

## Articles

### A LIST OF ABBOTS OF KAḤ-THOG MONASTERY ACCORDING TO HANDWRITTEN NOTES BY THE LATE KATOK ONTUL

*Helmut Eimer and Pema Tsering*

In his article "A Tibetan Antiquarian in the XVIIIth Century," *Bulletin of Tibetology*, IV, No. 3 (Gangtok), 1967 (hereafter "Antiquarian"), p. 7, Hugh E. Richardson refers, amongst other things, to some written information by the present Kaḥ-thog Dbon-sprul-sku (Katok Ontul, died before 1970). When he heard that we were preparing a paper on the abbots and teachers of Kaḥ-thog monastery, he sent us these notes, which were most probably composed in 1967, and kindly permitted us to use them for publication. We express our deep gratitude for this generosity.

The notes are written in *dbu-can* on five sheets of approx. 17.8 to 22.6 cm; two of them (numbered 1 and 2, hereafter T 1 and T 2) deal with the life of Rig-'dzin Tshe-dbañ-nor-bu, the other three (numbered 1 to 3, hereafter H 1, H 2 and H 3) give a brief survey of the history of Kaḥ-thog monastery including a list of 41 names of abbots. This list attracted our special interest, because it contains a number of names that are not found in the materials used in preparing our paper "Aebte und Lehrer von Kaḥ thog. Eine erste Uebersicht zur Geschichte eines Rñiñ ma pa-Klosters in Derge/Khams", *Zentralasiatische Studien*, 13 (1979), pp. 457-509 (hereafter "Aebte").

The following paper is intended to give the 41 names from the handwritten notes of Katok Ontul in comparison with the materials already known. The notes represent a tradition divergent from that in the other accessible sources. This can be seen from the different dates assigned to the foundation of Kaḥ-thog monastery: Kaḥ-dam-pa Bde-gšegs was born in the year *chu-stag*, i.e. the 36th year of the second cycle; he founded the monastery in the year *sa-mo-yos*, i.e. the 13th year of the third *rab-byuñ*, namely in 1159 (see e.g. "Aebte", p. 489), whereas Katok Ontul puts the year *sa-yos* in the second cycle (H 1, lines 6-7), thus dating the foundation sixty years earlier, namely in 1099. Since—according to the notes (T 1, lines 6-8)—600 years elapsed from the foundation of the monastery down to the birth of Rig-'dzin Tshe-dbañ-nor-bu, we cannot attribute this difference to a simple mistake made by Katok Ontul, we must consider it a part of the—presumably oral—tradition he wrote down.

The list of names opens with the words:

kaḥ-thog rañ-gi gdan-sar, gtso-che-ba'i bla-ma ñuñ-bsdus-žig žu-na. . . (H 2, lines 5-6)

"[Now follows]—if it is permitted—a comprehensive [list of] the foremost Lamas on the see of Kaḥ-thog proper . . ."

The position of the names in the list is indicated by numerals appearing above the first letters of each name; the name of Rig-'dzin Tshe-dbañ-nor-bu is marked by a canopy above it. No further information is enclosed in this list (H 2, line 6-H 3, line 1). In the following we give the names from the list with their respective numbers; additional notes are drawn from other sources as indicated in parentheses.

1. Kaḥ-dam-pa Bde-gšegs

Sga-dam-pa, Sga-dam-pa Bder-gšegs, Dam-pa Bder-gšegs Šes-rab (-señ-ge), Bde(r)-gšegs, Ses-rab(-señ-ge) ("Aebte", pp. 499-509, *svv.*); 1122-1192, founded Kaḥ-thog in 1159 ("Aebte", pp. 489 and 463-470); a sketch of his life is given by Katok Ontul (H 1, lines 1-15); on the different dates for the foundation of Kaḥ-thog monastery see above.

