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Perspectives on Tibetan Culture

A Small Garland of Forget-me-nots
Offered to Elena De Rossi Filibeck

Edited by

Michela Clemente, Oscar Nalesini
and Federica Venturi



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PERSPECTIVES ON TIBETAN CULTURE

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Elena De Rossi Filibeck in Ladakh, 2005.

Photo: Courtesy of Beatrice Filibeck

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Introduction

This volume originated as the initiative of two former students of Elena De Rossi Filibeck, Michela Clemente and Federica Venturi, and of Oscar Nalesini, who collaborated with her on several projects over the years, in order to celebrate her as a teacher, colleague and dear friend. The result is this tome, which combines the efforts of many of Professor Filibeck's students, who wanted to thank her for directing their first steps in the field of Tibetology, and of some of her closest colleagues, who gladly presented a piece in appreciation of her friendship, warmth and genuine fellowship through the years.

The career of Elena De Rossi Filibeck began and developed at the Department of Oriental Studies of the University of Rome "La Sapienza", where she graduated in East Asian History in 1971, under the supervision of Professor Luciano Petech (1914-2010). Successively she became a researcher and then an Associate Professor in the same department, where she taught the history and culture of Tibet to several generations of students, from those toting the Red Book of Mao in the 1970s, to the iPhone generation in the 21st century. Her research has covered different aspects of Tibetan culture, particularly focusing on history, religious geography, codicology, philology, and more recently Ladakhi studies. She participated in the international study project carried out by the Institut für Tibet- und Buddhismuskunde of the University of Vienna in collaboration with IsMEO and travelled to Tabo (Spiti, Himachal Pradesh, India) with the aim of assessing a number of ancient manuscripts, texts and inscriptions found in the monastery there.

She also took part in several research projects and initiatives at the University of Rome "La Sapienza", some involving cooperation with other universities in Italy, such as the research project on "Passions and emotions in the civilizations of India and Tibet" (De Rossi Filibeck 2009). In recent years she has organized several conferences in the field. Notable among them are the 13th Colloquium of the International Association for Ladakh Studies (IALS), convened in Rome in 2007 together with John Bray (Bray and De Rossi Filibeck 2009); a conference on Tibetan art (De Rossi Filibeck 2012) and the international symposium on the occasion of the centennial anniversary of Professor Luciano Petech, which she convened in 2014 (De Rossi Filibeck *et al.*, 2016).

Her most important contributions to the field of Tibetology remain the catalogues of the manuscripts and xylographs preserved in the Tucci Tibetan Collection of the Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente (IsMEO, later renamed Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente, IsIAO) in Rome. The work began in 1979, when Professor Petech started an initial sorting of the texts. Soon, he asked Professor Filibeck and Dr. Ramon Prats to collaborate with him. In addition, he

enlisted the cooperation of Lama Ati 'Jam dpal seng ge (1914-1981), who had already started to work on the collection some years earlier. After a few months, Dr. Prats had to give up on this task and Professor Filibeck started to shoulder most of the work. At the end of 1980 she took over full charge and responsibility. The results of her painstaking work have been issued in two volumes, *Catalogue of the Tucci Tibetan Fund in the Library of IsMEO, Volume 1* and *Catalogue of the Tucci Tibetan Fund in the Library of IsIAO, Volume 2*, respectively published in 1994 and 2003.

However, even more than her commendable research and publications, Professor Filibeck should be acclaimed for having created a “Roman school” of Tibetologists. Her humanity shows in the care and affection she has demonstrated in her students’ regards, in her desire to see them grow, help them and encourage them when she saw they had passion and ability. Thus, there are now numerous younger scholars, in Italy and elsewhere, that were first introduced to the alluring world of Tibetan culture by her. For this, we especially want to thank her.

A few editorial decisions should be made clear. The articles have not been fully rendered uniform in all their aspects. We have decided to leave a fair amount of latitude to individual authors, and thus items such as the use of italics for honorific titles, or the plurals of Tibetan and Sanskrit titles have been left to the personal preferences of each author. We trust that this will not cause too much discomfort for the readers.

Also, this volume is not divided thematically. As the subjects of the articles are especially varied, we have decided to present them simply in alphabetical order by the author’s last name. Among the topics discussed may be found art, history, Buddhism, Bon, medicine, explorations of Tibet, iconography, religious geography, and other sub-fields. Any reader captivated by the subject of Tibetan studies at large should be able to find something of interest by perusing the table of contents. Naturally, we hope that Professor Filibeck will find them all appealing, and we heartily wish her many years of continued success.

The editors would like to thank Dr. Jean-Luc Achard for helping us finalize this project. We also wish to thank Roberto Vitali for his continued support in this enterprise and Beatrice Filibeck for sneaking photos from her mother’s computer in order to provide us with the image of Elena De Rossi Filibeck reproduced here.

The Editors,
Michela Clemente, Oscar Nalesini and Federica Venturi

Tabula Gratulatoria

Marina Battaglini	Bruno Lo Turco
Alessandro Boesi	Christian Luczanits
John Bray	Filippo Lunardo
Katia Buffetrille	Francesco Maniscalco
Patrizia Cannata	Petra Maurer
Roberto Ciarla	Beniamino Melasecchi
Michela Clemente	Marcello Messana
Alice Crisanti	Fabio Miarelli
Mauro Crocenzi	Giorgio Milanetti
Cristoph Cüppers	Luca Milasi
Olaf Czaja	Oscar Nalesini
Patrizia Dadò	Jampa Panglung
Francesco D'Arelli	Margherita Pansa
Federica Delia	Marco Passavanti
Cristina Delvecchio	Fiorella Rispoli
Daniela De Palma	Adriano V. Rossi
Hildegard Diemberger	Donatella Rossi
Franz-Karl Ehrhard	Fabian Sanders
Helmut Eimer	Paolo Santangelo
Beatrice Filibeck	Arcangela Santoro
Giacomo Filibeck	Cristina Scherrer-Schaub
Gregorio Filibeck	Peter Schwieger
Irene Filibeck	Marta Sernesi
Camillo A. Formigatti	Elliot Sperling
Elisa Freschi	Ernst Steinkellner
Amy Heller	Helmut Tauscher
Christian Jahoda	Francis Tiso
Deborah Klimburg-Salter	Raffaele Torella
Per Kvaerne	Kurt Tropper
Alessandra Lazzari	Helga Uebach
Chiara Letizia	Federica Venturi
Erberto Lo Bue	Roberto Vitali

ELENA DE ROSSI FILIBECK'S PUBLICATIONS

Books and articles

1976

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1977

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1978

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1980

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1983

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1984

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1988

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1990

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2010

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2014

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2015

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“*DBYAR RTSWA DGUN 'BU* IS A MARVELLOUS THING”
SOME NOTES ON THE CONCEPT OF *OPHIOCORDYCEPS*
SINENSIS AMONG TIBETAN PEOPLE AND ITS
SIGNIFICANCE IN TIBETAN MEDICINE*

ALESSANDRO BOESI

Milan, Italy

Introduction

dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu, “summer grass – winter worm”, is diffused over a large part of the Tibetan plateau and the Himalayan mountains. Tibetans have likely known it since ancient times and have seen it as a worm transforming into a kind of grass. Modern biologists identify *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* as *Ophiocordyceps sinensis*, a parasitizing fungus attacking the larva of a moth species.

One of the first western travellers to report on the collection and trade of *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* on the Tibetan plateau was William W. Rockhill,¹ who crossed the eastern part of the Tibetan plateau between 1891 and 1892. Ernest H. Wilson,² who travelled in today Sichuan province at the beginning of the 20th century, also reported, in his book chapter devoted to illustrating Chinese *materia medica*, that *Ophiocordyceps sinensis* was at that time “a valued product of the western uplands, where it is found from 12,000 to 15,000 feet altitude”.

In Tibet *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* has been used mostly as tonic and aphrodisiac both in the local “science of healing” and at the popular level, i.e. among people who do not practise medicine but know how to use some substances that they buy or themselves collect in the wild. Its features and qualities have been described in a number of medical treatises composed from the 15th to the end of pre-modern Tibet in the early 20th century, and also in more recent Tibetan *materia medica* and formularies. Tibetans have highly prized this natural product for its religious and medical significance, and recently also for its commercial value. For several centuries, but particularly in the last few decades, *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* has become one of the principal trade items and

* I am very pleased and honoured to have been invited to contribute an article for this book devoted to celebrating the career of Professor Elena De Rossi Filibeck. It was a great opportunity for me to work with her on several projects concerning the Tucci Tibetan Collection in Rome, and I look forward to the pleasure of working with her again in the future.

1 See Rockhill 1894: 361.

2 Wilson 1913: 39.

source of income for local communities, being mainly collected and traded for the Chinese market.³ Owing to the recent rapid increase of the standard of living in China, market demand for natural products used in Chinese medicine and as dietary supplements, principally the ones considered to have peculiar properties as aphrodisiacs and tonics, has dramatically augmented. The result of this trend is that the use of *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* has been constantly increasing among the Chinese and has also made inroads in several other Asian countries, as well as in Europe and America. That is the reason why its price has been skyrocketing and the amount of this natural product collected in the mountain areas of Tibet keeps increasing.

This article aims at examining the Tibetan understanding of *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* among both educated and non-educated people, particularly gatherers, traders, and Tibetan medical practitioners, and at elucidating its significance in Tibetan medicine. In the first part I will examine the way Tibetans describe this element, conceive of its transformation process and life, and attribute symbolic value to it. In the second part I will survey the popular use of *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* and its description and classification in Tibetan medical treatises.⁴

Ophiocordyceps sinensis

Ophiocordyceps is a genus of ascomycete fungi belonging to the family Ophiocordycipitaceae (formerly Clavicipitaceae), which includes species parasitic mainly on insects and other arthropods. These types of fungi are thus named entomophagous (feeding on insects) fungi. *Ophiocordyceps sinensis* (Berk.) G. H. Sung, J. M. Sung, Hywel-Jones & Spatafora⁵ is an insect-parasitizing fungus living on lepidopterous (butterflies and moth) larvae. It attacks and grows on caterpillars, specifically on larvae from the genus *Thitarodes* (Hepialidae, Lepidoptera). *Ophiocordyceps sinensis* thrives from 3,000 to 5,000 meters above sea level, in cold, grassy, alpine meadows of the Tibetan Autonomous Region, as well as Sichuan,

3 See Boesi 2003; Boesi & Cardi 2009; Winkler 2005; Winkler 2008; Winkler 2008a.

4 The field data shown in this article were primarily collected during two research trips conducted in Li thang County (Sichuan, PRC). The first extended from April to September 1999, the second from May to August 2000. Research methods included participant observation and open-ended conversations with the people involved in the gathering, utilization, and trading of *Ophiocordyceps sinensis*, and with Tibetan doctors. Interviews to Tibetan medical practitioners from lower Mustang District (Nepal) and from Kathmandu (Nepal) Kun phan Tibetan Medical Centre were also carried out in July-August 2001, May 2012 and 2014. Brief interviews were conducted with Tibetan doctors from Dar rtse (Dar mdo County Sichuan, China), 'Ba 'thang ('Ba 'thang County, Sichuan, China), and Reb kong County (Huangnan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai, China). Excerpts of classic and modern treatises of Tibetan *materia medica* describing *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* were examined. The botanical identifications of the plants, when the reference is lacking, are based on the botanical specimens that the author collected in the field.

5 See Hywel-Jones *et al.* 2007.

Gansu, Qinghai, and Yunnan and in a few Nepalese, Bhutanese, and Indian areas of the Himalayas. The infected hosts, of which *T. armoricanus* (Oberthür) Ueda is the most commonly-mentioned species, live underground on the Tibetan plateau and Himalayan regions in the same areas where *O. sinensis* thrives, and they spend up to 5 years before pupating. The spores of *O. sinensis* are spread by the wind over the soil and onto plants, where they come into contact with *Thitarodes* larvae, particularly when the caterpillars emerge to feed on roots and herbaceous vegetation. Larvae were observed eating tender roots of alpine meadow species such as *Polygonum*, *Astragalus*, *Salix*, *Arenaria*, and *Rhododendron*.⁶ The caterpillars may either eat the spores or the spores lying on their bodies may germinate and enter their bodies through the mouth or the respiratory pores (two of them are present over each metamere). When *O. sinensis* attacks *T. armoricanus*, its mycelium invades the caterpillar's body, filling its cavity, killing the insect, and eventually completely replacing the host tissue. The dead caterpillar appears yellowish to brown in colour.

The cylindrical club-shaped fruiting body, 5-15 cm long and dark brown to black in colour, grows up from spring to early summer, protruding and developing out of the caterpillar's forehead. The stroma (mass of fungus tissue) bears many small, flask-shaped perithecia (fruiting bodies of ascomycetous fungi) that contain the asci (sacs in which the sexual spores are formed). According to Li *et al.* (1999), *O. sinensis* spores disperse and break up into 30-60 propagules, which attach themselves to the larval state of the insect; usually 15 days pass between spore dispersion and larval infection. In the Lithang area, where most of the fieldwork was conducted, the author observed *O. sinensis* between 4,000 and 4,500 meters of altitude in the alpine grasslands on the northern slopes of sPom ra, the mountain dominating Lithang town. The length of the larvae varied roughly from 3 to 6 centimetres. The length of the dry mushroom observed in the Lithang market spanned from 3 to 10 centimetres.

The Tibetan Concept of *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu*

Ophiocordyceps sinensis is an important ingredient of Chinese medical preparations, and according to some sources it has been known in China since ancient times.⁷ Yet *Ophiocordyceps sinensis* is present over a large part of the area traditionally inhabited by Tibetan populations,⁸ and, as far as it is known today, its citation in Tibetan medical treatises pre-dates by two centuries its mentioning in Chinese medical texts (see below). Thus it is highly probable that Tibetans were the first to notice this fungus thriving on the high pasturelands, examine its morphological traits, understand its biological features, discover its qualities and therapeutic properties, and attribute it a name, symbolic and religious values.

6 See Shen *et. al.* 1990.

7 For example, see Holliday & Cleaver 2008: 220.

8 See Winkler 2005: 71.

As Carla Nappi (2010: 27) put forward, the Chinese designation *dongchong xiacao*, which also translates as “summer-grass winter-worm”, may well represent a translation of the Tibetan term *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu*, and this medicinal fungus “may have been a Tibetan import into Chinese texts as a part of a Qing movement to translate Tibetan works in the 17th and 18th centuries. The court had established a Tibetan School (*Tanggute guanxue*) in 1657 to train scholars for translation works”. During this period the Qing had established strong contacts with the Tibetan elites and had increased their influence on Tibetan politics. Nappi (2010: 25) interestingly observed that in this period distant regions as today Sichuan and Yunnan Provinces, and what is now the Tibetan Autonomous Region, were becoming integral to the empire, and that the conquest and consolidation of these borderland regions was mirrored in Chinese medical texts by the integration of local medical drugs into the pharmacological canon. Thus *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* was possibly included into Chinese *materia medica* during this period, and it was sought for in China, particularly by the court, as testified by the request for *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* that the Qing emperor Kangxi (1662-1722) made to the 6th Dalai Lama (1683-1706), which will be discussed below.

Tibetan informants from the study areas, both educated and non educated, saw *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* as a single substance or phenomenon, which is subject to a metamorphosis occurring from the beginning of spring to the early summer. Its Tibetan designation reflects good knowledge of its life and seasonal changes based on observations in the field. In Lithang County and in the other regions visited the abbreviation *'bu*, commonly employed to designate many kinds of insects, worms, and maggots, is frequently used to indicate this product.

Tibetans believe that during winter (*dgun*) *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* lives as a worm (*'bu*) and that, after a metamorphosis occurring between the beginning of spring and early summer (*dbyar*), it changes into a kind of grass (*rtswa*). Tibetan people conceive the category *rtswa* as including all the various common grasses with narrow green leaves that are of little dimension and flexible nature, that are fixed to the ground by means of underground structures, and that are eaten by yaks, sheep, and goats.⁹ The aerial portion of this plant (the fruiting body of the fungus according to modern biology) is similar to a dry blade of grass as concerns size and general aspect. That is why the search for it over the high altitude meadows is a very difficult task, which requires concentration and patience.

Most informants described two distinct phases in the transformation process of *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu*. At the beginning, the “grass” starts growing from the head of the worm. At this stage the worm, whitish in colour, is still alive and it is possible to see it moving over the ground with a short horn (*rwa*) protruding from its head. Subsequently, with the advancing of the season, the horn continues in its growth until the worm dies. When the metamorphosis is completed, the worm, now brownish-

9 See Boesi 2004: 58.

yellow in colour, is transformed into the underground portion (*rtsa ba*) of a kind of grass (*rtswa*).

An interesting perspective of this metamorphosis, which may influence the gathering of the product, is that, whereas the worm (*'bu*) is considered as a living being (*srog chags*) since it has a conscious principle (*rnam shes*), the grass (*rtswa*) is not considered so. That is why several informants stated that they do not pluck *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* when the worm is still alive since the killing of sentient beings is a negative action and their karma would be badly affected. Therefore, several gatherers affirmed that when they find a worm that is still alive, they just leave it in the same spot without touching it. These ideas are also shared by ethnic Tibetan people living in the high Nepalese valleys. Sacherer (1979: 51-52) reported similar information obtained among the Sherpa people living in the Rolwaling valley in Nepal: “The Sherpa explain that this creature is in fact a worm in winter whose head becomes grass in summer at which time the half worm dies and can be gathered and utilised without sin...”. According to Childs & Choedup (2014: 12), “Traditionally, Tsum’s [Gorkha District] residents were reluctant to gather *yartsa gunbu* [even when the worm was dead] on the grounds that doing so constituted the killing of a living being. As a local saying goes, ‘Digging up one worm is equivalent to killing one fully ordained monk’”.

Concerning Tibetan medical texts, Zur mkhar ba mnyam nyid rdo rje seems to have written the first and most detailed description of *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu*’s place of growth, morphological features, and mode of life in his 15th century treatise.¹⁰ This information is similar to what I recorded during fieldwork. According to Zur mkhar ba mnyam nyid rdo rje,¹¹ “*dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* grows in remote mountain regions on dry grass covered mountains (*rtswa ri sgam po*),¹² in summer it is a blade of grass on a worm, similar to the leaf of mountain garlic (*ri sgog*),¹³ its flower resembles the

10 *rTsa ri sgam po sogs la kyi / ri bo dben pa 'i ldong [ljong] su skye / dbyar dus 'bu la lo ma 'i rtsa / ri sgog 'dab ma 'dra ba la / me tog a wa dar ljang 'dra / rtsa ba ston mjug go snyod 'dra*. See Zur mkhar ba mnyam nyid rdo rje 2005: 308-09.

11 The entire section of the *Man ngag bye ba ring bsrel pod chung rab 'byams gsal ba 'i sgron me*, devoted to describing *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu*, was translated by Jacob Winkler (see Winkler 2008a: 32-36).

12 *dByar rtswa dgun 'bu* starts developing in spring when growing season for most plants has not yet started, and dry herbaceous forbs and grasses from the previous year dominate the landscape.

13 Several types of wild garlic are recognized in Tibetan regions. Their classification, identification and nomenclature may vary from region to region, and village to village. According to De'u dmar dge shes bstan 'dzin phun tshogs's 17th century *Shel gong shel phreng* (2005: 356-357), seven types of wild *sgog pa* are differentiated, each type having its particular morphological traits, place of growth, and qualities: *ri sgog*, *brag sgog*, *'dzim nag*, *rgya sgog*, *klung sgog ke dzi*, *byi'u sgog* and *rug sgog*. According to dGa' ba' i rdo rje (1998: 288), *ri sgog* corresponds to *Allium atrosanguineum*, a species thriving in moist places between 2,400 and 5,400 m. in W Sichuan, NW Yunnan, Gansu, E and NW TAR (see Wu Z. G. *et al.* 1995-present: 165-202).

one of *a wa dar ljang*,¹⁴ and in autumn the root looks like the one of *Carum carvi* (*go snyod*).¹⁵ The majority of other Tibetan scholars and physicians mentioning this medicinal agent in their works mostly focused on its medical qualities and therapeutic action. Only rarely they do include brief information, often copied from Zur mkhar ba mnyam nyid rdo rje's work. For example, Cha har dge bshes Blo bzangs tshul khirms (1740-1810) in his medical treatise, after a description of morphology and mode of life likely inspired by Zur mkhar ba mnyam nyid rdo rje, wrote that *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* grows in mountain high altitude areas (*ri mtho sar skye ba*).¹⁶

Carla Nappi (2010: 25) mentioned the translation of an excerpt from one of the first Chinese texts¹⁷ describing *dongchong xiacao*, the 1848 *Zhiwu mingshi tukao*, a compendium of botanical knowledge.¹⁸ This detailed account shows that the understanding of this worm-plant features and mode of life is similar to the one explained by Zur mkhar ba mnyam nyid rdo rje and today's Tibetan informants: "In the winter it lives within the earth, its body like an old silkworm covered in hairs, and can move. In the summer it sheds its hairs, emerges from the surface of the soil, rotates its body and transforms into a plant. If it is not harvested, it returns to the earth in winter and transforms back into an insect...Its root is like a silkworm, its leaves look like the young sprouts of an herb". Accounts made by traders coming from Tibet

14 *A wa dar ljang* represents a variety of the plant named *a wa*. This type is mentioned in De'u dmar dge shes bstan dzin: phun tshogs's *Shel gong shel phreng* (2005: 296-297). According to him, three varieties of *a wa* may be distinguished: *bdud rtsi a wa*, the best one; *a wa dar ljang*, the medium quality one; and *a 'dra*, the low quality one. *A wa dar ljang* is described as similar to a thread. Two sub-varieties of it are distinguished: a female one (*mo*), which is similar to threads for fine silken garments and has a whitish flower, and a male (*pho*) one, which does not have flower. To my knowledge botanical identifications of these varieties are not available yet. According to *Zhongguo kexueyuan xibe gaoyuan shengwu yanjiusuo* (1991: 460-46) *A wa* corresponds to *Lloydia serotina* (Liliaceae) and to *Hippochaete ramosissima* (= *Equisetum ramosissimum*). Interestingly, the latter is often a creeping and climbing plant that might be associated to a thread.

15 Tibetans know well this plant, which grows all over Tibetan regions. Samples of its roots are in some way similar to what Tibetans conceive as *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* roots, which is what remains of the moth's larvae.

16 Blo bzangs tshul khirms 2007: 48.

17 What is indicated today as *Ophiocordyceps sinensis* is mentioned for the first time in Chinese texts around the middle of the 18th century. According to Nappi (2010: 24-25), a brief account of it appears in the *Sichuan Tongzhi* of 1731, a local gazetteer that was later republished in the *Siku Quanshu* compendium (The Emperor's four treasures) in 1782. It was described for the first time in Chinese medical treatises in 1751, particularly in the *Bencao congxin* (A compendium of *materia medica*) in a short account that was elaborated in subsequent pharmacological texts (see Wu 1990: 26). Nappi (2010:24-25) adds that some authors have argued that the first recorded instance of *dongchong xiacao* was in the *Bencao beiyao* in 1694. This attribution is, according to her, a mistake since the drug appears not in the original *Bencao beiyao*, but in a later revision of the text by Hong Yuan called *Zengpi bencao beiyao*.

18 See Wu 1993, vol 3: 286.

or/and Tibetan medical treatises, maybe the aforementioned one composed by Zur mkhar ba mnyam nyid rdo rje, may have inspired the Chinese author of this passage.

Informants from Lithang County gave an accurate morphological description of *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu*. They showed the minute characteristics of the worm and the grass as the presence of tiny hairs (*spu*) and wrinkles (*sgal tshigs*) on the back of the worm, and indicated hands (*lag pa*), legs (*rkang pa*), head (*mgo*), mouth (*kha*), eyes (*mig*), and anus (*rgyu tog*) over its body. The part of the *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* indicated as a blade of grass was also designated *rwa co* (horn) since, protruding from the root-worm's head, is similar, in shape and colour, to a horn. Part of it lies under; part of it sticks out of the ground. The dead caterpillar that lies within the soil is called worm (*'bu*) or underground portion (*rtsa ba*). According to Kunga Lama (2007: 72), who worked in eastern Tibet, three different terms are used to indicate *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* according to its growing cycle: *snga 'bu*, “early worm”, *bar 'bu* “in-between worm”, and *tshar 'bu*, “finished worm”. Tibetan gatherers and merchants from Lithang assessed the quality of the product by carefully inspecting some of its features: status of conservation, texture, length, and thickness of the worm, length of the horn. The most valued specimens exhibit a long worm, thick and hard in texture, having short and thin horn.

Most of the informants from Lithang gave the following description of the places where *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* is found: it grows near Lithang town over the shady side of the mountains characterised by expanses of meadows (*srib ri'i spang du*) where the soil is of *sa nag* (black soil) type. This term connotes a type of soft soil, dark in colour, with relatively abundant vegetation. *Sa nag* is opposed to the hard soil (*sa 'khregs*) of the *spang rgod*, “wild meadows”, described as the meadows where herbaceous flowering plants (*me tog*) and grass (*rtswa*) are less abundant, and the sound of horses' hoofs clapping on the ground can be clearly heard.

Traders and gatherers from Lithang emphasized that, at the beginning of spring, when people start collecting *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu*, a few flowering herbaceous plants (*me tog*) and woody plants (*shing sdong*) growing over the same area in the meadows have already bloomed. Among them they mention two types of *sur ru*,¹⁹ one with white flowers, *sur dkar* (*Rhododendron* sp.), and one with purple flowers, *sur nag*, (*Rhododendron* sp.), as well as the flowers known as *ut pal ser po* (*Meconopsis integrifolia*), and *khu yug me tog* (*Iris goniocarpa*).

According to a work on Nepalese medicinal plants, when yaks are driven to high altitude pastures during summer, they actively look for *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* in the alpine meadows to eat it, and it is very difficult to find this product in the areas where they graze.²⁰ I did not obtain this information during my fieldwork in Lithang County and in other Tibetan regions.

19 In Lithang County, as in other areas of eastern Tibetan regions, the term *sur ru* corresponds to the term *ba lu* used in several Himalayan and Tibetan areas.

20 See Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, Department of Medicinal Plants, 1970: 116.

Pickers and traders from Lithang County reported that the amount of *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* growing in the mountains is not always constant, but may vary from year to year. This variability is attributed to the climatic conditions during spring. Informants said that sometimes, particularly at its beginning, spring may be cold with frequent and abundant snowfalls. Owing to that it is very difficult for “the grass” to grow upwards because of the thick layer of snow that covers the ground. For that reason “the grass” and “the root-worm” get easily rotten within the soil. According to several traders and gatherers, during the spring of 2000 the weather had been very cold with frequent snowfalls. That is why only few *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* managed to survive: out of three, they claimed, two of them got rotten within the soil. At the time some other informants were wrong when claiming that the good season was simply a little bit late and that the gatherers had to wait for a few weeks to get a fine crop of this product as in the past years. Eventually at the end of the gathering season nearly all the people involved in this activity recognized that the amount of the product plucked in the mountains was inferior to the one of the previous year. The informants explained that the best weather conditions required for the abundant growth of *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* are moderate rainfalls and scanty snowfalls during spring. If it rains too much, the worm gets rotten, if it does not rain, it dries. If there is too much snow, the “grass” cannot grow up.

In Lithang County, the area where I spent most of my field research, many Tibetan informants, educated and non-educated, and notably pickers and traders, reported the following motto concerning *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu*, which attests the significance of this natural substance/product for local people: “*dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* is a marvellous thing” (*dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu ngo mshar che*). Unfortunately, we do not know how old this popular expression is. It might have been devised either recently in the past few decades or in the remote past. Its origin is difficult to determine also because to my knowledge it is not reported in any written source. In the same way it is hard to establish why it has been devised. This motto may be connected with the use of the caterpillar-fungus as very profitable trade item, to its particular medical properties, or to the symbolic function that it had in the past and still has at present in specific areas. Also more than one of these options may have contributed to its elaboration.

The first hypothesis might be the most substantial one since at least for the past few centuries, and particularly in the last decades, *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* has represented an important source of income for many Tibetan communities. Its gathering and trading activities have been documented in both foreign travellers' accounts and local historical treatises. For example Rockhill (1894: 361), who crossed the eastern part of the Tibetan plateau between 1891 and 1892, described in his diary *Ophiocordyceps sinensis* as an important natural product from Lithang region. He reported: “We followed down the Lit'ang Golo valley for a couple of miles and then ascended the steep Mo-lung gung [located to the south-east of Lithang]... This mountain is famous as producing that curious worm-plant known as the Shar-tsa gong-bu (tung-chung hsia-ts'ao in Chinese), called by botanists *Cordyceps sinensis*”.

In the work of the Khams pa historian dMu dge bSam gtan²¹ it is reported that before the 1950s Tibetans did harvest and trade *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* specifically for the Chinese market. In his biography of the 6th Dalai Lama,²² the Regent Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho wrote that the Qing emperor Kangxi, through his representative in Lhasa, had asked the Dalai Lama to send him paper (*shog bu*), and notably the tonics and aphrodisiacs *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* and *dbang po lag pa* (see below), indicating that at the time these products were already well known and used at the Chinese court in Beijing.²³ Du Halde, one of the first Europeans to describe this product in 1736, already rated it as rare and precious. He reported that the Emperor’s physicians told him that “*hia tsao tong tchong*”, as this product was designated, was only prescribed at the Court because of the difficulty they had to procure it.²⁴

Concerning its medicinal qualities, for several reasons these do not seem to be significant enough to justify the elaboration of this motto. Traditional doctors and other people see *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* as an effective tonic and aphrodisiac. Yet this medicinal agent is not described in some of the most important classic treatises of Tibetan medicine and *materia medica* such as the *rGyud bzhi*²⁵ and the *Shel gong shel phreng*,²⁶ which list other substances as the best aphrodisiacs and tonics.²⁷ Also its use does not seem to be particularly widespread among both traditional doctors and Tibetan people in the area where the motto has been recorded. Some Tibetan doctors from Dartsendo and from the Kumbum medical institute in Qinghai stated that they do not often use this product, and that they mainly collect it for its trading value. Nawan Tashi, a traditional doctor from Lithang, at the time of my fieldwork had bought 2 kg of fresh *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* from the local market and had hung it to dry on the ceiling of his storeroom. He intended to sell it during the next winter, when the price would increase, and did not intend to use it to manufacture his medicines.

The adjective *ngo mtshar*, “marvellous”, used in the popular expression, is mentioned in the medical text *Man ngag bye ba ring bsrel* composed by Zur mkhar ba mnyam nyid rdo rje (2005: 308-310), where the author describes the therapeutic properties of this medicine. Particularly he wrote that *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* is a *ngo mtshar sman*, “a marvellous medicine”. This expression is often used in Tibetan medicine to connote medicinal substances having particularly strong therapeutic qualities and action. However, this single passage from the *Man ngag bye ba ring bsrel* cannot be utilized to demonstrate a connection between the present popular expression and the medical properties of this drug.

21 dMu dge bSam gtan 1987, Book 2: 289. I would like to thank Dr. Toni Huber for indicating me this reference and for his suggestions.

22 I would like to thank Lobsang Yongdan for indicating me this source.

23 Cf. sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho 1989: 310.

24 See Du Halde 2003: 41-42.

25 Cf. g.Yu thog yon tan mgon po 1992.

26 Cf. De'u dmar dge shes bstan 'dzin phun tshogs 2005.

27 See below in the paragraph devoted to *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* in Tibetan medicine.

Concerning its symbolic function and collection regulations, in certain regions *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* has been related to the local popular religion. Animals that dwell underground in burrows, Huber observed, “are negatively associated with the archaic cosmology. These species are considered to be too close to the realm of the local subterranean and sub-aquatic deities (*klu, sa bdag, sri*, etc.), who are believed to be easily offended and also quick to cause harm to humans and their livestock in retribution for human encroachment upon their realm”.²⁸ *dByar rtswa dgun 'bu* is one of them. Namkhai Norbu (1997: 68), who travelled to the eastern part of the Tibetan plateau in 1953, reported that for the nomads of the regions of rDza chu kha and Se tha, *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* and *dkar mog*²⁹ represented the treasures (*snying nor*) of the lord of the soil (*gzhi bdag*), and *rdza yung*³⁰ their heart. The gathering of these plants was banned, according to the so-called *ri rgya*, the local law that governs the relations with the environment, and which prohibits the killing of wild animals. In his article “Territorial Controls by Sealing” (*rgya sdom pa*), Huber (2004: 142-43) clearly explains that in parts of Tibet, and particularly in A mdo and Khams, regional forms of territorial sealing established at the level of local lay communities existed. They were called *ri khrims* or *ri rgya*. Huber adds that these sealings were usually done to hill or mountain areas and water sources, the typical abodes of the territorial deities, and that they were introduced to protect local indigenous resources such as game animal and medicinal plants, which could be both economically valuable and associated with local deities. Norbu added that the gathering of these natural substances, upsetting the local deities, could cause the occurrence of epidemics that would severely affect both man and livestock. Also Gould, who has recently conducted a survey on *Ophiocordyceps sinensis* in Bhutan, reported that according to 67% of the herding families living near *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* gathering areas “the most serious effect of the new pickers [of caterpillar-fungus] is the upset they cause to the spiritual forces in the mountains”.³¹ The manifestation of their irritation was seen by the informants as the recent decrease of water level in the lakes located in their region. Concerning instead Norbu’s description of local sealing, Huber (2004: 142-43) explains that people from the neighbouring regions of 'Dzam thang, rNga ba, rMe ba, and rDzo dge also reported it and that the most important reason for sealing a certain territory was to protect it from members of rival neighbouring communities and other strangers travelling in the region. So in these areas *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* was one of the animals/plants/natural products to be protected, likely against the gathering by people coming from other areas.

28 See Huber 2005: 8.

29 A traditional doctor from Khyung bo I worked with mentioned this plant name. He reported that *dkar mog* grew in his homeland region. Unfortunately, I have never observed the plant in the field and have not been able to find, so far, its description in written Tibetan sources.

30 I did not find any Tibetan written source mentioning this plant and reporting its botanical identification.

31 See Gould 2007: 66.

Norbu (1997: 68) also affirmed that at that time several of the young generations had not any faith in the stories about the *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* and the other plants and secretly picked and bartered them. According to him, the people discovered carrying out that activity were severely punished. The record of this banning described by Norbu has most probably to be understood as limited to very small areas, for example near monasteries and sacred places, as it seems to still occur at the present time in several Tibetan regions. It is also worth noting that according to dMu dge bSam gtan data,³² *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* was abundantly gathered by Tibetan people in regions similar to, and close by Se thar and Dza chu kha. My informants from Lithang County, where the popular expression above was documented, and from the other areas where the author conducted fieldwork, did not report the information given by Norbu.

Popular use

The consuming of *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* as tonic and aphrodisiac does not seem to be particularly common among the Tibetans from the study areas. At Lithang it is sometimes used as tonic, and, according to my informants and observations, it is mainly drunk during winter in the form of a beverage prepared in different ways. During their daily activities, at home or in the open, Tibetans may sip small amounts of these potions contained in tiny bottles. I observed people drinking them while doing activities such as carving religious prayers on stones and gambling. People affirmed that the potions have the property of being beneficial to the health of the body and in particular of increasing its strength and vigour (*lus stobs*), and they are also deemed, though to a lesser extent, to boost sexual virility (*ro tsa*). Of course several young Tibetan *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* traders boastfully stated that only the Chinese and not the Tibetans need to consume this product for that purpose. In Lithang these potions are prepared by dipping into a container filled with a *rag* (a local spirit processed from barley or rice) a few *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* specimens. Their number may vary according to the quantity of a *rag* held in the container and the strength of the potion that is required. Usually, three to five specimens of *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* are steeped in half a litre of a *rag*. The potion is ready after having being kept in a cool place for two or three months. Some people wait one year or more before consuming it, claiming that the long period of permanence of the drug in the spirit increases the strength of the beverage. When the *a rag* is exhausted, some more can be added by filling the container again. The refilling can be done several times, though the potency of the potion decreases. Other ingredients may be added to the recipe, notably the bulbs of *peimou* (*a'u rtsi*, *Fritillaria* sp.), and the *goji* berries

32 dMu dge bSam gtan 1987, Book 2: 289.

(*'dre tsher ma*, *Lycium* sp.). I have reported here their Chinese names, which were used by the majority of local Tibetans.³³

As far as other Tibetan regions are concerned, information about *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* use at the popular level confirm that the properties attributed to the product are almost everywhere the same. An informant from Bathang in western Sichuan stated that *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* can be eaten as a tonic with melted butter (*mar khu*). In the Dolakha District (Central-east Nepal) Sherpa people use *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* as aphrodisiac and tonic: "One to two fruiting bodies are orally administered with milk, once a day".³⁴ According to Sacherer (1979: 51-52), in the Rolwaling valley of the same district the product is popularly used as tonic and aphrodisiac and "it is eaten in its entirety, caterpillar and fungus, mostly by middle aged men". In Nar, a region of Central Nepal (Manang District), it is said that "if a person mixes yertsagumbu with 13 other herbs and takes the mixture over a period of three years, he will become as thick as an elephant, quick as a horse and pretty as a peacock".³⁵

The same source attests that "the product is ground, boiled in milk and drunk with honey or rock [...]. In Thak areas (Sindhupalchok District, Nepal) the plant as a whole is taken orally in combination with *Dactylorhiza hatagirea* [named *dbang po lag pa* in Tibetan medicine and also considered an aphrodisiac and tonic], honey and cow's milk; tonic to yak and sheep".³⁶ A similar use has been attested also among the Tibetan population of Dolpa District (West Nepal).³⁷ According to Phuntsho Namgyel (2005: 130-31), in Bhutan people eat fried *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* to treat stomachache and cold disease.

***dByar rtswa dgun 'bu* in Tibetan Medicine**

Tibetans have likely known *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* as a medicinal agent well before the 15th century, when, according to the actual state of research, the Tibetan doctor Zur mkhar ba mnyam nyid rdo rje (1439-1475), the founder of the *zur lugs* medical

33 The underground portion of *a'u rtsi* is described in the *materia medica Shel gong shel phreng* as a remedy against the ailments caused by poison and to treat bone fractures (De'u dmar dge shes bstan 'dzin phun tshogs 2005: 350). Many informants from Lithang used it to relieve cough, bronchitis, and as tonic according to Chinese tradition (see also Karma chos 'phel 1993: 422, who mentioned these very properties as coming from Chinese tradition). In the same way *'dre tsher ma* is described as a remedy for liver, kidney, weakness of the eyes, and to treat ailments of the semen (*khu'i nad*), but only in Karma chos 'phel recent *materia medica* (1993: 74-75). These same properties are attributed to *goji* in Chinese medicine. The *peimou* is well-known to local Tibetans, being gathered and traded to Chinese merchants. The *goji* is an ingredient of the tea imported mainly from Gansu by Hui people. These remarks contribute to explain why these plants are indicated by using Chinese denominations and used according to Chinese knowledge.

34 See Bhattarai 1993: 392.

35 See Pohle 1990: 37.

36 Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation 1970: 116.

37 Lama *et. al.* 2001: 56.

tradition, described it for the first time in his treatise devoted to Tibetan medical treatment and preparations, the *Man ngag bye ba ring bsrel* (“Ten millions of oral instructions: a relic”).³⁸ In a chapter on sexual virility entitled “An Ocean of Aphrodisiac Qualities” (*Ro tsa yon tan rgya mtsho*), Zur mkhar ba mnyam nyid rdo rje described ecology, morphological traits, therapeutic qualities of *dbyar rtswa dgun ’bu*, and a recipe for a medicament based on it. *dByar rtswa dgun ’bu* is highly praised as a marvellous medicine (*ngo mtshar sman*) having countless qualities, and giving great benefits not only to libido but also to the seven bodily constituents and the five senses. This description is the most detailed that I have found so far in Tibetan medical texts. In the first half of the 16th century mKhas dbang skyem pa tshe dbang mchogs (b. 1479)³⁹ mentioned *dbyar rtswa dgun ’bu* in his commentary to the *rGyud bzhi*, and particularly in the section devoted to the treatment of gynaecological diseases (*mo nad*), where this medicinal ingredient is listed as a possible substitute to the medicinal plant *rtswa khu byug*.⁴⁰ To my knowledge, mKhas dbang skyem pa tshe dbang mchogs has been the only physician to describe *dbyar rtswa dgun ’bu* as a medicine that can be used to treat gynaecological diseases.

The fundamental treatises of Tibetan medicine, the *rGyud bzhi* and its commentary *Vaidurya sngon po*,⁴¹ the former possibly composed for the first time around the 12th century⁴² by the doctor g.Yu thog yon tan mgon po, the latter in the second half of the 17th century by the Regent Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, do not mention *dbyar rtswa dgun ’bu*. It is worth noting that the Regent knew this medicinal substance since he mentioned it in his practical treatise *Man ngag lhan thabs*⁴³ in the chapter concerning sexual desire (*ro tsa bar bya ba*). In this chapter it is listed two times as one of the several medicinal substances having the same qualities of alleviating and curing *ro tsa* diseases.

Surprisingly *dbyar rtswa dgun ’bu* is not described in the *Shel gong shel phreng*,⁴⁴ one of the most important Tibetan *materia medica* treatises, composed by the famous doctor De’u dmar dge shes bstan ’dzin phun tshogs in 1727. This text is still today one of the fundamental references for Tibetan practitioners owing to its completeness and details given in medicinal substance classification and description. It is really astonishing that De’u dmar dge shes bstan ’dzin phun tshogs, an authority on *materia*

38 See Zur mkhar ba mnyam nyid rdo rje 2005: 308-310.

39 See mKhas dbang skyem pa tshe dbang mchogs, vol 2: 313.

40 *Cypripedium tibeticum* (dGa’ ba’i rdo rje 1998: 176); *C. macranthos* and *Orostachys fimbriata* (Zhongguo kexueyuan xibei gaoyuan shengwu yanjiusuo 1991: 22-23); Karma chos ’phel (1993: 389-390) distinguishes two types of *khu byug pa*: *khu byug rtswa ljang mchog*, *Cypripedium tibeticum*, which is the best variety, and *khu byug rtswa ljang sman pa*, *Equisetum palustre*, the inferior variety.

41 Cf. sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho 1982.

42 The *rGyud bzhi* used nowadays is the revised edition compiled by the same Regent Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho in the 17th century.

43 Cf. sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho 2005: 568-574.

44 Cf. De’u dmar dge shes bstan ’dzin’ phun tshogs 2005.

medica, and who extensively travelled in eastern and central Tibetan plateau, did not mention this medicinal agent, common to many Tibetan regions, and which at that time already represented an important trade item.

The first author, and, as far as I know, the only one, to both describe (likely inspired by the words of Zur mkhar ba mnyam nyid rdo rje) and illustrate *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* was the Mongol doctor 'Jam dpal rdo rje in his illuminated Tibeto-Mongolian *materia medica* composed in the 19th century.⁴⁵ The way 'Jam dpal rdo rje represented *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* is revealing: the specimens are here depicted as prepared in bundles kept together by thin strings, ready to be sold, exactly as it happens nowadays in the pharmacies of Chinese medicine and medicinal plant markets in China, as one that I visited in Sichuan Province capital Chengdu. In addition, as it happens for every medicinal substance described in this work, its Mongolian, Manchu, and Chinese denominations are reported. These elements likely testify to the economic character of this work and notably to the importance of this product as a trade item in Tibet and China at that time. The way 'Jam dpal rdo rje represented *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* may reflect his belonging to the Naiman Banner of the Ju Uda League in what is today Inner Mongolia. Before its integration into Communist China in 1947, this region had played a very important role in trading activities and cultural exchanges between Tibet and Mongolia, and particularly between Tibetan and Chinese medical practitioners and traders.

dByar rtswa dgun 'bu is mentioned in several medical texts composed in the 18th, 19th and in the first half of the 20th century. The physician Blo bzang dbang rgyal (circa 18th century) mentioned this medicinal agent in a chapter concerning *ro tsa* diseases.⁴⁶ Sum pa ye shes dpal 'byor (1704-1788)⁴⁷ listed *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* under the *sngo sman* medicinal substance category (see below). Cha har dge bshes blo bzangs tshul khirms (1740-1810), as stated above, in his medical treatise⁴⁸ described morphology, ecology, and mode of life of *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* by using information likely taken from Zur mkhar ba mnyam nyid rdo rje's work. *dByar rtswa dgun 'bu* is mentioned in the medical formulary compiled by O rgyan theg mchog (b. 19th century),⁴⁹ in a section entitled "An ocean of aphrodisiac qualities", among the most effective medicinal substances used as aphrodisiacs, notably *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu*, *'od ldan*,⁵⁰ *da lis*,⁵¹ and

45 See Chandra 1971: f. 168. The full title of 'Jam dpal rdo rje's work is *gSo byed bdud rtsi'i 'khrul med ngos 'dzin bzo rig me long du rnam par shar pa mdzes mtshar mig rgyan*.

46 Cf. Blo bzang dbang rgyal 2008: 609-10.

47 Cf. Sum pa ye shes dpal 'byor 2007: 153.

48 Cf. Blo bzang tshul khirms 2007: 48.

49 Cf. O rgyan theg mchog 2002: 277-83.

50 In Tibetan medicine two types of *'od ldan* are recognized. The former, yellow flowered (*ser*), corresponds to *Saxifraga egregia*; the latter, white flowered (*dkar*), corresponds to *S. melanocentra* (cf. dGa' ba'i rdo rje 1998: 279-80).

51 Two types of *da lis* are recognized in Tibetan medicine. The white (*dkar po*) type corresponds to *Rhododendron*. aff. *cephalanthum*, *R. anthopogonoides*; the black (*nag po*) type to *R. capitatum*

lug mur.⁵² The author also described collection modalities, one medical preparation based on *dbyar rtswa dgun ’bu*, and one, also to treat *ro tsa* diseases, where *dbyar rtswa dgun ’bu* is listed among its ingredients. The physician Karma don grub dpal ldan bSod nams dbang phyug tshe ring (circa 19th/20th Century) from Lha thog principality in Khams reported the same information (but he did not mention the second recipe) in a section of his medical treatise, entitled as the one by O rgyan theg mchog.⁵³ The *bon po* practitioner ’Jigs med nam mkha’i rdo rje (1897-1955) mentioned *dbyar rtswa dgun ’bu* among the *ro tsa* medicines.⁵⁴

Interestingly a preliminary examination has shown that *dbyar rtswa dgun ’bu* is not included in the *materia medica* written by mKhyen rab nor bu (1989), the well-known traditional doctor whom the 13th Dalai Lama appointed in 1916 as director of the newly founded Medical and Astrological Institute (sMan rtsi khang) in Lhasa. It is also not mentioned in the texts on medical prescriptions composed by the same mKhyen rab nor bu (1974 and 1974a), but it is mentioned (again among the *ro tsa* medicines) in a text composed by ’Jam mgon ’ju mi pham rgya mtsho (1846-1912) from rDza chu dkar in Kham Derge principality, a famous Buddhist master of the rNying ma school, and also a Tibetan doctor who was interested in Chinese medicine. His treatise, entitled *sMan sbyor bdud rtsi ’i thig le*,⁵⁵ was printed at the Lhasa sMan rtsi khang under the sponsorship of the same mKhyen rab nor bu. So at that time *dbyar rtswa dgun ’bu* was likely known among Lhasa practitioners of the sMan rtsi khang, but we do not know whether it was used or not there. Since it is not mentioned in the medical prescriptions listed in the texts composed by mKhyen rab nor bu, we can presume that this ingredient was not deemed to be important at the Lhasa Medical and Astrological Institute at that time.⁵⁶

(Karma chos ’phel 1993: 82-83). According to dGa’ ba’i rdo rje (1998: 133) *da lis dkar po* corresponds to *R. primuliflorum*, *da lis nag po* to *R. nivale*. According to my work in lower Mustang District in Nepal, the black type corresponds to *R. lepidotum* (see Boesi 2014: 103). Practitioners from the Tibetan medical school from the Nordzinling (Nor ’dzin gling) Tibetan settlement of Dhorpatan (Baglung District, Nepal) collect *da lis dkar po* and *da lis nag po*. The first corresponds to *R. anthopogon*, the second to *R. lepidotum* (see Boesi & Cardi 2006: 54). According to *Zhongguo kexueyuan xibei gaoyuan shengwu yanjiusuo* (1991: 148-53), *da lis dkar po* corresponds to *R. anthopogonoides* and *R. anthopogon*, *da lis nag po* to *R. capitatum*, *R. bulu*, and *R. intricatum*.
52 *Lug mur* corresponds to *Phlomis younghusbandii* (cf. dGa’ ba’i rdo rje 1998: 294; Karma chos ’phel 1993: 202), to *P. younghusbandii*, *P. dentosa*, and *P. medicinalis* (cf. *Zhongguo kexueyuan xibei gaoyuan shengwu yanjiusuo* 1991: 360-62).

