

Three Ritual Prayers by Öndör Gegeen Zanabazar

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Introduction

The activities and works of Öndör Gegeen Zanabazar (1635–1723), the first head of Mongolian Buddhism, have been the topic of numerous books and articles written in Mongolia.¹ A ceremony commemorating Zanabazar’s death is regularly held in every Mongolian temple on the fourteenth day of the first month of spring, which is known as the “Great Day of Öndör Gegeen” (*Öndör gegeenii ikh düitsen ödör*). As it coincides with the fourteenth day ceremonies of the Lunar New Year, on that day, a double ceremony called the “Two-fold Prayer” (*Davkhar yeröl*) is held.

Before looking at the prayers composed by Zanabazar included in this chapter, let us first briefly describe Zanabazar’s activities in general, and then examine the circumstances surrounding the composition of his prayers and their usage in the ritual system in both pre-Socialist Mongolia and today.² No account of the ritual texts written by Zanabazar is known in English or in any other European language.³ The brief discussion of the usage of these texts in the ritual system, the recommendations for having them recited, and the background of the Mongolian Buddhist ritual system are all based on field research carried out by the author.

All three prayers translated in this chapter were composed in the Tibetan language. The first remains the most important prayer in the daily practice of Mongolian Buddhists and is thus the main prayer in all of Mongolian Buddhism, in which the texts of different Tibetan Buddhist traditions and lineages are otherwise used. The second prayer translated here is a food offering, often used in tantric rituals, and the third prayer is connected to a *sādhana* (“method of realization”) and mantra recitation of Avalokiteśvara. It contains profound tantric doctrinal meaning and is connected to the *soyombo* writing system created by Öndör Gegeen Zanabazar himself.

Öndör Gegeen Zanabazar was born in 1635 in Yesön Züil district (*sum*) in the area of the present Övörkhongai Province (*aimag*). As the grandson of Abatai

Khan, the founder of the first Mongolian monastery Erdene Zuu, he was considered a descendant of Chinggis Khan. He was enthroned at the age of five at Shireet Tsagaan Nuur (“White Lake with a Throne”), located in the Bүrd district of the present-day Өvörkhангай Province. The name given to him at his novice ordination was Ishdorj (Tib. Ye shes rdo rje), and he later became known by the name he received at his full monastic ordination, Luvsandambijaltsan (Tib. Blo bzang dam pa'i rgyal mtshan). During his studies in the great Tibetan monastic schools, he received initiations from the Fifth Dalai Lama and the Fourth Panchen Lama.

Өндөр Geegen Zanabazar was the first head of Mongolian Buddhism and has been the most prominent figure in Mongolian Buddhism to this day. He bore the title Өндөр Geegen, or “His High Brightness,” and the name Zanabazar, which is a distorted Mongolian pronunciation of the Sanskrit Jñānavajra (“Gnosis-Vajra”). As the head of Mongolian Buddhism, Zanabazar bore the title “Bogdo” or “Bogdo Geegen” (Modern Mong. Bogd Geegen, “Saint,” “Saint Brightness”) and the title “Jebtsundamba Khutagt” (Tib. Rje btsun dam pa, the “Highest Saint,” or “His Excellency”), conferred upon him in 1651 by the Fifth Dalai Lama, who recognized him as the Mongolian incarnation of the Tibetan master Tārānātha (1575–1634), a famous representative of the Jonangpa tradition. As a political and religious leader, Zanabazar played a key role in the spreading of the Gèluk (Tib. *dge lugs*) form of Tibetan Buddhism in Mongolia.

Zanabazar established several monasteries in Mongolia, one of which was Baruun Khüree (“Western Monastic City”), also known as Shankh Khüree (its other names being Tüsheet Khany Khüree and Ribogejigandanshaddüblin), founded in 1647 in Kharkhorin district of today’s Өvörkhангай Province. The most significant of his monasteries was Ribogejigandanshaddüblin (Tib. Ri bo dge rgyas dga' ldan bshad sgrub gling), or Nomiin Ikh Khüree (“Great Monastery of the Teaching”), which he founded in 1654 on Khentii Mountain situated in Mөngөnmoryt district of the present-day Төв Province. This monastery is also known as Sarydagiin Khiid or as Zүүн Khüree (“Eastern Monastic City”), named after its location in relation to the previously built Baruun Khüree (“Western Monastic City”). In 1680, during the Khalkha-Oirat Wars, this monastery was ruined. It is considered to be the original version of the later monastic establishment known as Ikh Khüree or Bogdiin Khüree, which, after changing its location many times, was permanently established in the area of the present-day Ulaanbaatar. In 1653, Zanabazar also established a small monastery for the practice of meditation known as Төвkhön or Төвkhön Khiid⁴ (Tib. *sgrub khang*). Initially there was only a meditation cave at the site of this monastery, and a temple was built later. The original name for this monastery given by Zanabazar was E Vam Gachillin (Tib. E waṃ dga' 'khyil gling), the Monastery of the Wheel of Joy⁵ of Wisdom and Method.⁶ The monastery is situated on the

peak of a mountain called Shiveet-Ulaan Uul, belonging to the Khangai mountain range (included as part of the Orkhon Valley area in the World Heritage List of UNESCO since 2004), in Bat-Ölzii district of Övörkhongai Province, some 60 kilometers from the famous Erdene Zuu monastery in Kharkhorin. Zanabazar resided in Tövkhön Khiid at different times in between his studies in Tibet, and he was also hiding there from the army of the Oirat leader Galdan Boshigt during the wars between the Oirats and the Khalkha Mongols in 1688.

Zanabazar is well known as an excellent sculptor and artist, and as the founder of the so-called Mongolian or Zanabazar School of Art in several branches of Buddhist arts. His bronze sculptures that are gilded in gold or copper are especially famous. His sculptures are kept today in several Mongolian monasteries as well as in Zanabazar Museum and in Chojjin Lama Museum in Ulaanbaatar. Among his most famous sculptures gilded in gold, which he made in the solitude of Tövkhön, are the sculpture representing Mahākāla (Makhgal, Tib. mgon po), kept in Baruun Khüree, the Vajradhara (Ochirdari; Tib. Rdo rje 'dzin pa) sculpture kept in Gandantegchenlin monastery (Tib. Dga' ldan thegs chen gling) in Ulaanbaatar, the sculptures of the Twenty-One Tārās (Dar' ekh, Tib. sgrol ma) and of the Five Buddhas (yazguuriin tawan burkhan, Tib. Mgon po rigs lnga), and the image of Amitāyus (Tsewemed, Tib. Tshe dpag med).⁷

Zanabazar is also known as the inventor of two different Mongolian writing systems. One is the Soyombo (Skr. *svayambhu*, Tib. *rang byung*, “naturally appearing”) script created in 1686 at Tövkhön. Soyombo was and still is used as an ornamental script, the first letter of which became an important symbol depicted on the Mongolian national flag and in the Mongolian national emblem.⁸ The second script is the horizontal Square script, or Seal script (*Khevtse dörvöljin*, Tib. *yig 'bru bzhi*). Both writing systems were meant to enable the writing of not only the Mongolian language but also Tibetan and Sanskrit sounds. Used only ornamentally, these two scripts can be seen even today on Buddhist prayer wheels and in inscriptions on the nameplates of monasteries.

By adapting Tibetan Buddhism to indigenous Mongolian customs and conditions, Zanabazar created a uniquely Mongolian Buddhism. He did so by systematically incorporating local deities, customs, and rituals into Tibetan Buddhism. He also designed the uniquely Mongolian monastic robes that are suited for the Mongolian climate and are inspired by the traditional Mongolian dressing gown called “*deel*,” with a straight flap different from that of the traditional *deel*. In addition, Zanabazar introduced special styles of recitation and new melodies, which differ from Tibetan recitation styles in their faster tempo and in the Mongolized pronunciation of the Tibetan language. During Zanabazar's time, a special ritual system was formed, too. These uniquely Mongolian Buddhist rituals were introduced into Mongolian monasteries: the melodies of Tibetan rituals were modified and new texts composed by Zanabazar and other Mongolian

lamas were included. The distinctive features introduced by Zanabazar remain a part of contemporary Mongolian Buddhism, since Mongolian Buddhists succeeded in preserving these features throughout the fifty years of suppression in the Communist period.⁹

Öndör Gegeen's Ritual Texts, His New Styles for Recitation, and His Influence on the Mongolian Ritual System

From among the ritual texts composed by Zanabazar that are still in use today is the first prayer translated here, known as *Bestowing the Highest Blessings* (*Jinlav Tsogzol*, Tib. *Byin rlabs mchog stsol*), which is recited everyday. Some of his other ritual texts are recited during different Buddhist festivals, such as during the ceremonies of the beginning of the Lunar New Year (*tsagaan sar*, “White Month”) in every Mongolian monastery and temple. The other text translated here is titled *From the Om, in countless. . .*¹⁰ (*Umlai daye*, Tib. *Om las bgrang yas*). This particular prayer is recited on the fourteenth day of the aforementioned fourteen days of New Year rituals, during the ceremony commemorating Zanabazar's death (*Davkhar yerööl*), when the *tsogchid* ritual (Tib. *tshogs mchod*, Skrt. *gaṇacakrapūjā*, “accumulation of offerings”) is performed without *lagdor* (Tib. *lhag gtor*, “residual dough offering”). On that day, the edible cakes that are distributed to members of the assembly in Gandantegchenlin monastery are made with the molds (*khev*) that were originally created by Zanabazar himself. The same text is frequently recited in Mongolia on various other occasions when meals containing meat (*bor tsav*, “brown food,” referring to meat; Tib. *tsha ba*, a meal for lamas) are served to the assembly during the ritual. The third text, titled *The Profound Sādhana of the Maṇi [Mantra]* (*Maani düvtav savmu*; Tib. *ma ṇi sgrub thabs zab mo*), is not recited regularly in Mongolian temples due to not being a ritual text for recitation but rather a text for individual practice assisting meditation. Even today some lamas use this text for their own meditation practices, in certain communal *sādhana* practices called *Maan' büteel* (Tib. *ma ṇi sgrub thabs*), and as part of the after-death rituals they perform for others.