2. Chos-rje Btsañ-bston

Rje, Rgyal-tshab Chos-rje Gtsañ-ston Rdo-rje-rgyal-mtshan ("Aebte", pp. 466 [note 3] and 489); 1126-1215, met Kaḥ-dam-pa Bde-gšegs about 1142 ("Aebte", p. 470); his birth-place is known as Gtsañ-žal (*loc. cit.*).

3. Byams-pa-'bum

Rgyal-tshab Byams-pa-'bum-pa ("Aebte", p. 489); 1179-1252, entered office as abbot in 1226; between the second and third abbots the see may have been vacant for about a dozen years ("Aebte", p. 463).

4. Spyān-sña Rin-chen

Spyān-sña Bsod-nams-'bum-pa, Bsod-nams-'bum pa ("Aebte", pp. 463 and 471); 1223-1283, entered office in 1252 ("Aebte", p. 463).

5. Žañ-ston-pa

6. Ye-šes-'bum-pa

Dbu-'od Ye-šes-'bum-pa ("Aebte", p. 472).

7. Yon-tan Ye-šes-'bum

8. Byañ-chub-rdo-rje

9. Señha-gu-ru

10. Badzra-šrī

This name could refer to Rmog-ston Rdo-rje-dpal-bzañ ("Aebte", p. 475), who was a pupil of Ye-šes-rgyal-mtshan, i.e. number 13 of the list.

11. Bhu-ddha-bha-tra

A faulty transliteration of Sanskrit Buddhahadra.

12. Bkra-(š)is-bla-ma

13. Ye-šes-rgyal-mtshan

Bu-'bor Mkhas-grub Dzñā-na-ke-tu, Mkhas-grub Ye-šes-rgyal-mtshan ("Aebte", p. 475); presumably XVIth century ("Aebte", p. 464).

14. Nam-mkha'-rgyal-mtshan

This name could refer to Lab-ston Nam-mkha'-rin-chen, the second abbot of the *druñ* lineage of Kaḥ-thog ("Aebte", p. 476), or to Nam-mkha'-rgya-mtsho, a pupil of Ye-šes-rgyal-mtshan ("Aebte", p. 475).

15. Kun-dga'-zla-ba

A pupil of Ye-šes-rgyal-mtshan ("Aebte", p. 475).