53 Cf. Karma don grub dpal ldan bsod nams dbang phyug tshe ring rnam par gyal ba’i lha 1985: ff. 117-118.

54 Cf. ’Tsho byed ’jigs med nam mkha’ rdo rje 2006: 445.

55 Cf. ’Jam mgon ’ju mi pham rgya mtsho 1974: 184-85.

56 For treating *ro tsa* ailments, *dbang po lag pa* seems to be one of the most valued medicinal substances according to these formularies. In the first one composed by mKhyen rab nor bu (1974: f. 50: *klu’i bdud rtsi dbang po lag pa ni / sman nus brgya ldan lus stobs khu ba bskyed*) it is reported that “concerning *dbang po lag pa*, nectar of the water-deities, having the potencies of a hundred

Several Tibetan *materia medica* treatises and medical formularies that have been published from the 1970s onwards in Chinese Tibetan regions, and also outside China among expatriated Tibetans, describe *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* as a powerful aphrodisiac and tonic. To my knowledge, the first modern Tibetan *materia medica* was published in Lhasa in 1973, and it includes *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu*.⁵⁷ Karma chos 'phel also includes it in his *materia medica* published in Lhasa in 1993,⁵⁸ and it is included as well in the already mentioned compilation by dGa' ba'i rdo rje,⁵⁹ published by the Medical and Astrological Institute of Chamdo. Also a Tibetan *materia medica* recently developed in collaboration with traditional doctors from Dolpo in Nepal includes this medicinal agent.⁶⁰

However, in this text the term *rtswa da byid*, “*da byid* grass”, is used to indicate this medicinal substance, and the term *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* is presented as a synonym for it. Only rarely I have heard Tibetan doctors using the name *rtswa da byid*. They know it from dGa' ba'i rdo rje's work, as this *materia medica* has become very popular among medical practitioners, likely because it includes photographs of medicinal substances. Some of my informants, for example practitioners from the Kunphen Tibetan Medical Clinic in Kathmandu, commented that this name can be appropriately used as another name for *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu*, and that it has not been recently devised. Yet, they did not give references of classic medical treatises where the term *rtswa da byid* is used as a synonym for *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu*. To my knowledge, this expression has never been used to indicate this product in both classical and in the majority of recent medical treatises.

In the chapter devoted to sexual virility of the treatise *Man ngag lhan thabs* by Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, *da byid* is clearly seen as distinct from *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu*. Among the types of meat used to treat *ro tsa* diseases, *da byid* is described as “the king” of them. Its different varieties are mentioned, but they seem to have no connection with *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu*, since this is quoted later in the same chapter along with other medicinal substances sharing the same qualities of *da byid*. Also the other aforementioned authors of medical treatises from pre-modern Tibet consider the two medicinal substances as distinct elements sharing similar medical qualities. Only two modern dictionaries of Tibetan medicine⁶¹ include the entry *rtswa da byid* as a synonym for *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu*. According to the first one, *rtswa da byid* is

medicines, it increases the strength of the body, and the semen.” Also in the second text it is written that “the libido is increased by *dbang po lag pa*” (mKhyen rab nor bu 1974a: f. 132: *ro tsar dbang po lag pas bskyed*). These pieces of information agree with my field data (see below). *dBang po lag pa* and *da byid* are mentioned as aphrodisiacs and tonics since the time of g.Yu thog yon tan mgon po in the 12th century (see g.Yu thog yon tan mgon po 2005: 104-05, 217).

57 Cf. Bod rang skyong ljongs gсар brje u yon lhan khang gi 'phrod bsten cus 1973: 579-80.

58 Cf. Karma chos 'phel 1993: 177.

59 Cf. dGa' ba'i rdo rje 1998: 109-10.

60 See Lama *et al.* 2001: 56.

61 dGra 'dul *et al.* 2006: 707.

one of the different types of names attributed to *dbyar rtswa dgun ’bu* according to its function. Thus it may be put forward that the name *rtswa da dbyi* has been devised recently in connection to the drug *da byid*, a kind of lizard (*Batrachuporus pinchonii*),⁶² which in Tibetan medicine is deemed to be one of the most powerful aphrodisiacs.

This manner of naming medicinal substances sharing the same qualities, but belonging to different categories of medicinal substances and often of life forms is not unusual in Tibetan medicine. For example, *ku sha* (*Tysanolaena maxima*),⁶³ the sacred plant imported from India, has a Tibetan type called *rtswa ku sha*, “grass *ku sha*”; and *ba sha ka* (*Adhatoda vasica* = *Justicia adhatoda*),⁶⁴ sometimes also called *shing ba sha ka*, “wood *ba sha ka*”, has a Tibetan type named *ldum ba sha ka* or *sngo ba sha ka* (*Corydalis impatiens*,⁶⁵ *C. longipes*⁶⁶) (*Veronica ciliata*),⁶⁷ “herbaceous *ba sha ka*”. In both of these examples the identifications of the same medicinal plant varieties correspond in reality to very different plants. Thus *rtswa da dbyi* is a type of *da dbyi* belonging to grasses (*rtswa*).

So far I have found only a few medical treatises composed in pre-modern Tibet that include *dbyar rtswa dgun ’bu* in a specific category of medicinal substances according to its nature and qualities, notably the Tibetan *materia medica* of ’Jam dpal rdo rje, the one of Cha har dge bshes Blo bzangs tshul khrim, and the treatise composed by Sum pa ye shes dpal ’byor (2007: 153). Concerning the first text, one should take into account that at present it is not used and even known by the majority of the Tibetan doctors with whom I have worked, and that it was likely not used also in the past. Following Tibetan traditional concepts, the authors included this medicinal agent in the category of herbaceous medicine (*sngo sman*), particularly

’Jam dpal rdo rje and Sum pa ye shes dpal ’byor in the section devoted to “underground portions from herbaceous medicines” (*sngo sman rtsa ba*),⁶⁸ since the worm becomes the root of an herbaceous plant. The last text attributes *dbyar rtswa dgun ’bu* to a category equally named *sngo sman*, which here includes also many herbaceous plants that in the majority of the other treatises aforementioned are integrated in the *thang sman* category.⁶⁹

Modern medical treatises devoted to Tibetan *materia medica* published in Chinese Tibetan regions from the 1970s onwards propose a classification that may vary from the one presented by ’Jam dpal rdo rje and Cha har dge bshes blo bzangs tshul khrim, possibly influenced by Chinese and modern scientific concepts. Karma chos ’phel

62 dGa’ ba’i rdo rje 1998: 376.

63 dGa’ ba’i rdo rje 1998: 173.

64 dGa’ ba’i rdo rje 1998: 141; Karma chos ’phel 1993: 143.

65 dGa’ ba’i rdo rje 1998: 142.

66 I gathered and identified a specimen of *sngo ba sha ka* during my research at Dhorpatan in west Nepal (see Boesi & Cardi 2006: 55).

67 Karma chos ’phel 1993: 144.

68 See Chandra 1971: ff. 158-68.

69 Cf. Blo bzang tshul khrim 2007: 43-90.

(1993: 177-78) surprisingly included the *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* in the category designated as *ldum bu thang sman*, “medicines of the plains of *ldum* type”,⁷⁰ which mainly includes stout and perennial herbaceous plants. This categorization contrasts the ones of 'Jam dpal rdo rje and Sum pa ye shes dpal 'byor according to which *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* is included in the *sngo sman* group, which mainly comprises tiny and annual herbaceous plants. These last classifications seem to be more appropriate taking into consideration the way Tibetans conceive *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu*, seen more as a tiny annual grass than as a perennial with underground organs surviving to winter and/or having robust aerial parts.⁷¹

Differently, in dGa' ba'i rdo rje's⁷² *materia medica*, *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* (here named *rtswa da dbyi*) is included in the category *rtsi sman*, “the essence medicines”. This group includes heterogeneous substances coming from animals, minerals, and plants, which are seen as very powerful (*nus pa chen po*) and concentrated medicines, many of them having good fragrance, a quality connoting their curative properties. dGa' ba'i rdo rje (1998: 96) mentions that, according to the dictionary of Tibetan medicine *g. Yu thog dgongs rgyan*,⁷³ the *rtsi sman* category is defined as follows: “name of a class of medicines that are endowed with the essence (*rtsi bcud*) that gives sustain to bodily constituents and defeats the diseases”. He later also reports that, according to a commentary to the *rGyud bzhi* written by dPal spungs dbon karma bstan 'dzin 'phrin las rab rgyas (18th century),⁷⁴ the substances included in the *rtsi sman* have, among the others, the property of “increasing strength” (*zung skyed*). Also my informants agree to this statement. So dGa' ba'i rdo rje possibly decided to include the *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* among the *rtsi sman* since it is deemed to be a strong tonic.

Concerning the significance and use of *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* in Tibetan medicine, the following information may provide some evidence of it. Several medical treatises composed in pre-modern Tibet describe the qualities of *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* as excellent, particularly to increase vigour and libido, and this drug was certainly used

70 See Boesi 2005-2006: 73-77.

71 De'u dmar dge shes bstan dzin' phun tshogs (2005: 64) differentiated *ldum bu thang sman* and *sngo sman* categories as follows: “*Thang sman* represent the plants whose underground organs are developed and whose aerial organs grow each year as the ones of woody plants, but which, except for the underground organs, perish in winter as the plants of the *sngo* type, and therefore are replaced each year. For example *ma nu* (*Inula racemosa* [dGa' rab rdo rje'i 1998: 260]), *lcum* (*Rheum palmatum*), and, according to the *rGyud bzhi*, the main *thang sman* are: *tig ta* (*Swertia chirayita* [dGa' rab rdo rje'i 1998: 205]) and *ba sha ka* (*Justicia adhatoda*, *Corydalis* spp., see above). Their underground organs have the essential nature of woody plants (*shing*), their stalks the one of the *ldum* type, their leaves and flowers the green and tender (*sngo*) one of herbaceous plants” (*rtsa ba rgyas shing lo sdong sogs lo rer shing ltar skye yang dgun nas rtsa ba ma gtogs sngo ltar rgas nas lo re bzhin brje bas ma nu dang lcum lta bu'i rigs la / rgyud las / thang gi gtso bo tig ta ba sha ka / gsungs pas rtsa ba shing la sdong po ldum lo me sngo'i rang bzhin can.../*).

72 dGa' ba'i rdo rje 1998: 109.

73 dBang 'dus 1982.

74 Cf. dGa' ba'i rdo rje 1998: 96.

among medical practitioners. On the basis of mKhyen rab nor bu’s medical prescription works, it may be put forward that this ingredient was not commonly used at the Lhasa sMan rtsi khang before the the 1950s.

Concerning the present situation, we have seen that practitioners from the Kumbum Tibetan Medical Hospital in Qinghai do not frequently use this medicinal agent. The physician Tshang pa Ngag dbang from Jomsom (Mustang District, Nepal) was more interested in its commercial value than in its medical use, and notably, the majority of Tibetan doctors from Lithang County reported that they did not frequently include in their recipes *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu*, while it was abundantly used in Chinese medicine and diet. Some of them did not value it highly, claiming that other medicinal agents, particularly *dbang po lag pa*,⁷⁵ mixed together, have the same properties of *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu*, but give more effective results. Interestingly, *dbang po lag pa* is mentioned, as well as in several pre-modern medical treatises, in the works devoted to medicinal preparations compiled by mKhyen rab nor bu (1974: f. 50) where it is described as a very powerful medicine for increasing body energy, while *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* is not mentioned.

It seems that *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* is nowadays frequently used in Central Tibet (particularly Lhasa). This is according to the information given by several doctors coming from different parts of the region, who at the Congress on Tibetan medicine held in Lhasa in 2000 produced a list of the most rare medicinal substances, which included *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu*. They lamented that it had become rare in the last few decades owing to its increased exploitation for commercial purpose. When I visited the Lhasa Tibetan Medicine Factory in January 2012, several medical preparations based on *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu*, packed in luxury boxes printed with golden letters, had been placed on sale in the entrance hall, as the most important medical products manufactured there. Chinese influence may have played a central role in the increased importance of this ingredient at Lhasa Tibetan medical institutions and maybe also of its attribution to the “essence medicines” (*rtsi sman*) category (see above).

It seems that in other areas, as in the Nepal high valleys inhabited by ethnic Tibetan people, *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* has been important as medicinal agent. For example, according to the WWF’s “People and Plant Initiative”⁷⁶ this ingredient is one of the most used medicinal substances by Dolpo *am chi*. According to recent surveys, people from Nepal Manang District, in the areas of Kecho Lake, Khangshar, Braka, Hungde, Nar and Phoo, collect and sell *Ophiocordyceps sinensis* to local *am chi*, who use it to make medicines.⁷⁷ Pandey (2006: 76) attested the use of

75 According to modern medical texts, *dbang po lag pa* corresponds to the Orchidaceae *Gymnadenia orchidis* and *Habenaria* sp. (dGa’ ba’i rdo tje 1998: 255); *Gymnadenia crassinervis* and *Gymnadenia conopsea* (Karma chos ’phel 1993: 63); *Dactylorhiza hatagirea* (Lama et al. 2001: 63).

76 See Ghimire et al. 2000: 4.

77 See Bhattarai et al. 2006: 6.

Ophiocordyceps by traditional doctors of Upper Mustang District. The situation in Bhutan is different: according to Phuntsho Namgyel (2005: 130-31), only recently the Bhutanese Traditional Medicine system started collecting *dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* and likely incorporating into medical formulae.

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LADAKHI KNOWLEDGE AND WESTERN LEARNING: A. H. FRANCKE'S TEACHERS, GUIDES AND FRIENDS IN THE WESTERN HIMALAYA¹

JOHN BRAY

(International Association for Ladakhi Studies)

The Moravian missionary scholar August Hermann Francke (1870-1930) left a rich legacy of research on Ladakh and the neighbouring regions of the Western Himalaya. Arguably, his greatest single contribution was his *Antiquities of Indian Tibet*, published in two volumes by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) in 1914 and 1926, which contains translations of the Ladakhi royal chronicle, the *La dvags rgyal rabs*, as well as other key historical texts. Other important contributions



Fig. 1. Francke exploring the ruins of a Buddhist temple in Gompa village, near Leh, Ladakh, 1909. Photo: Pindi Lal. Courtesy of Kern Institute, University of Leiden

¹ I gratefully acknowledge advice and support from a number of friends and colleagues over the years, especially Michaela Appel, Stephan Augustin, Isrun Engelhardt, Martin Klingner, Thsespal Kundan, Rüdiger Kröger, Onesimus Ngundu, Lorraine Parsons, Frank Seeliger and Hartmut Walravens. All errors remain my own responsibility.

include *A Lower Ladakhi Version of the Kesar Saga* (1905-1941) and dozens of shorter publications on topics ranging from rock inscriptions to music and folk songs.²

In February 1930 Francke died tragically young at Berlin's Charité hospital, still aged only 59. Among the works that still lay incomplete at the time of his death was a collection of Ladakhi wedding songs that he planned to publish with the ASI. As Elena De Rossi Filibeck (2009, 2016) has explained, the ASI still hoped to bring out the text after Francke's death. It first sought expert advice from the Dutch scholar Jan van Manen (1877-1943) in Calcutta, and then approached Professor Giuseppe Tucci (1894-1984) in Rome. Tucci duly received the manuscript, but he never took up the challenge of preparing it for publication.

For several decades, Francke's text therefore lay unnoticed in a library cupboard in the Italian Institute for Africa and the East of Rome (IsIAO) until it came to Elena's attention in 2000. In her 2009 paper, she transcribed, translated and published one of the sets of songs, which came from Hanle (Wam le) in eastern Ladakh, and in 2016 she reviewed the songs from Rupshu (Ri shod, Rub chu). In future, she plans to publish transcriptions of all the songs, also including a further set from Lower Ladakh. In this way, she will be able to ensure that they are available to a new generation of scholars, thus bringing one of Francke's unfulfilled aspirations to fruition more than 80 years after his death.

Francke of course did not work alone. By the nature of his research interests he drew on indigenous sources of knowledge, both written and oral. He therefore needed the assistance of Ladakhi colleagues to locate, transcribe and interpret the texts that he required. The wedding texts are a case in point. The Hanle and Rupshu songs were collected by Francke's friend and colleague Joseph Gergan (1878-1946), who also found further songs in Kharnak (mKhar nag). Francke had himself assembled the other sets of songs in his projected collection with the help of the villagers of Khalatse (Kha la rtse) and Tagmachig (rTag ma cig) in Lower Ladakh in the early 1900s. In this essay, I place Francke's researches in a wider social context, thus complementing Elena's work on the wedding songs. The essay is arranged chronologically, with sections on the different phases of Francke's activity, beginning with his apprentice years in Leh, the capital of Ladakh. The objective is to show how his interactions with local colleagues informed and enriched Francke's development as a scholar, and to celebrate their contributions.

² For a near-comprehensive bibliography of his published works and unpublished archival material, see Walravens & Taube 1992. For other biographical material on Francke, see in particular Bray 2008; Bray 2015. See also Francke's handwritten *Lebenslauf* (curriculum vitae) as of 1922 in the archive of the Humboldt University, Berlin: A. H. Francke *Lebenslauf*. Phil. Fak., Nr. 1238, Mikrofiche Nr. 2.

Apprentice Years in Leh, 1896-1899

Francke joined the Moravian mission in Leh in June 1896. The mission had recently gone through a difficult period. Francke was one of a new generation of missionaries who, it was hoped, would revive its fortunes.

The two pioneer missionaries, Wilhelm Heyde (1825-1907) and Eduard Pagell (1820-1883), had first travelled from Germany to India in 1853-1854. In 1855 they passed through Leh, hoping to travel from there to Mongolia. Finding that they were barred from crossing the Tibetan frontier, they instead founded a mission station at Kyelang (Kye lang/Kye glang) in Lahul in 1856. They were soon joined by the brilliant linguist Heinrich August Jäschke (1817-1881), who embarked on his study of Tibetan during a three-month stay in Ladakh in the summer of 1857. Heyde likewise made regular evangelistic journeys to the region, travelling as far north as the Nubra valley.

However, it was not until 1885 that the Moravians opened a mission station in Leh under the leadership of Friedrich Adolf Redslob (1838-1891). Leh's status as a trading centre meant that it was much more strategically placed than Kyelang. However, the new mission received a severe setback in 1891 when both Redslob and the medical missionary Dr Karl Marx died of typhus. By the mid-1890s, when Francke arrived, it was only just beginning to recover.



Fig. 2. Wilhelm and Maria Heyde in Kyelang, 1896. Samuel Joldan, who was later to work with Francke in Leh, is standing, second to the right, in the back row.

3 On the early history of the mission, see Bray 1983; Bray 1985; Beszterda 2013.

Francke's aptitude for languages was one of the main reasons why he received the call to Ladakh: the hope was that he would pick up and pursue his predecessors' linguistic research and Bible translation. Born in Gnadenfrei (Silesia) in 1870, Francke had originally been trained as a primary school teacher (*Volkschullehrer*) at the Moravian training college in Niesky. While teaching at a Moravian boy's school in Kleinwelka, near Bautzen, he had on his own initiative embarked on the comparative study of Indo-German languages, including Greek and Sanskrit. From Easter to Christmas 1895, he studied at the Moravian Theological College, near Manchester, where he began the study of Hebrew. However, he never completed a formal university education before leaving for Ladakh, and this makes his subsequent academic achievements all the more remarkable.

Early Work in Leh

As soon as he arrived in Leh, Francke embarked upon a study of the spoken and written languages. By September 1896 was able to write that he had got far enough to read the Litany twice and to hold hymn-singing sessions (*Singstunde*) and prayers.⁴

By the following year, he had had to take on extra responsibilities because his more senior colleague Rev Samuel Ribbach (1863-1943) was sick, apparently with typhus.⁵ Francke therefore had to prepare weekly sermons in the local language. He was also responsible for supervising the mission school and himself conducted lessons in English and arithmetic. Three days a week he undertook house visits, hoping thereby to get to know local people, and to spread the Christian message. His administrative duties included supervising the meteorological readings that the mission undertook on behalf of the Indian government, as well as managing the mission's purchases of wood (a vital fuel for the winter). Meanwhile, he was translating Bible stories into the Ladakhi dialect, making a collection of Ladakhi folkstories, and working on a Ladakhi grammar. Besides all this he was studying the Hindustani language and Buddhism for private interest.

In March 1897, Francke set out from Leh to meet his fiancée Anna Theodora Weiz ('Dora', 1875-1945), the daughter of a Moravian missionary who had served in South Africa. The couple were married in Amritsar in late March, and then set out on the return journey to Leh. Dora herself became an accomplished linguist in Ladakhi and Tibetan although, as will be seen, her poor state of health became a major source of concern.

4 Francke to La Trobe, Leh, 23 September 1896, Archiv der Brüder-Unität, Herrnhut (hereafter ABU).

5 Francke to La Trobe, Leh, 24 November 1896, ABU.

Samuel Joldan, the Teacher

In Francke's early years in Ladakh, one of his main guides was Samuel Joldan (Shamu el byor ldan). Joldan was originally from the village of Stok on the opposite side of the Indus valley from Leh. In the 1860s he had travelled to Lahul, together with his father Sonam Stobgyas (bSod nams stob rgyas), and in 1865 the two men became the first Ladakhi converts to be baptised by the missionaries. After returning to Ladakh in the late 1880s he had served as the postmaster of Leh, and was now working as the mission schoolmaster. In addition to being a native speaker of Ladakhi, Joldan could write literary Tibetan. He also had a good knowledge of Urdu, and could speak English and even some German.

Francke refers to Joldan in several of his writings, sometimes mentioning him by name, and sometimes referring to him as "his friend the schoolmaster". For example, he says that in his early years in Ladakh, Joldan accompanied him on his visits to Ladakhi homes. According to Francke (1899f: 234), they made a good pair because neither were very brave on their own but, working together, could lend each other courage. Similarly, Joldan accompanied Francke on pastoral visits to the hospital, which was then being run by a British government doctor in the absence of a medical missionary. Most importantly, he helped Francke in his linguistic researches.

First Acquaintance with Joseph Gergan

A second key figure was Joseph Gergan, who at this point was still a junior member of the congregation. This was the period when Gergan was finishing his education with the missionaries and embarking on his career as a mission worker in his own right.⁶ He does not seem to have played a major role in Francke's researches at this stage but, as will be seen, he eventually became the closest of all Francke's Ladakhi colleagues.

Gergan had been born in 1878 at Hundar in the Nubra valley to the north of Leh on the far side of the 18,000 feet Khardong pass. His father was Gergan Sonam Wangyal (dGe rgan bSod rnam dbang rgyal), a well-educated Lhasa Tibetan who had come to Nubra in the company of a senior lama in about 1860, and married into a local family.⁷ He was attracted to Christian teachings, and moved to Leh in 1888 in order to help the missionaries with the translation of the Old Testament into Tibetan, starting with the Psalms, as well as teaching in the mission school. However, he died suddenly in late 1889.

⁶ His original name was Sonam Tsetan (bSod rnam thse brtan). After his baptism in 1890 he was generally known as 'Joseph Tsetan' until 1921 when he took on the name 'Gergan' (dGe rgan) as a 'surname' following his ordination as a Moravian minister. In English writing, he always wrote his name 'Joseph', and 'Yoseb' (Yo seb) in Tibetan. For the sake of clarity, I shall refer to him as 'Gergan' throughout this essay, regardless of the period to which I refer. On Gergan's biography, see Bray 1994.

⁷ R 15 U a 2 Nr 14, Reisebericht 1875, pp. 21-22. ABU.



Fig. 3. The Moravian missionaries' knitting school in Leh, c. 1900. Joseph Gergan is standing at the top left. Source: ABU, Herrnhut.

Although Gergan Sonam Wangyal was himself never baptised, he had expressed the hope that his son would be brought up as a Christian. With the consent of his mother and older brother, Joseph was duly baptised in August 1890.⁸ The missionaries subsequently sent him to the Church Missionary Society (CMS) school in Srinagar, run by Rev Cecil Tyndale Biscoe, for two years.

In 1897, now aged 19, Joseph returned to Leh. Francke and his fellow missionary Samuel Ribbach (1863-1943) were given the task of continuing his education in Bible Studies, Church History, Theology and English.⁹ Later, Dr F. E. Shawe, who was in charge of the mission hospital, instructed him in anatomy and the care of the sick. At the same time, Joseph helped out with the mission and by the early 1900s, he had taken over from Samuel Joldan as the main teacher of the school.

The 'Language Question' in the Himalayan Mission

The 'language question', to adapt the title of one of Francke's articles (1910), was one of his major preoccupations from the outset. There were several aspects to the question. At the most basic level, the missionaries had little prospect of sharing the Christian message unless they could communicate in local languages. However, the

⁸ Jahresbericht der Missionsstation Leh 1890. ABU.

⁹ Jahresbericht der Missionsstation Leh 1897. ABU.

choice of language — or languages — was not entirely straightforward. Jäschke translated the New Testament into a simple form of the classical Tibetan used for religious texts (*chos skad*). This was a considered decision, based on the understanding that this style of language would be understood by educated people across the Tibetan cultural world. However, literary Tibetan differs markedly from the colloquial, much as Latin differs from Italian or French. Spoken Ladakhi in effect qualifies as a separate language, distinct from either *chos skad* or Lhasa colloquial.

Within a year of his arrival in Ladakh, Francke wrote an article for the *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländische Gesellschaft* (1897b) supporting Jäschke's translation policy, and expressing admiration for his skill in applying it. He stuck to the same view in his own later participation in the Tibetan translation of the Old Testament, which became a major part of his life's work. However, from the outset, he became interested in the distinctive features of spoken Ladakhi.

There were several reasons for this interest. The first concerned the communication of Christian teachings. While Jäschke had focussed on the classical language, he had also prepared Ladakhi colloquial translations of a selection of Bible readings used in the Moravian church's Passion Week liturgy: it seems that these had a much greater impact on the Ladakhi congregation than the classical Tibetan version. The second reason was educational. As noted above, Francke was responsible for supervising the mission school, and he saw the difficulties that both students and adults had in writing letters:

“If one looks at a letter by our Christians, one sees at the beginning and the end rather beautiful phrases in the classical language. In the middle, however, in the actual letter, all grammar and spelling is abandoned. The writer, because of his poor knowledge of the classical language, writes as he speaks. As he has to make up his own spelling, one can imagine that letters in this part of the world are amazing works of literature” (Francke 2005 [1898]: 290).

He therefore concluded that:

“[...] we must do our best to raise the Ladakhi dialect to be the written language and to teach reading and writing in it. Once it has been mastered reasonably well by the pupils, they can be introduced to reading in the classical language” (Francke 2005 [1898]: 290).

This would be no small undertaking:

“One can see that such a transformation of the curriculum of the reading school would be a life's work for one missionary. One would need an orthographic dictionary of the dialect, a grammar to establish the difference between dialect and classical language, and finally to write a series of readers” (Francke 2005: 291).

Francke's own life's work took him in several different directions but, amidst his many academic preoccupations, he never lost sight of this basic question: how best to communicate Christian teaching, as well as other aspects of modern life, so that they would be accessible to ordinary people in Ladakh?

Historical literature

In order to study Ladakhi and Tibetan vocabulary and — above all — grammar, Francke needed written and spoken samples of the language. The search for appropriate texts led him directly to his wider researches into Ladakhi history and culture.

When he arrived in Leh, the written text that was most readily available to him was the *La dvags rgyal rabs*, the Ladakhi royal chronicle. The chronicle had been known to Western scholars since the mid-19th century. Francke's predecessor, Dr Karl Marx had embarked on a revised translation of the text with the help of two local scholars, Tashi Stanpel (bKra shis bstan 'phel), the head lama of Stagna (Stag sna) monastery,¹⁰ and Munshi Tsering Palgias (Tshe ring dpal rgyas). Before he died in 1891, Marx had got as far as sending the first of three sections of the text, together with a translation, to the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*.

Together with Dora, Francke followed up on Marx's original research. The second part of Marx's translation of the *La dvags rgyal rabs* had been published in the journal without the original text in 1894. Francke now managed to find the text, and the third part of the chronicle was published in 1902 with a translation by Dora Francke. As will be seen, the *La dvags rgyal rabs* remained central to Francke's research interests.

Ladakhi Proverbs, Songs and the Kesar saga

At the same time, Francke also began to gather Ladakhi proverbs and folksongs. He regarded these as important sources for the local language, history, and — perhaps most importantly — ways of thinking. These researches led to a series of publications in English and German.

An encounter at the hospital led Francke to his study of the Kesar (Ke sar/Ge sar) epic, which tells of the adventures of a magical hero, and is known in different versions across the Tibet and Mongolia. An old man from the nearby village of Shey was lying sick. He was unable to sleep and he summoned a 16 year-old girl called Zara (Zar ra) to talk to him at night (see Francke 1922: 321). She talked and sang day and night with such energy that she caught Francke's attention. He asked her to recite her story to Joldan, who wrote it down word by word, and by this means he acquired the text of his first Ladakhi version of the Kesar saga.

Francke was excited about the Kesar text in several respects. First, he noted that while the style was different from normal speech, it nevertheless contained the 'purest Ladakhi'.¹¹ Secondly, "as a wonderful by-product" (*als schöner Nebenertrag*), it gave a deep insight into what he regarded as the otherwise unknown 'pre-Buddhist' religion of Ladakhi. An understanding of this religion would be helpful to the missionaries in their attempts to engage with the Ladakhis

¹⁰ See Marx 1891: 130, n. 14.

¹¹ Francke to La Trobe, Leh, 17 May 1899, ABU.

on matters of faith. In his early analysis of the saga, Francke (1899b) pointed to analogies with European epics, including the Edda poems from Norse mythology.

During the same period, Francke began to gather folksongs, noting down their words and in some cases the tunes. The first texts that he found were 'court songs' in praise of ancient Ladakhi monarchs. An early collection published in 1899 contains Francke's personal favourite, "The Beautiful Thseringskyid (sic)" (*Tshe ring skyid*), in praise of a girl of this name. The collection also contains references to wedding songs and, as will be seen, Francke pursued his interest in this genre in subsequent years.¹² The wedding songs relate to the Kesar saga in that they include frequent references to the same set of mythology.

Khalatse and Kyelang, 1899-1908

In 1899 Francke and Dora moved to new mission station in the village of Khalatse, some 50 miles downstream the river Indus from Leh on the historic trade route between Ladakh and Kashmir.¹³ Francke was based there until 1906, before moving to Kyelang for two years.

In Khalatse Francke continued his mainstream mission work, notably including his Bible translation activities. At the same time he was able to extend and deepen his historical, cultural and linguistic research. However, the couple's personal life was overshadowed by Dora's illness: she suffered from periodic epilepsy-like attacks, and in 1904 they were obliged to return to Germany. Dora remained there while her husband returned first to Khalatse and then, from 1906, to Kyelang. In 1907, Dora rejoined him. Unfortunately, the experiment proved unsuccessful: the following year, they again returned to Germany, thus bringing a premature conclusion to Francke's service as a full-time missionary resident in India.

During this period, Francke produced a Ladakhi translation of the Gospel of St Mark, which was later revised by Joseph Gergan (see Bible 1908; Bible 1918). He also published his *History of Western Tibet* (1907a) which, though long superseded, is still widely quoted. At the same time he published a series of articles in specialist periodicals such as *Indian Antiquary*, *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* and *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*. These helped establish his academic reputation by describing his scientific observations on missionary

12 The first Western scholar to make a study of Ladakhi songs was the Roman Catholic missionary Rev Henry Hanlon, who served in Leh in the early 1890s. Francke knew of a short note published by Hanlon in 1895, but does not appear to have been aware of a more detailed account of Ladakhi wedding rituals published in *Illustrated Catholic Missions* 9 (1895: 68-70, 86-88, 102-04). This includes translations of a selection of wedding songs, but not the original Ladakhi texts.

13 On Francke's activities in Khalatse, see Bray 1999; Bray 2009; Zeisler 1998. See also Ribbach 1940 and Ribbach 1985 for a detailed account of the village which draws on much of Francke's research.



Fig. 4. Hermann Francke and his wife Dora, possibly taken in Kyelang, c.1908.
Photo: Courtesy of Elihud George, Sabu (Ladakh).

journeys, as well as rock inscriptions, and the texts and translations of Ladakhi songs and the Kesar saga.

During this period, he also issued a number of publications on the Leh mission's lithographic press including three pamphlets on rock inscriptions, published in limited editions of 40 copies each in 1906, 1907 and 1908. These included Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions that Francke had discovered near Khalatse, as well as inscriptions associated with the Namgyal (rNam rgyal) dynasty of the Ladakhi monarchy from the 17th century onwards. In the introduction to the first of these pamphlets, Francke noted that many of the Tibetan language inscriptions had been copied down by his local assistants, and indeed the Tibetan scripts of the lithographic text show the handwriting of many different contributors.

Tharnyed Chomphel, the Tibetan Evangelist

From Francke's perspective, the most important of his Khalatse colleagues was Tharnyed Chomphel (Thar nyed chos 'phel), more commonly known simply as 'Chomphel'.

Chomphel was from Central Tibet, and had been a monk at the famous dGe lugs monastery of bKra shis lhun po. In the 1890s he had fallen ill while on a pilgrimage to Triloknath, a shrine in Lahul that is sacred to both Buddhists and Hindus, and had been left behind by his companions (see Anon. 1903). Ga Phuntsog, a Moravian evangelist, helped nurse him back to health, and Chomphel became a Christian through his influence. Soon after Francke's own arrival in Khalatse, Chomphel joined him with a view to serving as a local evangelist. Francke came to regard Chomphel, together with Gergan, as one of his closest personal associates in Ladakh: he was impressed by the strong Christian faith of both men, and saw this as a validation of his own missionary vocation.¹⁴

Chomphel's expertise as a former Buddhist monk proved to be particularly valuable when Francke was asked to decipher and comment on a set of Tibetan texts and inscriptions collected by the Hungarian scholar Marc Aurel Stein at Endere in the Southern Taklaman Desert. Endere had been abandoned in the 9th century. However, as Francke read through one of the scripts with Chomphel, he was caught by surprise when the latter interrupted him and recited the rest of the text from memory, having learnt it by heart in bKra shis lhun po (see Barnett & Francke 1907: 565). The passage in question was a religious poem that was later included in the *Theg mchog mdzod* compiled by Klong chen rab 'byams pa Dri med 'od zer (1308-1364).

Before becoming a Christian, Chomphel had served as a Buddhist monk in the Da Hanu region on the river Indus, two or three days' journey downstream from Khalatse. In Ladakh, the local inhabitants are known as 'Brog pa, while Western observers refer to them as 'Dards'. They speak their own Indo-Aryan language, and have their own distinctive traditions as expressed in — for example — their folksongs. Chomphel used his knowledge of the region to record some of these songs for Francke (1905: 93), and to begin work on a translation of St Mark's Gospel into their language.



Fig. 5. Sketch of Chomphel by A.H. Francke. Source: Völkerkunde Museum Herrnhut. Reproduced in Francke (1921: 128).

¹⁴ Personal communication from Martin Klingner, Francke's grandson, Neuwied, December 2015.

Ishe Rigzin, the Khalatse ‘Munshi’

The second key personality in Khalatse was Ishe Rigzin (Ye shes rig ‘dzin), who was the most literate man in the village and served as the local writer or ‘munshi’. He had already been of assistance to the missionaries in 1898, helping prevent frictions with the villagers who had helped build the mission house (see Francke 1899c: 397). Together with the village headman, he came to greet Francke on his arrival in Khalatse on 1 July 1899.

Francke correctly predicted that Ishe Rigzin would play an important role in the future life of the mission. He later noted that Ishe Rigzin was interested in Jesus’s teaching and had been reading in the Bible almost daily (Francke 1902c: 66). However, from a human perspective, it could scarcely be anticipated that he would make a formal profession of faith because of the risk of opposition from his family, particularly his wife. He never did become a Christian. Nevertheless, the two men built up a close working relationship.

Soon after his arrival, Francke appointed Ishe Rigzin to the post of mission schoolmaster because of his literacy in Tibetan. At first, the benefits of the mission’s educational syllabus were not obvious to the Khalatse villagers, and Francke had some difficulty assembling a relatively small quota of 14 students (see Francke 1902c: 63). As an incentive, he arranged a football match which — like other local sports — was accompanied by tunes played by one of the local musicians. The football was much appreciated but offered no enjoyment to the missionary who was left gasping for breath because of the high altitude.

Francke and Ishe Rigzin shared responsibility for teaching what turned out to be a motley collection of pupils, with an age range from six to sixty (see Francke 1902c: 64). These included two pairs of father and son, and one uncle and nephew sitting together. The village headman was among them. He started later than some of the other pupils, and therefore was not so skilled in foreign languages, but came top of the class in arithmetic.

Ishe Rigzin’s writing skills meant that he was able to be of particular service to Francke in his literary work. For example, he assisted Francke in the preparation of the *La dvags kyi ag bar*. This was a monthly newspaper, the first to be published in Ladakh. It included sections on international news, local news, Ladakhi history, and a Ladakhi proverb with a Christian commentary (see Bray 1988). Francke used it to



Fig. 6. Sketch of Ishe Rigzin by Francke. Courtesy of Völkerkundemuseum Herrnhut. Reproduced in Francke (1921: 129).

publish extracts from the *La dvags rgyal rabs*, thus sharing a hitherto obscure text with a wider Ladakhi audience. Ishe Rigzin was responsible for writing out the text of successive editions of the paper so that they could be reproduced on the Leh mission's lithographic press (see Rigzin Chodon 2012: 17), and he almost certainly drafted some of the articles.

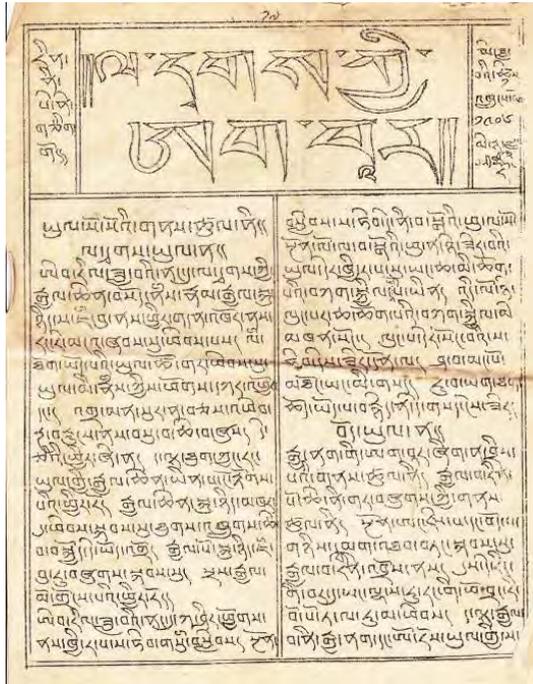


Fig. 7. May 1907 edition of the *La dvags kyi ag bar*.
Courtesy of Völkerkundemuseum Herrnhut.

Similarly, he supported Francke's historical and cultural researches by transcribing the songs, stories and reminiscences of fellow Khalatse villagers.

Konchok Tashi, the Story-teller

The most important of these was Konchok Tashi (dKon mchog bkra shis), the village story-teller. Originally from the village of Lerdo (La'i rdo), he had married into the Gyatsopa (rGya mtsho pa) family in Khalatse. He was well known for his broad repertoire, and villagers still remembered him in the 1990s, when Bettina Zeisler (1998) conducted research in Khalatse.

Konchok Tashi was renowned as a skilled narrator of the Kesar saga. Francke (1905-1941: xxviii) persuaded him to recite the epic to Ishe Rigzin, who acted as transcriber, over a period of several weeks. He then narrated a series of related stories



Fig. 8. Two portraits of Konchok Tashi by Francke. The first comes from Francke (1925:32). The second is a watercolour in the Völkerkundemuseum Herrnhut.

about other heroes in the epic. The Asiatic Society of Bengal published the texts in sections in its *Bibliotheca Indica* series from 1905 onwards, and eventually combined these into a single volume, but not until 1941, 11 years after Francke's death.

Konchok Tashi also appears as a character in *Drogpa Namgyal*, a semi-fictional biography of a typical Khalatse villager published by Francke's colleague Samuel Ribbach in 1940. As a child, the 'hero' of the book receives much of his informal education from Konchok Tashi in the form of folkstories. These included a Ladakhi version of "Reynard the fox", a trickster who repeatedly managed to outwit the other animals (see Francke 1902b; Ribbach 1940: 40-48). Earlier, Francke (1903d) had published a collection of the same stories on the Leh mission press so that they could be used as school text books.

Research into Wedding Songs

While he was in Khalatse, Francke witnessed the rituals that accompanied local wedding ceremonies. The most intriguing stages of the marriage include the scene where the *nyo pa*, the companions of the groom, go to collect the bride from her parental home. The *nyo pa* carry ceremonial white scarves, and are gorgeously dressed in ceremonial robes, including pointed golden hats. At the entrance to the house, there is a ritual exchange of songs that comes in the form of a series of riddles.

Finding that he did not understand the words, Francke asked the leader of the *nyo pa* to dictate the songs to Ishe Rigzin. The full meaning was still not entirely intelligible to Francke, and he therefore sent the text to Samuel Joldan in Leh asking him to help decipher them, and correct the spellings according to the rules of literary Tibetan. Francke subsequently published a Roman transliteration and

English translation of the first nine of these songs in *Indian Antiquary* (1901d), together with a drawing by an anonymous local artist.



Fig. 9. Indigenous drawing of a Ladakhi wedding, *Indian Antiquary* (Francke 1901d).

Francke's enquiries prompted the Khalatse villagers to share a further set of songs, the 'drinking songs' that accompany the negotiations between the families of the bride and the groom before the marriage is agreed. Again, Ishe Rigzin wrote down the words of the song as they were dictated to him. Samuel Joldan then corrected them, and they were published in a small edition on the Leh lithographic press (Francke 1903b).

Francke then had a further piece of good fortune in that he learnt that the villagers of Tagmachig (rTag ma cig), some ten miles away, possessed a manuscript set of wedding songs in the *dbu med* script. Apparently, these had been written down 50-100 years earlier in case the words were forgotten.¹⁵ For a small fee, he managed to borrow the text for a month and had it copied, again most likely by Ishe Rigzin. The transcript followed the original spelling except in the cases where the songs were the same as those already recorded from Khalatse. Francke printed out a small edition of 28 copies on the Leh mission press (Francke 1904).

15 See Walravens & Taube 1992: 51 for the text of Francke's German-language introduction.

Francke was particularly interested in the riddles posed to the *nyo pa* when they reach the bride's house. These refer to a wide range of local deities. For example, as Francke records, the people inside the house ask:

That blue smoke,
Rising upwards, what does it mean?
The blue smoke
Hanging over the ground, what does it mean?

The people inside the house reply:

The blue smoke
Rising upwards,
I think that the Lord of Heaven, dBang po rgya bzhin's anger may not be provoked,
It is an offering to him.
The blue smoke,
Is hanging over the earth,
I think that the Earth-mother,
Skyabs bdun's anger may not be provoked,
It is an offering to her.¹⁶

As with the Kesar saga, Francke argued that these songs gave vital insights into what he called the 'pre-Buddhist religion' of the region.

Meme Tsetan, the Dogra War Veteran

Meanwhile, Francke also continued his researches into more recent history. Among the oldest of the Khalatse villagers was *me me* (grandfather) Tsetan (Tshe brtan), who had served as a soldier during the Dogra invasions of Ladakh led by Zorawar Singh of Jammu between 1834 and 1842. Francke asked Tsetan to dictate his reminiscences, and Ishe Rigzin again served as his transcriber.

Previously, the only available accounts of the war had been a narrative by Basti Ram, one of Zorawar Singh's lieutenants, which was published in English translation by Alexander Cunningham (1854: 331-53); and the account prepared by Munshi Palgyas for Karl Marx. Tsetan offered a 'subaltern' view from Khalatse, differing in important points of chronology from the two earlier versions, and presenting a harsher perspective of the Dogra conquerors.¹⁷ Among other local details, he told how the Dogras had cut off the hand of man called Sukamir for trying to stir up the local population against them (see Francke 1926: 252). The amputated hand was nailed to a pole on Khalatse bridge as a warning to others, but then stolen by a cat. The villagers feared that they would be punished for the cat's misdemeanours. However, just then, an aged monk passed away: his hand was detached from the corpse, and nailed to the bridge as a substitute.

¹⁶ Francke 1901d: 134-35.

¹⁷ For an attempt to reconcile the details of the three accounts as regards the military campaigns, see Howard 1995.



Fig. 10. Two versions of a portrait of Meme Tsetan by Francke. The drawing is in Francke (1925:16). The watercolour is in the Völkerkundemuseum, Herrnhut.

Tsetan's memoirs went through a similar editing process to the first set of wedding songs. As Francke (1926: 255) explains, Tsetan spoke colloquial Ladakhi when he told his tale. However, Ishe Rigzin "contrived to embellish it with as many classical Tibetan words and grammatical forms as he thought necessary, to make the account acceptable to educated men". Francke added, "The natives themselves would never write as they speak. It is only the missionaries who pursue that aim." In Leh, Samuel Joldan corrected the spelling mistakes of Ishe Rigzin's draft, and printed an edition of 50 copies on the mission's lithographic press. Subsequently, Dora Francke prepared a German translation, also published on the mission press (Francke 1903c). Finally, Francke included the text (as revised by Ishe Rigzin and Samuel Joldan) in a collection of 'minor chronicles' published in the second volume of his *Antiquities of Indian Tibet* (1926).

Tsetan passed away in 1905 (see Francke 1926: 246). Like Ishe Rigzin, he was never baptised. However, according to Francke (1921a: 142), he was convinced of the truth of Christian teachings, and expressed the wish to be reborn in Europe so that he could receive instruction from his childhood onwards.

Zodpa Dechen, the Mission Assistant in Lahul

After Francke's transfer to Kyelang in 1906, he again focused on Bible translation, producing translations of St Mark's Gospel in the local languages of Bunan, Tinan and Manchad, which had not previously been reduced to writing.

During this period, Zodpa Dechen (bZod pa bde chen) played a similar role to Ishe Rigzin in Khalatse, assisting Francke with his linguistic enquiries, and

transcribing oral accounts. Zodpa was brought up in Lahul but — like most of the small Christian community in Kyelang — came from a Ladakhi family. During the First World War, Ernst Reinhold Schnabel, the missionary in charge of Kyelang, was obliged to leave Kyelang: Zodpa took over responsibility for leading church services and administering the mission property during the missionaries' absence (see Anon. 1916).



Fig. 11. Zodpa Dechen. The caption on the back of the photograph says that it was taken just after he had preached a sermon in Kyelang. Source: Moravian Church House, London.

Like Ishe Rigzin, Zodpa helped record oral historical accounts on Francke's behalf. Francke valued such accounts both for the information that they contained, and because they contributed to his linguistic researches. One example is the "Account of the Trade between the Kings of Ladakh and Kulū" which had continued until the 1840s. Zodpa recorded the text from a 77 year-old man in Kyor village. Francke first published it in a lithographed pamphlet with the title *Die historischen und mythologischen Erinnerungen der Lahouler* ("The Historical and Mythological Memories of the Lahulis"), which was published on the mission press in 1907. Like Tsetan's reminiscences, the text subsequently found its way into the second volume of Francke's *Antiquities of Indian Tibet* (1926: 221-24). Ishe Rigzin contributed a note on the trade from the Ladakhi perspective, and this was published in the same volume.

Engagement with the Archaeological Survey of India

Dora's continuing ill-health forced Francke to return to Germany in 1908, and this marked the end of his service as a full-time missionary resident in the Himalayas. He never lost his missionary vocation but from now on the balance of his activities shifted towards a greater emphasis on historical and archaeological research.

Despite his relocation, Francke remained in contact with his friends and former colleagues in Ladakh. In 1909 he had an opportunity to return to India under the auspices of the Archaeological Survey of India and, as will be seen, this made it possible for him to renew and strengthen his association with Joseph Gergan.



