ་བཏབ། དཔལ་སྒྲུལ་རིན་པོ་ཆེའི་དབུ་ཐོད་ལྟེ་མའི་
 རིལ་བུ་བདུན་ཆ་གཅིག་དང་། གཞན་ཡང་ཆོས་སྒྲན་རིལ་བུ་ལྷགས་སྒྲགས་སྒྲག་མདུད་[95b]སོགས་གནང་ནས་ཞལ་ཏེ་མཛོད་དོ།
 དེ་ནས་བདག་ཕྱིར་འོང་ནས་རྒྱལ་སྒྲོན་ལ་མི་སྒྲུ་དང་དོན་མེད་ཀྱི་སྒྲ་སེར་རྣམས་ལ་བདག་གིས་ལུས་འབྲེལ་མི་བྱེད་པར་ཁས་སྐྱེད་ཡོད།
 དེ་མིན་ང་རང་གིས་ཇོ་མོ་མ་བྱེད་སྒྲས། མོ་ན་རེ། ཨ་ཅི་ཁྱོད་ཀྱི་ང་ལ་འབྲོང་སྒྲགས་གོན་ཡོད་པ་འདྲ། སྒྲ་ཆེན་ཁོང་
 ལྟ་བུ་ལ་འདི་འདྲའི་ཆོག་རྩི་གཅི་ལ་ཞུ་མོད་ཟེར་ཞིང་འབྲམ་ཤ་འཐེན་འདུག། བདག་གིས་རང་བྱུང་གི་བུ་བུ་ཁོང་ལ་ཞུས་པས་
 མི་ཐོད་པ་མི་འདུག། དེ་བས་བསྐྱབ་སྒྲོམ་སྒྲོག་ལ་ཉམས་ན་དེ་མི་ཐོད་སྒྲས་རྒྱུ་ཆོ། མོ་རང་གི་ཅི་ཡང་མི་ཟེར།

⁶¹⁶ Havnevik 1989: 147.

⁶¹⁷ Makley 2005: 279.

⁶¹⁸ *Autobiography* 107b.4-108a.6:

དེན་ས་ང་རང་སྤྱིད་སྤྱུལ་མཐུན་ལ་སོང་ཞིང་ཞལ་ཆ་ཤས་སུ་བསྐྱད་ནས་སྤྱིད་སྤྱུལ་གྱི་ནུབ་གངས་ལྷོ་ཆོ། ཁོང་གིས་ད་ཁྱོད་གར་
འགྲོ་མ་འདུག་ངའི་སར་སྤྱོད་དང་སྤྱོད་གོས་ལ་བསམ་མི་དགོས་གསུངས། བདག་གིས་ཀྱང་སྤྱུལ་ལ་འདུག་སྟེ།
སྤྱུལ་སྤྱིའི་ལུ་མ་སྤྱིང་མས་སེམས་ངན་ཆོས་ནས་ཁྱོད་ཀྱི་བྱ་བ་འདི་མི་ལེགས། [108] དེད་སང་གི་སྤྱུལ་སྤྱིའི་ཅི་དྲན་འོང་མི་ཤེས།
ཁོ་རང་གི་སྤྱིའི་བསྐྱོད་མ་སྤྱིད་ལུང་ཐུགས་མཆོག་དོན་ཅི་སྤྱགས་འཆང་དེད་ཟེར་ཞིང་གཞན་ཡང་ཆོག་ངན་གྱིས་བདག་གིས་སེམས་
བསད་འདུག་པས། བདག་གིས་ཁྱོད་ཀྱིས་དེ་ལྟར་ཅི་ལ་བསམ། སྤྱུལ་སྤྱི་སང་གིས་བདག་བྱུང་མི་བཞེས་ངས་པ་ཡིན།
ཁོང་དགུང་གངས་མཐོ་བ་དང་། མིན་ཀྱང་འདུལ་བ་འཛིན་པ་སྤྱོད་པ་ཤིན་ཏུ་ཞིབ་འདུག་པ་ལུ་ཅག་གི་ཤེས་བཞིན་ཁྱོད་ཀྱིས་
ལོག་ལྟ་ཅི་ལ་བྱེད་སྤྱུལ་ཀྱང་། ད་དུང་ཡིད་མ་ཆེས་ཤིང་དུས་རྒྱུན་དུ་སྤྱུལ་སྤྱི་དང་། ང་རང་གཉིས་ལ་ཆོག་ཐུར་གྱིས་དགོས་
མེད་དུ་མ་བཤད་འདུག་པས། ཉིན་གཅིག་སྤྱུལ་སྤྱི་རི་ཟུབ་ནང་དུ་གན་མོ་ཞིག་ཤི་སོང་བས་དེ་ཀར་བྱོན་སོང་བའི་ལུ་དུ།
ང་རང་སློག་བྱུང་བྱས་ཏེ་མཁར་ནང་འགབ་མའི་ནང་དུ་སོང་ནས།

⁶¹⁹ Autobiography 110a.4-110b.5:

དེན་ས་ཞལ་ཆ་ཤས་ནས་སྤྱིད་སྤྱུལ་དཀར་བསོད་ལ་བྱོན་ཞོར་ལ། ཏྲ་བཟའ་སློན་པོ་ཞེས་པ་མ་བྱ་གཉིས་ཡོད་པའི། དེས་ཁོང་
ལ་གསོལ་ཇ་དངས་བའི་སར་བདག་ཤོག་གསུང་ནས་འབོད་མི་བཏང་འདུག་པས། དེ་དང་ལྷན་དུ་ང་རང་སྤྱུལ་མཐུན་ལ་སོང་ནས་
ཁམས་བཟང་ལྷོ་ཆོ། སྤྱུལ་སྤྱིའི་ཞལ་ནས་ཁྱོད་ཀྱིས་ང་མེད་པའི་ལུ་དུ་སློག་[110b]ལ་བྱུང་འགྲོ་བ་ཅི་ཡིན་གསུངས་ཆོ།
བདག་གིས་ལགས་ང་རང་གར་སོང་ཡང་ཀྱན་གྱིས་མིག་ལམ་དུ་གཞོད་ཅིང་ལོག་ལྟ་ཅི་གཞིར་འགྲོ་འདུག་པས། དེའི་
ལན་གྱིས་བདག་མ་བསྐྱད་པ་ཡིན་ལྟས་པས། ཡང་ཁོང་གིས་ཞལ་ནས་འོན་ད་ཁྱོད་དང་ང་གཉིས་ཡང་ཡང་ཨི་འཕྲད་མི་
ཤེས་པས། ཁྱོད་རང་གར་སོང་ཆོ་རྒྱ་དག་བྱིན་མས་ལ་གཟབ་དགོས། ཁྱོད་པར་མ་ཆེན་ལ་ཁྱོད་འགྲོ་འདུག་ཡོད་
པས། དེ་ལ་སོང་ན་རྟོག་སྤྱུལ་ལེགས་པོ་ཞིག་མེད་ཆོ་འགྲོ་མི་ཉན། བྱི་སྤྱང་ལ་སོགས་པའི་ཁ་ལས་ཐར་དཀའ་ཟེར་བ་ཐོས་
པས་ལག་ཉིས་ལ་འགྲོ་ཉིས་ཡོད་གསུངས་ཏེ། བསྐྱང་མཐུད་དམ་ཇུས་སོགས་དང་། བྱོ་རྟེན་དུ་ཡན་ཆ་ལྟ་གནང་བ་
སོགས་མཛད་ནས་ང་གནས་ལ་བྱོན་སོང་།

⁶²⁰ Autobiography 158b.4-159a.1:

བདག་གི་བསམ་པ་ལ་ཆོས་བདག་ཀ་བཞིའི་ནང་ནས་བྱང་གི་ཀ་བ་རྒྱུ་མ་ཏི་ཞེས་པ་དེ་ཀར་སྤྱུལ་ཀྱང་། ང་རང་སྤྱིའི་ལུ་མ་དམན་
པའི་དབང་གིས་སྤྱུལ་པའི་སྤྱི་དེ་ཉིད་ལ་གཞན་གྱིས་ལོག་ལྟ་བྱེད་འོང་སྤྱུལ་ནས་འཇིགས་ཆོས་ལ་འདི་སྤྱུལ། ཁྱོད་ཀྱི་རྒྱ་མ་དེ་ཅི་
ཡང་མི་མ་བྱེད་པ་ཞིག་ཡིན་པ་འདྲ། ང་གན་མོའི་སེམས་ལ་གང་དྲན་གྱི་ཡིག་རིས་སུ་རབ་ལུང་བསྐྱན་འབྱེད་སྤྱུལ་ཐབས་ཐ་

ནའང་ཆོག་བཞི་ཙམ་ལས་མི་ཉུང་བའི་ཡི་གེ་ཞིག་གིས་ནས་བསྐྱར་གསུངས་འདུག་པའི།

⁶²¹ The term I am translating as gossip, *mo kha*, is a colloquial Golok expression and is not in any dictionaries that I have seen. It refers specifically to gossip pertaining to associating with women.

⁶²² *Autobiography* 190b.5-191b.2:

དེ་ནས་རིམ་གྱིས་དཔལ་ཡུལ་དགོན་དུ་ཐོན་སོང་བས། ང་རང་གི་བསམ་པ་ལ་སློ་སྤྲུལ་སང་ལ་ཆ་ཞིབ་མེད་པས་མདུན་དུ་
མ་སོང་ཡང་ཆོག་སྟེན་ནས། དེད་ཅན་གྱི་གནས་ཚང་དགོན་སྟོད་དུ་བཅས་^[191]ནས་སྟོད་ཡོད་པས། རང་སྟོབ་དཔལ་ལྷན་
ཀྱི་མཚོ་དང་། འཇིགས་མེད་ཆོས་འཕེལ་གཉིས་འོང་ནས་ཁྱོད་དེ་ནས་སྤྲུལ་སྤྲུལ་གིས་བྱོན་ཤོག་གསུངས་པས་དེ་ལྟགས་ཀྱི་
སྤྲུལ་དུ་འགོ་དགོས་ཟེར། བདག་གི་སྟོ་སྤྲུལ་སང་ད་སྤྲུལ་མཇལ་འཕྲད་ཙམ་མ་གཏོགས་ཞིབ་ཆ་ཆེན་པོ་མེད། མིན་ཀྱང་
ང་རང་འགྲོ་མི་ཉན་མ་གཏོགས་ཁོང་མོ་ཁར་བྲགས་ཡོངས་སྤྲུལ་ཆེ། ཁོང་གཉིས་ན་རེ། གཞན་གྱིས་ཅི་བཤད་ཀྱང་བཤད་
དུ་རྒྱག་ཅུ་ཅག་འགྲོ་ཟེར། ཡང་བདག་གིས་ང་མི་འགྲོ་ཅིའི་ཕྱིར་འགྲོ། དོན་མེད་དུ་དགོན་གསེབ་རྩལ་བ་བྱིད་དུ་སྤྲོད་པོ་ལྟ་བུ་
མི་བྱེད། ཁོང་ལ་མོ་ཁ་ཕོག་ན་ཡུལ་གཉན་པོ་ཡིན་པས་ན་ཉེས་པ་ཆེན་པོའི་རྒྱ་བྱེད་འོང་སྟེ་གི་མ་གཏོགས། ང་རང་ལ་
མཚོན་ན་དབྱིངས་སུ་སྤྱོད་བ་རབ། འབྲེལ་བ་ཐེང་བ་འབྲེང་། ཐན་འང་མོ་ཁ་ཕོག་པ་ཙམ་གྱིས་ཀྱང་འབྲས་བུ་མཆོག་
གི་དངོས་བྱུང་ཐོབ་པའི་རྒྱ་བྱེད་པ་རྒྱ་གྲིའི་རིགས་ཀྱི་ཡོན་ཏན་ཡིན་མོད། འོན་ཀྱང་^[191b]ཆོག་འདིའི་ཟུར་ཙམ་ཡང་གཞན་ལ་མ་
སྤྲུལ་ཞིག། བདག་མགོན་པོ་འགྲོ་རན་པའི་གསང་ཆོག་ཡིན་ནོ་སྟེ་ཉེ་ཉལ་བསྐྱད་པས། ཁོང་གཉིས་ཀྱི་བྱ་ཐབས་བྲལ་ནས་
ཕྱིར་བྱེད་སོང་།

⁶²³ In this chapter on p. 272 I translate another passage from this meeting between Sera Khandro and Gotrül Rinpoché describing a vision she had while with him.

⁶²⁴ *Autobiography* 196b.2- 4:

དང་རང་ལ་ལེགས་ཉེས་ཀྱི་ཞུ་བ་ཆོག་གསུམ་ཡོད་པས་དེ་བྱིད་ཀྱི་གསན་པར་ཞུ་ཞུས་ཆེ། ཁོང་གི་ཞལ་ནས་ཉེ་འཁོར་
རྣམས་སྟེའི་ཕྱི་རོལ་དུ་སོང་གསུངས་ཏེ། དེད་དཔོན་གཡོག་གཉིས་གཅིག་ཕྱར་ཡིན་འདུག་པས། བདག་གི་སྤྲུང་བ་ལ་
ཁོང་ལ་མོ་ཁ་ཕོག་ཡོང་སྟེ་སྟེ། ཁང་པའི་དཀར་མཐོང་གི་ཕྱི་ནས་ཡར་མདུན་ཐད་དེ་ཀར་བསྐྱད་ནས་ལྟགས་གཉིས་ཀྱི་
གསུང་བསྟོས་ཞིབ་རྒྱས་སུ་མཇོད་ནས་ཞལ་བཞུགས་ཀྱང་གནང་།

⁶²⁵ *Autobiography* 301b.2-4:

དེ་ནས་དེད་རྣམས་རིམ་གྱིས་སེར་དགོན་ལ་ཐོན། བསོད་སྤྲུལ་སང་ནས་བསུ་བ་དང་མགོན་ཁ་ཕོགས་མཇོད། དེ་སྐབས་
རང་གི་གྲས་མལ་འདུག་ས། བསོད་སྤྲུལ་སང་དང་ཐག་ཅུང་ཟད་ཉེ་ནས་ན་འདུག་དགོས་སྟེ་ཀྱང་། ཕྱིན་ཀྱན་གྱིས་ལོག་
ལམ་བསམ་ནས་དེ་ཙམ་སྤྲུལ་མ་ལྷན་པས། གནས་འདི་ཀར་ཡུན་རིང་པོར་འདུག་སྐལ་མེད་པ་འདྲ་སྟེ།

⁶²⁶ Tsogyal 2002: 94-95.

⁶²⁷ See Campbell 2003: 98-127. Chapter Six, “At One with the Secret Other,” provides Campbell’s analysis of the role of secrecy in monastic consort relationships and its negative effects on female consorts.

⁶²⁸ Shaw 1994: 69.

⁶²⁹ Young 2004: 168.

⁶³⁰ Young 2004: 168.

Chapter Five: The Divine Couple

⁶³¹ I am thinking of the love poetry about Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, for example Jayadeva’s *Gīta Govinda*, composed in the twelfth century, and the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, dating from the ninth-tenth century.

⁶³² Beyer 1977: 340.

⁶³³ Beyer 1977: 339.

⁶³⁴ Rab gsal zla ba 1988: 11.

⁶³⁵ Gyatso 1998: 195.

⁶³⁶ José Cabezón offers an interesting analysis of the gendered symbolism of male method and female wisdom within Mahāyāna doctrine. Rather than concluding that women’s association with wisdom was positive or at least not misogynist, Cabezón argues: “Wisdom is characterized as feminine (1) because of wisdom’s inferiority in determining Mahāyānic ethnicity and (2) due to the Mahāyāna’s preoccupation with the centrality of emotional states as *the* distinguishing characteristic (its uniqueness) as a tradition, therefore considering them as more important to Mahāyānic identity, and hence characterizing them as masculine. Clearly, neither of these two reasons for using gender-based symbols adds to the status either of wisdom or women.” Cabezón 1992: 190. In the context of the Treasure tradition, aside from the gendered inequity between the prevalence of sources portraying men searching for their requisite female consort and the rarity of sources documenting women looking for their requisite male consort, it seems that the dyad of method and wisdom reflects two equally necessary facets of auspicious connection in which one does not exceed the other in importance. However, this does not refute Cabezón’s insightful point.

⁶³⁷ Snellgrove 2002: 281-285.

⁶³⁸ I am thinking in particular of the passage in Drimé Özer’s *Biography* when he tells her, “. . . Out of those, it is clear in the prophecy that there will be one extraordinary [consort] who will benefit the Treasures who is equal to me – this is you. Hence, because of this, we can act as consorts for each other.” Of course Sera Khandro then mitigates this strong assertion of equality by adding, “Although Dewé Dorjé thought, ‘It is certain that an inferior one like me is not equal to Trülku Rinpoché,’ for the purposes of auspicious connections, she didn’t say anything [like this] and said, ‘Okay.’” See Chapter Two pp. 94-95 for the full translation. For Tibetan, see endnote number 277 or Drimé Özer’s *Biography* 184a.4-184b.4.

⁶³⁹ Personal communication August 2004, in Padma County, Golok.

⁶⁴⁰ Dimock 1966: 6-11.

⁶⁴¹ *Rdzogs chen dpal dge* is another name for Patrül Jikmé Chöki Wangpo (1808-1887), the famous Patrül Rinpoché who wrote *The Words of My Perfect Teacher*. Contextually this comment seems to apply to Drimé Özer whom Sera Khandro is about to introduce, but actually it was his brother Namka Jikmé (*Nam mkha’ jigs med*) who was the incarnation of Patrül Rinpoché.

⁶⁴² *Autobiography* 66b.2-67a.1. This passage also appears in Chapter One p. 27; endnote 86 for Tibetan.

⁶⁴³ *Autobiography* 67a.1-67b.4:

ཨ་ཇའི་ནག་མོ་སྒྲིན་དཀར་ཞེས་པས་འདི་སྐད་ཟེར། ཉོ་ཉོ་ཁྱོད་ལ་ཐོ་དགའ་མེད་བསམ་པས་མ་ཡིན་པ་འདྲ། ཐོ་དགའ་ཡོད་གི།
 ཡ་གི་སྒྲ་མ་མཐོང་ནི་གི་འདོད་ཆགས་སྒྲིས་ནས་མི་འབྲལ་བར་ཤོག་ཟེར་ནས། སྒྲིད་གོང་དཔོན་རྒྱུང་བཅུ་ལྔ་འི་རྒྱ་བ་ལྟ་བུ་ལ་ཡིད་
 མི་འབྲུག་པར། ཁམས་པ་ནག་ར་བྱས་འཕྲང་ཅན་ལ་ཡིད་ཤོར་དོན་ཅི་ཡོད་ཟེར། བདག་གིས་བྱུ་ལ་བྲངས་ནས་འདི་སྐད་སྒྲས།

གསོན་དང་ཨ་ཇོའི་ལྷ་མ་མོ་ལགས། བྱ་མོང་ཡོད་གཤམ་ཆེ་བ་མིན། ཁོང་ནལ་འབྱོར་སྤྱི་ཆེན་དམ་པ་འདྲ།
 བདག་རང་དབང་མེད་པར་དད་པ་སྤྱི་མ། ཆོ་འདི་བྱི་འབྲལ་མེད་སྟོན་ལམ་བཏབ། ཁྱོད་འདོད་ཆགས་པ་སྤྱི་མ་ནི་མིན།
 ང་ཆགས་མེད་དོན་གྱི་བཅུན་མ་ཡིན། ཆགས་སྤེད་གྱི་བྱ་ངན་ངས་མི་བྱེད། ཁོང་དཔོན་རྒྱུ་བའི་གཟི་མདངས་ཅན།
 གོ་གས་ངན་པའི་དབང་དུ་མི་འགྲོ་ཞིང། ལས་ཐམ་ཆོས་ལ་སྟོད་པར་སྟོན། ང་སྟོན་དགུན་མཚམས་གྱི་མེ་ཏོག་འདྲ།
 དུས་དེ་རིང་ཡོད་ཀྱང་སངས་ཉིན་མེད། ལས་ཅི་འབྱུར་མི་ཤེས་ཨ་ལྷ་མ་ལགས། ཞེས་སྤྱི་མ་པས། མོན་ཟེ།
 རོ་རོ་གསོན་དང་ཀུན་དགའ་ལགས། རྗེ་བུའི་ཁ་ལ་མ་ཉན་པའི། ར་མའི་སྟོ་འདིའི་རང་སྟོག་བཅད།
 ཡ་མའི་ཁ་ལ་མ་ཉན་པའི། བྱ་མོང་སྟོ་འདི་འབྲུགས་པའི་གཞི། ཁྱོད་བསམ་སྟོ་སེམས་གྱི་གཏིང་ནས་ཐོངས།
 ཞེས་སྤྱི་མི་འདྲ་དུ་མ་འདུག། ཡིད་ཐེ་ཆོས་ཤོར་སའི་ཆོག་འགའ་འདུག། དགོས་མེད་པ་འདི་འདྲ་མ་གསུངས་ལགས།
 ཟེར་བས།

⁶⁴⁴ Autobiography 112a.5-112b.2:

དེ་ནས་བདག་གིས་གཏིར་གནས་དེ་ཀ་རེད་དང། ཉེན་འབྲེལ་གྱི་རྩལ་ཞིག་དགོས་འདྲ་སྟུང་སྟེ། བཟང་མོའི་སར་སོང་ནས་
 ཨ་ནེ་བཟང་མོ་ཁྱོད་ལ་སྤྱལ་སྤྱི་ཤིང་སང་གི་དབུ་སྤྱོད་ན་བཟའ་རེ་བདག་ལ་སྤྱིན་རྒྱུ་ཨི་ཡོད་སྤྱི་མ་ཆོ། མོན་ཟེ།
 རྒྱུང་ཟད་རེ་ཡོད་ཁྱོད་གྱིས་ཅི་བྱེད་དགོས་པ་ཡིན་ཟེར། བདག་གིས་ང་ལ་དགོས་པ་ཞིག་ཡོད་སྤྱི་མ་པས། མོན་ཟེ་ཅེ་མཚར་དུ་
 ཁྱོད་ལ་སྤྱལ་སྤྱི་སང་དངོས་གྱི་མཁོ་བྱ་ཡོད་ནི་ཨི་མི་ཡིན། དབུ་སྤྱོད་གིས་ཆོག་ན་ངས་སྤྱིན་ཟེར་ནས་་་་

⁶⁴⁵ Autobiography 155b.1-156a.2:

དེ་ནས་ཡང་ལོ་བྱིས་དེ་ཀའི་རྒྱ་བདག་པའི་ནང་དུ་སྤྱོད་པས་རྗེ་ཐམས་ཅད་མ་བྱེད་པ་སྤྱལ་སྤྱི་ཡིད་བཞིན་ནོར་བུ་དེ་ཉིད་སྤྱི་མ་སྤྱོད་ཕྱོགས་
 གྱི་གནས་ལྷགས་རི་འོད་འབར། བཀྲ་ཤིས་སྟོ་མང། ཁྱོས་མའི་གནས་སོགས་ནས་ཟབ་གཏིར་སྤྱོད་དངས་བདད།
 དེའི་ཞོར་ལ་ཡུལ་གྲོང་རྒྱུ་མས་ལ་འབྱུང་བསོད་རེ་མཛད་པའི་དོན་གྱི་རང་གནས་གྱི་ཉེ་ཆར་འཕྲང་གཉིས་བར་ལ་བྱོན་ཡོད་པ་ཐོས་ཆོ།
 ང་རང་གིས་མཇལ་དུ་འགྲོ་འདུན་སྟོ་མ་པ་རྩལ་གཏུང་བ་ལྟ་བུ་ཡོད་ཀྱང། རྒྱལ་སྤྱི་མ་ལ་ལྷ་མ་སྟོ་བས་ནས་བཏང་སྟོ་མས་ལ་བསྟུང་
 ཡོད་སྤྱི་མ་པས། རྗེ་དེ་ཉིད་རང་བསམ་གྱི་དཔོན་གཡོག་ཆ་ཤས་བཅས་རྒྱལ་སྤྱི་མ་སང་གི་སྤྱོད་པ་བྱོན་ནས་ཡན་ཅན་གཉིས་
 ཀས་དབང་ལུང་རེའི་ཆོས་འབྲེལ་མཛད། དེ་སྤྱོད་པས་རྗེ་དེ་ཉིད་གྱིས་བདག་ལ་དངོས་རྩལ་གཡུ་བྱུར་ལྟ་དང་ལྟ་རིག་གི་བྱལ་
 བཅས་གནང་ནས་ལྷགས་གཉིས་གྱི་ཞལ་ཏ་མཛད། བདག་གིས་ཀྱང་བྱིན་རྒྱལ་ཆེ་བ་འབྱུང་བཏགས་སྤྱོད་བའི་ཟབ་གཏིར་

གསར་པ་ཀྱི་བསྐྱལ་བའི་བྱས་པས། རྗེ་དེའི་ཀྱིས་ཀྱང་བདག་གི་བསམ་པ་བཞིན་ཟབ་ཆོས་ཀྱི་གདམས་པ་གནང་བས།

ང་རང་གི་ཟབ་གཏོར་གྱི་ཕབ་རྩལ་པའི་གསོས་སྤྱུང་ཅིང།

⁶⁴⁶ *Nai gro rdo rje rdzong* (also called *Nyi lung*, see Figures 5 and 6) is a cave on a hillside where Drimé Özer did many of his retreats located about one kilometer away from Dujom Lingpa's seat Dartsang in what is today a vast and open nomadic pasture land in the northern region of Serta County, Golok (Sichuan, PRC). The GPS location of this cave is elev. 14,035'; N 32 49.079'; E 100 04.427'. Near the cave at *Nai gro rdo rje rdzong* there is an old wooden structure that Dartsang locals describe as Drimé Özer's household (*bla brang*, see Fig. 4). It is two stories high with one or two rooms on each floor. In 2005, the structure was used to house statues of Dujom Lingpa and other protector deities and Nyingma hierarchs. In the summer of 2005 some ground on this hillside was flattened and construction began for a new stupa dedicated to Drimé Özer on this site.

⁶⁴⁷ Khyentrül Rinpoché is one of Drimé Özer's seven brothers, all sons of Dujom Lingpa. See Appendix II for a list of the eight brothers.

