

Mahāmudrā texts in the Tangut Buddhism and the Doctrine of “No-thought”. Preliminary Considerations.

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摘要

本論文準備使用西夏文的大手印傳統的資料針對西夏的大手印思想與實踐作出初步的分析。作者依靠西夏文的“大手印究竟要集”（德慧集）對西夏大手印師資承襲系統進行討論。主要的結論則為“大手印究竟要集”所代表的傳統與早期進入西夏的葛瑪葛舉佛教有所不同。例如本文的大手印成稀圖不包括 Marpa, Milarepa 等葛瑪葛舉的名師並且不提出到自從其他西夏文資料以及“大乘要道密集”的中文文獻所知道的玄密帝師和玄照國師。“大手印究竟要集”的另外一個特點在於本文的作者對“無念”思想的重視。因此，本論文針對“大手印究竟要集”內的無念概念的內涵作出一些初步分析，並且以他與西夏縮編的禪宗資料進行了一些比較。總結輪為大手印之內的無念與西夏禪宗的資料所使用的無念有一些類似之處。也就是說，兩個概念可能在相互影響之下而形成的。除了上述之外，作者還對在“大手印究竟要集”所利用的“比喻”做出了一些分析。

關鍵字：西夏，大手印，大手印究竟要集，無念，手印比喻，因乘，果乘

Key words: Xixia, Mahamudra, no-thought, metaphors, Vehicle of Cause, Vehicle of Fruit

This paper does not imply a study of Mahāmudrā teachings from the conceptual point of view. Its aim is limited to an attempt of historical location of Mahāmudrā texts within the general framework of Tangut Buddhism. As it appears now, most of the research of the Buddhist faith in Xixia, including Tangut Chan, Tangut Mahāmudrā, esoteric Buddhism, Tangut Huayan etc. is limited to putting together pieces of the larger whole. This kind of research reminds of puzzle, the main difference being, however, that in the research of Tangut Buddhism as soon as one piece is set in its place, it invokes even more questions than there were before. This observation fully applies to the Tangut Mahāmudrā texts. Thus, at the initial stage of research these texts should be treated more as historical documents rather than the sources of religious and ritual knowledge. However, the conceptual study of Tangut Mahāmudrā might become possible, once preliminary issues, such as Tangut/ Chinese versus Tibetan terminology, the structures of the texts, lines of transmission of the doctrine etc. are solved and the historical settings of the texts is more or less determined. In this case the Tangut texts can reveal a real Mahāmudrā treasure, since the number of Mahāmudrā writings we have now, and may locate in the future, is quite substantial, and some of the texts, including the ones discussed below are quite elaborate and informative. But before the immediate questions, mentioned above are not settled, deep diving into the Tangut Mahāmudrā will, to my mind, only result in confusion and growing misunderstanding. Therefore this paper intends to initiate a discussion between the scholars in order to bring more light into the issues relevant for the understanding of the profound Mahāmudrā doctrine as preserved in the Tangut texts. Therefore here I present a translation of certain parts of a Tangut Mahāmudrā composition and a brief discussion of the nature of the text and its possible relationship to other Mahāmudrā treatises associated with the Tangut Buddhism and offer a possible explanation of the origin of the concept of the

“no-thought” which seems to be crucial for the formation of the Tangut Mahāmudrā tradition.

As it is generally recognized, the Tangut Buddhism was formed out of two major constituents: Tibetan and Chinese Buddhist traditions. The second of those was based on the Huayan-Chan synthetic doctrine, thus reproducing the general outlines of late Tang Buddhism, especially as it was professed in the Northern and North-Western China.¹ All the researched Tangut Chan texts insofar support this point of view.

As early as in the 1930-s Nikolai Nevskij has determined that a variety of Buddhist texts, belonging to the domain of Tibetan Buddhism is to be found in the Tangut holdings in St. Petersburg and elsewhere. He indicated that the works by such famous personalities of Tibetan Buddhism, such as Marpa, Nāropa, Milarepa, dPal-Rtsegs and others are present in the Tangut collection of the Asiatic Museum in St. Petersburg.² Unfortunately, his research did not advance any further than this indication. A number of identifications of Tibetan texts (especially translations) was carried out by Nishida Tatsuo in his brief catalogue of Tangut collection in St. Petersburg.³ These identifications were further reproduced by Evguenij Kychanov in his catalogue of Tangut Buddhist texts in the Tangut holdings in St. Petersburg Institute of Oriental Studies. Dr. Nishida later returned to his research of Tibetan Buddhist texts (both translated from Tibetan and original Tangut compilations belonging to the realm of Tibetan Buddhism) in his less known publication—the Preface to Kychanov’s catalogue of Tangut Buddhist texts from the collection of St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies. In his research Dr. Nishida provided a number of identifications of personal names of Tibetan personalities mentioned in the texts. He had examined (however briefly) a number of texts, and offered some partial textual reconstructions (or rather Chinese renderings) of Tangut fragments. The research into Tangut Buddhist texts belonging to the realm of Tibetan Buddhism was later

This paper owes much to the assistance from Dr. Ruth Dunnell and Dr. Shen Weirong, without whom I could not have appeared. These two scholars helped me both with their scholarly directions and the preparation of the manuscript. All the mistakes and inconsistencies are solely mine, while the valuable observations (if any) emerged from the scholarly communication and exchanges I had with these two scholars as well as my other colleagues in the field of the Tangut studies.

The paper uses abbreviation T with the indication of volume, page and line number for the quotations from Taisho Tripitaka. The abbreviation Tang with a number, indicates the call numbers of the discussed texts in the Tangut holdings of St. Petersburg Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences. The photocopies of the researched texts were kindly provided by the Institute. Some of the bibliographical references are made to the yet unpublished manuscripts by Shen Weirong and Ruth Dunnell, who kindly permitted me to use their work in my studies.

¹ The syncretic nature of Tangut Buddhism was noticed by N. A. Nevskij. This notion was further confirmed by Shi Jinbo in his “*Xixia Fojiao Shilue*” (西夏佛教史略, Ningxia: Ningxia Renmin chubanshe, 1988). Huayan affiliation of the Chinese constituent of the Tangut Buddhism was further explored in K. J. Solonin “The Glimpses of Tangut Buddhism” (*Central Asiatic Journal*, in progress); *ibid.*, “Tangut Chan Buddhism and Guifeng Zongmi”, *Zhonghua Foxue Xuebao* 中華佛學學報 11 (1998); *ibid.*, “Hongzhou Buddhism in the Tangut State and the Heritage of Zongmi (780-841): A Tangut Source”, *Asia Major* 16, 2 (2003);

² See: Nikolai Nevskij “Тангутская письменность и ее фонды” (Tangut Script and Tangut Collections) in: *Тангутская филология* (Tangut Philology) vol. 1-2 (Moscow: Oriental Literature Publishers, 1960), vol. 1: 74-95.

³ Nishida Tatsuo 西天龍雄 *Seikabun noKegon kyo* (西夏文の華嚴經), vol. 1-3 (Kyoto: Kyoto University Press, 1970-75), vol. 3.

continued by Shen Weirong in his series of papers on Tibetan Buddhism in Xixia, which were based on the Chinese texts discovered from Khara-Khoto. The present paper concentrates on one of the less damaged and clear text from St. Petersburg collection—the “*The Collection of the Basic Notes on the Ultimate Great Seal (Mahāmudrā)*” (Tang. 345, #2526, further: “*The Collection!*”). According to the colophon of the text, “The Notes” were put together by Dehui, “śramana from Lanshan”.⁴

The text itself is a woodblock print, “butterfly” binding, altogether numbering 27 double pages, 16 lines per page, 17 characters per line. The text is almost complete and only slightly damaged on top of several pages, thus is clearly readable. The carving of the woodblock was probably done by a Chinese engraver, since the text combines pagination both in Tangut and Chinese characters. The opening portion of the text was initially researched by Dr. Nishida, but here I do not fully accept his conclusions and readings.⁵

The text opens up with an introduction, which contains the chart of lineage of the tradition of Mahāmudrā in the Tangut state. Insofar it is one of the few Tangut Buddhist documents which contains actual information on the ways of Buddhist penetration into the Tangut kingdom, and thus could be treated not only as a doctrinal writing, but also as a historical document. The text altogether lists eight “founding teachers”, whose tradition is inherited directly from Sakayamuni. The Buddha later transmitted the doctrine to the “great Man Weimo” (Vimalakirti), who passed the teaching to the master Saraha (4739 𑖑𑖔, 2425 𑖑𑖔, 1021 𑖑𑖔), who later became “the master to the master Nagarjuna” (0179 𑖑𑖔, 1664 𑖑𑖔, Chinese: 龍樹). The latter passed his tradition to an unidentified person, whose name (in Chinese reconstruction looks like: 山墓, *shanmu*, (according to Nishida, the name should be reconstructed as Tib. *Ri-khyod*, meaning a “hermit”, 隱士, Tangut: 2856 𑖑𑖔, 3141 𑖑𑖔).⁶ This master Shanmu later passed the teaching on to the “Compassionate Master” (慈師, Tangut: 4652 𑖑𑖔, 4858 𑖑𑖔).⁷ The disciple to this master was a person, whose name might be translated as “Glory of Wisdom” (智稱, Tangut: 4496 𑖑𑖔, 3719 𑖑𑖔), from whom the doctrine was passed to the “Lord of Speech” (語主, for unknown reason Nishida reconstructs the name as 語主說, Tangut: 0451 𑖑𑖔, 3948 𑖑𑖔), from the *Bapo* country (Tangut: 3090 𑖑𑖔, 2783 𑖑𑖔), and finally to the master “Diligence” (精進, Tangut: 3321 𑖑𑖔, 4902 𑖑𑖔, Nishida’s reconstruction: 妙口), who was a Tibetan (from *Bod* country, Tangut: 2653 𑖑𑖔) and became the master to the “master Dehui” (Chinese: 德慧, Tangut: 3355 𑖑𑖔, 2605 𑖑𑖔) from Minyag—the compiler of our text.⁸ All the personal

⁴ Strangely enough, the Tangut collection in St. Petersburg holds another text (a manuscript) under the same title (Tang. 345, 2851) in 27 fascs. However, even a running comparison confirms that these are two different texts. This second “*Collection*” is a sort of commentary to a Mahāmudrā treatise, mentioning both Master Diligence and Dehui. Information concerning Dehui see below.

⁵ As it will be seen from below, Dr. Nishida renders into Chinese only the simplest parts of the text and does not analyze any part of the contents.

⁶ Basing on the meaning of the name I suggest identifying this master as Śavarīśvara (Śavarepa, *savari* meaning “hill-person”).

⁷ If the above identification is correct, this Master then must Śavarīśvara’s successor, Maitripa. His Tangut name thus emerged by direct translation of the first part of the name *Mait* (which was believed to be the same as in Maitreya, Chinese: 慈氏). Maitripa is known to have studied Mahāmudrā under Śavarepa.

⁸ Dehui is not an enigmatic person: his career both as translator and Buddhist preacher can be reconstructed

identifications above are tentative, except for Sakayamuni, Vimalakirti, Nagarjuna, Saraha and Dehui, as well as the place names except for India and Tibet (Bod) which are definite and well attested by concurring sources. Each biographical entry contains the details of the origin of the relevant master and the essence of his teaching.⁹

Once the Mahāmudrā texts in Central Asia were believed to exist only in the Tangut language, while now we have an original Chinese reference source represented by several short Mahāmudrā texts preserved within a larger collection of translations from Tibetan and original compilations dating from pre-Mongol times: the so-called “*The Secret Collection of the Most Important on the Way of Mahayana*” (大乘要道密集 further: SCMIM).¹⁰ The collection was originally considered to have been compiled by Phagsba-lama (1235-1280), while current research clearly demonstrates the earlier origin of the “Collection” and its possible relation with Xixia.¹¹

Mahāmudrā tradition in the Tangut texts.