Fig. 12. Hermann and Dora Francke with their family. From left to right, the children are Hilde Deskyid, Walter Siegfried Dondrub, August Hermann. The two younger children had both Ladakhi and German names. The picture may have been taken soon after Francke's return from the mission field in 1908. Photo: Courtesy of Martin Klingner, Francke's grandson.

Secondment to the ASI

Already in 1907, Francke's publications on rock inscriptions had come to the attention of John Marshall (1878-1958), the Director General of the ASI, as well as two of his senior colleagues, Sten Konow (1867-1948) from Norway, and J. Ph. Vogel (1871-1958) from the Netherlands.¹⁸ They had asked him to undertake a number of research tasks on behalf of the ASI. In a letter to Bishop Benjamin La

18 Francke to La Trobe, Kyelang, 26 June 1907. ABU.

Trobe, the Director of the Moravian Mission Board in Germany, Francke expressed the fear that the ASI's demands on his time would conflict with his mission duties. He suggested that the Mission Board might let him go on secondment to the ASI, adding that he might still have time to continue his Bible translation activity, and that in the summer there would still be opportunities for evangelising.

Francke's withdrawal from full-time missionary service meant that he had both an opportunity, and perhaps a financial need to put this proposal into practice. Towards the end of April 1909 he received a telegram from the ASI at his home in Germany (see Francke 1914: 1). It contained an offer of a secondment of 18 months from the beginning of June. Leaving his family behind in Germany, Francke set out almost at once, and arrived in Simla on 20 May.

Francke joined the ASI at the beginning of something of a golden age in the institution's history. In 1902 the British Viceroy Lord Curzon had appointed Marshall to the newly revived post of ASI Director-General.¹⁹ Still only 26 at the time of his appointment, Marshall held this office for 28 years. A distinguished scholar in his own right, Marshall was also an outstanding administrator who supported and facilitated the work of others. Although the ASI was a British government department, it employed several leading scholars from other countries. In addition to Konow and Vogel, these included Aurel Stein (1862-1943), originally from Hungary, who is best known for his researches in Central Asia. Francke now joined their number.

The 1909 Research Expedition to 'Indian Tibet'

Marshall spent the first two weeks of June helping Francke draw up a plan for an extended archaeological field trip in the Indo-Tibetan border regions. Francke duly set out on 14 June accompanied by a small team. The expedition reached Poo in Kinnaur on 2 July. From there, they made a short excursion across the Tibetan border to Shipke. This was the only time that Francke entered Tibet 'proper' and of course he would have liked to go further, but he had made a promise to the British government not to do so. Instead, after returning to Poo, the expedition set out for Ladakh, via Tabo (ITa bo, ITa pho) and Ki (dKyil, sKyid) in Spiti. In late August, they reached Leh where Francke conducted an archaeological excavation of an old burial site, as well as chasing historical documents. They finally reached Srinagar in the Kashmir Valley on 16 October.²⁰

By far the most important member of the team was Babu Pindi Lal, the expedition photographer, who had been specially selected by Marshall. In his introduction to the published account of his journey, Francke (1914: 1) singles out Pindi Lal for special praise, noting that he had proved to be "a man ready to endure

19 On Marshall's life and career, see Wheeler 2004.

20 For a recent review of the same regions, inspired by Francke's journey, see Van Ham 2015.

hardship, and one who was prepared to carry on his work under adverse circumstances”.

Francke also benefited from the assistance of Lobzang, a former pupil of the Moravian mission school in Poo. Since he had been unable to travel further into Tibet than Shipke, he sent Lobzang, as far as Tholing (mTho lding) and Tsaparang (rTsa brang) asking him to look out for historical inscriptions on his behalf. Lobzang reported that he had found no inscriptions of any antiquity, but he did manage to copy a treaty between Bashahr and Tibet from 1679, which he had obtained from the *rdzong dpon* of Tsaparang.²¹

In Leh, Francke was able to renew his acquaintance with Joseph Gergan, and enlisted his help in tracking down and copying important historical texts. These included a chapter of the *La dvags rgyal rabs* concerning the history of the last independent kings of Ladakh. Gergan was able to confirm that this was in the possession of a Ladakhi nobleman named Tsandan Munshi, and he duly made a copy for Francke and the ASI (see Francke 1914: 118-19; Francke 1926: 3). Similarly, he copied another version of the same chapter owned by Munshi Palgyas, a leading Ladakhi scholar who — as noted above — had worked with Francke’s predecessor, Karl Marx.²² This was the beginning of Gergan’s own relationship with the ASI and, working in association with Francke, he continued to collect and copy historical documents for the survey, an activity which also provided a source of supplementary income.

The eventual outcome of Francke’s project with the ASI was the publication of two substantial volumes entitled *Antiquities of Indian Tibet*. The first, which contains a narrative of Francke’s field research, appeared in 1914. The book includes 45 pages of high-quality photographs by Pindi Lal: these represent a triumph of logistics as well as technical skill given that he would have had to use heavy glass-plate negatives, which in turn had to be carried over a series of high mountain passes.²³ The publication of the second volume was delayed by the outbreak of the First World War, and it did not finally appear until 1926. The second volume contains a revised translation of the *La dvags rgyal rabs*, drawing on all the different versions that Francke had been able to track down as well as other historical documents, including — as noted above — Meme Tsetan’s account of the Dogra war.

21 Francke wrongly dated the treaty to 1650. For a more recent analysis, which draws on Francke’s text, see Halkias 2009.

22 On Munshi Palgyas, see Sheikh 2015; Bray 2016.

23 Pindi Lal’s photographs, including a number that were not published in the book, are available on the Leiden University website, www.library.leiden.edu. See under ‘Digital Special Collections’ and then ‘Kern Institute’.

Francke's Last Visit to India, 1914-1916

Francke returned to Germany in 1910 and for the next three and a half years worked mainly from his home in Niesky in south-east Germany. He had three main tasks. The first was preparing the publication of the *Antiquities* on behalf of the ASI. Secondly, he was preparing a catalogue of Tibetan documents collected by Sir Aurel Stein in the Taklamakan desert, and thirdly he worked on the translation of the Old Testament into Tibetan.²⁴ In 1911 he was given formal academic recognition when the University of Breslau (now Wrocław) awarded him an honorary doctorate.

During this period, Francke remained in correspondence with Gergan with regard to the Bible translation, and there were plans for Gergan to travel to Germany. In late 1911 he got as far as Srinagar in Kashmir on what was to be the first stage of a journey to Europe.²⁵ However, Rev F E. Peter, the Superintendent of the Mission, recalled him to Leh. On the basis of the information available to me, it is not entirely clear why this happened, but it might have been because by this time Francke was beginning to plan another journey to Ladakh on his own account.

Across Central Asia

This journey, which eventually took place in 1914, had two objectives. The first was to collect historical and ethnographic artefacts for the Königliches Ethnographisches Museum (now the Museum Fünf Kontinente) in Munich. The second was to advance the Bible translation project by getting into direct contact with local scholars in Ladakh and Darjeeling.²⁶

Before Francke set out from Germany, he obtained a series of drawings from Ladakh and sent these to the museum. The first set of drawings was prepared by an unidentified local artist in Khalatse: they included religious as well as household objects, and the artist may therefore have been Chomphel, drawing on his experience as a former monk.²⁷ They may have been intended to serve as a kind of 'catalogue' of the objects that Francke might be able to collect in Ladakh. Francke also sent the museum two drawings of local scenes by an artist in Leh, which he had acquired through his colleague Rev. F E. Peter. One shows the interior of a typical Ladakhi kitchen. The other (see illustration) shows a Ladakhi wedding scene of the

24 Francke, *Lebenslauf*, p. 3. Phil. Fak., Nr. 1238, Mikrofiche Nr. 2. Humboldt University, Berlin.

25 23 Joseph Gergan to Benjamin La Trobe, 13 January 1912. Briefwechsel mit verschiedenen 1906-1915. MD 1588. ABU.

26 See Francke 1921a. I discuss the 1914 expedition in some detail in Bray 2015. The Bible Society correspondence concerning the expedition is in Editorial Correspondence – Tibetan. BSA/E3/3/566/1, Bible Society Archive, Cambridge University Library.

27 The drawings have the following title in Francke's handwriting "Tibetische Geräte. Zeichnungen eines Eingeborenen von Khalatse." Museum Fünf Kontinente, Francke-Körper collection, catalogue no. FK 1175. I am grateful to Isrun Engelhardt for bringing these drawings to my attention and to Michaela Appel for her subsequent assistance.

kind that Francke had been describing in his own writing. The figures in the pointed hats in the lower part of the picture are the *nyo pa*, the friends of the groom, who — as described above — were required to answer a series of riddles before entering the bride's house.



Fig. 13. Ladakhi wedding scene. Courtesy of Museum Fünf Kontinente, Munich Francke-Körper collection, catalogue no. FK 1176a.

Francke did not name the artist but says that he would be willing to paint a series of pictures showing the life of a Ladakhi from the cradle to the grave. He noted that he had been influenced by Western imagery, and therefore did not paint in a purely 'Tibetan' style. In any case, Ladakhi painters previously would not have thought of depicting local scenes.

28 Francke to Lucian Scherman, Niesky, 29 April 1913. Museum Fünf Kontinente, Francke-Körper Collection, FK 1760b.

29 The Völkerkundemuseum Herrnhut has another painting of a wedding scene in similar style, almost certainly by the same artist (see Icke-Schalbe 1990: 45); this was originally collected by one of Francke's missionary colleagues in the same period.

Wartime Internment

Together with a younger colleague named Hans Körber, Francke set out from Germany in May 1914. After travelling across Russia and Chinese Turkestan (Xinjiang), he arrived in Leh in early September. Before crossing the Karakoram, he had heard vague news of the outbreak of war in Europe. However, it was only on his arrival in Leh that he discovered that Germany and Britain were on opposite sides and that he was now regarded as an enemy alien. Francke was allowed to stay in Leh for three weeks on condition that he did not travel further than a day's walking distance from the town. He took the opportunity to continue his historical researches in Gergan's company. However, this happy interlude came to an end in October 1914 when Francke was ordered to travel first to Srinagar in Kashmir, and eventually to an internment camp for German and Austrian nationals in Ahmednagar. He was to remain there from November 1914 until March 1916.

Despite his incarceration, Francke was able to continue to do freelance work for the ASI. Gergan had made copies of a series of Ladakhi royal charters and other historical documents on behalf of the ASI, and Francke provided draft translations for Marshall.³⁰ Among others, these included a text outlining corvée labour obligations in the village of Sabu, near Leh, and an account of the events leading to the abdication of King Tsewang Namgyal (Tshe dbang rnam rgyal) in 1782.

In a draft letter written in 1915, Francke also refers to Gergan's discovery of a 107-page text concerning the 1753 Treaty of Hanle (Wam le) between Ladakh and the Purig, which was a separate kingdom from 1734 to 1758.³¹ The text includes a vivid description of the role played by Kaḥ thog Tshe dbang nor bu (1698-1755), a rNying ma lama from eastern Tibet who had served as mediator. Francke suggested that Gergan should be paid a fee of one rupee for each page that he had copied, plus a bonus of Rs 10 for discovering the text, making a total of Rs 117. Francke added that he himself was in dire financial straits, possibly because it seems that the British authorities did not cover all the living expenses of the Ahmednagar detainees. Since he had just completed 20 days' work for the ASI, he requested a fee of Rs10 per day, making a total of Rs200.

Gergan continued to collect material for the ASI and in 1916 his discoveries included the text of the Hanle wedding songs that were later translated by Elena De Rossi Filibeck (2009). However, Francke presumably did not learn of this discovery until some years later. In March 1916, together with a large group of missionary internees, he left India on board the SS Golconda.³² By the following June he was

30 Notebook by Francke, 1915. Nachlass A. H. Francke. 'Bonds and Contracts.' NL 256/91. University of Leipzig.

31 Notebook by Francke, 1915. Nachlass A. H. Francke. 'Bonds and Contracts.' NL 256/91. University of Leipzig. Schwieger (1999) has provided a critical edition of the text, including a German translation and a detailed commentary.

32 For Francke's subsequent wartime adventures, see Bray 2015.

able to return home via Holland, which was neutral in the First World War. Soon afterwards he was recruited to serve as an interpreter for Indian prisoners of war captured by the Germans. At the end of the war, he was himself interned a second time, this time in Serbia. He did not finally return home until July 1919.

Researches from Germany, 1919-1930

Francke never returned to India and, since he at first had no regular source of income, life in post-war Germany must have been particularly difficult. However, in 1922 he was appointed to a part-time lectureship at the University of Berlin, and from 1925 he was awarded a special professorship there.

In the last ten years of his life, he produced a series of scholarly publications, reinforcing his status as one of the leading Western specialists on Ladakh and Tibet.³³ His research interests ranged from Ladakhi folk culture to the deciphering of ancient Tibetan texts collected in Central Asia; and the deciphering of a draft translation of the Bon po text, the *gZer mig*. Throughout this period, Francke continued to correspond regularly with Gergan who in 1921 had been ordained as one of the first two Ladakhi ministers of the Moravian church. In the same year he moved to Kyelang to serve as the pastor of the Moravian congregation in Kyelang, and made frequent evangelistic journeys in the surrounding regions, before returning to Leh in 1926.

Francke had two reasons for corresponding with Gergan. The first is that they continued to collaborate on the translation of the Old Testament into Tibetan.³⁴ The system was that Gergan prepared the first drafts and sent them to Francke for review. Francke then sent the corrected draft to David Macdonald, a British official of part-Scottish, part-Sikkimese descent, who was then serving in Yatung, Tibet. Gergan finished his initial drafts in 1928 but the work of revision was still incomplete at the time of Francke's death in 1930, and the full Tibetan Bible was not published until 1948.

Meanwhile, as his publications show, Francke also corresponded with Gergan on scholarly matters. For example, in an article published in the *Zeitschrift der*



Fig. 14. Joseph Gergan in the 1920s or 1930s. Courtesy of Moravian Church House, London.

³³ See Walravens & Taube 1992.

³⁴ On the Tibetan Bible, see Bray 1990; Bray 1991.

Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft (1921b), he translates and transcribes a text recorded by Ishe Rigzin, most likely from Konchok Tashi the Khalatse storyteller. In 1923, he reported that Gergan had been able to locate a written version of a related text at the house of a Lahuli aristocrat. Later, Francke (1927a, 1928) announced that Gergan had discovered a Tibetan text on the ‘Questions of Skhandhar Beg’ that had been prepared for the Hungarian scholar Alexander Csoma de Kőrös in Dzongkhul (rDzong khul) monastery (Zangskar).³⁵

Alongside his other activities, Francke continued to work on the wedding songs. There were two strands to the project. In 1923, he published a translation of the Tagmachig songs under the title *Tibetische Hochzeitslieder* (‘*Tibetan Wedding Songs*’) with Folkwang Verlag. Folkwang specialised in publishing material from different cultures for an educated but non-specialist audience. Francke wrote a lengthy introduction in which he outlined his theory that the songs represented the ‘pre-Buddhist’ culture of Ladakh and the German translations were rendered in an approximation of the original metre.³⁶ However, Folkwang did not wish to reproduce the original text, and Francke regarded this as a significant shortcoming.

Hoping to find a publisher for a scholarly edition of the songs, Francke wrote to his former ASI colleague J. Ph. Vogel, who was now Professor of Sanskrit at Leiden in the Netherlands.³⁷ Vogel was among the sponsors of a new journal, *Acta Orientalia*, and Francke suggested that it might publish the text together with a full translation and annotations. Sten Konow, the co-editor of the journal, had expressed interest in the project. However, it never came to fruition. Francke later published two separate German-language collections of Ladakhi songs (1927b, 1931). However, his proposed scholarly edition of the wedding songs — including the Hanle and Rupshu songs collected by Gergan — was still incomplete at the time of his death in 1930.

Francke’s Legacy

Francke’s scholarly achievements rested not on dry and distant library research but on first-hand observation and human relationships. It is pleasing to note that Francke wrote of his Ladakhi colleagues — Gergan in particular — as his “friends”, not simply informants.³⁸

35 On these texts, see Térjek 1976.

36 Anna Paalzow is credited with refining Francke’s draft to reproduce the metre. I have not been able to find out any further details about her.

37 Francke to Vogel, 24 October 1922. Vogel papers. Kern Institute, University of Leiden. In the same card, Francke refers to Chomphel who was still living in Khalatse, and short of funds. Francke wonders whether Chomphel might perhaps be able to earn some extra funds by collecting butterflies and beetles for the Leiden Museum or, better still, recording the Dard version of the Kesar saga and producing a Tibetan translation.

38 See for example the draft introduction to his unpublished collection of wedding songs. Gergan likewise referred to Francke as his “friend” in a letter to his widow in 1935. See: Gergan to Dora Francke, Leh 21st Sept 1935. Nachlass Paul Theile, ABU.

In a reflection on the work of a missionary written in 1913, Francke wrote about how he had tried to become “a Tibetan to the Tibetans”.³⁹ Learning the grammar of the language was a vital beginning but not sufficient: it was also essential to understand local ways of thinking. As he put it, “In language, proverbs, folksongs, folkstories, games, concepts of propriety and music are stored up the cultural treasures of millennia”.⁴⁰ This search for human understanding is what led Francke to the study of proverbs, folksongs and, step by step, all his other scholarly enquiries.

Francke’s early death of course ended his collaboration with both local and international scholars, and left a number of projects unfinished. From his own perspective, the most important would have been the Tibetan Bible translation. His colleague F. E. Peter, who was still in Leh, took over his role of revising Joseph Gergan’s original drafts, and the entire text was completed by 1934 but, as noted above, not published until 1948.

The wedding songs project was not the only scholarly undertaking that Francke had in mind for the ASI. Together with H. Lee Shuttleworth, a former Indian Civil Service officer, he was also planning two further volumes of the *Antiquities of Indian Tibet*. In effect these would have amounted to a set of gazetteers of places of archaeological interest in the Indo-Tibetan border regions. The contents would have drawn on the combined knowledge of the two editors but they had not been able to visit every possible site and — for instance — the section on Diskit (bDe skyid) monastery in Nubra is based on “Notes supplied by Joseph Thse brtan [Gergan], Leh”.⁴¹ Shuttleworth was unable to complete the project on his own, but drafts of parts of the proposed volumes survive in the British Library and in the Archiv der Brüder-Unität in Herrnhut (see Jahoda 2007).

The development of Tibetan studies in Germany was disrupted by the political turbulence of the 1930s, the Second World War, and the country’s post-war partition. From the 1950s to the mid-1970s Ladakh was closed to international scholars because of its status as a sensitive border region. However, since then, there has been a marked revival and expansion of Ladakh and Himalayan studies both in India and abroad.

Of particular relevance to this essay is the publication of Joseph Gergan’s *Bla dvags rgyal rabs ’chi med gter* in 1976. The book was edited by S. S. Gergan,

39 As indicated by the title of his books (1907a, 1914, 1923, 1925–1926), Francke regarded Ladakh as part of a wider region of “Western Tibet” with its own status and history, distinct from that of Lhasa and by no means subservient to Central Tibet. Hence his reference to Ladakhis as “Tibetans”.

40 “In Sprache, Sprichwort, Volkslied, Märchen, Spiel, Anstandssitte, Musik sind die Geistesätze von Jahrtausende aufgespeichert worden”. See Francke 1913: 93.

41 “Bde-skyid (Nubra)”. H. L. Shuttleworth papers. MSS Eur D722/25, British Library. Asian and African Studies.

Joseph's son, and represents the synthesis of the author's historical researches. Arguably, it was inspired by Francke's original historical enquiries. However, it goes beyond his pioneering work both in the range and depth of its historical sources. The book has never been translated into English and therefore has yet to achieve the acclaim that it deserves.

Also in the late 1970s, the Swiss anthropologist Martin Brauen returned to the study of wedding rituals in the context of a study of Ladakhi festivals (see Brauen 1980; Brauen 1983; Brauen 1985). Maria Phylactou provided further anthropological analysis of Ladakhi wedding rituals in an unpublished Ph.D thesis (1989). More recently two Ladakhi scholars, Tsering Chosphele & Tsewang Paljor, have published a selection of Ladakhi wedding songs under the auspices of the Jammu & Kashmir Cultural Academy. Brauen drew on Francke's collection of Tagmachig wedding songs, using a copy held by the Berlin State Library. However, the task that Francke identified — providing a consolidated analysis of wedding songs from Ladakh and the wider region — has yet to be accomplished.

Elena De Rossi Filibeck's planned publication of the wedding songs collected by Francke and Gergan will represent an important step in that direction. It is to be hoped that the volume will also serve as an inspiration for future collaboration and friendship between Ladakhi and international scholars.

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A CONDENSED CATALOGUE OF 16TH CENTURY TIBETAN XYLOGRAPHS FROM SOUTH-WESTERN TIBET*

MICHELA CLEMENTE

(University of Cambridge)

Introduction

This contribution aims at presenting a condensed version of an online catalogue of 15th and 16th century Tibetan xylographs from South-Western Tibet which has been built thanks to two correlated projects, namely *Transforming Technologies and Buddhist Book Culture: The Introduction of Printing and Digital Text Reproduction in Tibetan Societies* and *Tibetan Book Evolution and Technology* (TiBET). The former was a five year project founded by the British Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC, 2010-2015) and undertaken under the leadership of Dr. Uradyn Bulag and Dr. Hildegard Diemberger, in collaboration with the British Library. The latter was a two year project (2013-2015) granted by a Marie Skłodowska Curie Fellowship and carried out by me under the supervision of Hildegard Diemberger. Both projects were hosted at the Mongolia and Inner Asia Studies Unit of the University of Cambridge.¹ The online catalogue contains information about prints preserved at the Cambridge University Library, the British Library (London), the Bodleian Library (Oxford), the World Museum (Liverpool), the IsIAO Library

* I wish to dedicate this paper to my Professor, Elena De Rossi Filibeck, whose manifest love for Tibetan culture and commitment to work and students made me decide to devote my life to this field of study. Since she spent many years working on the cataloguing of the Tucci Tibetan Collection, I hope she can appreciate this small contribution which aims at thanking her with all my heart for her constant help and support, and for transmitting her passion to me.

¹ I would like to thank all the people who helped us with several aspects of the projects: Libby Peachey, Burkhard Quessel, Terry Chilvers, Elena De Rossi Filibeck, Franz-Karl Ehrhard, Camillo Formigatti, Agnieszka Helman-Wazny, Filippo Lunardo, Katie Boyle, Michael Pahlke and his amazing team in Nepal, Jeff Wallman, Alessandro Boesi, Marta Sernesi, Daniel Sterling, Bruce Huett, Christopher Kaplonski, Fabio Miarelli, Paola Ricciardi, Anuradha Pallipurath and Mark Elliott. I am also particularly grateful to all institutions who collaborated with us: the British Library, the Cambridge University Library, the dPal brtsegs Research Institute in Lhasa, the Nepal Research Centre in Kathmandu, the Bodleian Library, the IsIAO Library in Rome, TBRC, the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology in Cambridge, the World Museum of Liverpool. I wish to express my thanks to Elena De Rossi Filibeck for passing the initial idea of the TiBET project to me during the cataloguing of the Tucci Tibetan Collection of the IsIAO Library in Rome. On the research results of the above-mentioned projects, see Clemente 2016a; Clemente 2016b; Clemente 2017; Clemente (in press a); Clemente (in press b); Clemente, Diemberger, Helman-Wazny & Lunardo (forthcoming); Clemente & Lunardo 2017; Clemente & Lunardo (forthcoming); Diemberger & Clemente 2013.

(Rome),² The National Archives (Kathmandu)³ and several libraries in Tibet.

Each entry included in the database contains the physical description of the xylograph and a description of its content, a transliteration of incipit and colophon, the mark up of personal and place names and dates in colophons as well as information on paper and pigment analysis, if available.⁴ An authority file⁵ for each person and place not available in BDRC (Buddhist Digital Resource Center) has also been created with information found in primary or secondary sources.⁶ Each entry includes pictures of the entire text, and if available, pictures of fibres in magnification from paper analysis as well as the map showing the location of the printing house where the book was produced. The database is currently searchable by title, personal name, place name and text number.

The condensed version of the database showcased in this article includes information on seventy-one sixteenth century printed texts, which are only a part of those described in the database. Fifteenth century xylographs are not presented in this contribution. Furthermore, due to space limitation, whenever there are more than one exemplar of a text the following list exhibits data on only one of the exemplars. Information on further available copies and/or different editions are provided in the footnotes, while a description of all the exemplars is available in the online database. Data displayed here was obtained from a study of colophons, an analysis of codicological features and an examination of biographies of masters involved in printing activities in the South-Western Tibetan areas. Texts are listed under the printing house where they were produced,⁷ and arranged in Tibetan alphabetical

2 The Italian government has put IsIAO under liquidation in 2011 and its library has been unaccessible until 2017, when it was moved to the Biblioteca Nazionale (Rome). The re-opening of the Library in a dedicated room of the Biblioteca Nazionale is planned for June 2018. Fortunately, we were able to photograph all Gung thang xylographs before the closedown of the institute thanks to a collaboration between IsIAO and the University of Cambridge within the AHRC project. The collaboration of the former President of IsIAO, the late Professor Gherardo Gnoli, and of the former Director of the Library, Dr. Francesco D'Arelli, was instrumental in making this feat possible.

3 Most texts preserved at the National Archives are microfilms of prints which were filmed by the Nepal German Manuscript Preservation and Conservation Projects (NGMPP-NGMCP, Centre for Manuscript Studies, University of Hamburg). The same microfilms are also kept at the State Library in Berlin.

4 Physical descriptions of the blockprints have been prepared by me in collaboration with the paper conservator, Agnieszka Helman-Wazny, and the art historian, Filippo Lunardo. They cover paper analysis and some distinctive features of prints such as design of front page and layout. The database of both projects is available at <http://bookfdb.socanth.cam.ac.uk:8080/exist/apps/TTBBC/index.html>. The website of the AHRC project is available at <http://www.ttbcc.socanth.cam.ac.uk>. The website of the TiBET project is available at www.tbevoltech.socanth.cam.ac.uk.

5 Authority files are documents containing information on people involved in the production of xylographs (craftsmen, donors, supervisors of printing projects, etc).

6 This data will be also integrated into the BDRC database as soon as possible.

7 For information on these printing houses and a map of the sites, see the website of the TiBET project.

order. When the place of printing of a certain xylograph is still under investigation, it is listed under “unknown printing house”. This short catalogue provides available data of each work such as shelfmark, title, number of pages, size, number of lines, colophon’s length, author/editor, printer; place and date of writing/editing, place and date of printing, and artists involved in the production.⁸ Secondary sources available on each text are also given in footnotes.

Condensed Catalogue

Brag dkar rta so⁹

- 1) Shelfmark: NGMPP E2518/11; Title: *Khams gsum 'dran bral grub thob ko rag pa 'i mgur 'bum bzhuks l_badzra dho dza* (ff. 1a-16a, cm 52,5x10,5, 6-7 lines, colophon: f. 16a3-6);¹⁰ Author: Ko brag pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan (1170-1249); Printer: lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal (1473-1557); Scribe: Vajradhvaja (Badzra dho dza);¹¹ Carver: dge bshes dGe 'dun. Further copies/editions: NGMPP L456/8,¹² L970/2,¹³ PT28.
- 2) Shelfmark: NGMPP L969/4_1;¹⁴ Title: *mKhas grub kun gyi gtsug rgyan l pañ chen nā ro pa 'i rnam thar l ngo mtshar rmad 'byung* (ff. 1a-46a, cm 44,6x9, 6-7 lines, colophon: f. 46a6-7);¹⁵ Author: lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal; Place of writing: Brag dkar rta so; Carver: dpon btsun Padma,¹⁶ mGon rgyal and mGon ne.¹⁷ Further copies/editions: NGMPP L36/1,¹⁸ PT22_2.¹⁹

8 Information on artists can also be found in Clemente 2016b; Clemente 2017; Clemente & Lunardo 2017.

9 Brag dkar rta so (lit. ‘white rock horse tooth’) is located between the Mang yul and Gung thang areas. This small monastery, which soon after its establishment became a famous printing house, was founded by lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal (1473-1557), a *bka' brgyud pa* master who devoted most of his life to the production of Buddhist xylographs. Since he established his seat at Brag dkar rta so in 1525, the date of printing of works produced in this monastery, unless specified in the catalogue entries, can be fixed between 1525 and 1557. On this master and his work, see Clemente 2007; Clemente 2009; Clemente 2014; Clemente 2015; Clemente 2016a: 397-98, 406-409; Clemente 2016c; Diemberger and Clemente 2013.

10 For the translation of this work, see Stearns 2000. See also Clemente 2015: 191; Clemente 2016a: 406; Schaeffer 2011: 473.

11 On this artist, see in particular the appendix in Clemente 2017: 387-88.

12 This microfilm is difficult to read.

13 Some parts of this microfilm are difficult to read.

14 In the microfilm NGMPP L969/4 this work is placed after two other texts. The catalogue of the Nepal German Manuscript Preservation Project also mentions a further copy of this text, which is a handwritten *dbu can* manuscript.

15 For a translation of this work, see Guenther 1963. See also Clemente 2015, 190; Clemente 2016a: 406-07; PBP 2007: 346; Schaeffer 2011: 469; Sernesi 2004: 257; Smith 2001: 76.

16 On this artist, see in particular the appendix in Clemente & Lunardo 2017: 311.

17 On this artist, see in particular the appendix in Clemente 2017: 386. Thanks to the study of these artists’ curricula it is possible to fix the date of printing between 1533 and 1563.

18 This microfilm is unreadable.

19 PT is the abbreviation used here for texts available in dPal brtsegs 2013.

- 3) Shelfmark: NGMPP E2518/6; Title: *Grub thob gling ras kyi rnam mgur mthong ba don ldan* (ff. 1a-61b [ff. 13 and 38 are double: the second folios are named 'og; ff. 14 and 15 are double: the first are named gong, the second 'og; the last folio is numbered 57-61], cm 52,5x10,5, 5-7 lines, colophon: ff. 57/61a-57/61b2);²⁰ Printer: lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal; Date of Printing: between 1538 and 1557; Carvers: bcu dpon rDo rje rgyal mtshan²¹ and Vajradhvaja. Further copies/editions: NGMPP L194/11, L12/1, L581/5,²² PT33.²³
- 4) Shelfmark: FGT 706;²⁴ Title: *Grub thob gtsang pa smyon pa'i rnam thar dad pa'i spu long g.yo ba* (ff. 1a-65a, cm 48,5x9,5 [44x7], 6-7 lines, colophon: ff. 64a6-65a7);²⁵ Author and Printer: lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal; Date of printing: 1543; Scribe: smon thang Kun dga' rgyal po; Supervisor of the carving: dPon btsun Padma; Carvers of the illustrations in the front: dpon btsun Padma and bcu dpon rDo rje rgyal mtshan; Carvers of the woodblocks: bcu dpon rDo rje rgyal mtshan, Thugs rab gtsang pa and mGon po rgyal mtshan. Further copies/editions: NGMPP E2518/10, L12/2, PT23.
- 5) Shelfmark: NGMPP L581/4; Title: *'Gro bavi mgon po gtsang pa rgya ras kyi mgur bum rgyas pa* (ff. 1a-52a [f. 2 is slightly damaged], cm 45,2x7,8, 5-7 lines, colophon: f. 52a4-7);²⁶ Printer: lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal; Date of Printing: 1551; Carver: bcu dpon rDo rje rgyal mtshan. Further copies/editions: NGMPP E2518/7, L970/4, L194/10.²⁷
- 6) Shelfmark: NGMPP L456/14;²⁸ Title: *rGyal ba rdo rje 'chang yab yum gyi rnam thar rin chen gter mdzod ces bya ba bzhug<s> so ll badzra dho dza he ll* (ff. 1a-11a, cm 48,5x9, 6-7 lines, Colophon: f. 11a4-7);²⁹ Author: Tilopa; Printer: lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal; Scribe: Vajradhvaja; Supervisor of

20 See also Clemente 2015: 190; Clemente 2016a: 406; Diemberger & Clemente 2013: 135; Schaeffer 2011: 472; Smith 2001: 76.

21 On this artist, see in particular the appendixes in Clemente 2017: 387, and Clemente & Lunardo 2017: 311.

22 Some parts of NGMPP L194/11 are difficult to read; L12/1 is difficult to read; L581/5 is incomplete (f. 57/61 is missing, no colophon).

23 This is a manuscript copy of the Brag dkar rta so xylograph. See also Ehrhard & Sernesi (in this volume).

24 FGT is used here for the xylographs preserved in the Tucci Tibetan Collection, IsIAO Library (Rome). For its cataloguing, see De Rossi Filibeck 2003: 341. For a description of the xylograph and the translation of its colophon, see Clemente 2007: 124, 135-37.

25 The drafting of this work by lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal is mentioned in FGT 657/5 (ff. 16a6-16b5). For a presentation of the work, see Larsson 2012: 49-51. See also Clemente 2015: 188; Clemente 2016a: 407; Clemente 2016b: 77-78; Diemberger & Clemente 2013: 134; Schaeffer 2011: 474; Sernesi 2007: 100; Smith 2001: 76.

26 See also Clemente 2015: 190; Clemente 2016a: 407; Schaeffer 2011: 472.

27 These latter microfilms are difficult to read.

28 The xylograph is damaged by water.

29 This work is also available in U rgyan rdo rje 1976: 85-105. See also Clemente 2015: 191.

- |printing sheets: Kun dga' rgyal po; Carver: dpon btsun Padma; Drawer and Carver of illustrations: bcu dpon rDo rje rgyal mtshan. Further copies/editions: NGMPP L969/4_4,³⁰ PT22_1.
- 7) Shelfmark: NGMPP L512/8; Title: *rGyud kyi dgongs pa gtsor ston pa l phyag rgya chen po yi ge bzhi pa'i 'grel bshad gnyug ma'i gter mdzod* (ff 1a-50a [f. 50 is slightly damaged], cm 47x8,5, 5-8 lines, colophon: ff. 49b7-50a7);³¹ Author: IHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal; Date of Writing: 1548; Place of Writing: Brag dkar rta so; Date of Printing: 1561; Carvers: dpon btsun Padma and mGon po rgyal mtshan. Further copies/editions: NGMPP L194/9, L1219/3, L503/2, L956/8.
- 8) Shelfmark: NGMPP L969/4;³² Title: *sGra bsgyur mar pa lo tstsha'i mgur 'bum bzhugs s.ho l dge legs 'phel l badzra dho dza* (ff. 1a-40a, cm 44,6x9, 6-8 lines, colophon: f. 40a7-8);³³ Author: gTsang smyon Heruka (1452-1507); Editor and Printer: IHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal; Date of Printing: 1552; Scribe: Vajradhvaja. Further copies/editions: NGMPP L194/7, E2518/2.³⁴
- 9) Shelfmark: NGMPP E2518/4; Title: *Chos rje dags po lha rje'i gsung l bstan chos lung gi nyid 'od* (ff. 1a-25a, cm 52x10,8, 6-7 lines, colophon: f. 25a5-7);³⁵ Author: sGam po pa; Date of Writing: 1134; Date of printing: 1550. Further copies/editions: NGMPP L970/5, L194/12, FGT1355.
- 10) Shelfmark: NGMPP L211/3; Title: *rJe rgod tshang pa'i rnam thar rgyal thang pa bde chen rdo rjes mdzad pa la mgur chen 'gas rgyan pa* (ff. 1a-42a, cm 49x8,5, 6-7 lines, colophon: f. 42a2-7);³⁶ Author: rGyal thang pa bDe chen rdo rje; Editor, Compiler and Printer: IHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal; Date of Printing: 1563; Drawer of illustrations: mKhas pa Dri med;³⁷ Scribe: yor mangs mGon blo; Supervisor of the carving: Sar tsho dpon btsun. Further copies/editions: NGMPP E2518/8, L969/5-970/1.

30 This is an incomplete text (ff. 2 and 11 are missing).

31 See also Clemente 2015: 193; Clemente 2016a: 408; Ehrhard 2004a: 593, n. 6; Schaeffer 2011: 476.

32 In the microfilm this work is placed after the biography of Nāropa.

33 See also Clemente 2015: 191; Clemente 2016a: 408; Schaeffer 2011: 470; Sernesi 2011: 201; Smith 2001: 77.

34 Some parts of NGMPP L194/7 are difficult to read, whereas E2518/2 is incomplete (ff. 1a-37a).

35 This work is mentioned in FGT 657/6 (ff. 22a5-22b4) as *mNyam med sgam po pa'i bstan bcos lung gi nyi ma*. See also Clemente 2015: 192; Schaeffer 2011: 475; Smith 2001: 77.

36 A further copy of this work is preserved in the Library of Lhalungpa, New Delhi. This text is mentioned in FGT 657/6: ff. 8a3-9a1; FGT 657/5: ff. 52a7-52b2. See also Clemente 2015: 190; Clemente 2016a: 409; Diemberger & Clemente 2013: 135; Schaeffer 2011, 472; Smith 2001: 75-76, 289, n. 183.

37 On this artist, see in particular the appendix in Clemente & Lunardo 2017: 311.

- 11) Shelfmark: FGT 1089/2;³⁸ Title: *rJe btsun mi la ras pa'i rdo rje mgur drug sogs gsung rgyun thor bu 'ga'* (ff. 1-109a, cm 49,5x8,5 [43x6,5], 5-7 lines, colophon: f. 109a6-7);³⁹ Compiler, Editor and Printer: lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal; Date of Printing: 1st April 1550. Further copies/editions: NGMPP L251/2, UL Tibetan 155.2.⁴⁰
- 12) Shelfmark: NGMPP E908/3; Title: *rJe ras chung pa'i rnam thar mdor bsdu*s (ff. 1a-39a [f. 1 is damaged and f. 6 is missing], cm 46x6, 6-7 lines, colophon: f. 39a4-6);⁴¹ Printer: lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal; Date of Printing: 1538; Carver: dpon btsun Padma.
- 13) Shelfmark: FGT 707;⁴² Title: *sTon pa sangs rgyas kyi skyes rabs brgyad bcu pa slob dpon dpa' bos mdzad pa* (ff. 1a-170a [f. 16 is slightly damaged, f. 17 is damaged; ff. 19, 66 and 161 are missing], cm 48x9 [43x6,5], 6-7 lines, colophon: f. 170a1-6);⁴³ Authors: Āryaśūra (7th century) [with additional stories by] Karma pa Rang byung rdo rje (1284-1339); Printer: lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal; Date of Printing: 1541 or 1553; Scribe: Vajradhvaja; Carvers: mKhas pa dpon btsun Padma, bcu dpon rDor rje rgyal mtshan, mGon po rgyal mtshan and dge bshes dGe 'dun; *yig gzugs par yig*: Kun dga' rgyal po.
- 14) Shelfmark: NGMPP L477/14;⁴⁴ Title: *Thun mong ma yin pa rdo rje mgur drug sogs / mgur ma 'ga 'yar bzhugs s.ho / dge legs 'phel* (ff. 1a-19a [f. 1 is damaged, ff. 2 and 3 are slightly damaged], cm 50x9, 6-7 lines, colophon: f. 19a7);⁴⁵ Author: Mi la ras pa; Printer: lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal. Further copies/editions: NGMPP E1256/1,⁴⁶ L20/3.⁴⁷
- 15) Shelfmark: NGMPP L10/21; Title: *dPe chos rin chen spungs pa'i zhung* (ff. 1a-7a, cm 50,4x9,4, 6-7 lines);⁴⁸ Author: Po to ba (1027-1105); Date of

38 For its cataloguing, see De Rossi Filibeck 2003: 394. For a description of the xylograph and the transliteration of the colophon, see Clemente 2007: 124-25, 138. For a study of the work, see Sernesi 2004.

39 According to FGT 657/6 (f. 22b4), the stimulus for printing this xylograph was provided by a woman in a dream. On the importance of visions and dreams for lHa btsun's literary work, see Diemberger & Clemente 2013: 135-37. See also Clemente 2015: 189; Clemente 2016a: 407; Roberts 2007: 38; Schaeffer 2011: 470; Sernesi 2011: 198-99; Smith 2011: 76. For a translation of the whole text, see Cutillo & Kunga Rinpoche 1978; Cutillo & Kunga Rinpoche 1986.

40 UL is an abbreviation used here for xylographs preserved in the Cambridge University Library. For the cataloguing of this print, see <http://catalogue.socanth.cam.ac.uk/exist/servlet/db/mssbp.xq>

41 See also Clemente 2015: 195; Clemente 2016a: 407; Schaeffer 2011: 471.

42 For its cataloguing, see De Rossi Filibeck 2003: 341.

43 For the translation of the colophon, see Clemente 2011: 60-61. See also Clemente 2015: 190; Clemente 2016a: 407; Clemente 2016b: 77.

44 Some parts of the microfilm are difficult to read. The initial four folios were filmed in the wrong order.

45 See also Clemente 2015: 192; Clemente 2016a: 406; Schaeffer 2011: 471; Sernesi 2011: 199.

46 This microfilm is difficult to read.

47 This is incomplete, ff. 13-19 are missing.

48 Cf. FGT 657/6: ff. 22a5-22b4. See also Clemente 2015: 193; Ehrhard 2000a: 78; Schaeffer 2011: 476.

- Printing: 1555; Carvers: mGon rgyal, mGon dar, bcu dpon rDo rje rgyal mtshan.
- 16) Shelfmark: NGMPP E2518/5; Title: *bDe gshegs phag mo gru pa'i rnam thar*; Author: bSod nams dpal (ff. 1a-18a, cm 52x11, 6-7 lines, colophon: f. 18a4-7);⁴⁹ Editor and Printer: lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal; Date of Printing: 1552. Further copies/editions: NGMPP L194/13, E693/4, L970/3.
- 17) Shelfmark: FGT 657/6;⁵⁰ Title: *rNal 'byor dbang phyug lha btsun chos kyi rgyal po'i rnam thar gyi smad cha* (ff. 1-32a, cm 47x8,5 [43,5x7], 6-7 lines, colophon: ff. 31b4-32a7);⁵¹ Date of Printing: not before 1557;⁵² Drawers of illustrations: mKhas pa Don bzang⁵³ and mKhas pa Dri med; Carvers: bcu dpon rDo rje rgyal mtshan (first part of the blocks), dpon po mGon ne, mGon po rdo rje, mGon po rgyal mtshan, mGon po, mGon po dbang phyug⁵⁴ and dge bshes dGe 'dun. Further copies/editions: NGMPP L456/7.⁵⁵
- 18) Shelfmark: FGT 657/5;⁵⁶ Title: *dPal ldan bla ma dam pa mkhas grub lha btsun chos kyi rgyal po'i rnam mgur blo 'das chos sku'i rang gdangs* (ff. 1a-54a, cm 46,5x8 [42x7,5], 4-7 lines; colophon: ff. 53b6-54a7);⁵⁷ Date of Printing: not before 1555;⁵⁸ Drawer of the illustrations: mKhas pa dPal chen;⁵⁹ Supervisor of the carving: dpon btsun Padma; Carvers: mkhas pa bSod nams bkra shis,⁶⁰ bcu dpon rDo rje rgyal mtshan, dpon po mGon ne. Further copies/editions: NGMPP L477/13,⁶¹ PT31.

49 This work is also available in U rgyan rDo rje 1976: 1-35. See also Clemente 2015: 191; Clemente 2016a: 407; Schaeffer 2011: 472.

50 For its cataloguing, see De Rossi Filibeck 2003: 331. For its description and study, see Clemente 2007: 124, 130-35; Clemente 2009; Clemente 2014; Clemente 2015 (p. 188 in particular); Diemberger & Clemente 2013; Schaeffer 2011: 475

51 See also Clemente 2016a: 408; Clemente 2016c. The work was probably written by lHa btsun's disciples, who presumably based it on their master's material.

52 I would tend to fix the latest date to 1563.

53 On this artist, see in particular the appendix in Clemente & Lunardo 2017: 311.

54 On this artist, see in particular the appendix in Clemente 2017: 387.

55 This is difficult to read.

56 For its cataloguing, see De Rossi Filibeck 2003: 331. For a description and the translation of the colophon, see Clemente 2007: 124, 130-32.

57 For a study of the work, see Clemente 2009; Clemente 2014. The work is also available in U rgyan rDo rje 1976: 273-379. See also Clemente 2015: 187; Clemente 2016a: 408; Clemente 2016c; Diemberger & Clemente 2013; Schaeffer 2011: 475.

58 I would tend to fix the latest date of printing in 1557, before lHa btsun's death, since the events related to this were not described in the work.

59 On this artist, see in particular the appendix in Clemente & Lunardo 2017: 311.

60 On this artist, see in particular the appendixes in Clemente 2017: 388, and Clemente & Lunardo 2017: 311.

61 The quality of this microfilm is not excellent. F. 2 is missing.

- 19) Shelfmark: NGMPP L10/22; Title: *dPe chos rin po che spungs pa'i 'bum 'grel* (ff. 1a-170a, cm 50,4x9,4, 5-7 lines, colophon: ff. 169b2-170a7);⁶² Author and Printer: IHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal; Place of Writing: Brag dkar rta so; Date of Printing: 1555; Carvers: bcu dpon rDo rje rgyal, mGon rgyal, mGon dbang, dpon btsun Padma, mGon rdor, rtogs ldan dGe 'dun, mKha' 'gro, mGon po, mGon ne, 'Phrin las, dPal 'byor, mGon dar; Scribes: bcu dpon rDo rje rgyal (first part) and bSod nam 'od zer (second part).⁶³ Further copies/editions: NGMPP L813/2, E2617/9.⁶⁴
- 20) Shelfmark: FGT 1356;⁶⁵ Title: *Phyag rgya chen po mal 'byor bzhi'i rim pa snying po don gyi gter mdzod* (ff. 1a-18a [f. 14 is ripped, f. 15 is damaged], cm 46,5x8 [44,5x6,5], 6-7 lines, colophon: f. 18a3-6); Author: Yang dgon pa rGyal mtshan dpal (1213-1258); Printer: IHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal; Place of Writing: dPal IHa sding Monastery; Date of Printing: 1556. Further copies/editions: NGMPP E1784/3, L194/8, L567/5.⁶⁶
- 21) Shelfmark: NGMPP L569/10; Title: *Phyag rgya chen po yi ge bzhi pa'i sa bcad sbas don gsal ba'i nyi ma* (ff. 1a-9a, cm 48,8x8,9, 6-7 lines, colophon: f. 9a4-6);⁶⁷ Author: IHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal; Place of Writing: Brag dkar rta so; Carver: dpon btsun Padma.
- 22) Shelfmark: FGT 1102;⁶⁸ Title: *Bram ze chen pos mdzad pa'i dho ha bskor gsum / mdzod drug / ka kha dho ha / sa spyad rnams* (ff. 1a-35b [incomplete, f. 26 is missing, ff. 33, 34 and 35 are damaged], colophon:⁶⁹ 35b3-7);⁷⁰ Compiler, Editor and Printer: IHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal; Date of printing: 1543. Further copies/editions: NGMPP L237/13, L456/6.⁷¹
- 23) Shelfmark: FGT 657/3;⁷² Title: *Tshe gcig la 'ja' lus brnyes pa rje ras chung pa'i rnam thar rags bsduṣ mgur rnam rgyas pa* (ff. 1-93a [f. 5 is ripped], cm

62 See also Clemente 2015: 193; Clemente 2016a: 408; Clemente 2016b: 78; Ehrhard 2000a: 78; Roesler 2000; Roesler 2011; Schaeffer 2011: 476.

63 On this artist, see in particular the appendix in Clemente & Lunardo 2017: 311.

64 NGMPP L813/2 (the last folio is missing) and E2617/9 (165 folios) are both incomplete.

65 For its cataloguing, see De Rossi Filibeck 2003: 447. For a description and the translation of the colophon, see Clemente 2007: 125, 141. See also Clemente 2015: 192; Clemente 2016a: 408; Schaeffer 2011: 476.

66 Incomplete xylograph (the first 9 folios are missing).

67 See also Clemente 2016a: 407; Diemberger & Clemente 2013: 135; Schaeffer 2011: 476.

68 For its cataloguing, see De Rossi Filibeck 2003: 397.

69 This work is a miscellanea which contains several colophons. Here only the last one is mentioned. For a description of this xylograph and a translation of some colophons, see Clemente 2007: 125, 139-40.

70 This work is mentioned in FGT 657/6: ff. 22a5-22b4. It is also available in U rgyan rdo rje 1976: 107-79. See also Clemente 2015: 189-90; Clemente 2016a: 407; Diemberger & Clemente 2013: 137; Schaeffer 2011: 468; Smith 2001: 77.