The ceremonies held for fifteen days during the Lunar New Year (on the first through the fifteenth days of the first spring month) commemorate the Buddha's defeat of the heretics (*tersüüd*, Tib. *log par lta ba*) by performing different miracles (*Choinpürel jon aa*; Tib. *chos 'phrul bco lnga*, “fifteen miracles”). This is one of the four great annual festivals commemorating the Buddha's life (*Burkhan bagshiin ikh düitsen ödrüüd*). In Mongolia, these ceremonies are markedly different from those held by Tibetans.¹¹ In Mongolia, since the time of Zanabazar, every afternoon during the fifteen days, the so-called Superior Prayer (*oroin yerööl*) rituals—also known as the “Great Prayer” (*ikh yerööl*; Tib. *smon lam chen*

po), or the “Prayers of [Demonstrating] Miracles” (*choinpürel molom yerööl*; Tib. *chos 'phrul smon lam*)—are held in the same way as they were when they were originally introduced in the old monastic capital, Ikh Khüree. Different texts, such as the “Thirty-two Eulogies” (*magtaal*, Tib. *bstod pa*) and the “Six Prayers” (*zurgaан yerööl*, Tib. *smon lam drug*), are recited in a beautiful, melodious way. As previously indicated, because of Zanabazar’s innovations, the “Great Prayer” rituals performed in Mongolia differ significantly from the “Great Prayer” rituals performed in the Tibetan tradition. Zanabazar added certain mantra recitations to the order of ritual texts (*gorim*, Tib. *go rim*) used for these particular New Year ceremonies and composed several new ritual texts, all of the mantras, as well as the melodies for chanting them. These alterations of the ritual order of these ceremonies resulted in what is called the “Ceremonial Order by Öndör Gegeen” (*Öndör gegeenii deg*, Tib. *sgrig*).

The mantras composed by Zanabazar for these ritual occasions are recited (*maani tatakh*) daily, after the monastic debate (Mong. *tsoglomd bosokh*, Tib. *tshogs lang*s; literally, “to rise in the assembly”),¹² near the end of the day’s ceremony. One lama of the assembly, standing on his table in front of his bench, recites the mantra of the given day and the others join in only at specific points. This mantra recitation is the most beautiful part of the ritual. This practice is not found in the Tibetan Buddhist rituals, although it is said that this Mongolian tradition derives from the tradition of the assembled devotees who used to recite mantras in the shrines of Tibet on these occasions. Zanabazar is said to have composed these mantras because of this practice that was later lost in Tibet. The mantras composed by Zanabazar are as follows: the *khoyor maany* (Tib. *ma ni gnyis*) recited on the first day; the *maani um um* (Tib. *ma ni om om*) on the second, sixth, and tenth days; the *maani um ya* (Tib. *ma ni om ya*) on the third, seventh, and eleventh days; the *maani ladaar* (Tib. *ma ni la tā ri*) on the fourth, eighth, and twelfth days; the *maani tūgje dagnyid* (Tib. *ma ni thugs rje bdag nyid*) on the fifth, ninth, and thirteenth days; and the *norov badma maani* (Tib. *ma ni nor bu padma*) on the fourteenth day, this latter being recited by the main chant master (*ikh unzad*; Tib. *dbu mdzad*). This last mantra is the longest of all; its recitation lasts for two to three hours. On the fifteenth day, the *maani patamjad* (Tib. *ma ni pha thams cad*) is recited.¹³ Over the course of the fifteen days, the main chant master (*ikh unzad*), the vice-chant master (*baga unzad*), and the chanters (*golch*, “those sitting in the middle”) take turns in the recitation of mantras (*maan' tatakh*), with the main chant master reciting the longest mantra, that of the fourteenth day, and the vice-chant master reciting that of the fifteenth day.

In addition to writing ritual texts and reforming the ritual system, Zanabazar played an important role in recomposing the melodies of certain ritual texts and in creating the modes of recitation that became characteristic of Mongolian Buddhism. At the end of each calendar year (according to the Lunar calendar),

there are usually five days of rituals. On the first day (on the twenty-sixth day of the last winter month), when the annual sacrificial cakes (*balin* or *dorom*; Tib. *gtor ma*) are consecrated at the ritual known as *balin adislaga* or *adislaga*, cymbals are played 108 times in a very slow and melodious way, as originally introduced by Zanabazar. From among the various modes of recitation, the so-called old melody (*khuuchin yan*, Tib. *dbyangs*, “melody”) was invented by Zanabazar, while the new melody (*shine yan*) refers to a melody later invented by the Fifth Jebtsundampa Khutagt. Even today, both the old and the new melodies are used in different rituals, and also in an alternating manner for different parts of the same ritual.

Zanabazar also composed melodies for several ritual texts. One of them is called *Smoke Offering Causing the Rainfall of Auspiciousness* (*Dashchiirav san*; Tib. *Bkra shis char 'bebs kyi bsangs*), which was written at his request by the Fourth Panchen Lama (Tib. Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan, 1570–1662) for the Mongols¹⁴ with the aim of keeping them free from hardships and in favorable conditions. The *Smoke Offering Causing the Rainfall of Auspiciousness*, which is one of the most widely used texts among the Mongols, is one of three texts written by the Fourth Panchen Lama at the request of Zanabazar in order to ensure the well-being of the Mongols. The other two are short texts. One is related to Medicine Buddha and titled *Baga Manal* or *Chogden jalwa [manal]* (Tib. *rgyal ba sman bla*; Skrt. *Bhaiṣajyaguru*). The other text is called *Hero Entering Battle: A Guide for the Transference of Consciousness* (*Potid bawuu yüljigmaa*; Tib. *'Pho khrid dpa' bo g.yul 'jug ma*), and it deals with the practice of the transference of consciousness at the moment of death to the Pure Land of the Buddha Amitābha. Zanabazar composed an appendix to this text under the title “Appendix to the Guide for the Transference of Consciousness Composed by Panchen Lama Chögyen” (Tib. *Pan chen chos rgyan gyis mdzad pa'i 'pho khrid kyi kha bskong*; Mong. *Banchin Choijangiin zokhioson Yegüütgeliin khötölböriin nökhvör*).¹⁵

An Explanation of the “Prayer in Accordance with the Times,” or “Bestowing the Highest Blessings”

In the colophon, the writer Öndör Gegeen Zanabazar is mentioned under the title “His Renowned Excellency” (Tib. *Dam pa'i ming can*). The colophon mentions that he composed this prayer (called here *Dus bstun gyi gsol 'debs*) at the request of his disciple, a fully ordained monk by the name of Namjil (Tib. Rnam rgyal), and that the text was transcribed by Ravjamba¹⁶ Lodoi (Tib. Rab 'byams pa Blo gros).

The prayer is known among the Mongols under many different names, most commonly under its abbreviated title *Adistid* (“Blessing,” being the Mongolian

equivalent of the first word of the text, Tib. *byin rlabs*). It is also known as *Jinlav Tsogzol*, which is a Mongolized pronunciation of the Tibetan *Byin rlabs mchog stsol* (“Bestowing the Highest Blessings”) and as *Düütünji soldev*, *Prayer in Accordance with the Times* (Tib. *Dus bstun gyi gsol 'debs*).

In general, the recitation of different Buddhist texts is recommended for different life circumstances and for attaining different goals. According to the short explanation for this text that can be found on the explanatory list of texts usually placed in monasteries to inform the devotees on the benefits of reciting a given prayer or ritual text, one can attain peace and harmony in life, the clearing away of obstacles, and the pacification of any kind of crisis, conflict, or disturbance.

The text is written in versified form, with the number of syllables in each line fixed at nine. The translation provided herein is based on four different Tibetan versions and five different modern Mongolian translations from Tibetan.¹⁷ The numerous publications of this prayer in Mongolian translation testify to its popularity among the Mongols. Since the ritual language of Mongolian Buddhism continues to be Tibetan, published translations are of great importance to Mongolian practitioners, since Mongolian prayer books often contain only the Mongolized Tibetan text written in Cyrillic transcription for the purpose of enabling the devotee to recite the text without any knowledge of the Tibetan language.

