The Gradualist Chapter of the *bSam gtan mig sgron* and the Teaching of Kamalāśīla

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I have pointed out elsewhere that although the *bSam gtan mig sgron* (SMG), ascribed to gNubs chen Saṃ rgyas ye śes, itself insists that the contents of the Gradualist chapter are the teaching of Kamalāśīla, the SMG deviates from his teaching at many points. But since my earlier article deals only with the section on the two truths (*satyadvaya*), in this article, I examine the section on “the four immeasurables” and “tranquility and insight” so that we can compare them to the teaching of Kamalāśīla.

The four immeasurables (caturapramāṇa) are loving kindness (*maitri*), compassion (*karuṇā*), joy (*muditā*), and indifference (*upekṣā*). In the Gradualist chapter of the SMG, the meditation on the four immeasurables is explained in the first of the sections on meditation, namely before the section on the two truths (*satyadvaya*), in this article, I examine the section on “the four immeasurables” and “tranquility and insight” so that we can compare them to the teaching of Kamalāśīla.

First, the SMG [67.5] states in the last part of this section:

We do not describe in detail here, but it is explained in the three *Bhāvanākramas*. This apparently means that the SMG follows the *Bhāvanākrama* (*BhK*) and explains the four immeasurables by summarizing the contents of the three *BhK*’s.

But, in fact, none of the *BhK*’s explains all four immeasurables; only some of them are explained, concerning the practice of compassion before generating the mind of enlightenment (*bodhicitta*).

The first *BhK* explains only compassion. The second *BhK* has a more detailed explanation, in which loving kindness and indifference are also mentioned. Indifference, loving kindness, and compassion are explained in that order, and the first two are preparatory stages to the practice of compassion. In the third *BhK*, the practice of compassion is not described in detail.
We compare the SMG to the second BhK, which has the most detailed explanations of loving kindness, compassion and indifference.

The four immeasurables section of the SMG reads as follows: [SMG, 66.5-7.4]

At first, one should practice compassion. If one sees the sentient beings that are non-arising objects at the level of the ultimate truth, one should be tormented exceedingly, saying, "they are suffering. Oh!" ··· After that, [one should practice] loving kindness, which is considering all sentient beings as one's own sons, just as a mother loves her only son. And then one should remove regret by joy. One should not abandon any sentient beings due to indifference.

Unlike the SMG, the second BhK describes indifference and loving kindness as the preparatory stages to compassion. The following extracts from the second BhK are in the order in which they appear in the text.

[The second BhK, ed. Goshima, 5.17-7.9. D. 42b7-44a2, P. 46b3-48a1]

Now the sequence of the practice of compassion will be described, beginning with the first entering. First, one should complete calming one's mind, removing attachment to and anger against all sentient beings through the practice of indifference. ··· Then one should practice loving kindness after finishing calming one's mind towards all the sentient beings. If, after having moistened the stream of one's mind with the water of loving kindness and made [the mind stream] just like the ground under which lies gold, one plants the seeds of compassion, they will easily grow very much. Then, after soaking one's mind stream with loving kindness, one should practice compassion.

The first sentence clearly suggests that the practice of indifference and loving kindness are part of the practice of compassion. Furthermore in the second BhK, the immeasurables are explained in the order of indifference, loving kindness and compassion; joy is omitted.

Thus, it is very clear that the SMG, which contains an explanation of joy and explains compassion first, deviates from the second BhK. It is very likely that the author of the SMG did not know that none of the three BhK's explains all four immeasurables; he only knew that compassion is explained first.

Since the explanations of the other three immeasurables besides compassion in the SMG are very short, it might be difficult to decide their order from the description in that text. But even if the SMG did not intend to indicate the order of the three, the first explanation of compassion clearly deviates from that of the BhK. Moreover,
the SMG pays no attention to the relations between indifference, loving kindness, and compassion. This can well lead at least to the conclusion that the SMG does not know the BhK in detail.

Now we will look at the differences between the SMG and the BhK’s in the section on tranquility and insight, focussing on one passage, which corresponds fairly closely to the BhK. To make a literal comparison, we will cite the Tibetan text. Common expressions are underlined, and portions that do not use the same words but have the same meaning are indicated by a wavy underline.