71 Incomplete and damaged.

72 For the cataloguing of this xylograph, see De Rossi Filibeck 2003: 330.

- 46x9 [44x7], 6-8 lines, colophon: f. 93a3-8);⁷³ Author: lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal; Date of printing: 1563; Carver: bcu dpon rDo rje rgyal mtshan. Further copies/editions: E2518/3.
- 24) Shelfmark: NGMPP E2518/9;⁷⁴ Title: *Yang dkon chos rje 'i mdzad pa 'i bar do 'phrang bsgrol* (ff. 1a-38a, cm 52,5x10,6, 6-8 lines, colophon: f. 38a7-8);⁷⁵ Editor: Yang dgon pa; Place of editing: dPal bu le dkar ba; Printer: lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal. Further copies/editions: NGMPP L456/5, L970/6.⁷⁶
- 25) Shelfmark: NGMPP L1107/4; Title: *Sangs rgyas thams cad kyi rnam 'phrul rje btsun ti lo pa 'i rnam mgur* (ff. 1a-24a [f. 23 is missing], cm 45,5x9, 5-7 lines, colophon: ff. 23b7-24a6);⁷⁷ Printer: lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal; Date of Printing: 1550; Carver: bcu dpon rDo rje rgyal mtshan; Scribe: Vajradhvaja. Further copies/editions: NGMPP E2517/6, L969/4_3, PT32.⁷⁸

Kun gsal sgang po che⁷⁹

- 1) Shelfmark: FGT 363/2⁸⁰ = *bKa' rgya l khu chos gnyis l lung bstan l rdor glu l kha skong rnam bzhugs s.ho ll dge 'o* (ff. 215a-343a, cm 53x10 [44x7], 4-7 lines, colophon: f. 336b1-343a7);⁸¹ Editor: rNgog Legs pa'i shes rab; Place of Editing: sNar thang; Printer: Chos dbang rgyal mtshan; Date of Printing: 1539; Scribes: snyings pa dge slong sGrol ma seng ge, snyings pa dpon yig Rin chen, snyings pa dpon yig Thugs rje skyab pa (first part);⁸² Drawers of illustrations: mKhas pa Dri med, mKhas pa Chos dpal⁸³ and mKhas pa sMon

73 For a description of the xylograph and the translation of its colophon, see Clemente 2007: 125, 142-43. See also Clemente 2015: 189; Clemente 2016a: 408; Diemberger & Clemente 2013: 135; Roberts 2007: 7-9, 37; Sernesi 2007: 45, 54-55.

74 Some folios of this microfilm are difficult to read.

75 See also Clemente 2015: 192; Clemente 2016a: 406; Schaeffer 2011: 473; Smith 2001: 77.

76 Both microfilms have many dark pictures.

77 This work is also reproduced in U rgyan rDo rje 1976: 37-83. See also Clemente 2015: 191; Clemente 2016a: 407; Schaeffer 2011: 469; Smith 2001: 76.

78 PT32 is actually a manuscript copied from the xylograph, without the illustrations. On this work, see also Ehrhard & Sernesi (in this volume).

79 Kun gsal sgang po che is located near the village of gTsang to the south-east of rDzong dkar, in Gung thang, and was the residence of *bo dong* Chos dbang rgyal mtshan (1484-1549), a religious master who promoted many printing projects in the Mang yul Gung thang kingdom (on this master, see Ehrhard 2000a: 23-50; Ehrhard 2000b: 206). On printing projects at Kun gsal sgang po che, see Clemente 2016a: 398-99, 410-11; Clemente (in press b); Clemente & Lunardo 2017; Ehrhard 2016b: 129-33.

80 For its cataloguing, see De Rossi Filibeck 2003: 132. The xylograph exhibits some underlinings made by Tucci.

81 The colophon is also provided in Ehrhard 2000a: 118-29. See also Clemente 2016a: 411; Clemente 2016b: 86; Diemberger & Clemente 2013: 129-30, n. 67; Ehrhard 2000a: 74.

82 On this artist, see in particular the appendix in Clemente & Lunardo 2017: 311.

83 On this artist, see in particular the appendix in Clemente & Lunardo 2017: 311.

- lam;⁸⁴ Carver of illustrations: mKhas pa bSod noms bkra shis; Carvers: dge slong mKha' 'gro,⁸⁵ dge slong Shes rab dpal, dge sbyong Nam mkha',⁸⁶ mkhas pa bSod noms bkra shis, bcu dpon rDo rje rgyal mtshan and mGon rgyal.
- 2) Shelfmark: FGT 361/2;⁸⁷ Title: *dGe bshes ston pas mdzad pa'i glegs bam gyi bka' rgya* (ff. 120a-123a, cm 46x9 [44x7], 7 lines, colophon: f. 123a2-7);⁸⁸ Author: 'Brom ston rGyal ba'i 'byung gnas (1008-1064); Date of Printing: 1538; Carver: lha mdun dge sbyor Nam me.⁸⁹ Further copies/editions: TBRC W00KG09688.
- 3) Shelfmark: FGT 286/2;⁹⁰ Title: *rGyal ba yang dgon chos rje'i bka' 'bum yid bzhin nor bu* (ff. 1a-128a [the first and the last folios are slightly damaged], cm 31x7,5 [30x6], 5-6 lines, colophon: ff. 127b6-128a6);⁹¹ Author: Yang dgon pa rGyal mtshan dpal; Printer: Chos dbang rgyal mtshan; Date of Printing: 1524; Scribe: mKhas pa nang tshar 'Phags skyabs; Drawer of illustrations: mKhas pa Dri med; Carvers: Chos dbang rgyal mtshan, dbon po Chos dbang, dge bshes sKyabs pa, dge bshes Sher dpal, dge bshes mKha' 'gro, dge sbyong Nam mkha', dge sbyong rDo rje, dpon chen Chos skyabs and mKhas pa bSod noms bkra shis. Further copies/editions: NGMPP L755/4-L756/1_1.
- 4) Shelfmark: FGT 286/1;⁹² Title: *rGyal ba yang dgon chos rje'i mgur 'bum* (ff. 1a-165a, cm 31x7,5 [30x6], 5-6 lines, colophon: ff. 160b2-165a6);⁹³ Author: Yang dgon pa; Printer: Chos dbang rgyal mtshan; Date of Printing: 1523-24; Scribe: mKhas pa nang tshar 'Phags skyabs; Drawer of illustrations: mKhas pa Dri med; Carvers: Chos dbang rgyal mtshan, dbon po Chos dbang, dge bshes sKyabs pa, dge bshes Sher dpal, dge bshes mKha' 'gro, dge sbyong Nam mkha', dge sbyong rDo rje, dpon chen Chos skyabs and mKhas pa bSod noms bkra shis. Further copies/editions: NGMPP L755/4-L756/1, L211/2.
- 5) Shelfmark: NGMPP L560/23; Title: *Jo bo rje'i bstod pa 'brom ston rgyal ba'i 'byung gnas kyis mdzad pa'i phun tshog bham ga ma* (ff. 1a-3a, cm 45,6x8,2, 6-7 lines, colophon: f. 3a6-7);⁹⁴ Author: 'Brom ston rGyal ba'i 'byung gnas; Date of Printing: 1540 or 1552 (*byi lo*); Scribe: dpon yig Thugs

84 On this artist, see in particular the appendix in Clemente & Lunardo 2017: 311.

85 On this artist, see in particular the appendix in Clemente 2017: 386.

86 On this artist, see in particular the appendix in Clemente 2017: 387.

87 For its cataloguing, see De Rossi Filibeck 2003: 132.

88 See also Clemente 2016a: 411.

89 On this artist, see in particular the appendix in Clemente 2017: 387.

90 For its cataloguing, see De Rossi Filibeck 2003: 2.

91 See also Clemente 2016a: 410.

92 For its cataloguing, see De Rossi Filibeck 2003: 2.

93 The colophon is also available in Ehrhard 2000a: 88-93. On the story of this xylograph, see Ehrhard 2000a: 29-30. See also Clemente 2016a: 410; Clemente 2016b: 82; Diemberger and Clemente 2013: 131.

94 On this xylograph, see Clemente (in press b); Clemente & Lunardo 2017: 301-02.

- rje sKyab pa; Drawer of illustrations: mKhas pa dPal chen; Carver: gsol dpon Nam mkha' dkon mchog.
- 6) Shelfmark: FGT 361/1_1; Title: *Jo bo rin po che rje dpal ldan a ti sha'i rnam thar rgyas pa yongs grags* (ff. 20a-119a, cm 46x9 [44x7], 5-7 lines, colophon: ff. 118b7-119a7);⁹⁵ Author: 'Brom ston rGyal ba'i 'byung gnas; Place of Writing: Ra sgren; Date of Printing: 1538; Scribe: mkhas pa Thugs rje skyab pa. Further copies/editions: PT20_1, TBRC W00KG0968.
- 7) Shelfmark: FGT 361/1;⁹⁶ Title: *Jo bo rje lha gcig dpal ldan a ti sha'i rnam thar bla ma'i yon tan chos kyi 'byung gnas sogs bka' gdams rin po che'i glegs bam* (ff. 1a-19a, cm 46x9 [44x7], 5-7 lines, colophon: f. 19a4-5);⁹⁷ Author: 'Brom ston rGyal ba'i 'byung gnas; Date of Printing: 1538-39.
- 8) Shelfmark: FGT 361/4;⁹⁸ Title: *Jo bo yab sras kyi gsung bgros pha chos rin po che'i gter mdzod l byang chub sems dpa'i nor bu'i phreng ba rtsa 'grel sogs* (ff. 247a-365a, cm 46x9 [44x7], 5-7 lines);⁹⁹ Date of Printing: 1538-39; Scribes: sGrol ma seng ge and dpon yig Rin chen; Carvers: bcu dpon rDo rje rgyal mtshan, dge slong mKha' 'gro, dge bshes Tshe 'phel,¹⁰⁰ dge bshes Chos skyong, dge sbyong mGon ne, dge bshes Ma gcig, dge bshes rDor rnam, dge bshes mGon rgyal. Further copies/editions: PT20_2, TBRC W1KG4473.
- 9) Shelfmark: NAK¹⁰¹ 743/2;¹⁰² Title: *Theg pa'i mchog rin po che'i mdzod l sa 'dhu dri zha'o l dge'o* (ff. 1a-510a [f. 233 is double], cm 46x8,5, 5-7 lines, colophon: ff. 504b1-510a7);¹⁰³ Author: Klong chen Rab 'byams pa (1308-1363); Date of Printing: 1533; Scribes: gTsang pa bSod nam 'od zer (first part), dge slong sGrol ma and his brother (second part); Drawer of illustrations: mKhas pa Dri med; Carver of the first illustrations: bSod nam bkra shis; Carvers (first part of the blocks): dge slong Padma and dge slong Nam mkha'; Carvers (second part of the blocks): dge slong Sher dpal, dge sbyong Nam mkha' and dge sbyong bZang po rgyal mtshan. Further copies/editions: NGMPP AT53/17-54/1, L1121/3-1122/1.

95 See also Clemente 2016a: 410; Clemente & Lunardo 2017: 301.

96 For its cataloguing, see De Rossi Filibeck 2003: 132. See also Clemente 2016a: 410.

97 On this work, see Vetturini 2013: 145-48.

98 For its cataloguing, see De Rossi Filibeck 2003: 132.

99 See also Clemente 2016a: 411.

100 On this artist, see in particular the appendix in Clemente 2017: 388.

101 Nak is the abbreviation used here for xylographs preserved at the National Archives of Kathmandu.

102 743/2 indicates that this is the second text of the xylograph which shelfmark is 743. This is the convention used here to distinguish texts included in the same printed volume.

103 The colophon is also available in Ehrhard 2000a: 104-14. See also Ehrhard 2000a: 73. A further copy of this xylograph is preserved in the collection of the Danish Royal Library. See Buescher & Tarab 2000, vol. 1, 296-97, catalogue no. 638; vol. 2, plate 16. See also Kapstein 2013: 318. A facsimile edition is available in Ehrhard 2000c: 1-510. See also Clemente 2016a: 410; Clemente 2016b: 86; Ehrhard 2000c: IX.

- 10) Shelfmark: FGT 363/1;¹⁰⁴ Title: *'Brom ston pa rgyal ba'i 'byung gnas kyi skyes rabs bka' gdams bu chos le'u nyi shu pa* (ff. 1a-214a, cm 53x10 [44x7], 5-7 lines, colophon: f. 214a5-7);¹⁰⁵ Compiler: rNgog Legs pa'i shes rab; Date of Printing: 1539-40; Scribe: mKhas Rin chen; Carver of illustrations: mKhas pa bSod noms bkra shis.
- 11) Shelfmark: NGMPP L66/5; Title: *mTshan ldan bla ma dam pa mnyam med chos dbang rgyal mtshan gyi rnam par thar pa l rin po che nor bu'i phreng ba* (ff. 1a-129a, cm 31,5x7,5, 5-6 lines, colophon: ff. 122b1-129b6);¹⁰⁶ Author: Chos dbang rgyal mtshan; Date of Printing: 1551; Scribe: mKhas pa bSod noms 'od zer; Carvers: dge slong mKha' 'gro dpal bzang, bcu dpon rDo rje rgyal mtshan, Vajradhvaja, dge bshes mGon rgyal, mGon dbang, mGon po rdo rje, dpon btsun Chos skyong, dPal 'byor bzang po, slob dpon gu ru dPal le, dge bshes Ngag dbang; Carvers of illustrations (first part): bcu dpon rDo rje rgyal mtshan.
- 12) Shelfmark: FGT 361/3;¹⁰⁷ Title: *Zhus lan nor bu'i phreng ba lha chos bdun ldan gyi bla ma brgyud pa rnam ki rnam thar* (ff. 124a-246a, cm 46x9 [44x7], 5-7 lines, colophon: f. 246a6-7);¹⁰⁸ Author: 'Brom ston rGyal ba'i 'byung gnas; Date of Printing: 1538; Scribe: Thugs rje skyab pa; Carver of illustrations: mKhas pa bSod noms bkra shis; Carvers: bcu dpon rDor rgyal, dge sbyong mKha' 'gro dpal bzang, dge sbyong Shes rab dpal, dge sbyong Nam mkha', dbon po Chos dbang, dge bshes Tshe 'phel. Further copies/editions: TBRC W00KG09688.

rDzong dkar/Khyung rdzong dkar po¹⁰⁹

- 1) Shelfmark: NGMPP AT61/21_8; Title: *Kun bzang thugs rje'i rnam 'phrul las* (1 folio, cm 32x7,8, 6 lines, colophon: f. 1a5-6);¹¹⁰ Author: gSang sngags rdo rje; Printer: sngags pa gSang sngags rdo rje. Further copies/editions: NAK 754/8.

104 For the cataloguing of this xylograph, see De Rossi Filibeck 2003: 132.

105 See also Clemente 2016a: 411; Clemente 2016b: 88; Diemberger & Clemente 2013: 129-30, n. 67; Eimer 1979, 1: 22; Eimer 1984.

106 The colophon is provided in Ehrhard 2000a: 165-70. See also Clemente 2016a: 411; Clemente 2017: 380, 386; Ehrhard 2000a: 77.

107 For its cataloguing, see De Rossi Filibeck 2003: 132.

108 Clemente 2016a: 411; Clemente 2016b: 77.

109 This printing house is located in the capital of Gung thang. The promoters of most printing projects carried out in rDzong dkar were Chos dbang rgyal mtshan and Nam mkha' rdo rje (1486-1553). On Nam mkha' rdo rje, see Ehrhard 2000a: 55-66. On the production of xylographs in rDzong dkar, see Clemente 2016a: 398, 409-10; Clemente (in press b); Clemente & Lunardo 2017.

110 The title is taken from the incipit.

- 2) Shelfmark: FGT 671/3;¹¹¹ Title: *sKyes mchog gi rnam mgur chen mo'i dkyus na mi gsal ba'i gsang ba'i rnam thar rags sdus shig* (ff. 193b-206a, cm 48x9 [44x7], 7 lines, colophon: ff. 205b5-206a7);¹¹² Compilers: mkhas btsun Yontan rgyal mtshan and sum ldan bikṣu Ga ga badzra; Date of Printing: 1540. Further copies/editions: NGMPP L618/2, 619/1, L195/9_3, PT21_3.
- 3) Shelfmark: FGT 671/5;¹¹³ Title: *sKyes mchog 'ba' ra bas mdzad pa'i sgrub pa nyams su blang ba'i lag len dgos 'dod 'byung ba'i gter mdzod* (ff. 223a-365a, cm 48x9 [44x7], 4-7 lines, colophon: f. 365a4-7);¹¹⁴ Author: 'Ba' ra ba rGyal mtshan dpal bzang; Printer: Nam mkha' rdo rje (1480-1553); Place of Writing: Don grub sdings ri khrod (Shangs Valley);¹¹⁵ Date of Printing: 1540-41; Carver of illustrations: mKhas pa bSod nam bkra shis; Carvers: Vajradhvaja, Nam mkha', Nam bzang, dge slong mKha' 'gro, mGon ne, Ma cig, mGon dbang, dge bshes Chos skyong, dpon yig dKon skyabs, dge bshes rGyal po, mGon rgyal, mGon rdor. Further copies/editions: NGMPP L540/4-L541/1, L195/10, L1107/8, L1119/2, L1208/4, PT21_5.
- 4) Shelfmark: FGT 671/7;¹¹⁶ Title: *sKyes mchog 'ba' ra pas mdzad pa'i mdo sngags kyi smon lam* (ff. 398a-401a, cm 48x9 [44x7], 7 lines, colophon: f. 401a5-7);¹¹⁷ Author: 'Ba' ra ba rGyal mtshan dpal bzang; Printer: Nam mkha' rdo rje; Date of Printing: 1540. Further copies/editions: NGMPP L195/12.
- 5) Shelfmark: FGT 671/4;¹¹⁸ Title: *Ka kha'i gsol 'debs sogs mgur phran tshogs rnam* (ff. 206b-222a, cm 48x9 [44x7], 6-7 lines, colophon: f. 222a1-6);¹¹⁹ Author: 'Ba' ra ba rGyal mtshan dpal bzang; Printer: Nam mkha' rdo rje; Date of Printing: 1540; Carvers: Ma cig, mGon dbang, Sher rgyal. Further copies/editions: PT21_4, L618/2-L619/1, L195/9_4.
- 6) Shelfmark: FGT 671/1;¹²⁰ Title: *rJe btsun 'ba' ra ba rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po'i rnam thar mgur 'bum dang bcas pa* (ff. 1a-190b, cm 48x9 [44x7], 5-7

111 For its cataloguing, see De Rossi Filibeck 2003: 335.

112 Clemente 2016a: 410. For the story of the printing of 'Ba' ra ba rGyal mtshan dpal bzang's biography, spiritual songs as well as his *sGrub pa nyams su blang ba'i lag len dgos 'dod 'byung ba'i gter mdzod*, see Ehrhard 2000a: 44-45, n. 38, 61-63, 75-76. According to the biographies of Chos dbang rgyal mtshan and Nam mkha' rdo rje, the execution as prints of these five texts (cf. FGT 671/1-5) was done at 'Dzo lhas, the place where Nam mkha' rdo rje was residing at that time. Only two colophons of these five xylographs mention the place of printing but this surprisingly is rDzong dkar. It seems therefore that the preparation of wood for blocks and their carving was done at 'Dzo lhas whereas the final stage of printing took place at rDzong dkar.

113 For its cataloguing, see De Rossi Filibeck 2003: 335.

114 Cf. note 112. See also Clemente 2016a: 410.

115 Don grub sdings was the residence of the family of 'Ba' ra ba rGyal mtshan dpal bzang. See Ehrhard 2000a: 52.

116 For its cataloguing, see De Rossi Filibeck 2003: 335-36.

117 See also Clemente 2016a: 410.

118 For its cataloguing, see De Rossi Filibeck 2003: 335.

119 Cf. note 112. See also Clemente 2016a: 410.

120 For its cataloguing, see De Rossi Filibeck 2003: 335.

- lines, colophon: f. 190b4);¹²¹ Author: ‘Ba’ ra ba rGyal mtshan dpal bzang; Printer: Nam mkha’ rdo rje; Date of Printing: 1540; Carvers of illustrations (front page): mKhas pa bSod nams bkra shis; Carvers: bcu dpon rDo rje rgyal mtshan, dge slong mKha’ ’gro, dge sbyong Nam mkha’, dge sbyong mGon ne, Nam me, dge bshes Tshe ’phel, dge bshes Ma gcig, dge bshes mGon dbang, Sher rgyal, Vajradhvaja. Further copies/editions: NGMPP L195/9_1, L518/4, L535/5,¹²² L618/2-L619/1, L785/2-L786/1, L1107/8-L1108/1, L1118/5-L1119/1, PT21_1.
- 7) Shelfmark: NGMPP AT61/21_1;¹²³ Title: *Nyams yig ma ñi’i lu gu rgyud* (ff. 1a-37a, cm 32x7,8, 7 lines, Colophon: ff. 36b2-37a6);¹²⁴ Author: bTsun pa Chos legs (1437-1521); Date of Printing: 1521; Scribe: brgya dpon Chos skyong rdo rje; Drawer of illustrations: mKhas pa Dri med; Carvers: bshes gnyen Kun ne, Chos dbang rgyal mtshan and bSod nams rnam rgyal.¹²⁵ Further copies/editions: NGMPP L189/3, L390/4, NAK 754/1.
- 8) Shelfmark: NGMPP L143/6-L144/1;¹²⁶ Title: *sPrul sku bstan gnyis gling pa padma tshe dbang rgyal po’i mgur ’bum dgos ’dod kun ’byung* (ff. 1a-187a [ff. 131 and 132 are missing], cm 32,7x7,4, 5-7 lines, colophon: ff. 185a4-187a7);¹²⁷ Author: bsTan gnyis gling pa Tshe dbang rgyal po (1480-1535); Date of Printing: 1537; Scribes: bSod nams ’od zer, Thugs rje skyab pa, dKon mchog skyab pa (*smad cha par byang*); Drawer of illustrations: mKhas pa Dri med; Carver of illustrations: bSod nams bkra shis; Carvers: Vajradhvaja, Mang thos, dge slong mKha’ ’gro, bcu dpon rDo rje rgyal mtshan, Tshe ’phel, Padma, dge slong Shes dpal.
- 9) Shelfmark: NGMPP L189/4; Title: *sPrul sku rig ’dzin mchog ldan mgon po’i rnam thar mgur ’bum dad ldan spro ba bskyed byed* (ff. 1a-241a, cm 32,5x7,5, 5-7 lines, colophon: ff. 239b2-241a7);¹²⁸ Author: mChog ldan mgon po; Printer: Chos dbang rgyal mtshan; Date of Printing: 1527; Scribe: Chos ’phags bzang po; Drawer of illustrations: sman thang srol ’dzin dKon mchog rgyal po; Carvers of illustrations: dge sbyong bSod nams bkra shis and lha ris

121 Cf. note 112. See also Clemente 2016a: 409; Clemente 2017: 380.

122 This latter text was printed at gNas.

123 The number after the underscore () is used here to distinguish the different texts within the same microfilm.

124 This text is also reproduced in Ehrhard 2000b: 349-85. The colophon is transliterated in Ehrhard 2000a: 87. See also Clemente 2016a: 409; Clemente 2016b: 86; Clemente (in press c); Ehrhard 2000a: 71; Ehrhard 2000b: XVI.

125 On this artist, see in particular the appendix in Clemente & Lunardo 2017: 311.

126 The pictures of the second part of *sPrul sku bstan gnyis gling pa padma tshe dbang rgyal po’i mgur ’bum dgos ’dod kun ’byung* start from L144/1_122. The first part of this microfilm (L144/1_1-121) contains the *rnam thar* of bsTan gnyis gling pa.

127 The colophon is transliterated in Ehrhard 2000a: 115-17. See also Ehrhard 2000a: 73.

128 The colophon is transliterated in Ehrhard 2000a: 101-03. On the story of its printing, see Ehrhard 2000a: 32-33, 72-73. See also Clemente 2016a: 409.

sKyab pa; Carvers: dge bshes mKha' 'gro, dge sbyong bSod nams bkra bshis, dpon yig Ye shes, lha ris sKyab pa, bcu dpon bDe legs, dpon yig dKon mchog skyab pa, dge bshes Dri med dpal ldan and dge bshes bKra shis dpal bzang. Further copies/editions: NGMPP L9/3.¹²⁹

- 10) Shelfmark: FGT 671/2;¹³⁰ Title: *'Ba' ra pa rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po gi rnam thar kha skong* (ff. 190b-193a, cm 48x9 [44x7], 7 lines, colophon: ff. 192b7-193a7);¹³¹ Author: Nam mkha' rgya mtsho; Printer: Nam mkha' rdo rje; Date of Printing: 1540. Further copies/editions: NGMPP L618/2-619/1, L195/9_2, PT21_2.

'Tsho rkyen/mTshe rkyen¹³²

- 1) Shelfmark: NGMPP AT150/7; Title: *Grol lam gsal bar byed pa snying gnam rin po che 'i phreng ba* (ff. 1a-20a, cm 32,5x8,5, 5-7 lines, colophon: f. 20a6-7);¹³³ Author and Printer: bTsun pa Chos legs; Date of Writing: 1501-04; Place of Writing: Chab rom phug; Date of Printing: 1514;¹³⁴ Drawer of illustrations: Chos bzang; Carvers: gnas brtan Seng ge and dpon yig dPal ldan rgyal po. Further copies/editions: NAK 927/2.
- 2) Shelfmark: NGMPP AT61/21_2; Title: *blTa ba 'i skabs rnam par bzhag pa* (ff. 1a-76a, cm 32x7,8, 4-7 lines);¹³⁵ Author: bTsun pa Chos legs; Date of Writing: 1501-1504; Place of Writing: Chab rom phug; Date of Printing: 1514; Drawer of illustrations: ITas dga' Chos bzang;¹³⁶ Scribe: mKhas pa 'Phags skyabs; Carvers: gnas brtan dge slong Seng ge and Chos skyong. Further copies/editions: NAK 754/2, NAK 927/3, NGMPP AT150/8, L189/3_1.

129 A handwritten version of this text is available in dPal brtsegs 2013 (PT16). On this work, see Ehrhard & Sernesì (this volume).

130 For its cataloguing, see De Rossi Filibeck 2003: 335.

131 Cf. note 112. See also Clemente 2016a: 409.

132 'Tsho rkyen was a hermitage where bTsun pa Chos legs and Chos dbang rgyal mtshan used to stay. It should be located not far from Chab rom phug, in Mang yul Gung thang. See Ehrhard 2000b: XIII-XV. See also Clemente (forthcoming b).

133 According to Ehrhard 2000b: XIII-XIV, this is the first of five chapters included in the textbook (*yig cha*) on Mahāmudrā written by bTsun pa Chos legs. The title of this xylograph should actually be that of the textbook, whereas the title of the first chapter should be *gZhi 'i skabs rnam par bzhag pa*. This latter is indeed the title found in the colophon. Cf. f. 20a6-7. A facsimile copy of this xylograph is available in Ehrhard 2000b: 1-20. See also Clemente (in press b); Clemente (in press c)

134 The date and place of printing are mentioned in the biography of bTsun pa Chos legs (cf. ff. 109b6-110a1). See also Ehrhard 2000a: 70, n. 4; Ehrhard 2000b: XIV.

135 This is also reproduced in Ehrhard 2000b: 21-96. It is the second chapter of the textbook (*yig cha*) on Mahāmudrā entitled *Grol lam gsal bar byed pa snying gnam rin po che 'i phreng ba* (see Ehrhard 2000b: XIV. Cf. colophon AT61/21_5). See also Clemente (in press b); Clemente (in press c). This work was erroneously identified as a rDzong dkar print in Clemente 2016a: 409.

136 On this artist, see in particular the appendix in Clemente & Lunardo 2017: 311.

- 3) Shelfmark: NGMPP AT61/21_3; Title: *sGom pa'i skabs rnam par bzhag pa* (ff. 1a-47a, cm 32x7,8, 7 lines);¹³⁷ Author: bTsun pa Chos legs; Date of Writing: 1501-1504; Place of Writing: Chab rom phug; Date of Printing: 1514; ITas dga' Chos bzang; Scribe: mKhas pa 'Phags skyabs; Carvers: *dpon yig dPal ldan* and *bSod nams rnam rgyal*. Further copies/editions: NGMPP AT150/9, L189/3_2, NAK 754/3, NAK 927/4.
- 4) Shelfmark: NGMPP AT61/21_4; Title: *sPyod pa'i skabs rnam par bzhag pa* (ff. 1a-66a, cm 32x7,8, 7 lines);¹³⁸ Author: bTsun pa Chos legs; Date of Writing: 1501-1504; Place of Writing: Chab rom phug; Date of Printing: 1514; ITas dga' Chos bzang; Scribe: mKhas pa 'Phags skyabs; Carvers: Chos skyabs *dPal bzang*¹³⁹ and *dKon mchog*. Further copies/editions: NGMPP AT150/10, L189/3_3, NAK 754/4, NAK 927/5.
- 5) Shelfmark: NGMPP AT61/21_5; Title: *'Bras bu'i skabs rnam par bzhag pa*; (ff. 1a-30a, 32x7,8, 7 lines, Colophon: ff. 28b5-30a7);¹⁴⁰ Author: bTsun pa Chos legs; Date of Writing: 1514; Place of Writing: Chab rom pug; Date of Printing: 1514; Drawer of illustrations: ITas dga' Chos bzang; Scribe: mKhas pa 'Phags skyabs; Carvers: *dPal ldan rgyal po* and *bSod nams rnam rgyal*. Further copies/editions: NGMPP AT150/11, L189/3_4, L501/2, NAK 754/5, NAK 927/6.

Chab rom phug¹⁴¹

- 1) Shelfmark: NGMPP L18/3;¹⁴² Title: *dPal ldan bla ma dam pa chos legs mtshan can gyi rnam thar yon tan 'brug sgra* (ff. 1a-150a, cm 32,8x7,8, 5-6

137 This text is also reproduced in Ehrhard 2000b: 97-143. It is the third chapter of the *Grol lam gsal bar byed pa snying gam rin po che'i phreng ba* (see Ehrhard 2000b: XIV. Cf colophon AT61/21_5). This work was erroneously identified as a rDzong dkar print in Clemente 2016a: 409. See also Clemente (in press b); Clemente (in press c); Ehrhard 2000a: 70.

138 This text is also reproduced in Ehrhard 2000b: 145-210. It is the fourth chapter of the *Grol lam gsal bar byed pa snying gam rin po che'i phreng ba* (see Ehrhard 2000b: XIV. Cf colophon AT61/21_5). This work was erroneously identified as a rDzong dkar print in Clemente 2016a: 409. See also Clemente (in press b); Clemente (in press c); Ehrhard 2000a: 70.

139 On this artist, see in particular the appendix in Clemente & Lunardo 2017: 311.

140 This text is also reproduced in Ehrhard 2000b: 211-40. It is the fifth chapter of the *Grol lam gsal bar byed pa snying gam rin po che'i phreng ba* (see Ehrhard 2000b: XIV. Cf colophon). This work was erroneously identified as a rDzong dkar print in Clemente 2016a: 409. See also Clemente (in press b); Clemente (in press c); Ehrhard 2000a: 70.

141 Chab rom phug was a hermitage located near the village of Rud, south of Kun gsal sGang po che and West of rDzong dkar. Its exact location is still unknown. The site was established by bTsun pa Chos legs as one of his retreat places, therefore the works printed there seem to be associated with the Bo dong pa tradition. Chos dbang rgyal mtshan also moved there in 1511. It seems that the production of prints at Chab rom phug is connected with these masters and that it stopped after their death; however, this question is still under investigation. See Clemente 2016a: 400, 412; Clemente 2016b: 80; Clemente (in press c); Clemente & Lunardo (2017); Ehrhard 2000a: 24.

142 Some parts of the microfilm are difficult to read.

lines, colophon: ff. 145a3-150a5);¹⁴³ Author: 'Jigs med bzang po and other disciples; Supervisor of the Printing: dge slong dBang phyug dpal ldan and dge slong Chos dbang rgyal mtshan; Date of Writing: 1520; Place of Writing: Chab rom phug;¹⁴⁴ Date of printing: 1525;¹⁴⁵ Scribe: mKhas pa nang tshar 'Phags skyabs; Drawer of illustrations: dpon chen Grags mgon;¹⁴⁶ Carver: mKhas pa Chos skyabs dpal bzang. Further copies/editions: NGMPP L66/7-L67/1, PT15.

- 2) Shelfmark: NGMPP AT61/21_7; Title: *Phyag rgya chen po 'i dka' ba 'i gnas gsal byed sgron ma* (ff. 1a-25a, cm 32x7,8, 7 lines, colophon: f. 25a3-7);¹⁴⁷ Author: bTsun pa Chos legs; Place of Writing: Chab rom phug; Date of Writing and Printing: 1515;¹⁴⁸ Scribe: mKhas pa 'Phags pa; Carver: sdom brtson bSam seng.¹⁴⁹ Further copies/editions: NGMPP L501/2_2, L948/1, L340/16, NAK 754/7, NAK 927/7.
- 3) Shelfmark: FGT 286/3;¹⁵⁰ Title: *Phyag rgya chen po 'i khrid yig bzhugs // skal bzang gso ba 'i bdud rtsi snying po bcud bsdus* (ff. 1a-81a [f. 2 is missing, ff. 4, 5, 6 are handwritten, f. 5 is 2 folios long], cm 33x8 [30x6], 7 lines, colophon: ff. 80b6-81a7);¹⁵¹ Author: bTsun pa Chos legs; Printer: bTsun pa Chos legs; Place of Writing: Chab rom phug; Date of Writing and Printing: 1515;¹⁵² Scribe: mkhas pa 'Phags pa; Carvers: bshes gnyen Kun ne, sdom brtson bSam seng, Chos dbang rgyal mtshan, sa skyong yig dpon dPal ldan rgyal po, Chos skyabs dpal bzang and bSod nams rnam rgyal. Further copies/editions: L501/2_1, AT61/21_6, L390/3, NAK 754/6.

gNas¹⁵³

- 1) Shelfmark: NGMPP L109/11; Title: *mKhas grub sha ra rab 'jam pa sangs rgyas seng ge 'i rnam thar mthong ba don ldan ngo mtshar nor bu 'i phreng ba*

143 The colophon is transliterated in Ehrhard 2000a: 95-100. See also Clemente 2016a: 412; Ehrhard 2000a: 72.

144 For author, date and place of writing, cf. ff. 117b5-118a3.

145 See also Ehrhard 2000a: 72; Ehrhard 2016a.

146 On this artist, see in particular the appendix in Clemente & Lunardo 2017: 311.

147 This text is also reproduced in Ehrhard 2000b: 323-47. See also Clemente (in press b); Clemente (in press c); Ehrhard 2000a: 71; Ehrhard 2000b: XV.

148 On place and date of printing, cf. NGMPP L18/3: f. 110a3-5.

149 According to the biography of bTsun pa Chos legs, another carver worked on the blocks, namely dPal ldan rgyal po. Cf. NGMPP L18/3: f. 110a5.

150 For the cataloguing of this xylograph, see De Rossi Filibeck 2003: 2.

151 This text is also reproduced in Ehrhard 2000b: 241-321. See also Clemente 2016a: 412; Clemente 2016b: 81-82; Clemente (in press b); Clemente (in press c); Ehrhard 2000a: 24, 71; Ehrhard 2000b: XV.

152 On the composition and printing of this xylograph, cf. NGMPP L18/3: f. 110a3-5.

153 gNas is located in the vicinity of sKyid grong, in Mang yul, and is the birthplace of Rab 'byams pa Byams pa phun tshogs (1503-1581), a disciple of both iHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal and rGod tshang ras chen. He followed his teachers' example and undertook many printing projects

- shar 'dod yid 'phrog blo gsal mgul brgyan* (ff. 1a-26a, cm 48x8,8, 5-7 lines, colophon: ff. 25b6-26a5);¹⁵⁴ Author: Zla ba rgyal mtshan; Printer: Byams pa phun tshogs; Date of Printing: 1559. Further copies/editions: PT36.
- 2) Shelfmark: FGT 587;¹⁵⁵ Title: *'Jam dbyangs zhal gyi pad dkar 'dzum bya nas / lung rigs kyi gter mdzod ze 'bru bzheng la / blo gsal rkang drug ldan rnam pa phur lding rol / legs bshad sbrang rtsi 'i dga' ston 'gyeng pa* (ff. 1a-124a, cm 64x11 [60x8], 7-8 lines, colophon: ff. 122b6-124a3);¹⁵⁶ Author: Shākya btsun pa Kun dga' chos bzang (1433-1503); Printer: Byams pa phun tshogs; Date of Printing: 1561; Scribe: bcu dpon rDo rje rgyal mtshan; Drawer of illustrations: mKhas pa Don bzang; Carvers: bcu dpon rDor rgyal, mGon rgyal and mGon dbang.
- 3) Shelfmark: NGMPP L535/5; Title: *rJe btsun 'ba' ra ba rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po 'i rnam thar mgur 'bum dang bcas pa* (ff. 1a-214b [ff. 7, 20, 200-212 are missing], cm 47,8x8,8, 5-7 lines, colophon: f. 214a7-214b5);¹⁵⁷ Author: 'Ba' ra ba rGyal mtshan dpal bzang; Editor: rGod tshang ras chen (1482-1559); Printer: Byams pa phun tshogs; Date of Printing: between 1555 and 1581. Further copies/editions: PT21_1, FGT 671/1, NGMPP L195/9_1, L518/4, L618/2-L619/1, L785/2-L786/1, L1107/8-L1108/1, L1118/5-L1119/1.
- 4) Shelfmark: FGT 657/4;¹⁵⁸ Title: *rJe btsun ras chung rdo rje grags pa 'i rnam thar rnam mkhyen thar lam gsal bar ston pa 'i me long ye shes kyi snang ba*

in the Gung thang kingdom starting from 1555. On this master, see Ehrhard 2012. On the production of gNas xylographs, see Clemente 2016a: 399, 411-12; Clemente 2016b: 76-80; Clemente (in press b); Clemente (in press c); Clemente & Lunardo 2017.

154 This text is also available in U rgyan rdo rje 1976: 451-501. For a translation of the colophon, see Bacot 1954: 292. The transliteration of the printing colophon is provided in Ehrhard 2012: 173. See also Clemente 2016a: 412; Schaeffer 2011: 473.

155 For its cataloguing, see De Rossi Filibeck 2003: 314. The transliteration of the colophon is provided in Clemente (in press b). According to the biography of Byams pa phun tshogs, he executed this work as a print before two years had passed from rGod tshang ras chen's death. Byams pa phun tshogs offered it to the monastery of Thub bstan sKyed mo tshal (Ehrhard 2012: 163).

156 See also Clemente 2016a: 412; Clemente 2016b: 76-80.

157 The transliteration of the colophon is provided in Clemente (in press b). See also Clemente 2016a: 411.

158 For its cataloguing, see De Rossi Filibeck 2003: 330-31. For a description and a partial translation of the colophon, see Clemente 2007: 143-150. This xylograph was erroneously identified as a Brag dkar rta so print in Clemente 2007: 125. According to the biography of Byams pa phun tshogs, he spent 5 months with rGod tshang ras chen at Ras chung phug, where he received a great number of reading authorizations, including the one of the biography of Ras chung pa, which was based on a xylographic edition of the text (see Ehrhard 2012: 158). Then, in 1559 he decided to print the biography of Ras chung pa written by rGod tshang ras chen, also thanks to a dream of his teacher and author of this work. He began to work in the fourth Hor month of the sheep-year, when he was 57, and finished on the fifteenth day of the fifth Hor month of the same year (see Ehrhard 2012: 162). This work was first printed in 1531 at Ras chung phug (see Roberts 2007: 40-47).

(ff. 1a-243a [ff. 198-199 and 232-233 are on the same folio], cm 47x8 [42x7,5], 7 lines, colophon: ff. 240a6-243a7);¹⁵⁹ Author: rGod tshang ras chen (1482-1559); Printer: Byams pa phun tshogs; Date of Printing: 1559; Scribes: mKhas pa bSod nams 'od zer and bcu dpon rDo rje rgyal mtshan; Carver of illustrations (first part): bcu dpon rDo rje rgyal mtshan; Carvers: mGon po, bcu dpon rDo rje rgyal mtshan, dGe 'dun, mGon rgyal, mGon dbang, rig pa rDo rje, mGon ne, 'Phrin las. Further copies/editions: UL Tibetan 155.1, PT34, TBRC W00JW501203.

- 5) Shelfmark: L586/9-569/1;¹⁶⁰ Title: *sTon pa thams cad mkhyen pa 'i skyes rabs phreng / bcu phrag gsum dang bzhi ni dpa' bo 'i ste / phyi nas rang byung rdo rjes bdun lhag pa 'i / drug bcus brgya rtsa rdzogs par mdzad pa* (ff. 1a-422a, 7 lines, colophon: ff. 421a2-422a6);¹⁶¹ Authors: Āryasūra [with additional stories by] Karma pa Rang byung rdo rje; Printer: Byams pa phun tshogs; Date of Printing: 1573-74. Further copies/editions: FGT 669, NGMPP L961/3-962/1, PT38.

Glang phug (La 'de Valley)¹⁶²

- 1) Shelfmark: FGT 709/2;¹⁶³ Title: *Shākya 'i dge slong rdo rje 'dzin pa chen po / nam mkha' rdo rje 'i rnam par thar pa ngo mtshar gsal ba 'i me long* (ff. 1a-53a, cm 48x8,5 [44,5x7,5], 5-7 lines, colophon: ff. 51/52b3¹⁶⁴-53a6);¹⁶⁵ Author: Chos rgyal lhun grub; Printer: Nam mkha' dpal 'byor; Date of Printing: 1554; Carvers: dpon btsun Padma, mGon rgyal, mGon dbang, mGon po rdo rje, dPal 'byor. Further copies/editions: NGMPP L18/13.
- 2) Shelfmark: FGT 709/3;¹⁶⁶ Title: *Shākya 'i dge slong rdo rje 'dzin pa / nam mkha' rdo rje 'i mgur 'bum / yid bzhin nor bu 'i bang mdzod* (ff. 1a-25a, cm 48x8,5 [45x7,5], 6-7 lines, colophon: ff. 22b6-25a6);¹⁶⁷ Printer: Nam mkha' dpal 'byor; Date of Printing: 1554; Drawer of illustrations: mKhas pa bSod nams 'od zer; Carver of the first illustrations: bcu dpon rDo rje rgyal mtshan. Further copies/editions: NGMPP L18/15.

159 See also Clemente 2016a: 411-12; Clemente 2016b: 79; Smith 2001: 76.

160 For a description, see Sernesi 2016: 287-94, 313-14.

161 See also; Ehrhard 2012: 166.

162 We do not know the exact location of Glang phug, which was presumably situated in the La 'de/'debs Valley. See Clemente 2016a: 400, 412; Clemente & Lunardo 2017.

163 For its cataloguing, see De Rossi Filibeck 2003: 342. For the transliteration of the colophon, see Clemente (in press b). For a summary of the life story of Nam mkha' rdo rje based on this work, see Ehrhard 2000a: 55-66.

164 F. 51 is numbered as *nga gcig / nga gnyis /*

165 See also Clemente 2016a: 412; Sernesi 2013: 205.

166 For its cataloguing, see De Rossi Filibeck 2003: 342.

167 The colophon of this work is also provided in Ehrhard 2000a: 171-75. See also Clemente 2016a: 412; Ehrhard 2000a: 55-66, 77; Sernesi 2013: 205.

A ti sha'i chos 'khor (La 'de Valley)¹⁶⁸

- 1) Shelfmark: FGT 1466;¹⁶⁹ Title: *rGyal ba yang dgon pa'i thugs kyi bcud ngo sprod bdun gyi mgrur ma* (ff. 1a-34a [f. 1 is ripped], cm 47x9 [44x7], 6-7 lines, colophon: ff. 33a1-34a7);¹⁷⁰ Author: 'Ba' ra ba rGyal mtshan dpal bzang po; Printers: Nam mkha' rdo rje and rtogs ldan dPal mgon; Date of Printing: 1546; Scribe: Lan 'de Tshe rings; Drawer of illustrations: mKhas pa sKyab pa; Carver of illustrations: dpon btsun Padma; Carver: rDo rje tshe brtan.

Khams gsum g.yul las rnam rgyal¹⁷¹

- 1) Shelfmark: NGMPP L546/4; Title: *Rang byon jo bo 'phags pa wa ti bzang po'i rnam thar nyi ma'i dkyil 'khor* (ff. 1a-17a [f. 1 is handwritten], cm 31x7,2, 5-6 lines, colophon: ff. 16b5-17a6);¹⁷² Author: dPal ldan dar (1424-1510); Date of Printing: 1525.

mDzo/'Dzo lhas¹⁷³

- 1) Shelfmark: FGT 671/6;¹⁷⁴ Title: *sKyes mchog gi zhus lan thugs kyi snying po zab mo'i gter mdzod* (ff. 366a-397a, cm 48x9 [44x7], 5-7 lines, colophon: ff. 391a1-397a7);¹⁷⁵ Author: 'Ba' ra ba rGyal mtshan dpal bzang; Printer: Nam mkha' rdo rje; Date of Printing: 1540; Scribe and Drawer of illustrations: mKhas pa sKyab pa; Carver of illustrations: mKhas pa bSod noms bkra shis; Carvers: gsol dpon Nam mkha', Chos skyong, dpon btsun Padma, mGon po rdo rje, rGyal po, mGon rgyal, dge slong mKha' 'gro dpal bzang, dge sbyong Nam bzang, bcu dpon rDo rje rgyal mtshan. Further copies/editions: NGMPP L195/11, L538/5, L1107/8.

168 A ti sha'i chos 'khor is located in the La 'de Valley, but its exact position is still unknown. On this printing house, see Clemente 2016a: 413; Clemente & Lunardo 2017.

169 For its cataloguing, see De Rossi Filibeck 2003: 458-59.

170 The text is available in U rgyan rdo rje 1976: 381-449. The colophon is also provided in Ehrhard 2000a: 162-64. See also Clemente 2016a: 413.

171 Khams gsum rnam rgyal is a castle established by King Kun dga' rnam rgyal lde in the area of sKyid grong and is associated with the bo dong pa scholar Chos dbang rgyal mtshan. See Clemente 2016a: 400, 413; Ehrhard 2000a: 31-33; Ehrhard 2004b: 139.

172 The colophon is provided in Ehrhard 2000a: 94. See also Clemente 2016a: 413; Ehrhard 2004b.

173 The exact location of mDzo lhas is still unknown, but it should be situated on the banks of the dPal khud mtsho, not far from Chos sdings, in Gung thang (see Ehrhard 2000a: 60-61). On this printing house, see Clemente 2016a: 413; Clemente & Lunardo 2017.

174 For its cataloguing, see De Rossi Filibeck 2003: 335.

175 The colophon is also provided in Ehrhard 2000a: 130-41. See also Clemente 2016a: 413; Clemente 2016b:77; Ehrhard 2000a: 75-76.