⁶⁴⁸ *Autobiography* 216a.1-219b.4:

དེའི་སྐབས་མཁར་ནང་འགབ་མའི་མགར་སྒོར་གྱི་ནང་ནས་ང་རང་གི་ཡུལ་པ་ལྷ་བུའི་དྲུད་ཁྱིམ་ཞིག་ལ་སྐྱེས་ཆོས་སངས་ཞེས་པ་ཡོད་

པས་དེ་ཀས་ང་རང་བསྐྱལ་བའི་ཐོན་བྱུང་། དེད་མ་བྱ་གཉིས་དང་། ཐུབ་བཟང་བཅས་ཁོང་གིས་སར་སོང་སྐབས།

ཐག་རིང་མིན་ཉི་མེད་ཀྱི་གནས་ནི་གྲོ་རྩེ་རྩེ་བྱ་བར་སྐྱལ་སྤྱོད་བཞིན་ཞོར་བུ་སྐྱེས་ཆོས་སངས་ལ་བཞུགས་ཡོད་པས།

དེ་ཀར་མཁྱའི་ལུང་གི་བསྐྱལ་བ་དང་། སྤར་སྒོ་སྐྱལ་སངས་གི་བཀའ་གསུངས་རྣམས་ལ་གཞི་བཅས་ནས་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་དོན་ལྷན་

རེ་ལེ་འབྱུང་སྐྱེས་ནས། ཆོ་ཆོས་ཀྱིས་ལམ་ཁྲིད་བྱས་ཏེ་དེད་མ་བྱ་དེ་ཀར་སོང་བས། ཐོག་མར་མཁྱེན་སྤྱལ་རིན་པོ་

ཆེའི་སྐྱེས་སྐྱལ་པའི་སྤྱོད་རིག་འཛིན་ཀྱང་བཟང་ཉི་མ་དང་མཇལ་བའི། ཁོང་ལ་སྐྱེས་མཁུན་དུ་ལེ་རྩུང་ལྷུ་པས།

ཁོང་གི་ཞལ་ནས་གཞན་སྤྱི་མི་རྣམས་པ་ཡིན་ཀྱང་། ཁྱོད་དཔོན་གཡོག་ལོས་རྒྱད། [216b] ད་ལྟ་ཐོལ་རྩེས་

བརྟེན་དུ་འོང་གསུངས། དེད་མ་བྱ་གཉིས་ཕར་ངོས་རྒྱ་འགོ་ཞིག་འདུག་པ་དེ་ཀའི་ཐད་དུ་སྤོང་བྱ་བ་བྱས་ཏེ། ཆོ་ཆོས་དང་།

ཐུབ་བཟང་གཉིས་ཀྱིས་བྱར་ཐུབ་ཀྱིན་འདུག། དེད་མ་བྱ་གཉིས་ཕར་མེ་ཏོག་མང་པོ་སྐྱེས་ཡོད་པར་སོང་ནས་བསྐྱེད་ཡོད་སྐབས།

ཡུལ་དེ་ཀའི་གཞི་བདག་ནག་ཕྱོགས་པ་ཞིག་གི་ང་རང་གི་སྤོང་དུ་སེར་བཤབ་བྱུང་བས། ང་རང་གིས་སྐྱགས་པ་དྲི་རྒྱུ་བདུན་འཛོམས་

ཀྱི་སྐྱར་གསལ་ནས་ཡི་དམ་ལྷའི་ང་རྒྱལ་གྱི་གཞི་བདག་དབང་དུ་བཅིང་ཆོ་བར་ཆད་ངང་གིས་ཞི་བར་བྱུང་ངོ་། དེའི་སྐབས་སྐྱབས་རྩེ་

དེའི་ཀྱི་གསུང་ཐུན་གྲོལ་ནས་དེད་རྣམས་འབོད་མི་ཐོན་བྱུང་བས། དེ་དང་མཉམ་དུ་སྐྱེས་མཁུན་དུ་སོང་ནས་མཇལ་

འཕྲད་མཛད་སྐབས། བདག་གིས་ཉམས་སྤང་གི་སྒོར་ལས་ཁོང་གི་སྐྱེད་ཏོན་གྱི་ལུང་བསྐྱར་ཞིག་ཡོད་པ་ཐུག་དུ་ཐུག་པས།

དེ་ཀའི་ནང་དུ་རྗེ་དེའི་ཀྱིས་གྲོགས་དང་ཡུལ་རྒྱུན་གྱི་དབང་གིས་སྐྱགས་འདུན་ལོག་ནས་འདུལ་ [217a] བ་འཛིན་པའི་ཆས་སྤྱོད་

ལྷགས་སྐྱེས་ཡོད་པའི་རྒྱུན་གྱིས་མཁྱའི་ལུང་བསྐྱར་དན་ལོག་དུ་རྒྱུ་བཤམ་ཡོད་ཀྱང་མི་དགོངས་པའི་རྒྱལ་མཛད་ཅིང་བཏང་སྐོམས་སྤྱོད་

བཞག་ནས། གཞན་ལུགས་གཉིས་ཀྱི་གསུང་མཛད་ཞིབ་རྒྱས་སུ་མཛད། དེ་ནས་ཡང་བདག་གི་འདི་སྐད་ལྟས།
 སྤྱལ་སྤྱུ་ཡིད་བཞིན་ནོར་བུ་བྱེད་ཀྱིས་ང་རང་ལ་ཐུགས་གཏད་སྐབས་འཇུག་བྱུང་པར་གདམས་བྱིད་ཟབ་མོ་རེ་དང་།
 འདི་ཕྱི་བར་དོ་ཀུན་རྒྱུ་འདུ་འབྲལ་མེད་པར་ཐུགས་རྩིས་བཟུང་རོགས་བཀའ་བྲིན་མ་རྒྱུང་ལགས། བདག་གིས་ནི་རྒྱུང་ནས་བཟུང་
 ལྷོད་ལ་ཐུག་གི་བར་དུ་གྲུ་ཅུ་ཡབ་ཡུམ་གྱི་ཐུགས་བཞེད་རུང་ཟད་ཅམ་ཡིན་ཡང་ཨི་འགྲུབ་སྒྲུམ་པའི་འདུན་པ་ཡོད་ཀྱང་།
 ངའི་འདོད་རྒྱུ་འོ་གྲོགས་སྒྲོན་ལམ་ལྡན་པ་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་ང་མི་འདོད། བདག་གིས་མི་འདོད་པའི་གྲོགས་རིགས་རུས་ངན་
 པ་གསང་སྤྲུགས་ལ་ལས་འབྲོ་རྒྱུང་བ་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་ང་འདོད་ནས། དཀའ་མོའི་ཚོགས་དགོན་མོའི་རྒྱུ་རྩལ་སོགས་ཐབས་དམས་
 ང་རང་འགྲུགས་ཐབས་བྱེད་འདུག། [217b] དེ་ལྟ་བུའི་བྱ་བ་རྒྱུབ་འགལ་ལ་སོང་ནས་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་ཡང་ཇི་བཞིན་པར་
 འོང་སྐབས་མི་ལྡན་པ་དེས་ལན་པ་འདྲ་ལགས། ད་ནི་ང་རང་གི་བསམ་པ་ལ་ངེས་མེད་ཞིག་རྒྱ་བྱང་སོང་ན་འགྲོ་དོན་མ་བྱུང་ཡང་།
 ཕྱི་ནང་ཀུན་ལ་ཁོང་སྤོམ་དགོས་པ་འདྲ་སྒྲུམ་ནས་ཡིད་འདུན་དེ་ཀར་ཐག་བཅད་ཡོད་པས། བྱོད་ཀྱིས་བྱ་གཏད་སྐབས་འཇུག་
 བཀའ་བྲིན་མི་རྒྱུང་བར་སྤྱོད་མ་བྱེད་ལྟས་པས། ཡིད་བཞིན་ནོར་བུའི་ཞལ་ནས་བྱོད་དེ་ལྟར་བྱ་བསམ་མ་མཛད་དང་
 འགྲོ་དོན་རིམ་གྱིས་འབྱུང་ལོས་འོང་། བདག་གིས་ཀྱང་བྱོད་རང་གིས་མཛད་ཕྱིན་རྒྱས་པའི་ཕྱིར་དུ་རྩ་གསུམ་
 སྤྱང་མར་ཕྱིན་བཅོམ་བྱེད་པ་དང་། དུས་ཆེན་གཉིས་ལ་ཚོགས་མཆོད་ཀྱི་སྐབས་སུ་འང་བདག་གིས་སེམས་ལོས་གཏད།
 བྱོད་ནས་བདག་ལ་བྱ་གཏད་རེ་མཛད་དགོས་སྲུང་ལྟས་པ་ལྟར་རང་གཏེར་ཁ་བྱང་དུ་མའི་ནང་དུ་བྱོད་དོ་རྗེའི་ལུང་གིས་
 གསལ་པོར་ཡོད་ཀྱང་། གཅིག་ཐད་ནས་རྒྱལ་སྤྲུལ་སངས་བྱིས་མའུ་ན་དུ་ཡོད་པ་དང་། གཉིས་ [218a]
 ཐད་ནས་བྱོད་ཀུན་སྤྱོད་ཤིན་རྒྱུ་བཅུན་པའི་གང་དུན་ལྟ་ཡོད་མ་བྱུང་བ་དང་། བྱོད་པར་ང་རང་ཉི་འཁོར་གཟུངས་མ་རྣམས་སྤོང་
 ཐབས་ཤིན་རྒྱུ་དཀའ་ཞིང་སེམས་སྤྲུལ་ཆེ་བས་བྱ་བ་ཐམས་ཅད་བཏང་སྟོམས་ལུང་མ་བསྟན་དུ་ལུས་སོང་བ་ཡིན་གསུངས།
 ཡང་བདག་གིས་ལགས་ང་རང་མི་བཟང་སྒྲུམ་ནས་ང་རྒྱལ་གྱིས་རྩལ་བཅུན་པ་མིན། གསང་སྤྲུགས་ཀྱི་དམ་
 ཆོག་འདི་དགོས་པ་དང་མ་འབྲེལ་ན་ཤིན་རྒྱུ་བསྤུང་དཀའ་བའི་རྒྱུན་གྱིས་སྤོ་གསུམ་གྱི་བྱ་བ་སྟོམ་པ་ཡིན་ལགས། ད་ལན་ཡང་
 ལུགས་གཉིས་གང་ཐད་ནས་རང་དོན་ཡིད་བྱེད་ཀྱི་སྒྲོ་མེད་པར། མ་དང་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་ལུང་བསྟན་གྱིས་བསྐྱུལ་ནས་མ་འོང་
 རང་དབང་མ་བྱུང་བ་དང་། མི་ལུགས་ནས་ཆོ་རོག་གྲོགས་ཀྱིས་སྤོ་འཇུག་ནས་དགོས་མེད་བྱས་པ་བྱེད་ཀྱི་ཐུགས་ལ་མངའ་བཞིན་
 དེ་ལ་གཞི་བྱས་ཏེ། སྒོ་སྤྱལ་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་ཀྱང་ད་ལན་འགྲོ་དགོས་གསུང་ནས་འོང་བ་ཡིན་ལགས། ད་ནི་ཕྱ་ཅག་གཉིས་ད་མིན་

ཨི་མཇལ་ཆ་མི་ཚོད་པ་འདྲ་^[218b] ན། སྤྱལ་སྤྱལ་ཡིད་བཞིན་ནོར་བུ་བྱིས་བདག་ལ་ཚིག་ཉུང་ལ་དོན་འདུས་པ་ཡང་ཟབ་མན་
 དག་ཉུང་བསྐྱས་ཤིག་གསུངས་དང་། ང་རང་གི་ཅི་ཡང་མི་ཤེས་ཀྱང་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་ཙམ་དུ་བདག་གི་སེམས་ལ་སྤྲས་པའི་མན་དག་
 བྱུང་པར་བཞིག་ཡོད་པའི་དེ་བྱིད་ལ་འབྲལ་ཞུས་ཆོ། རྗེ་དེ་ཉིད་ཀྱིས་ཞལ་ནས་ཁྱེད་ཀྱི་ཉེས་དུང་མཇལ་འཕྲད་ལོས་འོང་།
 བྱིད་མགར་རྒྱལ་སྤྱིའི་མདུན་ལ་མི་བཞུགས་པར་ས་ཐག་རིང་པོ་གང་དུ་བྱོན། མིན་ཀྱང་སྤྲས་མོ་ནར་རྒྱུང་བས་སྤྱར་འཛོག་
 ཐབས་གཤམ་ཡོད། གཤམ་ཏེ་རྒྱལ་སྤྲས་སངས་བྱུང་ཐོབ་ཀྱི་སྤྱོད་པ་ལྟ་བུ་ཡིན་པས་བྱ་བ་གང་ཐད་ནས་བྱིད་མི་སྤྱིད་ན་གནས་གང་བདེ་
 ཞིག་ཏུ་སྤྱོད་མཚམས་ལ་བཞུགས་ན། གསོལ་བཅའ་དང་ན་བཟའ་རེའི་མཐུན་རྒྱུན་བདག་གིས་ཅི་འགྲུབ་བྱེད་གསུངས།
 དེ་ནས་རྗེའི་ཐུགས་བཞེས་ལྟར་མ་རྒྱུད་གསང་བ་སྤིང་པའི་ཡང་བཅུད་དེ་རྗེ་རྒྱུང་གི་མན་དག་སྤྲས་གསང་མེད་པར་གཅེས་ནོར་དུ་
 ཟུལ། ^[219a] བྱུང་པར་མཁའ་གསང་སྤྱོད་མེད་བདེ་བ་ཆེན་པོའི་དགྱིལ་འཁོར་ལ་བརྟེན་ནས་རྣལ་འབྱོར་དོན་དབང་བཞི་པ་དང་།
 ལྷན་སྤྱོད་ཆོས་སྤྱོད་ཆེན་པོའི་དོ་སྤྱོད་དང་བཅས་པ་སྤྱོད་སྤྱོལ་དགོངས་པའི་བཀའ་གནད་དམར་བྲིད་གཤམ་པ་མངོན་དུ་ཐུང་བ་སོགས་ང་
 རང་གི་སེམས་ལ་འཆང་བའི་མན་དག་ཐམས་ཅད་སྤྲས་གསང་མེད་པར་གསང་གོགས་ཡིད་བཞིན་ནོར་བུ་ལ་གཅེས་ནོར་དུ་གདམ་མོ།

[Sera Khando recounts dream] དེ་ནས་ཡན་ཚུན་ཐུགས་མཐུན་རྗེས་བཅེ་ལྟོད་མེད་མཇེད་ནས་ངེད་རྣམས་ཕྱིར་ལོག་གོ།

⁶⁴⁹ “Taming disciples” (*gdul bya*) is in this case a euphemism for saying that Drimé Özer’s household is telling him he needs to go out and make some money by performing rituals/giving teachings/collecting alms to keep the household running.

⁶⁵⁰ Drimé Özer *Biography* 161b.6-165b.3:

དེ་ནས་ཉིན་གཅིག་རྗེ་བསྐྱེད་ལམ་ལ་བྱོན་ནས་ ^[162a] གཟིགས་ཆེ་རྗེའི་བཞུགས་གནས་ཀྱི་མདུན་ངེས་སུ་བྱུར་ཞིག་གི་ནང་ན་
 རིགས་མ་སྤྱོད་བའི་སྤྲགས་པ་ལྷ་ནག་གོས་ཐོར་བྱོན་པ་ཞིག་གིས་འབྲིང་སྤབས་ཀྱི་ལག་གཉིས་མེ་འོང་དང་མདའ་དར་འཛིན་པ་ཞིག་འ
 དུག་པས། རྗེའི་ཐུགས་ལ་ཆེ་རིང་མས་ཆོ་འཕུལ་འདྲ། མཁའ་འགྲོ་སྤྲགས་པའི་ཆ་བྱུང་ཅན་ཞིག་གི་ཅི་ལ་ཡོད་དགོངས།
 ད་ལྟ་ཐུན་གྲོལ་རྗེས་བདེ་བའི་དེ་རྗེ་ཡིན་འདུག་པས་ངོ་མཚར་ཆེ་འདུག་དགོངས། དེ་ནས་དབུས་མོ་བདེ་བའི་དེ་རྗེའི་དུང་དུ་
 འོང་ནས་ང་རང་ལ་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་ལུང་བསྟན་བྱུང་ནས་བྱིད་ཀྱི་སྤྱོད་པ་དུང་པོར་བཡིན་པས། ད་དུང་བསྟན་པ་དང་སེམས་ཅན་
 བྱིད་དུ་སྤྱོད་ཆོ་ཞབས་པད་བརྟན་དགོས་པས་གསོལ་བ་ཡང་མང་བཏབ་པས། རྗེའི་ཞལ་ནས་ང་རང་འཆི་བ་ལ་རང་དབང་
 ཐོབ་པའི་གང་ཟག་མིན་པས་ནམ་འཆི་ངེས་པ་མེད་གསུངས། ཡང་བདེ་བའི་དེ་རྗེས་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་ལུང་བསྟན་རྗེའི་ཐུག་ཏུ་ཟུལ་
 ནས་ལགས་ང་རང་གིས་རྒྱན་དང་གཡོ་གཏམས་མིན་པའི་བདེན་རྟགས་འདི་རེད་ཞུས་པས། རྗེས་གཟིགས་ནས་དགོ་སྤྱོད་
^[162b] འདུལ་བ་འཛིན་པའི་ཆས་སུ་ཞུགས་མ་ཉན་པ་འདྲ་དགོངས་ནས་ཞལ་རྒྱུང་ཟད་མཚུམ་ཞིག་མཇེད། དེ་མིན་ཅི་ཡང་

མ་གསུངས། ཡང་བདེ་བའི་དོན་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་ལུང་བསྟན་གྱི་དོན་བྱིན་གྱི་ཐུགས་སུ་མཁུན་བཞིན་རང་གི་ཁྱེ་མི་དགོས་ཀྱང་།
 བདག་རང་ནི་གཞན་དབང་དུ་སོང་བ་དང་གཅིག། རྗེའི་གཟུངས་མ་སོགས་གྱི་ཐུགས་བབ་ཡོད་མེད་དང་། རང་རང་ཁ་ཉམས་
 ཞན་པ་ས་མཐའི་མི་ཡིན་པ་སོགས་ལ་མང་བཏང་ནས་བྱིན་གྱི་སྒྱུ་རྩར་བཅར་ཐབས་མ་ལྟན་པ་ཡིན་མ་གཏོག། ཡོ་ལོ་བཙོ་ལྷའི་
 དུས་ནས་ལུལ་བྱིས་ཏེ་འབྲེལ་ཐམས་ཅད་བཙན་ཐབས་སུ་སྤངས་ནས་བྱིན་གཅིག་ཕྱར་གསོལ་བ་བཏབ་སྟེ་དམ་པའི་ལྷ་ཆོས་ཞིག་ཨི་
 འགྲུབ་སྟུམ་ཡང་། ལུས་ངན་བདག་ལས་ངན་པའི་དབང་གིས་འཁོར་ཆེན་སྤང་ནས་འཁོར་རྒྱུ་ལ་ཉིན་མཚན་མེད་དུ་གཡོང་
 འདུག་པས། ད་ནི་འདི་ཕྱི་པར་དོ་གསུམ་ལ་འབྲེལ་བ་མེད་པའི་ཐུགས་གཏང་སྒྲུབས་འདུག་དང་། གདམས་བྱིན་རེ་གནང་
 བའི་བཀའ་རྒྱུ་མ་རྒྱུ་ཞུ་བ་དང་། གཞན་ [163a] ཡང་ཆོས་དང་སེམས་ཅན་གྱི་བསྟོན་སྒྲིབ་མང་པོར་བྱས།
 ཡང་རྗེའི་ཞལ་ནས་བྱིན་ཟབ་གཏོར་ལ་དབང་བ་ཞིག་ཡིན་པས། རས་གདམས་བྱིན་བསྟན་སྟེ་གི། བྱིན་གྱི་ཐོག་མར་གྱི་སྒྲ་
 མ་སུ་བཞེན། གདམས་ངག་ཅི་བསྟུབ། གྲོགས་སྟོབ་པའི་སྟོབ་དཔོན་ཅི་འདྲ་ཡོད། གཏོར་གྱི་ཁ་བྱང་ལྷག་ཏུ་ནམ་ལེན།
 གཏོར་གྲོགས་དང་ཆོས་བདག་གང་ལྟར་ཡོད་ལ་སོགས་པར་སྟེ་གསང་མེད་པར་སྟོན་གསུང་། བདེ་བའི་དོན་མཁའ་རང་རྒྱུ་ནས་
 ཆོས་ལ་མོས་ཀྱང་པ་མའི་བཀའ་མ་གནང་ནས་གནས་ལམ་བསྟན། དེ་ནས་ལོ་ངོ་བཅུ་གཉིས་ལོན་དུས་མི་ལམ་གྲུབ་ཆེན་ས་ར་ཏ་
 པ་ཡིན་སྟེ་པའི་ནལ་འབྱོར་པ་ཞིག་གིས་ལུས་མེད་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་ཆོས་སྟོར་རེད་ཟེར་ནས་རྩ་རྒྱུང་གི་འབྲེལ་འཁོར་ལ་བསྟུབ་པ་དང་།
 གཞན་ཡང་འོག་སྟོ་བདེ་བ་ཆེན་པོའི་མན་ངག་ཐམས་ཅད་དེ་ལས་བརྒྱུད། ལོ་བཅུ་གསུམ་རས་མཁའ་འགྲོས་ལུང་བྱང་ལོང་ནས་
 གྲོགས་གཏོར་གནས་ཆོས་བདག་ཐམས་ཅད་འདི་ཕྱོགས་སུ་ཡོད་པ་ལུང་དུ་བསྟན་ཀྱང་མི་གོ་མ་ [163b] ཤེས་པའི་རྒྱུན་གྱིས་རེ་
 ཞིག་བཏང་སྟོམ་ལ་ལུས་སྒྲུབས་ཆེ་རིང་མའི་གྲོགས་བྱས་ཏེ་བརྗོད་ཐོཅ་མ་བྱིས། བཅུ་དྲུག་ལོན་པ་གནས་ལ་འགྲོ་དགོས་ཀྱང་།
 བཙོ་ལྷའི་ལོར་བྱིན་ལ་གསོལ་བ་བཏབ་ནས་སྟོན་ཕྱོགས་སུ་འོང་། བཅུ་དྲུག་ལོར་མགར་ར་གཏོར་ཆེན་གྱི་ལུང་གིས་ཟིན་ཀྱང་རྟོན་
 འབྲེལ་གཞན་དབང་ལ་སོང་། དེ་ནས་ལོ་ངོ་བཙོ་བཙོ་བརྒྱད་དུས་བྱིན་མཁའ་འགའ་ནང་དུ་དཔོན་པོ་ཤི་པར་བྱོན་སྟུབས། སྟོང་
 དཔོན་བཟང་མོ་དང་། རེད་གཉིས་གྱིས་རྗོ་རྒྱའི་རབ་ཁ་ནས་གསོལ་ཇུངས་ཤིང་དེ་ཀར་བཞུགས་པར་གསོལ་བ་བཏབ་
 ཀྱང་། ཟུ་པ་དབང་བཙན་པས་བཞུགས་སུ་མ་སོགས། དེའི་སྟུབས་བྱིན་གྱིས་དངོས་ཇུས་གནང་བ་དང་། ཞལ་
 གདམས་གསོལ་འདེབས་སོགས་མཛད་པའི་རྒྱུན་གྱིས། མ་རྒྱུན་ནས་ཟབ་གཏོར་སྟོར་གསུམ་གྱི་བརྟུང་དང་།
 མཚོ་རྒྱལ་སྟུབ་པའི་ཆོས་སྟོར་བཙས་རྟེན། ལོ་བཅུ་དགྲུའི་དུས་མི་ལམ་འབྲེལ་སྤང་ཞིག་ལ་རྒྱུན་ནས་གཉིད་ལས་སད་ཆོ།

[164a] ཡི་གེ་བྲི་འདོན་ལ་འབད་ཚུ་ལ་མ་དགོས་པར་ཤེས་པ་སོགས་བྱུང་། དེ་མིན་འདྲ་གསལ་ཆོགས་པ་ཆེན་པོ་འབྲས་བུའི་
 ཆོས་མཆོག་ལྷུལ་དུ་ཕྱིན་པ་ནི་གཅིག་གི་རྒྱུར་ནས་ལྷུས་མ་ལོན་ལགས། རྣམ་པའི་རྣམ་པ་ལམ་བྱེད་ཙམ་བསྟན་པ་མཐོང་ཡང་།
 ང་རང་སྒོ་དམན་པའི་དབང་གིས་ངལ་བལ་བསམ་ནས་ལྷུ་མ་བྱུང་ལྷུས་ཆོ། ཡང་ཆེའི་ཞལ་ནས་དེ་ན་བྱིད་ཀྱི་སྒྲུང་བལ་མ་བྱེད་སྒོར་
 མ་ཆུད་ན་རང་ལུགས་ཀྱི་དགོངས་ཉམས་ཅི་འདྲ་ཡིན་གསུང་། བདེ་བའི་དོན་ཆེས་ལགས་ང་རང་མོ་ལོ་བཅུ་གསུམ་ནས་བརྒྱུད་ད་
 བར་ལ་ཉམས་ལེན་འདི་རེད་ཟེར་རྒྱ་ཚུང་ཟད་ཙམ་ཡང་མ་ཆེད། སྤྱིའི་ཡུལ་ལ་སྒྲུང་བས་པར་མ་བཅད་གསལ་ལྷགས་ངོ།
 རང་སྒོ་ཡིས་བཅོ་གསུམ་མ་གཞུག་པའི་སྒོར་སང་ངོ། བར་རྟོག་ཆོགས་ཀྱི་རྒྱུན་དབང་གིས་བསྒྲུར་དུ་མི་བཏུབ་པའི་ཟང་ལ་ལེ་བའི་
 ཤེས་པ་འདི་ལ་སེམས་ཟེར་བཞི་ཡིན། འདི་འཁོར་འདས་གཉིས་ཀྱི་གྲུབ་གཞིར་སོང་བས་མེད་པ་ཡང་མ་ཡིན། [164b]
 སྤྱི་བསམ་བཅོད་པ་དང་བྲལ་ཞིང་བྱུང་བཅུ་ནས་མཁའ་ལྷ་བྱུར་གནས་པས་ཡོད་པ་ཡང་མ་ཡིན། ཡོད་མེད་གང་གི་ཚུགས་སུ་མ་
 ལྷུང་བའི་ཡེ་གོལ་སྒོ་འདས་ཆེན་པོ་འདི་ཀ་རིག་པའི་ངོ་བོ་རེད་སྟེ་མ་གྱི་ལྷུས། ཆེའི་ཞལ་ནས་གསལ་ལྷོང་གཉིས་མེད་པའི་ཡེ་ཤེས་དེ་
 ལ་རིག་པ་ཟེར་བ་ཡིན་པས་ངོ་བོ་དེ་ཀའི་ངང་གདངས་དང་མ་བྲལ་བར་ཉམས་སུ་བྱུངས་ན་ཆོག་གསུང་ནས་ཕན་ཚུན་གཉིས་ཀྱིས་
 ཆོགས་པ་ཆེན་པོའི་ཆོས་ཀྱི་བསྟོས་སྒྲིང་མང་དུ་མཛད། བྱུང་པར་བདེ་བའི་དོན་ཆེས་སྟན་རྒྱུད་ཀྱི་ཆོས་སྒྲོར་དོན་ཆེ་འབྱུང་གི་མན་
 ངག་དང་། གཏེར་གྱི་ཁ་བྱང་གཏེར་སྟོན་གྱི་འབྱུང་བྱང་ལ་སོགས་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཆེ་ལ་སྤྱོད་གསལ་མེད་པར་ལྷུས་པས།
 ཆེའི་ཞལ་ནས་བྱིད་ང་རང་གི་ཁ་བྱང་ཡང་བྱུང་ཐམས་ཅད་ད་སྒར་ནས་ཡོད་པར་སྒྲུང་ནའང་། རྟེན་འབྲེལ་གྱི་སྤྱོད་པས་བདེ་མོ་
 མ་བྱུང་ཡང་། མགར་ར་སྤུལ་སྤྱིའི་ཞལ་གསུང་ལེགས་པོ་གནང་ཡོད་པས་དེ་ལྷགས་ཀྱི་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་འཕྲོ་ཅན་དགོས།
 བྱིད་ཀྱི་ཁ་བྱང་ནང་ན་ང་རང་ལོ། [165a] ཡོད་གསུངས། བདེ་བའི་དོན་ཆེས་ཉ་མ་གོ་ལགས་ལྷུས་ནས་ཆེ་དེ་ཉིད་ཐབས་ལྟོགས་ཀྱི་
 གཙོ་བོར་བསྟན་གྱུར་། གཞན་གཟུངས་མ་སོགས་ཀྱི་ཐུགས་བབ་མེད་བསམ་ནས་བཏང་སྟོམས་སུ་བཞག དེ་ནས་ཆེའི་ཞལ་
 རས་སང་མོད་ང་རང་གི་བྱུང་བཅུ་ཆེན་སྤུལ་རིན་པོ་ཆེའི་སྤྱོད་གསུང་ཀྱི་ཐོག་ཡིན་པས་བྱིད་ཀྱི་ཐུགས་གཏད་དེར་དགོས། ང་རང་འཆི་བ་
 ལ་ཡང་ཡོད་པ་མིན་ཏེ། བྱིད་པར་ང་གཉིས་སྒྲོ་བཏུ་སོང་བའི་ཐབས་ཅི་ཡོད་ཀྱི་བྱིད་ཀྱི་བཀའ་ཅི་བཅག ང་རང་གི་འདི་
 སྒྲུང་ལ་སེམས་ལོས་གཏད་དང་། སྒྲ་བྱང་ནས་གདུལ་བྱུར་འགོ་དགོས་སོགས་ཟེར་འདུག་པས། དེ་ལྟར་བྱིད་དགོས་ཆོ་
 འདི་སྒྲུང་ལ་འདུག་ཟེར་རྒྱ་མེད་གསུངས། ཡང་བདེ་བའི་དོན་ཆེས་བྱིད་ཀྱིས་འདི་ལྟར་གསུངས་མི་ཉན། སྒྲ་བྱང་དང་གོས་
 འོང་ལོས་འགོ། ད་དུང་བསྟན་པ་དང་སེམས་ཅན་གྱི་དོན་ལ་བཞུགས་པར་གསོལ་བ་བཏབ། ཆེས་ཀྱང་དེ་ནི་བཞུགས་