The structure of the prayer follows that of the seven-branched prayer (*Mörgöliin doloon gishüün*; Tib. *Yan lag bdun pa*):

1. Prostration or paying homage [to the Three Jewels] (*mörgökh*; Tib. *Phyag 'tshal ba*)—the first four lines
2. Making offerings (*örgöl örgökh*; Tib. *Mchod pa phul ba*)—two lines
3. Confession [of sins] (*naminchlakh*; Tib. *Bshags pa*)—one line
4. Rejoicing [in other's virtuous deeds] (*buyaniig dagan bayasakh*; Tib. *rjes su yi rang ba*)—one line
5. Requesting for the Wheel of Dharma to be turned (*duritgakh*; Tib. *chos kyi 'khor lo bskor bar bskul ba*)—two lines
6. Praying [for the *buddhas*] not to pass into *nirvāṇa* (*zalbirakh*; Tib. *mya ngan las mi 'da' bar gsol ba gdab ba*)—twenty-two lines
7. Dedication of merit for the perfect enlightenment [of all sentient beings] (*zoriulakh*; Tib. *dge ba rdzogs byang du bsngo ba*)—the last four lines

The exact date of the composition of the prayer is unknown.¹⁸ It was most likely composed during the war between the Western and Eastern Mongols (Oirats and Khalkhas) with the aims of resolving the crisis, putting an end to the war through the power of Buddhist teachings and prayers, uniting the Mongols, and bringing peace. Therefore, this prayer is also known under the name *Prayer for Peace* (*Enkh*

taivanii zalbiral).¹⁹ According to Sugar and Ad'shaa, during the great battle of Khalkhiin Gol fought between the Soviet Union and Japan in 1939, in which the Mongols fought on the side of the Soviet Union, people secretly recited this prayer for peace.²⁰ While the composition of the prayer was inspired by the crises of war, it was also meant to express the desire for the liberation of all sentient beings, for their permanent happiness and peace. The phrase “degenerate times,”²¹ which occurs in the text, refers to the time of the composition of the prayer, a dark era when the Buddha Dharma is no longer present in the world or has greatly diminished, as a consequence of the manifold nonvirtues of sentient beings.

This prayer is recited not only as part of daily rituals, but also after the recitation of almost any ritual text, such as a smoke offering (*san*; Tib. *bsangs*) text or a text for the ritual of summoning prosperity (*dallaga*; Tib *g.yang 'gug*).

To this day, translations of this prayer into Classical Mongolian have never been ritually recited. One of these translations was made by *Borjgon gevsh* (Tib. *dge bshes*) from Borjigin clan or by Ishtavkhai *gevsh* (Ishtavkhai Sh., 1901–1972).²² Another translation was made by Kh. Gaadan, an abbot of Gandantegchenlin monastery between 1981 and 1990.²³ The titles of the Classical Mongolian versions are *Jinglubčoyčol* and *Jinglubčoyčal*.

Some Modern Mongolian translations of this prayer are based on Tibetan, while others are based on the Classical Mongolian versions. The first translation into Modern Mongolian, together with a short analysis of the text and explanations, was published by Sh. Bira.²⁴ His translation is often included in new publications.²⁵ Bira's publication also includes another Modern Mongolian translation, a Tibetan version, and two translations made into Classical Mongolian.²⁶ Another Modern Mongolian translation included in Bira's volume,²⁷ taken from the personal collection of the academic B. Shirendendev, is titled *Jinlavchogzol*. The third Modern Mongolian translation is known as the “Ishtavkhai translation,” published widely under different titles.²⁸ The fourth Modern Mongolian translation of the prayer can be found in several publications, one²⁹ of them accompanied by a short explanation written by Ts. Mönkh-Erdene of Dashchoilin (Tib. *Bkra shis chos gling*), which is the second largest monastery in the capital.³⁰ The most recent translations were published by Myagmarsüren, Altansükh, and Ariunzul.³¹

Three different commentaries on the prayer written in Tibetan by Mongolian scholars have come down to us.³² *Illuminating the Meaning: A Commentary on “Bestowing the Highest Blessings”* (*Byin rlabs mchog stsol ma'i 'grel pa tshig don rab gsal*) was composed by Agvaankhaidüv (Tib. *Ngag dbang mkhas grub*, 1779–1838), an abbot of Ikh Khüree, also known as *Jidoriin khamba*. The other commentary was composed by Ganjuurva Nomon Khan (Tib. *Bka' gyur ba no mon han*) Luvsantsültem (Tib. *Blo bzang tshul khirms*, 1642–1715) under the title *A Commentary on “Bestowing the Highest Blessings” Composed by Jebtsundampa*

(*Rje btsun dam pa'i zhal nas gsungs pa'i byin rlabs mchog stsol ma'i 'grel ba*).³³ The author of the third commentary is known as *Angi bagsh*, Tserenjav, or Luvsantserenjav *agramba* (Tib. Blo bzang tshe ring skyabs *sngags rams pa*, 1850–1932) of Möröngiin, or Delgermöröngiin Khüree (named after a river, situated in the center of today's Khövsgöl Province, once situated in Khotgoid *akhai beisiin khoshuu*). The title of his commentary is *Illuminating the Meaning Like the Light of the Wish-fulfilling Jewel, Similar to the Light of Burning Incense, of the Dus bstun gsol 'debs byin rlabs mchog stsol ma Composed by Zanabazar, the Superior Divine Yogī of the Northern Territory, as a Present Given to the Wretched Ones*.³⁴

An Explanation of the prayer titled “From the Om, in countless . . .”

As previously mentioned, this tantric food offering text³⁵ titled *Umlai daye* (Tib. *Om las bgrang yas*, *From the Om, in countless . . .*) is recited on the fourteenth day of the fifteen days of New Year rituals, when the *tsogchid* (*delgerengüi takhil*; Tib. *tshogs mchod*, Skrt. *gaṇapūjā*, “the accumulation of offerings”) is presented during the “Twofold Prayer” (*Davkhar yerööl*) that commemorates Zanabazar's death. It is recited on this occasion without the offering of residual sacrificial cakes (*lagdor*; Tib. *lhag gtor*). During this ritual in Gandantegchenlin, the baked cakes distributed to the members of the assembly as a meal offering are made with molds (*khev*) originally created by Zanabazar himself.

This ritual text is also frequently recited on various other occasions whenever the *tsogchid* is offered to the visualized “field of assembly” (*chuułganiı oron*; Tib. *tshogs zhing*) of all the gurus of the lineage, and also during any tantric ritual when food containing meat (*ulaan takhil*, “red offering;” Tib. *mchod pa dmar po*, or *bor tsav*, “brown food”) is served to the monks of the assembly. In Buddhist tantric rituals, the three main offering substances are meat (*makh*, or *mams*; Tib. *mam sa*), sacrificial cakes (*balin* or *dorom*, Tib. *gtor ma*), and spirits (*arkhi*, “vodka”), which are ritually transformed into offerings consisting of pure Dharmic quality (*nomiin chanar*), being of the nature of nectar (*arshaan*; Tib. *bdud rtsi*). Through these offerings, merit is accumulated and dedicated for the enlightenment of all sentient beings.³⁶

There is a famous image depicting Zanabazar slicing the meat of the sacrum of a lamb (*uuts*), which is usually ceremonially divided among the lamas according to their ranks, beginning with the abbot. Since this image is connected to a tantric ritual custom, it represents a transformation of the Mongolian daily custom of eating meat and sharing its portions according to the seniority of the family members into a ritual practice dedicated to the accumulation of merit and liberation of all sentient beings.

This prayer was composed in versified form with a fixed number of nine syllables in each line. The translation included in this chapter is based on two different versions of the Tibetan original: one contained in the edition of Zanabazar's collected works (*sunbum*; Tib. *gsung 'bum*) published by Lokesh Chandra,³⁷ and the other available on the Buddhist Digital Resource Center (BDRC) website.³⁸ The Tibetan original has been further compared with a modern Mongolian translation made by Myagmarsüren³⁹ and published under the title *From the Om, in countless . . .* (*Um üsgees toolshgüi*).

The structure of the text is as follows:⁴⁰

1. Consecration (*adis janlavlakh*; Tib. *byin rlabs*) of the offerings by means of the three syllables *om̐ āḥ hūm*. The offerings (Tib. *mchod pa'i sprin*, “cloud of offerings”), visualized as arisen from the syllable *om̐* and filling the sky, are mentally transformed into nectar (*arshaan*; Tib. *bdud rtsi*), that is, the nectar of wisdom or gnosis (*bilgüünii arshaan*; Tib. *ye shes bdud rtsi*)—the first four lines.
The offerings thus transformed are offered (*takhil örgökh*, Tib. *mchod 'bul*) to the field of assembly (*chuulganii oron*; Tib. *tshogs zhing*). This is detailed in the following way in the following stanzas:
2. Offerings (“an offering of the uncontaminated nectar of wisdom”) are first presented to the root and lineage *gurus* (*yazguuriin bagsh*, *damjlagiin bagsh nuguud*; Tib. *rtsa brgyud bla ma*), who are beseeched to grant all 1. desired blessings (*adis janlav*, Tib. *byin rlabs*)—the second set of four lines.
3. Afterward, offerings are presented to the peaceful and wrathful tutelary deities (*amirlangui bolon dogshin yidam burkhaduud*; Tib. *yi dam zhi khro*) and to the Three Jewels (*chukhag deed gurav*, Tib. *mchog gsum*), all of whom are asked to grant all desired *siddhis* (*shid büteel*; Tib. *dnagos grub*)—the third set of four lines.
4. Then offerings are presented to the *ḍakas* and *ḍākinīs* (*baatar daginasuud*, *bavuu khandmaanuud*, Tib. *dpa' bo mkha' 'gro*) and to the Dharma protectors (*nomiin sakhuis* or *choinjun*, Tib. *chos srung*), who are requested to grant the realization of all desired deeds (*ajil*, or *üils*; Tib. *'phrin las*)—the fourth set of four lines.
5. Dedication of the merit accumulated through the ritual (*zoriulga*, *takhil örgösnii buyan zoriulakh*, Tib. (*dge ba rdzogs byang du*) *bsngo ba*) for the perfect enlightenment of all mother sentient beings and oneself (*bi tergüüten*, *ekh bolson khamag amitan / am'tan бүкхен*; Tib. *bdag sogs mar gyur gro ba*)—the fifth set of four lines.
6. Aspiration that by the virtue of the *guru*, tutelary deities, the Three Jewels, and the protectors all the darkness of ignorance may be entirely vanquished, and the auspiciousness of perfect splendor be present—the last set of four lines.