La 'de¹⁷⁶

- 1) Shelfmark: NGMPP L18/14; Title: *dPal ldan bla ma dam pa sprul sku nam mkha' rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po 'i rnam par thar pa dgos 'dod kun 'byung nor bu 'i 'phreng ba* (ff. 1a-48a, cm 47,2x8,6, 6-7 lines, colophon: f. 48a5-6);¹⁷⁷ Author: Nam mkha' rdo rje; Printer: Nam mkha' dpal 'byor; Date of Printing: 1533-34; Carvers: bcu dpon rDo rje rgyal mtshan, dpon btsun Padma, dge slong mKha' 'gro dpal bzang, dge sbyong mGon ne, mKhas pa mGon rgyal.
- 2) Shelfmark: FGT 709/4;¹⁷⁸ Title: *Sākya 'i dge slong nam mkha' rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po 'i mgur 'bum* (ff. 1a-46a [f. 5 is missing], cm 48x8,5 [43x7], 5-7 lines, colophon: ff. 42b6-46a5);¹⁷⁹ Author: Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan (1475-1530); Date of Printing: 1545-46; Supervisor: Chos dbang rgyal mtshan; Scribe: bSod nams 'od zer; Drawer of illustrations: mKhas pa Dri med; Carver of illustrations (first part): bcu dpon rDo rje rgyal mtshan; Carver of illustrations (second part): rDo rje tshe brtan; Carvers: dge slong mKha' 'gro, dpon btsun Padma, bcu dpon rDo rje rgyal mtshan, dpon po mGon ne, mGon po rgyal mtshan. Further copies/editions: NGMPP L18/16-19/1, E1262/2, PT26.

bTsum¹⁸⁰

- 1) Shelfmark: PT27; Title: *sKyes bu gsum gyi lam rim rgyas pa khrid du sbyar ba l rje btsun gsang ba 'i byin gyis mdzad pa* (ff. 1a-305a, 5-8 lines, colophon: f. 297b3-305a8);¹⁸¹ Author: Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal (1376-1451); Date of Printing: 1546; Scribe: bSod nams 'od zer; Drawers of illustrations: mKhas pa dPal chen and bSod nams 'od zer; Carver of illustrations: bcu dpon rDo rje rgyal mtshan (first part) and mKha' 'gro dpal bzang; Carvers: bcu dpon rDo rje rgyal mtshan (first part), mGon rgyal, dge slong mKha' 'gro, dge sbyong mGon ne, mGon po rdo rje, Nam me, Chos dbang, dPal ldan rgyal

176 We do not know whether this is the name of a printing house or refers instead to one of the printeries located in the La 'de Valley, such as A ti sha 'i chos 'khor or Glang phug.

177 See Ehrhard 2000a: 51-52.

178 For its cataloguing, see De Rossi Filibeck 2003: 342.

179 This work is also available in U rgyan rdo rje 1976: 181-271, and in the Collection "Abteilung für Kultur und Geschichte Indiens und Tibets" (University of Hamburg). The colophon is also provided in Ehrhard 2000a: 142-47. The story of the consecration of Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan 's rnam mgur is recounted in Ehrhard 2000a: 64-65. See also Ehrhard 2000a: 76; Sernesi 2013: 205.

180 bTsum is a hidden valley located in the South of Mang yul Gung thang. The printing house was situated in the upper part of the valley.

181 The colophon is transliterated in Ehrhard 2000a: 148-61. See also Clemente (in press b); Ehrhard 2000a: 70, 76-77.

po, Tshe 'phel, rDor nam, Sher rgyal, dpon btsun Chos skyong, rtogs ldan bKa' brgyud, Gu ru. Further copies/editions: KWL_lam_rim.¹⁸²

Unknown Printing House

- 1) Shelfmark: NGMPP L18/2; Title: *Nges don dgongs 'dus* (ff. 1a-9a [f. 7 is missing], cm 32x7,9, 7 lines, colophon: f. 9a6-7); Author: bTsun pa Chos legs; Place of Writing: Chab rom phug;¹⁸³ Date of Writing: 1515. Further copies/editions: NGMPP L91/6, L189/2.
- 2) Shelfmark: NGMPP AT61/21_9; Title: *Na mo gu ru / mtshan ldan rtsa ba 'i bla ma rin po che* (ff. 1a-2b, cm 32x7,8, 6 lines, colophon: f. 2ab2-6);¹⁸⁴ Author and Printer: bTsun pa Chos legs. Further copies/editions: NAK 754/9.
- 3) Shelfmark: NGMPP L581/6; Title: *Gsol 'debs* (ff. 1a-4a, cm 46,5x8,2, 7 lines, colophon: f. 4a5-7);¹⁸⁵ Author: lHa btsun Rin chen nam rgyal; Date of Writing: 1522; Place of Writing: Ling ba Brag dmar.

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dPal brtsegs = dPal brtsegs bod yig dpe rnying zhib 'jug khang, *Bod kyi shing spar lag rtsal gyi byung rim mdor bsdus*, Lhasa: Bod ljongs bod yig dpe rnying dpe skrun khang, 2013.

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182 This xylograph belongs to a private collection. It was photographed by Hildegard Diemberger and Bruce Huett in Kathmandu and is available in the online database.

183 According to its stylistic features, this xylograph might be also printed at Chab rom phug.

184 The title is taken from the incipit. According to its stylistic features, this xylograph might be also printed at Chab rom phug.

185 Neither the printing house nor the printer's name are mentioned in the colophon, and the stylistic features of the xylograph do not help us in identifying its provenance. Notwithstanding this, I would posit that lHa btsun was the printer of this xylograph, as he used to print his own works produced at Brag dkar rta so. It seems therefore logical that this text, penned in 1522, was one of his earliest experiments with xylographic printing, and that it was printed at Brag dkar rta so soon after 1525. On this work, see also Clemente 2015: 192; Schaeffer 2011: 474.

186 This bibliography does not contain the primary sources which have already been presented in the condensed catalogue of this article.

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THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF TIBETAN “MINZU” IDENTITY THROUGH CHINESE EYES: A PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS ¹

MAURO CROCENZI
(Università per stranieri di Siena)

This article examines the representation of Tibetan history in Chinese contemporary Tibetan studies. It does not address the question of the political *status* of Tibet, and thus does not intend to contribute to the historical analysis of the Sino-Tibetan political relationships. It focuses on the Chinese descriptions of three key moments which have had a significant impact on the Tibetan Plateau: (1) the origin of the Tibetan people, (2) the stabilization of a Buddhist society in Tibet, and (3) the emergence of a national consciousness in modern China. Today, Chinese scholars of Tibetan history usually consider these key moments as having contributed to the development of an overall “Chinese” identity. Their misrepresentation – or even their ignorance – of political resistance in contemporary Tibet shows the nationalist orientation of Chinese academic studies on Tibetan and Chinese history.

Despite the fact that historians use scientific methods and strive for unbiased results, history – as any social science – remains a subjective branch of knowledge. In line with the most influential contemporary historians,² the approach used in this article is based on the idea that history is a matter of interpretation and representation, and thus unavoidably subjected to several influences, included cultural values, political goals, as well as ideological biases. In this sense, this article supports the view that both Tibetan and Chinese nationalist historians have made different use of history to promote their political agenda.³ At the same time it shows that the traditional way of thinking about political identity still plays an important role in portraying the main features of national identity in contemporary China.

This article argues that Chinese nationalist perspectives on Tibetan history are not only attributable to the political authoritarianism and censorship imposed by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), but also to the conceptual transformation of the Chinese state between the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. Many academic studies have efficaciously corrected the distortion of

1 I would like to thank Dr. Federica Venturi and Dr. Michela Clemente who offered me valuable suggestions for this study.

2 Carr 1966: 27-35; Chabod 2004: 64.

3 Powers 2004: x-xi.

historical facts in the Tibetan histories edited by the government of the People's Republic of China (PRC).⁴ The re-actualization of traditional sinocentrism within the international world order also had a deep impact on the representation of Tibetan history in China. However, the consequences of this process have not received the right attention within the academic environments. Following this line of thought, the present article seeks to contribute to the literature on the Chinese representation of Tibetan history.

Based primarily on fieldwork conducted in 2008 and 2009 and on the analysis of several texts about Tibetan and Chinese national history written by Chinese scholars,⁵ this article takes in account the high degree of homogeneity within terminologies, methodologies and perspectives adopted by Chinese scholars. It also provides a brief theoretical discussion of Chinese evolutionism and nationalism, and of their influence on contemporary Chinese scholars.

The Main Features of the “Chinese *Minzu*”

In the PRC, Chinese scholars usually translate the Chinese concept of *minzu* 民族 into English as “nation” or “nationality”.⁶ While these conventional translations capture the general meaning of the word *minzu*, they fail to convey adequately its complexity and plurality. *Minzu* not only refers to the Han nation (汉族 *hanzu*), but also to all the different minorities (少数民族 *shaoshu minzu*) which have been subsumed into the PRC, and thus has both a “narrow” and a “wide” sense. According to Communist Chinese understanding of *minzu*, all the nations within the PRC should evolve, through integration, into a higher-level identity, an over-arching “Chinese” nation (中华民族 *Zhonghua minzu*).

4 See, for example, Blondeau & Buffetrille 2008; Shakya 1999; Sperling 2004.

5 In 2008 and 2009, I attended classes on Tibetan culture and Tibetan history at the Minzu University of China (*Zhongyang Minzu Daxue*) in Beijing. The classes were mostly intended for Tibetan students studying for their bachelors degree. During that period, I also consulted academic studies about Tibet written by Chinese professors, especially texts published in the last two decades by the Chinese Tibetan Studies Press (*Zhongguo Zangxue Chubanshe*), the Minzu University of China Press (*Zhongyang Minzu Daxue Chubanshe*), and the Minzu Press (*Minzu Chubanshe*). Most of these sources deal with the ethnic and the national question from an anthropological, historical, sociological and political point of view.

6 See for example Ma, R. 2008 a: 10. According to Chinese scholars, the most ancient text recording the term “*minzu*” has been written in the 5th century, during the Northern and Southern dynasties. The term would also appear in some texts during the Tang period (7th-9th century), but its use would be very limited, as its absence from the dictionaries of that period prove. Originally the term “*minzu*” could have both a social and a political meaning, pointing at the definition of a single social class as well as of a population as a whole. At the end of 19th century, through the mediation of the Japanese word “*minzoku*”, the term was selected by many Chinese modernist intellectuals, in order to introduce in China the concept of nationality (Luo & Xu 2005: 28-29).

Chinese analyses on social organizations adopt a strong evolutionist perspective. According to Chinese contemporary theories, any kind of social community or entity passes through three stages: formation, development and extinction. The last stage of this evolutionary process implies the disappearance of social and ethnic identities and the merging into a larger entity, rather than political conquest and cultural assimilation of smaller identities.⁷

The prominent position of evolutionism in Chinese studies on the concept of *minzu* is due to several factors. First, it is due to the strong influence of the Maoist theory of social change on contemporary Chinese ethnology and anthropology, which postulates that national identity will eventually extinguish into internationalist class identity. Despite being strongly influenced by modern and revolutionary nationalism, the CCP followed this theory and adopted the evolutionist description of nation from Stalin as first definition of the concept of *minzu*.⁸

Second, social evolutionism played a relevant role in modern China's history. Chinese modernist intellectuals firmly believed that the development of “Chinese national” identity, which replaced the traditional imperial identity, was a precondition to build up a modern and advanced state. According to Sun Yat-sen, only the strongest groups in the world could survive to evolution.⁹

Lastly, the modern concept of *minzu* historically originated from the political and cultural identity patterns in the *Tianxia* 天下 imperial system.¹⁰ Political identity in imperial times was very flexible, due to the absence of exact political borders, and to the existence of different levels of acknowledgement of the emperor's centrality from the outside.¹¹ In order to get official acknowledgement inside the imperial space, “foreign” political subjects had to pay tribute to the ruling dynasty, avoiding in that way substantial political interferences. This means that the *Tianxia* system was focused on the principle of inclusiveness, and has evolved into a potentially unlimited political unity, as the expression “all under the sky” seems to suggest. In fact, the imperial space grew over times, since the imperial world order received growing acknowledgment from the “outside”. During the Qing dynasty, the *Tianxia* system reached the widest extent during the reigns of Kangxi, Yongzheng and Qianlong (1661-1792), following the political relationship between the Manchus and the Mongols, and the collapse of the Dzungar Khanates in the middle of the 18th century.

7 Luo & Xu 2005: 42-43.

8 Jin 2000: 136.

9 Bergère 1994: 407; Gordon 2010: 46.

10 *Tianxia* (“all under Heaven”) is an expression adopted since the Zhou period (XI B.C.-256 B.C.) to describe both the political space of pre-imperial China and the cultural core of Chinese civilization. Most of the “hundred schools” of thought during the Warring State period (453-221 B.C.) acknowledged the concept of *Tianxia*, but after the establishment of the empire (221 B.C.) the definition of *Tianxia* has been absorbed in to the Confucian political and cultural terminology until the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1911 (Schwartz 1968: 276-77).

11 Schwartz 1968: 276-77.

However, the rule of the Qing obtained a growing consensus in Central and Eastern Asia, since the political membership was grounded on the synthesis of different patterns of political relationships, such as the sinocentrism and the Buddhist *mchod yon* (“priest-patron”) systems, which linked together the Confucian Han majority, the Manchus and the Buddhist minorities, such as Mongols and Tibetans.¹²

The Representation of Tibetan Ethnic Identity in the Chinese Official Historiography

Chinese analyses on Tibetan history have been driven by political goals. Historic and anthropological research in the PRC has primarily been aimed to legitimate political unity and the role of the CCP, particularly in the face of sensitive political issues such as the Tibetan question.¹³ Thus, paradigms such as nationalism, sinocentrism and evolutionism underpin research on Tibetan history in the PRC. The premise of Chinese analyses usually is that Tibetan *minzu* is one of the fifty-six ethnic groups or “nationalities” within the Chinese nation. Then, these analyses evaluate historical Sino-Tibetan relations through the lens of the official political language adopted in the *Tianxia* imperial system. Finally, Chinese analyses characterize Tibetan identity as originating from processes of integration and assimilation among Himalayan groups. According to these analyses, such processes of integration and assimilation occurred not only in Tibet, but also throughout all the “Chinese” territory, where the high degree of ethnic and national cohesion ultimately created a higher-level “Chinese” *minzu* identity.¹⁴

From this point of view, the Chinese representation of Tibetan “*minzu*” identity has been very distinctive from the idea of Tibetan “nation” by Tibetan nationalist authors,¹⁵ which describe Tibet as a distinct country and maintain that Sino-Tibetan relations were based on the “priest-patron” pattern, and do not regard sinocentric universalism as a factor.¹⁶

Similarly, the Chinese pattern looks very different compared to the idea of national identity in the West. According to the Western principle of self-determination, every national group under alien domination and foreign occupation keeps the right to build

12 Dawa 2001: 47-51.

13 Powers 2004: 8-9.

14 Fei 1998 c: 134; Gelek 2008: 36; Liu 1999: 68; Zhang 2006 b: 82.

15 E.g. Shakabpa 2010: 442.

16 At this time I am not aware of an officially authorized translation of the study of Shakabpa in the PRC. The original version of the book in English is available in several Chinese libraries, but in fact it is very hard to get the book for consultation. However, Chinese histories on Tibet pay much attention to this book, which has been one of the main targets of the official historical propaganda of the CCP (Wang & Gyaincain 2000: 6). Among Chinese scholars, the work of Shakabpa has been praised, since it quotes many official documents of the Tibetan traditional government, but it also has attracted strong criticism for its nationalist stance on the Tibetan question (Zhang 2006 e: 221).

one’s own state.¹⁷ In the Western “nation-state” model, ethnic boundaries ideally coincide with geopolitical boundaries.¹⁸ On the contrary, the PRC has been following the principle of “ethnic inclusiveness” inherited from the *Tianxia* system, where both the “barbarians” and the “civilized people” found their own place, equally contributing to the “harmonious” development of the empire.¹⁹ In comparison with the different patterns of “nation-state” arisen in Western Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries, this system is intrinsically multidimensional and leans towards universalism.²⁰

In Western countries, national histories usually aim to portray the political and cultural roots of nations. In China, history, anthropology and ethnology all seek to understand how different “nationalities” (*minzu*) or “ethnic groups” came in contact with each other, and how their slow mutual assimilation and integration began. While “nation-states” have a static nature, China’s *minzu*-s can be seen as very dynamic entities, which originate from the merger of different groups, and gradually evolve into higher-level political entities.

The nationalist propaganda has deeply influenced Chinese historical investigations into “Chinese” nationalities. Despite conducting in-depth analysis of the historical contacts and cultural convergence that occurred between the nationalities within the PRC, Chinese scholars generally do not go beyond China’s contemporary geopolitical borders, and rarely evaluate the integration processes between minority nationalities and populations that inhabited other Asian countries, lands or kingdoms. For example, cultural and religious contacts between Tibet and Northern India in ancient times are constantly undervalued in Chinese historical analyses of Tibet.²¹ In this way, Chinese scholars avoid political censorship, since they abstain from questioning the cultural borders of the “Chinese” nation.

The orientations of Chinese scholars do not always reflect the propaganda and the censorship imposed by the CCP on Tibet-related political issues. After the Tibetan uprising in 2008, some Chinese independent scholars and intellectuals became involved with the Tibetan question and tried to explain the eruption of a new crisis in Tibet after about thirty years of reforms and development policies in the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR).²² All these studies openly disapproved the official

17 Dhokalia 1996: 22-23.

18 Hermet 1997: 89-90.

19 Zhang 2006a: 31.

20 Gao 2007: 32-33; Santangelo 2014: 3-7.

21 Powers 2004: 38-47.

22 Gongmeng falu yanjiu zhongxin 2009; Ma, R. 2009; Wang 2011. Chinese intellectuals consider the political reformism of Deng Xiaoping as the cornerstone of the present CCP policy in the minority areas. After the end of the Cultural Revolution, the acknowledgement of cultural and local identities has replaced the establishment of supranational class identity in the CCP political agenda. In 1980, the new policy in Tibet was introduced by the General Secretary of the CCP Hu Yaobang, and opened Tibet to the liberal economy and to the protection of cultural identity. See Wang 1994: 285.

policy in Tibet, but they did not question the Chinese sovereignty on the Tibetan Plateau. In this way they distanced themselves from the propaganda of the CCP, which downsized the events, but, at the same time, they proved to be very receptive to the theories on “Chinese” *minzu* identity.

The Formation of the Tibetan “*Minzu*”

Most Chinese contemporary anthropologists trace back the origin of the Tibetan “*minzu*” to the Qiang 羌 group, which first appeared in Chinese sources during the Shang dynasty (XVII?-XI B.C.). However, the appearance of a real, ethnic self-consciousness among the Qiang people has been considered a modern phenomenon.²³ The term “*qiang*” literally means “sheep-man” and was presumably adopted by some communities of farmers to name different tribes coming from Amdo and living in the Western and North-Western parts of China.²⁴

Chinese scholars point out that the Qiang people historically served as an “ethnic bridge”, putting in connection the Han with other minority groups. Chinese historical sources also reveal that there were several marriage alliances and commercial exchanges between the Zhou dynasty (XI-III B.C.) and the Qiang.²⁵ The Qiang entered into imperial China’s political scene through the establishment of the Tangut Dynasty of Western Xia (1038-1227), which according to Chinese sources came in contact with Tibetan Buddhism, while also showing a high degree of “sinicization”.²⁶

The question of the origin of Tibetan people is highly debated in China. After the establishment of the PRC, the famous linguist Yu Min asserted that Tibetan and Han people shared a “common origin”.²⁷ Other scholars have challenged this view, arguing that Tibetan people originated from the Qiang. These scholars have based their work on linguistic data, archaeological, and historical sources, such as the chronicles of the Tang dynasty, which report the migration of a Western branch of the Qiang towards the Tibetan plateau.²⁸

Although this view of the origin of the Tibetan people has been rejected by professor Shuo Shi, who based his studies on sources in Tibetan language,²⁹ it is widely used by Chinese scholars as an evidence of the existence of historical contacts between Tibetans and the “sinicized” Qiang groups. This link between Tibetans and

23 Wang 1999: 44-45.

24 See Fei 1998a: 27. Since 1953, the Qiang have been acknowledged by the Chinese government as one of the ethnic minorities of the PRC. In the 21st century, their population includes more than 300,000 people, which are mostly located in Gansu, Ningxia and Sichuan provinces. See Ma, R. 2008b: 46-50.

25 See, for example, Zhang 2006f: 253.

26 Chen 2002: 171.

27 Yu 1980: 45.

28 For more references, see Shi 2007: 29.

29 Shi 2001: 241.

Qiang has also been represented by the Chinese official tibetology as a historical premise of the first direct contact between Tibetans and Han during the Tang dynasty (618-907).³⁰

The origins of the Tibetan people prior to the Tang dynasty remain largely speculative due to the lack of historical sources.³¹ Imperial annals of this period do not even mention the Tibetan and the Qiang people, meaning that at that time Chinese historians lacked knowledge about the Tibetan regions and the local people. While the migration of the Qiang people to the West first appeared in the Tang dynasty imperial annals, it is only in the annals of the Song dynasty (960-1279) that the question of the origins of Tibetans was explicitly pursued, recording for the first time that Tibetan ancestors were related to the Qiang.³²

According to the Chinese sources, archaeological discoveries in five distinct regions show that the Tibetan plateau was inhabited since the Stone Age.³³ However, according to the Chinese perspective, this does not prove that Tibetans had either an autonomous origin or an autonomous development. For contemporary Chinese scholars, Tibetan people presumably originated from the union between local people and incomers, including Qiang, as historical, archeological, and philological evidence would point out.³⁴ According to Chinese studies, other groups lead a key role in relation to the development of the Tibetan identity, especially after the military conquests in Eastern Tibet by the early Tibetan kings. Among these groups they include also the Yi *minzu*, which is one of the most populous minority groups in the PRC.³⁵ According to the concept of “*minzu*”, this would prove that the Tibetan identity has a pluralist nature, just like the “Chinese” higher-level identity.

Therefore, Chinese researchers connect the origin and development of a Tibetan “*minzu*” with the process of interaction with other groups inside the PRC’s national borders. Chinese scholars don’t exempt Han people from this same process, as they were partially absorbed by Tibetan and other bordering people during their historical exchanges. In so doing, they attempt to consolidate the existence of a “Chinese” *minzu* comprising all the minority nationalities. They also assert that at the beginning Tibetan identity, at the same extent of all other *minzu* in China, should have held only a political character, since between the 7th and the 9th centuries many heterogeneous groups lived on the Tibetan Plateau. However, all these groups acknowledged the authority of the Yar klungs kings, and after the formation stage, political identity would have developed in an effective ethnicity.³⁶

30 See, for example, Shu 2008: 24-25, 147.

31 Ma, C. 1984: 27-28.

32 Shi 2007: 31-32.

33 Gelek 2008: 15; Shi 2007: 35-36.

34 Gelek 2008: 22-26.

35 Fei 1998a: 29.

36 Wang 2011: 126-27.

According to this perspective, Chinese historiography situates the formation of the Tibetan *minzu* during the era of the Yar klungs kings. Despite some exceptions,³⁷ academic circles believe that the Tibetan kingdom was not subjected to the Chinese civilization. During the Tang-Yar klungs dynasties era, the wars in Eastern Tibet set the conditions for the first cultural exchanges among the Tibetans, Han people and cultures of smaller, intermediate groups. In China the Sino-Tibetan relations during the Tang dynasty era are still considered the precondition of cultural and political integration of Tibet into modern China. In a similar way, the establishment of the Yuan dynasty (1271) and the Manchu's takeover of China (1644) would mark the beginning of integration of Mongols and Manchus into the *Tianxia* system. According to this perspective, the strengthening of the *Tianxia* system should be equally considered the base for the formation of an over-arching “Chinese” national identity, and the political conquest of Tibet by the Mongols was not a historical incident, but it would have historical grounds on previous contacts among Tibetans, Mongols and Han in political, cultural, economic, and – not least – in military fields.³⁸

Like the *Huangdi* emperors in the *Tianxia* system, the Yar klungs kings represented the core of the Tibetan *minzu*'s formation process. Through the political conquest and the acknowledgment of both the Buddhist and *Bon* élites at court, the early Tibetan kings became the main symbol of Tibetan identity.³⁹ The enlargement of the Tibetan kingdom was grounded on political submission and cultural integration, as the success of military campaigns and of the marriage alliances would prove. At the same time, the political centralization by the kings sealed the formation of a “*minzu*” identity at the political stage.⁴⁰ This was possible through several initiatives, such as the unification process in the administrative, cultural and juridical fields, and the acknowledgment of historical myths on the origin of the Tibetan group. The final result was that “*Tubo* became both a political and a *minzu* community, provided with a different and richer connotation compared with the past”.⁴¹

One of the most common myths in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition tells the story of the union between a civilized monkey, who personifies the *bodhisattva* Avalokiteśvara,

37 Zhang, Y., 2006a: 23-24.

38 Shi 1994: 9-11.

39 Dreyfus 2003: 496-97.

40 Lin 2006: 94.

41 Zhang 2006b: 76: “[...] 也使“吐蕃”作为一个政治和民族共同体有了不同的、较前更加丰富的内涵”。 In the PRC “Tibet” is usually translated into Chinese as “Xizang”, which points to the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR). When Chinese authors discuss the ancient history of Tibet, they usually express the idea of Tibet through the Chinese word “Tubo”, which has both a historical and a geographical connotation. It firstly points to the ancient Tibet of the Yar klungs Era, and secondly to the Tibetan plateau as a whole. The use of the term “Tubo” has been deeply criticized by several scholars, who have examined the pronunciation of the compound “吐蕃” (Tubo/Tufan) in ancient and modern times inquiring the reason why the pronunciation “Tubo” has been widely adopted in the PRC. Coblin 1994: 148.

and a wild ogress, who is the personification of Tāra. According to this myth, the union generated six offspring, namely the ancestors of all the Tibetans. According to Chinese sources, the myth would be a reference to the pluralistic grounds of the Tibetan “*minzu*” identity, suggesting that Tibetan people originated from the political unity of several tribes, and that the Tibetan identity originated from the union of different cultures, coming presumably from Tibet and beyond, as in the case of the Qiang.⁴² During the Tang period both the Tibetan and Han *minzu* reached their widest geographical extent. However, according to Chinese official historians, the Tang dynasty continued to exert an attractive influence on other *minzu* at the borders of the imperial space, including Tibetans. The existence of a highly centripetal Han core during the Tang era would be supported by the establishment of the “uncle-nephew” pattern of relations, which the Tibetan kings and the Tang emperors subscribed in the Sino-Tibetan treaty signed in 822 A. D.⁴³

According to this perspective, the contacts between Han and Tibetans during the Tang dynasty were a precondition for the extension of the imperial sovereignty during the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties, as well as for the formation of a “Chinese” *minzu* identity in the contemporary era. In particular, Chinese contemporary sources highlight the role played by wars, which established the first contacts among people.⁴⁴ At the same time, the cultural and commercial exchanges along the highly-celebrated “tea-horse” road, as well as the civilizing mission of the Tang princesses Wencheng and Jincheng, would have increased direct contacts between Tibetans and Han.⁴⁵

The Development of the Tibetan “*Minzu*”

Chinese scholars state that after the fall of the Tibetan kingdom the development process of the Tibetan “*minzu*” continued through the centuries until the beginning of Western colonialism. In particular, the Tibetan identity was enriched by the spread of Buddhism in Tibetan society. Buddhism would have converted a military alliance among several tribes into an integrated civilization, grounded on the monastic social system. Despite linguistic variations and differences in the way of life, Buddhism would become the main symbol of Tibetan identity, both from the viewpoint of the Tibetans and from that of their neighbors.⁴⁶

42 Zhang 2006b: 77.

43 For the full text of the treaty, see Richardson 1962: 244-45. It is useful to note that Chinese analyses usually summarize the content of the treaty, putting in evidence the hierarchical nature of the relationship between the Tibetan king and the Tang emperor. Moreover, Chinese scholars often have a “Confucian” understanding of the agreement, since they propose the idea of a “harmonious” unity between the two countries. See, for example, Shu 2008: 10, 152-53; Wang & Gyaincain 2000: 12-13; Zhang 2006: 10-11.

44 See, for example, Lin 2006: 247.

45 Jiarong 2004: 326-28; Zhang 2006c: 91.

46 Shi 2007: 18-19.

Moreover, the universalism of Buddhism would have opened the Tibetan civilization to the outside, encouraging the development of Tibetan “*minzu*” through the inclusion of other groups. The strategic position of Tibet also contributed to the expansion of the Tibetan “*minzu*”, since Tibet is located in the midst of several civilizations, i.e. India in the South, the *Tianxia* empire in the East, and the oases along the Silk Road in the North. However, the diffusion of Islam in Central Asia and in the Northern part of India would have pushed the Tibetans to look for the growth of cultural exchanges towards East.⁴⁷

From a political point of view, Chinese historiography places the beginning of Chinese sovereignty on Tibet during the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368). After some military clashes, the political integration of Tibet into the imperial space was grounded on mutual consensus.⁴⁸ The spread of Tibetan Buddhism among the Mongols supported economic and political exchanges, such as military protection and the promotion of the Tibetan monasteries by Mongol *khans*. On the other hand, the Mongols actively developed the *Tianxia* imperial system through the establishment of a new dynasty and the inheritance of the “Mandate of Heaven” from the Song dynasty (960-1279 A. D.). Through the *pax mongolica*, the people of Eastern Tibet would have started to integrate themselves into the political and cultural space of the *Tianxia* Empire. On the contrary, Central and Western Tibet would not have experienced the same integration process. For this reason, today the ethnic composition in these areas would be more homogeneous than the one in Eastern Tibet.⁴⁹

Chinese scholars do not consider the development of a Tibetan identity as antithetical to the political unity among Mongol, Han and Tibetan people. From a historical point of view, Chinese identity goes beyond the limits of ethnicity and has been considered an alternative to Western nationalism.⁵⁰ During the Yuan dynasty, the *Tianxia* Empire was ruled by Mongols, used Tibetan Buddhism to enhance political prestige, and adopted Confucian political symbols – such as the Mandate of Heaven, the Confucian ceremonies, the official historiography and, from 1314 A.D., the imperial exams – to stabilize society.⁵¹ Despite discrimination against the Chinese “*nanren*” (南人, the “people from the South”), Professor Fei Xiaotong records that the Yuan dynasty promoted the development of several “*minzu*” identities under a common political order.⁵²

The concurrence of the rise and fall of political authorities in Tibet and in the *Tianxia* Empire has been considered by the Chinese historians as an evidence of effective interaction, and of the dependency of Tibetans on the imperial prosperity. For

47 Shi 1994: 514.

48 Wang 2011: 95.

49 Shi 1994: 516-18.

50 Wang 2009: 204.

51 Dawa 2001: 47-51; Sabattini & Santangelo 2005: 399, 404-408, 413-414, 417.

52 Fei 1998b: 108.

example, the Sa skya pa relied on political and military protection by the Yuan emperors, while the rule of the Dalai Lamas increasingly depended on the expansion of the Qing dynasty. According to the tibetologist Zhang Yun, also the destiny of the Yar klungs kings was linked to the decline of the Tang dynasty, since the impoverishment of peasants would have deprived Tibetans of the outcome of their raids.⁵³

It is useful to note that the degree of acknowledgment of historical interaction between Tibet and the *Tianxia* Empire changes according to the specific viewpoint of Chinese authors. Works on Tibetan history underline historical connections and exchanges,⁵⁴ while analyses on Chinese policies in Tibet after the establishment of the PRC stress the gap existing between Tibetan and Han people still in the contemporary era. According to official statistics, from 1951 the central government of the PRC spent many unprecedented efforts to face the lack of integration of Tibet into modern China. For example, Chinese sociologist Ma Rong stated that geographical isolation and backwardness of the communication system of Tibet “made very difficult social, economic, and cultural exchanges between Tibet and other areas”, therefore imperial policies in Tibet until the Qing dynasty would have been limited to the “fulfillment of political subordination of Tibet”.⁵⁵ This contradiction shows that political propaganda still has a strong influence on academic research on Tibetan history inside the PRC.

The Perception of “Chinese” *Minzu* Identity among Tibetan People

The academic definition of “Chinese nation” (*Zhonghua minzu*) by most Chinese scholars acknowledges China’s ethnic plurality and political unity. Political unity would be grounded both on protection and development of the identity of each “*minzu*”. Chinese studies on Tibetan history similarly pursue the questions of the development of Tibetan identity and of the Tibetans’ political conscience in China. These studies generally argue that the political integration of Tibet from the 13th century, together with the acknowledgment of the Yuan dynasty by the Sa skya élite, has been a cornerstone in the development of a unitary political conscience among “Chinese” nationalities in modern times. Among such studies one might note, for example, the critical analysis of ’Phags pa’s *Shes bya rab gsal* (彰所知论 *Zhang suo zhi lun*).⁵⁶

Chinese history is not considered by Chinese historians as the evolution process of one ethnic group becoming a nation. Rather, it is considered to be a civilization process realized through the contribution of several ethnic groups throughout the

53 Zhang 2006d: 96.

54 See, for example, Chen 2004: 308; Jiarong 2004: 322-23; Xiong 2004: 280-81; Wang & Huang 2004: 228-29; Zhang 2006c: 84.

55 Ma, R. 2008c: 167.

56 Zhang 2006b: 80-81.

centuries. The most crucial historical passage in this process is the development of the “*minzu*” feeling of belonging to the “Chinese” nation, leading towards the rise of a larger unifying “national” identity. According to Chinese scholars, this passage is not unrealistic, because of the nature of the political and cultural identities in the *Tianxia* system. However, Chinese scholars don’t have a common understanding of the main distinctive features of “Chinese” *minzu* identity.⁵⁷

According to this perspective, Han, Mongol and Tibetan people would have all taken part in the development of an over-arching “Chinese” identity, in the same way that the ideas of “civilization” and “barbarity” equally contributed to the development of the concept of *Tianxia*.⁵⁸ After establishing the Yuan dynasty, the Mongol emperors joined the *Tianxia* system and started to promote the imperial civilization to other groups at the borders of the Empire. The Tibetans were thus integrated in this new regime, mainly, according to Zhang, because (1) Tibetan Buddhism became very popular among Mongolian *khans* and (2) Yuan emperors offered military protection and economic support to the Sa skya pa.⁵⁹

However, the emergence of political resistance in contemporary Tibet shows that the success of the “Chinese” *minzu* brand is very limited among Tibetans. After protests spread out in 2008, the liberal Han intellectual Wang Lixiong did not hesitate to label the *Zhonghua minzu* a “shop sign” (招牌 *zhaopai*).⁶⁰ Today, resistance in Tibet is directly connected to the question of self-determination. However, the lack of a “Chinese” *minzu* consciousness in Tibet also challenges the representation of modern history by Chinese historians of Tibet. The political transition from the *Tianxia* pattern to the modern nation-state system marks a breaking point in Chinese political thought, since Chinese intellectuals “could no longer imagine a future in which the form of the state was monarchical or made claims to universal rule. On the contrary, they came to imagine a state composed of citizens.”⁶¹ The new conception

57 The factors they take in exam include the “common psychological qualities” (共同的心理素质 *gongtong de xinli suzhi*), the “indisputable geographical ties and consanguinity” (一定的血缘、地缘关系 *yiding de xueyuan, diyuan guanxi*), as well as “commonality, sense of belonging, stability, common roots, common ancestors and common written language” (共通性、归属感、稳定性、同根、同祖、同文等等 *gongtongxing, guishuxing, wendingxing, tonggen, tongzu, tongwen deng deng*). However, the “compound nature” (复合 *fuhe*) probably is the most accepted distinguishing feature. For more references, see Gao 2007: 11-12.

58 Vogelsang 2014: 116-17.

59 Zhang 2006d: 99-100.

60 In his article Wang Lixiong openly contested the existence of a Chinese national consciousness among minority nationalities. However, the viewpoint of Wang Lixiong was not supported by other Chinese scholars. According to the Party’s propaganda, the 2008 uprising was the result of political separatism by the 14th Dalai Lama. Other influential scholars considered the impact of social reformism in minority areas. See, for example, Ma, R. 2009; Wang 2011. The article of Wang Lixiong is available online, see <http://wlx.sowiki.net/?action=show&id=32> (accessed September 2016).

61 Zarrow 2012: 5.

of the State had a deep impact on the political relations between the central government and the minority nationalities.

During the late Qing period, the attempt to establish central sovereignty on Tibet was an unprecedented challenge to the traditional pattern of relationship between the Tibetan government and the “*Tianxia*” empire. This attempt directly pushed the Thirteenth Dalai Lama to political separatism. However, after the fall of the Qing, the new Chinese republican government had no military instruments to integrate Tibet into the new Chinese state.⁶² In 1913, the declaration of independence by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama acknowledged the historical and political link between Tibet and the *Tianxia* Empire, but also criticized the changes occurred in the imperial policy with the invasion by Zhao Erfeng and the policies of Chinese representatives Zhang Yingtang and Lian Yu.⁶³ Chinese analyses on the late Qing’s Tibet policy completely ignore this transition, and when they examine the “separatist” policy of the 13th Dalai Lama they only consider the effects of British imperialism.⁶⁴

Even though Chinese and Western sources have a similar understanding of the traditional imperial identity, they show a completely different perception of the colonial era. The political crisis during the late Qing era resulted in the development of a “modern” state, grounded on sovereignty, territoriality, and nationality. However, according to Chinese analyses, the “Chinese” *minzu* identity would have solid historical roots, since all the groups which have been included in the modern Chinese state would have shared for centuries both a common identity inside the imperial order and the experience of imperialism.⁶⁵ On the contrary, for Chinese scholars, Tibetan “separatism” has no historical roots, and is related to Russian and British imperialism in Central Asia.⁶⁶ It is worth noting here that even the Tibetan protests in 2008 have been attributed by the Chinese propaganda to the Fourteenth Dalai Lama and to the Tibetan community in exile.⁶⁷ In a similar way, Chinese analysis of the internationalization of the Tibetan question show that the Fourteenth Dalai Lama’s political statements evaluate the status of Tibet through the lens of modern Western political culture.⁶⁸ This is also corroborated in Western sources, according to which the impact of Western colonialism had a close relation with the development of both

62 Crocenzi 2014: 38-40.

63 The text of the 13th Dalai Lama is available in Shakabpa 2010, 337-40.

64 See, for example, Yang 2001: 169-71; Zhou 1997: 343-71.

65 See, for example, Fei 1998a: 35-36; Ma R. 2008a: 9 -10. According to this line of thought, it is the imperialist aggression by Japan and the Western countries in the 19th and 20th century that would have fully shaped the Chinese national consciousness. However, the Chinese national identity would have already existed during the imperial era, even though only at a latent level. See Gao 2007: 39-41.

66 See, for example, Zhou 1997: 308.

67 ZFLP 2008: 50-58.

68 Tang 2003: 502

Chinese and Tibetan nationalism.⁶⁹ In addition, Western scholars also state that Tibetan nationalism originated from the assimilation policies of the late Qing emperors and then increased throughout the Tibetan world after the nationalist policies of Yuan Shikai, following the Xinhai revolution in 1911.⁷⁰

Conclusion

Despite the political transition from the Republic of China to the PRC – and the ideological division between the Guomin dang (GMD) and the CCP – the most recent theories on the origin of the Chinese nation echo the positions articulated by Chinese scholars during the Nanjing Decade (1928-1937). Since the 1930s, the goal of Chinese modern historians and anthropologists has been to trace back the origin and the development of the historical exchanges among all the *minzu*.

Chinese communists have taken their distance from the historical perspective of the GMD, by supporting the idea that the Chinese civilization originated from different parts of the national territory, rather than from the Central plains along the mid-course of the Yellow River. Moreover, the PRC is theoretically grounded on multiethnicism, while the Republic of China held an assimilationist agenda towards minorities.⁷¹ Nevertheless, Chinese nationalism has deeply marked the thought of Chinese intellectuals and theorists of both the GMD and the CCP. The nationalism of the CCP has strongly influenced the positions of Chinese scholars on the historical status of Tibet. Most of the historical texts consulted state that Chinese sovereignty in Tibet was established in the 13th century by the Yuan dynasty and that it was inherited by successive dynasties. On the contrary of the above stated ideas, Western studies have provided a rather more nuanced analysis on the alleged historical Chinese sovereignty in Tibet during the Yuan, the Ming, and the Qing period.⁷²

Regarding the existence of a “Tibetan political question”, Chinese studies acknowledge that the question of sovereignty in Tibet has arisen in the modern era. According to the most prevalent interpretation, the birth of the Tibetan question would be strictly connected with Western imperialism. However, Chinese scholars usually ignore how the practice of sovereignty in Tibet had radically changed during the late Qing period, after the British invasion of Tibet in 1903-1904. The 1913 independence declaration of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama (1876-1933) illustrates the historical relationship between Tibetan institutions and the *Tianxia* Empire in a very impartial way, since it abstains from considering the rule of Mongols and Manchus merely as a foreign occupation of China. However, it also emphasizes how the

69 Anand 2006: 293.

70 Goldstein 1989: 54-58.

71 Leibold 2007: 114.

72 Blondeau & Buffetrille 2008: 15-16, 19-21; Petech 1972.

political interferences of Qing officers and the military invasion of Tibet by the Qing army had irreparably affected the character of that relationship.

In all the Chinese sources on modern history of Tibet examined, scholars either underestimate, or entirely ignore, this transition and the fact that the introduction of modern political concepts – such as central sovereignty, territoriality, citizenship and representative power – had a deep impact on the traditional sinocentric pattern of relationship. Most Chinese scholars consider the establishment of a national system as a natural and historical evolution of the *Tianxia* Empire. This perspective reiterates the political and ideological influence of the CCP on academic circles, as well as the deep impact of the Western modern political language in modern and contemporary China. At the same time, it would be worthwhile to consider to what extent the basic values of the *Tianxia* system – such as inclusiveness and sinocentrism – as well as the revival of traditional culture in the last decades, currently contribute to the validation of the idea of a national and multiethnic country in the eyes of Chinese contemporary scholars.

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APROPOS A RECENT COLLECTION OF TIBETAN XYLOGRAPHS FROM THE 15th TO THE 17th CENTURIES

FRANZ-KARL EHRHARD (LMU, Munich) and
MARTA SERNESI (SOAS, London)

A collection of fifty xylographs has been made available in the publications series of the Paltsek Research Institute (Lhasa) under the general title *A Brief Introduction to the Evolution of Tibetan Xylographic Printing Technology (Bod kyi shing par lag rtsal gyi byung rim mdor bsdus)*. This publication is chiefly the result of the joint efforts of Porong Dawa, a well-known member of the Paltsek Research Institute, and Hildegard Diemberger of the University of Cambridge, who devoted her recent research to the documentation and study of early printing in Tibet. Porong Dawa discusses his findings also in an article, where he pays particular attention to the most important works included in the compilation and how they can contribute to our understanding of the history of printing in Tibet.¹ In the following survey we aim at further discussing the individual xylographs and, in particular, we shall detail the sites where the blocks were produced, identifying the secular and religious figures responsible for the individual printing projects. This is offered in appreciation of the work by Professor Elena de Rossi Filibeck devoted to the description, cataloguing, and study of Tibetan manuscripts and blockprints.²

Early Prints of Doctrinal Works

The publication is organized chronologically according to the date of carving of the blocks for the prints. The first eleven xylographs reproduced in the collection have

1 The publication consists of a printed book and two attached DVDs, and was published in 2013. The former presents images of the initial and final pages of each text and brief comments in Tibetan on the persons involved in the individual printing projects; the full texts can be consulted in the digital format. We will refer to the individual texts with the numbers assigned in the publication, provided in square brackets, e.g. [=1]. A brief review of this collection has appeared: see Diemberger & Clemente 2014. Some of the prints in the collection are also included in the following database: <http://booksdb.socanth.cam.ac.uk:8080/exist/apps/TTBBC/index.html>. For the discussion of the compilation by Porong Dawa, see Porong Dawa 2016. For the Paltsek Research Institute and its publication activities, see Diemberger 2012a: 26-27.

2 For the catalogue of the Tucci Tibetan Collection in the library of the ex-IsIAO Institute, see De Rossi Filibeck 1994; De Rossi Filibeck 2003. When referring to books preserved within this collection, we will refer to their catalogue number preceded by the siglum TTC.

been assigned to the period from 1407 to 1507 and may be generally classified as Buddhist doctrinal literature. This could be interpreted as evidence supporting the hypothesis that the widespread adoption of the technology of printing in Tibet in the 15th century may be seen in the context of the flourishing monasticism of the time, marked by the foundation of many new monasteries and the development of study curricula.³ Half of these early xylographs are works written by Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal (1376-1451) or produced under his supervision; this points to the fact that the Bo dong pa school and its patrons played an important role in the initial phase of distributing Buddhist literature in the medium of printed texts.

The xylograph opening the collection is the Tibetan translation of Haribhadra's *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* [=1], which was printed in 1407 at Shel dkar chos sde in La stod lHo in south-western Tibet. The project was achieved under the supervision of the monastery's abbot Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal, and with the patronage of the ruler Ta'i Si tu lHa btsan skyabs. A general exposition of the Tantra classes by Bo dong Paṅ chen, known as the *rGyud sde spyi rnam* [=3], was also printed at Shel dkar chos sde shortly afterwards, in 1411, with the sponsorship of the same ruler.⁴

Xylographs of individual works by Phyogs las rnam rgyal were executed in later years in the Yar 'brog region, the "myriarchy" (*khri skor*) at the border between dBus and gTsang. The patrons responsible for the projects were two rulers of Yar 'brog, namely Khri dpon Nam mkha' bzang po and his nephew Khri dpon Kun dga' rgyal mtshan; the works bear the titles *Kun rig gi cho ga'i de nyid rnam nges* [=6] and *rGyud sde rnam par bzhang pa* [=8] and were achieved in the years 1446 and 1468 respectively. These printing activities might be seen within a wider effort to produce a complete set of the master's writings, known as the *dPal de kho na nyid 'dus pa*.⁵ Another individual work of Bo dong Paṅ chen was printed in gTam shul in lHo brag (south-eastern Tibet), in the year 1477; it is a praise to the deities of the four tantra classes and it has the title *rGyud sde bzhi'i lha tshogs la bstod pa* [=9]. The last work of the Bo dong pa school from the second half of the 15th century that is included in the collection is the liturgic manual for the shortest text of the *dPal de kho na nyid*

3 This hypothesis has been formulated by Sernesi in the paper "Towards a History of Early Tibetan Printing: New Evidence and Uncharted Territories", presented at Virginia University in November 2014, and at the Lumbini International Research Institute in March 2015; see Sernesi 2017.

4 For the importance of these doctrinal works as sources for the historiography of printing in La stod lHo, see Diemberger & Clemente 2013: 133; Sernesi 2017: 201-04. Compare Porong Dawa 2016: 199 for the physical description of the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra*, which shows two rings drawn in the middle of the pages, reminiscent of the rings for leaves-holding strings common in the Indian manuscript culture. See Diemberger 2012b for a discussion of the context of production of the text.

5 These prints of the Yar 'brog rulers, and the efforts of this royal family in producing the collected writings of Phyogs las rnam rgyal, are studied in Tsering Dawa Sharshon 2016; it should be noted that at present only the shortest of these prints belonging to the *dPal de kho na nyid 'dus pa* cycle is available, preserved within the collection of the British Library (pressmark: Tib I.156).

'*dus pa* cycle called *dPal de kho na nyid 'dus pa'i snying po chos spyod* [=10]; it was printed in Zur tsho in south-western Tibet and the main patron was a female member of the ruling family of that region.⁶

A special place in the collection is given to a work from the Sa skya pa school dealing with instructions for mountain anchorites. It has the title *sGom chen gyi mngon rtogs ri khrod kyi lung gtam* [=2] and its author is Chos rje Seng ge rgyal mtshan (14th/15th cent.), founder of the Nub ris lHa mdun monastery in Mang yul Gung thang. According to the colophon, the work was printed by one Seng ge bzang po. A person of that name is known as one of the royal preceptors of the Gung thang king Khri rgyal bSod rnam lde (1371-1404), and thus the printing project has been assigned to the early 15th century.⁷ However, a more likely candidate to be the project leader would be dGe slong Seng ge bzang po from the monastery of Nub ris lHa mdun, who took part in a renovation of the 'Phags pa lha khang in Mang yul sKyid grong in the year 1523. This would place the print in the early 16th century instead. In fact, the page setting and the style of the illustrations seem rather to point to this later date. The text is marked KA, so perhaps it was the first volume of a series of works of the local monastic community of lHa mdun.⁸

Two further prints which can be classified as doctrinal works are a xylograph of Śāntideva's *Bodhicaryāvatāra* and one text by rJe Tsong kha pa (1357-1419), the founder of the dGe lugs pa school. The *Byang chub sems dpa' spyod la 'jug pa* [=4] and the commentary by rJe Tsong kha pa on the *Cakrasaṃvaratantra* [=5] were executed as xylographs in the years 1422 and 1428 respectively, and it is mentioned in their printing colophons that both these projects were undertaken for the long life of the Phag mo gru pa ruler Gong ma Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1374-1432). These belong to the so called "Old dGa' ldan and Gong dkar ba prints," together with the first edition of other works by Tsong kha pa, such as the *sNgags rim chen mo*.⁹ The

6 The printing colophon of the *rGyud sde bzhi'i lha tshogs la bstod pa* states that the xylograph was produced as a memorial for the Second 'Brug chen rGyal ba'i dbang po (1428-1476), who had recently passed away. The liturgic manual of the *dPal de kho na nyid 'dus pa* cycle and the person bDag mo Nam mkha' bzang mo, responsible for the print, are discussed in Diemberger 2016: 272-77, which includes a translation of the printing colophon of the text.