པར་ཞལ་གྱིས་ [165b] བཞེས་ནས། སང་པོད་སོགས་སྒྲུབས་ནས་ལྷན་དུས་ཞིག་ལ་བྱེད་ཀྱི་གསུངས་ཆོས་ཐམས་ཅད་ངའི་སང་
བྱེད་ཤོག་གསུངས་ཏེ། ཡན་ཚུན་གཉིས་ཀ་ནས་གཅིག་གྲོགས་གཅིག་གིས་བྱས་ཤིང་ཐབས་ཤེས་འདྲ་འབྲལ་མེད་པའི་སྒྲོན་ལམ་
མཛད་ནས་ཐུགས་ཡིད་གཅིག་ངའི་ལྷ་བྱའི་དད་འདུན་གྱི་གསོམས་སུ་གྱུར་ཏོ།

⁶⁵¹ *Autobiography* 235a.5-236a.4:

དེ་ནས་ངེད་དཔོན་གཡོག་འབྲོང་སྒྲོར་ལ་སོང་ནས་རིམ་གྱིས་ཡིད་བཞིན་ནོར་བུའི་སྒྲུ་མདུན་ལ་སོང་ནས་མཇལ་འཕྲད་མཛད་ཅིང་ཞག་
ཆ་ཤས་སུ་བཞུགས་ཏེ། སྒྲུ་ལ་སྒྲུ་ན་མས་ཀྱི་དབང་ལུང་གསན་རེས་མཛད། བྱད་པར་ང་རང་ཆེ་དེ་ཉིད་ཀྱིས་སྒྲིན་གྲོལ་
ལ་བཀོད་ནས་མིང་གི་ཅོད་པན་སྒྲུལ། དེ་ནས་ [235b] རང་གཏིར་ཆོས་ཉིད་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་གསང་མཛོད་ཀྱི་ཁ་བྱང་རྗེའི་
བཀའ་མ་བཟོད་ནས་ཐུག་ཏུ་ཐུལ་བས་ངོ་མཆར་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་དུ་མའི་གསོམས་སུ་མཛད། ང་རང་ལ་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་བརྟེན་འབྲེལ་དོན་
འབྱེད་དཀའ་བ་ཞིག་ཡོད་པ་དེ་ཀའི་དོན་རྗེ་དེ་ཉིད་ཀྱིས་དགོངས་ཏེ། དོག་ལན་མཛད་པ་གཏིར་གཞུང་དུ་གསལ།
དེ་སྐབས་བདག་གིས་སྒྲོ་སྒྲུལ་སང་གིས་ད་ལོ་ངེད་མ་བྱ་བྱེད་ཀྱིས་བསྐྱབས་ན་དེས་དགའ། དེ་མིན་སྒྲུལ་ཕན་པར་དཀའ་
འདུག་གསུངས་པས་དེ་ལྟགས་ཐུགས་ནས་མ་འདོར་བར་ཞུ་ཞུ་ཆོ། རྗེ་དེ་ཉིད་ནས་ཀྱང་བྱིས་པ་ལ་ཡ་བསྐྱང་དང་།
ང་རང་ལ་ཆོ་དབང་ཆོ་འགྲུགས་སོགས་མཛད་ཅིང་གཅིག་ལ་གཅིག་བརྟེན་ནས་དེའི་རེའི་ཡན་གྱི་སྒྲུ་ཆོའི་བར་ཆད་ཞི་བར་བྱུང་ངོ།
དེ་ནས་རྗེ་དེ་ཉིད་ཀྱིས་དངོས་རྒྱས་རིན་ཐང་ཆེ་བ་དང་། བཀྲ་ཤིས་པའི་རྒྱས་ཀྱི་རིམ་བཀྲ་བའི་བཞུགས་གདན་ལྷ་ལོག་བཟང་པོས་
སྒྲིས་བཅས་རྒྱལ་སྤྱས་སང་ལ་ཐུལ་བས། ཁོང་ཐུགས་ཤིན་ཏུ་དབྱིས་པར་མཛད་ཅིང་ཡན་ཚུན་ཐུགས་མཐུན་གཞུང་བཟང་གི་
[236a] གསོམས་སུ་སྒྲིན་པ་དང་། རང་ཡང་རྩ་བའི་གཞུངས་མ་ལྷ་བྱར་ཐུགས་བརྩེ་བ་ཆེན་པོས་རྒྱས་སུ་བཟུང་ཞིང་།
བྱད་པར་ལུལ་དུས་ཀྱི་རྟེན་གྱིས་ཐུགས་སུ་ན་མི་མངའ་ཞིང་སྒྲུ་ཆོ་ཞབས་པད་བརྟེན་ཐབས་སོགས་ཞལ་གྱིས་བཞེས། རང་ནས་
ཀྱང་ཐབས་གང་དུག་གི་ངེས་མེད་ཀྱི་གནས་སུ་མི་འགྲོ་ཞུས་ཏེ། ཐུགས་ཡིད་གཅིག་འདྲེས་ལྷ་བྱའི་སྒྲོན་ལམ་ཐབས་ཤེས་འདྲ་འབྲལ་
མེད་པའི་ཐུགས་བསྐྱེད་སྒྲོན་ལམ་མཛད་ནས། རིང་ཅག་རང་གནས་ལ་བཞུད་དོ།

⁶⁵² This is one instance in which Sera Khandro as biographer of Drimé Özer forgets to write about herself in the third person as she generally does in Drimé's narrative. Instead, she refers to herself in the first person. Slippages like this are clues supporting her claim that she is the author of Drimé Özer's *Biography*. In her *Autobiography*, she always refers to herself in the first person and there are no slippages into the third person.

⁶⁵³ Drimé Özer *Biography* 172b.2-175a.5:

དེ་ནས་ཞག་ཆ་ཤས་ནས། རྒྱལ་སྤྱས་དཔོན་གཡོག་ཐམས་ཅད་བྱོན། རྗེས་ཀྱང་ལྷ་དང་རྒྱ་མའི་ལུང་བསྐྱན་འབྱུང་ཚུལ་དེ་

ལྟར་ཡིན་ཀྱང་། བྱོད་ཀྱི་ཐུགས་བབ་མེད་ཆོ་ལྟར་ལྟས་པ་ལྟར་ཡིན་གསུངས། རྒྱལ་སྤྱུལ་གྱི་ཞལ་ནས་མོ་རང་ལ་ད་ལོ་མོ་
 ཅིས་ཤིན་ཏུ་འབྱུག་འདུག་པས། བྱོད་གཉིས་གཅིག་གྲོགས་གཅིག་གི་བྱས་ནས་ཕན་ཐོག་འབྱུང་ན་བཟང་གི། ང་རང་
 སྤར་བཤད་ཀྱི་ཆོག་ཐོག་ཡིན་པས། མོ་རང་གི་བདག་པོ་བྱོད་ཡིན་འདུག་ཀྱང་། རྒྱ་བྱང་རྣམས་ཀྱི་ཐུགས་བབ་ཡོད་པ་གལ་ཆེ་
 གསུང་། རྗེའི་ཞལ་ནས་ཁོང་རྣམས་ཐུགས་འདུན་བཞིན་ཡབ་ཡུམ་ཐམས་ཅད་ལྟན་དུ་བཞུགས་ [173a] ལ། རང་ནས་
 ཀྱང་ཕན་ཚུན་ཀྱང་ལ་ལུགས་གཉིས་གང་ཐད་ནས་ཚུལ་མཐུན་གཞུང་བཟང་གི་བྱ་བས་བསྐྱུང་ཞིང་། བྱོད་པར་རིག་མའི་དམ་
 ཆོག་ལ་བསམ་ནས་ངེད་ཅག་རྣམས་ནང་མཐུན་ཡིན་མ་གཏོག། མཁའ་འགྲོ་ངའི་རྩ་བ་བཞུགས་བཞག་རུང་ཆོག་ངན་མེད་ངས་
 ཀྱང་། ད་ང་རང་ཁ་ལོ་ནམ་ཆོ་མཐོ་འགྲོ་བ་ཡིན་པས། ཐབས་ཅི་ཡོད་ཀྱི་བྱ་བ་མི་མང་སྟུམ་གི་གསུངས། དེ་ནས་
 རྗེའི་ཞལ་ནས་མཁའ་འགྲོ་བདེ་ཆེན་བདེ་བའི་དོན་རྗེ་ལ་བྱོད་ཀྱི་གསུང་ཆོས་རྣམས་ངའི་སར་བྱིར་ཤོག་གསུངས། བདེ་བའི་དོ་
 རྗེའི་བཀའ་བཞིན་དཔེ་ཆ་རྣམས་བྱིར་ནས། ཁ་བྱང་སྒོར་གསང་བྱ་བྱས་ནས་མ་བྱིར་བས། རྗེའི་ཞལ་ནས་བྱོད་ལོ་བཅུ་
 གསུམ་ཡིན་དུས་ཀྱི་ཁ་བྱང་ཐོག་མ་དེ་གར་ཡོད་ན་སྤྱོད་གསང་མེད་པར་འདྲིར་བྱིར་ཤོག་གསུངས། བདེ་བའི་དོན་རྗེས་ཁ་བྱང་
 མེད་ལྟས་ནས་རྩན་དུ་འགྲོ། སྤྱོད་ལམ་ལ་སྤུལ་ན་རྗེ་དེ་ཉིད་ཁ་བྱང་དུ་གསལ་ལ་ཤོར་ཟིན་འདུག་པས། དམན་པ་བདག་
 ལྟ་བུའི་ཐབས་གྲོགས་རེད་ [173b] ལྟས་ན་ཅི་དགོངས་སྟུམ་པ་དང་། བྱོད་པར་མགར་ར་སྤུལ་སྤྱི་ནིང་རང་གི་གཏིར་ཆོས་
 འབྲི་ཐབས་བྱོད་པར་བཀའ་གནང་མ་ཐོབ་པས། ད་ལྟ་གཟིགས་སོང་ན་བཀའ་བཏོན་སྤྱག་འབེབས་ཨི་གནང་སྟུམ་ནས་ཅི་ཡང་
 མ་ལྟས་པར་འདུག་ཀྱང་། རྗེས་ཡང་བཀའ་གསུངས་ཐེབ་པས། མོ་རང་གིས་ཁ་བྱང་ཐམས་ཅད་རྗེའི་སྤྱག་ཏུ་སྤུལ་བས།
 གཏིར་སྟོན་ངེས་པ་རེད་ཁ་བྱང་དོ་མཚར་ཅན་གསུངས། མགར་སྤུལ་གྱི་ཞལ་ནས་ཁྱུ་ཅག་རྣམས་ལ་འང་ང་རང་དང་
 མཚམས་པའི་ཁ་བྱང་དང་ཡང་བྱང་སོགས་ཡོད་འདུག་པས་དོ་མཚར་རྒྱ་ཅད་ཨི་ཡོད་གསུངས། རྗེའི་ཞལ་ནས་ཁྱུ་ཅག་རང་ས་
 རང་ཡུལ་ལ་བསྐྱད་ནས་ཐབས་གྲོགས་ཆོས་བདག་ཐམས་ཅད་རྒྱ་རིམ་རེ་མ་གཏོགས་རང་ས་ནས་རྟེ། མཁའ་འགྲོའི་མ་ཡུལ་
 དཔུས་སྤྱོད་ཐག་རིང་བ་དང་། ཆོས་བདག་དང་ཐབས་གྲོགས་ཐམས་ཅད་ཁྱུ་ཅག་གི་ཡུལ་ལ་འདྲི་ལྟར་གསལ་ལ་ཤོར་ཡོད་པ་དོ་
 མཚར་གི་གསུང་། དེ་སྐབས་སྤུ་ལུང་བསྟན་ནང་དུ་བྱ་ཆོས་བྱེད་ཆོས་ཟེར་བ་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་བདེ་ [174a] བྱང་ཞིག་འདུག་པ་
 རྗེའི་གཟིགས་ནས་འདི་ལ་བྱ་ཆོས་ཅིའི་ཕྱིར་བཏགས་པ་ཡིན་གསུངས་པས། བདེ་བའི་དོན་རྗེས་ལགས་བྱ་ཆོས་ཟེར་བ་དཔེ་ལ་བརྟེན་
 ནས་གཞན་གྱིས་བཏགས་པ་ཡིན་པས། ང་རང་གིས་ཀྱང་དེའི་རྗེས་མཐུན་དུ་རྒྱབ་ཡིག་ལ་དེ་ནི་གྲིས་པ་ཡིན་ལྟས་པས། རྗེས་

འདི་བྱིད་ཞིང་དུ་ཡིབ་འགྲོ་བའི་བད་བསྐྱར་རོ་གསུང་། ཡབ་ཡུམ་གཉིས་ཀས་གཅིག་གྲོགས་གཅིག་གིས་བྱས་ཏེ། སྤྱི་ཆེའི་
 བར་ཆད་སེལ་ཐབས་ཀྱི་ཞུས་ལན་མང་པོ་ཡོད་ཀྱང་གཏིར་གཞུང་དུ་གསལ་ནས་ཡི་གེར་འཇིགས་ནས་མ་བྲིས། དེ་ནས་རྗེས་
 མཁའ་འགྲོའི་དགྲིལ་འཁོར་ལ་བརྟེན་ནས་བདེ་བའི་རྫོང་ལ་སྤྲིན་གྲོལ་ཞིབ་རྒྱས་སུ་གསུང་ནས། མེ་ཏོག་དབུས་སུ་བབ་པས་
 མིང་ཀྱན་བཟང་བདེ་སྦྱོང་ཆོས་ཉིད་དབང་མའི་ཅོད་པན་གནང་། དེ་ནས་བདེ་བའི་རྫོང་རྗེ་ལ་རང་གཏིར་གྱི་མཆོ་རྒྱལ་གྱི་
 ཆོས་སྒྲོར་རྣམས་ཀྱི་ལུང་ལུལ། རྗེས་དབང་བསྐྱར་དགོས་གསུང་ཀྱང་། བདེ་བའི་རྫོང་ས་གཏིར་ཕག་མའི་ [174b]
 ཆོས་སྒྲོར་པལ་ནས། རྗེ་ལ་ཐོག་མར་དབང་ལུང་འབུལ་དགོས་པ་འདྲ་ན་དེས་ཆོག་གི་སྒྲུམ་ས་ནས། འདིའི་དབང་གཅིག་
 བརྒྱད་ཡིན་པས་རྗེས་སེར་དུ་འབུལ་འོང་ཞུས། དེ་ནས་བདེ་བའི་རྫོང་གཏིར་ཆོས་རྣམས་ཀྱི་བད་དང་གཏིར་ཆོག་ཐམས་ཅད་
 མེད་པར་བཅུ་ཆོས་ལྟ་བུར་བྱས་ཡོད་པས། རྗེས་འདི་ལྟར་མཛད་པར་བད་ཡིག་སོགས་ཐམས་ཅད་གཏིར་གཞུང་དུ་རྗེ་ལྟར་
 ཡོད་པ་དེ་ནི་མ་གཏོག་བཅས་བཅོས་མ་མཛད་། བྱུང་པར་གཏིར་གྱི་ཆོས་སྒྲོར་འབབས་ཐབས་མ་འཆུག་གསུངས་པས།
 དེ་བའི་རྫོང་རྗེ་ལ་རང་སྦྱོང་མོ་ཡིན་པས། རྗེ་མི་ལ་རས་པའི་གསུངས་བཞིན་འོང་བར་མ་གཏོག། ས་གཏིར་དུ་མར་དབང་
 ཡང་གྲོགས་མ་ལྟན་ནས་ས་གཏིར་གསུམ་ཅམ་ལས་མ་ལེན། དེ་ཕབ་རྒྱུད་འགྲིགས་འོང་གི། དེ་བྱ་ཅག་ཡབ་ཡུམ་གྱི་ཕུ་འི་
 སྒོན་ལམ་གྱི་སྒོ་བས་སད་ནས་འཕྲད་པ་ཡིན་ཀྱང་། ང་རང་གཞན་དབང་ལ་ཤོར་བས་བྱིད་ཀྱི་སྤྱི་མདུན་ལ་འོང་སྒྲུབས་མི་ལྟན་
 ཡང་སྤར་ཞུས་པ་ལྟར། སྤྱིར་སངས་རྒྱས་ཀྱི་བཞུན་ [175a] པ་དང་། སྒོས་བླ་མ་གཏིར་སྒོན་གྱི་ཐུགས་དགོངས་
 རྗེས་ཐབས་ཟབ་གཏིར་བྱི་སྒོལ་ལ་སོགས་པ་དང་། ཡང་དགོས་ང་རང་ཐུགས་ནས་མི་འདོར་བར་སྤྱོད་ཆོ་ཞབས་པད་བརྟན་ཐབས་
 མ་འཆུག་སྤྱི་མཁའ་ཞུས་ནས་ཞབས་སྤྱི་བོར་བྱང་སྟེ་གསོལ་འདེབས་སྒོན་ལམ་བཏབ་ཅིང་རྒྱལ་སྤྱི་དཔོན་གཡོག་མཁའ་འགྲོ་བཅས་
 ཕར་བྱོན་གྲུབ་བྱས། རྗེ་དེ་ཉིད་ཀྱིས་ཀྱང་ཅ་བའི་རིག་མ་ལྟ་བུར་ཐུགས་བརྟེན་བཅེ་མཛད་དེ། མཁའ་འགྲོ་ལ་སྤྱི་ཞིག་ཡོད་
 པས་དེ་ལ་བསྐྱེད་སྦྱོབ་ཀྱི་འཁོར་སོགས་གནང་ཞིང་ལུགས་གཉིས་ཀྱི་བྱ་བས་དེར་འདུས་བྱ་སྒོ་བ་ཀྱན་གྱི་ཡིད་སྦྱོབ་བྱས་ནས་རྒྱལ་
 སྤྱི་དཔོན་གཡོག་ཐམས་ཅད་ཕར་ཕེབས་སོ།

⁶⁵⁴ I translate *gza' sdug* as “marital dispute” according to the oral explanation of Gyalrong Khenpo Sangyé. I suspect that *gza'* is a misspelling or alternate spelling of *bza'* as in *bza' tshang*, or couple.

⁶⁵⁵ Naringma (*Bya khog sna ring ma*) is a valley in-between Dartsang (further north) and the Serta county seat (further south) in Serta County. Naringma is roughly in-between Sera Monastery and Dartsang. The GPS location of this valley is approximately N: 32 43.650', E: 099 59.079', elev. approx.: 12,696 ft.

⁶⁵⁶ Drimé Özer and Sera Khandro's commitments between male and female partners (*yab yum bar gyi dam tshig*) refers to their promise to remain inseparable from each other in this life and in all their future incarnations.

⁶⁵⁷ *Autobiography* 242a.6-245b.1:

ལྟར་སྒོ་སྤྱལ་རིན་པོ་ཆེས་ [242b] ཞལ་གསུངས་ཁྱིའི་རྣམས་ཀྱི་ཐུགས་ལ་མངའ་བཞིན། བྱའདིའི་སྤྱབས་གནས་སྤྱལ་སྤྱི་མེད་
 སང་མིན་པ་གཞན་རིམ་གྱོས་སྤྱབས་དཀའ་གསུངས་པ་དང་། མིན་གྱང་ད་ལན་རྒྱལ་སྤྱལ་སང་གི་ཐུགས་ལ་མི་འབབ་པའི་རྒྱ་
 མཚན་གང་ལ་བསམ་མཐོན་བཏང་ཡང་། བདག་གི་བྱའདི་ཕན་བཏགས་ཞིག་མིན་པ་འདྲ་སྤྱལ་ཆོ། འཇིགས་མེད་དགོན་
 མཚོག་དང་། ཁྱེད་སྤྱན་གྲགས་སོགས་ཀྱིས་རྒྱལ་སྤྱལ་ལ་ཞུས། ཁོང་རང་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་གྲོས་བྱས་ཏེ། དེད་མ་
 བྱའི་ད་བཞིན་མོར་བྱའི་སྤྱི་མེད་ལ་བསྐྱུང་སྤྱི་མེད་ལ་འགྲོ་དགོས་ཟེར། བདག་གིས་ང་མི་འགྲོ་ཁར་སང་ཉིན་པར་གསལ་སྤྱོན་
 ཀྱིས། མཁའ་འགྲོ་གཏོར་སྤོན་སྤྱལ་སྤྱི་མེད་གསུངས་མར་འགྲོ་བྱེད་བྱེད་པ་ཀུན་གྱིས་སྤྱལ་འདུག རྒྱལ་སྤྱལ་སང་ལ་ཞུས་
 པའི་རྒྱུན་གྱིས་ད་དྲུང་ཡང་གཟུང་སྤྱུག་འདི་འདྲ་སྤྱོད་འདུག་པས། དེའི་ཁར་དེད་མ་བྱུང་ངོས་སྤྱི་མེད་ལ་སོང་ཆེ་སྤྱིར་འོང་མི་
 བཅུག་པ་སོགས་བྱ་བ་མི་འདོད་པ་སྤྱོད་ཆོག་པ་འདྲུང་ཉེ་བས་ན་མི་ [243a] འགྲོ་ངོས་པ་ཡིན་སྤྱལ་ཏེ་བཏང་སྤོམས་ལ་བཞག་ཆོ།
 བྱུང་ནད་བབ་ཤིན་ཏུ་ལྷི་བས། ཁོང་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་སེམས་ཀྱིས་མ་བཟོད་ནས་རྟ་གྲོ་སོགས་ཀྱིས་བྱ་བ་ལ་མི་གཞོད་པར་བྱས་ཏེ།
 ཁོང་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་མཐུན་རྒྱུན་བསྐྱབ་ནས། དེད་མ་བྱུག་སྤྱུམ་དང་། སྤྱོད་བྱུག་བཟང་བཅས་བྱུ་ཁོག་སྤྱི་མེད་མར་རྒྱུ་ཉེ་ཉིད་
 ཀྱིས་ཆོས་སྤྱར་བཏང་བའོད་པས་དེར་སོང་། དེའི་སྤྱབས་བདག་གིས་ལྟར་གྱི་མི་ལ་མ་དུན་ནས་བྱུག་བཟང་ལ་འདི་སྤྱོད་སྤྱལ།
 ལུ་ཅག་སྤྱི་མེད་ལ་སོང་ཡང་ཁོང་བཞུགས་ཀྱི་ཡོད་ཅི་ཤེས་སྤྱལ། བྱུག་བཟང་ན་ཤེ། ཁོང་མི་བཞུགས་པར་གང་དུ་བྱོན།
 གཏུལ་བྱུ་ལ་ནི་མི་བྱོན་ཟེར། ཡང་བདག་གིས་གཏུལ་བྱུར་བྱོན་ན་ལུ་ཅག་གིས་མཇལ་ཐབས་ལོས་འོང་དང་།
 འོ་སྤོམ་སང་གི་ཐད་གཟུང་སྤྱུག་ཤེ་ལ་རྒྱུན་ནས་གང་རིམ་ཐོད་དཀར་སོགས་ཐག་རིང་ཞིག་ལ་བྱོན་སོང་ཀྱི་ཡོད་སྤྱལ་གི་སྤྱལ།
 བྱུག་བཟང་གིས་དེ་ལྟར་ [243b] ཀྱི་ལུང་བསྐྱུན་ཀྱི་འོང་ཟེར། མ་བསྐྱུན་ལུང་བསྐྱུན་སོགས་བདག་གིས་མི་ཤེས་གྱང་།
 མི་ལ་མ་འབྱུལ་སྤྱང་ཤེ་ལ་ཁོང་དང་མཇལ་འཕྲད་འོང་བ་མྱིས་པའི་སྤྱར་ལྟར་མ་ཡིན་པའི་བདག་གི་སེམས་ལ་སྤྱུག་བསྐྱུལ་ཆེན་པོ་
 ཞིག་གིས་རྒྱུན་བསྐྱུལ་ཏེ། ཁོང་དང་འབྲལ་མི་བྱུག་ཅིང་ཁོག་པའི་སྤྱིར་བྲལ་བ་ལྟ་བུའི་སྤྱུག་བསྐྱུལ་ཆེན་པོ་བྱུང་བས། བདག་
 གི་བསམ་པ་ལ་རྒྱུ་ཉེ་ཉིད་ཞིང་ཁམས་ལ་བྱོན་འགྲོ་བའི་ཡིན་སྤྱལ་ཆོ། མཁའ་འགྲོ་ཞིག་བྱོན་ནས་གྲོགས་མོ་བྱེད་ཀྱིས་དེ་ལྟར་
 བསམ་མི་དགོས་དང་། བྱེད་ཀྱིད་པའོ་ཞིང་ཁམས་ལ་མི་བྱོན་གྱང་། གྲོགས་ངན་གྱི་རྒྱུན་གྱིས་བསྐྱུང་ནས་གངས་
 རིམ་ཐོད་དཀར་ལ་བྱོན་འདུན་ཡོད་འདུག་གྱང་། བྱེད་རང་མ་འཕྲད་བར་དུ་མི་བྱོན་པ་འདྲ་ཟེར་བ་དུས་རིང་མོ་ཞིག་ནས་མྱིས་པ་
 ཡིན་པས་དེ་ཀྱི་ཡིད་ཀྱི་སྤྱུམ་སྤྱལ་ཆོ། བྱུག་བཟང་གིས་བྱེད་མ་བྱོན་པར་དུ་བཞུགས་ཡོད་ཟེར་བ་དེ་རྟགས་ཆེ་གི། ད་ལན་