The number of Mahāmudrā texts in Tangut translations probably outnumbers the texts belonging to Chinese Chan and Huayan traditions. This phenomenon is in tenor with general understanding of the development of Tangut Buddhism, which shifted from Chinese to Tibetan influences during later half of the Tangut history.¹² Tibetan influences seem to be dominant in the late Tangut Buddhism as it might be concurred by the iconographic evidence recently

from the available Tangut material. Nie Hongyin believes him to be a Tibetan Yon-tan blo-gros or Yon-tan yes-se. This conclusion, however, is doubtful since the “*The Collection*” is a record of conversation, which was probably conducted in Tibetan and then translated into good Tangut by a native speaker. Dehui had long career, and was eventually promoted to the “state preceptor”—one of the highest ranks in Buddhist hierarchy in Xixia. He is mentioned more than 20 times in colophons of Tangut and Chinese texts, and his activities might be provisionally dated to the 80-90-s of the 12th century. (See: Ruth Dunnell “Translating history from Tangut Buddhist texts”, unpub. manuscript; Nie Hongyin 聶鴻音 “Xixia wen zangchuan ‘Banruo xin jing’ yanjiu 西夏文藏傳‘般若心經’研究.” *Minzu yuyan 民族語言* 2 (2005): 22-29)

⁹ See: Tang. 345, #2526: 1-4.

¹⁰ For the present paper I am referring to the publication of the text: “*Dacheng Yaodao Miji*” (below: SCMIM) 大乘要道密集 (Taibei: Micheng chubanshe, 1983), which is not the best edition of the text. This book is often referred to in numerous publications and reports by Shen Weirong, who turned my attention to its Mahāmudrā section. Apparently, it was Chen Qingying who was the first to examine the contents of SCMIM from the point of view of its possible relationship with Xixia Buddhism. (See: Chen Qingying 陳慶英 “Dacheng yaodao miji” yu Xixia wangchande Zangchuan fojiao” “大乘要道密集” 與西夏王朝的藏傳佛教, *Zhongguo Zangxue* 3 (2003): 94-106. Another possible translation of the title of SCMIM is: “*The secret collection of works on the Quintessential path of Mahāyana*” (this is the title adopted by Shen Weirong in his “Study of Chinese manuscripts concerning Tibetan tantric practice found in Khara-khoto of the Tangut empire: Essentials for the Dream Yoga”, *Cahiers d’Extrême-Asie*, 15 (2005): 189-232. The manuscript of this paper titled “Studies on Chinese texts of the Yogic Practices of Tibetan Tantric Buddhism found in Khara Khoto of Xi Xia (Tangut) [I]: Quintessential Instruction on the Illusory Body of Dream” was kindly provided to me by the author. In fact, the best study of SCMIM was carried out by Shen Weirong 沈衛榮 in his “Dacheng yadao miji” yu Xixia, Yuan chao suoquande Xizang mifa” “大乘要道密集” 與西夏、元朝所傳西藏密法. (The manuscript of this yet unpublished paper was kindly provided to me by the author).

¹¹ Besides its substantial historical value, SCMIM is a valuable reference source for translations from Tangut, since it renders original Tibetan terms through Chinese characters, which allows more direct identifications of personal names, place names and technical terms. Once the correlations between Chinese and Tangut are established, reconstruction of Tibetan original (if there is one) becomes easier.

¹² See: Shi Jinbo 史金波 *Xixia Fojiao shilue 西夏佛教史略* (Yinchuan: Ningxia renmin chubanshe, 1988).

published by Kira Samosuyk. One of the characteristic features of that Tibetan influence in the Tangut State is the tradition of reverence of various Indian and Tibetan Mahāmudrā teachers, including Tilopa (988-1069), Nāropa (1016-1100), Milarepa (1052-1135), Virupa (9th century), Dombi-Heruka, Luipa, Marpa (1012-1097) and others, whose images could be located within the collection of Tangut iconography.¹³ The textual tradition of Mahāmudrā in the Tangut language is quite rich: one could number quite a few various texts which contain the term Mahāmudrā (大印, 0971 教, 2609 教) in their titles, and a number of works which are indirectly related to this tradition, such as “*The Essence of the Six Dharmas of Nāropa*” (Chinese reconstruction of the title: 六法自體, Tang 371 #2542), or “*The Double Entrance of the Master Nāropa*” (Chinese reconstruction of the title: 那羅巴師之雙入要文, Tang. 271 # 3946) etc. The total quantity of Mahāmudrā works is no less than that of Chinese Huayan Chan texts,¹⁴ thus allowing a suggestion that Mahāmudrā was a very influential tradition in Xixia. A part of the personal names of Tibetan teachers, including the Mahāmudrā masters in Tangut translations was identified by Nevskij and later by Dr. Nishida in his Preface to Kychanov’s Catalogue. All together Nishida lists Tangut translations or transcriptions for the names of Tilopa, Dipamkara, Milarepa, Marpa, Luipa, Nāropa, Saraha and reconstructs (very approximately)¹⁵ the lines of successions, which he happened to notice in the texts, he examined.¹⁶ Most of the lineages mention Marpa and Milarepa as the transmitting masters, which allows to connect the Tangut Mahāmudrā, at least partially, with bKa’-rGyud rather than with Sakya tradition.¹⁷ Thus a question of the relationship between the Tangut texts and the tradition of pre-Mongol time Chinese Mahāmudrā arises: to which of the numerous traditions of Tibetan Buddhism do the Tangut texts actually belong, or, as in case with the Chinese Buddhism in Xixia, the texts tend to represent a native tradition,¹⁸ only indirectly related to its Tibetan counterpart. In turn, this question is a part of a broader problem, which implies the clarification of the actual nature of

¹³ I was shortly briefed on these matters by Kira Samosuyk during our meeting in February 2007. More information on this matter is to be found in her recent catalog of Buddhist iconography from Khara-Khoto. (See: *Буддийская живопись из Хара-Хото 12-14го веков*. (Buddhist Paintings from Khara-Khoto. 12-14th centuries. Between China and Tibet.) (St. Petersburg: The Hermitage Publishers, 2006)

¹⁴ Previously I believed that Huayan Chan tradition of the late Tang (as understood by Yoshidzu Yoshihide) was predominant in the Tangut State, as well as the Chinese oriented Buddhist traditions in general. (See: Yoshidzu Yoshihide 吉津宜英 *Kegon zen no shisoshi-teki kenkyu* 《華嚴禪的思想史の研究》 Tokyo: Daito, 1985; K. J. Solonin, “Hongzhou Buddhism in Xixia and the Heritage of Zongmi (780–841): A Tangut Source,” *ibid.*, “The Glimpses of the Tangut Buddhism”, CAJ, in progress).

¹⁵ In his reconstruction Dr. Nishida limits himself to rendering the relevant Tangut characters with his own phonetic transcription, and does not provide the Chinese equivalents, involving other scholars in guessing what is meant by his transcriptions.

¹⁶ See: Evgeunij Kychanov “*Каталог тангутских буддийски памятников из коллекции СПбФ ИВРАН*” (The Catalog of the Collection of the Tangut Buddhist texts from the Collection of SPb Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies, RAS) (Kyoto: Kyoto University Press, 1999). The Preface by Dr. Nishida, entitled: “西夏語佛典編纂上諸問題” is to be found on pages ix-xlvii of the volume. Dr. Nishida discusses the Mahāmudrā texts and Tibetan texts in Xixia in general on pages xviii-xlvi.

¹⁷ This general scheme allows to connect the Tangut texts with the works preserved in the SCMIM (See: Chen Qingyin, “Dacheng yaodao miji”: 104-106.

¹⁸ On formation of the local tradition of Chinese Buddhism see for example: K. J. Solonin “Hongzhou Buddhism in Xixia and the Heritage of Zongmi (780-841): A Tangut Source” *Asia Major* 16.2 (2003).

Tibetan Buddhism in the pre-Mongol Chinese North-Western borderland. The initial research has proven, that at least a substantial part of the North-Western (including Tangut) Buddhist traditions was affiliated with bKa'-rGyud doctrines and lineages: as early as in the mid-12th century the founder of Karma Bka'-rgyud tradition Dus-gsum Mkhyen-pa (1110-1193) was invited to the Tangut state, but sent one of his pupils instead. This pupil was held in the very high esteem by the fifth Tangut king Renxiao (1140-1193).¹⁹ Towards the end of the Tangut history the prestige of Tibetan lamas was increasing, which resulted in the growing number of the texts translated from Tibetan, or compiled in Xixia according to the pattern of Tibetan Buddhist texts.²⁰ The research of the Chinese texts from Khara-Khoto has revealed that it were bKa'-rGyud doctrines which were first to penetrate into Xixia, where the first Chinese translation of the relevant texts had been carried out.²¹ Bearing that in mind, one would find only natural that the Mahāmudrā tradition first reached the Tangut State within the broader framework of bKa'-rGyud doctrines.

According to the account by Chen Qingying, the lines of succession of Mahāmudrā as recorded in SCMIM demonstrate affiliation with bKa'-rGyud tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. The texts preserved in the SCMIM are of Tangut origin as it is demonstrated by a more detailed inquiry into the contents of the texts. In the text "*Da shouyin jiatuozhi yaomen*" 大手印伽陀支要門²² the line of succession is recorded in the following way:

The *Master True and Complete Wisdom* transmitted the teaching to the *Brave Mind of Bodhi...*, then to the Master *Saloha* (Saraha), then to the master *Saloba* (Śavarīśvara?), then to the Master *Yawanuodi*, then to *Lama Marpa*, then to *Milarepa*, then to *Lama Lazheng*, then to the Imperial Preceptor *Xuanmi*,²³ then to the Great *Lama Dabao*, then to the State Preceptor *Xuanzhao*. 真實究竟明滿傳與菩提勇識大寶意解脫師，此師傳與薩囉喝師，此師傳與薩囉巴師，此師傳與啞幹諾帝，此師傳與辣麻馬巴，此師傳與銘移辣囉悉巴，此師傳與辣麻辣征，此師傳與玄密帝師，此師傳與大寶上師，此師傳與玄照國師。) ²⁴

¹⁹ Shi Jinbo, *Xixia Fojiao Shi lue*: 51-56. The initial research on Tibetan Tangut Buddhist contacts and their possible connection with further institution of "imperial preceptor" (帝師) in the Mongol court in China was carried by Elliot Sperling: "Lama to the King of Hsia" *The Journal of the Tibet Society*. 7 (1987); *ibid*, "Further Remarks Apropos of the 'Ba'-rom-pa and the Tanguts," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 57. 1 (2004); Ruth Dunnell, "The Hsia Origins of the Yuan Institution of Imperial Preceptor," *Asia Major* 5.1 (1992); Nie Hongyin 聶鴻音, "Xixia Dishu kaobian" 西夏帝師考辨, *Wenshi* 文史 3 (2005).

²⁰ There was an earlier observation, both by Nie Hongyin and myself (K. J. Solonin, "The Glimpses of Tangut Buddhism", *CAJ*, in progress), that in case of putting together an original compilation, the Tangut were actually imitating the structure of the original texts of the relevant tradition. This observation was made for the Chinese oriented works, but appears to be also true for the texts belonging to the Tibetan tradition..

²¹ See: Shen Weirong, "Studies of the Chinese Texts on the Yogic Practices"

²² Shen Weirong in "Dacheng yaodao miji" believes that this text is only represented with its title, while the lineage actually belongs to the "*Yu Dashouyin Dunru Jianru Yaomen*" (於大手印漸入頓入要門), SCMIM: 399-401.

²³ Like Dehui, Xuanmi is a prominent personality of Tangut Buddhism: he is mentioned four times in Tangut colophons, most of the time together with Dehui, which could allow to identify him with the Master Diligence from "The Collection".