7 Arguments for placing the print of the instructions for mountain anchorites in the 15th century and the identification of Seng ge bzang po as one of the Sa skya pa teachers of Khri rgyal bSod rnam lde are given in Porong Dawa 2016: 200-02.

8 For dGe slong Seng ge bzang po, see Ehrhard 2004: 370, n. 96; refer also to Ehrhard 2016b: 139 for the final correcting and editing by the same master of a printed edition of a biography of Thang stong rgyal po prepared in the year 1532. On the illustrations of 16th century prints from Mang yul Gung thang, see Jackson 1996: 122-26 and Sernesi 2016a. During the late 15th and early 16th century, the monastic communities from important centres in Mang yul Gung thang, such as mNgon dga', were producing printed editions of the Collected Writings of their most prominent masters; see Ehrhard 2016a: 216-25.

9 A copy of the latter work in the private collection of the Dalai Lama is described in Jackson 1989: 2-5. The colophon states that it was printed in 1426 by order of I nag bZhi 'dzom of Gong

work by Śāntideva was printed in mChing ru gNam mdun, and was sponsored by an individual named gZhon nu dpal, and one named Nam mkha'.¹⁰ The work by Tsong kha pa was realised in 'Ol ka sTag rtse: the *rdzong dpon* of this fortress at the time of the 5th Phag mo gru Gong ma was Brag dkar ba Rin chen dpal, one of the master's greater supporters, and the main donor of the foundation of dGa' ldan monastery (1409). The donor mentioned in the colophon of the work from 1428 is named Tshul khriims rin chen. Although he is otherwise unknown, he evidently continued to honour the memory of Tsong kha pa and support his pupils at the 'Ol ka fortress.¹¹

From the Brag dkar ba family came also the noble lady Chos kyi dpal 'dzoms (or Bu khrid dpal 'dzoms), the wife of sNe'u pa dPal 'byor rgyal po.¹² The couple is well known for lavishly sponsoring monasteries in the lHa sa area and the production of copies of various scriptures during the second half of the 15th century. The college of Se ra Byes was established with their support and eventually entrusted to dPal 'byor lhun grub (1427-1514), who went on to become the 8th great abbot of Se ra monastery. The commentary on rJe Tsong kha pa's *Drang nges legs bshad snying po*, titled *Legs bshad snying po'i dka' 'grel bstan pa'i sgron me* [=11], was composed by the latter master at the request of Chos kyi dpal 'dzoms, and it was printed at her main estate dPal 'byor lhun po in the year 1493.¹³

The final work in this first section of the collection is a print of Asaṅga's *Abhidharmasamuccaya* [=7] that was realized with the support of the noble house of Rin spungs, especially as a memorial for Nor bu bzang po (1403-1466) and his

dkar for the sake of the long life of the ruler Grags pa rgyal mtshan. See also Sernesi 2010: 150-53 for an illustrated print from the IsIAO collection produced under the reign of the Phag mo gru pa clan during the first half of the 15th century (TTC 1359).

10 '[/m]Ching ru or 'Phyng ru appears to be located between outer Gr[v]a and 'Phyongs rgyas; see Sørensen & Hazod 2007: 168-69, n. 421 and Map 1, no. 22.

11 A portrait of Tsong kha pa (labelled Thams cad mkhyen pa Blo bzang grags pa la na mo) is found on the left side of f. 2a of the text. It may be compared with a portrait of the master illustrating a copy of the *Lam rim 'bring po* from blocks probably also carved in the 1420s, under the sponsorship of the noble family of bKra shis sben tsa; see Jackson 1996: 128, fig. 63; Jackson 1989: 6-7.

12 He was related to Nam mkha' bzang po, who is best-known as the main sponsor of the first sMon lam chen mo festival (1409) and for sponsoring the foundation of 'Bras spungs monastery (1416). See Wylie 1980, and Sørensen & Hazod 2007: 761-62. Nam mkha' bzang po sponsored a printed edition of the *Khyab bdag rdo rje sems dpa' bsnyen bsgrub bzhi'i sbyor bas mnyes par byed pa'i sgrub thabs rnal 'byor dag pa'i rim pa*; see Jackson 1990: 109.

13 For this estate and the couple's support of dGe lugs pa institutions in the lHa sa area, see Sørensen & Hazod 2007: 501, 762. The patronage of xylographic editions of rJe Tsong kha pa's works by Chos kyi dpal 'dzoms is mentioned in the *Deb ther dmar po gsar ma*; see Tucci 1971: 241. See Jackson 1989: 7-10 for the description of a copy of the *Lam rim 'bring po* realized in 1465 with the noble lady's sponsorship. Sørensen & Hazod (2007: 762, n. 8) mention that, in 1478, dPal 'byor rgyal po sponsored a printed edition of the *Rgyal rabs gsal ba'i me long* by Bla ma dam pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan (1312-1375). For the establishment of Se ra Byes and the tenure of dPal 'byor lhun grub, see Ary 2015: 67-9.

brother dPal bzang rin chen (1405-1493). It can be dated to the year 1507, since the colophon also mentions that the work was executed as a xylograph to fulfil the final wishes of 'Jam dbyangs Kun dga' chos bzang (1433-1503), a Sa skya pa scholar associated with the monastery of 'Bras yul sKyed mo tshal in gTsang.¹⁴

Prints of Biographies and Collected Writings

The greatest number of xylographs in the collection can be attributed to the literary genre of “biography” or “hagiography” (*rnam thar*), sometimes enlarged by “spiritual songs” (*mgur*) and then called *rnam mgur*. One may also find a “succession of teachers” (*bla rabs*), i.e. a work dealing with the lives of the lineage holders of a specific tradition, and a “succession of previous lives” (*skyes rabs*) of Buddha Śākyamuni. For the period of the 16th century, only one doctrinal work is included in the collection (a text from the Jo nang pa school), while for the 17th century three such works have been reproduced. A total of thirty-five printed biographies attests to the increasing interest in making this kind of works available in print in Tibet, at a time when the new technology developed and became employed by individual Buddhist masters and their disciples.

The earliest printed biography in the collection is devoted to gTsang smyon Heruka Sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan (1452-1507), and it was produced at the monastery of rGyal gyi Śrī ri in Tsib ri (south-western Tibet) in 1508. The work was written by dNgos grub dpal 'bar (1456-1527), a student of gTsang smyon Heruka from the Sa skya pa school, and bears the title *gTsang pa he ru ka'i thun mong gi rnam thar* [=12].¹⁵ In fact, the printing of the Madman's main narrative works, *The Life and The Collected Songs of Mi la ras pa* (printed ca. 1488–90), shortly followed by *The Life*

14 The year 1447 as the date of print of the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* from Rin spungs provided by Porong Dawa in Paltsek (2013: 22) is thus one sixty-year-cycle too early. A Vinaya work of 'Jam dbyangs Kun dga' chos bzang was carved on wooden blocks in the 1560s by gNas Rab 'byams pa Byams pa phun tshogs (1503-1581). A copy of this xylograph is available in the ISIAO collection, TTC no. 587; see De Rossi Filibeck 2003: 314; Ehrhard 2012: 163; Sernesi (forthcoming: handlist BP 3).

15 The *Life of gTsang smyon Heruka* was accompanied by a volume of the master's *Collected Songs*, by the latter's separate table of contents, and by a short treatise on the genre of *mgur* composed by gTsang smyon. The circumstances of production of these prints have been thoroughly investigated; see Ehrhard 2010: 154-58; Sernesi 2011: 186-87; Larsson 2012: 44-47; Larsson & Quintman 2015: 91-94. The printed editions of the “School of gTsang smyon” are studied in detail in Sernesi (forthcoming). The final section of this book is a handlist, providing for each edition a bibliographical description, references to the known copies, and the colophon transcription. The entries are listed with a siglum and a number: these references will be given below as e.g. Sernesi (forthcoming: EP 1) etc. For the *gTsang pa he ru ka'i thun mong gi rnam thar* and accompanying texts, see Sernesi (forthcoming: EP 2, EP 3, EP 4/1, EP 4/2). A xylograph of dNgos grub dpal 'bar's biography is available in Paltsek 2010: vol. 55 (Ri), pp. 381-509; cf. Sernesi (forthcoming: Ch. 3, M 8).

of *Mar pa* (printed in 1505), provided gTsang smyon's students with a first-hand experience in bookprinting, which they cultivated after the master's demise.¹⁶ While the print of gTsang smyon's biography and song collection in 1508 was a collective enterprise, the master's pupils would then engage in printing activities individually, producing an extensive output generally ascribed to the "School of gTsang smyon."

The School of gTsang smyon

Sixteen texts included in the collection may be identified as stemming from the "School of gTsang smyon." While many of these printed books are well known to scholarship, few are rare or unique copies.

The *rGyal ba yang dgon chos rje'i rnam thar* [=14], is a biography of rGyal ba Yang dgon pa (1213-1258) that was printed by 'Jam dpal chos lha (b. 1478), the cotton-clad (*ras pa*) of the monastery of Lo paṅ in Tsib ri; this individual had already assisted the Madman of gTsang in printing the *Life and Songs of Mar pa* in 1505, and he was among the master's pupils involved in the printing projects executed in 1508 at Tsib ri rGyal gyi Śrī. The work was printed at the monastery of Lo paṅ at an unknown date, thanks to the offering of the wooden blocks by 'Jam dpal chos lha's pupil Sangs rgyas dar po (15th/16th cent.). The carvers are not the same that were responsible for the printing projects of 1505 and 1508, and who came from sMan khabs, but they came instead from Gung thang. Their names are mGon po rgyal mtshan, mGon po rdo rje, and mGon po dbang phyug, and they are well known from printing projects realized in Mang yul Gung thang during the 1540s-50s. In particular, they all worked together at the printed edition of the *rNal 'byor dbang phyug lha btsum chos kyi rgyal po'i rnam thar gyi smad cha*, which was realized after the passing of lHa btsum Rin chen rnam rgyal (1473-1557). For this reason, the dating 1520 proposed by Porong Dawa for the former printing project is probably too early.¹⁷

If one continues to look for further xylographs produced by the "school of gTsang smyon" the next print is the biography of the great yogin Mi la ras pa carved on

16 A copy of the original blockprint of the *Mi la ras pa'i rnam mgur* is still missing. The only existing copy of the first edition of *The Life of Mar pa* that has been located so far is Wellcome Tibetan 44; see Sernesi 2011: 185-86; Sernesi (forthcoming: EP 1). This print was completed with the collaboration of two pupils of gTsang smyon, namely Lo paṅ 'Jam dpal Chos lha and bSod nams bsam grub. The former also edited *The Life of gTsang smyon Heruka* by dNgos grub dpal 'bar. The same artisans worked at both *The Life of Mar pa* and *The Life of gTsang smyon Heruka*, i.e. the scribe sMan khab stod pa Nam 'phel and the carvers Sangs rgyas and rDor dpal.

17 For 'Jam dpal chos lha and his skills in editing the writings of gTsang smyon Heruka, see Ehrhard 2010: 157. Regarding this master, his pupil Sangs rgyas dar po, and their printing projects, see Sernesi (forthcoming: Ch. 4, and handlist under siglum LP). For the *rGyal ba yang dgon chos rje'i rnam thar*, see Sernesi (forthcoming b: LP 1). A study of this and related sources on Yang dgon pa is in progress in Munich. For the *rNal 'byor dbang phyug lha btsum chos kyi rgyal po'i rnam thar gyi smad cha*, see Clemente 2007: 133-34; Sernesi (forthcoming: M 4).

wooden blocks in 'Od gsal phug in Ron (a village in Gung thang) in the year 1538. This *rJe btsun mi la ras pa'i rnam thar* [=19] is a new edition based on the original xylograph prepared under the supervision of gTsang smyon Heruka and it was achieved by his disciple rTogs ldan Chos kyi rgya mtsho (15th/16th century).¹⁸

The disciple of gTsang smyon Heruka who is probably most famous for his printing activities is lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal (1473-1557). He issued more than twenty different hagiographical and doctrinal works, printed at his workshop located at Brag dkar rta so, the renowned site of Mi la ras pa in Mang yul Gung thang. The works printed by Rin chen rnam rgyal were first listed by Gene Smith (1969: 25-28) on the basis of a passage of the master's biography. Now copies of most of these editions have surfaced, and they have been supplemented by more titles printed by the same master.¹⁹ The Paltsek collection contains five texts from Brag dkar rta so, dating from the years 1540 to 1555, as well as the *rnam mgur* of the royal monk. The first print bears the title *rGyal ba rdo rje 'chang yab yum gyi rnam thar rin chen gter mdzod dang mkhas grub kun gyi gtsug rgyan pañ chen nā ro pa'i rnam thar ngo mtshar rmad byung* [=22] and formed obviously the initial part of a "golden rosary" (*gser phreng*) series of texts.²⁰ In 1543 the biography of gTsang smyon Heruka written by lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal was carved on wooden blocks in Brag dkar rta so and it bears the title *Grub thob gtsang pa smyon pa'i rnam thar dad pa'i spu long g.yo ba* [= 23].²¹ Also the collected spiritual songs of Ko brag pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan (1182-1261), and the *rnam mgur* of Gling ras pa Padma'i rdo rje (1128-1188) were printed at the initiative of lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal; these works have the titles *Khams gsum 'dran* (= 'gran) *bral grub thob ko rag pa'i* (= brag pa'i) *mgur 'bum* [=28] and *Grub thob gling ras kyi rnam mgur* [=33] respectively.²² In the

18 This reprint of the *Mi la ras pa'i rnam thar* had been prepared by rTogs ldan Chos kyi rgya mtsho together with a reprint of the *Mi la ras pa'i mgur 'bum*, which was completed in 1540. For further details on these prints realized with the support of many nobles, officers, patrons, monks and yogins from Mang yul Gung thang and the valley of Lan 'de, see Sernesi 2011: 191-97. For the description of the editions, see Sernesi (forthcoming: P 3 and P 4).

19 For the Brag dkar rta so editions, see Clemente 2007; Clemente 2015; Clemente 2016: 406-09; Schaeffer 2011; Sernesi 2011; Sernesi (forthcoming): Ch. 4 and handlist under siglum LT. The two volumes of the master's hagiography and six copies of Brag dkar rta so xylographs can be found in the IsIAO Tibetan Tucci Collection: TTC 657/3, TTC 657/5, TTC 657/6, TTC 706, TTC 707, TTC 1089/2, TTC 1102, TTC 1356; see De Rossi Filibeck 2003: s.v.

20 This edition is undated in the colophon. For the description of the edition, see Sernesi (forthcoming: LT 3). An English translation of the biography of Nāropa can be found in Guenther 1963.

21 Another copy of this edition is TTC 706. For its description, and for the edition and English translation of the printing colophon, see Clemente 2007: 135-37. For the description of the edition, see Sernesi (forthcoming: LT 1).

22 Both these editions are undated in the colophon. The Tibetan text and the English translation of the collection of spiritual songs of Ko brag pa are available in Stearns 2000. For the description of the edition, see Sernesi (forthcoming: LT 22). The copy of the *Grub thob gling ras pa'i rnam mgur* as contained in the Paltsek collection is not an original xylograph, but a calligraphed version

year 1550 the *Sangs rgyas thams cad kyi rnam 'phrul rje btsun ti lo pa'i rnam mgur* [=32] followed, which can be regarded as another section of the set of golden rosary texts.²³ Finally, the collection includes the first volume of the life story of lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal himself, known as *dPal ldan bla ma dam pa mkhas grub lha btsun chos kyi rgyal po'i blo 'das chos sku'i rang gdangs* [=31].²⁴

A highlight of the Paltsek collection are the rare biographies of two disciples of gTsang smyon Heruka, namely bSod nams blo gros (c. 1460?-1541) and dBang phyug rgyal mtshan (b. 1474). The life story of the former has the title *mKhas grub rdo rje 'chang bsod nams blo gros kyi rnam par thar pa yon tan gyi sbrang rtsi la dad pa'i bung ba rnam par rol pa* [=24], and was composed in the year 1544 by the youngest among the master's pupils, named Bya bral ba Tshul khriims dpal ldan, compiling different materials including an earlier *rnam thar* by the heart-sons mKhyen rab dbang phyug and sKya'o rtogs ldan. All three disciples are portrayed in the illustrations of the text. The biography was printed in a place called mGar phug located in Mang yul Gung thang at an unspecified date, possibly not long after the completion of the text.²⁵ The life story of dBang phyug rgyal mtshan is called *Phyogs bcu dus gsum rgyal ba sras bcas kyi sku gsung thugs dang yon tan 'phrin las nams gcig tu bsod pa dbang gi rgyal po yi dri med rnam thar skal bzang yid 'phrog* [=25], and was printed in rDza ri bSam gtan gling, a hermitage in the rTsi ri region. This is so far the only known copy of this text. Unfortunately the penultimate folio (fol. 245) is missing, and the final folio (fol. 246) is very damaged, so the colophon is for the most part lacking or

of the text instead. Four copies of this edition have been filmed by the NGMPP: Reel no. L 194/11 (complete), Reel no. E 2518/6 (complete), Reel no. L 12/1 (f. 4 missing. Damaged by worms, breaking, water), Reel no. L 581/5 (f. 56 ripped, f. 57 missing); a copy has been scanned by the TBRC: W4CZ1043. For this edition, see Sernesi (forthcoming: LT 12).

23 The copy of the *Ti lo pa'i rnam mgur* included in the collection is a manuscript copied from a xylograph, as it includes the printing colophon from Brag dkar rta so. It was reproduced from Khams sprul Don brgyud nyi ma 1972-76, Vol. 1: ff. 1-75. Another manuscript copy of the xylograph has been published in Uryyan Dorje 1976: 37-83. Three incomplete xylographic copies from the blocks have been filmed by the NGMPP: Reel no. E 2517/6 (ff. 13-19 missing), Reel no. L 1107/4 (f. 23 missing), Reel no. L 969/4 (section 2, f. 21 missing); see Sernesi (forthcoming: LT 4).

24 For an edition and translation of the printing colophon of the biography of lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal see Clemente 2007: 130-32; a study of this work together with its sequel, the so-called *rNam thar kyi smad cha*, can be found in Clemente 2014: 435-84. For the description of these editions, see Sernesi (forthcoming: M 3 and M 4).

25 This is a black and white reproduction of the exemplar of the text filmed by the NGMPP in 1996 in Phole (collection of lCags phug sprul sku); see NGMPP Reel no. 833/3. For the description of the edition, see Sernesi (forthcoming: M 7). For a sketch of the life of bSod nams blo gros and his printing activities, see Schaeffer 2007: 223-24 and Schaeffer 2011: 465-66; for his edition of the *Life of Mi la ras pa*, see also Sernesi 2011: 188-89, 215-16. mKhyen rab dbang phyug is also known as the compiler of the biography of gTsang smyon Heruka's consort Kun tu bzang mo (1464-1549); see Diemberger 2016: 286.

illegible.²⁶ Both masters were also engaged in producing xylographic editions of bKa' brgyud pa works, and the Paltsek collection contains a manuscript copy of the biography of Nāropa compiled by dBang phyug rgyal mtshan at the exhortation of Kun tu bzang mo (1464-1549), the spiritual partner of gTsang smyon Heruka. This *mKhas grub mnyam med dpal nā ro pa'i rnam thar dri med legs bshad bde chen 'brug sgra* [=39] (marg. *kha*) was printed in the region of gNya' nang, together with the hagiography of Tilopa, titled *rNal 'byor gyi dbang phyug chen po rje btsun ti lo shes rab bzang po'i rnam thar zab gsal rin gter mdzod mthong bas yid smon*, and compiled by dBang phyug rgyal mtshan in 1523 (marg. *ka*). This printing project was achieved with the support of disciples of Kun tu bzang mo, including the donor and yoginī (*sbyin pa'i bdag mo rang grol gyi rnal 'byor ma*) dBon mo g.yang 'dzom.²⁷

Further Prints from the 16th Century

Six xylographs in the collection are from the workshops of the Bo dong pa monk mNyam med Chos dbang rgyal mtshan (1484-1549) and the 'Ba ra ba bKa' brgyud pa yogin Nam mkha' rdo rje (1486-1553). Their activities in printing Buddhist texts in the region of Mang yul Gung thang have already been documented for the period from 1514 to 1554 with particular attention to the printing colophons of the relevant xylographs. The four works produced under the supervision of mNyam med Chos dbang rgyal mtshan start with the *dPal ldan bla ma dam pa chos legs mtshan can gyi rnam thar yon tan 'brug sgra* [=15], the biography of the eclectic Bo dong pa teacher bTsun pa Chos legs (1437-1521), printed in Chab rom phug in Mang yul Gung thang in the year 1525. This is followed by the biography and the spiritual songs of the rNying ma pa teacher Rig 'dzin mChog ldan mgon po (1497-1531); this work is called *sPrul sku rig 'dzin mchog ldan mgon po'i rnam thar mgur 'bum dad ldan spro ba bskyed byed* [=16] and was executed as a xylograph by mNyam med Chos dbang rgyal mtshan at the royal palace of rDzong dkar in Gung thang in the year 1527.²⁸

26 For information on this text, see Porong Dawa 2016: 204-05. For the description of the edition, see Sernesi (forthcoming: M 9).

27 This printing project was already mentioned by Gene Smith 1969: 28-29. The manuscript in the Paltsek collection is reproduced from Khams sprul Don brgyud nyi ma 1972-76, Vol. 1: ff. 83-214. The life story of Nāropa is the work tentatively translated into German with the title *Die Legenden des Nā ro pa* by Grünwedel in 1933. Only a manuscript version of the original xylograph was available at the time; see Grönbold 1974: 251-55. Unique copies of both texts from the original blocks have been filmed by the NGMPP. For the description of these printed editions, see Sernesi (forthcoming: P 1 and P 2).

28 For the printing colophon of the biography of bTsun pa Chos legs, see Ehrhard 2000: 95-100. The work was printed as the first volume of the collected writings of the Bo dong pa master; see Ehrhard 2106a: 223-25 for a description of the process of production of this set of xylographs. The edition of the printing colophon of the *rnam mgur* of Rig 'dzin mChog ldan mgon po can be found in Ehrhard 2000: 101-03. It should be noted that the reproduction of the latter work in the Paltsek collection is not the original xylograph; it is a calligraphed version of the text published as *Rin chen*

The Bo dong master also printed the two-volume textual collection making up the famous “Book of the bKa’ gdams pas” (*bKa’ gdams glegs bam*), a project that was realized in the year 1539 at the hermitage of Kun gsal sGang po che. Finally, the *sKyes bu gsum gyi lam rim rgyas pa khrid du sbyar ba* [=27], a manual on the “stages of the path” (*lam rim*) from the Bo dong pa school written by Phyogs las rnam rgyal, was carved on wooden blocks in the Himalayan valley of bTsum, to the south of Mang yul Gung thang, in the year 1546.²⁹

Among the prints of the ’Ba’ ra ba bKa’ brgyud pa school realized in the 16th century in Mang yul Gung thang, is the *rnam mgur* of ’Ba’ ra ba rGyal mtshan dpal bzang po (1310-1391) and the spiritual songs of the latter’s reincarnation ’Ba’ ra ba Nam mkha’ rgyal mtshan (1475-1539). The *rJe btsun ’ba’ ra ba rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po’i rnam thar mgur ’bum dang bcas pa* [=21] was printed in rDzos lha in the Gung thang region in the year 1540 and the *Śākya’i dge slong nam mkha’ rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po’i mgur ’bum* [=26] was printed in Lan ’de, a Himalayan valley to the south of Mang yul Gung thang, in the year 1546.³⁰

A text dealing with the succession of teachers of the Shangs pa bKa’ brgyud pa school can also be found in the Paltsek collection. It was printed once again in Mang yul Gung thang, namely in the royal palace of rDzong dkar in the 1540s. This *Shangs pa bka’ brgyud kyi bla rabs* [=29] was produced by a teacher called Byin rlabs rdo rje as a memorial for one Nam mkha’ rab gsal.³¹

The second earliest printed biography in the collection after the one of gTsang smyon Heruka is a work describing the life of the Sa skya pa scholar Dwags po bKra shis rnam rgyal (1399-1458). It bears the title *Kun mkhyen bkra shis rnam rgyal gyi rnam par thar pa ngo mtshar gyi rgya mtsho* [=13] and it was written by the latter’s nephew, the First Karma ’Phrin las pa (1456-1539). The place of printing was the region of Dwags po and the xylograph was produced under the patronage of the

gter mdzod rgyab chos, vol. 16, Paro 1979. A print from the original blocks was filmed by the NGMPP, Reel no. L 9/3 = L 189/4.

29 For the printing colophon of the *bKa’ gdams glegs bam*, see Ehrhard 2000: 118-29; see Sernesi 2015b for the formation, reception, and editorial history of the text. The Paltsek collection includes images of black and white photocopies of vol. *ka*, ff. 20-94, then digital photos of vol. *ka*, ff. 247-365 (ff. 1-19, 95-246 missing) and of vol. *kha* (complete). The printing colophon of the *lam rim* manual of Bo dong Paṅ chen can be found in Ehrhard 2000: 148-61; this was the last one of the large-scale printing projects of mNyam med Chos dbang rgyal mtshan.

30 The printing colophons of these two works produced by Nam mkha’ rdo rje, a disciple of ’Ba ra ba Nam mkha’ rgyal mtshan, can be found in Ehrhard 2000: 130-41, 142-47. The spiritual songs (marg. *kha*) of ’Ba ra ba Nam mkha’ rgyal mtshan were printed together with his biography (marg. *ka*). For an earlier xylograph of this *rnam mgur*, printed by mNyam med Chos dbang rgyal mtshan at Kun gsal sGang po che in the year 1534, see Ehrhard 2016b: 129-33.

31 Like in the printing projects of lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal, mNyam med Chos dbang rgyal mtshan, and Nam mkha’ rdo rje also in this case the Gung thang king bDud ’dul mgon po lde a.k.a. Kun bzang Nyi zla grags pa (1514-1560) takes a prominent position as a patron for the xylograph. No further information on Byin rlabs rdo rje and Nam mkha’ rab gsal are presently available.

provincial regent called sKu rab Chos rgyal in the year 1515. A biography of the First Karma 'Phrin las pa is also contained in the collection: this work with the title *Mig gis mthong bas sprul sku mngon du byed rna bar thos pas dad pa 'i spu long g.yo legs par bsam na dgos 'dod kun byung ba 'i dpal ldan bla ma 'i rnam thar* [=18] was executed as a xylograph in Yar gsum lhun po rtse in the year 1536 by one Kun dga' rnam rgyal.³²

The collected writings of rJe sGam po pa bSod nams rin chen (1079-1159) were produced in the year 1520 in the Dwags po region as well. A complete copy of the set, beginning with the master's biography, titled *rNam par thar pa yid bzhin nor bu rin po che kun khyab snyan pa 'i ba dan*, is included in the Paltsek Collection [=46]. This edition was realized at Dwags la sgam po monastery under the aegis of the abbot bSod nams lhun grub (1488-1532), and was extremely influential in shaping all the later printed editions of the collection.³³

The *sTon pa thams cad mkhyen pa 'i skyes rabs phreng ba* [=38] is a copy of the extra-canonical edition of Āryaśūra's *Jātakamālā* with the additional stories compiled by the Third Karma pa Rang byung rdo rje (1284-1339). This edition was prepared in 1542 at the palace of Gong dkar under the aegis of a scion of the Phag mo gru family, namely 'Gro ba'i mgon po (1508-1548). This work was printed again in Mang yul Gung thang in 1574, closely following the model from Gong dkar. The person responsible for this further printed edition is gNas Rab 'byams pa Byams pa phun tshogs (1503-1581), a disciple of lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal, and thus also a member of the "School of gTsang smyon Heruka."³⁴

32 The sKu rab chos rgyal referred to in the printing colophon of the biography of Dwags po bKra shis rnam rgyal could be bSod nams rnam par rgyal ba (15th/16th cent.), also known as rTse le[gs] Rig 'dzin chen po; for his person and prints supported by the family of the sKu rab Gong ma, see Ehrhard 2013: 65, 72-73. The *Kun mkhyen bkra shis rnam rgyal gyi rnam par thar pa ngo mtshar gyi rgya mtsho* has also been published in Paltsek 2010: vol. 83 ('U), pp. 385-486. The author of the biography of the First Karma 'Phrin las pa is one Nam mkha' lha dbang Kun dga' legs pa'i blo gros.

33 For this collection, its arrangement and first printed edition, see Kragh 2013: 372-76; Sernesi 2013: 194-96; Sernesi 2015a: 482-89. The collection was reprinted in Mang yul Gung thang in 1574/5 by Byams pa phun tshogs; for details on the latter edition and its relationship with the previous one, see Sernesi 2016b: 294-99. Although correctly dated, these collected writings have been situated towards the end of the Paltsek collection, among prints belonging to the 17th century. This is probably to present them together with the printed copy of another biography of rJe sGam po pa realized in Dwags la sgam po in the 1630s; for the latter xylograph [=47] see below, and note 46.

34 For details on the Gong dkar edition, and its colophon, see Sernesi 2016b: 287-94, 311-14, where also its reprint by Byams pa phun tshogs is treated. For the illustrations of these two, closely related, editions, see also Sernesi 2016a: 353-58. For the printing projects of gNas Rab 'byams pa Byams pa phun tshogs, see Ehrhard 2012: 160-67; Sernesi (forthcoming: Ch. 6, and handlist under siglum BP). Trained in the Sa skya pa tradition in 'Bras yul sKyed mo tshal in gTsang, he was a disciple of both lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal and rGod tshang ras pa sNa tshogs ming can (1482-1552) from Ras chung phug in dBus.

It is known that this master realized around fifteen individual printing projects in the period from 1555 to 1580. Among these, the Paltsek collection contains the *rJe btsun ras chung rdo rje grags pa'i rnam thar rnam mkhyen thar lam gsal ba'i me long ye shes snang ba* [=34], the hagiography of Mi la ras pa's disciple Ras chung rdo rje grags pa (ca. 1084-1161), and the *Sha ra rab 'byams pa sangs rgyas seng ge'i rnam thar mthong ba don ldan ngo mtshar nor bu'i phreng ba thar 'dod yid 'phrog blo gsal mgul rgyan* [=36], the account of the life of Sha ra Rab 'byams pa Sangs rgyas seng ge, the teacher of gTsang smyon Heruka.³⁵ Both prints were realized in the village of gNas in Mang yul in the year 1559, and they were obviously produced as memorial offerings after the passing away of Byams pa phun tshogs's teacher lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal in 1557. The edition of Ras chung pa's biography was based on the printed edition realized in the hermitage of Ras chung phug in Yar lungs by rGod tshang ras chen (1482-1552), another of gTsang smyon's pupils who was active in book printing. Indeed, Byams pa phun tshogs travelled three times to meet this master, and during the last visit at Ras chung phug, in 1551, he received the transmission of the *Life of Ras chung pa* on the basis of a printed copy.³⁶ He obviously obtained on that occasion a personal copy of the edition executed by rGod tshang ras chen at his hermitage in 1531.³⁷ When Byams pa phun tshogs reprinted this work in his birth-village of gNas in 1559, he closely followed the original from Central Tibet, so that the length of the volume and the choice of illustrations are the same; however, the text distribution is slightly altered, so that the beginning and the end of each folio do not match in the two editions.³⁸ rGod tshang ras chen had printed other texts

35 A manuscript copy of the *Sha ra rab 'byams pa sangs rgyas seng ge'i rnam thar* text is included in Urgan Dorje 1976: 451-501. The original on which the manuscript is based is probably TBRC W2CZ7692. A complete printed copy of the Byams pa phun tshogs edition has been filmed by the NGMPP, Reel no. L 109/11. For the description of this edition, see Sernesi (forthcoming: BP 1).

36 The travels to central Tibet are recounted in the master's biography, the *mKhas grub chen po byams pa phun tshogs kyi rnam thar ngo mtshar snang ba'i nyin byed yid bzhin nor bu dgos 'dod kun byung dad pa'i gsal 'debs* [=30], ff. 70a-78b; see Ehrhard 2012: 158-59.

37 See *Ras chung rdo rje grags pa'i rnam thar rnam mkhyen thar lam gsal ba'i me long ye shes snang ba*, ff. 1a-248a, vol. no. *OM*. A unique copy of this print is kept at the British Library, no. 19999 d89 (ff. 43, 241 missing); we thank Burkhard Quessel for his assistance in accessing the volume. A handwritten *dbu can* copy retaining the original printing colophon by rGod tshang ras chen has been published in Khams sprul Don brgyud nyi ma 1972-76, vol. 3; a typeset version has been published in Paltsek 2011, vol. 1. An overview of the printing projects of rGod tshang ras chen, including a discussion of the dating of this printed edition and a list of the accompanying texts printed together with it, was presented by Marta Sernesi in an unpublished paper presented at the 12th IATS Seminar (Vancouver, 2010); a thorough treatment may now be found in Sernesi (forthcoming: Ch. 5, handlist under siglum GT). On the early life and printed editions of rGod tshang ras chen, see also Ehrhard 2010. A copy of the edition prepared in gNas by Byams pa phun tshogs is TTC no. 657/4; see De Rossi Filibeck 2003: s.v.

38 The two editions are very close, so that certainly the printing sheets for carving the blocks in gNas were prepared copying the Ras chung phug edition. For example, the scribe kept the double numbering of fol. 232/233 (*nyi brgya so gnyis so gsum*), which is found in the Ras chung phug

together with the *Life of Ras chung pa*, and notably two short compositions, numbered *Ā* and *Hum*, accompanying the hagiography. The first is titled *gSang bdag sprul sku rje btsun ras chung rdo rje grags pa'i rnam thar las gsung ngag rdo rje'i tshig rin chen dpungs pa*, and constitutes a session of responsa (*dri lan*) exchanged between Ras chung pa and his disciple Sum pa chos dar.³⁹ The second is a versified eulogy summarizing the life of Ras chung pa, titled *rJe btsun ras chung rdo rje grags pa'i rnam thar gsol 'debs rnam mkhyen thar lam gsal ba'i me long ye shes snang ba*. Both texts were also reprinted by Byams pa phun tshogs, and are reproduced in the Paltsek collection [=34-35]. The printing colophon of the responsa (vol. *Ā*) is copied from rGod tshang ras chen's, and only the proper names are substituted. The Western Tibetan edition is said to have been produced in Brag dkar rta so by one Nam mkha'i rnal 'byor rGod phrug blo sde, obviously an epithet of Byams pa phun tshogs.⁴⁰

Another print in the Paltsek collection from the workshop of gNas dates from the years 1574/5. It deals with the lives of the three Buddhist teachers invited to Tibet by Khro phu Lo tsā ba Byams pa'i dpal (1173-1250) and bears the title *Paṅ grub gsum gyi rnam thar dpag bsam 'khri shing* [= 37]. Finally, also the life story of Byams pa phun tshogs himself, called *mKhas grub chen po byams pa phun tshogs kyi rnam thar ngo mtshar snang ba'i nyin byed yid bzhin nor bu dgos 'dod kun byung dad pa'i gsal 'debs* [= 30], may be found in the selection.⁴¹

edition, although the text in the Byams pa phun tshogs edition begins there at an earlier point (equivalent to the middle of the last line of the preceding folio 231b in the Ras chung phug edition). In the original edition, the narrative is followed by a first colophon by rGod tshang ras chen in ff. 240b-241a, where also the final illustrations are found; to this is appended a long poetic composition recounting the Buddhist "conversion" of Tibet and describing the hermitage of Ras chung phug, and finally the printing colophon with the register of the offerings received, running until f. 248a (not illustrated). For the translation of this colophon, see Sernesi (forthcoming b). The Western Tibetan edition also retains the peculiar feature of presenting the final images at ff. 240b-241a (corresponding to the end of the narrative text), while its own printing colophon, recording the list of donors, ends at f. 243a (not illustrated). Actually, f. 241 is missing in the unique copy of the Ras chung phug edition kept at the British library. While the contents of the missing text may be gleaned from the manuscript copies, we assume that f. 241a would carry illustrations similar to those found on f. 241a of the Western Tibetan edition, that is, (left) Phyag bzhi pa surrounded by Bya rog gdong ma and Seng ge gdong ma, and (right) Remati surrounded by Tshe ring ma and rNam thos sras: indeed, all the other illustrations exactly correspond in the two editions.

39 Sum pa chos dar is credited with the compilation of the earliest hagiographical composition devoted to Ras chung pa, called the *Ngo mtshar nor bu'i snying po*. This was one of the main sources of rGod tshang ras chen's composition, but no copy of it is known to date; see Roberts 2007: 7-9. In the colophon of the printed edition of the *dri lan*, rGod tshang ras chen states to have reproduced it faithfully following a text by Sum pa chos dar, so this might represent a fragment belonging to an ancient strata of the hagiographical lore.

40 For these prints, see Sernesi (forthcoming: BP 2/1-3).

41 Among the prints achieved by Byams pa phun tshogs in the later phase of his life one finds next to the *Paṅ grub gsum gyi rnam thar dpag bsam 'khri shing* also the extra-canonical version of the *Jātakamālā* and the collected writings of rJe sGam po pa; the latter project was prepared closely

Later Prints of Doctrinal Works and Biographies

Porong Dawa attributes to the period of the 16th century only one doctrinal work of the collection, that is the xylograph of the famous treatise on the “mountain doctrine” (*ri chos*) by Dol po pa Shes rab rgyal mtshan (1292-1361). The *Ri chos nges don rgya mtsho* [=17] was printed together with its topical outline at a hermitage near Sa skya in the year 1528 by one Shes rab dpal bzang, supported by a ruler called Mi dbang 'Phags rgod khyung rgyal.⁴²

Further prints from the Jo nang pa school are four individual texts from the biographical tradition of rJe btsun Kun dga' grol mchog (1507-1566). These works bear the titles *rJe btsun kun dga' grol mchog gi rnam thar skal bzang dad pa'i shing rta 'dren byed*, *rNam thar skal bzang dad pa'i shing rta 'dren byed kyi 'phros zur 'debs mdzes rgyan*, *rNam thar yang rgyan nor bu'i phra bkod* and *rNam thar spel rgyan nor bu'i do shal* [=40]. They were carved on wooden blocks at the palace of Shel dkar rgyal rtse under the patronage of the ruler Chos rgyal bSod nams lhun grub in the year 1563. Among the writings of rJe btsun Kun dga' snying po a.k.a Tārānātha (1575-1635), two biographies are included in the collection. These are the autobiography with the title *rGyal khams pa tārānāthas bdag nyid kyi rnam thar nges par brjod pa'i deb ther shin tu zhib mo ma bcos lhug lhug pa'i rtogs brjod* [=43] and the work *rJe btsun bla ma dam pa rdo rje 'chang chen po kun dga' rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po'i rnam thar dge legs kun gyi 'byung gnas dad pa'i rgya mtsho* [=44], describing the life of a Sa skya pa master from the tradition of Śākya mchog ldan (1428-1507). The first work was printed in the years 1618 to 1621 in rTag brtan Dam chos gling, the monastery of Tārānātha later known as dGa' ldan phun tshogs gling, and the second one was printed soon after its composition in 1599 at gTing skyes in southern gTsang with the support of the local ruler Ngag gi dbang po Phyogs las rnam rgyal.⁴³

following the 1520 Dwags la sgam po edition. For these printing projects, see Ehrhard 2012: 166; Sernesi 2016b: 287-94; Sernesi (forthcoming: BP 6, BP 7, BP 8). The dating of the print of the biography of Byams pa phun tshogs in the collection—marked “1540?” (see Paltsek 2013: 83)—should be shifted to the year 1581. For another copy of this edition, see TBRC W25576. This text was accompanied by the collection of spiritual songs of the master with the title *mKhas grub rab 'byams chos rje'i gsung mgur*; see Sernesi (forthcoming b: M 5, M 6).

42 The hermitage is called rGya ri khrod and the person responsible for the print describes himself as a “yogin of the Kālacakra” (*dus 'khor rnal 'byor pa*). The date is provided as *sa pho byi*, which in the printed book of the collection is equated with 1468, but according to the chronological order of the texts within the collection, should correspond to 1528. In fact, the date of this edition is still uncertain. The work was translated in full in Hopkins 2006; this rendition includes an edition of the *sa bcaḍ*; see *ibid.*: 733-69. For the translation Hopkins employed four copies of the text, including two later printed editions, but the Sa skya edition was not available to him; see *ibid.*: 40.

43 The four works of the biographical tradition of rJe btsun Kun dga' grol mchog have the margins *nga to ca* and are part of a xylographic edition including also the hagiographical accounts of the master's previous lives. This set of texts has been published under the title “The Autobiographies of Jo-nang Kun-dga' grol-mchog and His Previous Embodiments”, 2 vols., New Delhi: Tibet

A doctrinal work of Tārānātha can also be found in the collection and it is one of his commentaries on the *Kālacakratantra*. This work is called *Dus 'khor sgrub thabs dpag bsam ljon shing* [=45] and was executed as a xylograph at the royal palace of rDzong dkar under Khri bSod nams dbang phyug lde (1577-1621) in the year 1616. That the last king of Mang yul Gung thang supported further printing projects is also testified by the *bDud rtsi snying po yan lag brgyad pa gsang ma man ngag gi rgyud* [=41], one of the “four Tantras” (*rgyud bzhi*) of the Tibetan medical tradition; this work was printed, once again at rDzong dkar, in the year 1611.⁴⁴

The last king of gTsang, Karma Phun tshogs rnam rgyal (1586-1621), had also acted as a patron for printing projects, and the Paltsek collection contains a voluminous commentary on the *Zab mo nang don* of the Third Karma pa Rang byung rdo rje; the title of the work is *dPal rdo rje 'i tshig zab mo nang gi don 'grel bshad sems kyi rnam par thar pa gsal ba byed pa 'i rgyan* [=48] and it was printed in lHo brag in south-eastern Tibet in the year 1615.⁴⁵

Another print realized in the Dwags po region in the 1630s is a biography of rJe sGam po pa, written by 'Dzam gling nor bu rgyan pa (1589-1633) and called *Chos kyi rgyal po mnyam med sgam po pa chen po 'i rnam thar yid bzhin gyi nor bu thar pa rin po che 'i rgyan mchog* [=47]; the author is known as the Second Dwags lha sgam po sPrul sku and has written further works, including a text on the monastery's abbatial succession together with a pilgrimage guide to Dwags lha sgam po.⁴⁶

House, 1982. For the printed edition of the writings of rJe btsun Kun dga' snying po, see Zongtse 1977: 91-104; the collected writings start with the autobiography bearing the margin *ka*. The blocks for this edition were originally kept at bSam grub rtse, the seat of the kings of gTsang, before being moved to Tārānātha's monastery. Kun dga' rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po was the grandson of rDo ring Kun spangs Kun bzang chos kyi nyi ma (1449-1524), and a pupil of Kun dga' grol mchog. He studied in gSer mdog can and was later an important figure of the tradition, sponsored by the gTing skyes rulers. We thank V. Caumanns for these details.

44 The commentary on the *Kālacakratantra* is contained in the second volume of the xylograph edition of Tārānātha's writings; see Zongtse 1977: 92. The xylograph of the *Man ngag gi rgyud* was in later times no more available in Mang yul Gung thang as noted by Brag dkar rta so sPrul sku Chos kyi dbang phyug (1775-1837); see his *dPal ldan gso ba rig pa 'i mang ngag gi khog 'bubs bsdus don nyung ngu 'i ngag gi gtam du bya ba drang srong kun tu dgyes pa 'i rol mo*, Dharamsala 2012, p. 92.2-4 (*de rjes mang yul gung thang rdzong dkar por chos rgyal gdung gi mtha' ma khri bsod nams dbang phyug gis bzhegs pa 'i par zhiq byung 'dug kyang deng sang ni mi snang*). The dating of this latter print to the time of the Gung thang king Khri rgyal bSod nams lde (1371-1404) has thus to be corrected; see Ehrhard 2000: 14-15.

45 The author of this work, Chos rgyal bsTan pa 'i rgyal mtshan of the Karma bka' brgyud pa school, was a disciple of both the Seventh Karma pa Chos grags rgya mtsho (1454-1506) and the First Karma 'Phrin las pa. It was written in Yer pa lHa ri snying po in dBus and the place of printing is called lHo brag lHa lung klu sdings.

46 For further details on the Second Dwags lha sgam po sPrul sku and his writings, see Sørensen 2007: 51-52. As 21st throne-holder he was on the abbot's seat from 1592 until 1632 and it seems that his other writings were made available only in manuscript form. The biography of rJe sGam po pa, written in 1632, was composed upon the request of O rgyan Las 'phro gling pa a.k.a. Rig 'dzin

A xylograph that cannot be dated at the moment is the biography of Gling ras pa Padma'i rdo rje; the colophon of this *rJe grub thob chen po gling ras pa'i rnam thar* [=42] provides only the information that the work was printed in the southern region of Tibet at a site called lHa ldings.⁴⁷

The last two prints in the collection are biographies of two members of the 'Brug pa bKa' brgyud pa school. The first one is called *Oḍiyana pa ngag dbang rgya mtsho'i rnam thar* [=49] and describes the life of the teacher known as sTag tshang ras pa (1574-1651). This book bears the volume number *Oḡ* and was printed as the first of three volumes, followed by the *O rgyan mkha' 'gro gling gi lam yig thar lam brgod pa'i them skas* (vol. *Ā*), and the *O rgyan ngag dbang rgya mtsho'i mgur 'bum zhal gdams zab don ut pa la'i 'phreng ba* (vol. *Huḡ*).⁴⁸ The last book in the Paltsek collection bears the title *rDo rje 'chang dngos mi pham ngag dbang snyan grags dpal bzang po'i rnam par thar pa ngo mtshar rgya mtsho'i zlos gar* [=50] and is an account of the life of Ngag dbang sNyan grags dpal bzang (1617-1680), the Second sDing che dgon sPrul sku; it was printed in the Mustang region in the Nepalese Himalayas. These two xylographs date from the 1660s and the 1680s respectively and it is possible to compare certain stylistic features of these works with further 'Brug pa bKa' brgyud prints from the 17th century.⁴⁹

'Ja' tshon snying po (1598-1639); the throne-holder of Dwags lha sgam po is known as the 'master of the teachings' (*chos bdag*) of the latter's treasure works.

47 This print was produced by one Blo gros Grags pa dpal bzang and the location given in the colophon is Gangs ri'i khrod kyi lho phyogs lha ldings. For a temple in Bhutan known as lHa ldings and founded by members of the Sa skya pa school, see Phuntsho 2013: 184. For the print of the *rnam mgur* of Gling ras pa produced in the 16th century [=33], compare note 22.

48 The collection is sealed, in turn, by a short *Grub thob chen po'i rnam thar gsol 'debs dngos grub char 'bebs* (vol. *Ho*). For a black and white copy of the four texts together, see TBRC W2CZ5991. In this scan they are followed by two more texts (no volume number). The print was achieved with the support of the king of Ladakh named bDe ldan rnam rgyal (r. 1642-94). For this king, see Petech 1977: 57-70. He also figures as a donor in the reprint of the *Life of Mi la ras pa* by gTsang smyon Heruka supervised in the Nepalese Himalayas by a master named Ratna; see Sernesi 2011: 202. The biography of sTag tshang ras pa was composed in 1663 at bDe chen chos 'khor dgon in Central Tibet by Ngag dbang Kun dga' lhun grub (1617-1676), the Second bDe chen chos 'khor sprul sku; it was printed in Ladakh and the blocks were kept at Hemis monastery; see Schwieger 1996: 83.

49 The author of the biography of the Second sDing che dgon sprul sku is known as sTag rtse sku skye Mi pham phun tshogs shes rab (1654-1715), and he composed the work in Tsā ri. The biography was published as *The Biography of the Second sDing po che Cog gra Mi pham ngag dbang snyan grags dpal bzang by Stag rtse sku skye Mi pham phun tshogs shes rab and other biographical material connected with the 'Brug pa Dkar brgyud pa tradition. Reproduced from rare blockprints and manuscripts from Hemis Monastery*. Darjeeling, Kargyud Sungrab Nyamso Khang, 1984, ff. 273-523; see also TBRC W1CZ888. The works of sTag rtse sku skye were also later printed in the Mustang region, and they were filmed in 1986 by the NGMPP, Reel no. 100/1-100/27; see also TBRC W18167. It should be noted that these collected writings were carved on wooden blocks with the support of female sponsorship; see Schaeffer 2004: 43. One can note similarities of page layout, margins etc. between these xylographic editions.