An Explanation of the *Profound Sādhana of the Maṇi* [Mantra]

The *Profound Sādhana of the Maṇi* [Mantra] (*Maan' düvtov savmu*; Tib. *Maṇi'i sgrub thabs zab mo*) is related to the tantric meditational practice of Avalokiteśvara and is known in the Mongolian language as *Maaniig büteekh gүн arga* or as *Maaniin büteeliin gүн arga*.⁴¹ In the title *maṇi* stands for the six-syllable *ōṃ maṇi padme hūṃ* mantra. The Tibetan phrase *sgrub thabs*, Skrt. *sādhana*, “method or means of realization,” refers specifically to a tantric liturgy and procedure usually emphasizing the stage of generation (Tib. *bskyed rim*), and its structure is described below.

As previously mentioned, this text is not recited widely or regularly in Mongolian temples because it is not a ritual text for recitation (*khurliin unshlaga*, *unshlagiin sudar*). However, due to its close connection to the *Kālacakratantra* teachings (Tib. *dus kyi 'khor lo*; Mong. *tsagiin khürden*, or *düinkhor*), it is recited as part of the daily chant called *sharjün* (Tib. *zhar 'byung*, “addendum,” name of the daily chanting in monastic schools) in the Kālacakra monastic college *Düinkhor datsan* (Tib. *dus 'khor grwa tshang*) of Gandantegchenlin monastery in Ulaanbaatar.⁴² According to Khorolbat Lama,⁴³ it is also recited in Mongolian monasteries annually as part of the *kharanga magtaal* (“praise,” “eulogy”) collection of texts. Moreover, it is used today in the context of personal meditation practice (*amnii unshlaga*), when reciting mantras (*maan' unshikh*) at the completion of the meditation on Avalokiteśvara. It is also recited during collective practice called “*maṇi sādhana*” (*maaniin büteel*; Tib. *ma ṇi sgrub thabs*), held annually in several larger monasteries occasionally lasting for a week or even a month, and some lamas often recite it during postmortem rituals.⁴⁴

Connected to the *sādhana* practice, this text has a deep philosophical meaning. According to Khorolbat Lama,⁴⁵ the word “profound” contained in the title relates to the fact that the text belongs to the category of Unexcelled Yoga Tantras (Tib. *rnal 'byor bla na med pa'i rgyud*; Mong. *naljorlanamed* or *yogüzer khantsashgüi yos*),⁴⁶ and that it is connected to the *Kālacakratantra*.⁴⁷ Being a *sādhana* of Avalokiteśvara (*Janraiseg burkhaniig büteekh arga*), it builds on the Sanskrit *ōṃ maṇi padme hūṃ* mantra, and in addition, on the symbolic meaning of the *soyombo* symbol, created by Zanabazar.

By the *maṇi* (*maani*), a jewel (*chandmani*), and the syllable *e* wisdom (*bileg*, Tib. *shes*) is symbolized, and by the *padme* (*badam/badma*) or a lotus (*lyankhua*), and the syllable *waṃ*, method (*arga*, Tib. *thabs*) and also bliss and emptiness (*amgalan*, *khooson*, Tib. *bde stong*) is symbolized; thus, the unity of wisdom and method, or emptiness and bliss, is symbolized by these.

Also, the same unity is symbolized by the “symbol with ten powers” (Tib. *rnam bcu dbang ldan*; Mong. *namjü vandan*), the seed syllable (*khöröngö üseg*) of the Kālacakra tantric system,⁴⁸ as well as by the *soyombo* symbol.

Just as the syllable *e* and the syllable *waṃ* and the words *maṇi* and *padme* represent wisdom and method, in the same way, the *soyombo* symbol, which resembles the word *ewaṃ* in its form, symbolizes the unity of wisdom and method, of emptiness and bliss, or emptiness and compassion.

As seen in the second stanza of the text, in the course of practice, what is sought is this unity or non-duality (Tib. *gnyis med*) which relates to the meditational practice aimed at the actualization of the Dharma Body (Tib. *chos sku*, Mong. *nomiin lagshin*, Skrt. *Dharmakāya*) of the Buddha at the moment of death. This explains why the text became extraordinarily important in Mongolia for tantric meditation. According to Mönkh-Erdene Lama, the text contains profound tantric meaning (as described above), but for those unable to understand this profound meaning, Zanabazar summarized it with the mantra *oṃ maṇi padme hūṃ*, by which an offering is offered during this practice, and explained its meaning. The text also contains a meaning of the *soyombo* symbol explained by its creator, Zanabazar himself, being thus considered as the main explanation of this symbol.

The text was composed in versified form with the number of syllables in each line fixed at seven. The translation that follows is based on two versions of the Tibetan original⁴⁹ and on three different translations into Modern Mongolian. One of the three Mongolian translations was made by Myagmarsuren under the title *Maaniin büteeliin gün arga orshvoi*,⁵⁰ the second was prepared by Khorolbat Lama,⁵¹ and the third translation was published under the title *Maaniin günzgi büteeliin arga*.⁵²

There are several available commentaries on the text written by different lamas.⁵³ One was written by Agvaandorj (Tib. Sngags dbang rdo rje, nineteenth century), the scribe and Dharma master (*bicheech tsorj*) of Ikh Khüree, under the title *Jewel Whorl of Bliss: A Brief Description of How to Practice the Meaning of the Profound Sādhana of the Maṇi [Mantra] According to the Kālacakra System* (Tib. *Ma ṇi'i sgrub thabs zab mo'i don dus 'khor lugs dang mthun par nyams su len tshul mdo tsam brjod pa nor bu dga' 'khyil*). Another commentary was composed by the third Tugan *geegen*, Luvsanchoijinyam (Tib. Thu'u bkwan Blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma, 1737–1802) of Amdo, under the title *Opening the Eyes to See the Profound Meaning: A Commentary on the Sādhana of the Maṇi [Mantra] Written by Jebtsumdampa, Self-Existing Wisdom-Vajra*⁵⁴ (Tib. *Rje btsun dam pa rang byung ye shes rdo rjes mdzad pa'i ma ṇi'i sgrub thabs kyi 'grel ba zab don lta ba'i mig 'byed*). The third commentary was composed by *günten geegen* Gonchigdanbiidonme (Tib. Dkon mchog bstan pa'i sgron me, 1762–1823), also from Amdo, and titled *Illuminating the Profound: A Commentary on the "Profound Sādhana of the Maṇi [Mantra]" Composed by Jebtsundampa, the Sun of the Teachings*⁵⁵ (Tib. *Bstan pa'i nyi ma rje btsun dam pas mdzad pa'i ma ṇi'i sgrub thabs zab mo'i 'grel pa zab mo snang ba*). The fourth commentary, composed by

the *ikh gevsh* (“great *geshe*”) Rigzensewjiddorj (eighteenth century), also known as *khicheengüi lam* (“diligent lama”) from Dalai Choinkhor Vangiin Khoshuu of Sain Noyon Khan Province, is titled *Wish-Granting Tree That Fulfills All Needs and Desires: A Commentary on the Difficult Points of the Profound Sādhana of the Maṇi [Mantra]* (Tib. *Ma ṅi'i sgrub thabs zab mo'i dka' 'grel dgos 'dod 'byung ba'i dpag bsam khri shing*).

The structure of the poem follows a typical *sādhana* structure: the preliminaries that include refuge-taking and generating *bodhicitta*, the main part that contains the visualization of Avalokiteśvara and the recitation of the mantra, and the conclusion containing the dedication of merit. In detail, the structure of the text is as follows:⁵⁶

1. Expression of homage and/or offering (*takhil ögüülel*; Tib. *mchod par brjod pa*)—one line
2. The main body of the text (*sudriin bodit utga*; Tib. *gzhung don dngos*) consisting of the following parts:
 - 2.1. The preliminary practices (*ankhaaran awlagiin zawdal*; Tib. *nyams len gyi sngon 'gro*), including the taking of refuge, generating *bodhicitta* (Tib. *skyabs sems*, abbreviation of Tib. *skyabs 'gro* and Tib. *sems bskyed*), and cultivating the Four Immeasurables (Tib. *tshad bzhi*, abbreviation for Tib. *tshad med bzhi*)—four lines
 - 2.2. The actual practice (*bodit ankhaaran awlaga*; Tib. *nyams len dngos*) consisting of the following three parts:
 - 2.2.1. The visualization of deities (*burkhaniig todotgoston, chuulganii oroniig todorkhoilon bodokh*; Tib. *lha gsal btap pa*); the first four lines also include teachings on preparation for the moment of death, aimed at actualizing the Dharma Body. These are followed by a description of the visualization of Avalokiteśvara, born from the syllable *hrī*, his appearance, and his manifestations—twelve lines.
 - 2.2.2. A prayer of supplication addressed to all the assembled buddhas (*terkhüü bükh burkhaniig khuraasnaar üzeed zalbirakh*; Tib. *de sangs rgyas kun 'dus su bltas te gsol ba gdab pa*). Here we find lists of different deities and Buddhist traditions, with a *guruyoga* practice that is based on any one of them. The practitioner is encouraged to pray to them—fourteen lines.
 - 2.2.3. Mantra recitation (*urilga üildekh*; Tib. *Bzlas pa bya ba*); the layers of meaning of the mantra *oṃ maṇi padme hūṃ* and of the *soyombo* symbol are described⁵⁷ together with an explanation of the aggregation of all *maṇḍalas* and their deities in both the

mantra and the symbol. A description of the appropriate way of visualizing the deities while the six-syllable mantra is recited is also included here—fifty-two lines.