བཞུགས་ཡོད་པའི་པ་མེད་། ད་པན་ཅི་འགྱུར་མི་ཤེས་ཀྱང་ཁྱེད་ཀྱི་གསུང་མཛད་གནད་ [244a] མོ་རེ་ཞུས་ན། ཁྱེད་ནམ་
 པ་གཉིས་ཐུགས་སྒྲུང་མཐུན་པ་དང་། མིན་ཀྱང་བྱ་བ་གང་ཐད་ནས་ཐུགས་རྒྱ་ཆེ་བས་ཁྱེད་ཀྱི་གསུང་ས་མི་བཅག་ཟེར།
 དེ་ནས་ངེད་རྣམས་སྒྲུང་མཛད་མོན་མོང་བས། རྗེ་དེ་ཉིད་ཀྱི་མདུན་འདུག་ཚུལ་ཁྲིམས་དེ་རྗེ་དང་། འོད་འབར་རྣམས་
 ཀྱིས་བསུ་བ་བྱས་ཏེ། རིམ་གྱིས་མཇལ་འཕྲད་མཛད་ནས་ཡིད་བཞིན་ནོར་བུའི་སྒྲུ་མདུན་ལ་མོང་བས་ཐུགས་བརྩེ་བ་ཆེན་པའི་
 རྗེས་སུ་བཟུང་ནས། བྱ་རྒྱུད་ལ་བསྐྱུང་སྒྲོབ་སོགས་ཞིབ་དུ་མཛད་ཆེ་བྱ་རྒྱུད་ནད་ལས་གྲོལ་སོང་། དེ་སྐབས་ང་རང་གིས་སྒྲུར་
 གྱི་མི་ལམ་ལ་གཞི་བྱས་ཏེ་སེམས་ལ་སྒྲུག་བསུལ་བྱུང་ཚུལ་སོགས་ཞིབ་རྒྱས་སུ་ཞུས་པས། ཁོང་གིས་ཀྱང་ཐུགས་མདུན་གྱི་མཛད་
 པ་སྒྲུབ་གསང་མེད་པར་གསུངས། བདག་གིས་ཀྱང་ལུགས་གཉིས་ཀྱི་ཞུ་བྱ་དང་། ཁྱེད་པར་ཡབ་ཡུམ་བར་གྱི་དམ་ཆོག་
 དང་འདུན་པ་དཔང་པོར་བཞག་ནས་ཞིང་ཁམས་ལ་བྱོན་རྒྱུ་པར་ཞོག ས་ཐག་རིང་པོ་ཅམ་ལ་ཡང་བྱོན་མི་ཉན་ཡང་ཡང་ཞུས་ཆོ།
 [244b] རྗེས་ཐུགས་ཀྱིས་མ་བཟོད་དེ་བདག་གིས་ཞུས་པའི་དོན་འབྲས་ཐུགས་རིམ་ཞིན་པར་མཛད་པ་ཞལ་གྱིས་བཞེས། དེ་ནས་རང་
 གཏེར་ལག་མོའི་ཟབ་དབང་གཅིག་བརྒྱུད་དུ་རྗེ་དེ་ཉིད་ལ་ཕུལ་བས་ཐུགས་དབྱེས་ཀྱི་གསོས་སུ་གྱུར། རྗེས་ཟབ་གཏེར་མཆོ་རྒྱལ་ཟབ་
 དབང་ངེད་ཅག་མ་བྱ་རྣམས་ལ་བསྐྱུལ་བས། བྱ་རྒྱུད་ལ་བྱིན་དབང་པའི་ལྷས་བྱུང་བའི་ཆོ། རྗེས་ཞལ་ནས་བྱ་རྒྱུད་
 འདིའི་པ་དང་སྒྲུ་མིན་སོགས་རིམ་ལྔར་ཡིན་གསུངས་པ་ལ། བདག་གིས་ཁོའི་ལོ་རྒྱུས་ཐམས་ཅད་སྒྲུབ་གསང་མེད་པར་ཞུས་ཆོ།
 རྗེས་ཞལ་ནས་སྒྲུར་བདག་གིས་ཁོང་ལ་རིག་འཛིན་འགྱུར་མེད་དོན་རྗེ་མཆོན་དུ་གསོལ་བ་ལྟར། རིག་པ་འཛིན་པ་ཞིག་འོང་ངེས་
 ཡིན་པས་ན་ཟས་གསོ་སོགས་གྲིབ་ཅན་ལ་འཛེམ་དགོས་གསུངས། དེ་ནས་ཡབ་ཡུམ་གཉིས་ལ་བདུད་ཀྱི་བར་ཆད་མི་འབྱུང་
 བའི་ཕྱིར་དུ། རང་གཏེར་གྲོ་ཡོད་ཀྱི་སྒྲུབ་པ་བདུད་ལས་གཡུལ་རྒྱལ་གྱི་ཟབ་ཤོག་སྒྲིག་སྒྲོམ་དམར་ནག་གི་གྲུད་དུ་སྒྲུབ་པ་སྒྲོང་
 ཁྲོམ་ཞེས་པའི་ [245a] གནས་སུ་ཡོད་པའི་དེའི་གཏེར་སྒྲོ་དང་དུས་ཆོད་རྣམས་གསལ་པོར་ཡོད་ཀྱང་། རྗེས་འབྲེལ་གྱི་དགོས་
 ཆེད་དུ་གཏེར་ནས་འདོན་པའི་སྐལ་བ་རྗེ་དེ་ཉིད་ལ་བབ་ཡོད་པ་ཡིན་པས། རྗེས་ཀྱང་ཐུགས་ཐག་དེ་ཀར་བཅད་ནས་ཐབས་ཤེས་རྗེས་
 འབྲེལ་གྱི་གསོས་སུ་གྱུར་ཏེ། ཡབ་ཡུམ་གཏེར་ཡབ་ལ་དབང་བ་དང་། ཡབ་གཏེར་ཡུམ་གྱིས་འབབས་བྱབ་ཀྱི་ཐུགས་
 དགོངས་རེ་གཅིག་དུ་གྱུར་ཏེ། དེའི་སྐབས་སུ་རྗེ་དེ་ཉིད་ཀྱིས་བདག་ཐུགས་བརྩེ་བས་རྗེས་སུ་བཟུང་སྟེ། ཐབས་ཤེས་འདུ་འབྲེལ་
 མེད་པའི་རྗེས་དུ་ཉིད་ཀྱི་གཏེར་བྱོན་དོན་རྗེ་ལྟེ་ལྟེ་པ་དང་། དོན་རྗེས་བྱ། གདུལ་བྱ་རྗེས་སུ་འཛིན་ཕྱིར་བུམ་བྱུང་མེད་ཤོག་མིག་དར་
 བུམ་གོས་སྒྲོ་རྗེས་བྱུང་སྒྲོ་དང་བཅས་པ། ཟབ་གཏེར་གྱི་སྒྲེལ་གྱི་མཐུན་རྒྱུན་ཤོག་གྲུ་དང་མཆོལ་སྒྲུག་ གཞན་ཡང་རིན་ཐང་

ཆེ་བའི་རྒྱ་རྒྱུ་ཏུ་མ་དང་ཕྱི་ནང་གསང་བའི་དབང་རྟེན་ཕྱིར་དུ་གནང་ནས། འདི་ནས་བྱང་རྒྱུ་མ་ཐོབ་བར་དུ་ཡབ་ཡུམ་སྐད་ཅིག་གི་
ཀྱང་འདྲ་འབྲེལ་མེད་ [245b] པའི་ཐུགས་བསྐྱེད་དང་སྟོན་ལམ་མཛད་དོ། དེ་ཅག་ནམས་རང་གནས་ལ་ལོག་གོ།

⁶⁵⁸ Drimé Özer Biography 181b.3-183a.6:

བདེ་བའི་དོན་རྟོགས་དུ་ཐོན་བྱུང་བས། རྗེ་འཇམ་མཁའ་ལོ་རང་ལ་མ་ཁལ་འགྲོས་ལུང་བསྟན་འོང་ཡོད་ཐང་དང་། ང་རང་
འགྲོ་བྱུང་བྱེད་པ་འདི་གསང་དགོས་དགོངས། དེ་ནས་རིམ་གྱིས་བདེ་སྐྱོང་དབང་མོས་ཕྱག་ཕུལ་ཏེ། རྗེ་མཉམ་དུ་འོང་
ནས་སྐྱེ་ཁམས་བཟང་ཞུས་ཆོ། རྗེས་ཀྱང་བྱིད་འོ་མ་རྒྱལ་ལམ་གསུང་། མོན་རེ་ང་རང་དཀའ་མ་བྱུང་དང་། བྱིད་དང་
མཇལ་རྒྱ་ཡི་ཡོད་སྐྱེས་ན་སྐྱུག་བསྐྱེད་ཆེན་པོ་འོང་ཞུས་པས། རྗེ་འཇམ་ནས་བྱིད་མ་བྱོན་པ་རེད་མ་གཏོགས། ང་རང་
འདི་ཀར་མི་ [182a] འདུག་པར་གཞན་དུ་འགྲོ་ཚུལ་མེད་པས་མཆོམས་དམ་རྒྱ་ཡིན་གསུང་། མོན་རེ་བྱིད་གཏུལ་
བར་བྱོན་གི་བསམ་པ་མིན། དཔེན་ཁྲོད་དུ་ལོས་བཞུགས་དང་། དེས་མེད་གྱི་གནས་ས་ཐག་རིང་པོ་ཞིག་དུ་ཕེབ་འགྲོ་
སྐྱེས་ནས་བདག་འདུག་ཐབས་མེད་པའི་སྐྱུག་བསྐྱེད་ཆེན་པོ་འོང་ལགས། ད་ཁྲོད་བྱོན་རྒྱ་བྱེད་པ་མ་ཡིན་རྒྱུ་རང་ལ་འཆི་སྐྱེས་
འོང་བ་ཡིན་ཐང་ཏེ་མི་གོ་གི་ལགས་ཞུས། དེ་ནས་རྗེ་འཇམ་ལ་སྐྱས་གསང་མི་བྱུང་དེས་པ་ཡིན་འདུག་པས། ལོ་རྒྱུས་
ཞིབ་པར་བཤད་ན་ཁོ་རང་ངའི་རྩེ་མེད་པ་ཡིན་པས་བཤོལ་མ་མི་བྱེད་དགོངས་ཏེ། ཐོག་མཐའ་བར་གསུམ་གྱི་ལོ་རྒྱུས་ནམས་
ཞིབ་པར་གསུང་ཆོ། མོན་རེ་འོ་ལགས་སོ་ལོས་ཡིན་གཏིར་སྟོན་བྱ་བྱང་ལ་བྱིད་གྱི་ཐབས་མ་ཆགས་ཀྱང་། སྤྱིར་སངས་
རྒྱུས་གྱི་བསྟན་པ་སེམས་ཅན་གྱི་བདེ་སྐྱོང་དང་། བྱིད་པར་ཡབ་རྗེ་བླ་མའི་ཟབ་གཏིར་འཛིན་སྐྱོང་སྤེལ་གསུམ་བྱིད་ལ་རག་
[182b] ལས་པ་དང་། ཡང་སྟོས་སྤྱ་སྤྱུལ་གསེར་ཐལ་། ལ་སྐྱོང་ཁག་གསུམ། བད་མ་འབྱུང་དཔོན་ཁག་བདུན་
ལ་སོགས་པའི་ཡུལ་སྤེལ་གྱིས་ཤི་བྱའི་རྣམ་ཤེས་གཏད་ས། གསོན་པོའི་སྐྱབས་གནས་ཞུས། འདི་ཕྱི་རེ་ལྟོས་བཅས་
ས་བྱིད་ཡིན་པ་དང་། ནང་སྟོས་དོན་གྱི་སྤྱང་མོ་བདག་གིས་འདི་ཕྱི་བར་དོ་གསུམ་གྱི་སྐྱབས་གནས་སྤེལ་སྤྱུ་ཡིད་བཞིན་ནོར་བུ་
བྱིད་གཅིག་ཕུ་འདི་ལས་མེད་པས། ས་ཐག་རིང་པོ་ཞིག་ལ་མི་བྱོན་པར་ཡུལ་སྤེལ་གསུམ་འདི་འི་གང་བདེ་ཞིག་ལ་བཞུགས་ནས།
སྐྱེ་ཆོ་བརྟན་ཐབས་གྱི་བྱ་བ་ཅི་དགོས་ལ་སྐྱས་གསང་མེད་པར་བྱ་སྟོབ་རྣམས་ལ་གསུང་ཏེ། སྐྱེ་ཆོ་བརྟན་ཐབས་རེ་མ་མཛད་དུས།
འུ་ཅག་ཡབ་ཡུམ་གྱི་ཆོས་དམ་ཆོག་དང་འདུན་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་ལ་བྱིད་གྱི་ཐུགས་འདད་མ་རྒྱས་པ་ཡིན་ཟེར་ནས་ཤིན་ཏུ་དུས་ཤིང་ཡང་
ཡང་ཞུས་ཆོ། རྗེ་འཇམ་གྱིས་མ་བཟོད་ནས་བྱིད་གྱི་འདི་ལྟར་མ་མཛད་དང་། འུ་ཅག་གཉིས་གྲོས་འོང་གསུངས་ནས།
ཡབ་ཡུམ་ [183a] ཀས་མན་ཚུན་གྱི་དམ་ཆོག་ལ་གནས་ཏེ། ས་ཐག་རིང་པོར་མི་བྱོན་པ་དང་། སྐྱེ་ཆོ་གཞན་དབང་ལ་མི་

གཏོང་བ་སོགས་མཛད་ནས། བདེ་བའི་དོན་ལྟེན་ཟུང་གཏོང་པ་གཏོང་མེད་ཆོས་སྐོར་གྱི་དབང་ལུང་ནམས་རྩེ་ལ་གཅིག་བརྒྱད་དུ་ལུ་
 བྱུང་པར་མོ་རང་གི་གཏོང་རྩེ་མ་ཁལ་འགྲོའི་བླ་དེ་ཐིག་བརྒྱ་མ་དང་། མཚོ་རྒྱལ་གྱི་རྟ། གཡུ་ཅེ་འི་བྱི་མཚོ་ནས་
 དངས་བའི་གྲུ་འི་བྱང་སེམས་བཅས་སྐྱོ་བརྟན་ཕྱིར་ལུ་ནས་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་ཕུན་སུམ་ཆོག་པ་འབྱུང་བ་དང་། རྩེ་ནས་ཀྱང་
 བདེ་བའི་དོན་ལ་རང་གཏོང་མཚོ་རྒྱལ་སྐྱབ་པ་དཔལ་འཛིན་བྱེད་གྱི་དབང་ལུང་ཐམས་ཅད་ཞིབ་རྒྱུ་སྐྱབ་པ་ལས་
 ཡབ་ཡུམ་མི་འབྲེལ་བའི་རྟེན་དུ་གཏོང་བྱོན་དོན་ཅེ་ལྟ་པ་དང་། དོན་འཁྲུག་ལ། འབུམ་པ། སྐན་རྟ་ལ་སོགས་པའི་
 རྒྱ་རྩེ་འཛིན་ཐང་ཆེ་བ་དུ་མ་གནང་། བྱུང་པར་མོ་རང་གི་སྐས་ལ་མ་ཡིན་འདུག་པས། དེ་ལ་བསྐྱུང་འཁོར་དང་
 སྐྱབས་འབྱུག་མཛད་སྐབས།

⁶⁵⁹ 'Brong skor is a nomadic camping area near Drongri ('Brong ri), the most important mountain deity of the Serta region where Sera Khandro, Drimé Özer, and many other Treasure revealers extracted and hid many Treasures.

⁶⁶⁰ A type of Tibetan medicine.

⁶⁶¹ This is a reference to battles between the Chinese and Tibetans that were going on around Sera Khandro in the 1920s and 1930s, in this case in approximately 1922.

⁶⁶² The three kindnesses offered in service of one's lama are 1) practicing the Dharma, 2) serving the lama (attending to his needs), and 3) offering material wealth.

⁶⁶³ "Pray" is a translation of *smon lam dkar nag* 'khyud 'khor bar du btab. The meaning of this phrase is unclear, in particular the term 'khyud 'khor.

⁶⁶⁴ Drimé Özer *Biography* 193b.1-197a.2:

དེ་ནས་ཞིག་འགའ་ནས་བདེ་བའི་དོན་ལ་ནད་དྲག་པོ་ཞིག་སྒོ་བྱར་དུ་བྱུང་ནས་འབྲོང་སྐོར་ལ་བྱོན་ཞོར་དུ་རྩེ་འི་དབང་ལུང་ནས་ཡབ་ཡུམ་
 གཉིས་ཀྱི་གཤོམ་མཛལ་བ་ལྟ་བུའི་དགའ་སྐྱོ་མཛད་། དེ་ནས་རྩེ་ལ་བདེ་བའི་དོན་ལ་བྱེད་བསྐྱུན་གཞི་དེ་རེ་གསུངས། མོ་ན་
 རེ་ར་རང་ནད་གཞི་དམ་སེམས་ཞིག་ལ་རྒྱུན་བསྐྱུན་པ་ཡིན་པས་སྒོ་བྱར་དུ་ལུང་བསྐྱུན་འབྲེལ་ཞིག་འོང་ནས། སྐབས་ཁྲའི་ཉིར་ལྟ་ཆུན་
 ཆད་དུ་རབ་ན་བྱེད་གྱི་སྐྱུ་མ་དུན། མིན་ཀྱང་འབྲོང་མ་དུན་མ་ཐོན་དགོས་ཟེར་བ་འོང་ཡང་། རྒྱལ་སྐས་སོགས་གྱི་ཐུགས་
 བབ་མེད་སྐྱུ་མ་ནས་བཏང་སྒོམས་སུ་བསྐྱུང་སྐབས། ཆོས་བཅོ་བརྒྱད་ཉིན་ནད་དྲག་པོ་ཐེབས་པ་ཡིན། ར་རང་གི་གྲ་པ་
 ཐུབ་བཟང་དང་། རྒྱལ་སྐས་གྱི་སྐྱུ་རུས་འཛིགས་མེད་དགོན་མཚོག་དང་། བླ་སྐྱུ་སྐྱུ་གྲགས་ཞེས་པ་ར་རང་གི་ཆོས་བདག་རུ་
 འབྱུང་བ་ཞིག་ཡོད་པ། [194a] དེ་དག་གི་འདུག་རུ་མ་སྐྱེར་བར་གྲོ་བ་ཁལ་རྟ་སོགས་གྱི་མཐུན་རྒྱུན་བྱས་ཏེ། ཆོས་བཅོ་དགུ་འི་
 ཉིན་སྐྱུ་གྲགས་གྱི་བསྐྱུལ་ནས། སོག་གི་དགོན་མཚོག་ཆེ་རིང་གི་རི་ཐོག་ལ་འབྱུལ་མ་བྱས། དེས་ར་རང་ལ་རྟ་པོ་བཟང་པོ་
 ཞིག་གཡུར་ནས་ཉིར་ལྟ་ཆུན་འབྲོང་མ་དུན་ལ་ཐོན། དེའི་ཉིན་འཆི་འགྲོ་ཆད་བྱས་ནས་སྐྱུ་གྲགས་ཆེན་པོ་འབྱུང་འདུག་ཀྱང་།
 བན་དེ་ཞིག་འོང་ནས་སྐྱུ་ལས་འབྲེལ་པས་མངགས་པ་ཡིན་པས། བྱེད་ཡབ་ཡུམ་དམ་ཆོག་ལ་གནས་དགོས་ཟེར་བ་དང་མཉམ་

དུ་འོད་དམར་ཞིག་གིས་བདག་གི་སྒྲིབ་བ་བྱས་པ་ལ་རྒྱུ་བྱས་ཏེ་ང་རང་ལོང་བ་རྒྱབ་བྱུང་ཞུས། རྗེ་ཞལ་ནས
 བྱིད་ཀྱིས་དེ་ལྟར་ཅི་ལ་བྱེད། ལྷ་རྒྱ་རང་མའི་ཐོག་ནས་འུ་ཅག་ཡབ་ཡུམ་གྱི་སྐྱེ་ཆེ་རྒྱུ་དབང་དུ་མི་གཏོང་ཆད་ཨོ་ཡིན་གསུངས།
 བདེ་བའི་དྲོའི་སྤྲོ་རེད་ང་སྒྲིབ་ཆོག་གི་སྤྲོ་ན་ཕན་ཚུན་གཉིས་ཀ་མེད་འདྲ་ཟེར་ནས་དུ་ཀྱིན་འདུག་པས། རྗེ་ཞལ་གསུངས། [194b]
 ལ་ངས་འདུན་པ་ཞིང་དུ་གཏད་པ་འདི་གོ་བར་འདྲ་དགོངས་ཀྱང་མིན་མདོག་མཛད་ནས། བྱིད་ཀྱི་ཐུགས་རྒྱུད་ཅི་འདྲི་ཕྱིར་ཡིན།
 འུ་ཅག་ཐག་མིང་གི་སྐྱེ་མ་ན་ནི་རྒྱལ་སྤྱུ་གྱི་ཐུགས་ལ་བབ་ན་ང་རང་གིས་ནས་སྒྲ་བྲང་གིས་བྱིད་ལོ་གཅིག་གཉིས་རེ་བཞུགས་ན་འདྲ།
 མིན་ཀྱང་གཏན་བཞུགས་བྱེད་རྒྱུ་ལྟན་ན་དག་འཇག་ཡི་རང་བྱེད་པ་མ་གཏོགས། འགལ་སྒྲ་སྤྱུ་ཅི་ཅམ་ཡང་མི་བྱེད་ཟེར་ནས་ཁ་ཆེན་
 ཆོག་ཆེན་བཤད་འདུག་པས། དེའི་ཐད་ནས་ཐུགས་རྒྱུད་འདི་དགོས་གསུངས། བདེ་བའི་དྲོའི་སྤྲོ་རེད་ལྷ་རྒྱ་བསམ་པ་མིན།
 བྱིད་ཀྱིས་དུས་ནམ་པ་ཀུན་དུ་ཐུགས་འདུན་ཞིང་ལ་གཏད་ནས། བདག་ཅག་རྗེས་འཇུག་ཐམས་ཅད་ལ་ཐུགས་འདོང་མ་བཏང་ནས་
 རྒྱུན་དབང་དུ་གཏོང་བ་འདྲ་སྐྱེ་ནས་སེམས་ལ་སྤྱུག་བསྐྱེད་ཆེན་པོ་འབྱུང་བ་དང་། བྱུང་པར་ང་རང་གི་ཐད་ནས་སྒྲ་བྲང་གི་ཅི་
 ཟེར་གོ་ལགས་ཞུས་ནས་སྒྲ་བྱི་རྒྱུ་རྒྱུན་ཐམས་ཅད་གསལ་བོར་སྐྱེས་འདུག་པས། རྗེས་བྱིད་ལ་དེ་ལྟར་རེད་སྤྱུ་ཟེར་ [195a]
 གསུངས། བདེ་བའི་དྲོའི་སྤྲོ་རེད་འཇིག་རྟེན་གྱི་མི་ཞིག་ནི་མིན་ངས་པ་ཡིན་མིན་ན་ཞུས། དེ་ནས་ཡབ་ཡུམ་གཉིས་ཀ་འི་
 རུགས་གཉིས་ཀྱི་གསུང་མཛད་མང་དུ་གནང་། རྗེས་ཀྱང་སྒྲ་བྱིད་མ་བཅའ་བཞིན་ཐུགས་འདུན་ཞིང་ལ་མི་གཏད་གསུངས།
 དེ་སྐབས་བདེ་བའི་དྲོའི་སྤྲོ་རེད་འཇིག་རྟེན་ནས་ལོན་པའི་གཏེར་སྒྲོམ་བྱེ་ཨོ་ཀྱོང་ལས་སྤྱུ་བ་པ་ཞིག་ཡོད་པ་དེ། རྗེ་ལ་ཐུག་ནས་རྟེན་
 འབྲེལ་འཕྲོ་ཅན་དུ་མཛད་ཅིང་དེ་ལྟར་ཞག་འགར་བཞུགས། དེ་ནས་ཀུན་གྱི་འུར་ཟེར་བྱེད་ཅིང་སྐྱེར་གཞི་སྤྲར་དགོས་ཞུས་ཆོ།
 རྗེས་སྒྲོན་མེད་པ་འདྲ་ཡང་ཁོ་རང་ཆོའི་བསམ་པ་ལྷ་རྒྱ་སྤྲར་སྤྲར་ན་ཆོག་གསུངས་ཏེ། རྒྱ་གྲིའི་ལུང་བསྐྱེད་ཀྱི་གནས་གསེར་འབྲོང་
 རིའི་རྩབ་ཀྱི་སྒྲོ་སྤྲར་གཉིན་ཆེན་གཡུ་བསེ་ཟེར་བའི་དབང་གི་སྤྱུ་སྤྲར་གནས་ཞིག་ཡོད་པ་དེ་ཀར་སྤྲར་གཞི་སྤྲར་དུ་བྱོན་ནས། ཡབ་ཡུམ་
 གཉིས་ཀས་ཟབ་གཏེར་གསར་པ་མཛད་དང་དབང་ལུང་སོགས་མཛད། བྱུང་པར་བདེ་བའི་ [195b] དྲོའི་ལ་བྱིད་ཀྱི་གཏེར་
 སྒྲོའི་གུ་རུ་ཏྲ་ཕག་གི་ཆོས་སྒྲོར་ཟབ་མོ་ཞིག་ཡོད་པ་དེ་གཏན་ལ་འབབས་ཐབས་བཀའ་རྒྱུ་མི་རྒྱུང་བར་ལྷ་ཞེས་པ་འདྲ་གསོལ་བ་བཏབ་
 པས། རྗེ་ཀྱང་ཡབ་པར་ཞལ་གྱིས་བཞེས་ནས་ཕན་ཚུན་ཞིབ་རྒྱས་ཀྱི་གསུངས་མཛད་དང་། བྱུང་པར་བདེ་བའི་དྲོའི་སྤྲོ་རེད་ལ་
 གསོལ་བ་དག་ནི་ལས་ངན་པ་འདི་སྐྱོབས་ཆེ་བས་བྱ་བ་ཅི་འབྱུང་ཆ་མི་ཆོད་པ་འདྲ་ན། ཡིད་བཞིན་ནོར་བུ་བྱིད་ནི་སྐྱེ་ཆེ་བཟན་ཐབས་
 ལ་མ་འཇུག བྱིད་ནི་བསོ་སྤྱུ་སྤྲ་ཆོགས་རང་གོ་ལ་གྱི་དབྱེད་བྱེད་སྐྱོབ་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་མཉེས་པ་གསུམ་གྱི་ཞབས་ཏོག་སྤྱུ་ནས་