Final Remarks

The textual collection prepared by the Paltsek Research Institute, with a leading role by Porong Dawa, is titled *A Brief Introduction to the Evolution of Tibetan Xylographic Printing Technology*. Indeed, the items included in the compilation provide an overview of Tibetan printed books during the first three centuries of the adoption of the xylographic technology in Central Tibet. The prints stem from a wide geographical area, including Mang yul Gung thang, La stod lHo, gTsang, and dBus, and testify to the ubiquitous spread of woodblock printing. Alongside some witnesses already known to scholarship, we find in the collection a number of supplementary copies of known editions, or unique copies of previously unknown editions. The two DVDs make these prints now available to the scholarly community as precious data for the study of the history of the book in pre-modern Tibet. As mentioned above, the earliest printed books included in the collection are doctrinal texts sponsored by leading noble houses. In the 16th century we witness an increased production of life stories and spiritual songs of Buddhist masters, sometimes sponsored by collecting individual donations. In the section of the collection devoted to the later books we observe a wide variety in genre and length of the works printed, and see that local rulers in the Himalayan regions like Ladakh and Mustang continued to sponsor the printing of the life and works of prominent Buddhist masters into the 17th century. These precious documents are indispensable sources not only for the history of the printing technology, but also for the study of the religious and intellectual history of Tibet.

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**EIN KANJURTEXT AUF GEBETSFAHNEN:
DHVAJĀGRA-KEYŪRA-DHĀRAṆĪ,
RGYAL MTSHAN GYI RTSE MO'I DPUNG RGYAN CES BYA
BA'I GZUNGS**

HELMUT EIMER

(Bonn)¹

Abstract

In Tibet, prayer flags are a common means of asking supernatural beings for both protection and prosperity. A flag such as this is called a 'wind-horse' if it shows a horse in the middle bearing the Buddhist triratna. Prayer flags are written or printed on different sizes of paper or cloth. Small wind-horse flags comprise a limited number of invocations only. On medium sized ones we find the main part of the Rgyal mtshan gyi rtse mo'i dpung rgyan ces bya ba'i gzungs (Sanskrit Dhvajāgra-keyūra-dhāraṇī), almost completely in transliterated Sanskrit. Some very large wind-horse flags cover the text as it occurs in the Kanjur, including the narrative frame in Tibetan. The present paper gives a German translation and the Tibetan version of the Dhvajāgra-keyūra-dhāraṇī according to the Derge Kanjur.

Wenn ein gläubiger Tibeter eine Gebetsmühle dreht,² erwirbt er das gleiche Verdienst wie durch das Lesen oder Rezitieren des Mantra *om ma ṇi padme hūm* oder der Sūtra-Texte, die in der Trommel enthalten sind. Außerdem werden im tibetischen Kulturkreis häufig bedruckte oder sonstwie mit Schrift versehene Gebetsfahnen an wichtigen Plätzen aufgehängt, um durch das Flattern im Wind dem jeweiligen Stifter Glück und Wohlergehen zu sichern und die lokalen Götter zu besänftigen. Diese in der tibetischen Volksfrömmigkeit sehr beliebten Fahnen werden meistens als *rlung rta*, 'Windpferd', bezeichnet.³ Es gibt sie in verschiedenen Größen und Ausfertigungen, mit kurzem oder längerem Text.

Hier wird zunächst der Text eines 1972 in Kathmandu / Nepal erworbenen Druckstocks für eine Windpferd-Fahne betrachtet (siehe Abbildung).⁴ Die Druckplatte

1 Frau Dr. Siglinde Dietz, Göttingen, danke ich herzlich für wichtige Hinweise und Korrekturen zu diesem Beitrag.

2 Auch 'Gebetsrad' (tib. *'khor lo*, 'Rad', englisch 'prayer-wheel').

3 Über den Hintergrund der tibetischen Vorstellung vom 'Windpferd' wird im Folgenden nicht gesprochen.

4 Größe der Tafel 260 x 350 mm, Schriftfeld 225 x 320 mm. Ich danke der Eigentümerin für die Genehmigung zur Veröffentlichung.

beruht offensichtlich auf einem Abzug einer abgenutzten Blockdrucktafel.⁵ Die Schriftzeichen sind oft undeutlich oder sogar unlesbar, die Abbildungen wirken unbeholfen, vor allem in der Mitte die Darstellung des Pferdes mit dem Juwel auf dem Rücken. In den Ecken sind die vier schützenden Tiere gegeben, und zwar oben links *khyung* ‘Garuḍa’, rechts *’brug* ‘Drache’, unten links *seng* ‘Löwe’ und rechts *stag* ‘Tiger’.

In den ersten beiden Zeilen steht der Titel der Dhāraṇī zunächst auf Sanskrit und dann auf Tibetisch. Um ihn korrekt lesen zu können, muss man zum Vergleich den Kanjur heranziehen:⁶

rgya gar skad du | ārya dhwa dza a gra ke yū ra nā ma dhā ra nī |
bod skad du | ’phags pa rgyal mtshan gyi rtse mo ’i dpung rgyan ces bya ba ’i
gzungs |

Die *Dhvajāgra-keyūra-dhāraṇī* ist in allen bekannten Ausgaben und vollständigen Handschriften des Kanjur sowie in sehr vielen anderen Drucken und Manuskripten überliefert.

Die wörtliche Entsprechung von Sanskrit *keyūra* (‘ein am Oberarm getragener Reif’) ist im Tibetischen *dpung rgyan* (‘Schulterschmuck’). Der Ausdruck *dhvajāgra* bzw. *rgyal mtshan gyi rtse mo* findet sich auch im Titel von zwei Mahāsūtras: Im Zusammenhang mit der Edition dieser Texte zeigt P. Skilling, daß es sich bei *dhvajāgra* um einen Begriff aus dem Militärwesen handelt. *Dhvaja* ist ‘a naval or military standard; a banner’, und zwar ein der Truppe vorangetragener Stab, auf dem oben z.B. das Bild eines Löwen oder einer Gottheit angebracht ist.⁷ Diese Standarte soll die Feinde erschrecken und die eigenen Kämpfer ermutigen,⁸ demnach muss in diesem Zusammenhang auch *keyūra* eine militärische Bedeutung gehabt haben. Die zentralen Abschnitte der Dhāraṇī sprechen ja vom Kampf gegen Feinde, vor denen das *rGyal mtshan gyi rtse mo ’i dpung rgyan* schützen soll, deshalb wird hier Skt. *keyūra* mit ‘Emblem’ wiedergegeben (das wohl auch an der Schulter (*dpung*) der Kämpfer gezeigt werden konnte).

Die vorliegende Windpferd-Fahne enthält ein recht großes Stück der kanonischen *Dhvajāgra-keyūra-dhāraṇī*. Der Text beginnt ohne die Anrufung der Buddhas und der Bodhisattvas und ohne die im Kanjur allgemein übliche Rahmenerzählung. Diese schildert, wie der spätere Buddha in seiner Existenz im ‘Himmel der dreiunddreißig Götter’ von Śatakratu, dem Herrscher über diesen Himmel, um wirksame Hilfe im

5 Zu dem Verfahren des Neuschnittes eines Druckstocks nach einem Abzug von einem alten vgl. Eimer 1970.

6 Am Ende dieses Beitrages wird der vollständige Wortlaut der Dhāraṇī nach den beiden Fassungen im Derge-Kanjur (Text Nr. 612 und Nr. 923) sowie eine Übersetzung gegeben.

7 Skilling 1994-1997, II: 444-458. Auch aus der römischen Geschichte sind solche ‘[Feld]zeichen’ (lateinisch *signum*) bekannt.

8 Skilling 1994-1997, II: 404, Ziffern (1b) und (2b).

Kampf gegen die unter Vemacitra, tib. Thags (b)zangs ris, stehenden Asuras gebeten wurde⁹ und daraufhin die unbesiegbar [machende] Dhāraṇī, ‘deren Emblem an der Spitze der Standarte ist’, verkündete. Der Hauptteil des Textes umfasst fünf unterschiedlich lange Abschnitte, die aus transliteriertem Sanskrit bestehen¹⁰ und jeweils mit einem tibetischen Schlußsatz enden. Dieser lautet bei den ersten drei Abschnitten:

bdag gnod pa thams cad las srungs shig srungs shig, “Schütze, schütze mich vor allen Schäden!”

beim vierten finden wir:

bdag 'jigs pa thams cad las srungs shig srungs shig, “Schütze, schütze mich vor jeglicher Gefahr!”

und beim fünften

bdag 'jigs pa dang | gnod pa dang | nad 'go ba dang | 'khrug pa thams cad las srungs shig srungs shig swā hā, “Schütze, schütze mich vor allen Gefahren, Schäden, Ursachen von Krankheiten und vor Kriegen!”

Im Text wird die Dhāraṇī immer wieder als Person angesprochen und aufgefordert, die Feinde zu besiegen, zu vernichten und zugrunde zu richten. Die Verben stehen in der direkten Befehlsform,¹¹ sie werden zur Intensivierung der Aufforderung so gut wie immer wiederholt. Als Anrede¹² finden wir neben dem ganz neutralen *bhagavatī*, ‘Erhabene’, andere schmückende Beinamen: *jayavāhinī*, ‘Siegbringende’, *śaṅkarī*, ‘Heilbringende’, *prabhāṅkarī*, ‘Strahlende’, *puṣpamālinī*, ‘mit Blumen Bekränzte’. Nur an einer Stelle, und zwar zu Beginn der Zeile 9, erscheint *Dhvajāgra-keyūrā* als Name.¹³

Wie die Dhāraṇī in der Meditation visualisiert werden konnte oder ikonographisch dargestellt wurde, zeigen uns weitere Bezeichnungen: *trinetrā*, ‘Dreiäugige’, *caturvaktṛā*, ‘Viergesichtige’, *caturdaṁṣṭrā*, ‘[du] mit den vier Fangzähnen’, *caturbhujā*, ‘[du] mit den vier Armen’, *lambodarī*, ‘[du] mit dem Hängebauch’.¹⁴ Dem gleichen Zweck dient auch die Beschreibung der Bewaffnung der Dhāraṇī, sie trägt Schwert, Keule, Diskus, Dreizack, Vajra und einen Panzer.¹⁵

Im Tanjur sind drei kurze Texte mit dem Titel *Dhvajāgra-keyūra-sādhana* überliefert, die weitgehend die gleichen Aussagen zur Ikonographie enthalten.¹⁶ Nur

9 Auch die beiden *Dhvajāgra-mahāsūtras* erwähnen den Krieg zwischen den Göttern und den Asuras (Skilling 1994-1997, I: 294f. und 276f.).

10 Eine Ausnahme ist zu Beginn der Zeile 4: *bdag dang sems thams cad kyi*, ‘von mir und allen Lebewesen’.

11 2. Pers. Sing. Imperativ (*Parasmaipada*).

12 Stets im Vokativ Sing. des Femininums.

13 Entsprechend D¹ fol. 46a2 / D² fol. 268a2.

14 Ein Zeichen des besonderen Wohlstandes.

15 Skt. *asi-musala-cakra-triśūla-vajra-kavaca-dhāraṇī*.

16 Derge-Tanjur Text Nr. 3258 (*rgyud, bu*, 16b3-b6), Text Nr. 3383 (*rgyud, mu*, 54a2-a5) und Text

einzelne der dort gegebenen Details weichen von unserer Windpferd-Fahne ab, anstelle von *musala* (‘Keule’) wird *khaṭvāṅga* mit einem Vajra als Verzierung angeführt (*rdo rjes mtshan pa'i kha ṭvām ga*).

Mit dem Ende des fünften Abschnittes, d.h. des vorwiegend aus Sanskrit bestehenden Teils, bricht auf der vorliegenden Fahne der Text der Dhāraṇī, wie wir sie im Kanjur finden, ab.¹⁷ Es folgen, wie man aus den noch lesbaren Buchstaben erkennen kann, die Mantras der Bodhisattvas Mañjuśrī, Avalokiteśvara und Vajrapāṇi:

om wa gī shwa ri mūṃ | om ma ṇi pad me hūṃ | om ba dzra pā ṇi hūṃ phaṭ.

Die beiden letzten Zeichen in Zeile 24 und etwa zehn zu Anfang der Zeile 25 sind unlesbar, d.h. unverständlich. Danach erscheint noch einmal der Schlußsatz von Abschnitt 5. Aus den dann folgenden Schriftzeichen lässt sich versuchsweise als Wortlaut gewinnen:

*stag lo pa ni mi 'khor bcas kyi tshe srog lus dbang thang rlung rta mnga' ba stob thob*¹⁸ *zla ltar rgyas par mdzod gyur cig | lha rgyal lo.*¹⁹

Im Kanjur enthält die *Dhvajāgra-keyūra-dhāraṇī* nach den fünf Abschnitten noch einen weitgehend tibetischen Absatz, der davon spricht, vor welchen Gefahren und Schäden die Dhāraṇī schützen kann und welche Hilfe sie dem zu gewähren vermag, der sie sich zum Schutz wählt. Darauf folgt – vor den üblichen Kolophonen²⁰ – noch der Schluss der Rahmenerzählung, nämlich dass die Zuhörer nach den Worten des Buddha erfreut waren und ihn priesen.

Die *Dhvajāgra-keyūra-dhāraṇī* findet sich auch auf anderen Gebetsfahnen. Ein Beispiel dafür ist die von Nik Douglas (1978) veröffentlichte, etwa gleich große Fahne ‘Banner of Victory Flag (*gyaltsen-tsemo*)’.²¹ Sie zeigt in der Mitte ebenfalls das ‘Windpferd’. An den senkrechten Rändern erscheinen links die ‘acht glückbringenden Zeichen’ (*bkra shis rtags bryad*) und rechts die ‘acht glückbringenden Substanzen’ (*bkra shis rdzas bryad*). In den Ecken sind die vier schützenden Tiere zu sehen.

Nr. 3592 (*rgyud, mu*, 219a3-a6).

17 Gegen Ende der Zeile 22 (über dem Rand der Abbildung des Tigers unten rechts), entsprechend D¹ fol. 46a7 / D² fol. 268b1.

18 Statt der unklaren Silben *ba stob thob* müsste man nach der Parallele auf der von Nik Douglas (1978) veröffentlichten Gebetsfahne *thang stobs 'byor* einsetzen.

19 Etwa zu verstehen als: “Der Mensch, [der im] Tigerjahr [geboren ist], möge zusammen mit [seinen] Angehörigen an Lebenszeit, Lebenskraft, Körper und Macht [wie das] Windpferd [gewinnen], und [seine] Energie möge wie der Mond zunehmen.” Herrn Dagkar Namgyal Nyima danke ich vielmals für seine Hilfe beim Entziffern.

20 Der erste nennt den tibetischen Titel (Titelkolophon) und der zweite die an der Übersetzung beteiligten Personen (Übersetzerkolophon).

21 Douglas 1978: Nr. 53, als Format ist 24,1 x 32,6 cm verzeichnet. Der lautlich wiedergegebene tibetische Titel ist *rgyal mtshan rtse mo*, also Skt. *dhvajāgra*.

Der Wortlaut beginnt mit einer Anrufung der personifizierten *Dhvajāgra-keyūra-dhāraṇī*:

oṃ na mo bha ga ba te dhwa dza a gra ke yū re.

Nach zweieinhalb Zeilen mit transliteriertem Sanskrit setzt der Text der Dhāraṇī ein mit *tadyathā*, ‘[sie lautet] folgendermaßen’,²² und reicht, wie bei der uns vorliegenden Gebetsfahne, bis zum Ende des fünften Abschnittes.²³ Auch hier folgen darauf die Mantras der Bodhisattvas Mañjuśrī, Avalokiteśvara und Vajrapāṇi. Dann heißt es:

oṃ āḥ hūṃ he ho |
*stag seng khyung ’brug*²⁴ *’dir yar skyed* |
 kun ’dus sarba ’du ’du ho |
byi ba | glang | stag | yos | ’brug | sbrul | rta | lug | spre | bya | khyi | phag |²⁵ *lo pa mi*
nor ’khor bcas kyi tshe srog lus dbang thang klung rta mnga’ thang stobs ’byor
thams cad mar do ’i zla ltar rgyas par gyur cig | lha rgyal lo |
oṃ su pra ti ṣṭha badzra ye swā hā ||

Etwas abgesetzt steht am unteren Rand noch eine Strophe aus vier neunsilbigen Zeilen, ein allgemeiner Segenswunsch für den Dalai Lama:

| *gangs ri rwa bas bskor ba ’i zhing khams ’dir* |
 | *phan dang bde ba ma lus ’byung ba ’i gzhi* |
 | *spyang ras gzigs dbang bstan ’dzin rgya mtsho yi* |
 | *zhabs pad srid mtha ’i bar du brtan gyur cig* |
 || *ki ki swo swo lha rgyal lo* ||

Als zweite Parallele kann hier auf das ‘Victorious Banner (*Gyal-tsan dse-mo*)’ verwiesen werden, das L. Austine Waddell (1854-1938) in seinem Buch *The Buddhism of Tibet* abbildet.²⁶ Anstelle des Pferdes mit dem Juwel auf dem Rücken ist in der Mitte das aus stilisierten Rañjanā-Buchstaben zusammengesetzte *nam bcu dbang ldan* (*daśākāraṣṭī*) dargestellt.²⁷ Die Tiere in den vier Ecken sind nicht abgebildet, sondern werden nur durch ihre Bezeichnungen vertreten.²⁸ Am linken,

22 So werden Dhāraṇīs innerhalb eines Textes im Kanjur eingeführt.

23 Dieser endet in Zeile 25 der Gebetsfahne.

24 Es sind die vier schützenden Tiere, die in diesem kurzen Satz mit der Bitte um Segen angerufen werden.

25 Dies sind die Bezeichnungen der zwölf Tiere, die zur Zählung der Jahre dienen.

26 Waddell 1934: 415. Obwohl der Sanskrittitel in der ersten Zeile gut zu lesen ist, wird p. 416, Anm. 2, für diese Fahne ‘*Arya dhvaja agra-keyur rana maharani*’ angeführt. ‘*Gyal-tsan dse-mo*’ (für *rgyal mtshan rtse mo*) ist die Wiedergabe von Skt. *dhvajāgra*.

27 Zur Deutung des *daśākāraṣṭī* vgl. Filchner 1933: 160-161 und Anm. 512-529 (p. 436).

28 Ihre Reihenfolge entspricht dem Text auf der von Douglas 1978: Nr. 53, vorgestellten Windpferd-Fahne: oben *stag* und *seng* und unten *khyung* und *’brug*, d.h. die auf der Erde lebenden Tiere oben und die in der Luft lebenden unten.

rechten und unteren Rand sind glückbringende Substanzen und glückbringende Zeichen dargestellt. Über dem Textfeld stehen auf den Ziegeln eines stilisierten Daches die Silben *om āḥ hūṃ badzra gu ru padma sid dhi hūṃ*.

Auch auf dieser Windpferd-Fahne endet der Text der kanonischen Dhāraṇī mit dem fünften Abschnitt, es folgt noch der Titelkolophon. Danach steht zweimal der kurze Satz:

a ma ra ṇi dzī wan ti ye swā hā.

Liest man *a ma ra ṇe* statt *a ma ra ṇi*, wäre zu übersetzen:

“[Denen], die in Unsterblichkeit leben, Heil!”

Dem schließen sich die Silben an:

'dir yar bskyed kun 'dus sarba 'du 'du ho.

Dies steht ebenfalls auf der von Nik Douglas veröffentlichten Windpferd-Fahne.

In der letzten Zeile der Gebetsfahne mit dem *rnam bcu dbang ldan* folgt noch ein Segenswunsch, zu dem eine Parallele in dem vorangehenden Beispiel zu finden ist:

lo po²⁹ mi nor 'khor dang bcas kyis srog lus dbang thang klung rta rnaṃs bskyed.

In der Sammlung Werner Schulemann, jetzt im Ostasiatischen Museum der Stadt Köln,³⁰ finden sich die Druckstöcke für drei sehr große Gebetsfahnen; der Ausstellungskatalog führt sie unter dem tibetischen Titel *rGyal mtshan rtse mo'i dpung rgyan*,³¹ da sie den vollständigen Wortlaut der *Dhvajāgra-keyūra*[-*dhāraṇī*] enthalten.

Die erste dieser drei Drucktafeln³² bildet in der Mitte das *rnam bcu dbang ldan* ab, die vier Tiere in den Ecken sind wie auf der in Kathmandu erworbenen Druckplatte angeordnet. Den senkrechten Rand zieren die *bkra shis rtags brgyad*, den linken die ‘sieben Juwelen’ der Königsherrschaft (*rin po che sna bdun*).

An die ersten fünf Abschnitte der Dhāraṇī, die weitgehend Sanskrit enthalten, schließt sich wie im Kanjur als Schlußstück des eigentlichen Textes ein sechster an, der nur auf Tibetisch geschrieben ist. Auf den Titelkolophon folgt zunächst die *ye dharmā hetuprabhavā*-Strophe, dann heißt es noch: *om su pra ti ṣṭha badzra ye swā hā*. Darunter stehen in der Mitte von zwei Zeilen, jeweils in einem doppelten Rahmen, die Namen der zwölf Tiere, die zur Bezeichnung der Jahre dienen. Links davon

29 Vor *lo pa* (so aufgrund der parallelen Gebetsfahnen emendiert) ist in der Zeile etwas Platz gelassen, um das Geburtsjahr oder das Alter des Stifters der Fahne nachträglich einzusetzen.

30 Herrn Hans Roth, M.A., danke ich dafür, dass er mir diese drei Windpferd-Fahnen zugänglich gemacht hat. Sie sind erfasst im Projekt ‘Digitalisierung der tibetischen und mongolischen Sachkultur europäischer Museen’ der Abteilung für Mongolistik und Tibetstudien des Instituts für Orient- und Asienstudien der Universität Bonn.

31 Sie sind unter den Signaturen Rb 77,1 bis 77,3 erfasst; vgl. *Buddhistische Kunst* 1974: 182-184 (Nrn. 135 bis 137).

32 Signatur Rb 77,1; Hochformat (30 x 53 cm).

finden sich die Mantras der drei Bodhisattvas Mañjuśrī, Avalokiteśvara und Vajrapāṇi sowie zusätzlich:

oṃ badzra satwa hūṃ.

Rechts von dem Rahmen um die Namen der Tiere lesen wir:

oṃ āḥ hūṃ | badzra gu ru padma siddhi hūṃ.

Dem folgt in den letzten drei Zeilen:

lo pa mi nor 'khor bcas kyis | srog lus dbang thang rlung rta rnam | zla ba yar gyi...bzhin du | gong nas gong du 'phel bar shog | ma ngga lam |

Die zweite große Gebetsfahne der Sammlung Schulemann entspricht in ihrer bildlichen Ausgestaltung ganz der ersten, nur dass in der Mitte nicht das *nam bcu dbang ldan* dargestellt ist, sondern das Windpferd.³³

Hier folgt auf den Text der Dhāraṇī und den Titelkolophon nur:

byi ba glang stag yos 'brug sbrul rta lug sprel bya khyi phag | lo bu'i srog lus dbang thang rlung rta rnam yar bskyed du gsol | lha rgyal lo.

Die dritte Druckplatte zeigt ebenfalls das Windpferd in der Mitte und die vier schutzbringenden Tiere in den Ecken. Am unteren Rand sind die ‘acht glückbringenden Zeichen’ (*bkra shis rtags brgyad*) und in deren Mitte zusätzlich einige Tiere dargestellt.³⁴ Danach stehen der Titelkolophon und die Mantras der drei Bodhisattvas Mañjuśrī, Avalokiteśvara und Vajrapāṇi. Dem folgt der Satz:

kun 'du(s) sarba 'du 'du hoḥ,

nach einer schmalen Lücke in der Zeile heißt es dann noch:

lo pa'i srog lus dbang thang rlung rta rnam yar bskyed du gsol.

Aufgrund der hier vorgestellten Beispiele könnte man annehmen, dass alle Windpferd-Fahnen die kanonische *Dhvajāgra-keyūra-dhāraṇī* (wenigstens teilweise) enthalten, dies gilt jedoch nur für Fahnen größeren Formats. Auf den weit verbreiteten kleineren Gebetsfahnen finden wir nur wenig Text, wobei aber Gemeinsamkeiten zu erkennen sind:³⁵ Den Anfang bilden meist die Mantras der drei Bodhisattvas Mañjuśrī, Avalokiteśvara und Vajrapāṇi; danach können – entsprechend dem verfügbaren Platz – noch weitere Mantras folgen. Zum Abschluss folgt die Bitte,³⁶ dass die Bodhisattvas

33 Signatur Rb 77,2; Hochformat (27 x 50 cm).

34 Signatur Rb 77,3; Querformat (47 x 33 cm).

35 Als Beispiele konnten herangezogen werden die Abbildungen bei: Waddell 1934: 411, Douglas 1978: Nr. 48-50, Grönbold 1982: 379, Kvaerne 1984: 262. Ähnliches findet sich auch in den Texten auf den bei Weiner 1974: Nr. 56-57, abgebildeten mittelgroßen Stücken.

36 Z.B. *kun 'du(s) sarba 'du 'du hoḥ.*

und Götter gemeinsam für das Wohlergehen des Stifters (dessen Jahrgang oder Alter vermerkt werden kann) wirken mögen.³⁷

Text der Dhāraṇī nach dem Derge-Kanjur

Text Nr. 612 (*rygud 'bum, ba* (15), fol. 45b1-46b4) [hier D¹]

und Nr. 923 (*gzungs 'dus, e* (1), fol. 267a7-268b6) [hier D²]

In eckigen Klammern wird der Zeilenanfang für D¹, D² und S (die vorliegende Windpferd-Fahne) verzeichnet. Passagen in transliteriertem Sanskrit und lautmalende Silben sind in Kursivschreibung gegeben. Die Zeichensetzung ist nicht erfasst.

Die *Dhvajāgra-keyūra-dhāraṇī* wird schon in den frühen Listen buddhistischer Schriften, die ins Tibetische übersetzt worden sind, unter den 'langen und kurzen Dhāraṇīs' (*gzungs che phra sna tshogs*) angeführt.³⁸ In allen Druckausgaben des tibetischen Kanjur ist sie in der Abteilung *rgyud ('bum)* enthalten. Sie ist zusätzlich ein zweites Mal abgedruckt in der Abteilung *gzungs 'dus* der Drucke aus Derge und Ulan Baator sowie in der Abteilung *rgyud ('bum)* der Ausgaben aus Beijing, Cone und 'Jang Sa tham / Lithang, da diese Ausgaben ja zu dem Überlieferungszweig (Tshal pa) gehören, in den eine ursprünglich selbständige Sammlung *gzungs 'dus* einbezogen worden ist.³⁹ Die *Dhvajāgra-keyūra-dhāraṇī* ist auch in den Kanjurhandschriften in Ulan Baator, London, Tokyo, Berlin und in der aus Phug brag enthalten.⁴⁰

Die Dhāraṇī findet sich auch in der *mDo mang-l gZungs 'dus*-Sammlung des Tāranātha, von der mehrere Handschriften und Druckausgaben (vor allem aus dem sino-tibetischen Gebiet) bekannt sind.⁴¹

〈Titel〉

rgya gar skad du | ārya dhwa⁴² dza a gra ke yū ra nā ma dhā ra ṇī | bod skad du | [S
2] 'phags pa rgyal mtshan gyi rtse mo'i dpung rgyan ces bya ba'i gzung |⁴³

37 Solche Wünsche führt Stein 1972: 223, in Übersetzung an, vgl. auch Waddell 1934: 414.

38 Vgl. Herrmann-Pfandt 2008: 215 (Lhan dkar ma Nr. 376, 'Phang thang ma Nr. 352).

39 Für die Stellenangaben in den gedruckten Kanjur-Ausgaben vgl. Hackett 2012: 171 (Nr. 640) und 244 (Nr. 935).

40 Bethlenfalvy 1982 (Nr. 639); Pagel & Gaffney 1996: 74 (Nr. 460); Saito 1977: 350 [46] (Nr.109-49); Beckh 1914: Nrn. 99.22 und 107.78; Jampa Samten 1992: 208 (Nr. 609). Ein Katalog für die (mit der Handschrift in Berlin verwandte) Handschrift in Taipei liegt nicht vor.

41 Taube 1965: 129-130 (Nrn. 414-417; Nr. 418 ist ein kleinformatiger separater Druck), De Rossi Filibeck 2003: 121 (No. 353, Section 19), und Eimer 2006:171 (Fasc. *tha*).

42 *dha* D¹.

43 In S fehlt die Anrufung und die Rahmenerzählung. Der Text setzt mit der eigentlichen Dhāraṇī (D¹ 45b6) wieder ein.

⟨Anrufung⟩

sangs rgyas [D² 267b1] dang | byang chub sems dpa' thams cad la phyag 'tshal lo |

⟨Rahmenerzählung⟩

'di skad bdag gis thos pa dus gcig [D¹ 45b2] na | bcom ldan 'das sum cu rtsa gsum pa'i lha'i nang na lwa⁴⁴ ba dkar po lta bu'i rdo leb la bzhugs te | de nas lha'i dbang po brgya byin lha [D² 267b2] ma yin rnams las pham | rab tu pham nas de rtab cing rings pa'i gzungs kyis bcom ldan 'das ga la ba der song ste phyin nas || [D¹ 45b3] bcom ldan 'das kyi zhabs la mgo bos phyag 'tshal te |

bcom ldan ma 'das la 'di skad ces gsol to || bcom ldan [D² 267b3] 'das bdag 'di ltar lha ma yin dang g.yul bkya ba las || lha ma yin gyi dbang po thags zangs ris las pham | rab tu pham ste | sum cu rtsa gsum [D¹ 45b4] pa'i lha rnams kyang pham | rab tu pham na | bcom ldan 'das bdag cag gis de⁴⁵ ji ltar bsgrub par [D² 267b4] bgyi | bcom ldan 'das kyis bka' stsal pa | lha'i dbang po khyod kyis rgyal mtshan gyi rtse mo'i dpung rgyan ces bya ba gzhan gyis mi thub pa'i gzungs zung shig | ngas [D¹ 45b5] kyang sngon byang chub sems dpar gyur pa na de bzhin gshegs pa gzhan gyis mi thub pa'i rgyal mtshan [D² 267b5] las 'di mnos so || mnos nas kyang gzhan la rgya cher yang dag par bshad do || mngon par dran te de tshun chad 'jigs pa'am | bag tsha ba'am | spu zing zhes byed pa'am | [D¹ 45b6] tha na skad cig yud tsam yang lus la gnod pa byung ma myong ngo ||

bcom ldan [D² 267b6] 'das rgyal mtshan gyi rtse mo'i dpung rgyan ces bgyi ba gzhan gyis mi thub pa'i gzungs de gang lags ||

⟨Die eigentliche Dhāraṇī⟩

⟨Abschnitt 1⟩

bcom ldan 'das kyis bka' stsal pa | [S 3]⁴⁶

tadya thā | om dza ya dza ya | bi dza ya bi dza ya | dza ya [D¹ 45b7] *bā hi ni | shang ka ri shang ka ri | pra bhaṃ* [S 4] *ka ri* | [D² 267b7] *bdag dang sems can thams cad kyi | sarba sha trūṃ | dzaṃ bha ya dzaṃ bha ya | stambha* [S 5] *ya stambha ya | mo ha ya mo ha ya | bha ga ba ti*⁴⁷ *dza ya bā hi ni | ma tha ma tha | pra ma tha pra ma tha | gra sa gra sa | ha sa ha sa | hūṃ hūṃ | la hūṃ* [S 6] *la hūṃ | la mbo da ri* |[D¹ 46a1] *tri ne tre* | [D² 268a1] *tsa tur bāk tre | tsa tur daṃ ṣṭre*⁴⁸ *tsa tur bhu dze | a si mu sa la | tsa kra | tri shū la | badzra ka* [S 7] *ba tsa dhā ra ṇi* | *bdag gnod pa thams cad las srungs shig srungs shig* |

44 *la* D², *zla* (,Mond') im Kanjur aus Beijing (*rgyud, ba*, 73a7).

45 *de la* D².

46 Bis hier fehlt der Text in S.

47 *te* D².

48 *ṣṭe* D².

〈Abschnitt 2〉

*om̐ bha ga ba ti | ha na ha na | da ha da ha | pa tsa pa tsa | ma [D² 268a2] tha ma tha
| [S 8] pra ma tha pra ma tha | dhu na dhu na | [D¹ 46a2] bi dhu na bi dhu na | hūṃ
hūṃ | phaṭ phaṭ | bhanydza bhanydza | pa ra sai nyaṃ | bi dhwa⁴⁹ nsa ya | sarba sha
trūṃ nā sha ya |*

*dhwa [S 9] dza a gra ke yū re | tri ṭa tri ṭa tri ṭa | bhri ṭa bhri ṭa | ulkā mu khi | ulkā
dhā ra nī | trai lo kya ma thā ni | [D² 268a3] bi dhwa nsa ya pa ra sai nyan | [S 10]
bdag gnod pa thams cad las srungs shig srungs shig [D¹ 46a3]*

〈Abschnitt 3〉

*tsa la tsa la | tsi li tsi li | [S 11] tsu lu tsu lu | kaṃ pa kaṃ pa | ka la ka la | ki li ki li | ku
lu ku lu | munydzā⁵⁰ munydzā⁵¹ | [S 12] aṭṭa hā saṃ bi dhwa nsa ya | pa ra sai nyan |
[D² 268a4] bdag gnod pa thams cad las srungs shig [S 13] srungs shig |*

〈Abschnitt 4〉

*trā sa ya trā sa ya | bhrā ma ya bhrā ma ya | buddha sa tye na | [D¹ 46a4] dha rma sa
tye na | [S 14] saṃ gha sa tye na | sa tya bā di nāṃ | sa tye na | buddha sa tye mā ti kra
ma | dharma sa tye mā [S15] ti kra ma | saṃ gha sa tye mā ti kra ma | sa tye⁵² bā [D²
268a5] di nāṃ | sa tye⁵³ mā ti kra ma | lambo da ri | lambo da ri | ku ṭa ku [S 16] ṭa |
kuṭṭa kuṭṭa | kuṭṭā pa ya kuṭṭā pa ya | ru dra ma nā ya⁵⁴ | biṣṅṅu ma nā ya | tsandra [D¹
46a5, S 17] sūrya brahma ma nā ya | trai lo kya a dhi pa ti ma nā ya | sarba de ba
adhi pa ti ma nā ya | [S 18] sarba yakṣha | [D² 268a6] rakṣha sa | gan dharba | kuṃ
bhaṇḍa | ma ho ra ga a dhi pa ti ma nā ya | bi dhwa nsa ya pa ra sai nyaṃ | raṃ ga
raṃ ga | raṃ [S 19] gā pa ya raṃ gā pa ya | dzwā la dzwā la |*

*puṣhpa mā li ni | rundha rundha | ri ti ri ti | tsi ti [D¹ 46a6] tsi ti | dhri ti dhri ti | bhri
ku ṭi mu kha pa ra se [S 20] na [D² 268a7] gu⁵⁵ lot sā da ni ka ri || ha la ha la | hi li
hi li | hu lu hu lu | he he | ri ni ri ni | ri ni⁵⁶ ma ti | dzaṃ bha dhwa dze | sarba buddha
| a [S 21] ba lo ki te | bdag ṽjigs pa thams cad las srungs shig srungs shig |*

〈Abschnitt 5〉

*sarba ta thā ga ta a ba lo [D¹ 46a7] ki te swā hā | [D² 268b2] gu ṇa rā dza pra bha [S
22] sotta me swā hā | sūrya arka bi ma le swā hā | tsandra arka bi ma le swā hā | sarba*

49 *dhā* D².

50 *muntsa* D².

51 *muntsa* D².

52 *tya* D¹.

53 *tya* D².

54 Emendiere hier und an den parallelen Stellen zu *rudram ānaya*.

55 *gu* D¹, *ku* im Kanjur aus Beijing (*rgyud, ba, 74a3*).

56 Statt des dreimaligen *ni* steht in D2 *ṇi*.

*gra ha na ksha tra dhe mī ka ra ne swā hā*⁵⁷ bdag 'jigs pa dang | gnod pa dang | nad
[S 25] 'go ba dang | 'khrug pa thams cad las srungs shig srungs shig [D² 268b2]
swā hā |

〈Abschnitt 6〉

lha'i rgyal po rgyal [D¹ 46b1] mtshan gyi rtse mo'i dpung rgyan ces⁵⁸ bya ba gzhan
gyis mi thub pa'i gzungs 'dis khyod g.yul sprod pa'am | 'thab pa'am | rtsod pa'am |
'gyed pa'am | gang du 'gro yang rung ste mi 'jigs shing thams cad du rgyal bar [D²
268b3] 'gyur ro ||

rgyal mtshan gyi rtse mo'am | mgul du btags na [D¹ 46b2] mi'i rgyal po dang | skyes
bu dpa' bo thams cad la srung bar byed do ||

bud med kyi gzugs lta bur bsgyur nas mdun du 'dug ste mi 'jigs pa sbyin zhing srung
bar byed | dpal [D² 268b4] skyed par byed | pha rol gyi sde spa bkod⁵⁹ par byed | bkra
shis pa dang | gtsang ba dang | grags [D¹ 46b3] pa dang | dpal dang | phun sum tshogs
pa kun tu⁶⁰ gnas par byed do |

〈Schluss der Rahmenerzählung〉

bcom ldan 'das kyis de skad ces bka' stsal nas | lha'i [D² 268b5] dbang po brgya byin
dang | lha dang | mi dang | lha ma yin dang | dri zar bcas pa'i 'jig rten yi rangs te | bcom
ldan 'das kyis gsungs pa la [D¹ 46b4] mngon par bstod do ||

〈Titelkolophon〉

'phags pa rgyal mtshan gyi rtse mo'i dpung rgyan ces bya ba'i gzungs rdzogs [D²
268b6] so || ||

〈Übersetzerkolophon〉

rgya gar gyi mkhan po *dzi na mi tra* dang | *dā na shī la* dang zhu chen gyi lotstsha ba
bande ye shes sdes bsgyur cing zhus te skad gsar bcad⁶¹ kyis kyang bcas nas gtan la
phab pa || ||

Übersetzung

〈Rahmenerzählung〉

So habe ich gehört: Zu einer Zeit⁶² weilte der Erhabene im [Himmel] der dreiunddreißig
Götter auf einer Steinplatte, die einem weißen Wolltuch (*kambala*)⁶³ glich.

57 Hier bricht der Text der Dhāraṇī in S ab.

58 zhes D².

59 'god D.

60 du D².

61 chad D².

62 Vgl. Klaus 2007: 321-22.

63 Im Beijing-Kanjur findet sich die Lesart 'Mond' statt 'Wolltuch'.

Als damals Śatakratu, der Herr der Götter, von den Asuras besiegt war, völlig überwunden war, kam er völlig verschreckt eilends dahin, wo der Erhabene weilte, [dort] angekommen verneigte er sich zu den Füßen des Erhabenen und sprach zu ihm, der [noch] nicht aus [der Welt] hinausgegangen war, wie folgt: “Erhabener, als ich mit den Asuras im Kampf war, wurde ich vom Herrn der Asuras, Thags zangs ris, besiegt, völlig überwunden. Auch die Götter [des Himmels] der dreiunddreißig [Götter] waren besiegt, völlig überwunden. Erhabener, auf welche Weise können wir zum Ziele kommen?”

Der Erhabene sprach: “Herr der Götter, nimm die unbesiegbar [machende] Dhāraṇī namens ‘Die, deren Emblem an der Spitze der Standarte ist’. Als ich in früherer [Zeit] ein Bodhisattva war, erhielt auch ich durch einen anderen Tathāgata diese Würde der unbesiegbar [machenden] Standarte. Als ich sie erhalten hatte, habe auch ich sie andere ausführlich und korrekt gelehrt. Wenn man sie gut im Gedächtnis bewahrt, dann nimmt man nicht einmal für einen kurzen Moment eine Gefahr, einen Schrecken, ein Haarsträuben oder auch einen körperlichen Schaden wahr.”

“Erhabener, wie lautet die unbesiegbar [machende] Dhāraṇī namens ‘Die, deren Emblem an der Spitze der Standarte ist’?”

〈Die eigentliche Dhāraṇī〉

〈Abschnitt 1〉

Der Erhabene sprach:

“[Sie lautet] folgendermaßen: *Om*, siege (\sqrt{ji}), siege, erobere ($\sqrt{ji} + vi$), erobere! [Du] Siegbringende,⁶⁴ [du] Siegbringende, [du] Heilbringende,⁶⁵ [du] Heilbringende, [du] Strahlende,⁶⁶ zermalme (\sqrt{jambh} Kausativ), zermalme alle Feinde von mir und allen Lebewesen, lähme (\sqrt{stambh} Kausativ), lähme [sie], verwirre (\sqrt{muh} Kausativ), verwirre [sie]!

[Du] Erhabene, du Siegbringende, beschädige (\sqrt{math}) [sie], beschädige [sie (d.h. die Feinde)], zerstöre ($\sqrt{math} + pra$), zerstöre [sie], verschlinge (\sqrt{gras}), verschlinge [sie], verlache (\sqrt{has}), verlache [sie]! *Hūṃ, hūṃ, la hūṃ, la hūṃ!*

[Du] mit dem Hängebauch,⁶⁷ [du] Dreiäugige, Viergesichtige, [du] mit den vier Fangzähnen, mit den vier Armen,⁶⁸ die [du] Schwert, Keule, Diskus, Dreizack, *Vajra* und einen Panzer trägst,⁶⁹ schütze, schütze mich vor allen Schäden!

64 Skt. *jayavāhinī*; hier und im Folgenden wird ‘Du’ ergänzt, es weist auf die Anredeform hin.

65 Skt. *śaṅkarī*.

66 Skt. *prabhaṅkarī*

67 Skt. *lambodarī*.

68 Skt. *trinetṛā, caturvaktrā, caturdaṁṣṭrā, caturbhujā*.

69 Skt. *asi-musala-cakra-triśūla-vajra-kavaca*.

〈Abschnitt 2〉

Om, [du] Erhabene, schlage (\sqrt{han}), schlage, brenne (\sqrt{dah}), brenne, koche (\sqrt{pac}), koche, beschädige, beschädige [die Feinde], zerstöre ($\sqrt{math} + pra$), zerstöre [sie], schüttele (\sqrt{dhu}), schüttele, schüttele [sie] durch ($\sqrt{dhu} + vi$), schüttele [sie] durch!

Hūm, hūm, phaṭ, phaṭ, brich ($\sqrt{bhañj}$): brich das feindliche Heer,⁷⁰ lass [es] auseinanderfallen ($\sqrt{dhvamś} + vi$ Kausativ), vertreibe alle Feinde ($\sqrt{naś}$ Kausativ)!

[Du], ‘deren Emblem an der Spitze der Standarte ist’, *tri ṭa, tri ṭa, bhri ṭa, bhri ṭa*,⁷¹ [du] mit dem Feuergesicht, die [du] das Feuer trägst, die [du] die Dreiwelt vernichtest,⁷² lass das feindliche Heer auseinanderfallen, schütze, schütze mich vor allen Schäden!

〈Abschnitt 3〉

Rühre dich (\sqrt{cal}), rühre dich, *tsi li tsi li | tsu lu tsu lu* | zittere (\sqrt{kamp}), zittere, treibe (\sqrt{kal}), treibe, *ku lu ku lu*⁷³ | vernichte (\sqrt{muc} (*muñc*)), vernichte ihn, der (laut spöttisch) lacht,⁷⁴ richte das feindliche Heer zugrunde, schütze mich, schütze mich vor allen Schäden!

〈Abschnitt 4〉

Lass [die Feinde] erzittern (\sqrt{tras} Kausativ), lass [sie] erzittern, bringe [sie], bringe [sie] in Verwirrung (\sqrt{bhram} Kausativ) durch die Wahrheit des Buddha, durch die Wahrheit des *Dharma*, durch die Wahrheit der Gemeinde, durch die Wahrheit derer, die die Wahrheit sprechen; gehe nicht vorbei ($\sqrt{kram} + ati$)⁷⁵ an der Wahrheit des Buddha, gehe nicht vorbei an der Wahrheit des *Dharma*, gehe nicht vorbei an der Wahrheit der Gemeinde, gehe nicht vorbei an der Wahrheit derer, die die Wahrheit sprechen!

[Du] mit dem Hängebauch, [du] mit dem Hängebauch, biege ($\sqrt{kuṭ}$), biege, zerschlage ($\sqrt{kuṭṭa}$, *kuṭṭayati*), zerschlage, lasse erschlagen ($\sqrt{kuṭṭāpaya}$ Kausativ 2), lasse erschlagen!

Bringe Rudra⁷⁶ herbei, bringe Viṣṇu, Candra, Sūrya [und] Brahma herbei, bringe den Oberherrn der Dreiwelt herbei, bringe den Oberherrn aller Götter, aller Yakṣas, Rākṣasas, Gandharvas, Kum̐bhāṇḍas herbei, bringe den Oberherrn der Mahoragas herbei!

70 Skt. *parasainya*.

71 Aus dem Skt. lassen sich *tri ṭa, tri ṭa, bhri ṭa, bhri ṭa* nicht erklären.

72 Skt. *ulkāmukhī, ulkādhāraṇī, trailoḷyamathanī*.

73 Aus dem Skt. lassen sich *tsi li tsi li | tsu lu tsu lu* und *ku lu ku lu* nicht erklären.

74 Skt. *aṭṭahāsa* ist auch ein Beinamen des Śiva.

75 D.h. ‘vernachlässige nicht’. Der Lokativ *satye* passt nicht in den Satz, da das Verb ein Akkusativobjekt erfordert. Sollte hier und an den parallelen Stellen der Anusvāra von *satyam* wegen des mehrfach vorangehenden *satyena* durch das ‘*gṛeng bu*-Zeichen ersetzt worden sein?

76 Das Verb ist hier und im Folgenden $\sqrt{nī} + ā$, bringe herbei’, das Objekt steht im Akkusativ voran, abzutheilen ist z.B. *rudram ānaya* etc.

Lass [das feindliche Heer] auseinanderfallen, bringe es zum Stehen (\sqrt{ram}), bringe es zum Stehen, lass es zum Stehen bringen (\sqrt{ram} Kausativ 2), lass es zum Stehen bringen, bringe es zum Brennen (\sqrt{jval}), bringe es zum Brennen!

[Du], deren Kette aus Blumen [besteht],⁷⁷ halte es [das feindliche Heer] zurück (\sqrt{rudh} (*rundh*)), halte es zurück | *ri ti ri ti* | *tsi ti tsi ti* | *dhri ti dhri ti*⁷⁸ | !

[Du,] die [du] bewirkst, dass das feindliche Heer desjenigen, dessen Gesicht geschwungene Augenbrauen [hat], sich auf dem Boden rollt,⁷⁹ *ha la ha la* | *hi li hi li* | *hu lu hu lu* | *he he* | *ri ni ri ni* | *ri ni ma ti* |

[Du], deren *dhvaja* [die Feinde] zermalmt,⁸⁰ [du], die du auf alle Buddhas blickst, schütze, schütze mich vor allen Gefahren!

〈Abschnitt 5〉

[Du], die [du] auf alle Tathāgatas blickst, *svā hā!*

[Du,] die [Du] von höchstem Glanz eines Königs der Vorzüge [bist], *svā hā!*

[Du,] die [du] durch die Strahlen der Sonne rein [bist], *svā hā!*

[Du,] die [du] durch die Strahlen des Mondes rein [bist,] *svā hā!*

[Du,] die [du] alle Planeten und Mondhäuser⁸¹ *svā hā!*

Schütze, schütze mich vor allen Gefahren, Schäden, Ursachen von Krankheiten und vor Kriegen, *svā hā!*

〈Abschnitt 6〉

Das ‘Emblem an der Spitze der Standarte, «König der Götter», die unbesiegbar [machende] Dhāraṇī, wird dir, in welchen Kampf, Gefecht, Streit oder Auseinandersetzung du auch immer kommst, Furchtlosigkeit gewähren, dich schützen und Herrlichkeit erzeugen.

Wenn man [die Dhāraṇī] an der Standarte oder auch am Hals befestigt, bringt sie allen Königen und Helden Schutz.