²⁴ SCMIM: 399, Chen Qingying, *op. cit*; Shen Weirong, "Dacheng Yaodao miji". Apparently, the imperial preceptor Xuanshi, believed to be of Tangut origin, is not probably such an enigmatic person: SCMIM contains the text "Wusheng shangshi chuxian ganying gongdesong" (無生上師出現感應功德頌, SCMIM: 328-331) which is considered to be the biography of Xuanmi, compiled in Xixia. The contents of the text were researched

This line of succession has been extensively analyzed by Shen Weirong, who reconstructed it in a more detailed and proper way: 金剛持 rDo rje 'chang²⁵, –寶意 Blo gros rinchen, –薩囉巴 (小薩囉巴即薩幹哩巴, Śavarīśvara), –啞幹諾帝 (i.e. 銘得哩幹, Maitripa), –馬巴 Marpa, –銘移粹囉悉巴 Milaraspa, –粹麻粹征 Blama blochen—玄密帝師 (Imperial Preceptor Xuanmi)—大寶上師 (Lama Dabao)²⁶—玄照 (Xuanzhao).²⁷ What is of main concern here is the identification of Blama blochen with Gampopa (1079-1153, sGam po pa bSod nams rin chen, Dwags po lha rje).²⁸

The Tangut text, entitled “大手印要道論師資” (in Chinese rendering), which is a part of a bigger collection “大手印定導[要論]”²⁹ contains the following lineage of succession: 真實究竟明滿 (rDo rje 'chang?) to 菩提勇識大寶 (Blo gros rinchen), to Saraha, to Sararpa, to *Phavatutipa*,³⁰ to *Liamapa* (Marpa), to Milarepa, *Lamaradzhe* (Lama Lazheng—Gampopa), to *ŋ^wir*.³¹ The rest of the text is damaged, but one could easily see that the line of succession is almost identical to the one preserved in SCMIM. Therefore we have substantial ground to

by Chen Qingying: Chen Qingying “Xixia dacheng Xuanmi dishi shengping” (西夏大乘玄密帝師生平) *Xizang daxue xuebao* (2000) 3; also: *ibid*, “Xuanmi dishi kao” (玄密帝師考), <http://www.tibetology.ac.cn/article2/ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=262>. However, the conclusions of Chen Qingying concerning the personality of Xuanmi were recently challenged by Shen Weirong. Shen argues that “xuanmi” (玄密) is in fact only one of the epithets applied to the master Wusheng throughout his biography in SCMIM. Among the epithets, applied to Wusheng one can notice the byname “dabao” (大寶), which happens to coincide with one of the names in Mahāmudrā lineages both in Chinese and Tangut texts. Thus, Wusheng could have been identified with Dabao (probably a Tangut master as well) or any other person whose name happens to coincide with one of the numerous epithets in the biography. Strangely enough, that the colophon to Wusheng’s biography mentions, that it is an “abridged rendering of a Sanskrit original” (依梵本略集, SCMIM, 328).

²⁵ The identity between *Zhenshi jiuqing mingman* 真實究竟明滿 and rDo rje 'chang is not clear to me, but here I follow the judgement of Tibetologists.

²⁶ Ruth Dunnell tried to identify Lama Dabao with Lama Zhang, or Zhang Rin-po-che (1122-1193), whose full name was Zhang Gyu-brag-pa (Brtson-'grus-grags-pa). Such an identification is possible since this lama is a known author of Mahāmudrā compilations (see: Dunnell, “Translating History”). However, as Dunnell observes elsewhere all these identifications remain tentative, though some of them might prove true. As it was mentioned above, Dabao might be the same person as Xuanmi.

²⁷ Shen Weirong, “Dacheng Yaodao Miji”. This reconstruction is based on the analysis by Lü Cheng 呂澂, published in his “*Hanzang Fojiao Guanxi shiliaoji*” 漢藏佛教關係史料集 (Chengdu: Huaxi Xihe Daxue Zhongweihua yanjiusuo, zhuankan 2, 1, 1942). This book is a hard read, but an extremely valuable source for the Chinese versions of Tibetan Buddhist terms and personal names, and thus is very helpful in the research into Tangut Buddhism as well.

²⁸ Shen Weirong, *op.cit*. “lama lazhen” is the Chinese transcription for Dwags po lha rje.

²⁹ Tang 346, #7216, Nishida, xlv. This collection also contains the Tangut text “大手印正入要論”, which might be identical with “大手印頓入要門”, compiled by the state preceptor Xuanzhao (SCMIM: 387-388), also a prominent Tangut Buddhist (Ruth Dunnell “Translating History”). This identification is very likely, given the proximity of Tangut characters for Chinese 頓 and 正.

³⁰ Obscure *Phavatutipa* in Nishida’s transcription must stand for 啞幹諾帝 of SCMIM, who is identified as Maitripa. (Sen Weirong, *op.cit*.)

³¹ While preparing this paper I did not have access all of the original Tangut manuscripts, mentioned in this paper, and Dr. Nishida does not provide Tangut characters. However, I am confident that Nishida’s *Liamapa* (slightly altered rendering) is Lama Marpa and *lamarazhe* is Lama Lazheng (Gampopa, see above) recorded in SCMIM. Nishida’s *ŋ^wir* then must be the first character for Xuanmi (Nishida, Preface: xlv; Chinese 玄, Tangut: 2111, *dwuu*). However, even from Nishida’s observations it is clear that the names of Tibetan Buddhist personalities were not always rendered in the same way: sometimes the honorific “bLa ma” was included as a part of the personal name, sometimes the names are translated, sometimes rendered phonetically. Thus we know two ways of transcribing Marpa’s name: one is just Marpa (Tangut: 5590 孛, 5042 魏, 3090 韓, Nishida, “Preface”: xxxix) and the other: *Liamapa*, which is an abridged rendering of Tibetan “bLa ma Marpa”.

conclude that part of the Tangut Mahāmudrā texts is close or similar to the ones preserved in SCMIM, and thus these texts were available before the Yuan dynasty and probably originated from Xixia. For another Mahāmudrā lineage preserved in “*Xinyi dashouyin yinglou yaomen*” 新譯大手印金瓔珞要門,³² I could not find a Tangut parallel. However, the Mahāmudrā tradition, as it appears from the texts from SCMIM and the Tangut text mentioned above, is connected very much with bKa’-rGyud lineage, while “*The Collection*” preserves a lineage which is slightly different, but still retaining basic bKa’-rgyud affiliation. Thus one might again assume that the probably the earliest of Tibetan traditions to penetrate Xixia was the bKa-rGyud.³³

The Mahāmudrā Lineage in “The Collection”.

“*The Collection*” is a very promising text: its rich in contents and is written in clear and transparent language. The “tentative translations” which I mark every now and then, are due not to the drawbacks of the author’s style, but mostly result from my own limited knowledge of both Tangut language and Tangut—Tibetan Buddhist terminology. Therefore the problem of the lack of adequate reference material which could allow direct identifications of Tangut—Tibetan—Chinese Buddhist terminology, especially the terms related to the specific “*mijad*” concepts is crucial not only for the present study, but for all other research of Tibetan related Tangut texts. Since there are only very few similarities both in content and the way of exposition between the Tangut and Chinese Mahāmudrā texts, the collection of “*Dacheng yaodao mij*” is only of limited value here. However, the research into the text seems rewarding, but its results should be considered only as preliminary.

“*The Collection*” represents only one of the Mahāmudrā lineages in the Tangut State, but in an elaborate way: the chart found in the opening section of text not only lists the teachers, but also provides some details of their careers. The lineage presented in the Tangut text is different from any of those in SCMIM and is less lapidary than SCMIM texts. All the personal names (except for Sakaymuni and Saraha (circa 769-809) in the Tangut text are not transcribed (as most of the time in SCMIM), but translated.³⁴ Vimalakirti’s name is rendered according to the Chinese pattern: Weimo (維摩, Tangut: 2426 禪, 1642 跋) and he is said to originate from “the noble family in Northern India, State of Xitian” (Chinese: 西天國北印度長者也; Tangut: 1523 闡, 1273 棧, 1594 釐, 4696 羸, 4354 散, 5442 羸, 1233 棧, 3545 禪, 4601 覆, 0197 散).³⁵

³² SCMIM: 417. This lineage is more complicated, but also ends with the State Preceptor Xuanzhao.

³³ This observation is generally confirmed with the study of the texts pertaining to the “dream yoga” texts in Chinese, discovered in Khara-Khoto collection. (See: Shen Weirong, “The Dream bodies”)

³⁴ Tangut in general were not certain whether they should translate names or render them phonetically. The case seems to be that if they could understand the literary meaning of name (Chinese case) they would rather translate it. If a place was involved or they could not reconstruct the direct meaning of a name, they would transcribe it. (see: K. J. Solonin “The Glimpses of Tangut Buddhism”)

³⁵ The entry on Weimo in “*The Collection*” reads: “This first master (he received the teaching of no-thought from Sakyamuni—K.S.) was from a noble family in Northern India in the Xitian state. His wisdom and intelligence, are they as bright as the thousand suns? His speech was eloquent and [its stream], was it flowing like ten thousand rivers? Each one of the ten great disciples concealed his words in respect.[to him] He was singing, dancing and enjoying together with the thirty two saints, his concentration penetrated the three realms of emptiness, the three worlds were just his home. He strictly abided by the four vows and [treated] the four kinds of living beings as his children. The Dharma of the ten grounds was clouded, the nine kinds of existence deluded the living beings. These obstacles [he removed] with the rain of the sweet dew of One-Vehicle,

The same introduction pattern applies to other members of lineage. Thus, Saraha is said to be “a brahman from Western India, State of Xitian”,³⁶ Nagarjuna comes from the “royal family from Southern India”, the master Shanmu (Śavarīśvara?) is a “brahman from Southern India”,³⁷ “Compassionate Master” comes from the royal family in Central India, “Glory of Wisdom” is of royal kin from Eastern India,³⁸ “Lord of Speech” comes from *Bapo*, and the

[pouring] over the Buddha-grounds in ten directions. Then he became the founding Master of the Master Saraha and transmitted to him the most true and important’. (Chinese reconstruction: 此第一宗師，西天國北印度長者也。智慧聰明，千日明亮豈及；辯才萬河流流焉似，(the above portion of the text is damaged and is not readable now, but both Nishida and me are referring to our previous copies, with the more complete text) 十大弟子各自隱言敬佩。與三十二聖共同歌舞戲，堅持四願，四生為其子，十地法雲，九有迷眾之蓋，一乘甘露十方佛國遍雨。侯為 Saraha 師之宗師而真要傳[焉])。 (“*The Collection*”, 1a. lines 1-7) My reconstruction is connected with Nishida’s, but I follow my own reading. Due to the technical difficulties, large Tangut quotations are given only in their Chinese reconstructions. Tangut characters are provided where crucial. There are some specific grammatical occurrences in this paragraph, like e.g. Tangut 3330 纒. (Chinese: 雨) is in the position of a verb. Nishida uses 降, but this character seems not to occur in the text.

³⁶ Saraha entry reads: “This second founding master was a brahman from the Western India, state of Xitian. He understood the five *vidyas*, contemplated the emptiness of the five *skandhas*, clearly accomplished the six supernatural powers, he took changing forms in accordance with the six ways. He rejoiced together with the hundred thousand *dakinis*, he revered thousands of millions *celestial females*? (Chinese: 仙陰, Tangut: 2862 菱, 0148 纒) as himself (the text is damaged, so reading is tentative), the most dirty he could make pure. [because] the original source of purity and dirt is in disorder and mixture. He [could] turn severe wrath into love, [because] the original nature of wrath and love is equal. The eight grounds do not move, the true source is tranquil and abides in harmony. The three parts of *Doha* (Saraha’s poetic collection, 0509□, 1021 纒) elucidate the great Way [through the] songs. Then he became the founding master to the Master Nagarjuna and transmitted to him the most true and important.” (I do not comment on the common Buddhist terms (*skāndhas*, *six ways*, etc.) here, since I believe they are close to the relevant Chinese terms and are actually derived from Chinese Buddhist texts). Chinese reconstruction: 此第二宗師，西天國西印度婆羅門也。解達五明，五蘊皆空觀照，明證六通，宜應六道變現，[與]百千空行共同喜樂，萬億仙陰如自敬事供養，垢垢能淨，垢淨本源凡亂[故]，怨怨成親，怨親體性平等[故]。八地不動，源已和寂寂。三部 *Doha* 大道宣宣以歌。後為龍樹師之宗師而真要傳[焉]”。 (“*The Collection*”: 1b, line 8-2b, line 6. Nishida: xlii.

³⁷ Śawarepa’s entry reads: “This fourth master was the brahman from the Southern India, the State of Xitian. His mind and understanding were brilliant, While he still was in the womb, he silently remembered the previous life. His speech was eloquent. When he was delivered, he could speak about the fundamental things. The people of the country loved him and rejoiced in him, and often came to his door. [He praised] many *devas* with a lot of songs, and made a rain of the flowers of emptiness. He lived in the market place, and saw love (tentative translation), and taught the people who lived at home. While he was wandering in the mountains, he conquered evil ghosts and spirits. [How] overcoming is brightness of wisdom of the Four lands, [how] broad is the red fire. The sea of suffering of and eight difficulties are coming to extinction, and the clear smoke is floating. Then he became the founding master to the master Maitripa and transmitted to him the most true and important.” Chinese rendering: 此第四宗師西天國南印度婆羅門也。心意明輝，在胎前命默思。語言巧能，產來，能說本事，國人喜樂 (Tangut: 0209□? cannot be properly rendered, text is also slightly damaged here) ? 複復面來門下，諸天歌頌數數，令虛化雨。商場且在，見愛，而教在家人。遊山墓，伏弊惡鬼神。四地光輝勝勝，八難苦海終終，清煙飄飄。後為慈師之宗師而真要傳[焉]。 However, if this character is really Śavarīśvara, the Tangut text does not mention the parable of his meeting Avlokitesvara during his hunting trip. Also, Śavarīśvara is known to have been a dancer, but in the Tangut text there are only slight hints on that (if any). Indication of Southern India is in tenor with what little is known of Śawarepa, who is not included in the list of eighty four Mahasiddhas.

