PART THREE
CHAPTER SIX

THE PROVENANCE OF THE FUSION OF TANTRIC AND PURE MEDITATIONAL TEACHINGS (THE ROLE OF MTPh)

In the rNying ma pa school, rDzogs chen is considered to have come from two different sources. While Padmasambhava is thought to have preached rDzogs chen in Tibet itself, Vairocana introduced a certain trend of the rDzogs chen thought directly from India. What we are concerned with here is the text known as the *Man ngag lta ba’i phreng ba* which seems to be the only extant work on rDzogs chen attributed to Padmasambhava. It therefore represents the fundamental work of this particular rDzogs chen tradition.

Below we have made a rough translation of the work. It is short, but very concise. The first part deals with various doctrines of Buddhist and non-Buddhist origin gradually leading to the doctrine of rDzogs chen. The work is composed within the framework of the “Nine vehicles” (*theg pa dgu*), the classification of Buddhist teachings of the rNying ma pa school. Although the actual term *theg pa dgu* does not occur, it is nonetheless self-evident from the fact that it is divided into nine sections. It is in fact an early example of the *grub mtha’* (*siddhānta*) type of work in Indo-Tibetan Buddhist literature. We shall have occasion to come back to the question of the “Nine vehicles” later.¹

A copy of this work is found in the *bsTan ’gyur* with the following title: *lTa ba dang theg pa la sogs pa’i khyad par bsdus pa’i bskyud byang*—“A short note on the analysis of different theories and ways”.² However, it is the colophon title: *Man ngag gi rgyal po lta ba’i phreng ba*—“The rosary of theories, being the king of precepts”, by which it is usually known and more often in its abridged form *lTa ba’i phreng ba* or simply *lTa phreng*. D.T. Suzuki has “reconstructed” the title in Sanskrit: *Rājopadeśa-darsānamāla*, but no evidence can be gathered that it is of Indian origin in spite of its ascription to Padmasambhava. In fact, the colophon does not contain any indication of its author at all. Neither *DS* nor *YN* of Bu-ston Rin-chen-grub mention the work. Its presence in the *bsTan ’gyur* therefore suggests an insertion later than Bu-ston’s time along with other Tibetan works, such as *lTh*. However, the recent publication of a volume containing several works of Rong-zom Paṇḍita Chos-kyi bzang-po preserves

¹ See p. 146.
² *T* Vol. 83, No. 4726.