ཆོས་དམ་ཆོག་གོ་ཡོད་པ་གསུག་ཡིན་པ་ལྟ་བུར་འདུག་པས་ངོ་མཚར་ཆེ་གིས་གཏོགས། སྒྲིགས་དུས་འདིར་འགྲོ་བ་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་ཆོས་
 ཀྱི་ཡོན་ཏན་སྒྲ་མའི་བཀའ་ངོ་མཚར་གོ་བ་ཤིན་ཏུ་དཀའ་མོ་རེད་ཟེར་ནས། འབྲུང་དང་འབྲུང་འབྲུང་གྱི་གཏམ་སྒྲ་ཆོག་མཁན་བསྐྱབ་
 བྱའི་ཚུལ་དུ་ཞུས་ཏེ། སྐྱེ་བ་འདི་ནས་ཆོ་རབས་ཐམས་ཅད་དུ་ [196a] ཡིད་བཞིན་ནོར་བུ་བྱེད་དང་མི་འབྲལ་ཞིང་། ཟབ་གཏོར་
 ཆོས་ཀྱི་དཔལ་ལ་ལོངས་སྤྱོད་ནས། ཐབས་ཤེས་བྱུང་འཇུག་རིག་སྒྲུ་མའོན་འབྱུར་ཤོག ཅེས་ཟེར་ནས་དོན་རྒྱུ་ཞེས་སྒྲི་
 བོར་བྱང་ཞིང་སེམས་རྒྱུང་བའི་ཚུལ་བྱེད་ཆོ། རྗེའི་ཐུགས་ལ་ཁོ་རང་ལ་མགས་སྐྱུ་ལ་གྱིས་ཤི་ཆ་གི་ཟེར་བ་འདི་བདེན་འདུག་
 དགོངས་ནས། བདེ་བའི་དོན་རྒྱུ་ལ་དེ་ལྟར་ཡིན་འདུག་ཟེར་བ་རང་རང་གི་ཐོས་བྱུང་བས་བདེན་ནམ་གསུངས། བདེ་བའི་དོན་རྒྱུ་ལ།
 ཕན་ཚུན་འཐབ་མཁོན་དུ་འགྲོ་སྒྲུ་མ་ནས། མགས་སྐྱུ་ལ་གྱིས་མགོ་ལོག་བཟའ་གསལ་སྒྲོན་ཞེས་ས་ལུང་གིས་ཟེན་ནས་སྐྱུ་རྩར་
 བཞེས་རྒྱ་བྱས་ཏེ། བདེ་བའི་དོན་རྒྱུ་ལ་བྱེད་ཀྱིན་ཡོད་ཀྱང་། དེ་ལྟར་མིན་ཟེར་ནས་སྐྱུ་ལ་གསལ་བྱས་ཤིང་བདག་ངེས་མེད་
 ཞིག་ཏུ་འགྲོ་འདུན་ཡོད་པས་བྱེད་ཀྱི་ཐུགས་གཏད་རིམ་ཞུས་ཆོ། རྗེའི་ཞལ་ནས་བདག་ལ་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་ལུང་བསྐྱུན་ [196b]
 སོགས་ལ་ཆོ་ཆོས་བར་ཆད་སེལ་ཐབས་བྱེད་རང་ཡིན་པ་ལྟར་ས་ཐག་རིང་པོ་རེ་མི་བྱོན་པ་དང་། བྱེད་པར་སྐར་ཐོག་
 འདེགས་ལོ་བར་ཆུ་ཤས་ཅམ་ལ་བཞུགས་ཐབས་རེ་མ་འཇུག རའི་ས་ནས་བྱང་གིས་འགལ་རྒྱ་མེད་ངེས་པ་ཡིན་སོགས་
 གསུངས་ནས། བདེ་བའི་དོན་རྒྱུ་ལ་གནས་ཆོ་རབས་ཀྱན་ཏུ་བྱེད་དང་འབྲལ་བ་མེད་པའི་སྒྲོན་ལམ་དཀར་ནག་འབྱུང་འཁོར་བར་
 དུ་བཏབ་ནས་ཡོད་ཀྱང་། བྱེད་ཀྱི་སྐྱུ་མདུན་ལ་བཅར་ཐབས་དཀའ་མོ་རེད་། གཅིག་ཐད་ནས་མགས་སྐྱུ་ལ་དང་།
 གཉིས་ཐད་ནས་ཉིད་ཀྱི་ཉི་འཁོར་རྣམས་ཆོག་ཐོག་ཏུ་ཨི་འདུག་མི་ཤེས་པ་འདུན་དེ་ལྟར་གྱི་དགོས་མེད་། ལུ་ཅག་ལ་བ་ལུ་མ་ཐུགས་
 རར་མཐུན་ཐོག་ཡིན་པ་དང་། བདག་རང་གིས་ཀྱང་ལོ་ངོ་བཙོ་ལྔ་འི་དུས་ནས་བྱེད་ལ་གསེལ་བ་བཏབ་ནས་གཙུག་གི་ནོར་
 དུ་འཆང་བ་ཡིན། ད་དུང་ཡང་འདི་ཕྱི་བར་གསུམ་ལ་རེ་ས་སྐྱུ་བས་གནས་བྱེད་ལས་མེད་པས་ཐུགས་ [197a] ཞབས་ནས་མི་
 འདོར་བ་བཀའ་ངོ་མཚར་མ་རྒྱུང་ཟེར་ནས། རྗེའི་སྐྱུ་ལ་བསྐྱོད་པ་བྱས་པ་དང་། སྒྲོན་ལམ་སོགས་གཏོར་གཞུང་དུ་གསལ་ལོ།
 དེ་ནས་བདེ་བའི་དོན་རྒྱུ་ལ་ཟབ་གཏོར་འབེབ་རྒྱ་བཀའ་ངོ་མཚར་མ་རྒྱུང་ཞུས་ནས་རང་གནས་ལ་ཕེབས་པོང་།

⁶⁶⁵ Autobiography 253b1-4:

བྱེད་ཀྱིས་བདག་ཐུགས་བརྩེ་བ་ཆེན་པོས་རྗེས་སུ་བཟུང་སྟེ། མི་གལ་ནས་བྱུད་པ། ལྷ་གལ་དུ་བཀོད་ནས། ཆོ་སྤྱོད་
 འཛིན་པའི་ཀམ། ལྷུང་ལམ་བསྐྱོད་པའི་གསང་གྲོགས། ཟབ་གཏོར་གསུལ་བྱ་རྒྱུས་པའི་དཔལ་པོ། ལུགས་གཉིས་བྱ་བ་
 ཀྱན་གྱི་འབྲུང་གནས་དམ་པ། བྱེད་ལྷ་བྱ་ཁོ་མོ་བདག་གིས་སྤར་ཡང་མ་རྟེན། ཕྱིའི་ནས་རྟེན་པ་ལྟ་ཞོག།

⁶⁶⁶ Autobiography 254a. 6-255a.1:

དེ་ནས་ངེད་ཅག་ [254b] རང་ཡུལ་སྤྱོད་པ་ལ་འོང་ནས་རི་ཟམ་ཞེས་པའི་ནང་དུ་ཐོན་ཏུ་བཟི་ལམ་ལ། ཡང་ལྷན་སྤྱོད་གྱི་
 མི་མོ་འཛིག་པ་སུ་རུང་བ་དེ་ཐོན་ཏུ་ནས་འདི་སྐད་ཟེར། བྱིད་དམ་ཉམས་ནམས་གྱི་བྱིད་དུ་ཅིའི་ཕྱིར་འགྲོ་བ་ཡིན།
 གསེར་དང་ར་གན། ཆང་དང་རྩ་གཉིས་ནོར་བུ་བྱུང་། རང་སྐལ་གྱི་སེམས་པ་དགོས་མེད་དུ་དོར། རང་གཏིར་ཟབ་མོའི་
 འཛིན་སྐྱོང་རྒྱབ་དུ་བོར་ནས། འཁོར་བའི་ཁ་འཛིན་ལ་གཡངས། བྱིད་ཆུང་ནས་ད་བར་གྱི་དུས་ལ་བྱུག་ཆོ། ར་རང་
 གིས་བྱང་པའི་བསྐབ་བྱུངས། ཟབ་མོའི་ཆོས་གཏིར་གྱི་པ་ལོག་གཏད། རྒྱུན་ཕྱིན་གྱི་བར་ཆད་བརྒྱུག་པ་སོགས་མ་
 ཡིས་བྱ་སྤྱོད་བཅུ་བ་བཞིན་བྱས་ཏེ་བསྐྱེད་བསྐྱིད་བ་ཡིན་ཀྱང་། ད་དུང་རང་རྩ་གསུམ་མི་བྱུང་ཅིང་གཞན་དབང་ཁོན་ལ་གཏོང་དགོས་
 པའི་དོན་ཅི་ཡོད་ཟེར། ཡང་བདག་གིས་ར་རང་སྐྱོ་སྐྱོ་མང་ནས་གྲོགས་དང་གྲོགས་མི་ནོར་བུ་པ་མ་ཡིན། ལྷ་དང་སྒྲ་མ་གྱིས་
 ཞལ་གསུང་བཅག་ [255a] མ་རུས་པས། རང་དོན་རྒྱབ་དུ་བོར་ནས་བདུད་འདུལ་དབང་སྤྱུག་སྒྲིང་པའི་ཟབ་གཏིར་འཛིན་སྐྱོང་རེ་
 ཡི་འོང་སྐྱེ་མ་ནས། སེམས་འདུན་གྱི་འཕན་པ་དེ་ཀར་གཏད་པ་སོགས་གྱིས་ད་བར་ལ་རང་དོན་མ་འགྲུབ་པ་དང་། བྱིད་པར་
 ཐབས་གྲོགས་དང་ཆོས་འཛིན་ཐམས་ཅད་གཞན་དབང་ཁོན་ལ་སོང་བས། བདག་སྤྱི་ལུས་དམན་པའི་དེ་རྣམས་དང་འཕྲད་ཐབས་
 མ་བྱུང་བ་ཡིན། ད་ལན་གྱི་སྐབས་ཡང་ར་རང་མི་འགྲོ་རང་དབང་མེད་པ་དེ་ལན་སྤྲོས་ཆོ། མོན་རེ། བྱིད་རང་མི་རུས་ངན་
 པའི་རྒྱུན་གྱིས་བྱ་བ་གང་ཐད་ནས་ལ་ཡོག་མེད་པར་བྱེད་དགོས་སྐྱེ་མ་ནས། ད་བར་ལ་མགར་ར་སང་གི་བྱུར་ལ་ལྷག་སོང་བ་ཡིན།
 ད་ལོ་པན་ཆོད་བྱིད་ངེད་ཅག་གི་དབང་ཡིན། མགར་ར་སང་གི་བྱུར་ལ་སྤྱོད་པའི་དུས་རྒྱུགས་པ་ཡིན་ཀྱང་། ད་དུང་སྤོན་ལོག་
 པའི་སྤྱོས་བའི་རྒྱུད་བསྐྱེད་པ་ནས། བྱིད་ཀྱི་ཆོ་ཆོས་གདུལ་བྱ་རྣམས་ལ་ཅི་འགྱུར་མི་ཤེས། མར་མེད་ངེ་བཞེན།
 རྒྱ་དང་མེ། རྫོང་དང་ལྷགས་བཞིན་ [255b] ཡིན་པས་སྤྱབས་གཟབ་དགོས་ཟེར་བ་དང་མཉམ་དུང་རང་གཉིད་ལས་སད་དོ།

⁶⁶⁷ The term Sera Khandro uses is *nor*, which can refer to livestock in general, to cattle, to yak/cattle cross-breeds, or to yaks.

⁶⁶⁸ “*Lag ngar gyi me thur sog pas thal phyag byas*” refers to collecting the embers from the fire at night and patting them into a mound in order to keep them hot enough to reignite the fire the following day.

⁶⁶⁹ The three liberations are emptiness, signlessness, and wishlessness.

⁶⁷⁰ This is another of many instances in which Sera Khandro cross-references events she narrates in her auto/biographical writings with her (and his) Treasure scriptures. This level of intertextuality between auto/biography and divinely inspired revelation suggests the permeability and interpenetration of these two categories in Sera Khandro’s writing.

⁶⁷¹ *Autobiography* 257a.3-264a.5 (This *Autobiography* passage is a more expanded version of an otherwise very similar passage in the *Biography*, hence to avoid repetition I do not cite the *Biography* passage here):

དེ་ནས་ཉིན་གཅིག་དང་མོ་རྒྱུ་ལ་སོང་བས། ཡུལ་དེར་ཤིན་དང་ནགས་ཚལ་ཤིན་ཏུ་འཕྱག་པའི་ཟིལ་པ་ཆེ་བ་དང་།
 རང་ལ་ཆར་གོས་མེད་པས་སྤོང་ནས་ཁ་ཆར་གྱིས་གདུང་ནས་གོས་སྤྱིན་མེད་པ་ཆུ་ལ་བྱིང་བ་ལྟར་སྤོང་སོང་བ་ལ་སྤྱིན་བྱས་ཏེ།
 ནང་སྤྲོ་མོ་རྒྱུ་ལ་གཉིས་ཀྱི་རྒྱུ་པ་འཐེན་ནས་འགྲོ་མི་ཤེས་པར་བྱེད་འདུག་པས། སྤྱིན་བྲག་མ་བྱ་དང་། རྒྱལ་སྤྲུལ་
 གཉིས་ཀྱི་ཨ་ནེ་བས་མ་སྤྱིད་སོགས་ཀྱིས་སྤྱིན་པ་འཕོད་དགོས་ཟེར་གྲང་། ཁོང་ [257b] གི་ཐུགས་བབ་མེད་ཆོ་བཏང་སྟོམས་
 ལ་བཞག་དེ། རང་ནས་གྲང་སྤྱིང་ཅུས་བྱས་ཏེ་མོར་བཞོལ་གིག་དང་བྱིས་ཀྱི་ལས་ཀ་ཐམས་ཅད་སྤར་ལྟར་ ཅི་ལྟོགས་བྱས།
 དེ་སྐབས་ཡང་རྒྱལ་སྤྲུལ་སང་གི་སྤྱི་ལྟས་འཇིགས་མེད་དགོན་མཆོག་ལ། དེད་དཔོན་གཡོག་ཇོང་གནས་ ལ་བྱོན་དགོས་པའི་
 ལོ་རྒྱུ་རྣམས་ཞིབ་པར་བཤད་ནས། དེ་ལྟར་བྱེད་ཀྱིས་རྒྱལ་སྤྲུལ་ལ་ཡང་ཡང་ཁྱད་གོས་སྤྲུལ་པས། ཁོང་ནས་གྲང་ལན་མང་
 པོར་དེ་ལྟར་ལྟས་གྲང་བྱེད་རྒྱུ་མ་རྙེད་ནས། གཉི་མདའ་ཉི་མ་ལུང་བྱ་བར་སྟོན་ཅུ་ཇོགས། དེའི་ཉིན་ ཏུ་གོང་ལ་སོང་བ་དེ་
 ལ་ཁག་བཞག་ནས། ང་རང་གི་རྒྱུ་ལ་གཉིས་ཞེ་སོང་ནས་མལ་སར་ལུང་ཡང་ད་དུང་སྤྱིང་ཅུས་བྱས་ཏེ། རྒྱལ་སྤྲུལ་སྤྱི་
 མཆེད་ལ་ན་བཟའ་ཆ་ཚང་སྤྲུལ་སྤྱིན་ཞིག་བཟོ་བྱ་བ་རེ་བྱས་ཆོ། ནད་གཞི་ཇེ་འཕྱགས་ལ་སོང་ནས་འཆི་ལ་ཉི་ བར་བྱུང་ཡང་སྤྱིན་
 དཔུང་རིམ་གྱོ་བྱེད་པ་ལྟ་ཞོག། ཐུབ་བཟང་དང་། འཇིགས་མེད་ [258a] དགོན་མཆོག་གཉིས་ཀྱིས་ ནད་གཡོག་བྱས་
 པ་ཐུགས་ལ་མ་བབ་པའི་རྣལ་འབྱོར་མཛོད་ཆོ། བདག་གིས་ཁོང་གཉིས་ལ་འདི་སྐད་སྤྲུལ། ང་རང་ནད་ཞབས་འདི་ལས་
 ཐར་སྤྱིད་པ་བྱུང་ན། མགར་ར་སྤྲུང་གི་བྱིས་དེར་མི་འདུག་ངེས་པ་ཡིན། ང་མོ་ལོ་ཉི་ཤུའི་དུས་ནས་ད་ཅ་དགྲུ་ལ་མ་ཐོན་
 བར་དུ་ལག་ངར་གྱིས་མེ་ཐུར་སོག་པས་ཐལ་ཐུག་བྱས་ཏེ། མི་ཆོ་གཡོག་ལ་ཟད་པ་ཡིན། ད་འཆི་ཁར་ཐུག་གྲང་སྤྱིན་དཔུང་
 རིམ་གྱོ་བྱེད་པ་ལྟ་ཞོག། ནད་གཡོ་རེད་མགར་སྐོར་བྱིང་ཀུན་དང་། བྱུང་པར་རྒྱལ་སྤྲུལ་ཁོ་རང་དང་བཅས་པའི་དགོངས་
 པ་དེ་བྱེད་གཉིས་ཀྱིས་གསལ་བ་ལྟར། ང་རང་གིས་ཟེར་མི་དགོས། བདག་གི་ནད་གཡོ་ཡིན་མིན། མགར་ར་སྤྲུ་
 མཆོག་སྤྱན་པ་ཡིན་པས། ཁོ་རང་འཕོད་དུ་སོང་ལ་སྤྱིན་དཔུང་བྱེད་དུ་བཅུག་དགོས་སྤྲུལ། དེ་སྐབས་གཉིས་སྟོན་སྤྲུང་
 གི་གཉིར་ [258b] པ་འོད་འབར་དང་། འཇིགས་མེད་བཟང་པོ་གཉིས་ཀ་ཆོང་ནས་ལེན་དུ་ཐོན་བྱུང་བས། དེའི་གདོངས་ ལ་
 ཡིད་བཞིན་མོར་བྱས་གྲུ་རྩ་རྩ་ལག་གི་བསྐྱེད་ཇོགས་ཆ་ཚང་སྤར་ལྟས་སྤྲུལ་ཐུག་གིས་མཛད་ཅིང་བྱིང་གིང་ཡིག་ཐག་དང་བཅས་པ་སྤྲུལ་
 ལྟར་གནང་འབྱོར་སྤྱི་པོར་ཕེབས་པ་དང་། དེ་དང་མཉམ་དུ་ཇེ་དྲི་ཉིད་དགྲུང་ལོ་ཞེ་གཉིས་པན་ཆད་མི་བཞུགས་པའི་ལུང་བསྤྱན་

ལྷ་ཚོགས་སྒྲུ་མ་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་བདུད་འཛུམས་དྲེང་དང་། གཞན་ཡང་གནས་གསུམ་མཁའ་འགྲོས་ ལུང་བསྟན་སོགས་དང་།
 ཁོང་དཔལ་རིམ་ཐེབས་དགོས་བྱུང་ཆོ་བྱིད་ཀྱི་ཐུགས་ངལ་མཛད་མི་དགོས། ཅུ་ཅག་ཡབ་ཡུམ་སྐད་ ཅིག་ཅམ་ཡང་འབྲལ་བ་
 མེད་སོགས་གསུང་ཡིག་ཐེབས་པས་ཅི་བྱེད་ལྟོས་མེད་དུ་སོང་། བྱིན་དྲུག་གིས་མནར། སེམས་སྟབས་བསྐྱེད་ཀྱིས་གདུང་ནས།
 རྗེ་དེ་ཉིད་ལ་སྒྲེ་སྟེགས་ཀྱིས་སྒྲོ་གཏམ་དང་། ཁོ་མོའི་མགོན་དུ་བཞུགས་པར་གསོལ་བ་བཏབ་ནས་ཞུ་ཡིག་ལྷུལ།
 དེ་ནས་ཡང་ཉིན་གཅིག་ཐུབ་བཟང་གི་ཡུལ་པ་ [259a] རྣམས་ཐོན་བྱུང་བས། ང་རང་མཐོང་ཆོ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱིས་མཆིལ་མ་
 བྱུང་ནས། ཨ་ཁ་ཁ་ད་ལན་བྱེད་འདས་འགྲོ་ངེས་པ་རེད་། སྟོན་པ་དང་མོ་བ་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་ཅི་ཟེར་འདུག་ཟེར་བས།
 བདག་གིས་ང་རང་ནད་འདིས་མནར་ནས་ལོ་གསུམ་ཅམ་ཡིན། རྗེ་འབྲུགས་ལ་སོང་ནས་རང་མགོ་མ་ཐོན་པར་རྒྱ་བ་གཅིག་ལྷུག་
 ཅམ་སོང་། དེའི་ཆོ་སྟོན་ཐུན་གཅིག་རིམ་གྲོ་བྱས་ཅམ་ཡང་བྱེད་མ་སྟོང་བ། འཇིགས་མེད་དཀོན་མཆོག་དང་། ཐུབ་
 བཟང་སོགས་ཀྱིས་གསལ་སྒྲུལ་ཆོ། ཁོང་ཆོས་གྲོས་བྱས་ཏེ་མགར་ར་ལྷ་མཆོག་འཕོད་དུ་སོང་ནས་ཐོན་བྱུང་། ཁོང་གིས་
 ང་རང་གི་རྩ་དང་རྩ་ལ་བལྟས་ཆོ། རྩ་འབམ་རེད་། ནད་ལུན་རིང་བའི་རྩིན་གྱིས་སྟོད་དུ་འགྲོ་ཉིན་གདུང་ཟེར། དེ་
 སྐབས་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱིས་བདེན་པར་བཟུང་ཡང་། སྟོན་གྱིས་ཕན་ཐབས་མ་བྱུང་ནས་འཆི་བ་ལ་ཉེ་འོང་བའི་ཆོ། [259b] ལྷ་དཔལ་
 དང་། རྒྱལ་སྤུས་སྒྲུ་མ་ཆེད་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་བཀའ་འགྲོས་མཛད་ནས། དེད་མ་བྱ་གཏིར་སྐར་ལ་བསྐྱལ་དགོས་ཟེར།
 དེའི་སྐབས་བདག་གིས་མི་རོལ་པ་དུར་བྱོད་བྱེད་མི་དགོས། དེད་མ་བྱ་གཏིར་སྟོན་སྒྲུབ་རྩུར་ལ་ཅིའི་ཕྱིར་འགྲོ། ང་
 རང་གིས་ཆོ་སྟོད་རྒྱུད་པ་ཡོད་ཆོ་བྱིད་མགར་ར་སང་གི་གཡོག་བྱས། ད་ལི་རན་དུས་གཞན་ཞིག་ཡོད་པར་འགྲོ་དགོས་པའི་དོན་
 ཅི་ཡང་མེད། གལ་ཏེ་དེད་མ་བྱའི་བྱེད་ཅག་ལ་གནོད་ན། རྗེ་གས་གནས་སམ། འབྲོང་མདུན་གཉིས་གང་རུང་དུ་འགྲོ་
 དང་ཆོག་མ་གཏོགས། གཏིར་སྟོན་སྒྲུལ་སྒྲུའི་སྒྲུ་མདུན་ལ་དེད་མ་བྱ་སོང་ཆོ། བྱེད་མགར་ར་སང་གིས་དེ་སྟེ་ཅི་བཤད།
 ཅི་གྲོས་ཡོད། རང་རང་སོ་སོའི་སེམས་ལ་ཡོད་པ་དེ་རེད་། ང་རང་གི་སྟོང་ན་རྩ་ཞིག་མ་བྱུགས། འོག་ནས་མེ་ཞིག་
 མ་འབྱུད། དེ་མིན་བྱ་བ་གང་ཐད་ནས་བྱེད་སང་གིས་ཅི་བྱས་སེམས་ལ་འོས་ཡོད་སྒྲུལ་ཆོ། [260a] ལྷ་དཔལ་དང་། རྒྱལ་
 སྤུས་སང་གཉིས་ཀས་འབྲོང་མདུན་དང་། རྗེ་གས་གནས་གཉིས་ལ་མགར་སྟོར་ཆོ་བ་མེད་པ་ཡིན་པས། གཏིར་སྐར་དུ་
 འགྲོ་དགོས་ཟེར། འཇིགས་མེད་དཀོན་མཆོག་དཔོན་གཡོག་གཉིས་སྒྲུལ་མ་མངགས། བསྐྱལ་པ་ལྷགས་བྱའི་རྒྱ་བ་
 བརྒྱུད་པའི་ཆོས་གསུམ་གྱི་ཉིན་དེད་མ་བྱ་གསུམ་དང་། ཐུབ་བཟང་བཅས་ལ་མ་དུ་ཞུགས། དེ་སྐབས་རྒྱལ་སྤུས་སང་

ནས་ཐུགས་རྒྱུང་མཛད་ཅིང་ལུང་པའི་མདའ་བར་དུ་སྐྱེལ་མ་མཛད། ང་རང་གི་འདུག་གནས་སྤྱི་ལོ་དུ་ཤོད་བབས་པ་དང་།
རྒྱུང་ཆེན་པོས་སྤྱི་མ་ལོག་གི་ཆོན་ཐག་བཅད་པ་སོགས་མ་ངེས་པའི་ལྷས་མང་དུ་བྱུང་བས། སྐྱེལ་མ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱིས་ང་རང་
ཤི་འགོ་བ་ལྟ་བུའི་སྤྱི་ལོ་དུ་ཤོད་དོ། དེ་ནས་མགར་ར་ལྟ་དཔལ་གྱིས་ཀྱང་ཇ་བར་ཞིག་གི་ལམ་དུ་སྐྱེལ་མ་བྱས། རྒྱལ་སྤྱས་
སང་དང་ཉི་འཁོར་གཞན་རྣམས་ཕྱིར་ལོག་གོ། [260b] དེ་སྐབས་བདག་གི་སྤང་བ་ལ་ད་རྒྱལ་སྤྱས་སང་དང་།
ངེད་གཉིས་སྐྱེ་བ་འདི་རྩ་མི་འཕྲད་ངེས་པ་ངེད་སྐྱམ་ནས། ལྟ་དཔལ་དང་། འཇིགས་མེད་དཀོན་མཆོག་གཉིས་ལ་འདི་སྐད་
སྤྱས། ང་རང་ནད་བབ་ལྷི་བའི་རྒྱུན་གྱིས་ཤི་འགོ་བ་ལ་ལ་ཐང་མེད་པ་འདྲ། རྒྱལ་སྤྱས་ལ་བྱིད་གཉིས་མ་འཆུག།
གསལ་སྒྲོན་ཁ་བྱི་རྩལ་པ་དང་། རྒྱལ་སྤྱས་སང་མི་གཤིས་ངན་པའི་རྒྱུན་གྱིས་ལས་མཐའ་ཅི་འགྱུར་མི་ཤེས་པ་འདྲ་ན།
བྱིད་གཉིས་ཀྱི་དེ་ལུགས་དགོས་སྤྱས་ཆོ། ཁོང་གཉིས་ནས་ཀྱང་དེ་ལྟར་བྱེད་པར་ཁས་བླང་ནས། བདེ་སྤྱག་ལེགས་ཉིས་
ཀྱིས་གཏམ་སོགས་ཞིབ་རྒྱས་སྤྱས་ཏེ་ལྟག་དཔལ་ཕྱིར་ལོག་གོ། དེ་ནས་ངེད་ཅག་ལམ་དུ་བཞུད་ནས་རང་ལ་ངལ་དུ་བཞེན་པ་
བྱུང་ཡང་སྤྱིང་རྩས་བྱས་ཏེ་སོང་བས། རྗེ་དེ་ཉིད་ཀྱིས་བཞུགས་གནས་མཁར་འགབ་སང་གིས་གསུམ་གྱི་ཉི་མ་ལུང་བྱ་བར་
བཞུགས་ཡོད་པས། དེ་ཀར་ཐོན་ [261a] ནས་ཐོག་མར་རྗེ་དེ་དངོས་སྤོབ་བསོད་སྤྱལ་སྤྱོད་གསུམ་རང་གྲོལ་དང་མཇལ་འཕྲད་
མཛད། དེ་ནས་རིམ་གྱིས་སྤྱི་ལོ་དུ་ནད་དང་མཇལ་འཕྲད་མཛད་སྐབས། ང་རང་གིས་སྤྱིང་རྩས་བྱས་ཀྱང་ལུས་བྱང་ཟད་པའི་
རྒྱུན་གྱིས་གཏམ་ཆོག་གཅིག་གཉིས་ལས་བཤད་མ་བྱལ་པ་སོགས་བྱུང་བས། རྗེ་ཉིད་ཀྱིས་མ་བཟོད་ནས་འཇིགས་མེད་དཀོན་
མཆོག་ལ། བྱིད་ཀྱིས་མཁའ་འགོ་འདི་ལ་ནད་དྲག་པོ་འདི་ཙམ་གྱིས་མནར་ཀྱང་ལྟོགས་མི་བྱེད་པ་ཅི་ཡིན་གསུངས་པས།
ཁོང་གིས་ལོ་རྒྱུས་ཐམས་ཅད་ལྷ་ཆས་བྱེད་འདུག་པས། བདག་གིས་ཁོང་ལ་བརྟེན་གྱིས་པས་ཅི་ཡང་ཟེར་མ་ཤོད་ནས།
ཕན་གཞོད་མེད་པའི་གཏམ་ཆ་ཤས་ལྷས། དེ་ནས་རྗེ་དེ་ཉིད་ཀྱིས་སྤྱན་དུང་དུ་རིམ་གྱོ་སོགས་ཀྱི་མཐུན་རྒྱུན་མཛད་པས།
ང་རང་ནད་ལས་རྗེ་དངོས་ལ་སོང་། དེ་སྐབས་སྤྱི་ལོ་དུ་ཤོད་པོ་ཆེའི་ཞལ་གསུངས་ལ། བྱིད་ལོ་གསུམ་རྩ་ལ་ཐོན་དུས་
[261b] ཤ་ཟད་གོས་པ་བྱུང་ཡོང་། དེ་སྐབས་ཐེ་ཆོམ་མི་དགོས་དང་། ཁ་རྟེན་ཆད་ཀྱི་སེམས་ཅན་རྣམས་ལ་ཕན་ཐོགས་
ཆེན་པོ་འབྱུང་ངེས་གསུང་པ་ལྟར། རྗེ་དེ་ཉིད་ནས་ཤ་ཟད་གོས་གསུང་སྟེ། ཤ་ལ་བྱིན་རྒྱུ་བས་མཛད་ནས་གནང་བས་བཀའ་
བཅག་མ་རྩས་པ་དང་། ནད་ཀྱི་ཕྱིར་དུ་དགོས་པ་ཡིན་པ་སོགས་ཀྱི་ཟས་དེ་ལ་རུང་ཟད་རེ་ལོངས་སྤྱད། སྤྱི་ལོ་དུ་ལ་འཕེལ་
འགྲིབ་ཤིན་ཏུ་སོང་བ་རྣམས་སོར་རྒྱད་པ་བྱུང་ནས། ཅ་རྒྱུང་ལ་བོག་ཐོན་ནས་ལས་སྤྱི་རུང་བའི་རྒྱུ་བྱེད་དོ། ཡང་ང་རང་རྗེ་དེ་