SMG, 77.3-6. ŋes pa'i skyon ni / le lo dañ / dmigs pa brjed pa dañ / byin rgod dañ / mi rtsol ba dañ / rtsol ba'o //

(2) de s p on a'i nen o ni / 'du byed brgyad de / dad pa dañ / 'dun pa dañ / rtsol ba dañ / śin tu sbyañs pa dañ / dran pa dañ / šes bzin dañ / sems pa dañ / btañ sñoms so //

de spyo cas pa'shan tshul ni // ñaño po bzi le lo'i gñen po'o // ña dran pa ni dmigs pa brjed pa'i gñen po'o // šes bzin ni byin rgod kyi gñen po'o // de gñis po rtogs nas spañ no // byin rgod dañ ldan na mi rtsol ba ŋes pa'o // de sems pas spañ no // byin rgod dañ bral pa'i tshe / rtsol ba ŋes* pa ste / btañ sñoms kyis spañ no //

*SMG : rned.

the first BhK, ed. Tucci, 256.18-57.16 (omit)

Although there are some problems regarding the content itself, we first examine the differences in language. Looking at the underlined and wavy-underlined portions, we can easily see that the same contents are often presented in different words. We can also see that the SMG, although it seems to be based on the BhK, omits many things.

Specifically, the first sentence of the SMG (1) largely agrees with the BhK. The next wavy-underlined sentence (2) about the eight things by which one can remove the faults (spoñ ba'i 'du byed, prahānasamśkāra) is remarkable, since it is very strange that although both the SMG and the BhK have the word spoñ ba, in the SMG, spoñ ba is separated from 'du byed, and consequently the compound spoñ ba'i 'du byed cannot be found in the SMG. In (3), the word dañ po is changed from goñ ma. After the SMG omits a long portion from the BhK, the two texts agree briefly before they diverge in wording, although not in content.

There is a problem here regarding the number of faults (ṅes pa). The BhK clearly states that there are six faults (ṅes pa drug), but the SMG seems to enumerate only
five, using the compound, byin rgod (layauddhatya), thus putting drowsiness (byin ba) and agitation (rgod pa) together. The expression in the latter part of the citation, šes bzhin ni byin rgod kyi gñen po'o, could lead to the same conclusion.

It is already known that there is a tradition of five faults, for example, in the Madhyântavibhâga (IV-4) 3) as well as a tradition of six faults, as in the BhK. If we could say that the SMG counts only five faults, it would show us that the SMG doesn’t know the BhK correctly. At least the SMG is not aware of the enumeration of six faults in the BhK.

Due to limitations of space, we cannot look further at the other parts of this section, but it can be seen from the example above that in the section of tranquility and insight, too, the SMG has many different expressions from the BhK and probably contains deviations from the BhK.

We have verified that there are problems regarding the statement in the SMG that the contents of the Gradualist chapter of the SMG conform to the teachings of Kamalasila concerning the section of the four immeasurables and tranquility and insight. Furthermore, we also found many deviations from the BhK in these sections.

Now the question remains, whether such an interpretation of Kamalasila derives only from misunderstanding on the part of the author of the SMG, or whether there was a tradition of such an interpretation. It is difficult to settle this question because of the insufficiency of other sources. One thing we can say now is that such an understanding of Kamalasila really existed in Tibet.

1) rNal byor mig gi bsam gtan or bSam gtan mig sgron : A treatise on bhāvanā and dhyāna and the relationships between the various approaches to Buddhist contemplative practice by gNubs chen Sans rgyas ye šes, Leh, 1974.

2) 抜稿「『禪定燈明論』拙門派章について」，『日本西藏学会々報』48, 2002, pp. 43-50

3) 御牧克己「チベット仏教修行の一断面—所謂「チベット牧象図」について—」，平成8-11年度科学研究費補助金研究成果報告書『修行の研究』，京都, 2000, p. 69. We do not intend to say here that the SMG follows the Madhyântavibhâga because there are important differences in terminology; namely, the SMG and the BhK use ābhoga and anābhoga for the last two faults, while Madhyântavibhâga mentions them as samskāra and asamskāra.

(Key Words) bSam gtan mig sgron, tshad med pa bži, zi gnas, lhag mthon, Kamalaśīla

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