³⁸ Curiously enough, one of the crucial figures in Mahāmudrā transmission in Xixia—“Mahayana Imperial Preceptor Xuanmi (大乘玄密帝師)” personal monastic name was Zhicheng (智稱), translated as Prajñākīrti or Shes-rab grags-pa (Nie Hongyin “Xixia dishi kaobian”: 5). If such an identification is accepted and applied to “*The Collection*”, Xuanmi would become an Indian, “The Lord of Speech” will become Dabao, “Master Diligence” will become Tibetan Xuanzhao and the master to Dehui. However, “*The Collection*” itself does not support any of such identifications. As I mentioned above, the Master Diligence could also be identified with Xuanmi if he is recongnized as Dabao. Thus, more immediate evidence is required.

“Master Diligence” is from Tibet.³⁹ Unlike SCMIM, the Tangut text goes as far as inform the reader of the “lay surnames” (Chinese: 人姓, Tangut: 0029 嗣, 3890 繡) of the last two teachers: the lay name of “Lord of Speech” was 3191 循, 3860 織 *bjaa ror*, possible Tibetan reconstruction *bro*, or *bor*), while the lay name of the “Master Diligence” was 1007 纘, 4410 彘 (*xi nge*, combined reading by *fanqie* would sound like *xing* or *sing*). Insofar, I do not have any sufficient grounds to identify the last two persons with any of the known figures in Mahāmudrā transmission history: it looks tempting to identify the Lord of Speech with Marpa, Milarepa, or Gampopa (all renown for their eloquence), but there is no sufficient evidence for this kind of identification. In his reconstruction of the initial part of the text Dr. Nishida renders parts of the biographical entries for each teacher and provides Chinese reconstruction for the parts of the text itself.⁴⁰

For the present study, the last two personalities listed by the Tangut text are of special importance, so I would like to provide tentative translations of their biographical entries in full length in the main body of the paper:

“This seventh founding master comes from the state of Bapo.⁴¹ His lay family name was *Bjaa ror* (fanqie: *bor*, *bro*). He desired to understand “six characters”, removed the obstacle from the eye of the “five bright wisdoms”, adhered to the three collections of vinaya, pacified the waves on the water of twenty four pure concentrations, the twenty four palaces of dakinis [he] collected as if on the altar. He uphold the circle of sixty two Buddhas that appeared before him. He reached the palace of patience of □□□□□ four lords.⁴² He clearly demonstrated five characteristics and clarified the principle of

³⁹ This is where our text demonstrates its peculiarity: after Maitripa, Kagyu lineage should have gone directly to Marpa, then to Milarepa etc. However, here we do not have Marpa, but instead the lineage lists the “Glory of Wisdom” and the “Lord of Speech”, whom I fail to identify at the moment.

⁴⁰ Nishida, op. cit., xli-xliv. However, I always use my own readings for the discussed parts of the text.

⁴¹ For the master Lord of Speech from Bapo there is the following observation: the text “*Xinyi Dashouyin jin yingge feng sizhong yaomen*” (新譯大手印金縷絡等四種要門, SCMIM: 417 presents a lineage which mentions a master Babi (Babo) Wusheng (巴彼, 巴波 (SCMIM: 425), 無生). This master is positioned as a heir to Jingangshou (金鋼手 rDo rje 'chang), thus probably he is the same person, whose biography is presented in “*Wusheng shangshi chuxian ganying gongdesong*”, where Wusheng is described as dreaming about Jingangshou, who commands him to return to the “Middle Kingdom and Xifan” (西番中國, SCMIM: 328. According to the account in the biography, he enjoyed high esteem in “Xia”, which he was “transforming by the royal order”. SCMIM: 330). This person might be the Master Lord of Speech from the State of Bapo mentioned in “*The Collection*”. “*Xinyi Dashouyin jin yingge feng sizhong yaomen*” further mentions, that from him Dharma went to Vajraguru and then to Xuanzhao (Shen Weirong, “Dacheng yadao miji”). Thus it puts the master two generations before Dehui from “*The Collection*”. Therefore the identification between the Lord of Speech and Wusheng is chronologically plausible, but there is no chance to explain the change in the name.

⁴² In my rendering of Tangut personal and place names I am using the transcription of the Tangut characters suggested by Gong Hwang-chenrg, or Nikolai Nevskij’s Chinese transcription from “*The Tangut Philology*”. There are a lot of terms which need further clarification, therefore the present paper intends to initiate the discussion and bring the attention of the scholars to the issue, rather than to suggest plausible answers.

In his Chinese rendering of the relevant part of the Tangut text Nishida omits this passage, which very difficult for understanding, but in so doing he limits himself to a line of dots, thus creating the impression that the text was damaged, which is not an issue here. My Chinese rendering of the paragraph: “此第七宗師 bapo 國人也。人姓 bjaaror, 求知六字, 除五明慧眼[之]翳, 持三戒, 十淨定水湛然, 空行二十四宮聚如場共, 受持六十四佛中圍現前, 及四主競勝熱頂忍宮。五相宣明, 明人法空理, 實持無念戲樂, 斷妄幻, 起無著[之]行, 調付虛思心念, 後成精進師之宗師, 而傳真要[焉]”。The number “twenty four” for the “palaces”

emptiness of man and dharma. He really accepted the joyful game of “no-thought”, removed delusional thoughts and exercised non-abiding [and] suppressed the empty thoughts of mind and then became the founding master Master Diligence, and passed on him the most true and important.

This eighth founding master comes from the state of Bod. His lay family name was *Xi nge* (*sngge?*, Nishida: *sing*). He followed [the doctrine] of the three baskets, extinguished the three poisons, awakened the mind, took the vow to deliver the four kinds of living beings. [He] established three collections for seven parts of the true principle (*nyaya?*), [teachings of] foundations, causes and comparisons. In the six collections he discriminated between the two truths of true and false Ways, taught sutras, sastras and discipline. Every day he was translating Sanskrit tantras, and exercising contemplation and wisdom. Every night he was putting together a collection in Tibetan script.⁴³ Every mind was attaining the harmony with the enlightenment, and he was collecting the provisions for [those who travel along] the Way. He suppressed every thought, which was affectional or deluded, and [then] became the founding master for Dehui, and passed on him the most true and important.⁴⁴

Important thing here is that the final person in the transmission chart is Dehui the compiler of “The Collection”, while the Masters Xuanzhao (玄照) and Xuanmi (玄密) mentioned

here is rather enigmatic. “Twenty four palaces” might represent twenty four constellation, but this needs to be further specified. (The Tangut used to revere celestial bodies, but they numbered twelve constellations, the tradition, apparently borrowed from India, while the planetary names are of Chinese origin. See: Nikolai Nevskij, «Кульм небесных светил в Тангутском государстве» (The Cult of Celestial Bodies in the Tangut State) (*Tangut Philology*, vol. 1: 52-73) In my translation I have failed to render the part about the “victorious palace of the four lords”. The 六字 (six characters) used here present no difficulty: they must imply a six character dharani, the only problem being which dharani out of quite a few presented in the sources, the Tangut text refers to. The 五明 is probably the equivalent of Sanskrit *pañcavidya* (attested by other Tangut texts); “sixty four Buddhas” are not identified insofar, the term 中圍 (enclosure?) often occurs in late Chinese *mijiao* (密教) texts and is well attested by SCMIM (e.g.: SCMIM: *Daoguo Yanhui ji* 道果延輝集: 1-3). The term occurs in various connotations. However, all of these terms might be well connected with the Mahāmudrā practices: the construction of the mandala of sixty two Buddhas by Marpa, and assembly of dakinis therein are mentioned in various biographies of Milarepa.

⁴³ Apparently, this second (see above, note 4) “Collection”, mentioned above might be the Tangut translation of that Tibetan compilation by the Master Diligence, which, in this case is devoted solely to the “no-thought” concept. The final part of the text explains how three *tantras* were collected by the Master Diligence, then accepted by Dehui who presented them for the benefit of the living beings. In some strange connotation the “map of Tsongka” (Tangut: 4797 穉, 5457 穉, 4023 穉, 1362 穉) is mentioned in the concluding portion of the text. The general tenor of the compilation is however clear: the word Mahāmudrā is not mentioned there at all, being substituted with “no-thought”. (See: Tang. 345, 2851, p 27a. lines 1-3). The text tends to explain the “four gates” of attaining contemplation, all rendered through the “no-thought”, and comments upon another text, which, judging from what I could understand, is different from “The Collection” discussed in this paper. However, the same persons: Dehui and Master Diligence are involved the second “Collection”, and it might even turn out that the text was written not by Dehui, but by his disciples. All this allows me to suggest that this second “Collection” is a commentary to the Tibetan compilation by the Master Diligence.

⁴⁴ Chinese rendering by Nishida is much shorter than the original text. My Chinese rendering: “此第八宗師藏國人也。人姓 Xi-nge, 身持三藏, 破三毒[而]醒心。起四攝法, 願度四生, 安立七類正道, 設制本緣喻[之]三, 分別六集中道真妄二諦, 說經論戒, 日日翻譯梵本, 修戒定慧, 夜夜集藏文, 心合覺, 積集覺道資糧, 調付念念, 虛染煩惱, 後成德慧之宗師而傳真要[焉]”.

in the lineages of SCMIM are not present at all. Therefore, one might suggest that we are dealing with a slightly different lineage, probably deviating from the ones attested by other Tangut texts and SCMIM. Since the Tangut text does not contain a colophone, it is hard to establish the date of compilation, but its compiler—Dehui was active as a translator of Buddhist scriptures around 1186. This makes him a contemporary with Xuanmi who also was active around the same time (he is mentioned under 1193).⁴⁵

Contents of “The Collection”

After the introduction of the lineage, the text turns to the explication of the doctrine itself. In so doing, Dehui resorts both to prose sections, probably reflecting his encounters with the Master Diligence, and poetic verses (“gathas”), which also belong to the Master. The text opens with a brief discourse on the teaching of “no-thought”, which is considered the core of the Mahāmudrā doctrine:

Then the Master said: “The source of movement and rest is similar, the substance of purity and dirt is the same, the merit of no-thought manifests its merits, and in the calm waters the images appear. (Chinese: 於時師謂：動靜源同；淨垢同體；無念現功；浪湛流現象)”, and then said a gatha: “The thoughts are calm and the minds are marvelous;

Every mind is marvelous and the thoughts are calm; When it is calm and marvelous and there is “no-thought”; every mind and every thought attain the right enlightenment (Chinese: 正覺).

Then, after the stupid disciples heard about that mudra, their minds and bodies became soft, and [they started] jumping with joy.⁴⁶...

1. Vehicle of Cause and Vehicle of Fruit in “The Collection”

The text further continues in a question and answer form, combining the prose sections and verses, which are followed again by prose explanations by the Master. As far as I can conclude so far, the dialogue is taking place between Dehui and his Master Diligence. Dehui asks the Master:

“Those who now follow the Way according to the Vehicles of Cause and Fruit (Chinese: 因果二乘, 3532 縱, 3746 徒, 0590 橈, 2037 籟)—do all of them follow this practice of “no-thought” (無念, 1445 懈, 3510 類)? [The Master] answered: “Those, who follow the two vehicles of Cause and Fruit, follow the men and separate from the Way.⁴⁷ Thus, there are nine categories (九品, 3568 純, 4729 類), among which only those who belong to the eighth category are [really] exercising the “no-thought”. [Dehui] asks: “If it is like that,

⁴⁵ Shi Jinbo, *Xixia Fojiao*: 165.

⁴⁶ The next sentence appears extremely enigmatic, and I cannot come up with a plausible translation. Chinese reconstruction: 虛間金鳥難比與羅，超越捕坎內玉兔，宗師意守長足，告？頭切肉，流血折骨拔髓，磨頂減足，思念報恩 “The Collection”, 5a, lines 6-8; Nishida’s reconstruction is very close to mine and also the same enigmatic. The first part of the paragraph probably indicates the difficulty of attaining Mahāmudrā—it is as difficult as to catch a golden bird in the sky with a net, or catch a jade rabbit. However, the definition of the rabbit is unclear. Whose blood the teacher leaves out, and whose flesh he is cutting and whose bones he is breaking, remains unclear to me. Therefore I omitted this paragraph from the main text.