བཀའ་གནང་ལྟར་མཚམས་དམ་བཤུ་ཞིག་ལ་བསྐྱད་ཡོད་སྐབས། ཡུལ་དེ་ཀའི་བདག་པོ་གཉེག་མར་གནས་པའི་མི་མིན་
 རྣམས་ཀྱིས་གཞུགས་སྡོམ་ཆོག་ལ་སྒྲུབ་ནས་ཐོ་མཚམས་བྱེད་དུ་འོང་བས། བདག་གིས་ཁོང་རྣམས་ལ་ལ་ཉིང་འཛིན་
 གྱིས་བཅིང་། ལ་ལ་སྦྱིང་ཇེས་བསྒྲུལ། ལ་ལ་དམ་ལ་བཞག་ནས། སྦྱིན་ཆད་གང་དག་འགྲོ་བ་རྣམས་ལ་གནོད་
 བྱེད་ [262a] མི་རྒྱས་པར་བྱས་ [262b] ཡབ་ཡུམ་གཉིས་
 ཀྱིས་རྒྱ་བ་གསུམ་གྱི་བར་དུ་ཉམས་ལེན་མཛད། དེ་སྐབས་སུ་ཕྱི་ཡུལ་གྱི་རྟགས་སུ་ཉིན་མཚན་མེད་པར་རི་རྩར་བ་དང་།
 ས་གཡོ་བ་དང་། སྒྲ་ཁུར་བ། སྒྲིང་བྱ་དང་། རོལ་མོའི་སྒྲ་སྒྲོགས་པ། སྤི་བཟང་གི་དང་ལུང་བ་སོགས་བྱུང་
 བ། ལས་ལྡན་སྒོ་བ་འབངས་ཀྱན་གྱིས་མཐོང་ཆོས་སུ་གྱུར་པ་དང་། རང་ཅ་རྒྱུང་ཐིག་ལེ་གནས་སུ་དག་པའི་རྟགས་སུ་
 དབུ་མ་གྱིན་གྱི་མཛུགས་ [263a] རྒྱ་གྲོལ་ནས། ལམ་སྐྱུངས་བསྐྱོད་ལ་མ་ལྟོས་པར། ཐེག་པའི་ཆོས་ཚུལ་ཐམས་ཅད་
 ཆགས་ཐོག་མེད་པར་མ་བྱེད་ཅིང་། ཟབ་གཏོར་དགོངས་པའི་གབ་སྒོམ་ལས། འགྲོ་བའི་ཁམས་དང་མོས་པ་དང་མཐུན་
 པའི། གདམས་པའི་གནད་དོན་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱིས་བད་རང་གྲོལ་དུ་བྱུང་བ་དང་། རྒྱུང་བཅུ་ལས་སུ་རུང་ཞིང་། ལུས་
 གཞོན་ཤ་དང་ལྡན་ཅིང་ཤིང་བལ་ལྟར་ཡང་བ། དག་རྗེ་ཆེའི་ཆོག་རང་རྟོལ་དུ་མགྱུར་མ་བྱས་ཆེ། དེའི་སྒྲ་ཐོས་ཆད་གྱི་
 རྒྱུང་ལ་བསམ་གཏན་དང་པོའི་ས་བོན་འཛོག་པ་སོགས་ལས་སྤན་དུ་མས་འགྲོ་བའི་དོན་འབྱུང་ཞིང་། བྱུང་པར་བདེ་ཆེན་
 རྒྱུང་པའི་ཡེ་ཤེས་སྒོམ་བྲལ་རིག་སྟོང་རྣམ་ཐར་གསུམ་ལྡན་རིག་སྟོང་བསམ་བཞུང་ལས་འདས་པའི་དགོངས་པ་མངོན་དུ་གྱུར་ཅིང་།
 ཐབས་ཤེས་གཉིས་ཀྱི་ཐུགས་ཡིད་མངོན་སུམ་དུ་རོག་ཅིག་དུ་འབྲེས་ནས། སྒྲ་གསུམ་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་ཆོགས་གཤལ་དུ་བྱོན་ནས་
 དག་པའི་གཟིགས་སྐྱང་སྐབས་ [263b] སྒྲུལ་པའི་བྱུང་པར་གྱིས་ཞི་བ་རྗེ་ཆེ་མཆོད་ཅིང་། ཇེས་རྗེ་ཆེ་མཆོད་དོས་སུ་གཟིགས།
 ང་རང་གིས་ཀྱན་གཟིགས་དབང་མེའི་རྣམ་པར་མཐོང་བ་དང་། གསང་ཆེན་སྐུར་ལམ་མཐར་སྦྱིན་པའི་དགའ་སྟོན་དུ་ཆོགས་
 ཀྱི་མཆོད་པ་བསམ་གྱིས་མི་བྲུབ་པ་དང་། བྱུང་པར་གནས་གསུམ་དུ་རང་རང་དང་འཚམས་པའི་འོངས་སྟོད་། གཉིས་མེད་།
 སྒོམ་མེད་། སྒོམ་བཅས་སོགས་ཡིད་དུ་འོང་བའི་ནང་ནས། རིག་འཛིན་དབྱེས་ཆོགས། མཁའ་འགྲོའི་རྩ་ཆོགས་
 གཉིས་སུ་འདུག་པས། ཇེས་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་རྩ་ཆོགས་ཟེར་གསུངས། བདག་གིས་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་འདུ་ཆོགས་ཡིན་སྐུམ་
 པ་རེ་མ་གཏོགས། ཐུགས་སྐྱང་ཐམས་ཅད་རོག་ཅིག་དུ་གྱུར་ནས་སྐྱང་སྟོང་བདེ་བ་ཆེན་པོའི་དཀྱིལ་འཁོར་ལ་བརྒྱ་བ་དང་།
 འབྱུང་བ་ལ་རང་དབང་བསྐུར་ནས་རྟོགས་པའི་རྩ་བ་རྒྱས་པའི་ཕྱིར་དུ་སྒྲུ་འབྲུལ་དོམས་པ་སོགས་ཇེ་དེ་ཉིད་ཀྱི་གཏོར་གཞུང་དུ་

གསལ། དེའི་སྐབས་སུ་བི་མ་མི་ཏུས་ཞལ་གཟིགས་ནས་དེ་ཉིད་ཀྱི་སྐབས་ཐབས་གནང་བ་དང་། [264a]

གནས་གསུམ་གྱི་མཁའ་འགྲོ་མ་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་ཐབས་ཤེས་གདན་ཐོག་གཅིག་ཏུ་འཁོད་པ་ལ། ཆོས་སྤྱག་འདུ་བའི་བཀྱར་སྟེ་
བྱེད་ཅིང་རྫོང་སྐྱེ་ཡི་མཆོད་པ་གསུང་པ་ནི་རང་གཏིར་ན་གསལ། བྱེད་པར་ཕན་ཚུན་ཟབ་གཏིར་གྱི་བརྟེན་ཤོལ་ཤིན་གྱུ་སྤྱར་ཞིང་།
རང་ནས་ཀྱང་དེ་སྐབས་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་ལ་ཕུན་སུམ་ཆོགས་པའི་མཐུས་ཆོས་ཉིད་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་གསང་མཛོད་ཀྱི་ཆོས་སྟེ། ཟག་ཏིག་
རྫོང་ཡག་མའི་སྟེའི་སྤྱར་ལམ་ཨ་ཏུ་ཡོ་གའི་མན་ངག་སྟེང་སྟོ་བདེ་བ་ཆེན་པོའི་དོན་དང་། འོག་སྟོ་ཁམས་གསུམ་རོལ་པའི་ཟབ་
བྱིད་རྣམས་གསལ་བྱུང་སྟེ་སྟེལ་བ་སོགས་བྱས་པའོ།

⁶⁷² Autobiography 268b.4-269b.1; 271b. 4-273.6:

ཡང་རྗེའི་ཞལ་ནས་ང་རང་ལ་ཞལ་གདམས་གསུངས་ཡོད་པ་འདི་དེའི་གནས་སྐབས་ལ་དགོངས་པ་ཡིན་ན། འཆི་སྤྱང་འབྱུང་
ལུའི་བསྟེ་འཕོ་གསུངས་དོན་ཅི་ལགས། བྱེད་ཀྱི་མཛོད་སྟོན་དང་། སྤྱུ་ལུས་སོགས་གང་ལ་བརྟགས་དཔྱད་བྱས་ཀྱང་
ཡིད་མི་ཆེས་པ་ཞིག་འདུག་པས། [269a] སྤྱི་མིང་སྤྱིང་གཉིས་དང་། བྱེད་པར་ང་རང་རྣམས་བྱགས་ཀྱིས་དོར་ནས་འདི་སྤྱང་
ལ་མི་བརྟགས་དོན་ཅི་ལགས། རེད་རྣམས་ཀྱི་སྟོག་ཏད་པ་དང་། སེམས་འཁྲིམ་སྟེ་བྱེད་། བྱེད་པར་ང་རང་གི་སྐབས་
གནས་རེས་གྲོགས་དང་སྤྱུ་མ་གཉིས་ཀྱི་རྟེན་ཏུ་བྱེད་ལས་མེད་པ་མ་བྱེད་པཞིན། བདག་བྱགས་ནས་དོར་བ་ཀྱི་ཏུད་གསུངས་ཏེ།
བྱགས་ངལ་ཆེན་པོ་མཛོད་འདུག་པས། བདག་གིས་སེམས་ཀྱིས་མ་བཟོད་ནས། དེ་སྤྱི་བསམ་བྱའི་རྟེན་རྣམས་སྤྱི་
གསང་མེད་པར་ལྷས་ནས། ད་ཕན་ཆད་དེ་ལྟར་མི་བྱུ་བའི་དམ་བཅའ་ཡུལ། ད་ལན་ཆོ་ཡི་འཕན་པ་མ་ཟད་ཀྱང་།
བསམ་པའི་འཕན་པ་རྫོགས་ཏེ་བས། བྱེད་ནས་བྱགས་གཟབ་རེ་མཛོད་དང་། ལུ་ཅག་གཉིས་སྤྱི་བདུ་མར་སྟོན་ལམ་
འབྲེལ་ཟབ་ཆེ་བས་ཕན་པ་འབྱུང་ངེས་པ་ཡིན་ལྟས། དེ་ནས་སྐྱེ་བ་དེ་ཀའི་ཉི་ཤུ་བདུན་གྱི་དགུང་མོ་དབང་གི་དུས་སུ་རང་ལ་མཁའ་
འགྲོས་བསྟེ་ [269b] བ་བྱུང་ནས། [... long explanation of ḍākinīs' invitation and description of their appearance

and of their delightful land filled with rainbow light] [271b.4] རང་གི་འབྱུང་བཞི་མཐའ་ནས་སྤྱད་ཅིང་ལུས་བཅུ་སྟོང་
ལྟར་སོང་། སེམས་སྤྱིད་བྱིངས་དང་མཉམ། འབྱེད་བྱེད་ཀྱི་ཤེས་རབ་གནས་སྤྱད་གསལ། འཁོར་འདས་གསལ་སྤྱི་
མེད་པར་མཐོང་ཡང་། སྤྱང་བའི་སྐབས་འབྱེད་དཀའ་བ་སོགས་འབྱུང་ཆོ། རྗེ་དེ་ཉིད་དང་། བསོད་སྤྱུལ་སང་གིས་དབུས་
མཛོད་པའི་རྟེ་འཁོར་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱིས་ [272a] སྤྱི་སྤྱགས་འདོན་ཅིང་ཆེ་དོད་རི་རི་བྱེད་པ་དང་། གཞན་ཡང་ཆོས་སྤྱར་འདུས་
སྤྱི་རྣམས་མི་བདེ་ཡོང་དོ་བྱེད་ཅིང་། དཔེར་ན་བྱ་ཆང་ཁྲ་ཡིས་གཏོར་བ་སྤྱུར་ཏུ་ཡོང་ཡོང་བྱེད་པ་དང་། བྱེད་པར་

རྒྱུ་མཁའ་ལྷོ་ལོང་གི་ཕྱག་གིས་སྐྱུ་པ་ད་དུ་སྒྲུང་ནས་འདི་སྐད་གསུངས། གཅེས་
 ཕྱག་བྱེད་ཀྱིས་བདག་ཕྱགས་ནས་དོར་སྟེ་ཞིང་དུ་གཤེགས་པར་གྱུར་ན། ང་རང་ཡུན་རིན་མི་འགོར་བར་བྱེད་དང་མཉམ་དུ་འདུན་
 པ་གཏང་ངེས་པ་དང་། གཏིར་ཆོས་ལ་སོགས་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱང་འཛིན་སྟེ་ལྟེན་པ་ལྟ་ཞོག། རྗེས་ལྷུང་ཙམ་ཡང་མི་མཛོན་
 པར་བྱེད་པ་ཡིན། བདག་གིས་འདི་ཕྱི་འཛིན་སྟེ་ལྟེན་པ་ལྟ་ཞོག། སྐྱུ་ལམ་བསྐྱོད་པའི་ཤིང་རྩ་ཆེན་མོ། ཐབས་གྲོགས་སྤིང་གི་
 རོར་བྱེད་དང་སྐྱེ་བའི་ཐབས་ཐམས་ཅད་ལ་འབྲལ་བ་མེད་པར་ཤོག་ཅིག་གསུངས་ཏེ། ཕྱགས་རྒྱུང་བར་མཛད་ཆོ་སྐྱོན་ཆབ་དོག་
 པོ་གཅིག་ [272b] ང་རང་ན་བའི་ནང་དུ་སྐྱུང་ནས་སྤིང་ལ་བརྒྱབ་པ་ལྟ་བུར་བྱས་ཆོ། ང་རང་སྤྱི་དབྱགས་ཆད་མ་རྒྱུ་པར་ཡོད་
 ཀྱང་ཅུང་ཟད་ཞིག་དྲན་པ་ཆེད་པ་ལྟར་བྱུང་བས། ཡང་རྒྱུ་མཁའ་ལྷོ་ལོང་གི་ཕྱག་གིས་ལྟེན་པ་ལྟ་ཞོག། གཅེས་ཕྱག་
 བྱེད་ཀྱིང་མ་བཞེད། བྱེད་ཀྱིས་འདུན་པ་སྤིང་གའི་ཡུལ་རྫོང་རྩི་གསུམ་ལ་གཏོད་དང་དྲན་པ་གསལ་འོང་སོགས་ཡང་ཡང་
 གསུང་མཐར། ཡིད་བཞིན་ཞོར་བུའི་གསུང་ཐོས་པ་ལ་ཡིད་འཕྲེང་ནས་འདུན་པ་ཁོང་ལ་གཏང་ཆོ། སྐྱུ་ལྟེན་ལོད་སྐྱུང་
 ཐམས་ཅད་ཐག་རྒྱུ་འོང་ལ་སོང་བ་ལྟར་བྱས་ནས་མི་སྐྱུང་བར་གྱུར། འདི་སྐྱུང་གི་དངོས་པོ་རྒྱལ་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་སྐྱུང་ཡུལ་དུ་
 རེས་གསལ་འཇུག་པ་ལྟར་བྱས་ཀྱང་ལྟར་གསུངས། སྐྱུ་ལྷུས་ཀྱང་དོ་འབྱུག་ལྟར་སོང་འདུག། ང་རང་གཉིད་ཉར་གྱིས་
 སད་པའི་སྐྱེས་བྱ་བཞིན། སྐྱུ་ལྟེན་ལོད་ཐམས་ཅད་བཞེད་པའི་ཡུལ་དུ་གྱུར་ནས། ཅི་ཡིན་ཆ་མཆོད་ནས་མིག་གིས་
 གཟུགས་ [273a] སྐྱུང་ཅུང་ཟད་མཐོང་འདུག་པས་བལྟས་ཆོ། བྱིས་ཐམས་ཅད་མར་མེ་མང་པོའི་གང་འདུག།
 བསོད་སྐྱུལ་སང་དང་། སྐབ་བཟང་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་བདག་གིས་རྒྱུང་པ་མེ་ལ་བྱོ་ཐབས་བྱེད་འདུག། རྗེས་ད་དུང་བདག་གི་
 མགོ་སྐྱུ་པར་ལ་བཞག་ནས། ལུས་ཀྱི་སྐྱེ་མཆེད་རྩིན་བཞུགས་དང་ཆོ་འབྱུགས་རེ་མཛད་འདུག་ཀྱང་། ང་རང་གི་ང་
 སྐྱུ་ག་སོང་བ་ལྟར་ཅི་ཡང་སྐྱུ་མ་རུས། གཞན་སྐྱུ་ན་པ་རིམ་གྱོ་སོགས་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱིས་ང་རང་གི་ཆགས་རྩལ་ཡོད་སྐབས།
 ཐོ་རངས་དང་པོའི་དུས་སུ་གསང་གྲོགས་ཡིད་བཞིན་ཞོར་བུ་མཐུན་སྤྱིན་རྒྱ་བས་ཆེ་བ་དང་། ང་རང་ལས་ངན་གྱི་འབྲས་བྱ་
 མ་ཟད་ནས་སྤྱི་དབྱགས་རྒྱུང་ཆེན་ཆད་འཆམས་ནས་རིམ་གྱིས་སོས་པར་གྱུར་ནས། དེར་འདུས་སྒྲོབ་འབངས་ཐམས་ཅད་དང་།
 བྱེད་པར་རྒྱུ་མཁའ་ལྷོ་ལོང་གི་ཕྱག་གིས་ལྟེན་པ་ལྟ་ཞོག། བསོད་སྐྱུལ་སང་བཅས་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཕྱགས་ཤིན་ཏུ་དབྱིས་ཏེ། ཤིག་སོན་འཕྲད་པ་ལྟར་དག་འསྟོ་ཆེན་
 པོ་མཛད་དོ།

⁶⁷³ Sera Khandro also cites Drimé Özer's honorific words about her by quoting him saying, "Because you are a lama, I won't displease you by a hair's breadth." *Autobiography* 267a.1:

བྱེད་སྐྱུ་མ་ཡིན་པས་ཕྱགས་ལ་མ་བབ་པ་སྐྱུ་རྩེ་ཙམ་ཡང་མི་བྱེད་གསུང་།

⁶⁷⁴ Drimé Özer Biography 223a.4-223b.5:

དཀོ་རང་ནམས་ཀྱི་བསམ་པ་རྫོགས་པར་བྱེད་དགོས་པར་འདུག་ན། བྱིད་ཀྱི་ཐུགས་ངལ་མ་བྱེད་དང་། ལྷ་ཅག་
གཉིས་འགལ་བ་སྤྱི་ཅུ་མ་ཡང་མ་སོང་བ་ཡིན་པས། སྤྱི་བ་ནས་ཆོ་རབས་དང་འདི་ཕྱི་བར་དོ་ཐམས་ཅད་འབྲལ་བ་མེད་
ངེས་པ་ཡིན་པས། དེ་ནི་རང་ན་ཆོ་ཀྱང་མི་འདུག་པས་ཟངས་མདོག་དཔལ་རི་ [223b] ལ་འགྲོ་རྟ་གསུངས་ནས།
སྤྱན་རླིབ་གེར་བར་སྤང་ལ་གཟིགས་འདུག་ བདེ་བའི་དོ་རྩེའི་མགུལ་ལ་འཁྱུད་ནས་ལྷ་ཅག་ལ་བ་ཡུམ་སྤར་གྱིས་དམ་ཆོག་རྩེ་ལྟར་
བཤད་། ད་དུང་བསྟན་པ་དང་སེམས་ཅན་གྱི་དོན་ལ་བཞུགས་དགོས་པ་དང་། བྱིད་པར་རང་སྤྱོད་ནས་ཅིའི་ཕྱིར་བྱོན་ཞུས་
ཤིང་དགུ་དུས་ནས་བརྒྱལ་འགྲོ་བར་ལྷ་བྱུང་བྱས་ཆོ། ཡང་རྩེའི་ཐུགས་ཀྱིས་མ་བཟོད་ནས་དགོངས་པ་སྟོང་དེ། བདེ་བའི་
དོ་རྩེ་ལ། ལ་གཅེས་ཐུག་བྱིད་ཀྱིས་དེ་ལྟར་མ་བྱེད་དང་། ང་རང་ལྟར་ལས་འབྲེལ་བའི་དུས་ནས་དམ་སེམས་ཀྱི་རྒྱུན་དབང་
ལས་མ་ཐར་བ་ཡིན་པས་ད་ལེན་ཀྱང་དེའི་ལན། ལྷ་ཅག་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་གཞན་དབང་དུ་སོང་བ་ཡིན་པས། བྱ་ཐབས་
ཅི་ཡང་མེད་པས་འགྲོ་དགོས་ངེས་པ་ཡིན་ཀྱང་།

⁶⁷⁵ This name, as I have mentioned earlier, is an epithet of Longchenpa's previous incarnation and, as in this case, of Drimé Özer. It means "one endowed with the power of having a karmic connection to the Lotus [Born One, i.e., Padmasambhava]."