3. Conclusion (*khoitkhiin daraalal*; Tib. *rjes kyi rim pa*), which encourages the practitioner to engage in various virtuous acts and to meditate in accordance with the tantric stage of completion (Tib. *rdzogs rim*)—seven lines
4. The benefits or merit (*tus erdem*; Tib. *phan yon*) gained through this practice, described in the form of an aspirational prayer (*yerööl*; Tib. *smon lam*)—twelve lines
5. Colophon (*suuliin utga*; Tib. *mjug gi don*)—twelve lines

Translated Texts

Prayer in Accordance with the Times

or

Bestowing the Highest Blessings

[*Homage*]

To the root and lineage lamas who bestow the highest blessings,
 To meditational deities and to the peaceful and wrathful deities sending down
 the rain of spiritual realization,
 And to the *ḍākinīs* and Dharma protectors who eliminate all obstacles,
 I prostrate with deep respect of the three doors.⁵⁸

[*Making Offerings*]

I offer a heap of offerings, both actual and visualized,
 Which fill the sky to the extent of space.

[*Confession of Sins*]

I confess all the sins that I have accumulated since beginning-less time and
 vow [not to commit them again].

[*Rejoicing in Others' Virtuous Deeds*]

I rejoice in all the virtue accumulated by both ordinary and noble beings.

[*Requesting the Turning of the Wheel of Dharma*]

I encourage the turning of the Wheel of the profound and vast Dharma.
 I pray that you [the *guru*] may enjoy a long life until the end of cyclic existence!

[*Requesting Not to Pass into Nirvāṇa*]

I dedicate the heap of all my virtue without exception, starting with this,
 In accordance with the aspirations of the *buddhas* and *bodhisattvas* of the
 three times,
 For the sake of completely removing the darkness of ignorance in all sentient
 beings,
 And for the spreading of the light of omniscient wisdom.
 Who are fully affected by the deep darkness of great defilement
 And who were born in degenerate times,⁵⁹ please save us out of compassion!

By the complete extinguishing of the great fire of manifold sufferings,
 Which are the fruits of negative actions and mental afflictions ripened
 in time,
 May, I pray, the perfect bliss and happiness
 Of kindness and compassion being free from any mutual enmity spread!

Please, Nondeceptive Protector, rescue us! Protect us!
 Please, Treasury of Boundless Compassion (*Avalokiteśvara*), look upon us!
 Care for us!
 Ancient tutelary gods⁶⁰ and deities of the land,⁶¹ do not be careless! Do not be
 careless!
 Please, care for us, quickly save us!

May the sunlight of the teachings of the Victorious One⁶² spread throughout
 the ten directions!
 May all sentient beings forever enjoy the splendor of happiness and joy
 By purifying the [two types of] obscurations and accomplishing the [two]
 accumulations⁶³ in the state of omniscience!
 May they quickly attain awakening!

By the blessings of the truth of the Guru and the Supreme Three Jewels,
 By the reliable power of the changeless sphere of reality (*dharmadhātu*)⁶⁴ and
 interdependent origination,
 And by the devotion and the holy deeds of the Dharma protectors,
 May all our wishes be fulfilled exactly as desired!

[*Dedication of Merit*]

By the blessings of the Guru who embodies all protection,
 May all temporary and ultimate misfortunes that there are be eliminated!

May we have the auspiciousness of enjoying the perfect splendor
Of the spontaneously generated prosperity and well-being of *saṃsāra* and
nīrvāṇa!

[*Colophon*]

This prayer, titled *Prayer in Accordance with the Times*, was composed by His Excellency, the renowned, upon the request of his disciple, the fully ordained monk Rnam rgyal. It was written down by *ravjamba*⁶⁵ Blo gros.

From the om̐, in countless . . .

[*Consecration of Offerings*]

From the *om̐*, in countless large jewel vessels,
An ever-excellent cloud of offerings born from the three syllables [*om̐*
āḥ hūṃ]⁶⁶
Fills the entire sky until the end of the world, and
Turns into an ocean of the uncontaminated nectar of wisdom.
om̐ āḥ hūṃ

[Recite these three times.]

om̐ āḥ hūṃ

[*Offerings to the Root and Lineage Gurus*]

To [all] the gracious root and lineage *gurus*,⁶⁷ without exception,
From within the sphere of reality, in the measureless palace of great bliss,
[I] present an offering of the uncontaminated nectar of wisdom.
Be pleased, and please grant all desired blessings!
Om̐

[*Offerings to the Peaceful and Wrathful Tutelary Deities and to the Three Jewels*]

To the Three Jewels and to [all] the peaceful and wrathful tutelary deities⁶⁸
Of my own body of the *maṇḍala* of the Five Victorious Ones,⁶⁹ without excep-
tion, and to whomever is suitable,
[I] present an offering of the uncontaminated nectar of wisdom.
Be pleased and please grant all desired accomplishments!
Om̐

[Offerings to *ḍakas*, *ḍākinīs*, and Dharma Protectors]

To all *ḍakas*, *ḍākinīs*, and Dharma protectors without exception
Of the three worlds,⁷⁰ of the outer, inner, and other,⁷¹ and to whomever is
suitable,

[I] present an offering of the uncontaminated nectar of wisdom.
Be pleased and please grant the realization of all desired deeds!

[Dedication of Merit]

By the power of pleasing the supreme ones of the Pure Lands
In this way, with an ocean of the nectar of wisdom,
May I and others regarded as mothers,⁷² without exception,
Acquire the mastery of the supreme, omniscient wisdom!

[Aspiration]

By the brilliance of the prosperity and well-being of the supreme virtue
Of the Guru, tutelary deities, the Three Jewels, and protectors,⁷³
May all the darkness of the degeneration of ignorance⁷⁴ be entirely
vanquished, and
May the auspiciousness of the perfect, radiant, and pervasive splendor be present!

Profound Sādhana of the Maṇi [Mantra]

[Paying Homage]

Homage to Lokeśvara!⁷⁵

[The Preliminary Practice]

A person [who] wishes to liberate
Themselves and [all] others from the ocean of *saṃsāra*,
By means of the strong belief of relying upon “you [who] know best,”
Must make the effort in taking refuge and in generating *bodhicitta*⁷⁶ and the
Four Immeasurables.⁷⁷

[The Actual Practice]

[The visualization of the deities]

The impure consciousness, at the basis of emptiness
Enters the state of the union of bliss and emptiness
Of the clear light of the essential condition of the pure state of emptiness,
And of the nondual method and wisdom.⁷⁸
This is the definitive meaning of the *maṇi padme*.

The supremely empowered Avalokiteśvara, born from [the syllable] *hri*,
 [Has] a white-colored body, [with] rays of light
 Radiating in the ten directions, [has] one face,
 Four arms, eleven faces, and so forth.
 With limitless manifestations
 He abides in sky, filling the entire sky.
 Repeatedly visualize [him in this way] with devotion.

[*A Supplication Prayer to All the Assembled Buddhas*]

Make wishes and prayers
 With strong devotion [to these:]
 The ultimate reality Kālacakra,⁷⁹ Cakrasaṃvara, Hevajra, Guhyasamāja,⁸⁰
 Māyājāla,⁸¹ Vajrāsana, Mahāmāyā,⁸²
 Yamāntaka,⁸³ [who is] the enemy of the Lord of Death, Hayagrīva⁸⁴ [who has]
 the supreme power of a steed,
 The ocean of *ḍākinīs*, the Great Mother Prajñāpāramitā,⁸⁵
 Mahāmudrā,⁸⁶ Atiyoga,⁸⁷ and
 The equality with Buddhahood,⁸⁸ the great Madhyamaka,⁸⁹
 The self-arising wisdom Vajrasattva,⁹⁰
 Vajradhara,⁹¹ and the like, Buddhas of the essential state,
 The Dharma, the Saṅgha, and deities,
 Mantras, *tantras*, *maṇḍalas*, and *mudrās*,
 The *guruyoga*⁹² of the state of unity
 Embodying all the *siddhis*.⁹³

[*Mantra Recitation*]

Maṇi is a jewel.
 Also, it is the great bliss pervading all of space
 Of the unchanging ultimate truth.
 It is Buddhahood. Its abode is
 The basis of emptiness, which dwells
 In a basket of the true nature of phenomena. It is a lotus, “*padme*.”
 [The syllable] *me* means “in the lotus.”
 It means, “dwelling in the basket
 Of Buddhahood.” Again, the “basket”
 Has the meaning of “placed in.”

In the letter *e* is the syllable *waṇi*, and in the letter *a* is the syllable *hūṇi*:
 Method is in wisdom, bliss [is in] emptiness.
 In emptiness is compassion, the vowels and consonants.