⁴⁷ This is a rather strange idea, considering the importance of oral instruction and guidance by an experienced lama, so much emphasized in the bKa’-rGyud Mahāmudrā teachings.

then what is the basic nature (根性, 3109 瓶, 1262 瓶) of those, who rejoice and believe (喜信 · 4394 瓊, 4100 瓊) into the Vehicle of Cause?" [The Master] answered with the gatha:

The first is the nature of the Medicine Tree,⁴⁸
The second is the nature of the Pure Flower,⁴⁹
The third is the nature of Concealment,⁵⁰
The fourth is the nature of the Fragrance Mountain,⁵¹
The fifth is the nature of the Clear Moon,⁵²
The sixth is the nature of the Bright Sun,⁵³
The seventh is the nature of the Ship,⁵⁴
The eighth is the nature of the Great Sea,⁵⁵
The ninth is the nature of the Emptiness of Space.⁵⁶
These are the nine names for the people, who follow [the vehicle] of causes.

[Dehui] asked: "What is the basic nature of the nine categories of those, who rejoice and believe into the Vehicle of the Fruit?" [The Master] answered with a gatha:

The first is the nature of Iron,⁵⁷
The second is the nature of Bronze,⁵⁸
The third is the nature of Silver,⁵⁹
The fourth is the nature of Pure Gold,⁶⁰
The fifth is the nature of Bright Jade,⁶¹
The sixth is the nature of Lapis Lazuli,⁶²
The seventh is the nature of the Diamond,⁶³
The eighth is the nature of Mani-pearl,⁶⁴
The ninth is the nature of the King of the Mountains.⁶⁵

⁴⁸ The following translation alters the original verse: every line in the original finisheds with the word "man" or "people" of such and such nature. "Medicine tree"—Chinese 藥樹, Tangut: 5681 瓊, 1664 瓊.

⁴⁹ Chinese: 清華, Tangut: 3352 瓊, 1855 瓊.

⁵⁰ Chinese: 隱藏, Tangut: 3904 瓊, 1967 瓊.

⁵¹ Chinese: 香山, Tangut: 0793 瓊, 2856 瓊.

⁵² Chinese: 淨月, Tangut: 1855 瓊, 3313 瓊.

⁵³ Chinese: 明日, Tangut: 2245 瓊, 5728 瓊.

⁵⁴ Chinese: 船舶, Tangut: 0920 瓊, 4303 瓊.

⁵⁵ Chinese: 大海, Tangut: 0971 瓊, 5280 瓊.

⁵⁶ Chinese: 虛空, Tangut: 1636 瓊, 4943 瓊.

⁵⁷ Chinese: 礦鐵, Tangut: 5486 瓊, 2599 瓊.

⁵⁸ Chinese: 青銅, Tangut: 2574 瓊, 2560 瓊.

⁵⁹ Chinese: 銀, Tangut: 2390 瓊, 5774 瓊.

⁶⁰ Chinese: 真金, Tangut: 0226 瓊, 2087 瓊.

⁶¹ Chinese: 清玉, Tangut: 4905 瓊, 0458 瓊.

⁶² Chinese: 琉璃, Tangut: 4216 瓊, 1070 瓊.

⁶³ Chinese: 金剛, Tangut: 0226 瓊, 2561 瓊.

⁶⁴ Chinese: 摩尼, Tangut: 1642 瓊, 2104 瓊.

⁶⁵ Chinese: 山王, Tangut: 2856 瓊, 2930 瓊.

These are the nine names for the people, who follow the Way
[according the vehicle] of Fruit.⁶⁶

[Dehui] asked: “What are the nine ways for those, who rejoice and believe into
the Vehicle of Causes?” [The Master] answered with the gatha:

The first is the way of controlling⁶⁷ the three karmas ,
The second is contemplation of the dust of the objects,⁶⁸
The third is contemplation of the impermanence of consciousness,⁶⁹
The fourth is contemplation of objects as devoid of self,⁷⁰
The fifth is contemplation of body as devoid of self,⁷¹
The sixth is contemplation of consciousness as devoid of self,⁷²
The seventh is contemplation of the true emptiness of dharmas,⁷³
The eighth is contemplation of the source and “no-thought”,⁷⁴
The ninth is absence of wisdom and liberation.⁷⁵
These are the names for the ways of perfection [for those who] follow the Way
[according to the vehicle] of Causes.⁷⁶

[Dehui] asked: “What are the nine ways for those, who rejoice and believe into the
Vehicle of Fruit?” [The Master] answered with a gatha:

The first is the contemplation of Buddha body as it appears before you,⁷⁷
The second is contemplation of Buddha inside your body,⁷⁸
The third is contemplation of Buddha in another [person’s] body,⁷⁹
The fourth is the way joy of inner fire,⁸⁰
The fifth is the brightness of joy of wrapped? spots.⁸¹
The sixth is the way of your own tranquility,⁸²
The seventh is the way of joy of the ultimate emptiness,⁸³

⁶⁶ See: “The Collection”: 5b-6b, line 3.

⁶⁷ i.e. body, mind and speech (三業). Chinese: 比治, Tangut: 4872 𪛗, 4561 𪛗

⁶⁸ Chinese: 觀境微塵, Tangut: 4339 𪛗, 2857 𪛗, 5070 𪛗, 3889 𪛗.

⁶⁹ Chinese: 觀識不常, Tangut: 1272 𪛗, 2857 𪛗, 1491 𪛗, 5595 𪛗.

⁷⁰ Chinese: 觀境無我, Tangut: 4339 𪛗, 2857 𪛗, 3510 𪛗, 3818 𪛗.

⁷¹ Chinese: 觀身無我, Tangut: 4391 𪛗, 2857 𪛗, 3510 𪛗, 3818 𪛗.

⁷² Chinese: 觀識無我, Tangut: 1272 𪛗, 2857 𪛗, 3510 𪛗, 3818 𪛗.

⁷³ Chinese: 觀法真空, Tangut: 1143 𪛗, 2857 𪛗, 2087 𪛗, 4943 𪛗.

⁷⁴ Chinese: 觀源無念, Tangut: 4821 𪛗, 2857 𪛗, 1445 𪛗, 3510 𪛗.

⁷⁵ Chinese: 無知解脫, Tangut: 1420 𪛗, 3510 𪛗, 3828 𪛗, 3025 𪛗.

⁷⁶ “The Collection”: 6b, line 5-2a, line 1.

⁷⁷ Chinese: 前觀佛身, Tangut: 0062 𪛗, 2857 𪛗, 3464 𪛗, 4931 𪛗.

⁷⁸ Chinese: 自身佛觀, Tangut: 4412 𪛗, 4931 𪛗, 3464 𪛗, 2857 𪛗.

⁷⁹ Chinese: 他身佛觀, Tangut: 4568 𪛗, 4931 𪛗, 3464 𪛗, 2857 𪛗.

⁸⁰ Chinese: *tju-məð* 喜樂 Tangut: 2814 𪛗, 0991 𪛗, 1629 𪛗, 0230 𪛗. If my reconstruction is correct, the first two characters are the Tangut version for *gTum mo*—the first of the six yogas of Nāropa. It is interesting to mention, that the second character in the bynome actually means “fire” and “heat”. Nishida reads 內火 and does not comment upon that concept.

⁸¹ Nishida reads this as 斑塊明樂. My reading: 2892 𪛗, 3400 𪛗, 2245 𪛗, 0230 𪛗. (斑卷明樂) is not better than Nishida’s and does not allow any identification. However, further in the text there is a lengthy discourse by the Master Diligence on the nature of the “spots”. Phonetic reading is not much help here either.

⁸² Chinese: 汝已(進)寂樂 Tangut: 2882 𪛗, 0693 𪛗 (0691 𪛗), 0090 𪛗, 0230 𪛗.

The eighth is the joy of entertaining the “no-thought”;⁸⁴

The ninth is the great joy of the absence of wisdom,⁸⁵

These are the names for the ways of perfection [for those who] follow the Way [according to the vehicle] of Fruit.⁸⁶

The general correlations between practices and natures might as well be reproduced in a table:

The Vehicle of Cause

Nature	Contemplation
nature of the Medicine Tree	controlling the three karmas
the nature of the Pure Flower	contemplation of the dust of the objects
the nature of Concealment	contemplation of the impermanence of consciousness
the nature of the Fragrance Mountain	contemplation of objects as devoid of self
the nature of the Clear Moon	contemplation of body as devoid of self
the nature of the Bright Sun	contemplation of consciousness as devoid of self
the nature of the Ship	contemplation of the true emptiness of dharmas
the nature of the Great Sea	contemplation of the source and “no-thought”
the nature of the Emptiness of Space	absence of wisdom and liberation

Vehicle of Fruit

Nature	Contemplation (“the way of joy”)
the nature of Iron	contemplation of Buddha body as it appears before you
nature of Bronze	contemplation of Buddha inside your body
the nature of Silver	contemplation of Buddha in another [person’s] body
the nature of Pure Gold	the way joy of inner fire
nature of Bright Jade	brightness of joy of wrapped? Spots
nature of Lapis Lazuli	the way of your own tranquility
nature of the Diamond	the way of joy of the ultimate emptiness
nature of Mani-pearl	the joy of entertaining the “no-thought”
nature of the King of the Mountains	the great joy of the absence of wisdom

My impression here is that the two Vehicles represent two versions of the teaching: one designed for the ordinary people, who have to proceed from the initial stage of controlling the three *karmas*, (i.e. mind, speech and body), while the other is supposed to be followed by the people of higher abilities. As it is noticeable from the verses, there is certain relationship

⁸³ Chinese: 究竟空樂 Tangut: 3351 纒, 2417 發, 4943 纒 0230 纒

⁸⁴ Chinese: 無念戲樂 Tangut: 1445 纒, 3510 纒, 5531 纒, 0230 纒

⁸⁵ Chinese: 無知大樂 Tangut: 1420 纒, 3510 纒, 0968 纒, 0230 纒

⁸⁶ The combined usage of “no-thought” and “no-wisdom” is well attested in the sutra literature, especially in Prajñāpāramita texts. In Xuanzang’s translation of Mahaprajñāparamita a number of such connotations might be discovered, e.g.: “*Da banruo boloumiduojing*” 大般若波羅蜜多經, 217, T. 6, 0220: 0459a13-14; and other fragments. In these Great Wisdom Scriptures “no-thought” and “no wisdom” are used in combination with supreme wisdom, absence of characteristics is treated as the “supreme purity”.

between “natures”, “contemplation” and “the way of joy”, which describe the spiritual advance of an ascetic on the Mahāmudrā path. It is important to mention here that the natures and practices exposed in the discourse on the two vehicles are essentially the same and appeal to the same substance of the true mind. Thus, talking about the great joy of “no-thought” (the eighth stage for the Vehicle of Fruit) the Master Diligence mentions:

“[Dehui] asked: “This eighth way of the joy of no-thought, what is it about? [The master] answered: “The perfection on this way is similar to following the eighth among the nine categories of [practice] for those who love and believe into the Vehicle of Cause.” [Dehui] asked: “If they are all the same, for what reason its name is different from that previous way?” [The master] answered: “Concerning those, who love and believe into the Vehicle of Cause, they establish harmony with the single truth by refuting (Chinese: 背 Tangut: 1425 駁) the five desires and thus contemplate the source and attain “no-thought”. Now, those who love and believe into the Vehicle of Fruit, [they] establish the harmony with the single truth by accepting (Chinese: 合 Tangut: 4599 報) the five desires. Thus, the nature of feelings of accepting or refutation is different, while the “no-thought” attained [through] the harmony with the single truth is the same.”⁸⁷

The same conclusion applies to the supreme stage of the “way of absence of wisdom and liberation” and “the great joy of absence of wisdom” and the difference between them will be known only through “ritual” (or the “mode of fulfillment” Chinese: 樣 or 禮 Tangut: 1365 概).⁸⁸

What is meant here is the eight path of the Vehicle of Cause, which is explicated in the following way:

[Dehui] asked: “The eight [stage]—contemplating the source and [attaining] “no-thought”, what is it about? [The master] answered: “[When] the true mind is tranquil, the four characteristics (i.e. birth 生, abiding 住, difference 異 and extinction 滅) cannot move. The nature of enlightenment will manifest itself and how the transformations of the three worlds will be possible? Every thought is “no-thought”, then accordingly, every thought will be *bodhi*. If all the thoughts will be set in motion, then accordingly, every thought will become a defilement. Accordingly, [when] every thought is tranquil, every mind is marvelous and bright. [When] every mind is marvelous and bright, the thoughts are empty and tranquil. [When] it is emptiness and marvel, the marvelous nature will return to its foundation.⁸⁹ [When] every mind and every thought have attained “no-thought”, intention towards the source [will arise] (tentative translation—K. S.), and thus there will be contemplation of the source and “no-thought”. Realization of wisdom [happens] following the vision. In accordance with the vision, the ordinary mind ? (tentative translation,

⁸⁷ Chinese: 問謂：此第八無念樂道者，如何？答謂：同於昔因乘信愛者之九品道中第八觀源無念[之]修。問謂：雖同，則何故昔其道名不同？答謂：此因乘信愛者以背五欲，和[於]真一，[此]隨觀源無念道也。此果乘信愛者以合於五欲和[於]真一，[此]隨無念樂道也。此隨，背合[之]性情異而隨和[於]真一[之]無念同是。”*The Collection*”: 15b, line 4-16a, line 2.