⁶⁷⁶ Drimé Özer Biography 226b.3-228a.6:

སྤྱན་བར་སྤང་ལ་གཟིགས་ནས་འདི་སྤང་གསུངས། འོད་གསལ་ཉི་མའི་དཀྱིལ་འཁོར་འདི། ཤར་ནས་འབྱུང་ཡང་རྩབ་
རིར་ཕྱོགས། དེ་ཡང་མི་རྟག་སྟོན་པ་འདྲ། དབྱར་གསུམ་སྤང་ལ་རྩི་ཐོག་རྒྱས། སྟོན་གསུམ་སད་སེར་བ་
མོས་འཛུངས། དེ་ཡང་མི་རྟག་སྟོན་པ་འདྲ། འཁོར་སྟོབ་ཆོགས་དུས་མགོན་པོ་འདྲ། སྤར་སོར་འདུས་ཀྱང་
ཕྱིའི་ནས་མེད། དེ་ཡང་མི་རྟག་སྟོན་པ་འདྲ། སྤྱུ་ལུས་ནམ་མཁའ་འཇའ་ཆོན་འདྲ། སྤང་སྤྱན་བྲལ་ཆོ་མཁའ་
[227a] ལ་ཡལ། དེ་ཡང་མི་རྟག་སྟོན་པ་འདྲ། བསྐྱེད་ལས་འབྲེལ་ཆོས་ཀྱི་སྤྱུ། དཔལ་རིའི་ཞིང་ལ་མདོན་སངས་རྒྱས།
དེ་ཡང་མི་རྟག་སྟོན་པ་འདྲ། ཀྱན་བཟང་ཆོས་ཉིད་དབང་མོ་བྱིད། བདག་གི་ལུས་ལ་སེམས་མ་འཕྲང་། སྤང་
རྟོག་སྤྱེའི་སྤྱར་བསྟོམ། སྤྱེ་བྲགས་བདེ་ཆེན་སྤྲགས་སུ་སྟོས། དན་རྟོག་ཆོས་ཉིད་གཅིག་གི་ངང་། བདག་གི་
ཐུགས་དང་གཉིས་མེད་མཛོད། དུས་ནམས་འབྲལ་མེད་བྱིན་གྱིས་རྒྱབས། ཕྱི་མ་དཔལ་རིའི་ཕྱོགས་དུ། འདེན་སྟོན་
བསུ་བ་ང་ཡིས་བྱེད། དེ་བར་ཐུགས་བསྐྱེད་དམ་བཅའ་བཞིན། བསྟན་འགྲོའི་དོན་ནམས་མཐའ་རྒྱས་མཛོད།
གསུངས་ནས་ཐུག་གཉིས་བདེ་བའི་དོ་རྩེའི་མགོ་ལ་བཞག་ནས་སྟོན་ལམ་མཛོད་ཀྱང་། བདེ་བའི་དོ་རྩེ་ནི་སྤྱག་བསུལ་

ཤིན་རུ་ཆེ་ཡང་སྤྲུག་སྤྲུག་བྱས་ནས་རྗེ་འཇམ་མཁའ་ལ་འཇུག་ཤིང་འདི་སྐད་ལྟས། ཡ་ཀུན་མཁའི་པདྨ་ལས་འབྲེལ་ཙུལ། ཐུགས་
 [227b] བཅོམ་བཅེན་པོས་བདག་ལ་དགོངས། སྟོན་མཆོ་རྒྱལ་དང་ཤེལ་དཀར་སྟོན་ལས་མཐུས། ཏུས་ད་རེས་ལས་འཕྲོ་
 དག་པ་ཡིས། མགོན་ཁྱེད་ཀྱི་ཉི་རྒྱུད་སྐལ་ལྷན་ནས། ཙུ་བདུན་ནས་ཐུགས་ཀྱི་གཟུངས་མར་བཟུངས། སུམ་ཙུན་སྤྱང་
 འཇུག་བསྟན་འགོར་སྟན། མཛད་པ་དང་ཕྱིན་ལས་མཐའ་རྒྱས་འབྱུང་། ཏུས་ད་རེས་སྟོན་ལོག་འདུད་དབང་གིས། སྐྱེ་ཉི་
 མའི་དཀྱིལ་འཁོར་དབྱིངས་ལ་རྒྱབ། མིག་ལོང་གི་བདག་ཅག་རྗེ་ལྟར་བྱེད། ཡ་ཡིད་བཞིན་མོར་བྱ་མཁའ་འགྲོས་འདྲིན།
 མ་འགྲོ་བའི་བདེ་སྤྱིད་སྤྱི་ཡིས་སྤེལ། མགོན་ཏུས་གསུམ་སངས་རྒྱས་ཞིང་ཏུ་བྱོན། གཉིས་འཛིན་གྱི་སེམས་ཅན་
 སྤྱི་ཡིད་འདྲིན། ཡ་པདྨ་ལས་འབྲེལ་དཔལ་རིར་གཤེགས། ལས་ལྷན་གྱི་བྱ་སྟོབ་སྤྱི་ཡིས་སྟོབ། ཁྲོགས་ཡིད་བཞིན་
 མོར་བྱ་མི་བཞུགས་པར། ལུས་དམན་གྱི་བདེ་སྟོང་དབང་མོང་། སྐབས་གནས་དང་རེ་སྟོས་སྤྱི་ཡིས་བཅའ། [228a] མགོན་
 པད་འབྱུང་དངོས་སྤྱང་དབྱིངས་ལ་གཤེགས། གཉིས་གཉིས་ཀྱི་འཛིན་སྟོང་སྤྱི་ཡིས་བྱེད། རྗེ་ཁྱེད་ཉིད་དངོས་སྤྱི་ཡིས་བཞུགས་པར།
 ད་འདྲ་སྐྱར་གསོལ་བ་བཏབ་དགོས་འབྱུང་། གསུངས་ཟབ་མོའི་གདམས་ངག་མི་གསུངས་པར། མན་ངག་ནམས་དཔེ་
 རྒྱུ་རྗེ་དགོས་བྱུང་། ཐུགས་བཅོམ་བས་གཅེས་པར་མ་བསྐྱར་ནས། སུན་སྟོམ་གྱི་ཐུགས་ཡིད་བསྐྱེད་དགོས་བྱུང་།
 འཁོར་སྟོབ་ཀྱི་སྐལ་ལྷན་མི་སྟོང་བར། ཡུལ་བདེ་བཞིན་རང་སར་འགྲོ་དགོས་བྱུང་། ད་ཅི་ལ་བསམ་ཀྱང་མགོན་ཁྱེད་དང་།
 འབྲེལ་མེད་ཀྱི་བཀའ་འདྲིན་མི་རྒྱུད་ལྟ། ཞེས་ལྟས་ནས་གསོལ་བ་ཡང་ཡང་བཏབ། རྗེས་ཀྱང་ཞལ་ཏུ་མང་ཏུ་མཛད་ནས།
 ཡབ་ཡུམ་གཉིས་ཀའི་ཀ་དག་དང་ལྷན་གྱུ་བ་ཀྱི་ཉམས་ལེན་ནམས་ལྟ་དག་བྱས་པའི་ཚུལ་གྱིས་གསུངས་གྲོས་མང་ཏུ་གནང་།

⁶⁷⁷ Drimé Özer Biography 229b.6-230a.3:

རྗེ་འཇམ་མཁའ་གཉིས་བདེ་བའི་རྗེ་འཇམ་མཁའ་བཞུགས་ནས། ཨ་རྟི་ བདག་ནི་ཐབས་མཆོག་བདེ་ཆེན་ཉི་རུ་ག།

ཁྱེད་ཀྱི་སྟོང་དབྱིངས་ཤེས་རབ་ཡུམ་ཆེན་མོ། ཟུང་འཇུག་གཉིས་མེད་སྟོང་པས་ཉིང་འཛིན་གྱིས། སྤྱང་གྲགས་རིག་གསུམ་
 དག་པ་རབ་འབྱམས་ཞིང་། སྐྱེ་དང་ཡི་ཤེས་འདུ་འབྲེལ་མེད་པའི་གྲོང་། ཟུང་འཇུག་མི་ཤིག་ཏུ་ཡག་ཡབ་ཡུམ་སྐྱར།
 རབ་སངས་དག་ཞོན་ཏུ་བྱུམ་སྐྱར་སངས་རྒྱས་ཤོག།

⁶⁷⁸ Drimé Özer had warned Sera Khandro ahead of time that his community wouldn't let her stay after his death. He had already asked his closest disciple Sotrül Rinpoché to look after Sera Khandro at Sera Monastery.

⁶⁷⁹ Drimé Özer Biography 232a.3-233a.2:

དེ་སྐབས་བདེ་བའི་རྗེ་འཇམ་མཁའ་གསུངས་པ་འདི་ངེས་པ་རེད། ང་རང་གཅིག་ཕུར་ཡིན་ཀྱང་འདུག་ཏུ་མ་སྟེར་བས། ད་ཅི་

མཉམ་དུ། ཡིད་བཞིན་ནོར་བུ་ང་རང་གི་རྩ་རྒྱུན་ནས། འོ་རྒྱལ་ལམ། ཐུགས་ངལ་མ་མཛད་དམ། སྤྱིར་
 འཁོར་འདས་གྱི་ཆོས་འདི་མཛར་ཆེ། སྒོས་ཁྱ་ཅག་ན་མས་སྒྱུ་མའི་འཕྲུལ་སྒྲུང་དབྱིངས་སུ་ཞིག་པ་ལྟར་འབྲུང་བ་དེ་ལྟར་
 [234b] མཛར་རམ། མི་རྟག་པའི་རྒྱུ་མཛན་དུ་མ་གསུངས་ཀྱང་། ང་རང་ཡིད་ཆེད་བྱས་ནས་ཤིན་ཏུ་བྲག་ཏུ་བྱས་ཏེ།
 བྱིད་ཀྱིས་ངེད་ན་མས་ཤུལ་དུ་བོར་ནས་ཞིང་དུ་འབྱོན་པ་ཅི་ལགས། ཡང་སྒོས་ང་རང་ནི་ཉིད་ཀྱིས་མཁྱེན་བཞིན་ཕྱིན་ཏུ་གྱུན་གྱིས་
 བརྟམ་མཛད་བྱས་ཤིང་གང་གཞོད་བྱེད་པ་ཉིད་ཀྱིས་མཁྱེན། ད་མགོན་སྐུ་བས་མེད་པ་བདག་གིས་ཇི་ལྟར་བྱེད་སོགས་སྒྲོ་གདམ་
 མང་དུ་ཞུས་པས། གསུངས་པ་བྱིད་ཀྱིས་འདི་ལྟར་མ་མཛད་དང་། ཁྱ་ཅག་གཉིས་སྐད་ཅིག་ཀྱང་འབྲུལ་བ་མེད།
 སྤྱིར་འདུས་བྱས་གྱི་མཛན་ཉིད་དང་། སྒོས་ཁྱ་ཅག་གཉིས་བསྟན་པའི་གསོས་སུ་སྟན་པས། ཕྱིན་ཏུ་གྱུན་དབང་ངན་པ་དང་།
 དུས་ཀྱིས་བསྐྱར་བ་ཆེར་བཅན་པའི་འགྲོ་བ་ན་མས་བསོད་ན་མས་དམན་པའི་དབང་གིས་སོང་ནས། ཀྱན་ཇོ་བ་སྐུ་མ་ཅམ་དུ་འབྲུལ་
 སྒྲུང་འཆར་ཡང་། དོན་ལ་ནི་ཁྱ་ཅག་ [235a] གཉིས་སྟོན་སྟོན་འབྲེལ་ཟབ་ཆེ་བ་དང་། ད་རེས་ཕན་ཚུན་བྲིས་པ་གཙང་ཞིང་
 འབྲེལ་བ་ཆེ་བའི་སྟོབས་ཀྱིས་སྐད་ཅིག་ཀྱང་འབྲུལ་བ་མེད། འོད་གསལ་གྱི་གྲོང་དུ་དེ་ཉིད་དུས་ཀྱན་མཇལ་འོང་གསུངས་ནས།

⁶⁸¹ There are many other examples of contemporary Treasure revelation couples who perceive themselves to be divinely prophesized consorts, but Namtrül Jikmé Püntsock and Taré Lhamo are the only example that I have heard about of a couple who understands themselves to be incarnations of both Drimé Özer and Sera Khandro. Taré Lhamo is one of many figures who has been recognized as Sera Khandro's incarnation. In Golok, others include Drimé Özer's teenaged great grandson in Dartsang named Trinlé Tenzin (*Phrin las bstan 'dzin*) who is her speech incarnation, Dzongtrül Rinpoché's daughter Lhacham Chökyi Drönma (*Lha lcam chos skyi sgron ma*, see Padma 'od gsal 2003: 73 for a reference to her), and Khandro Rinpoché (b. 1954) from Darlag, Golok (see Mchog sprul rang rig rdo rje rin po che, *Mdo khams rgyal mo tsha ba rong gi bai ro 'i sgrub phug ngo sprod mdor bsdu* 2006:19-36 for biographical information about Khandro Rinpoché). I am currently conducting research on Khandro Rinpoché and on other incarnations of Sera Khandro and Drimé Özer.

When I asked Chatral Rinpoché whether Sera Khandro had incarnations, he responded by telling me that Sera Khandro foretold that she would have many incarnations, but that they would not be well-known; they would not be monks or lamas, but would be lay people. Personal communication, October 2004. Chatral Rinpoché's oldest daughter Semo Sarasvatī is widely rumored to be Sera Khandro's incarnation, but I have not heard Chatral Rinpoché verify or negate this.

⁶⁸² Padma 'od gsal mtha' yas, *Nam sprul 'jigs med phun tshogs dang mkha' 'gro ta' re lha mo'i rnam thar*, Chengdu: Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1997.

⁶⁸³ The Cultural Revolution created a major break in the Treasure revelation lineages that Sera Khandro described in her early twentieth-century context. One casualty of this turbulent time period appears to be Drimé Özer's collected works. Sera Khandro's Treasure revelations, biographical writings, and commentaries survived the period of the Cultural Revolution but her biological descendant, her grandson by her daughter Chöying Drönma named Dolé Nyima, did not. Her student Chatral Rinpoché brought her lineage and her writings to Nepal along with him. Other sets of her manuscripts have been preserved in Tralek Monastery (*Bkra legs dgon*) in Gandze, in Riwoché, and in Serta by her disciple Sotrül Rinpoché (of Sera Monastery) and his descendants. In Golok, there are contemporary religious figures such as Drimé Özer's descendant Lama Gönpa Kyap of Dartsang, Serta, who received empowerment in Drimé Özer and Sera Khandro's religious lineages from Sera Khandro's scribe Tsültrim Dorjé. However, in Eastern Tibet, Drimé Özer and Sera Khandro's Treasure revelations are not widely practiced. An exception to this is the

Katok Monastery branch Tralek Monastery where there are religious figures currently maintaining and propagating Sera Khandro's Treasure teachings.

⁶⁸⁴ Pema Ösel's biography of Namtrül Rinpoché states that Gzhu chen bai ro mi 'gyur ye shes rdo rje recognized Namtrül Rinpoché as the incarnation of Gzhu chen nam sprul 'jigs med 'od gsal rig pa'i rdo rje at the age of nine, a proclamation that Rdzong gsar mkhyen brtse rin po che 'jam dbyangs chos kyi blo gros confirmed. Padma 'od gsal mtha' yas 1997: 14. Pema Ösel also mentions that Namtrül Rinpoché was prophesized to be the incarnation of the following figures: a mind incarnation of Padmasambhava and an incarnation of the Spiritual Master Namkai Nyingpo (*Slob dpon nam kha'i snying po*), the Knowledge Holder Jatsön Nyingpo (*Rig 'dzin 'ja' tshon snying po*), the Treasure revealer Nyinda Sangyé (*Gter ston nyi zla sangs rgyas*), Jangsé Yülhla Tokgyur (*'Jang sras g.yu lha thog 'gyur*), Prince Dralha Tsegial (*Lha sras dgra lha rtse rgyal*), Prince Manikara (*Lha sras ma ni ka ra*), and so forth. Padma 'od gsal mtha' yas 1997: 19. In his biography of Namtrül Rinpoché, Pema Ösel does not write that Drimé Özer was a previous incarnation of Namtrül Rinpoché, but rather he writes that Drimé Özer incarnated as Sera Yangtrül Rinpoché of Sera Monastery, who was the later incarnation of the figure Sera Khandro refers to as Sotrül Rinpoché (Padma 'od gsal mtha' yas 1997: 52). In conversation, Pema Ösel explains that Namtrül Rinpoché was also recognized by 'Prin las nor bu as an incarnation of Drimé Özer but that he didn't mention this in his biography because there is no official certificate or letter legitimating the recognition. That said, Pema Ösel adds that it is widely accepted. Personal communication, July 2006.

⁶⁸⁵ Oral interview August 2004, trans. Trülku Thondup.

⁶⁸⁶ The GPS reading for Nyenlung Monastery (*Snyan lung dgon*) is N: 32 47.890', E: 100 34.789', elev. 13,369'

⁶⁸⁷ The GPS reading for Tsinda Monastery (*Rtsis mda' dgon*) is N: 32 48.059', E: 100 33.956', elev. 14,975.' Holly Gayley is currently conducting doctoral research on Taré Lhamo.

⁶⁸⁸ Padma 'od gsal mtha' yas 1997: 131-132. Interestingly, Pema Ösel Thayé documents Sera Khandro's death date as 1937 in order to make sense of Taré Lhamo's birth date of 1938. Actually, according to Sera Khandro's attendant and scribe Tsültrim Dorjé's account of the end of her life, Sera Khandro died in 1940 at the age of 49 (Tshul khriims rdo rje 1948: 12). In Chatral Rinpoché's account of the end of Sera Khandro's life, he also documents that she died at the age of 49 in 1940 (Bya bral sangs rgyas rdo rje 1976: 13b).

⁶⁸⁹ The condensed version of Sera Khandro's autobiography, which she wrote in 1929, is found in her published Treasure volumes. See Bde ba'i rdo rje. *Ku su lu'i nyams byung gi gnas tshul mdor bsdu rdo rja'i spun gyis dris lan mos pa'i lam bzang*. In *Misho rgyal dngos sngang bde skyong dbang mo yi zab gter gsang ba'i chos mdzod rin po che*. Kalimpong: Dupjung Lama, 1978, vol. 4:103-129.

⁶⁹⁰ Oral interview August 2004 with Namtrül Rinpoché, paraphrased.

⁶⁹¹ Oral interview August 2004 with Namtrül Rinpoché, Trülku Thondup, trans.

⁶⁹² Oral interview December 2004 with Namtrül Rinpoché.

⁶⁹³ Oral Interview December 2004 with Namtrül Rinpoché.

⁶⁹⁴ Oral interview August 2004 with Namtrül Rinpoché.

⁶⁹⁵ Oral interview December 2004 with Namtrül Rinpoché, paraphrased. Sera Khandro claims the same thing about her own reading and writing abilities.

⁶⁹⁶ An addendum to this is that although he emphasizes that he and Taré Lhamo revealed Treasures together as a partnership, he suggests that he, as Drimé Özer before him, was the main person to reveal physical Treasures and not Taré Lhamo or Sera Khandro. (Oral Interview August 2004 with Namtrül Rinpoché, Trülku Thondup, trans.).

Conclusion

⁶⁹⁷ Gyatso also calls attention to this absence in Gyatso 2005: 289-290.

⁶⁹⁸ *Autobiography* 404b.4-6:

ལས་ཅན་སྒྲོན་ལས་ལྡན་ལ་ཆོས་འདི་སྒྲོན། ཏུས་ན་མས་ཀུན་ཏེ་བཅོལ་ཕྱིན་ལས་མཛོད། དམ་མེད་ལོག་ལྟ་ཅན་ལ་འདི་མ་

སྒྲེལ། གཡ་ཏི་འཕྲད་ན་རྟགས་མཚན་སྒྱུར་དུ་སྒྲེན།

Appendix III

⁶⁹⁹ *Nam mkha'i snying po*, one of Padmasambhava's 25 disciples.

⁷⁰⁰ *Nor bu dbang rgyal*, Chatral Rinpoché's uncle.

⁷⁰¹ I.e., he diligently engaged in practices from Sera Khandro's Treasure revelations (*gter chos*).

⁷⁰² *'Phags ma rnam par rgyal ma*, Skt. *Vijaya*, The Noble Victorious Lady.

⁷⁰³ *Nang mchod*, "inner offering," refers to ritual substances related to the Secret Empowerment in Tantric Buddhism and to the skull cup in which these offerings are held.

⁷⁰⁴ *Dran pa nam mkha'* is one of Padmasambhava's original 25 disciples, who was a Bönpo priest before converting. I think that this figure named Ayu signifies Khenpo Norbu Wangyal.

⁷⁰⁵ My hypothesis is that this refers to Karma Dondrüp, who Sera Khandro mentions in her colophon above and on f. 337b of her *Autobiography* as "The direct disciple of the Lord [Drimé Özer], the doctrine holder, the renunciate lama from *A skyabs Karma Don 'grub*. . . ."

⁷⁰⁶ *A ka' shi la* refers to Tsültrim Dorjé; it is part of his name in Sanskrit.

⁷⁰⁷ This refers to Jiktrel Chöki Lodrö (*'Jigs bral chos kyi blo gros*), the lama from Pelyül Tartang Monastery whom she calls Dharma Mati on *Autobiography* 158b.4. Sera Khandro mentions four pillars who will be her four main doctrine holders (*chos bdag*). These four names, endnotes 6-9, seem to be the list of her four main doctrine holders. Sera Khandro expresses this only symbolically, however; she does not clearly list these four names as the four doctrine holders in her auto/biographical writing.

Bibliography

Tibetan Sources:

Klong chen rab 'byams pa (1308-1364). *Tshig don rin po che'i mdzod*. Gangtok: Sherab Gyaltzen and Khentse Labrang, 1983.

_____. *Dpal gsang ba'i snying po de kho na nyid nges pa'i rgyud kyi 'grel pa phyogs bcu'i mun pa thams cad rnam par sel ba*. Paro: Ngodup, 1975.

'Gu log dam chos dpal bzang (b. 20th century). *'Gu log gi lo rgyus gnyan po g.yu rtse'i bsang dud*. Dharamsala: The Library of Tibetan Works and Archives. 2 vols.

Mchog sprul rang rig rdo rje (b. 20th century). *Mdo khams rgyal mo tsha ba rong gi bai ro'i sgrub phug ngo sprod mdor bsdus*. (no publication data), 2006.

'Jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha' yas (1813-1899). *Gter ston brgya rtsa'i rnam thar*. vol. ka of *Rin chen gter mdzod*. Tezu, Arunachal Pradesh: Tibetan Nyingmapa Monastery, 1973.

'Jigs med bsam grub (ed.). (b. 20th century). *Khams phyogs dkar mdzes khul gyi dgon sde so so'i lo rgyus gsal bar bshad pa thub bstan gsal ba'i me long*. Krung go'i bod kyi shes rig zhib 'jug lte gnas kyi chos lugs lo rgyus zhib 'jug so'o dang krung go bod brgyud nang bstan mtho rim slob gling bod brgyud nang bstan zhib 'jug khang, zi khron zhing chen dkar mdzes khul yig bsgyur cud. vol. 1-3, 1995.

Stag sham nus ldan rdo rje (1655-?). *Bod kyi jo mo ye shes mtsho rgyal gyi mdzad tshul rnam par thar pa gab pa mngon byung rgyud mangs dri za'i klu phreng*. Kalimpong: Zang mdog dpal ri Monastery, 1972.

Bde skyong dbang mo, Mkha' 'gro (1892-1940). *Skyabs rje thams cad mkhyen pa grub pa'i dbang phyug zab gter rgya mtsho'i mnga' bdag rin po che padma 'gro 'dul gsang sngags gling pa'i rnam par thar pa snying gi mun sel dad pa'i shing rta ratna'i chun 'phyan utpala'i 'phreng ba*. Damchoe Sangpo, Dalhousie, 1981.

Bde chen dbang mo, Mkha' 'gro (b. 1868). *Mkha' 'gro rgya mtsho'i rnam thar*. Dolanji, H. P.: Tibetan Bonpo Monastic Community, 1985.

Bde ba'i rdo rje (1892-1940). *Dbus mo bde ba'i rdo rje'i rnam par thar pa nges 'byung 'dren pa'i shing rta skal ldan dad pa'i mchod sdong*. Unpublished manuscript, 1934.

_____. *Mtsho rgyal dngos sngang bde skyong dbang mo yi zab gter gsang ba'i chos mdzod rin po che*. 4 volumes. Kalimpong: Dupjung Lama, 1978.

- _____. *Rdo rje phag mo'i zab khrid las dbang phur thugs sgrub skor*. Solu: Thodung Monastery, 1972.
- Mdo mkhyen brtse'i ye shes rdo rje (1800-1859). *Mdo mkhye brtse'i rnam thar*. Chengdu: Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1997.
- Padma 'od gsal mtha' yas (b. 1957). *Nam sprul 'jigs med phun tshogs dang mkha' 'gro ta re lha mo'i rnam thar*. Chengdu: Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1997.
- _____. *Gter chen bdud 'joms yab sras kyi rnam thar*. Chengdu: Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2000.
- _____. *Deb chung a ru ra'i dga' tshal*. Chengdu: Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2003.
- Bya bral sang rgyas rdo rje (b. 1913). *Dbus bza' mkha' 'gro bde ba'i rdo rje'i rnam thar chen mo'i mjug gi kha skong nyung du g.yu yi phra tshom*. Unpublished manuscript, 1976.
- Dbus bza' mkha' 'gro (1892-1940). *Snang sbyang dbus 'grel*. Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2002.
- Smin gling lo chen dharma śrī (1654-1718). *Rje btsun bla ma gter chen chos kyi rgyal po'i yum chen lha 'dzin dbyang can sgrol ma'i rnam thar*. In *Smin gling lo chen dharma śrī gsung 'bum*. Dehra Dun: D. Kochheen Tulku, 1975-2000.
- Tshul khriims rdo rje (19th-20th century), *Rgyal yum ye shes mtsho rgyal mi mngon rnam thar bzhengs pa mkha' 'gro rin po che bde ba'i rdo rje'i 'das rjes kyi rnam thar don bstan su bkod pa*. Unpublished Manuscript, 1948.
- Tshe dbang rdo rje (b. 20th century), Sprul sku. *Grub dbang pad ma lung rtogs rgya mtsho mchog gi rnam thar byang chub lam bstan*. Dalhousie, H. P.: Damchoe Sangpo, 1984.
- Gzhon pa dam chos tshe ring, Dkon mchog rdo rje, skal rdo (eds.). *Dbal shul gser thar gyi lo rgyus gsar bsgrigs blo ldan mig gi bdud rtsi*. Krung go mi dmangs srid gros gser thar rdzong u yon lhan khang gi rig gnas lo rgyus dpyad yig tsho chung. 1989.
- Ra se dkon mchog rgya mtsho (b. 20th century). *Gangs ljongs skyes ma'i lo rgyus spyi bshad*, Lhasa: Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, 2003.
- Bsod nams nyi ma (b. 20th century). *Se ra yang sprul gyi rnam thar*. Gser thar rdzong rig gnas khang gis bsgrigs shing par, 1994.

O rgyan brtson 'grus (b. 20th century). *Dar thang dgon pa'i gdan rabs*. Chengdu: Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1999.

A bu dkar lo (ed.). *Khrag 'thung bdud 'joms gling pa'i rnam thar*. Xining: Ziling mi rigs par khang, 2002.

Secondary Sources:

Allione, Tsultrim. 1984. *Women of Wisdom*. London, Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Ashley, Kathleen, Gilmore, Leigh, and Peters, Gerald. 1994. *Autobiography & Postmodernism*. Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press.

Ashton, Gail. 2000. *The Generation of Identity in Late Medieval Hagiography: Speaking the Saint*. London : Routledge.

Aris, Michael. 1989. *Hidden Treasures and Secret Lives*. London: Kegan Paul International.

Aziz, Barbara Nimri. 1976. "Views from the Monastery Kitchen: Fieldwork with Tibetan Monks and Nuns." In *Kailash*. vol. IV, n. 2.

_____. 1978. *Tibetan Frontier Families : Reflections of Three Generations From D'ing-ri*. Durham: Carolina Academic Press.

_____. 1987. "Moving Towards a Sociology of Tibet." In Janice Willis (ed.). *Feminine Ground*. Ithaca: Snow lion Publications.

_____. 1988. "Women in Tibetan Society and Tibetology." In H. Uebach, J. L. Panglung (eds.). *Tibetan Studies*. Munich, Bayrische Akademie der Wissenschaften, vol. II, p. 25-35.

Bakhtin, M.M. 1981. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Michael Holquist (ed.). Austin: University of Texas Press.

Barbour, John D. 1992. *The Conscience of the Autobiographer*. London: Macmillan.

_____. 1994. *Versions of Deconversion*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia.

Barron, Richard (trans.). 2003. *The Autobiography of Jamgon Kongtrul*. Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications.

Blackburn, Anne M. 2001. *Buddhist Learning and Textual Practice in Eighteenth-Century Lankan Monastic Culture*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Beyer, Steven. 1977. "Notes on the Vision Quest in Early Mahayana." In *Prajñāpāramitā*

and Related Systems: Studies in Honor of Edward Conze. Berkeley: Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series.

Blezer, Henk. 2001. "Karma Gling pa: Treasure Finder or Creative Editor?" In *Reading Asia: New Research in Asian Studies*. Frans Husken and Dick van der Meij (eds). Richmond: Curzon.

Blondeau, A. M. 1980. "Analysis of the Biographies of Padmasambhava According to Tibetan Tradition: Classification of Sources." In *Tibetan Studies in Honor of Hugh Richardson: Proceedings of the International Seminar on Tibetan Studies Oxford 1979*. Michael Aris and Aung San Suu Kyi (eds). Warminster: Aris & Phillips Ltd.

_____. 1984. "Le 'Decouvreur' du Mani Bka'-'bum etait-il Bon-po?" In *Tibetan and Buddhist Studies commemorating the 200th Anniversary of the birth of Alexander Csoma de Koros*. Louis Ligeti (ed.). Budapest: Akademiai Kiado, pp. 77-123.

_____. 1987. "Une polemique sur l'authenticité des Bka'-thang au 17^e siècle." In *Silver on Lapis*. Christopher I. Beckwith (ed.). Bloomington, The Tibet Society.

_____ and Steinkellner, Ernst (ed.). 1996. *Reflections of the Mountain: Essays on the History and Social Meaning of the Mountain Cult in Tibet and the Himalaya*. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.

_____ (ed). 1998. *Tibetan Mountain Deities, Their Cults and Representations: Papers Presented at a Panel of the 7th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies Graz 1995*. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.

Brown, Peter. 1981. *The Cult of the Saints*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

_____. 1988. *The Body and Society: Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Bynum, Caroline Walker. 1986. "... And Woman His Humanity": Female Imagery in the Religious Writing of the Later Middle Ages." *Gender and Religion: On the Complexity of Symbols*. Caroline Walker Bynum, Steven Harrell, and Paula Richman (eds). Boston: Beacon Press.

_____. 1987. *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

_____. 1992. *Fragmentation and Redemption*. New York: Zone Books.

Campbell, June. 2003. *Gender, Identity, and Tibetan Buddhism*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.