The *vajra* sun is in the *vajra* moon.
 The *vajra* and triangular drop are in the lotus.
 Its meaning is “sitting firm supported by the support,”⁹⁴ and so on.

Therefore, the father and mother deities
 Of the profound original state, the highest method and wisdom,
 All the *maṇḍalas* of the support and the supported⁹⁵
 Are contained in the “*maṇi padme*.”

The precious stone⁹⁶ is a synonym for the compassion
 of the supreme method, the boundless great bliss.
 The jewel, a drop, the *vajra*,
 The vowels, the syllable *haṃ*, the syllable *waṃ*,
 And the syllable *he* are brought together and assembled.
 The Primordial Buddha⁹⁷ and other [*buddhas*]
 Taught these numerous [things]. The goal-oriented
 Wisdom, a synonym for great emptiness,
 The lotus, the Dharma-source,⁹⁸ the triangular,
 The mind of the *Vīras*,⁹⁹ the consonants, the letter *a*,
 And the letter *e*, the *vajra* wheel, the secret wheel,
 The basket, the lion throne, and so on—
 These many [things] are taught.

In [the syllable] *oṃ* are the five wisdoms of method.
 In [the syllable] *hūṃ* the five wisdoms of wisdom,
 The completely pure ten types of wisdom.¹⁰⁰
 The six kings of secret mantra,¹⁰¹ the unchanging six,
 The Victorious Ones belonging the six families,¹⁰² and so on,
 In all of the ultimate six divisions—
 In one recognized deity all the deities are included.
 In one mantra all mantras are collected.
 From within the sphere perfect with
 Belief in this profound instruction, invited by the pure and clear,
 Uninterrupted, and long and short flow of
 Strong, single-pointed faith and devotion,
 the Sons of the Victorious Ones,¹⁰³ without exception,
 Who radiate blessings and
 Infinite rays of the light of compassion,
 Who clear away the [two types of] obscurations¹⁰⁴ of all sentient beings, and
 Who have attained all *siddhis*, are invoked.
 Imagine that by the melody of the recitation of the six letters¹⁰⁵
 They entirely fill the sky.

[Concluding Section]

From [within] the sphere [of emptiness], perform all kinds of virtuous acts:
 Prostrations, circumambulations, offerings and eulogies,
 Making sacrificial cake and water offerings, confessing misdeeds,
 Rejoicing [in virtue], making invocations and prayers,
 Offering *maṇḍalas*, and so on.
 Also make the effort to meditate on the profound stage of completion¹⁰⁶
 In accordance with the *guru's* instructions.

[Benefits]

If you do so, all the goals of this present and future lives,
 As wished for, will be fulfilled,
 And you will be separated from everything inauspicious at the time of death.
 The supremely empowered one, Avalokiteśvara
 Will welcome you, together with an inconceivable number of
 His attendants or his emanations,
 In the Pure Land of Poṭala, or
 In Sukhāvātī.¹⁰⁷ From a lotus
 You will be miraculously born, and right after your birth
 You will obtain many good qualities,
 Such as *dhāraṇīs*, *samādhis*, and so on.
 Gladdening all the perfect *buddhas*,
 You will bring to an absolute perfection
 All good qualities of the grounds and the paths,¹⁰⁸
 And you will attain the holy ultimate state
 That resembles that of Avalokiteśvara.

[Colophon]

At the request of a disciple of a religious lineage, Chos dbang rdo rje, this particularly excellent and profound instruction, which is of great benefit and easy to accomplish, was composed by the so-called *yogi* Zanabazar (*yo gi Dzā na badzra*) blessed by the supreme ones, who composed it according to the teachings of the ancient holy ones when he was eighty-five. *Ravjamba* Blo gros wrote it down as a text.

Notes

1. See D. Sugar and Sh. Ad'shaa, *Öndör gegeen* (Ulaanbaatar: Publisher unknown, 2004); see also J. Choinkhor, S. Norovsambu, and Ts. Tsolmon (eds.), *Undur gegehen*

Zanabazar (Ulaanbaatar: Mongolian National Commission for UNESCO, 1995). One of the newest publications is a conference volume published in 2015 on the 380th anniversary of Zanabazar's birth. See Chuluun and Mönkhjargal (eds.), *Öndör gegeen Zanabazar. Amydral, Öv* (Ulaanbaatar: Publisher unknown, 2015). Most recently, Zanabazar's collected works have been published in Modern Mongolian by G. Myagmarsüren. See G. Myagmarsüren, *Öndör gegeenii sümbüm*, Mongol mergediin büteeliin chuulgan "Mangala pitaka," Vol. 1 (Ulaanbaatar: Züün Khüree Dashchoilin khiid, Burkhanii shashin soyol sudlaliin khüreeleen, 2018).

2. The current article was written in the framework of a research project funded by the Hungarian National Research, Development, and Innovation Office (Nemzeti Kutatási, Fejlesztési és Innovációs Hivatal)—NKFIH, with the contract number PD 116108. One of the texts translated and analyzed here is often used in the practices at the occasion of someone's death.
3. More details on the use of Zanabazar's texts in the Mongolian ritual system can be found in Zsuzsa Majer, "A Comparative Study of the Ceremonial Practice in Present-day Mongolian Monasteries," PhD Dissertation (Budapest: Eötvös Loránd University, Faculty of Arts, Doctoral School of Linguistics, Doctoral School of Mongolian Linguistics, 2008).
4. *Khiid* is a Mongolian term for a smaller monastery.
5. Tib. *dga' khyil*, Skrt. *ānanda-cakra*, a Buddhist symbol consisting of three flames of different colors.
6. On this monastery as a place of pilgrimage, see Zsuzsa Majer, "Tövkhön, the Retreat of Öndör Geegen Zanabazar as a Pilgrimage Site," *The Silk Road* 10: 107–116. Seattle, online version: http://www.silk-road.com/newsletter/vol10/SilkRoad_10_2012_majer.pdf, 2012.
7. On his works of art, with illustrations, see N. Tsültem, *The Eminent Mongolian Sculptor—G. Zanabazar* (Ulaanbaatar: National Publishing House, 1982). On the heritage of Öndör Geegen, including his works of art, see Krisztina Teleki, "Öndör gegeen Zanabazariin biyet bolon biyet bus öwiin jishee barimtuud," in *Nomadic Heritage Studies Museum Nationale Mongoli* 13, Fasc. 36 (2013): 304–321.
8. There is a yellow and winged galloping horse in the center of a blue circle on the Mongolian emblem, which is also the symbol of luck and life force for the Mongols, called *khiimor* or *lündaa*, Tib. *rlung rta* (wind-horse), with the *soyombo* symbol on its back. It is encircled by a yellow circle, with the three-part wish-fulfilling jewel (Skrt. *cintāmaṇi*) on its top. Under this, in the lower part of the emblem, there is a Buddhist symbol, the Wheel of the Teaching.
9. For more detail on the ritual system of the revived Mongolian Buddhism, see Majer (2008).
10. R. Byamba, *Mongolchuudiin tövd kheleer tuurwisan mongol khelend orchuulsan nom züin bürtgel*, *The Bibliographical Guide of Mongolian Writers in the Tibetan Language and Mongolian Translators*, Vol. 1 (Ulaanbaatar: Private publication, 2004): 8.
11. For a more detailed description of the connected rituals of Mongolian Buddhism, see Majer (2008). In the Tibetan tradition, *Monlam dutsen* (Tib. *smon dus chen / smon lam dus chen*, "Prayer Festival," or "Great Days of Prayers") is held during this period,

- starting from the first day of the Lunar New Year (Tib. *lo gsar*) and lasting for twenty-one days with a different ceremonial schedule. In the Tibetan tradition, on the fifteenth day of the month, the festival of *Chonga chöchen* (Tib. *bco lnga mchod chen*, “The Great Offering of the 15th”) is held, and traditionally it took place around the main shrine of the Jokhang (Tib. Jo khang), on the Barkor (Tib. Bar khor), in the presence of the Dalai Lama.
12. On these occasions the monks participating in the debate stand up in the middle of the assembly hall; therefore, the debate is called “standing up.”
 13. For recorded mantras, see http://bodhi.mn/?page_id=1510, http://bodhi.mn/?page_id=1715, “Mongoliin burkhanii shashnii khögjiliig demjikh san” (“Fund for the Development of Mongolian Buddhism”). The mantras are recited by the chant master of Dashgenpellin monastery named Tovuu, and by these lamas: B. Soronzonbold; J. Byambadorj, lama of Baruun Khüree monastery; Lkhagvasüren, the main chant master of Gandantegchenling monastery; and Jambaldorj.
 14. Sugar and Ad’shaa (2004): 86–88. See also J. Yeröolt, *Dashchiüreviin san zokhiogdson tüüikh*, Facebook page of “Öndör geegen Zanabazar Soyoliin San” (“Öndör Geegen Zanabazar Cultural Fund”) (<https://www.facebook.com/Өндөр-гэгээн-Занабазар-соёлын-сан-521895244656496/?fref=ts>).
 15. Byambaa (2004): 7. (item 00007.).
 16. *Ravjamba*, Tib. *Rab ’byams (pa)*, a scholastic title of a scholar of Buddhist philosophy.
 17. In translating the text from the Tibetan, I relied on the publication of Zanabazar’s collected works (Tib. *gsung ’bum*) published by Lokesh Chandra (1982): folios 748–751 (according to the numbering of the original text, folios 100B–102A); the versions in the textbooks for the daily chanting of the two largest Mongolian monasteries, available in form at Gandantegchenlin monastery without date of publication, 297–300, 136A–137B), and in Dashchoilin monastery (Jambal—Mönkhsaikhan (2004): 144–145); I also relied on the version published by Bira (1995): 15, 19. The text is also available in the Modern Mongolian editions of the collected works of Öndör Geegen Zanabazar, for example in the first volume of the collected works of the Jebtsündamba *khutagts* published by Gurudeva Rinpoche and R. Byamba (2003). They are also available in the appendix to the newly published Mongolian translation of Öndör Geegen’s works by G. Myagmarsüren (2018). Several versions of the text are kept in the Oriental Collection of the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. See Orosz (2008–2009): *Dus bstun gyi gsol ’debs* 520.58.4, 536.17, 543.4, 592.38; *Dus bstun gyi gsol ’debs Byin rlabs mchog stsol ma* 568.41; *Byin rlabs mchog stsol ma* 520.30, 543.4, 607.6.2; *Byin rlabs mchog stsol ma dang / Ma ñi’i ril sgrub kyi cho ga’i ’don cha sogs* 607.6.
 18. According to Bira, the text was written in 1696. See Sh. Bira, *Bogd Jivzündamba Zanabazariin zokhioson “Tsag lugaa zokhilduulsan zalbiral adistadiin deediig khairlagch orshivoi”* (Ulaanbaatar: International Association for Mongolian Studies, 1995): 3.
 19. Ts. Mönkh-Erdene, “Tsagiig tovkhinuulagch zalbiral,” in *Burkhanii shashnaa deedlen shütekhiiin uchir*, edited by B. Darambazar (Ulaanbaatar: Züün Khüree College of Buddhist Philosophy and Study of Religion, 2008): 47.