⁸⁸ “The Collection”, 16a, lines 4-7

⁸⁹ Chinese: 妙性本所使歸 Tangut: 3565 覲, 2112 藏, 1262 概, 4484 禱, 3070 散, 1442 概

untranslated Tangut 4736 齋)—this is the true practice. When the practices are not in disorder, the concentration arises by itself. The three—vision, practice and concentration are the most correct and important on the true way.”⁹⁰

The following paragraph, devoted to absence of wisdom is written in the similar way, and indicates that state of no-wisdom is attained through the “no-thought” and also implies its specific “vision, practice and concentration”.⁹¹

Here one might notice a certain peculiarity: if the text of “*The Collection*” is really a bKa’-rGyud text, one would expect to find the third section of the Vehicle of the Way (道乘), but it is not the case here. At the same time, the term “*daoguo*” 道果 (*lam 'bras*), characteristic for Sakya tradition is never used in “*The Collection*”. Thus, the actual exposition of the teaching, as it appears, is in contradiction with the alleged lineage presented in the opening part of the compilation and, as of now, its scholarly affiliation cannot be determined. In the text the Master Diligence directly introduces the two Vehicles, dividing the path into nine stages or degrees of perfection, expressed in a metaphoric way. Moreover that, the metaphors, used so extensively through the text, are not found anywhere in the SCMIM Mahāmudrā texts, and appear to be unique to the Tangut compilation.⁹² Judging from the way the teaching is exposed in “The Collection” there is no possibility to connect it directly with any of the Mahāmudrā traditions, preserved in SCMIM. Accordingly, judging from the little which is known about other Tangut Mahāmudrā texts, which are roughly in tenor with the SCMIM traditions, “The Collection” seems to be unique among the Tangut texts either.

The only possible correspondence for the “two vehicle” approach taken in “*The Collection*” (however, indirect) might be seen in the SCMIM text “*Xinyi Dashouyin bugongyi peijiao yaomen*” (新譯大手印不共義配教要門), attributed to Maitripa, and translated in Xixia by the pupils of the State preceptor Xuanzhao.⁹³ In the opening part of the text Maitripa speaks about the beginnings of Mahāmudrā and mentions that rDo `rje chang has compiled the “*Initials of the Unborn Mahāmudrā*” (無生大手印本源理) and exposed the doctrine from the two angles: one exposition was presented from the point of view of expedient means (方便), while the other teaching expressed the ultimate truth of mind (真心義) and was designed for the students with the high degree of wisdom.⁹⁴ This last doctrine is called “The Vehicle of Fruit”, while the first might be referred to as “The Vehicle of Cause”, though the text by Maitripa (more

⁹⁰ Chinese: 問謂：第八觀源無念道者，如何？答謂：凡心寂寂，四相不能動搖，覺性宣明，豈能三世[之]變易？念念無念，此順念念菩提。念念動念，此順念念煩惱，此順念念寂寂，心心妙妙，妙性歸於本所。心心念念無念源方？趣，便觀源無念。知覺者，順見也。隨順與見，常心？令，實行也。行不雜亂，自定也。見行定三[者]，正要實道也。”*The Collection*”: 11a line 3-11b, line 2.

⁹¹ “*The Collection*”: 11b, line 3-12a, line 2.

⁹² Actually SCMIM preserved a number of texts, devoted to the metaphoric explication of the Mahāmudrā: “*Dashouyin shisanzhong fayu*” (大手印十三種法喻, SCMIM: 409-410); “*Dashouyin sanzong fayu*” (大手印三種法喻, SCMIM: 411-412) etc. Other texts of Mahāmudrā cycle in SCMIM are also of highly metaphoric nature (Shen Weirong, “Dacheng yaodao miji”), but none of them presents anything close to what we have in “*The Collection*”.

⁹³ SCMIM: 367-376. 新譯大手印不共義配教要門，大巴彌恒銘得哩幹集，果海密嚴寺玄照國師沙門惠賢傳，果海密嚴寺沙門惠幢譯

⁹⁴ SCMIM: 367-368

likely, attributed to Maitripa) does not postulate that directly.

2. "No-thought" in "The Collection"

In all the classifications found in "The Collection" "the no-thought" is introduced as the eighth among nine other stages of practice, thus being an immediate predecessor to the liberation. In the paragraph on the eighth way for those who "love and believe into the Vehicle of Cause", the master mentions that :

"when all thoughts are no-thought, the thoughts are *bodhi*; when the thoughts come into motion, all the thoughts become defilements. Therefore, [when] all the thoughts are tranquil, all the minds are marvelous and bright".⁹⁵

As it is clear from the above, the "no-thought" is definitely a crucial concept in "The Collection", and as such this text is quite out of the ordinary as compared to the different Mahāmudrā compilations in SCMIM. The "no-thought" is also referred to in these texts, though this concept does not play such an exclusive role in the Mahāmudrā teaching, as it is presented in the SCMIM texts. In "The Collection" "no-thought" constitutes the core of the teaching and is explained at much length in various portions of the text, which were only partially represented in the translations presented here. Important to mention is the position the "no-thought" occupies in the teaching of the two vehicles introduced by the Master Diligence: in the text, as far as I have noticed, the two vehicles are never compared, and since all the "natures" and "contemplations" and "ways of joy" are introduced in much detail, one might assume that both vehicles are of equal value, especially considering that the ultimate goal for both vehicles is attainment of "no-thought" and "no-wisdom". After the Master Diligence finishes explaining the "ways of contemplation" and "the ways of joy" for the Vehicles of Cause and Fruit, he turns to the explanation of "no-thought":

"The stupid disciple (Dehui—K.S) bowed his head again and again before the feet of the founding master, and wished [him] many years of longevity, [and then] asked: "Among the nine ways for those who rejoice and believe into the Vehicle of Causes and the nine ways for those who rejoice and believe into the Vehicle of Fruit, what corresponds with the way of your mind, the great teacher? What did the founding patriarchs of the past⁹⁶ consider the most important?" [The master] answered: "The eighth [among the] ways of the founding masters of the past is what I rejoice in and wish [to attain], and following my mind, [I] would like to find harmony in this [way].

[Dehui] asked: "There are joy and belief into the eighth way (way of "no-thought"—K. S.) both according to the Vehicle of Cause and the Vehicle of Fruit, which [makes] two ways. Say, supreme teacher, with which of these your mind is pleased?" [The master] answered: "In the past the founding patriarchs [believed that for the] the interior [practices] the way of "no-thought", which follows the Vehicle of the Fruit, is the most important; and for the outside [performance], the practice of "no-thought", which follows

⁹⁵ Chinese: 念念無念，此順菩提，念念動念，念念此順煩惱，此順念念寂寂，心心妙妙明明。 "The Collection", 11a, lines 5-6. See full translation of the paragraph below.

⁹⁶ Chinese: 祖宗師, Tangut: 0224 彝, 4484 禱, 4858 禱

the Vehicle of the Causes, is the most marvelous and victorious. Thus, my mind and practice are in harmony according to this”.

[Dehui] asked: “Thus the way of “no-thought” is the most important and true. Accordingly, what are the characteristics of the three practices of enlightenment, perfection and realization?”⁹⁷ [The master] answered: “I will explain to you the characteristics of the three practices of enlightenment, perfection and realization in “no-thought”. There are three ways, which should be discriminated: the first is the basic doctrine⁹⁸ of vision of enlightenment of the “no-thought”, the following is way of perfection and practice of the “no-thought”, the last is the way of the realization of merit⁹⁹ [arising] from the true realization of “no-thought”.

[Dehui] asked: “This first—the basic teaching of the vision of enlightenment of the “no-thought”—what is it about?” [The master] answered: “I will explain to you this basic teaching: again, there are two ways in it: the first is the teaching refuting the hundred mistakes and following the truth.¹⁰⁰ The second [one] is the most important teaching of the masters indicating the single truth.¹⁰¹ The first, [i.e.] the teaching refuting the hundred mistakes and following the truth, again has two teachings: the first is the [the one which] indicates and elucidates [the doctrine of] our own lineage [or] the teaching of the four conditions; the second is refuting other lineages, i.e. the teaching of double extinguishing.¹⁰² These teachings are just like that. There are many ways, and there will be no end to the explanation”.

[Dehui] asked: “Explain, the most important teaching of the masters indicating the single truth, what is it?” [The master] answered: “[I] will explain to you this the most important teaching of the masters indicating the single truth. Again, there are four ways here: the first is the way [of representing] all the phenomena as vain and empty [since they are] the works of illusion.¹⁰³ The second is the way of vain thinking and [understanding] the illusory nature of the characteristics of thought;¹⁰⁴ the third is the way of “no-thought” and [understanding] the initial absence of the vain mind;¹⁰⁵ the fourth is the way of “no-thought”, tranquility and no-birth”.¹⁰⁶

This paragraph is followed by an elaborate discussion of each of the “ways” and other related matters with special attention to the “no-thought”.¹⁰⁷ To my opinion, the “no-thought”

⁹⁷ Chinese: 悟修證三行相, Tangut: 3606 毓, 1270 赫, 2171 毓, 1718 殺, 2543 觀, 2352 毓

⁹⁸ Chinese: 宗趣, Tangut: 4484 赫, 1026 蕤. In the most cases the word “teaching” renders Tangut 2468 毅, Chinese: 門

⁹⁹ Chinese: 功起, Tangut: 1633 赫, 0001 禱

¹⁰⁰ Chinese: 百非護說正應, Tangut: 5770 毓, 1348 情, 0356 飛, 2777 茲, 3355 毓, 0316 祿

¹⁰¹ Chinese: 一真明指師要, Tangut: 1075 翳, 2087 藝, 5607 熾, 0431 殺, 4858 蔚, 4773 翫

¹⁰² Chinese: 雙衰, Tangut: 1733 毓, 1050 蕤

¹⁰³ Chinese: 諸相虛妄幻術門, Tangut: 4876 鸞, 2352 毓, 1636 魁, 5619 熾, 2371 翳, 5062 翫, 2648 毓

¹⁰⁴ Chinese: 諸念幻相妄思門, Tangut: 4876, 鸞 1445 翳, 2371 翳, 2352 毓, 4367 蕤, 1399 熾, 2648 毓

¹⁰⁵ Chinese: 妄心本無無念門, Tangut: 4367 蕤, 3769 絳, 4484 赫, 3510 翳, 1445 翳, 3510 翳, 2648 毓

¹⁰⁶ Chinese: 無念寂默無生門, Tangut: 1445 翳, 3510 翳, 0090 翳, ?, 2754 蕤, 3510 翳

¹⁰⁷ For the convenience of the readers, I have provided my Chinese rendering of the above paragraph (“*The Collection*”, 16a, line 1-17b, line 6): 時愚子于宗師足數數拜告(tentative reading)意命壽壽。問謂：先信喜於因乘[之]人之九品道，且後信喜於果乘[之]人之九品道中，上師，汝心何與和耶？祖宗師何令[為]要？

here is presented as a rather sophisticated doctrine implying a “gradual” rather than “sudden” approach and requiring a long process of attainment. The closest parallel to the doctrine of “*The Collection*”, which I could find is presented in “*The Basic Teachings of Sudden and Gradual Approaches to Mahāmudrā*” (於大手印漸入頓入要門),¹⁰⁸ which is probably also a Tangut compilation: it comes together with the “*Dashouyin jiatuozhi yaomen*” (大手印伽陀支要門) and is followed by a discourse on the nature of mind and dharmas by the Imperial Preceptor Xuanmi. The above text also discusses the “no-thought”, but to much lesser degree: “*The Basic Teachings of Sudden and Gradual Approaches to Mahāmudrā*” (於大手印漸入頓入要門) presents a short discourse on the “no-thought”: according to the text, the “gradual approach to Mahāmudrā” (漸入) is to be divided into three steps: practice (加行, preparatory stage), “correct substance” (正體, correct state of mind, actual practice) and “accomplishment or conclusion” (結歸). “The no-thought” is positioned among the five aspects of “correct substance” as the fourth grade of spiritual advance:

“The substance of no-thought, ... not thinking about the numerous joys and sufferings is joy. Joy is no-thought. Joy is shining brightness, and shining brightness is the joy of “no-thought”. And in this bright joy of “no-thought” there are no thoughts and no discriminations. That is why it is called the “no-thought”.¹⁰⁹

The “no-thought” stage is followed by the “abiding in concentration” (不亂而住), which might roughly correspond to the “absence of wisdom” as presented by “The Collection”. These correlations probably reveal some degree of relationship between the texts, but are too vague to offer any definite conclusion. At the moment I believe “The Collection” to be unique among the Mahāmudrā texts, transmitted in Xixia both in Chinese and Tangut languages.