- Chayet, Anne. 1993. *La femme au temps des Dalai-lamas*. Paris: Stock-L. Pernoud.
- Cixous, Hélène. 2000. "The Laugh of the Medusa," in *French Feminism Reader*. Kelly Oliver (ed.). Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Clarke, Graham E. 1992. "Aspects of the Social Organization of Tibetan Pastoral Communities." In Ihara Shoren and Yamaguchi Zuiho (eds).
- Collins, Steven. 1982. *Selfless Persons*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Connolly, Peter and Hamilton, Sue. 1997. *Indian Insights: Buddhism, Brahmanism, and Bhakti*. London: Luzac Oriental.
- Cozort, Daniel. 2005 [1986]. *Highest Yoga Tantra*. Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications.
- Culley, Margo. 1992. *American Women's Autobiography: Fea(s)ts of Memory*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- Dargyay, Eva M. 1977. *The Rise of Esoteric Buddhism in Tibet*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- Davidson, Ronald M. 1995. "Atiśa's *A Lamp for the Path to Awakening*," In *Buddhism in Practice*. Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (ed.). Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- _____. 2002. *Indian Esoteric Buddhism: A Social History of the Tantric Movement*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- _____. 2005. *Tibetan Renaissance: Tantric Buddhism in the Rebirth of Tibetan Culture*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- de Man, Paul. 1979. "Autobiography as De-facement," *MLN*. no. 94 vol. 5. Dec.: 919-930.
- Delany, Sheila. 1998. *Impolitic Bodies: Poetry, Saints, and Society in Fifteenth-Century England*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Desjarlais, Robert. 2003. *Sensory Biographies: Lives and Death Among Nepal's Yolmo Buddhists*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Diemberger, Hildegard. 1991. "Lhakama [lha-bka'-ma] and Khandroma [mkha'-'gro-ma]: The Sacred Ladies of Beyul Khenbalung [sbas-yul mkhan-pa-lung]." In E. Steinkellner (ed.). *Tibetan History and Language*. Vienna, Arbeitskreis für Tibetische und Buddhistische Studien.
- _____. 1999. "Machig Zhama's Recovery: Traces of Ancient History and Myth in the

South Tibetan Landscape of Kharta and Phadrug.” In Toni Huber (ed.). *Sacred Spaces and Powerful Places in Tibetan Culture*. Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives.

Dimock Jr., Edward C. 1966. *The Place of the Hidden Moon: Erotic Mysticism in the Vaiṣṇava-sahajiyā Cult of Bengal*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Doctor, Andreas. 2005. *Tibetan Treasure Literature: Revelation, Tradition, and Accomplishment in Visionary Buddhism*. Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications.

Dorje, Gyurme. 1987. “The Guhyagarbhatantra and its XIVth Century Tibetan Commentary, *phogs bcu mun sel*.” Diss School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

Dowman, Keith. 1984. *Sky Dancer: The Secret Life and Songs of Yeshé Tsogyal*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Dreyfus, Georges. 1994. “Proto-nationalism in Tibet.” In Per Kvaerne (ed.). *Tibetan Studies*, 1:205-18. Oslo: Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture.

———. 1998. “Le Nationalisme: Entre mémoires glorifiées et identité collective.” In *Tibétains 1959-1999: 40 ans de colonization*. Paris: Éditions Autrement.

Drolma, Delog Dawa. 1995. *Delog : Journey to Realms Beyond Death*. Richard Barron (trans.). Junction City, Padma Publishing.

Dujom Rinpoche, Jikdrel Yeshe Dorje. 1991. *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism Its Fundamentals and History*. vol 1 and 2. Gyurme Dorje and Matthew Kapstein (trans. and eds). Boston: Wisdom Publications.

———. 1996. *Perfect Conduct: Ascertaining the Three Vows*. Khenpo Gyurme Samdrup and Sangye Khandro (trans.). Somerville: Wisdom Publications.

Dunaway, David K. 1992. “Method and Theory in the Oral Biography.” *Oral History*, autumn, pp. 40-45.

Eakin, John Paul. 1992. *Touching the World: Reference in Autobiography*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

———. 1999. *How Our Lives Become Stories: Making Selves*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Edou, Jérôme. 1996. *Machig Labdrön and the Foundations of Chöd*. Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications.

- Eliade, Mircea. 1954. *The Myth of the Eternal Return Or, Cosmos and History*. Willard R. Trask (trans.). Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Ellingson, Stephen & Green, M. Christian. 2002. *Religion and Sexuality in Cross-Cultural Perspective*. New York: Routledge.
- Ekvall, Robert B. 1938. *Gateway to Tibet: The Kansu-Tibetan Border*. Harrisburg: Christian Publications, Inc.
- _____. 1964. *Religious Observances in Tibet: Patterns and Function*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- _____. 1968. *Fields on the Hoof: Nexus of Tibetan Nomadic Pastoralism*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Epstein, Lawrence. 1982. "On the History and Psychology of the 'Das log.'" *The Tibet Journal* 7,4: 20-85.
- _____. (ed.). 2002. *Khampa Histories*. Leiden: Brill.
- Ehrhard, Franz-Karl. 1999. "The Role of 'Treasure Discoverers' and Their Search for Himalayan Sacred Lands." In *Sacred Spaces and Powerful Places in Tibetan Culture*. Toni Huber (ed.). Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives.
- Folkenflik, Robert. 1993. *The Culture of Autobiography: Constructions of Self-Representation*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Furlong, Monica. 1996. *Visions & Longings: Medieval Women Mystics*. London: Mowbray.
- Geary, Patrick. 1994. *Living With the Dead in the Middle Ages*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Geertz, Clifford. 1973. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books.
- _____. 1983. *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology*. New York: Basic Books, Inc.
- Gelek and Hai Miao. 1997. "Marital Payments: The Case of Tibetan Nomads." In *Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the 7th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Graz 1995*. Helmut Krasser, Michael Torsten Much, Ernst Steinkellner, Helmut Tauscher (eds). Vol. 1. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, pp. 317-325.
- Gelek. 1998. "The Washu Sertar: A Nomadic Community of Eastern Tibet." In *Development, Society, and Environment in Tibet*, Graham E. Clarke (ed.). Wien:

Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.

- Germano, David. 1994. "Architecture and Absence in the Secret Tantric History of the Great Perfection (rdzogs chen)." *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 17.2: 203-335.
- _____. 1998. "Re-membering the Dismembered Body of Tibet: Contemporary Tibetan Visionary Movements in the People's Republic of China." In *Buddhism in Contemporary Tibet*. Melvyn C. Goldstein and Matthew T. Kapstein (ed.). Berkeley: University of California Press.
- _____ and Gyatso, Janet. 2000. "Longchenpa and the Possession of the *ḍākinīs*." *Tantra in Practice*. David White (ed.). Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- _____. Forthcoming. *Prophetic Histories of Buddhas, ḍākinīs and Saints in Tibet*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- _____. n.d. *The Great Perfection* (unpublished manuscript).
- _____. (trans. n.d.). *The Treasury of Words and Meanings*, by Longchen Rabjampa. (unpublished manuscript)
- Goldstein, Melvyn C. 1989. *A History of Modern Tibet, 1913-1951*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- _____. 1987. "When Brothers Share a Wife." *Natural History*. 96(3): 109-112.
- _____. 1971. "Stratification, Polyandry, and Family Structure in Central Tibet." *Southwest Journal of Anthropology*. 27(1): 64-74.
- _____. 1997. *The Snow Lion and the Dragon: China, Tibet, and the Dalai Lama*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Gracia, Jorge J.E. 1995. *A Theory of Textuality*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Granoff, Phyllis and Shinohara, Koichi. 1992. *Speaking of Monks: Religious Biography in India and China*. Oakville: Mosaic Press.
- Greer, Allan and Bilinkoff, Jodi. 2003. *Colonial Saints: Discovering the Holy in the Americas, 1500-1800*. New York: Routledge.
- Gutschow, Kim I. 1997 (summer). "Unfocussed Merit-making in Zangskar: A Socio economic Account of Karsha Nunnery." In *The Tibet Journal*. vol. XXII. n. 2 (special issue "Women and Tibet"), pp. 30-58.

- _____. 2000a. "Yeshe's Tibetan Pilgrimage and the Founding of a Himalayan Nunnery". *Innovative Buddhist Women: Swimming Against the Stream*, Richmond: Curzon.
- _____. 2000b. "Novice Ordination for Nuns: The Rhetoric and Reality of Female Monasticism in Northwest India." *Women's Buddhism, Buddhism's Women: Tradition, Revision, Renewal*, Ellison Banks Findly (ed.). Boston: Wisdom Publications.
- _____. 2001. "The Women Who Refuse to Be Exchanged". *Celibacy, Culture, and Society: The Anthropology of Sexual Abstinence*. edited by Elisa J. Sobo and Sandra Bell. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- _____. 2004. *Being a Buddhist Nun: The Struggle for Enlightenment in the Himalayas*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Gyalwa Changchub and Namkhai Nyingpo. 1999. *Lady of the Lotus-Born*. Discovered by Tertön Taksham Samten Lingpa. Padmakara Translation Group (trans.). Boston: Shambhala.
- Gyatso, Janet, 1986. "Signs, Memory and History: A Tantric Buddhist Theory of Scriptural Transmission." *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 9.2:7-35.
- _____. 1992a. "Autobiography in Tibetan Religious Literature: Reflections on Its Modes of Self-Presentation." In *Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the 5th International Association of Tibetan Studies Seminar*, Shoren Ihara and Zuiho Yamaguchi (eds), vol. 2, pp. 465-78. Narita, Japan: Naritasan Institute for Buddhist Studies.
- _____. 1992b. "Genre, Authorship, and Transmission in Visionary Buddhism: The Literary Traditions of Thang-stong rGyal-po." In *Tibetan Buddhism: Reason and Revelation*. Davidson and Goodman (eds). New Delhi: Śrī Satguru Publications, pp. 95-106.
- _____. 1993. "The Logic of Legitimation in the Tibetan Treasure Tradition." *History of Religions* 33.1:97-134.
- _____. 1994. "Guru Chos-dbang's gTer 'byung chen mo: An Early Survey of the Treasure Tradition and Its Strategies in Discussing Bon Treasure." In Kvaerne 1994, vol. 1, pp. 275-87.
- _____. 1996. "Drawn from the Tibetan Treasury: The gTer ma Literature." In *Tibetan Literature Studies in Genre*. José Cabezón and Roger Jackson. Ithaca: Snow Lion.

- _____. 1998. *Apparitions of the Self*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- _____. 2005. "Sex," In *Critical Terms for the Study of Buddhism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 271-290.
- _____, and Hanna Havnevik (ed.). 2005. *Women in Tibet: Past and Present*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Hanna, Span. 1996. "Vast as the Sky: The Terma Tradition in Modern Tibet." In *Tantra and Popular Religion in Tibet*. New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture and Aditya Prakashan.
- Harding, Sarah. 2003a. *Machik's Complete Explanation: Clarifying the Meaning of Chöd*. Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications.
- _____. 2003b. *The Life and Revelations of Pema Lingpa*. Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications.
- Havnevik, Hanna. 1989. *Tibetan Buddhist Nuns: History, Cultural Norms and Social Reality*. Oslo, Norwegian University Press.
- _____. 1997. "The Autobiography of Jetsun Lochén Rinpoché, A Preliminary Research Report." *Tibetan Studies, Proceedings of the 7th Seminar of the International Association of Tibetan Studies, Graz 1995*. Helmut Krasser, Michael Torsten Much, Ernst Steinkellner, Helmut Tauscher (eds). Wien: Verlag Der Österreichischen Akademie Der Wissenschaften.
- _____. 1999. *The Life of Jetsun Lochén Rinpoche (1865-1951) As Told in Her Autobiography*. (unpubl. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oslo), 2 vol., 773 p.
- _____. 2002. "A Tibetan Female State Oracle." in H. Blezer (ed.). *Religion and Secular Culture in Tibet: Tibetan Studies II*. Leiden, Brill, pp. 259-288.
- Hawley, John Stratton and Wulff, Donna Marie (eds). 1982. *The Divine Consort: Rādhā and the Goddesses of India*. Berkeley: Berkeley Religious Studies Series.
- Holmberg, David H. 1983. "Shamanic Soundings: Femaleness in the Tamang Ritual Structure." In *Signs*. vol. 9. n. 1. pp. 40-58.
- Hollywood, Amy. 2002. *Sensible Ecstasy: Mysticism, Sexual Difference, and the Demands of History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Huber, Toni. 1994a. "Putting the *gnas* Back into *gnas-skor*: Rethinking Tibetan Buddhist Pilgrimage Practice." In *Powerful Places and Spaces in Tibetan Religious Culture. The Tibet Journal*. Toni Huber (ed.). 19(2-3), pp. 23-60.
- _____. 1994b. "Why can't women climb Pure Chrystal Mountain ? Remarks on

- gender, ritual and space at Tsa-ri." *Tibetan Studies : Proceedings of the 6th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Fagernes 1992*. Per Kværne (ed.). Oslo: The Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture.
- _____. 1999. *The Cult of Pure Crystal Mountain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ihara Shoren and Yamaguchi Zuiho, ed. 1992. *Tibetan Studies : Proceedings of the 5th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies Narita 1989*. Narita: Naritasan Shinshoji.
- Ibsen, Kristine. 1999. *Women's Spiritual Autobiography in Colonial Spanish America*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.
- Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Tayé. 2003. *The Treasury of Knowledge Book Five: Buddhist Ethics*. Trans. Kalu Rinpoché Translation Group. Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications.
- Jamyang Shakya. 1990. *Princess in the Land of Snows: The Life of Jamyang Sakya in Tibet*. Boston: Shambhala.
- Jelinek, Estelle C. 1986. *The Tradition of Women's Autobiography: From Antiquity to the Present*. Boston : Twayne Publishers.
- Jetsun Pema. 1997. *Tibet: My Story, An Autobiography*. Shaftesbury: Element.
- Jones, Lindsay. Ed. 2005. *Encyclopedia of Religion*. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA.
- Kalff, Martin. 1978. "Dākinīs in the Cakrasamvara Tradition." *Tibetan Studies*. M. Brauen and P. Kværne (eds). Zurich: Volkerkundemuseum der Universität Zurich.
- Karmay, Samten. 1998a. *The Arrow and the Spindle*. Kathmandu: Mandala Book Point.
- _____. 1998b. *The Great Perfection (Rdzogs chen)*. Leiden: E.J. Brill.
- Keyes, Charles F. 1982. "Charisma: From Social Life to Sacred Biography." *Charisma and Sacred Biography*. Michael A. Williams (ed.). *Journal of the American Academy of Religion Studies*. Vol. XLVIII, No. 3 and 4.
- Kippenberg, Hans G., Kuiper, Yme B., Sanders, Andy F. (eds). 1990. *Concepts of Persons in Religion and Thought*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Klein, Anne Carolyn. 1995. *Meeting the Great Bliss Queen*. Boston: Beacon.
- Krupat, Arnold. 1985. *For Those Who Come After: A Study of Native American Autobiography*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Kværne, Per (ed.) 1994. *Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the 6th International Association*

of Tibetan Studies Seminar. 2 vols. Oslo: Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture.

- Lama Chonam and Sangye Khandro. 1998. *The Lives and Liberation of Princess Mandarava*. Boston: Wisdom Publications.
- Lejeunne, Philippe. 1989. *On Autobiography*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Levine, Nancy. E. 1998. "From Nomads to Ranchers: Managing Pasture Among Ethnic Tibetans in Sichuan." In *Development, Society, and Environment in Tibet*. Graham E. Clarke (ed.). Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.
- Lingpa, Dudjom. 2002. *Buddhahood Without Meditation: A Visionary Account Known as Refining One's Perception (Nang-jang)*. Richard Barron and Susanne Fairclough (trans.). Junction City: Padma Publishing.
- Lobsang P. Lhalungpa (trans.). 1977. *The Life of Milarepa*. New York: Compass.
- Losang Kalsang Gyatso. 1995. *Nyung Nä: The Means of Achievement of the Eleven-Faced Great Compassionate One Avalokiteśvara*. Boston: Wisdom Publications.
- Makley, Charlene Elizabeth. 1997. "The Meaning of Liberation: Representations of Tibetan Women," in *The Tibet Journal* 22 (2): 4-29.
- _____. 1999. *Embodying the Sacred: Gender and Monastic Revitalization in China's Tibet* (unpubl. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan), 360 p.
- _____. 2002a. "Sexuality and Identity in Post-Mao Amdo." In Toni Huber (ed.). *Amdo Tibetans in Transition: Society and Culture in the Post-Mao Era, PLATS 2000*. Leiden: E.J. Brill
- _____. 2002b. "On the Edge of Respectability: Sexual Politics in China's Tibet." In *Positions, East Asia Cultures Critique* 10 (3): 575-630.
- _____. 2003. "Gendered Boundaries in Motion: Space and Identity on the Sino-Tibetan Frontier." In *American Ethnologist* 30 (4): 597-619.
- March, Kathryn. 2002. *If Each Comes Halfway: Meeting Tamang Women in Nepal*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Martin, Dan. 2001. *Unearthing Bon Treasures: Life and Contested Legacy of a Tibetan Scripture Revealer, with a General Bibliography of Bon*. Leiden : E.J. Brill
- Mayer, Robert. 1994. "Scriptural Revelation in India and Tibet: Indian Precursors of the

- gTer-ma Tradition." In *Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the 6th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies Fagernes 1992*. Per Kværne (ed.), vol. 2.
- McKay, Alex. 1997. *Tibet and the British Raj*. Richmond: Curzon Press.
- Miller, Nancy K. 1994. "Representing Others: Gender and the Subjects of Autobiography." In *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 6 (1): 1-27.
- Mooney, Catherine M. 1999. *Gendered Voices: Medieval Saints and their Interpreters*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Myers, Kathleen Ann. 2003. *Neither Saints Nor Sinners*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Myers, Kathleen A. & Powell, Amanda. 1999. *A Wild Country Out in the Garden: The Spiritual Journals of a Colonial Mexican Nun*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Nam-mkha'i snying-po. 1983. *Mother of Knowledge: The Enlightenment of Ye-shes mTsho-rgyal*. Tarthang Tulku (trans.) and Jane Wilhelms (ed.). Berkeley: Dharma Publishing.
- Olney, James. 1972. *Metaphors of Self: the meaning of autobiography*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- . 1980. *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Orofino, Giacomella. 2000. "The Great Wisdom Mother and the Gcod Tradition." in D. G. White (ed.). *Tantra in Practice*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 396-416.
- Patrul Rinpoche, 1994. Padmakara Translation Group (trans.). *Words of My Perfect Teacher*. New Delhi: Vistaar Publications.
- Pema Ösel Thayé, 2005. *Hagiographies de Taré Lhamo et Namtrul Rinpoché : Un couple de tertöns dans le Tibet d'aujourd'hui*. Jean-François Buliard (trans.). Ygrande: Éditions Yogi Ling.
- Penny, Benjamin. 2002. *Religion and Biography in China and Tibet*. Richmond: Curzon Press.
- Perkins, Judith. 1995. *The Suffering Self: Pain and Narrative Representation in the Early Christian Era*. London: Routledge.
- Petech, Luciano. 1973. *Aristocracy and Government in Tibet 1728-1959*. Roma: Istituto

Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente.

- Peterson, Linda H. 1988. "Gender and Autobiographical Form: The Case of the Spiritual Autobiography." In *Studies in Autobiography*. James Olney (ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Petroff, Elizabeth Alvida. 1986. *Medieval Women's Visionary Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Polkey, Pauline. 1999. *Women's Lives into Print: The Theory, Practice and Writing of Feminist Auto/Biography*. London : Macmillan Press Ltd.
- Pommaret, Francoise. 1989. *Les Revenants de l'au-dela dans le monde tibetain*. Paris: C.N.R.S.
- Prabhavananda, Swami and Isherwood, Christopher. 1972. *The Song of God: Bhagavad-Gīta*. New York: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Prats, Ramon. 1980. "Some Preliminary Considerations Arising From a Biographical Study of the Early gter ston." In *Tibetan Studies in Honor of Hugh Richardson: Proceedings of the International Seminar on Tibetan Studies Oxford 1979*. ed. Michael Aris and Aung San Suu Kyi. Warminster: Aris & Phillips Ltd.
- Rab gsal zla ba, Dil mgo Mkhyen brtse. [1988] 1999. *The Wish-Fulfilling Jewel*. Boston: Shambhala.
- Ray, Reginald. 1994. *Buddhist Saints in India: A Study in Buddhist Values and Orientations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Reynolds, Dwight F. 2001. *Interpreting the Self: Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Riccard, Mattheu. 1994. *The Life of Shabkar: The Autobiography of a Tibetan Yogi*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Richardus, Peter (ed.). 1998. *Tibetan Lives: Three Himalayan Autobiographies*. Richmond: Curzon.
- Renevey, Denis and Whitehead, Christiania. 2000. *Writing Religious Women: Female Spiritual and Textual Practices in Late Medieval England*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.
- Reynolds, Frank E. and Capps, Donald, Ed. 1976. *The Biographical Process: Studies in the History and Psychology of Religion*. Paris: Mouton & Co.
- Ritchie, Donald A. 2003. *Doing Oral History*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Robinson, James Burnell. 1996. "The Lives of Indian Buddhist Saints: Biography, Hagiography and Myth. In *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre*. José Cabezón and Roger Jackson (eds). Ithaca: Snow Lion.
- Rock, J. F. 1956. *The Amnye Ma-chhen Range and Adjacent Regions*. Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente.
- Sakya Pandita Kunga Gyaltshe. 2002. *A Clear Differentiation of the Three Codes: Essential Distinctions among the Individual Liberation, Great Vehicle, and Tantric Systems*. Jared Douglas Rhoton (trans.). Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Sayre, Robert F. ed. 1994. *American Lives: An Anthology of Autobiographical Writing*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- Samuel, Geoffrey. 1993. *Civilized Shamans*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Schaeffer, Kurtis R. 2004. *Himalayan Hermitess: The Life of a Tibetan Buddhist Nun*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- . 2005. "The Autobiography of a Medieval Hermitess: Orgyan Chokyi (1675-1729)." In Gyatso and Havnevik (eds), pp. 83-109.
- Schober, Juliane. 1997. *Sacred Biography in the Buddhist Traditions of South and Southeast Asia*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Seelig, Sharon Cadman. *Autobiography and Gender in Early Modern Literature: Reading Women's Lives, 1600-1680*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Shakabpa, Tsepon W. D. 1984. *Tibet: A Political History*. New York: Potala Publications.
- Shaw, Miranda. 1994. *Passionate Enlightenment*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Smith, E. Gene. 2001. *Among Tibetan Texts*. Boston: Wisdom Publications.
- Smith, Sidonie. 1993. *Subjectivity, Identity, and the Body*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Smith, Sidonie and Watson, Julie. 1992. *De/Colonizing the Subject*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- . 1998. *Women, Autobiography, Theory: A Reader*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.

- _____. 2001. *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Snellgrove, David. 1967. *Four Lamas of Dolpo*. Oxford: Bruno Cassirer, Ltd. 2 vols.
- _____. 2002 [1987]. *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*. Boston: Shambhala.
- Sperling, Elliot. 1998. "Awe and Submission: A Tibetan Aristocrat at the Court of Qianlong," in *The International History Review*, xx. 2: 325-335.
- Stanton, Domna C., ed. 1987. *The Female Autograph: Theory and Practice of Autobiography from the Tenth to the Twentieth Century*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Sticca, Sandro. 1996. *Saints: Studies in Hagiography*. Binghamton: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies.
- Szarmach, Paul E. 1996. *Holy Men and Holy Women: Old English Prose Saints' Lives and their Contexts*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Talyor, Charles. 1989. *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Terrone, Antonio. 2002. "Visions, Arcane Claims, and Hidden Treasures: Charisma and Authority in a Present-Day Gter ston." In C. Klieger (ed.). *The Tibetan Diaspora: Voices of Difference PIATS 2000: Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the Ninth Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Leiden 2000*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, pp. 213-28.
- _____. Forthcoming. "Tibetan Buddhism Beyond the Monastery: Revelation and Identity in rNying ma Communities of Present-day Kham." In *L'image du Tibet aux XIXeme-XXeme siècles – The Image of Tibet in the 19th and 20th Centuries: A Franco-English Thematic Volume of the EFEO*. Monica Esposito (ed.).
- Thompson, Paul R. 2000. *Voice of the Past: Oral History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Tsarong, Dundul Namgyal. 2000. *In the Service of his Country: The Biography of Dasang Damdul Tsarong, Commander General of Tibet*. Ithaca: Snow Lion.
- Tsering, Diki. 2000. *Dalai Lama, My Son: A Mother's Story*. New York: Viking Arkana.
- Tsogyal, Yeshe. 1978. *The Life and Liberation of Padmasambhava: Padma bKa'i Thang*. Emeryville: Dharma Publishing.

- Tsogyal, Yeshe. 1993. *The Lotus-Born: The Life Story of Padmasambhava*. Eric Pema Kunsang (trans.). Boston: Shambhala.
- Tsomo, Karma Lekshe (ed.). 1999. *Buddhist Women Across Cultures: Realizations*. Albany, State University of New York Press.
- _____. 2000. *Innovative Buddhist Women : Swimming Against the Stream*. Richmond : Curzon.
- _____. (ed.). 2004. *Buddhist Women and Social Justice : Ideals, Challenges, and Achievements*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Tulku Thondup Rinpoché. 1986. *Hidden Teachings of Tibet*. Harold Talbott (ed.). Boston: Wisdom Publications.
- _____. 1999. *Masters of Meditation and Miracles*. Harold Talbott (ed.). Boston: Shambhala.
- Van Schaik, Sam. 2004. *Approaching the Great Perfection*. Boston: Wisdom Publications.
- Voaden, Rosalynn. 1999. *God's Words, Women's Voices: The Discernment of Spirits in the Writing of Late-Medieval Women Visionaries*. Suffolk: York Medieval Press.
- Vostrikov, A. I. 1970. *Tibetan Historical Literature*. Calcutta: Indian Studies, Past and Present.
- Waddell, L. Austine. 1906. *Lhasa and its Mysteries*. New York: E.P. Dutton & Co.
- Watkins, J. C. 1996. *Spirited Women: Gender, Religion and Cultural Identity in the Nepal Himalaya*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Weinstein, Donald and Bell, Rudolph M. 1982. *Saints & Society: The Two Worlds of Western Christendom, 1000-1700*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Weintraub, Karl Joachim. 1978. *The Value of the Individual: Self and Circumstance in Autobiography*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- White, David. 2003. *Kiss of the Yoginī*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Wiethaus, Ulrike. 1993. *Maps of Flesh and Light: The Religious Experience of Medieval Women Mystics*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.
- Williams, Michael A. (ed.). 1982. *Charisma and Sacred Biography, Journal of the American Academy of Religion Studies*. Vol. XLVIII, No. 3 and 4.

- Willis, Janice, editor. 1987. *Feminine Ground: Essays on Women and Tibet*. Ithaca, Snow Lion Publications.
- Wilson, Liz. 1996. *Charming Cadavers: Horrific Figurations of the Feminine in Indian Buddhist Hagiographic Literature*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Wood, Diana. 2003. *Women and Religion in Medieval England*. Oxford: Oxbow Books.
- Wu, Pei-Yi. 1990. *The Confucian's Progress: Autobiographical Writings in Traditional China*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Young, Serenity. 2004. *Courtesans and Tantric Consorts*. New York: Routledge.