20. Sugar and Ad'shaa (2004): 78.
21. Tib. *dus ngan* ("degenerate time"). In Mongolian translations, it reads: *tsöviin tsag* ("deteriorating times"), *muu tsag* ("bad times"), or *munkhag tsag* ("times of ignorance").
22. Bira published the manuscript of the Classical Mongolian translation of *Ishtavkhai gevsh*, as well as the manuscript of another translation into Classical Mongolian. See Bira (1995): 16, 18. According to Bira, both manuscripts are owned by Sh. Soninbayar lama of Gandantegchenlin monastery, and both had been copied by hand by the paternal grandfather of Sh. Soninbayar, Togtokhuchral, who lived in the old Borjigin setsen Khoshuu of Setsen khan Aimag.
23. Bira (1995): 4, mentions only this translation. See also Byambaa (2004): 43; L. Khürelbaatar (ed.), *Altan khüird* (Ulaanbaatar: Publisher unknown, 1992): 11; and L. Tüdev (ed.), *Mongoliin Uran Zokhioliin Deejis* (Ulaanbaatar: Publisher unknown, 1995): 283. Apart from the translations of *Ishtavkhai* and *Gaadan*, Byambaa also mentions a translation by Gelegjamts *doorombo* (Tib. Dge legs rgya mtsho mdo rams pa, 1869–193?), which is, in fact, a biography of Öndör Gegeen written by Agvaan Eshitüvden, or Ishtüvden (Tib. Ngag dbang ye shes thub bstan) and translated by Gelegjamts. It mentions only the prayer *Jinlav tsogzol*. See Hans-Rainer Kämpfe, "Sayin Qubitan-u Süsüg-ün terge. Biographie des 1. rje bcun dam pa-Qutuqtu Öndür gegen (1635–1723), verfasst von Nag gi dbaṅ po 1839. Zwerte Folge." *Zentralasiatische Studien* 15: 331–383 (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrasowitz, 1981): 352. Also see Bira in (1995): 3.
24. Bira (1995): 7–9.
25. For example, Sugar—Ad'shaa (2004): 80–81. They even used in their explanation of the text (78–80) given by Bira.
26. Bira (1995): 7–9, 10–13. The Mongolian title of Bira's translation is a rendition of the two alternate Tibetan titles *Tsag lugaa zokhilduulsan zalbiral Adistadiin deediig khairlagch orshivoi* (*Prayer in Accordance with the Times and [Bestowing] the Highest Blessing*).
27. Bira (1995): 14.
28. Choinkhor et al. (1995): 70. "Janlavtsogzalmaa, Adistidiin manlaig örshögöch orshiv" (Author unknown), in *Mongol unshlaga, urilgaas* (Ulaanbaatar: Publisher unknown, 2008): 17–18; "Tsagiig tokhinuulagch zalbiral" (Author unknown), in *Burkhanii shashnii zan üüliin gariin avlaga I* (Ulaanbaatar: Publisher unknown, 2005): 50.
29. B. Darambazar, *Burkhanii shashnaa deetlen shütekhiiin uchir* (Ulaanbaatar: Züün Khüree College of Buddhist Philosophy and Study of Religion, 2008): 48–49. Here it is found under the title *Tsagiig towkhinuulagch soyorkhol talvikhuin surgaal orshvoi*. (*Jinlav tsogtsolmaa*) (*Teaching in Accordance with the Times, Bestowing Grace*). Two other publications include the same translation. See A. Bayasgalan, *Tövd khel ekhlen surakh bichig* (Ulaanbaatar: Amrida kompani, 1996): 62–63; under the title *Adistidiin deediig khairlagch ekh* and *Janlav tsogzol* (*Adistidiin deediig khairlagch ekh*) (*Mother Who Bestows the Highest Blessings*).
30. Mönkh-Erdene (2008): 47.

31. Myagmarsüren (2018): 168–169. It was published by Altansükh and Ariunzul under the title *Tsagiig zokhiruulakh zalbiral, Ülemj deed adistid soyorkhogch*. See R. Altansükh and B. Ariunzul, *Öndör geegen Zanabazar, Adistediin deediig khairlagch ekh (orchhulga, tailbar)* (Ulaanbaatar: Mongol Ulsiin Shinjelkh Ukhaanii Akademi Filosoifiin Khüreelen, 2016): 5–6 and under the title *Adistediin deediig khairlagch ekh (The Mother Bestowing the Highest Blessing)*.
32. Byambaa (2004): 43 mentions all three commentaries; Bira (1995): 5; D. Khorolbat, “Öndör geegen Zanabazariin tuurvisan maaniig büteekh gün arga büteeliin sudalгаа,” in *Aspects of Mongolian Buddhism 1. Past and Present*, edited by Attila Rákos (Budapest: L’Harmattan, 2018): 62; Sugar and Ad’shaa (2004): 79.
33. Byambaa (2004): 43 also provides the text consisting of twenty folios. See S. W. Tashigangpa, *The Collected Works of Ngag-dbang-mkhas-grub* (Delhi: Publisher unknown, 1974): volume *ka*. Bira resorted to Ganjuurva Nomon Khan’s commentary, which consists of six folios and belongs to the private collection of Sh. Soninbayar. Its title is *Byin rlabs mchog stsol ma’i ’grel pa bzhugs so*. Bira (1995): 5.
34. *Byang phyogs bskal lhag lha Yo gi Janabajras nyam thags ’gro rnam la skyes bskur stsol ba’i dus bstun gsol ’debs byin rlabs mchog stsol ma’i brjod don bsam ’phel nor bu snang ba’i thabs su spos me’i snang ba lta bu’i brjod tho bkod pa bzhugs so*. The same commentary is mentioned by Sugar and Ad’shaa by its shorter Mongolian title. See Sugar and Ad’shaa (2004): 79. The original Tibetan title of the text is not given here.
35. Byambaa (2004): 8, item 00008.
36. It is a special characteristic of tantric Buddhism that everyday objects or offerings are transformed into offerings of pure quality. In the same way, actions of everyday life, like eating, are transformed, too. Therefore, eating can be considered a way of offering, and the food consumed an offering (*takhil*, Tib. *mchod pa*).
37. Lokesh Chandra (1982): folios 590–592 (according to the numbering of the original text, folios 20B–21B).
38. *Om las bgrang yas ma*, in *Khal kha rje btsun dam pa sku phreng rim byon gyi gsung ’bum*. TBRC W2DB25419 (Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia: R. Byambaa, 2004), 1: 104–106. [http://tbc.org/link?RID=O2DB25419|O2DB25419C2O0012\\$W2DB25419](http://tbc.org/link?RID=O2DB25419|O2DB25419C2O0012$W2DB25419). The Tibetan text is also available in the appendix to a new publication by Myagmarsüren (2018). For several modern Mongolian editions of the Tibetan versions, see B. Soronzonbold (ed.), *Khüree kharanga magtaal* (Ulaanbaatar: Soyombo, 2016): 208; and for the published editions of the collected works of Öndör Geegen Zanabazar, see R. Byambaa (ed.), *Collected Works of Jebtsundampa khutukhtus of Khalkha. I. Rje btzun dam pa blo bzang bstan pa’i rgyal mtshan, II. Rje btzun dam pa blo bzang bstan pa’i sgron me, III. Rje btzun dam pa ye shes bstan pa’i nyi ma*, Vol. 1 (Ulaanbaatar: Private publication, 2003).
39. Myagmarsüren (2018): 41.
40. So far, I have been unable to find a commentary on this text. Therefore, the analysis given here is based on the oral explanation given to me by Ts. Mönkh-Erdene, which was recorded in October of 2017 in Mongolia (*Umlai daye*, October 25, 2017, 00:18:36).