“No-thought” metaphors in “*The Collection*”.

It seems to be a pattern for Mahāmudrā texts both Tangut and those in SCMIM to explain the doctrinal content through the profound usage of metaphors and comparisons. This makes the whole matter highly poetic, but at the same time difficult for the scholarly (“positivist”) analysis. Therefore here I would like to limit myself to mere indication of the metaphors used to render the concept of “no-thought” in “The Collection”.

After introducing the four parts of the teaching “indicating the single truth”, the master goes on explaining each one of them using “gathas”, which, in turn, are explained through prose discourses. For the present study, we should consider the last two of four doctrines, since these are the ones where “no-thought” comes into the first place. The first of the two is the *the*

答謂：[吾]信求先祖宗師第八到者，而吾之心亦此隨和。問謂：第八到者，隨順喜信因果[二]乘，有二。告，上師，汝心何與和？答謂：先祖宗師[在]內隨果乘心[之]無念道者令[為]急要，[在]外隨因乘行[之]無念道者令[為]聖妙也。便隨吾之心行隨此和。問謂：以如[此]，則無念道者，真要也。[其]隨悟修證三行相如何？答謂：凡解說此無念之悟修證三行相，則當分別[為]三門：先無念見悟宗趣門，次無念修行道宣門，後無念實證功起門也。問謂：先無念見悟宗趣門者，如何？答謂：解說此宗趣門，則復有二門：先百非護說正應門，後一真明指師要門。先百非護說正應門者，復有二門：一者宣指自宗，四因門，二者他宗護說，雙亡門。此二門亦各自是是，有多門講解不盡是。問謂：後一真明指師要門者如何？答謂：解說此此宗要門，則復有四門：一者諸相虛妄幻術門，二者諸念幻相妄思門，三者妄心本無無念門，四者無念寂默無生門也。

¹⁰⁸ SCMIM: 399-401

¹⁰⁹ SCMIM: 400, lines 10-13; Shen Weirong “Dacheng Yaodao mijì”.

way of "no-thought" and [understanding] the initial absence of the vain mind and the second is the way of "no-thought", tranquility and no-birth". Concerning the first of the two, the Master Diligence has following to say:

"[Dehui] asked: [This] third is the way of "no-thought" and [understanding] the initial absence of the vain mind, what is it about? [The Master] answered: "In this teaching the main doctrine of absence of vain mind, true mind and "no-thought" is made clear through the "eight metaphors of no-thought".¹¹⁰ [Dehui] asked: "What are these eight metaphors?" [The Master] answered with a gatha:

Every thought extinguishes by itself, like an echo,¹¹¹
 In no-thought thought comes to extinction, like the heat of a torch,¹¹²
 The vain thoughts appear like the images of shadow,¹¹³
 All flows from one cause, [which is] like the jade pearl,¹¹⁴
 ["No-thought"] is like a seed and root: braches and leaves come out of it,¹¹⁵
 It is not clarified by concentration, like the color of the sun,¹¹⁶
 Unawakened will awaken, [no-thought] is like the stamp of a seal¹¹⁷
 When pointed at, the truth is realized, [it is] like the *chu-ming*.¹¹⁸

Further the master continues to explain the gatha phrase by phrase. He attempts to elucidate the sometimes elusive meaning of the metaphors, but as it appears at present is not always consistent. However, all the metaphors indicate or imply the "mind", which has to realize its innate enlightenment through the application of "no-thought". The final portion of the text is devoted to the second teaching of "no-thought": "the way of "no-thought", tranquility and no-birth". In this last paragraph of surviving text the "basic doctrine" of no-thought and tranquility is explained through the "eight metaphors of no-birth"¹¹⁹:

"The nature of substance is not born, [it is] like emptiness of space,¹²⁰
 Actions and characteristics are not born, [it is] like tranquility,¹²¹
 The spirit is not born, [it is] like a lonely mother,¹²²

¹¹⁰ Chinese: 無念八喻 Tangut: 1445 𪛗, 3510 𪛗, 1632 𪛗, 5768 𪛗

¹¹¹ Chinese: 念念自滅, 如後音 Tangut: 1445 𪛗, 1445 𪛗, 4412 𪛗, 4693 𪛗, 0099 𪛗, 5608 𪛗, 0659 𪛗

¹¹² Chinese: 無念盡念, 如炬[之]熱 Tangut: 1445 𪛗, 3510 𪛗, 1445 𪛗, 4192 𪛗, 5500 𪛗, 3089 𪛗 (probably a mistake in the original text), 0659 𪛗

¹¹³ Chinese: 妄念現相, 如影像 Tangut: 4367 𪛗, 1445 𪛗, 2352 𪛗, 0909 𪛗, 4694 𪛗, 4142 𪛗, 0659 𪛗

¹¹⁴ Chinese: 凡流一緣, 如玉珠 Tentative translation. Tangut: 2350 𪛗, 3357 𪛗, 1075 𪛗, 3532 𪛗, 4905 𪛗, 4240 𪛗, 0659 𪛗

¹¹⁵ Chinese: 枝葉起出, 如種根 Tangut: 0751 𪛗, 1622 𪛗, 3667 𪛗, 0001 𪛗, 1686 𪛗, 3109 𪛗, 0659 𪛗

¹¹⁶ Chinese: 以定不明, 如日光. Tentative translation. Tangut: 1355 𪛗, 1748 𪛗, 1491 𪛗, 5607 𪛗, 5728 𪛗, 3797 𪛗, 0659 𪛗

¹¹⁷ Chinese: 未悟則悟, 如印[之]跡 Tangut: 0375 𪛗, 3606 𪛗, 4139 𪛗, 3606 𪛗, 2609 𪛗, 4713 𪛗, 0659 𪛗

¹¹⁸ Chinese: Tangut: 指[之]時醒真, 如 *chuming*. 0431 𪛗, 4724 𪛗, 2087 𪛗, 2950 𪛗, 3911 𪛗, 3724 𪛗, 0659 𪛗. ("The Collection": 23b, line 5-24a, line 4) The last two characters (3911 𪛗, 3724 𪛗) before 0659 are a transcription of a certain unidentified Buddhist term, thus translated phonetically here. Further in the text the term is explained by the master, but not in a very transparent way, thus I was not able to identify it so far.

¹¹⁹ Chinese: 無生八喻 Tangut: 2754 𪛗, 3510 𪛗, 1632 𪛗, 5768 𪛗

¹²⁰ Chinese: 體性無生, 如虛空 Tangut: 0455 𪛗, 1262 𪛗, 2574 𪛗, 3510 𪛗, 1636 𪛗, 4943 𪛗, 0659 𪛗

¹²¹ Chinese: 行相無生, 如默然 Tangut: 2543 𪛗, 2352 𪛗, 2574 𪛗, 3510 𪛗, 3759 𪛗, 0659 𪛗

¹²² Chinese: 性氣無生, 如寡母 Tangut: 1262 𪛗, 2425 𪛗, 2754 𪛗, 3510 𪛗, 2008 𪛗, 0245?, 0659 𪛗

The Cause of action is not born [it is] like an orphaned son,¹²³
 The Fruit of attainment is not born, [it is] like the flowers of emptiness,¹²⁴
 The Way of realization is not born, [it is] like rabbit's horns,¹²⁵
 The wisdom is not born, [it is] like being a blind person,¹²⁶
 The expedient means are not born, [it is] like an empty prison.¹²⁷

All the above metaphors are allusive and imply a certain degree of familiarity with contexts in which they are spoken. I was not able to determine the actual context for any of these, except the "rabbit's horns" metaphor, which seems to originate from "*Da Zhidu lun*" (大智度論) and implies a stupid person, who would think that long ears are actually rabbit's horns. More importantly however, is the fact that none of these metaphors was discovered so far in the Mahāmudrā texts preserved in SCMIM. In various texts of Mahāmudrā cycle in the SCMIM the verses various Indian teachers (*mahasiddhas*, including Saraha, Nagarjuna, Kukuripa, Virupa and others) are quoted a lot, and their use of metaphors is quite sophisticated as well. However, none of those are found in "The Collection", which allows a suggestion that the Master Diligence composed the verses himself, or took them out of "collection in Tibetan" script, which he, according to his biography, was compiling every night.

Another context in which the concept of "no-thought" is referred to in SCMIM, is the list of the so-called "eight mirrors of Mahāmudrā", among which "the bright mirror of the realm of no-thought, which is the innate purity of the realm of the unborn Dharmakaya" (無念界之明鏡者無生法身界內淨) is included as the seventh. This "mirror" is positioned as the further development of the "mirror of thought" (有念之明鏡), which reflects the "innate purity of the realm of the no-thought" (無念界內而清淨) and the process of perfection is thus described as a transition from "thought" to "no-thought", which, in turn is "the true emptiness" and thus might be compared with the "emptiness of space" (虛空) in which all the phenomena manifest themselves.¹²⁸ The last and presumably the "ultimate" mirror is the "bright mirror of the unborn Dharmakaya" (無生法身之明鏡), in which the unity of the three Buddha bodies is eventually realized. The explanation reads that this mirror is "the principle dharma of no-thought, which does not come to extinction" (無念之理法爾不滅).¹²⁹ Thus the "no-thought" might be considered the core of the Mahāmudrā practice, and is in fact the foundation of the doctrine. The basic idea of "*The Collection*" is that the attainment of the state "no-thought" directly precedes the ultimate liberation is well in tenor with what is expressed in SCMIM texts considered above, but the wording and the way of expression in "*The Collection*" is much more sophisticated and colourful.

Conclusion

¹²³ Chinese: 起緣無生，如孤子 Tangut: 0001 𑖇, 3532 𑖇, 2754 𑖇, 3510 𑖇, 2008 𑖇, 1131 𑖇, 0659 𑖇

¹²⁴ Chinese: 得果無生，如空華 Tangut: 4911 𑖇, 3746 𑖇, 2754 𑖇, 3510 𑖇, 4943 𑖇, 3352 𑖇, 0659 𑖇

¹²⁵ Chinese: 證道無生，如兔角 Tangut: 2171 𑖇, 0173 𑖇, 2754 𑖇, 3510 𑖇, 2210 𑖇, 1393 𑖇, 0659 𑖇

¹²⁶ Chinese: 智慧無生，如盲人 Tangut: 4496 𑖇, 2605 𑖇, 2754 𑖇, 3510 𑖇, 1159, 4105, 0659 𑖇

¹²⁷ Chinese: 方便無生，如空牢 Tangut: 3302 𑖇, 2173 𑖇, 2754 𑖇, 3510 𑖇, 4943 𑖇, 0790 𑖇, 0659 𑖇. "*The Collection*": 27a, lines 1-4

¹²⁸ "*Dashouyin bajing yaomen*" 大手印八鏡要門, SCMIM: 407-408.

