



The contents of the rDzogs chen murals of the *klu khang* in Lhasa

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On a little island in the lake behind the Potala we find a three-story temple. Its location and function are expressed in its formal name: *rDzong rgyab kyi klu khang*, which literally means the “Nâga House Behind The Fortress”. Following the construction of the Potala in the second half of the 17th century, a lake was created following the extraction of building material. To pacify the disturbed *nâgas* the Fifth Dalai Lama, Blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617–82) promised to satisfy them by building a temple as a place for regular *pûjâs*. It is said that he used the small artificial island in the lake for retreat. Later a temple dedicated to the *nâgas* was built on this island.

In its present condition, in the *klu khang* we find marvelous murals with unique depictions of the Great Perfection tradition (rDzogs chen) in the top floor. The parts I have been able to identify so far are based on Padma gling pa 's (1445–1521) *gter ma* called rDzogs chen kun bzang dgongs pa kun 'dus. I will examine the arrangement of the illustrations and their relationship to the literary sources by collating them with the inscriptions in the murals.