41. Byambaa (2004): 43, 00096; 44, 00097. For an explanation of this text I resorted to the article by Khorolbat lama and on the explanation by Ts. Mönkh-Erdene lama of Dashchoilin Monastery of Ulaanbaatar, and the *Maan' düwtaw sawmu* explanation of the text by Ts. Mönkh-Erdene lama, recorded October 26, 2017, 00:49:46.).
42. Khorolbat (2018): 61.
43. Khorolbat (2018): 61.
44. This was often told to me during my fieldwork carried out in 2016 and 2017 on Mongolian after-death rites and related texts by the lamas interviewed on their ritual practice.
45. Khorolbat (2018): 61.
46. Khorolbat (2018): 65.
47. Khorolbat (2018): 61, and an oral explanation given by Mönkh-Erdene lama.
48. The symbol consists of seven syllables and an additional three elements combined together. It is visualized in the generation stage of the *Kālacakratantra* practice in the form in which it was originally carved by Tāranātha (1575–1634).
49. For translating the Tibetan text, I consulted the version available at the BDRC collection: *ma ni'i sgrub thabs zab mo*. In *khal kha rje btsun dam pa sku phreng rim byon gyi gsung 'bum*. TBRC W2DB25419 (Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia: r. byambaa, 2004), 1: 232–240. [http://tbr.org/link?RID=O2DB25419|O2DB25419C2O0094\\$W2DB25419](http://tbr.org/link?RID=O2DB25419|O2DB25419C2O0094$W2DB25419). I also used the publication of Öndör Gegeen's collected works published by Lokesh Chandra: Lokesh Chandra (1982) (according to the numbering of the original text, folio 84B–88B). The text is also available in the modern editions of the collected works of Öndör Gegeen Zanabazar, for example in the appendix of the newly published Mongolian translation of his works by Myagmarsüren (2018): 242–244; it was also published recently in a new edition of various ritual texts by Soronzonbold and Pürevsükh (2015): 668–671.
50. Myagmarsüren (2018): 163–167.
51. Khorolbat (2018).
52. “*Mani badmegiin magad utga.*” *Öndör gegeen Zanabazariin aildsan khoyor günggii uwdis tüünii tailbar*. The author, year, and publisher unknown.
53. Khorolbat (2018): 61–62 mentions all four commentaries.
54. Tib. Ye shes rdo rje is Öndör Gegeen's monastic name.
55. Tib. Ye shes bstan pa'i nyi ma was the third Jebtsundampa (1758–1773). The title of the text mentions this as the name of the text's author.
56. The analysis of the text's structure is based on the commentary by Agvaandorj *tsorj* of Ikh Khüree taken from Khorolbat (2018): 66–69, and on the explanation of the text given by Ts. Mönkh-Erdene lama.
57. The names of the parts of the *soyombo* symbol are as follows: Tib. *me*, Mong. *gal* (“fire”); Tib. *nyi ma*, Mong. *Nar* (“sun”); Tib. *zla ba*, Mong. *sar* (“moon”); Tib. *chos 'byung*, Mong. *Choinjün* (“the source of phenomena”); Tib. *mda'*, Mong. *Süm* (“arrow”); Tib. *e waṃ*, Mong. *evam* (“thus”); Tib. *nyis shad*, Mong. *khos shad* (“double perpendicular stroke”). The parts of the last letter, called *norov badam tamga*, (“jewel lotus seal”), are the following: Tib. *nor bu*, Mong. *Norov* (“jewel”); Tib. *padme*, Mong.

- Badam* (“lotus”); Tib. *nyis shad*, Mong. *khos shad* (“double perpendicular stroke”). See Mönkh-Erdene (2004): 21–25. Many of these parts are mentioned in the text.
58. Tib. *sgo gsum* (“the three doors”) are the body, speech, and mind.
 59. Tib. *dus ngan*, “bad time/crisis/degenerate time.”
 60. Tib. *thugs dam* (“tutelary gods”).
 61. Tib. *gnyan*, deities of the land, earth, or mountains.
 62. Tib. *rgyal bstan*.
 63. The accumulations of merit and knowledge.
 64. Tib. *chos dbyings* (Skt. *dharmadhātu*).
 65. Tib. *rab 'byams* designates the highest rank of a monastic and a scholastic degree in Buddhist philosophy.
 66. Tib. *'bru gsum* stands for the three mantric syllables *om̐ āḥ hūṃ*.
 67. Tib. *rtsa brgyud bla ma*.
 68. Tib. *yi dam zhi khro*.
 69. Tib. *rgyal ba'i dkyil 'khor* (the *maṇḍala* of the Five Buddhas or Victorious Ones).
 70. Tib. *gnas gsum* (“three places,” “three abodes,” or “three worlds”): the head (body), the throat (speech), and the heart (mind).
 71. Tib. *phyi dang nang gzhan* (Mong. *gadaad khiigeed dotnii busad*) literally means “outer, inner, and other”; it stands for Tib. *phyi nang gsang* (Mongolian *gadaad dotno nuuts*), which means “outer, inner, and secret.”
 72. Tib. *mar gyur 'gro ba*.
 73. Tib. *srung ma*.
 74. Tib. *mi shis rgud pa*; probably the correct form is *mi shes rgud pa*, as Tib. *mi shis* means “inauspicious” or “bad luck.” Hence, the term would mean “a decline of inauspiciousness,” while with Tib. *mi shes* (“ignorance”), the translation makes more sense, as “a degeneration of ignorance.” The only known modern Mongolian translation by Myagmarsüren reads: “*ül medekh doroitol*” (“the degeneration of ignorance”); the oral explanation given by Mönkh-Erdene lama reads: “*ül medekhiin munkhag*” (“the stupidity of ignorance”).
 75. Tib. *Lo ki sva rā ya*.
 76. Tib. *skyabs sems*, the abbreviation of Tib. *skyabs 'gro sems bskyed* (“taking refuge and arousing *bodhicitta*”); Mong. *avral (oduulakh) / itgel, setgel / bod' setgel üüsgekh*.
 77. Tib. *tshad bzhi* is an abbreviation for *tshad med bzhi*; Mong. *dörvön tsaglashgüi*.
 78. Tib. *thabs shes*.
 79. Tib. *dus 'khor, dus kyi 'khor lo*; Mong. *Düinkhor*.
 80. Tib. *bde dgyes gsang* stands for the following three deities: *Bde mchog* (Skt. *Cakrasaṃvara*; Mong. *Demchig*), *Kye'i rdo rje* (Mong. *Jedor*; Skrt. *Hevajra*), and *Gsang 'dus* (Mong. *Sandui*; Skrt. *Guhyasamāja*).
 81. Tib. *sgyu dra rid*; Mong. *khuvilgaan tor, ilbiin tor*, “net of illusions.”
 82. Tib. *Ma ya*.
 83. Tib. *Gshin rje'i gshed*; Mong. *Yamandag, Erlegiin daisan*; Skrt. *Yamāntaka* or *Vajrabhairava*.
 84. Tib. *Rta mchog dbang*; Mong. *Khayankhirvaa*.
 85. Tib. *Yum chen mo*
 86. Tib. *phyag chen*; Mong. *makhamudra*; Skrt. *mahāmudrā*.

87. Tib. *shin tu rnal 'byor*; Mong. *mashid yegüzer*; Skrt. *Atiyoga*, “the yoga of the innermost essence.”
88. Tib. *sangs rgyas mnyam sbyor*, the abbreviation for *sangs rgyas thams cad mnyam par sbyor ba'i rgyud*.
89. Tib. *dbu ma*, Skrt. *Madhyamaka*, the Middle Way School.
90. Tib. *Rdo rje sems*; Mong. *Bazarsad*.
91. Tib. *Rdo rje 'chang*; Mong. *Ochirdary*.
92. Tib. *bla ma'i rnal 'byor*; Mong. *bagshiin yegüzer*, or *lamiin iog*.
93. Tib. *dnogs grub*, Skrt. *Siddhi*, “accomplishments, attainments.”
94. Tib. *rten la brten pa bzhugs* (“sitting firm supported by the support”) means that the *soyombo* symbol explained in this work also relates to the Buddhas and their *maṇḍalas*.
95. Tib. *rten dang brten pa* (“the support and supported”) refers to the residence and its resident, the structure and inhabitants, and in this case, to a *maṇḍala* and its deities.
96. Tib. *nor bu*; Mong. *erdene, chandmaan'*.
97. Tib. *dang po'i sangs rgyas*.
98. Tib. *chos 'byung*; Mong. *Choinjün*; also a name of a component of the *soyombo* symbol.
99. Tib. *dpa'*, “hero.”
100. Tib. *shes bcu*, an abbreviation for *ye shes bcu*.
101. Tib. *gsang sngags rgyal drug*.
102. Tib. *rgyal ba rigs drug*, an abbreviated name for the Six *buddhas*.
103. Tib. *rgyal sras*.
104. Tib. *sgrib*.
105. Tib. *yig drug* relates to the *om maṇi padme hūṃ mantra*.
106. Tib. *rdzogs rim*; Mong. *tögsöliin zereg*.
107. Tib. *bde ba can*; Mong. *Divaajin*, Skrt. *Sukhāvātī*.
108. Tib. *sa lam* (“the grounds and paths”), the five paths and the ten Bodhisattva Grounds (Skrt. *bhūmi*).

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