¹²⁹ "*Dashouyin bajing yaomen*", SCMIM: 408

The research of "The Collection" and other Tangut Mahāmudrā texts has just started, and it would be somewhat premature to expect any definite conclusions at this stage. However, one thing is certain: "The Collection" occupies a unique position among the Tangut Mahāmudrā texts, though known only superficially as they are now, and demonstrates a number of characteristics that are uncommon to the other texts of this cycle. First of all, it is quite big, as compared to the texts from SMIM. "*The Collection*" developed its specific vocabulary and the mode of expression, which discriminates it from other Buddhist compilations from Xixia. However, the proper understanding of the text and the concepts it implies might be achieved only if this Tangut compilation is positioned in the context of other Buddhist works from Xixia, belonging both to Chinese and Tibetan traditions. Therefore I believe that two modes of comparative research should be employed: one is the comparison with other Chinese and Tangut Mahāmudrā texts, originating from Khara-Khoto, while the other is of more sophisticated nature and implies a research of "no-thought" as it circulated in Chan oriented and Mahāmudrā oriented texts.

"*The Collection*" implies a rather complex and sophisticated doctrine of "no-thought", totally different from the one current in Chinese Buddhist circles in Northern China at that time.¹³⁰ At the same time the "no-thought" is a term attested in the Tangut texts affiliated with Chan tradition in the Tangut state. Judging from what is known now, the Tangut followers of Chinese Buddhism shared the traditional "Southern School" understanding of "no-thought" in the way that might have been learnt from the works of Guifeng Zongmi (780-841) and texts affiliated with Zongmi's tradition. Another source of knowledge was "*The Platform Sutra*" and works of Khitan Buddhist Master Daochen, which were definitely known in Xixia.¹³¹ Thus "no-thought" in the Mahāmudrā texts represents a separate and independent concept, which might be related to the Chan teachings only indirectly. At the same time it is hard to imagine that Chan "no-thought" and Mahāmudrā "no-thought" existed within the same circle of Buddhist monks and managed to remain totally independent from each other. Given the fact that there is no direct Tibetan equivalent for Chinese/ Tangut "no-thought" one might assume that the use of term to render Mahāmudrā concepts itself might be a result of contamination between Chinese and Tibetan doctrines. The emergence of the term "no-thought" in the Mahāmudrā context still has to be researched: its application for Mahāmudrā thus might have been a Tangut invention as well, considering the familiarity of the Tangut monks with both Chinese and Tibetan oriented texts.¹³² More rewarding in this regard might be research into the usage of the "no-thought" in

¹³⁰ For brief discussion of that matter see: K. J. Solonin "Hongzhou Buddhism in Xixia and the Heritage of Zongmi"; *ibid.* "The Glimpses of Tangut Buddhism" etc. For the actual source material one could refer to the compilation by Daochen "*Xianmi yuantong chengfoxin yaoji*" (顯密圓通成佛心要集), T. 46, 1955: esp. 0992a07-08; 0993a24-25. Daochen's works and understanding of both esoteric and exoteric Buddhism had great impact on the formation of the Tangut Buddhism. (See: K. J. Solonin "The Khitan Connection of Tangut Buddhism" *The Proceedings of the International Symposium on Humanity and Nature in Khara-Khoto*. (Beijing: Zhongguo Renmin Daxue chubanshe 2007): 371-96.

¹³¹ See: K. J. Solonin "The Khitan Connection of the Tangut Buddhism".

¹³² Tangut appropriation of the "no-thought" is itself a problem: it might have been learnt both from the Chan texts and from the translations of canonical writings done from Chinese (e.g. *Prajnaparamita* or *Avatamsaka* sutras), where the concept is widely applied.

the original Tangut compilations. The resulting comparisons can actually contribute into the formation of Tangut Mahāmudrā tradition. In this regard I would like to point out two Tangut texts, presumably belonging to the Chinese Buddhist circles in Xixia, one a definitely Tangut compilation, the other probably a translation of a composition by an otherwise unknown Buddhist master Fayong (法勇). The first one is entitled: “*Twenty five answers to the questions on the Buddhist Principles, posed by the monks before the State Preceptor Tangchang while he was staying in the Palace of Light Monastery*”.¹³³ This text indeed is a collection of twenty five questions and answers on various Buddhist topics, including the “no-thought”. Here I would like to present two of them:

Somebody asked: “How should one act¹³⁴ to become a Buddha?” The Master said: “No thought”¹³⁵ and seeing substance—then [you] will become Buddha.” [Practitioner] asked again: “What is “no thought?” The Master said: “Become Buddha and there will be no thought.” Another question: “What are the thoughts of those who had not yet become Buddhas?” The Master said: “Buddha said: “There should not be the thoughts even about the smallest and most scarce dharmas. That is *anubodhi*.”¹³⁶ The asker left with joy.¹³⁷

This little encounter actually can be interpreted in a way to show a certain similarity between the concepts exposed by the Master Tangchang and the idea of the extinction of thought, presented in “*The Collection*”. Of course, Chan or Chan-like maxims presented in “*The Twenty Five Questions and Answers*” are more radically “sudden” than Mahāmudrā teaching and might possibly be traced to “*The Platform Sutra*”.¹³⁸ The idea expressed by the Master Tangchang is neither new nor original, but what is important here is similar connotation of the “no-thought” as leading to the enlightenment and manifesting the essence of the Buddha-nature. However, his understanding of the “no-thought” is more direct and “immediate”, while the “*The Collection*” uses also the “no-birth” and “tranquility” as certain additional characteristics or factors in the “no-thought”. Therefore we probably cannot assume any direct contamination between Mahāmudrā and Chan concept of the “no-thought”. However, this assumption does not exclude the possibility of mutual interferences between the doctrines on the functional level, especially given the fact that there is no direct Tibetan equivalent for “no-thought”,¹³⁹ while the concept at the same time appears to be of crucial importance for the Tangut Mahāmudrā. This allows suggesting that the usage of the “no-thought” to render Mahāmudrā concepts might be also a Tangut invention, although

¹³³ Chinese: 唐昌國師住光殿眾舍中時眾人問佛理二十五問答, Tangut: 1584 歸, 4584 衍, 1594 薩, 4858 彰, 1648 數, 4076 翰, 3866 鏡, 1257 龐, 1454 暉, 3926 終, 5540 辨, 5676 獵, 3866 鏡, 4105 駭, 3464 肆, 3878 終, 0693 葭, 3415 鏡, 0590 禱, 4489 設, 3119 鏡, 3415 鏡, 4196 淋. Tang 186 #2536.

¹³⁴ Chinese: 修行, Tangut: 1270 歸, 2352 鏡.

¹³⁵ Chinese: 無念, Tangut: 1445 歸, 3510 歸

¹³⁶ Chinese: 阿弩菩提, Tangut: 0498 歸, 0337 觀, 2783 鏡, 2134 數

¹³⁷ This is encounter #5, p. 4a of the original text.

¹³⁸ Here I refer to the part where Huineng talks about “thought as substance of true reality” (念真如之體) while explaining the meaning of “no-thought”. T 48, 2007: 0338c19-20

¹³⁹ According to Shen Weirong (personal communication) a Tibetan term which is more or less close to the “no-thought” is “*yd byed med pa*” (no conceptualization, Chinese: 無想).

original connotations of the relevant terms did not initially coincide.

The other Tangut text is devoted to a topic, which seems to be extremely remote from Mahāmudrā, i.e. the text entitled “*The Essence of Doctrine of the Hongzhou Lineage [with Explanations and Clarifications by sramana Fayong]*”,¹⁴⁰ which is a scholastic attempt of a reconciliation between the Chan teaching of Zongmi with the “sudden Chan” of Mazu Daoyi (馬祖道一, 709-788). In order to bring Mazu and Zongmi together the author of the text, a Tangut monk Fayong (Chinese: 法勇, Tangut: 4821 穉, 4936 齋) establishes three kinds of Chan teachings, which supposedly should bring together the multiple aspects of Chan and which are all based upon the notion of “everything being true”, peculiar to Mazu: the “*Chan which is outside the phrases*” (i.e., words) 句外禪 (3815 禪, 1427 禪, 1356 禪), the “*Chan which follows the phrases*” 句隨禪 (3815 禪, 4614 禪, 1356 禪), and the “*Chan of the Ancient Precious Seal*” 太古寶印禪 (0971 教, 3699 教, 2718 教, 2609 教, 1356 教),¹⁴¹ which is a synthesis of both and supreme level of contemplation. This terminology is rather unique and is not attested in any of the Chinese Buddhist sources, from which it is allegedly derived. It seems to be a Tangut invention as well, since the combined use of the term “seal” in connection with the “no-thought” doctrines is not very well attested in Chan sources of late Tang and Song periods.¹⁴² Therefore, a suggestion that this concept emerged due to some sort of inter-traditional communication is not totally implausible. Thus, in a broader sense the usage of “no-thought” in the Mahāmudrā texts might result from the translator’s familiarity with the relevant Chan doctrines, and on the opposite: certain Mahāmudrā connotations might have influenced Tangut Chan terminology. The domination of the “no-thought” in Tangut Mahāmudrā is further supported by the evidence provided in the commentary to the alleged “*Collection*” by the Master Diligence, mentioned elsewhere in the paper.¹⁴³ That text, appearing to be another Mahāmudrā treasure, does not use this term “mahāmudrā” at all, while the major part of the text is devoted to the introduction of the “no-thought” concept. This text is a much harder read than “The Collection” discussed in this paper, due to the fact that it appears to be a manual or abridged exposition of the text by Master Diligence, and thus implies some sort of an oral instruction or at least a clear context to be properly understood. However, if the observations on the nature of the text and its authorship by Master Diligence, a Tibetan, is correct, the wide use of “no-thought” in translation of Mahāmudrā texts probably approved by a Tibetan monk, demonstrates the substantial degree of mutual penetration between Tibetan and Chinese Buddhism in Xixia. Of

¹⁴⁰Chinese: 洪州宗趣注解明護記, Tangut 1217 禪, 5534 教, 4484 禪, 1026 教, 1316 禪, 2804 教, 5607 禪, 0356 教, 2746 禪. Tang. 112, #. 2540. This text is an enlarged version of 洪州宗師教儀, Tangut 1217 禪, 5534 教, 4484 禪, 4858 教, 5250 教, 1365 禪 (Tang. 111, #2529). The full translation of both texts, see: K. J. Solonin “Hongzhou Buddhism in Xixia and the Heritage of Zongmi”; *ibid.*, “The Glimpses of Tangut Buddhism”.

¹⁴¹ Complete translation of the paragraph see in: K. J. Solonin, “Hongzhou Buddhism in Xixia and the Heritage of Zongmi”: 78-80

¹⁴² More or less adequate examples of such usage are to be found in Yongming Yanshou (904-975) “*Zongjing Lu*” (宗鏡錄), where the terms are used for explanation of various Chan doctrines. See: “*Zongjing Lu*”, T. 48, 2016: 0637a18-19. In this paragraph Yanshou seems to be quoting the “*Xinxinming*” (信心銘) by Niutou Farong. The independent term “the precious seal” occurs in “*Zongjing lu*” more frequently, but also mostly in quotations.

¹⁴³ Notes 4 and 42.

course, the contamination between Chinese Chan and the Great Perfection (*rDzogs chen*) and/or Mahāmudrā can be traced as far as the 9th-10th century Dunhuang,¹⁴⁴ but the Tangut case actually demonstrates the further development and Tangut appropriation of the synthetic doctrine and its further transmission to the Mongols during the Yuan dynasty. The above is merely a suggestion, which has to be considered more carefully and placed within a larger whole of heterogeneous Buddhist traditions of the North-Western Chinese borderland during two hundred years prior the Mongol invasion. This further study could allow either refutation or acceptance of the above hypothesis, but with more solid textual evidence. Nevertheless, the research of Tangut Buddhist texts on Mahāmudrā might contribute to a deeper understanding of the process of shaping of Tibetan, Tangut and Chinese Buddhism, and would further emphasize the crucial role of Tangut Buddhists in transition of the Tibetan Buddhist teachings into China is now quite clear.

¹⁴⁴ The interaction between Chinese and Tibetan Buddhism in the Dunhuang area is well attested both by Chinese and Tibetan sources. For some references see: Carmen Meinert “Chinese Chan and Tibetan rDzogs chen: Preliminary remarks on Two Dunhuang Tibetan Manuscripts” in: Henk Blezer ed. “*Religion and Culture in Secular Tibet*” (Leiden: Brill, 2002); Sam van Schaik, Jacob Dalton “Where Chan and Tantra Meet: Buddhist Syncretism in Dunhuang” in: “*The Silk Road: Trade, Travel, War and Faith*” (London: British Library Press, 2004)