16. Bsod-rnam-rgyal-mtshan

17. Chos-dbañ-pa

18. Bsod-rnam-rdo-rje
  19. Brtan-pa Siṅge
  20. Bkra-(ś)is-rin-chen
  21. Rin-chen-rdo-rje
  22. Nam-mkha'-mkhan
  23. [Nam-mkha'-]slob (rnamṅas gñis)
  24. Rig-'dzin Bdud-'dul-rdo-rje  
Kun-dga'-bsod-nams-chos-'phags, Gter-ston Rig-'dzin Bdud-'dul-rdo-rje, Bdud-'dul-rdo-rje, 1615-1672 ("Aebte", pp. 478-481).
  25. Kloṅ-gsal-sñiṅ-po  
Gter-ston Rig-'dzin-chen-po Kloṅ-gsal-sñiṅ-po, Dbañ-drag-rgya-mtsho, O-rgyan Mdo-sṅags-gliṅ-pa, Hūṃ Gnam-mkha'i-rdo-rje, 1625-1692 ("Aebte", p. 482-483).
  26. Bsod-rnam-lde'u-btsan  
Bsod-nams-lde'u-btsan, Kaḥ-thog-rgyal-sras Bsod-nams-lde'u-btsan, 1672/73-1721/22 (or 1723), son of Kloṅ-gsal-sñiṅ-po, incarnation of Bdud-'dul-rdo-rje ("Aebte", p. 485).
  27. Dri-med Žiṅ-skyoṅ-mgon-po  
Born 1722 or 1723; his next incarnation was Rig-'dzin-mgon-po, i.e. number 31 of this list ("Aebte", p. 485).
  28. 'Gyur-med Tshe-dbañ-mchog-grub  
Kaḥ-thog-panḍita 'Gyur-med Tshe-dbañ-mchog-grub, born about 1764 ("Aebte", p. 485).
  29. Kun-bzañ-ṅes-don-dbañ-po  
Born in Phyag-tsha Dbon-tshañ ("Aebte", p. 491).
  30. Rig-'dzin Tshe-dbañ-nor-bu  
Rig-'dzin-chen-po Tshe-dbañ-nor-bu, 1698-1755 ("Aebte", pp. 485-486), a sketch of his life is given by Richardson, "Antiquarian", and by Pema Tsering, "Historische, epische und ikonographische Aspekte des Gliṅ Gesar nach tibetischen Quellen", *Die Mongolischen Epen. Bezuege, Sinndeutung und Ueberlieferung*. Wiesbaden 1979. (Asiatische Forschungen. 68.), p. 163 note 9.
  31. Rig-'dzin 'Jigs-med-mgon-po  
Incarnation of Dri-med Žiṅ-skyoṅ-mgon-po ("Aebte", p. 485).
  32. 'Jigs-bral Chos-dbyiṅs-rdo-rje  
Incarnation of Rmög-grub Rin-po-che ("Aebte", p. 487).
  33. 'Gyur-med Chos-dbyiṅs-rañ-grol
  34. Kun-mkhyen Chos-kyi-blo-gros  
Si-tu-mchog-sprul Chos-kyi-blo-gros, died c. 1880 ("Aebte", p. 486).
  35. 'Jigs-med-yon-tan-mgon-po
  36. Rig-'dzin 'Jam-dpal-rdo-rje
  37. Si-tu Chos-kyi-rgya-mtsho  
Kun-gzigs Si-tu Chos-kyi-rgya-mtsho-mchog, 1880-1925 ("Aebte", pp. 486-487).
  38. Mkhan-chen Ṅag-gi-dbañ-po  
Ṅag-dbañ-dpal-bzañ, 1879-1941 ("Aebte", pp. 487-488), his autobiography
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has been published as *The Autobiographical Reminiscences of Ngag-dbang-dpal-bzang, Late Abbot of Kaḥ-thog Monastery*. Gangtok 1969. (The Ngagyur Nyingmay Sungrab, I.).

39. Dge-tse 'Gyur-med-bstan-pa-rnam-rgyal

40. Rje Dbon Padma-rgyal-mtshan

41. Mkhan-chen Legs-bśad-'byor-ldan

He participated in a *luñ* and *dbañ* of the *Rin-chen-gter-mdzod* presided over by the Dpal-yul-mchog-sprul Rin-po-che in the presence of important abbots and incarnations from the neighbouring monasteries; this was observed by Pema Tsering—a young monk at that time—in Dpal-yul monastery.

It is obvious that the list—or at least the latter portion of it—is not arranged in chronological order: as number 28 figures 'Gyur-med Tshe-dbañ-mchog-grub (born about 1764); as number 30 appears Rig-'dzin Tshe-dbañ-nor-bu, who was born 1696, i.e. more than sixty-five years earlier. This leads us to the question of the organizing principle behind the list of the 41 names. According to the notes of Katok Ontul, in the first six centuries of Kaḥ-thog monastery there were three lineages of important teachers (T 1, lines 5-6): the thirteen members of the *bla-rabs*—presumably identical with the *rgyal-tshab* line ("Aebte", p. 462)—, the thirteen members of the *druñ-rabs* and the thirteen members of the *rmog-rabs*. If all the members of these three lineages had been recorded, the list covering the first 600 years—i.e. up to number 30, Rig-'dzin Tshe-dbañ-nor-bu—would contain at least 39 names and not 29. The thirteen *rgyal-tshab* of the literary tradition are known by name, but the personal dates are given for the first six members of this line only ("Aebte", pp. 463 and 489-490); the *druñ* line is counted up to its ninth member; a list of the *rmog* teachers is not known to us. We have to wait for further material to solve the problem.

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