Wenn sich [die Dhāraṇī] in die Gestalt einer Frau verwandelt hat und [sich] vor einem befindet, gewährt sie Furchtlosigkeit und schützt.

Sie bewirkt, dass man die Helden der feindlichen Armee besiegt. Sie lässt einen stets mit Glück, Reinheit, Ruhm, Glanz und Vollkommenheit versehen sein.”

〈Schluss der Rahmenerzählung〉

Als der Erhabene diese Worte geäußert hatte, freute sich die Welt samt Śatakratu, dem Herrn der Götter, den Göttern, den Menschen, den Asuras und den Gandharvas, sie lobten die vom Erhabenen gesprochenen Worte.

77 Skt. *puṣpamālīnī*.

78 Die Silbenfolge: *ri ti ri ti* | *tsi ti tsi ti* | *dhri ti dhri ti* lässt sich nicht aus dem Sanskrit deuten.

79 Skt. *bhṛkuṭī-mukha-parasenā-ku-loṭha-sādhanīkarī*, d.h., dass das feindliche Heer vernichtet wird. Diese Deutung verdanke ich Frau Dr. Siglinde Dietz.

80 Skt. *jambhadhvajā*.

81 Skt. *sarva-graha-nakṣatra-dha-mī-karaṇe*, die Silben *dha-mī* lassen sich nicht aus dem Sanskrit deuten, *-karaṇe* ist als Vokativ Singular Femininum zu verstehen.

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Abzug von einer 1972 in Nepal erworbenen Druckplatte der Windpferd-Fahne

THREE ANCIENT MANUSCRIPTS FROM THOLING IN
THE TUCCI COLLECTION, ISIAO, ROMA,
PART III: MANUSCRIPT 1329 F

AMY HELLER
(CRCAO, Paris)

Dedicated with esteem and friendship to Elena, whose catalogues of the Tucci manuscripts collection of ISIAO are crucial resources to expand our understanding of the civilisations of Tibet and the Himalayas.

Among the treasures collected by Professor Giuseppe Tucci during his travels in the Western Himalayas and Western Tibet (Tucci & Ghersi 1996) figure prominently three previously unpublished Tibetan Prajñāpāramitā manuscripts with illuminations (see Tucci 1949; Tucci 1989; Tucci & Ghersi 1996; De Rossi Filibeck 1996; De Rossi Filibeck 2003).¹ Tucci and later Dr. Eugenio Ghersi discovered these manuscripts and many others in caves above Tholing, formerly used by the monks as their winter residence (Tucci & Ghersi 1996: 306). These manuscripts form part of a well-known corpus produced in the context of the 10th to 11th century revival of Buddhism promoted by the royal patronage of the kings of Gu ge sPu rang. This revival occurred especially at the monasteries of Tholing in Gu ge and Khor chags in sPu rang, under the aegis of the Great Translator-cum-royal chaplain Rin chen bzang po (958-1055).² Further to my studies of the manuscripts 1329 E, and 1329 O (see Heller [in press]; Heller & Eng [in press]), the present paper discusses the third unpublished illuminated manuscript from Tholing, the manuscript 1329 F of the Tucci Tibetan Collection Archive. Its paper composition and codicology, as well as the aesthetic analysis of its illuminations, are examined here, and a hypothesis of its chronological context is proposed in the conclusion.

1 I thank Prof. Elena De Rossi Filibeck for inviting me to “La Sapienza” University in Rome as Visiting Professor (2006, 2008) to study these illuminated manuscripts of the Tucci Tibetan Collection. Dr Francesco D’Arelli, former director of the ISIAO Library, kindly authorized their photography. Michela Clemente helped Luigi Fieni accomplish the photography. I also acknowledge Lama Sushil of Poo Monastery who kindly authorized me to photograph the illuminated Poo Prajñāpāramitā volume, and Eva Allinger and Christiane Papa-Kalantari for many discussions about manuscript illuminations. I am grateful to them all.

2 See Tucci 1949; De Rossi Filibeck 2007; Harrison 2007.

This manuscript is distinctive from 1329 E and 1329 O. The opulent illuminations of the manuscripts 1329 E and 1329 O are rendered in gold and brilliant nuanced colors in an extremely refined style, which has been attributed to Kashmiri artists due to the deliberately effaced notations in Indic script beneath the frames of the illuminations (see Harrison 2007: 235). Radio-carbon analysis of a similarly illuminated *Prajñāpāramitā* manuscript leaf collected by Tucci, now conserved in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (M.81.90.6), has yielded a date of the late 10th to early 11th century (see Heller 2016 a-b). Although written on similar beige paper and having similar dimensions, the fragmentary incomplete volume 1329 F, formerly designated TT1, is particularly daunting for art historical research, comprising no less than 400 illuminations. Furthermore, although discovered in the same caves above Tholing, these illuminations do not conform to the sophisticated style and vibrant palette of the Kashmiri illuminations of manuscripts 1329 E, 1329 O and those in the Los Angeles Country Museum of Art. Instead, the palette of the illuminations in manuscript 1329 F exhibits strong primary colors, especially yellows and reds, while gold is virtually absent. The manuscript 1329F has been briefly described by De Rossi Filibeck in her invaluable book, the *Catalogue of the Tucci Tibetan Fund in the Library of IsIAO* (2003: 437): “1329 F. Incomplete text; dbu can manuscript, Kha na-Kha ’a, 8 lines, cm. 68,50 x 26,50 (54,50 x 12). Pages: 5a-408b.” Earlier, De Rossi Filibeck had described the originality of this volume:

“One of these manuscripts, marked TT1, possesses a further significant characteristic. Each *recto* side contains an illuminated image of the Buddha Sakyamuni. Confirmation of the hypothesis of western Tibetan origin was also kindly given by Prof. Deborah Klimburg-Salter, to whom I was able to show the manuscript during her recent stay in Rome... Comparative examination with another Tucci Collection manuscript that I was able to date as about the second half of the 16th century and which also came from Western Tibet, enabled me to set a maximum post quem time limit for the TT1 since it displays characteristics that indicate that it is certainly older than the manuscript from the second half of the sixteenth century.” (De Rossi Filibeck 1996: 486).

As we will discuss below, stylistically, although a few exceptions confirm the rule, on the whole one observes great aesthetic uniformity among the illuminations, some of which relate aesthetically to hitherto documented examples conserved in Dolpo, Nepal (see Heller 2009: 83). To a lesser degree, the aesthetics also relate to a documented series among the more than 300 illuminations of the *Prajñāpāramitā* volume in Poo, Kinnaur district, Himachal Pradesh, India (see Allinger 2006: 6, Fig. 10). Radio-carbon analysis of the paper of these specific manuscripts, now conserved in Dolpo, indicated chronology corresponding to the second half of the 11th century, with a median date ca. 1114 AD (see Heller 2009: 82, n. 10). At the same time, local historical traditions relate that these texts accompanied the founder of the Dolpo monastery who hailed from the west, logically the west Tibetan kingdoms of Gu ge

sPu rang, in immediate proximity to what are now the Nepalese border districts of Limi and Dolpo (see Heller 2009: 83, 199-200). This chronology of the manuscripts now in Dolpo and Poo, and the incomplete 1329 F, all correspond to what De Rossi Filibeck referred to as the most favorable period of the Tholing *scriptoria*'s work, reasonably traced to the odd hundred and fifty years between the beginning of the 11th century and the middle of the 12th century, during which time there were suitable social conditions and patronage for the production of manuscripts (see De Rossi Filibeck 2007: 54-55). Also in terms of paper composition and codicology, there are further indications that the fragmentary manuscript 1329 F may date from late 11th to early 12th century.

Paper Composition and Codicological Characteristics

A small sample of the manuscript 1329 F has been analysed for composition of the paper. According to the examination of Agnieszka Helman-Ważny, ribbon-like fibre placing and very significant irregularities within the fibre length allow to identify this type as *Stellera chamaejasme* fibres, which can be clearly differentiated from *Daphne* and *Edgeworthia* despite the fact that all plants belong to the Thymelaeaceae family. The beige paper is composed of fibres of the two plants, which are native to western Tibet as well as other regions. The strength of the paper and its slightly glossy surface results from the *Daphne* or *Edgeworthia sp.* fibres, while the *Stellera* fibres are responsible for the paper's characteristic softness and absorbency (see Helman-Ważny 2014: 111-12, and figs. 61-62).³ It is noteworthy that the slightly smaller manuscript leaf 1329 E, which Tucci also collected at Tholing, has the same fibre composition of the paper, and the same smoothness of the page. While at present there is no documentation on the *scriptoria* nor on paper production in the vicinity of Tholing, the donation of volumes of manuscripts was essential at the time of the foundation of numerous monasteries and smaller temples. According to the biography of Rin chen bzang po attributed to his disciple, only in the nearby sanctuary of Radnis the library comprised all the *Prajñāpāramitā* in the full and medium length versions, as well as 18 sets of originals and copies, two copies of the *Prajñāpāramitā* version in 18,000 verses and five of the *Prajñāpāramitā* in 8,000 verses (see Snellgrove 1980: 108), as well as numerous copies donated to all the temples founded by Rin chen bzang po. The vast quantities of paper needed to produce the *Prajñāpāramitā* copies would have certainly encouraged local production of paper and manuscripts, with Tibetan scribes collaborating with the Kashmiri artists as well as, we may presume, local Tibetan artists.

The Tibetan text is written in black ink in elegantly spaced *dbu can* letters with archaisms: *da drag* and *ya biags* are frequent, the reverse *gi gu* is infrequent. There are

³ I thank Agnieszka Helman-Ważny for her analysis of the paper of the Tholing manuscript fragments 1329 E and 1329 F in the Tucci Tibetan Collection of ISIAO.

a few instances of archaic forms of superscript letters. The superabundant *'a chung* appears rarely in the text of the manuscript. Curiously, however, for every chapter heading, a narrow rectangular black frame is used for accentuation; the letters are written in gold and here the superabundant *'a chung* is always present: *shes rab kyi pha rold tu phyin pa stong phrag brgya' pa*.⁴ Most often the *siddham* are single, without ornament, but some *siddham* are double, with or without ornamentation. Each leaf consistently has two binding holes surrounded by circles in red ink (2.7 cm diameter), the margins are also drawn in red. The page has been ruled for 8 lines of script. The numbering of several leaves is idiosyncratic. The pagination has two letters on the left margin, in vertical alignment, where the first represents the volume number and the second the hundreds: *kha* (1-100), *kha na* (101-200b), *kha ma* (201-300b) and *kha 'a* to indicate the hundreds 301a-400b, rather than *kha nga* as would be expected (see De Rossi Filibeck 2007: 61). In general, the volume letter is rubricated while the letter for the hundreds is black. In addition to the system of vertical alignment, for example on Fig. 1, full leaf, there is the red *kha 'a*, indicative of vol. *kha*, 300s, and next to the *kha*, is written a horizontally positioned *nga*, also rubricated, which is theoretically extraneous. This may be simply a scribal error. At present, the reasons, if any, for the presence of this additional letter remain unknown. The page numbers are indicated *xxxx brgyad*, i.e. 408, while *kha 'a* should be 308 (i.e. written as *xxx brgyad*). There are other leaves with *kha wa* and *kha nga*, instead of *kha 'a*. To determine what is distinctive and what may be scribal errors, ideally, a systematic review of the numbering of all extant leaves should be undertaken in the future.

The Aesthetic Analysis of the Illuminations

In principle, each leaf has one miniature painting representing a seated Buddha, on the recto, although there are a few examples where there are two illuminations, i.e. a Buddha and a disciple on the same leaf. In addition, for one leaf, the illumination is on the verso, not the recto, as it is a chapter incipit. Two other leaves have illuminations on both recto and verso, again due to the beginning of a chapter on the verso. A few leaves have the double illumination with a Buddha at left margin and a Buddha at right margin. Thus while we can determine a norm, the rules are not completely compulsory. While most of the Buddha and disciples are represented in a uniform aesthetic, there are a few illuminations which are quite distinctive in coloration and modeling. This seems to suggest that several artists were active in the painting of the illuminations. One has the impression that an individual artist was responsible for a

4 This is not the case in the illuminated Tabo manuscript where one can observe the chapter heading in the *Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* manuscript, catalogue no. 1.1.1.23 (see Harrison & Scherrer-Schaub 2009), folio featuring Sadāprarudita (Allinger & Papa Kalantari 2012, fig. 5, photography by Eva Allinger).

whole chapter, and in the next chapter, a different artist could be responsible, but this is a subjective conjecture.

The consistent representation of the Buddha following aesthetic models of western Tibet has been identified previously.⁵ To this it is possible to add that the salient characteristics in the principal illuminations of the manuscript 1329 F are as follows:

- ♦ Each illumination, whether positioned at center of the page or elsewhere, is uniformly square and framed with a thick red line as border on two lateral sides and on top (see Fig. 1 and 2). There are very few exceptions to this rule (see Fig. 3).
- ♦ The red line of the bottom border is not necessarily apparent, as lotus petals often cover the area at the bottom end of the square and do not respect the limit of the square – they extend beyond the square frame.

In some cases, the halo around the Buddha's head also extends to the limit of the square frame.

- ♦ The body halo *prabha* is in a horseshoe shape, perfectly oval at the apex. There is an outer rim, often in the same red line as the border of the square frame. Then, systematically, all the Buddhas are seated on lotus pedestals inside a body *prabha*, which is positioned as if to float inside a field of dark blue color, uniformly applied. This blue space must be interpreted as the field of Dharma, i.e. the sky (*chos dbyings* = sky). The *prabha* has concentric colors in succession: i.e. seven or eight concentric rings of colors inside the *prabha*. This is a rainbow halo (*'ja tshon*). The colors may vary: for example, folio 6 has the outer rim in deep red, then a medium red ring, then deep red wash over thin black outline, then medium red, then a black outline and white ring. The white ring is bordered by a thick black line which outlines the deep green area (a cushion) behind the seated Buddha.
- ♦ The head halo varies in color but the shape of the halo is consistently ovoid and there is usually a pronounced outline of contrasting dark color to the halo.
- ♦ The hairline of the Buddha: the standard is a broad forehead with almost square hairline (no widow's peak) and very low spherical *uṣṇīṣa*. The hair is systematically painted to extend over the outer earlobes rather than close to the head, as if there is an emphasis on the hair which is completely lacking in curls, swirls etc. The face is rather broad and also square.
- ♦ The body color of the Buddha varies. Most are flesh color, with no pronounced muscles and the body proportions are relatively slender with broad shoulders. Some are white, a few are bright yellow as a variant on the flesh color. *Kha ma* + 4 (f. 204a, see Fig. 4) is quite different – blue body color with pronounced

5 See Klimburg-Salter 1996; Allinger 2006; Heller 2009; Allinger & Papa Kalantari 2012.

shading in dark blue to emphasize the pectoral muscles and even the joints of the arms at the shoulder, elbow and wrist. This image is especially muscular, almost as if attempting to imitate the Kashmiri aesthetic, although it does not have an “hourglass” waist. The eyebrows and cheeks are also subject to the shading in dark blue overpainting.

- ♦ The *uṣṇīṣa*, the cranial protuberance indicating supramundane wisdom: in general the *uṣṇīṣa* are low and spherical, very similar to the manuscripts now conserved in Dolpo (see Fig. 5). Occasionally, the ornamentation of the stūpa with the sun-moon finial is apparent (see Fig. 6), which is a characteristic observed in the Poo manuscript illuminations as well as in the Tucci collection 1329 O (see Fig. 7).
- ♦ The *Mudrā*: the fingers are very often disproportionately long and hyperflexible, with the articulations of the fingers very distinct (see Fig. 8). The *mudrā* is thus emphasized. In particular, the *dharmacakramudrā* presents a large number of variants in the positions of the hands of the Buddhas. In some other cases, the hands are perfectly symmetrical. This characteristic of over-long fingers and accentuated joints is also visible in manuscripts now conserved in Bicher monastery in Dolpo (Nepal), in Tabo (Spiti) and in Poo (Kinnaur), all of which appear to be safely attributed to roughly the same period of production, the late 11th to 12th century.

Conclusion

The fragmentary manuscript 1329 F is clearly related to the tradition of manuscripts developed at the Tholing monastery and vicinity in Guge, a tradition of manuscripts which was also conserved in the Tabo and Poo monasteries further west, as well as the Khor chags monastery in sPu rang. At present, there is not sufficient historical documentation of the scribal and artistic activities in Tholing to pinpoint the years of production and potential wane of production. Although the early 11th century was a period of artistic ferment, under the immediate impetus of Rin chen bzang po’s return to Tholing accompanied by Kashmiri artists, the subtle development of the aesthetic parameters of the western Tibetan manuscript illuminations may have been a successive, or possibly co-eval, gradual evolution. It should also be remarked that the Buddhist council at Tholing in 1076 was certainly a period when Buddhist masters, scribes, translators and artists of many nationalities were present together and collaborated actively. Thus, while the precise circumstances and chronology of the manuscript fragment 1329 F, as well as the manuscripts now conserved in Dolpo and those conserved in Poo, remain to be determined, they must be situated in the period in which local production of *Prajñāpāramitā* manuscripts in the kingdoms of Gu ge sPu rang was encouraged. This was an exceptional period of aesthetic refinement which accompanied the royal commitment to the re-establishment of Buddhism throughout the western Himalayas.

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Fig. 1: Full leaf of *Satasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā*, manuscript 1329 F, f. 408a, ink and opaque watercolor on paper (68.5 x 26.5 cm), IsIAO, Roma (Credits: Luigi Fieni).



Fig. 2: (detail) The Buddha of *Satasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā*, manuscript 1329 F, f. 408a, ink and opaque watercolor on paper (9.4 x 9 cm), IsIAO, Roma (Credits: Luigi Fieni).



Fig 3: (detail) The Buddha of *Satasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā*, manuscript 1329 F, f. 353a, ink and opaque watercolor on paper (9.4 x 9 cm) IsIAO, Roma (Credits: Luigi Fieni).



Fig. 4: (detail) The Buddha Akṣobhya of *Satasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā*, manuscript 1329 F, f. 204a, ink and opaque watercolor and gold on paper (9.4 x 9 cm) IsIAO, Roma (Credits: Luigi Fieni / Amy Heller).

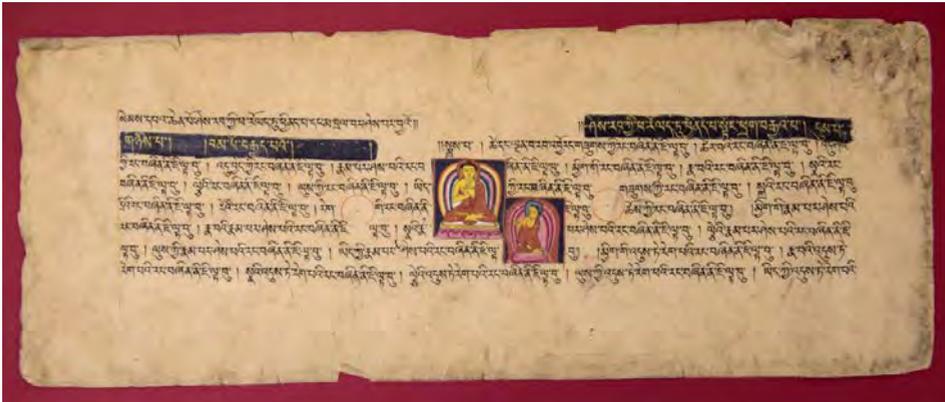


Fig. 5: (detail) The Buddha and a disciple of *Satasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā*, manuscript 1329 F, f. 141b, ink and opaque watercolor on paper (9.4 x 9 cm) IsIAO, Roma (Credits: Luigi Fieni).



Fig. 6: (detail) The Buddha of *Satasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā*, manuscript 1329 F, f. 329a, ink and opaque watercolor on paper (9.4 x 9 cm) IsIAO, Roma (Credits: Luigi Fieni).

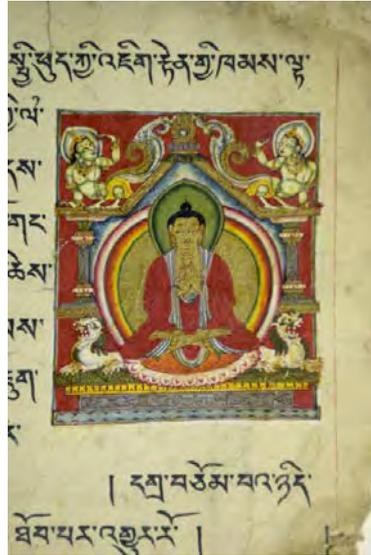


Fig. 7: (detail) The Buddha of *Satasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā*, manuscript 1329 O, ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper (9.4 x 9 cm) IsIAO, Roma (Credits: Luigi Fieni).



Fig. 8: (detail) The Buddha and divine assembly of *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā*, f. 1a, ink and opaque watercolor on paper (22 x 73 cm), Lotsawa Lha khang, Poo, Himachal Pradesh (Credits: Amy Heller).

A G.YUNG DRUNG BON DESCRIPTION OF MOUNT KAILĀŚA (GANGS TI SE)

PER KVÆRNE
(University of Oslo)

I dedicate this preliminary study of a passage from a Bon text describing Gangs Ti se to my dear friend Elena De Rossi Filibeck, among whose many publications is an edition of a Tibetan guide book of this mountain (Filibeck 1988).

The importance of the holy mountain of Kailāśa for Hindus as well as Buddhists is too well known to need further elaboration. It is also known, thanks to the publication in 1989 by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche and Ramon Prats of the *Gangs Ti se'i dkar chag*, that the Bon po, too, not only consider this mountain sacred (which, in a general way, was known before, cf. Tucci 1970: 242), but also have texts of their own that describe it from their particular perspective.

For the sake of convenience, the text from which this excerpt is taken will be referred to as *Grags pa gling grags*. In Western literature, the first reference to it was made by Samten G. Karmay (1972) in his translation and study of the *Legs bshad mdzod* (“The Treasury of Good Sayings”), written in 1922 by the Bon scholar, Shar rdza bKra shis rgyal mtshan (1859-1935). In his bibliography, Karmay listed a manuscript preserved in the Oslo University Library, entitled (short title) *Grags pa rin chen gling grag[s]*. The text is repeatedly quoted by Shar rdza bKra shis rgyal mtshan himself.¹ It is this text that we shall now examine, on the basis of four available versions.² The date of the text is, unfortunately, not known, although Anne-Marie Blondeau (1990) has convincingly argued that it probably dates from the 12th century. In other words, as Tibetan historical texts go, it is fairly old.³

Although the *Grags pa gling grags* deals with a variety of topics, ranging from the geography of the world to the coming of the first king to Tibet and, finally, the establishment of Buddhism in Tibet during the reign of king Khri Srong lde btsan, the

1 Independently of Karmay, I mentioned this text in my catalogue of the Tibetan texts in the Oslo University Library (Kværne 1973: 102).

2 As there is no critical or even annotated edition of the text, a brief survey of available manuscripts and editions may be useful. This will be found in the Appendix of this article (texts A-D).

3 According to Dagkar (1997: 699) it was discovered in 1301 by Khod po Blo gros thog med, but he does not cite any source for this claim.

passage translated below presents a description of Mount Ti se and its surroundings, which has several unusual features. This passage is reproduced, in an abbreviated and metric form, in dPal ldan tshul khirms (1902-1973) *History of the Bon Religion*, published in 1972.⁴ This passage (starting from: A 3a, B 6b, C 4a, D 4a) will occasionally be referred to in the footnotes to the following translation.⁵

[Mount Ti se and Lake Ma phang]:⁶

Further, as for the wonder (*ngo mtshar*)
 which is worthy of fame here in 'Dzam bu gling:
 In the sky, exactly above the centre of 'Dzam bu gling,⁷
 is the snow-mountain Ti se,⁸
 [and] to the east of it is Lake Ma phang⁹
 – both are in the sky.
 The base of Mount Ti se is like the Ar mo li ga stone,¹⁰
 the peak is on a level with the Four Trances.¹¹
 That mountain and lake which are thus, (A 3b)
 remain, even at the time of the destruction of the world-age,
 [in mid-air] like a bucket suspended,¹² tied (by a rope), (C 5b)
 not destroyed by fire, water, and wind,
 firm and everlasting (*g.yung drung*). (B 7a)
 Directly below them (on the ground)
 is the snow-mountain called Ya phag sha ra¹³
 which people call 'the Snow-mountain Ti se',

4 dPal Tshul 1972, vol. 1: 64-66. The author does not claim to quote our text *verbatim*, but only “(renders) the meaning of the *Gling sgrags* and so on” (Gling sgrags sogs kyi dgongs pa'i don).

5 I am grateful to Dan Martin who turned my attention to this passage, as well as for reading this article and providing important additional references, which will be acknowledged below.

6 The subtitles in bold are not to be found in the text, but are added for the sake of making the sequence of topics clearer.

7 dPal Tshul 1972, vol. 1: 64: “Above the snow-mountain that is in the centre of (i.e. between) Zhang-zhung and Tibet” (zhang bod dbus kyi gangs ri'i steng).

8 C and D often have rtse, ‘summit’, probably a hypercorrection.

9 B has spang(s), hence ‘Lake Non-Abandoned’; C and D often have pang, and occasionally dpang, ‘lap’.

10 I am grateful to Dan Martin for pointing out that Ar mo li ga (B kha, C and D ka) refers to “the stone platform that upholds Indra’s throne in the heaven of the thirty-three gods on top of Mt. Meru” (personal communication). For further details I refer to his translation of the (older) *IDe'u chos 'byung*, forthcoming in the “Library of Tibetan Classics” series. Cf. ar ka, ‘marble’, Jäschke 1958: 606.

11 C and D: “... above the fourth trance”. In either case the reference is to the four stages of ‘the sphere without form (arūpadhātu)’, the highest or ultimate sphere of the universe.

12 sPyang is emended to dpyang, ‘to suspend, make hang down’ (Jäschke 1958: 328).

13 B: Ya bag sha ra. “Ya dpag (bag) sha ra is ...[o]ld name of Mount Ti se” (Dagkar 2003: 340).

and Lake Ma dros,¹⁴ known as Ma phang.¹⁵
 The snow-mountain is like a well-proportioned *stūpa*,
 Lake Ma phang is like a laid-out *maṇḍala*.
 Because they in their actual essence (*snying po don*)
 are the Lake and Snow-mountain of Enlightenment,
 they are the place (*sa gnas*) where all the gShen rab
 of the past, present, and future become fully awakened.¹⁶
 Further, since the snow-mountain Ti se,
 in the manner of a male deity (*yab kyī tshul*)¹⁷
 holds the lake, like a female consort, in its lap (*dpang*),
 the lake is known as Ma phang.¹⁸
 The distance across the lake is fifty leagues (*dpag tshad*),
 the circumference is two hundred leagues.
 Looking at the lake from the east, (B 7b)
 [one sees it as] a semi-circle of white colour;
 looking from the north, as a square of reddish-green (*dmar ljang*) colour;
 looking from the west, as a reddish-grey (*dmar skya*) circle;
 looking from the south, as a blue¹⁹ triangle.

[Mount Shim phod]:

On the north side of Lake Ma phang is the hill called Shim phod;
 it does not fly up to heaven above, it does not fall down to earth (below),
 but remains in mid-air.
 On its peak are the ‘Seven Eternal Houses of the *khyung* Bird’.²⁰ (C 6a)

14 Ma dros, Skt. Anavatapta, ‘Non-heated’ (understood as lying in the shade, hence not heated by the sun) is usually equated with Lake Manasarovar. C: mal dros, cf. Dagkar 2003: 340 ‘Lake Mal-grol was given the new name Ma-pang’.

15 The text is to be understood to state that while the celestial mountain and lake are the real Ti se and Ma phang, the terrestrial, visible, mountain and lake are given the same names, although their actual names are Ya ba sha ra and Ma dros (Mal dros).

16 C: “they are the place to which all the gShen rab and the Enlightened Ones of the past, present, and future come”.

17 B adds: “Lake Ma-spangs being the female consort (yum)”.

18 B: ma spang; C: ma dpang.

19 C: “blue-grey” (sngo skya). C adds: “The four (continents) are seen as four colours”.

20 Bya khyung gi(s) g.yung drung khyim bdun; the other texts have slightly different versions: B: “It is the place of the seven houses of the eternal (g.yung drung) khyung bird”; C: “It is the nest of the khyung bird, the place of the seven eternal houses”; D: “It is the house of the two birds, the khyung bird and the bird of the eternal house”. I suspect that the latter (D) is a corrupted version, rather than an authentic variant. I am grateful to Dan Martin for pointing out (personal communication) that the term g.yung drung khyim bdun is also found in the *mDo ’dus* (g.yung drung khyim bdun mi dag ni / mu khyud ’dzin kyis kha la gnas /) where it would seem to refer to a place where humans (mi dag) of some kind dwell, followed by its precise location (as yet obscure).

Directly below, on the ground,
is the ‘Fragrant Incense Mountain’ (*spos ri ngad ldan*).²¹

[The cliff Bya skyibs can]:

If one continues twenty leagues to the north,
on a level with the peak of that mountain suspended in mid-air,
there is a cliff known as ‘Having Golden Bird-Shelters’ (*gser gyi bya skyibs can*).²²
Being on a level with the Thirty-three²³ [gods],
it is supported (*skyor*) in mid-air by wind,
being [simultaneously] borne up and pressed down.
The shape of that cliff is that of four interlocked *svāstikas*;
its circumference is fifty leagues, (B 8a) its height²⁴ three and a half²⁵ (leagues).
It is encircled along its base (*mtha*’) by a thousand minor cliffs.

[The tree Sale ljon pa]:

If one proceeds twenty leagues from there to the east,²⁶
[there is] the tree called ‘Bright Tree’ (*sale ljon pa*).²⁷
Its roots seem to go downwards one ‘earshot’ (*rgyang grags*),²⁸ (A 4a)

21 Skt. Gandhamādana, “N. of a mountain ... to the east of Meru, renowned for its fragrant forests”, Monier-Williams 1960: 345. The *mDo* ‘*dus*’ (quoted in the *Legs bshad mdzod*) refers to *sPos ri ngad ldan* as situated in the vicinity of ‘Ol mo lung ring – both being near Gangs Ti se (Karmay 1972: xxix).

22 C: “The golden cliff ‘Having Bird-Shelters’”. *Bya skyibs*, cf. *bya skyi*, ‘roof, shelter’ (Jäschke 1958: 372) and (1) *brag skyibs*, (2) *khang pa’i mda’ g.yab* (*Tshig mdzod*: 1855); *brag skibs* (sic, for *skyibs*), ‘beetling rock’ (Jäschke 1958: 380); *brag skyibs*, “Felsenschutz”, *brag gi bya skyibs can*, “Fels mit Schutz für Vögel” (*Wörterbuch* 2005- 5. Lieferung: 312). *dPal Tshul* 1972: 65 seems to indicate that this cliff is located “on the ground” (*sa na*): *bar snang spos ri’i byang thad dpag tshad ni / nyi shu’i sa na gser brag bya skyibs can* / – The cliff is also mentioned in the *Grags pa gling grags* a few folios before the present passage (B f. 5b) as the last of five places in ‘Dzam bu gling, each associated with a particular type of trance (*bsam gtan*): “In Tibet, since there is the golden cliff ‘Having Bird-Shelters’ (*bod na gser brag bya skyibs can yod pas*), there arises the ‘Trance which is like the sun and the moon’”. *dPal Tshul* 1972, vol. 1: 63, has: *Zhang zhung bod na bya skyibs can gyi brag*. Cf. n. 6 above.

23 C: “Thirty-two”.

24 A, B, and C: *spangs* for *dpangs*, ‘height’; D: ‘*phangs*’.

25 C: “six”, but if C: *yar phyir* can be emended to *yar phyed*, C would have: “...upwards five and a half (leagues)”.

26 A, B, and C: “Twenty leagues from there to the east in the sky ...”.

27 In a similar context the *mDo* ‘*dus*’ refers to ‘dzam bu smrig shad shing (Karmay 1972: xxix).

28 *rGyang grags*, “*krośa*, ...equivalent to five hundred arm-spans” (*Bod dbyin tshig mdzod*: 717); “ear-shot” (Jäschke 1958: 107); “... *Rufweite*; skt. *krośa* entspricht 1/4 *yojana*” (*Wörterbuch* 2005-, 13. Lieferung: 424).

and, above, growing upwards one ‘earshot’;²⁹
 as for the level of its branches, they are like seven³⁰ stages.
 At the base of that tree are a thousand (smaller) trees surrounding it.

[The pond Dal gyis ’bab pa]:

Twenty leagues further to the east
 is the pond ‘Flowing Gently’ (*dal gyis ’bab pa*).³¹
 Each side of the square[-shaped pond measures] fifty leagues,
 [hence] the circumference is two hundred [leagues].
 The shores of that lake are bordered by lotuses and ‘lotus-marshmallows’;³²
 with stems like plough-beams, (C 6b)
 with leaves as thick as the hide of a buffalo [or] a wild yak,³³
 with circumference of thirteen finger-spans (*mtho*)
 of [a man]³⁴ at the time when [human] life [lasts] one hundred years. (B 8b)
 The mountain, lake, cliff, tree, and pond
 which are thus suspended in mid-air:
 except by those who are cleansed of their impurities and have ‘magic feet’,
 they can be seen by no-one else.

[The elephant Rab brtan]:

At that cliff, tree, lake, and pond, Rab brtan,
 the elephant of Indra, the ruler of the gods, stays with his entourage.
 The height of Rab brtan is two and half leagues,
 his circumference is seven³⁵ [leagues].
 He is surrounded by an entourage of a thousand lesser elephants;
 their colour is that of ashes,³⁶ they have beautiful shape

29 C: “... upwards six leagues”.

30 D: “fifteen”.

31 Skt. Mandākinī, “‘going or streaming slowly’, N. of an arm of the Ganges (flowing down through the Valley of Kedāranātha) and of other rivers ... (esp.) the heavenly Ganges; ... another river in heaven” (Monier-Williams 1960: 788).

32 Pad ma dang / pad ma ha lo. C and D omit the second pad ma. Ha lo is usually translated “hollycock (*Althea rosea*)”, but “marsh mallow” also occurs, cf. lcam pa ha lo, cf. “rose marsh mallow” (Bod dbyin tshig mdzod: 1025). On the literary use of the term ha lo and ha lo’i me tog, see Sørensen 1990: 100-02.

33 Ma he ’brong gi ko ba; C: ma he ’bring po’i ko ba, “as the hide of a medium(-sized) buffalo”. B adds: “with stems attaining (the diametre of) young, eight-year old willow trees”.

34 C: “... the finger-span of the body of an average man...”.

35 C: “five”.

36 C: “all are bluish-grey (sngo skya) of colour”.

and crystal jewels on their heads;³⁷
 they have supernatural knowledge (*mngon shes*)
 and magic power (*rdzu 'phrul*).
 At the break of dawn
 they pay homage to the elephant Rab brtan.
 That elephant and his entourage dwell in [autumn and] spring
 by the tree Sale ljon pa and the cliff Bya skyibs can.³⁸
 That place is the place where the Teacher himself
 made the division into the Nine Ways of Bon. (B 9a)
 Even now, [the gods called] ‘Those who delight in magic appearances’³⁹
 and ‘Those who have power over the magic appearances of others’⁴⁰
 having descended, offer music (C 7a) and disport themselves there.

[The terrestrial Ti se and Ma phang]:

Further, the so-called Ti se and Ma spang
 which can be seen by everyone nowadays,
 are certainly at the centre of 'Dzam bu gling.
 That snow-mountain (which can be seen) is called Ya bag sha ra,
 the lake, Ma dros.⁴¹
 From Ti se and sPos ri ngad ldan,⁴² which are in mid-air,
 [there falls] into that lake a waterfall, invisible to men.⁴³
 As to how that is: (A 4b)
 because many *nāga* come to bathe [in it] as it neither freezes nor boils,⁴⁴
 that numinous lake (*mtsho gnyan*) is known as ‘Not heated’ (*ma dros*).⁴⁵

37 C and D: nor bu chu shel gyis mdog(s) can, “...with the hue of a crystal jewel”.

38 C: “In autumn and spring they stay by the tree Sale ljon pa; in winter at the cliff Bya skyibs, and in summer they stay by the pond Dal 'u can”; D: “It is explained that in spring they stay underneath ('gab na) the tree Sa le ljon pa; in summer they stay by the pond Dal 'u can; in autumn they stay by the eight thousand surrounding smaller ponds (mtshe'u phran); in winter they stay at the cliff Bya skyib can”.

39 Skt. *nirmāṇarati*, “gods who create their own magical enjoyments” (Edgerton 1970: 319).

40 Skt. *paranirmitavaśavartin*, “n. of the highest class of *kāmāvaca* gods, lit. controlling (enjoyments) magically created by others” (Edgerton 1970: 319).

41 C and D: mal dros.

42 C: Shim phod is surely correct, as above the text states that it is Shim phod that is suspended in mid-air.

43 C continues: “Flowing onto the cliff (which is like) the belly of a tortoise, it is the river in which ‘Eternal Heroes’ (g.yung drung sems dpa') bathe; the flowing can only (be seen) by those who, having removed their impurities, have obtained the eye of Wisdom”.

44 C: “as it neither freezes in winter nor boils in summer”.

45 C: mal grol.

Conclusion

This description of Mount Tise and its surroundings posits a symmetry between a mountain (actually two mountains) and a lake, visible to everyone, on the ground, and a mountain and a lake (and certain other elements) suspended in ‘mid-air’, only visible to “those who are cleansed of their impurities and have ‘magic feet’”. The corresponding pairs are (on the ground) Mount Ya phag/bag sha ra, Lake Ma dros (Mal dros/grol), and Mount sPos ri gnad ldan; and (in mid-air) Gangs Ti se, Lake Ma phang (pang/spang(s)/dpang), and Mount (*ri*) Shim phod.⁴⁶ This neat scheme is somewhat complicated by the fact that, as the text notes, people tend to refer to the mountain and lake on the ground by the names which should, strictly speaking, be reserved to their mid-air counterparts. There is, however, a physical link between the two levels, as a waterfall (*chu ’bab*) descends from the two mountains in mid-air to the lake on the ground, as explained at the end of the passage presented here. The origin of this cosmographic scheme remains to be ascertained, but Dan Martin has pointed out that most of the places mentioned in the passage studied here are mentioned in the *Lokaprajñapti*.⁴⁷ This is a lead that must be further explored in future studies. The particular element of a river descending from heaven (or as here, from mid-air), however, would in any case seem to be inspired by the myth of the descent of the Gaṅgā from the heavens to earth.

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46 dPal Tshul 1972 refers to Gangs Ti se and mTsho Ma pang irrespective of their location, and apparently places the cliff Bya skyibs can on the ground rather than in the sky, which could be understood to fit with the reference to its location “in Tibet”, cf. n. 21 above.

47 Personal communication.

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Appendix

List of available versions of *Graggs pa gling grags*

- A** = The Dolanji ms., 37 fols. The first half of the manuscript is somewhat damaged. The manuscript would seem to be unavailable at present. I have therefore worked on the basis of a photograph of the text from the 1980s. The manuscript originates from Dolpo in Nepal.
- B** = The Oslo ms., 95 fols. Possibly the original text, of which this is a copy, came from the Bon monastery in the Chumbi Valley (Dromo), as the colophon states that it was copied in 1919 at the behest of the Sikkim Political Officer Major William Lachlan Campbell, C.I.E. However, as Campbell is known to have procured Tibetan texts at Gyantse in the same year, the original may have come from somewhere in the interior of Tibet (see Evans-Wentz 1957: 71, n. 1).
- C** = The Nagchu ms., 69 fols., a xerox copy, almost or entirely illegible in places. The three first folios are missing. I have not seen the original, which I was told belonged to a monk “somewhere in Nagchu”.
- D** = The Lhasa Tenjur version, published by Sog sde bsTan pa'i nyi ma in Lhasa in 1998. This version consists of 95 folios in manuscript form, found in vol. 72 (see Karmay & Nagano 2001: 627).

There is also a printed edition published in Lhasa in 2010 (Don grub lha rgyal *et al.* 2010). This edition is based on the Oslo, Nagchu, and Lhasa Tenjur mss.

Excerpt from *Graggs pa gling grags*

A: Dolanji ms. B: Oslo ms. C: Nagchu ms. D: Lhasa Tenjur edition

The ms. transliterated as the basic text is A.

An asterisk * indicates that a variant reading (B, C, and/or D) of the syllable to which it is appended is provided on the right hand margin of the same line; if the asterisk refers to two or more syllables, this will be clear from the context.

If the variant regards the entire line of the basic text, the variant is given on the line below the basic text. Likewise, longer passages that are only found in a single text (usually C, but occasionally B or D) are given below the basic text (A), and must be understood to continue until the basic text reappears. All variants and longer passages not found in A are printed in smaller font size.

A question mark after a syllable or a phrase indicates that it is not clearly legible and cannot be established on the basis of the other texts.

Contracted forms (*bsdu yig*) are written in full, although the form thus restored will often strictly speaking be hypothetical with regard to the letters not actually indicated in the *bsdu yig*.

Numbers which are written in whole or in part by means of numerals in the ms. are kept as numerals in the transliteration.

Lacunae due to physical damage to the ms. in A have been filled in on the basis of the other mss., and the text is printed in italics.

da* 'dzam bu gling 'di na* / la D 'dir	B, C de yang, D de
ngo mtshar* sgrag du* rung* ba ni / D drung	C mtshar can C sgrags su, D bsgrags su
'dzam bu gling gis* dbus skyil* / C, D dkyil	B, D gi B kyi,
drang po* thad kha'i* nam mkha' la / drang po	B dbus kyi grangs, D <i>omits</i>
	C kyi,
B, D kyi	
gangs ti rtse* yod / B si, D tse	
de'i shar na mtsho ma phang* yod / (D 4b) C, D pang	B spangs,
de 2 dkar* nam mkha' la yod / kyis, D gnyis	B 2 ka, C 2 thad
de yang gangs ti se'i* rtsa ba D ti rtse'i	B sti si'i, C ti rtse'i,
ar mo li ga* rdo dang mnyam / kha'i, C, D ka'i	B
rtse mo gsam gdan* gzhi'i* thad na 'dug / bsam gtan	B, C, D
	B bzhi'i, C bzhi ba'i,
D bzhi pa'i de ltar gis* gangs* dang mtsho de / (A 3b) <i>omitted in C</i>	B gi, D gyi;
	C gang, D
gangs ti rtse skal* pa 'jigs* dus* kyang / 'jig C dus su	D bskal C, D
zo ba spyang* la rtags* (C 5b) pa ltar gnas ste* / g.yang C, D btag	D
	B
bzhin bsdod de me chu rlung gis* mi bshigs* C, D bshig	D gsum gyis B 'jigs par,

bstan* pa'i g.yung drung (B 7a) ngo /	
C brtan	
de'i 'og* 'thad* drang po na /	D 'og
gi C, D thad	
B de'i bka'i 'og thad grang po na	
gangs* ya phag sha ra* bya ba yod de* /	C gang B bag sha ra ba B,
C, D yin te	
mi rnam gyis* ti se'i* gangs* zer ba dang /	C, D kyis B ti si
C ri ti rtse'i	
	C gang,
D gangs yin	
mtsho ma* gros bya ba yin de* /	C, D mal
C ste, D te	
ma phang* zer ba de 2 ka* yod do* /	B spangs, C, D pang C de 2,
D de gnyis	
	B, D yod
de, C yin no	
ti se'i* gangs* ni	B sti si,
C, D ti rtse	
bkod legs* mchod rten* 'dra /	C leg D mchod
rten bkod legs	
ma phang* mtsho ni	B
spangs, C, D pang	
maṅḍal bshams* 'dra'o* /	D bshams pa
B, C, D 'dra	
snying po don yod pa	
byang chub kyis* mtsho dang gangs* yin pas /	C
kyis C gang	
D byang chub kyis dang/ gang yin pa'i	
dus gsum* gshen rab* thams cad*	C 3, D sum B bshen rabs
C cad dang	
mngon* par sangs rgyas pa'i sa gnas yin no /	
D mi mngon	
C sangs rgyas byon pa'i gnas yin no	
de yang gangs* ti se* de*	C gang C,
D rtse C ni	
yab kyis tshul/	
B adds: mtsho ma spangs yum gyis tshul lo /	
mtsho de yum ltar	
dpang* du khyer ba 'dra ba* nas* /	B spang, D pang C omits 'dra ba B,
C, D bas na	
mtsho ma phang* ngo*:	B spang, C

dpang D so	
mtsho de'i chu zheng la dpag tshad lnga bcu* /	D nga bcu
brgyad bcu /	
mtha' skor la 2* rgya* yod do* /	D nyis B, D
brgya D yod /	
mtsho de'i* shar nas (B 7b) ltas nas*	D
de D bltas na	
mdog dkar* zla gam:	
D dkar po	
byang nas bltas na	
mdog* dmar ljang gru* 4*:	D omits mdog C
grub D bzhi	
nub nas ltas* dmar skya bzlum* po /	C ltas na, D bltas
na C, D zlum	
lho ltas*	B ltas nas, C ltas
na, D bltas na	
sngon po* gru 3* du thong* ngo /	B, D gsum
B, D mthong	
	C sngo skya gru 3 / de bzhi mdog 4
ru mthong /	
ma phang* gis* byang ngos nas*:	B spang, C, D pang B, D gi,
C gis D na	
shim* phod kyis* ri bya ba	B
shi B, D kyi	
yar rgung du* mi 'phar	B gnam la,
C dgung la	
sa* la mi ltung*	C, D bar sa C ltung par,
D ltung ste	
bar snang la gnas pa'o* /	B, D gnas
so, C gnas /	
de'i (D 5a) rtse mo nas*	
B, C, D na	
bya khyung gis g.yung drung khyim bdun gnas so /	
B g.yung drung gi bya khyung khyim bdun gnas so	
C bya khyung gis tshang yod / g.yung drung khyim bdun gyis (C 6a) gnas so /	
D bya khyung dang g.yung drung gi khyim bya gnyis gnas so /	
de'i 'og thad nas*:	
C na, D po	
sa la* gnas pa'i spos ri ngad* ldan yod /	D
phar B nged	
bar snang la gnas pa'i ri de'i rtse thad brang nas*	
D thad nas	

C bar snang gis gnas pa'i ri'i thad ka na /	
<i>byang du dpag tshad nyi shu btsal na*</i> /	C btsal ba na /, D
gtsal ba'i yon /	
brag gser gyi* bya skyibs can bya ba yod de*:	C, D gser brag B yod
do, D yod /	
sum bcu rtsa sum* thad na /	C 2 kyis,
D gsum gyi	
bar snang la rlung gis brdeg gnan / skyor de gnas so /	
B bar snang la rlung gi btegs te skyer te gnas so /	
C bar snang rlung gis yar bteg / mar mnan skyer te gnas so /	
D yar la rlung gis bteg ste byas ba'o /	
brag de'i dbyibs*	C dbyib, D
dbyibs kyi	
<i>g.yung drung bzhi skor du yod do</i> /*	
C, D yod /	
<i>de 'i* mtha' skor la</i>	C,
D omit de'i	
dpag tshad lnga bcu: dang* (B 8a)	C, D omit dang
	spangs la phyed dang 4 yod /
	C yar phyir la drug /
	D 'phangs su phyed bzhi yod /
	B mtha' la, C tha ma na, D
de'i mtha'*	
mtha' ma	
brag phran stong gis bskor* nas yod* /	C skor
B, C yod do	
de nas shar du dpag tshad nyi shu btsal ba na* /	B, C, D nyi shu'i
nam mkha' la	
shing Sale <i>ljon pa bya ba</i> /	
<i>rtsa ba rgyang grags gcig*</i>	
C grag 1 /	
<i>'thur* la rdug pa'i</i> (A 4a) tshul /	
C, D thur	
gyen du yang rgyang grag 1*	B,
D grags gcig	
C gyen du dpag tshad drug	
yar la skyes nas* /	
D yar skyes	
yal kha* 'thon* dman	B, C, D ga B, D
mtho, C mthon	
rim pa bdun* ltar du* yod* /	D bco lnga B, C ltar C yod
do, D yod pa	
B rim pa bdun ltar rgyug pa'i tshul /	

shing* de'i tha ma*	C omits shing B mtha' la, C mtha' na, D
mtha' ma	
shing* sa la ljon pa *stong gi *skor nas yod* /	B, D shing phran C sa le
ljon C, D gis	
C yod do	
de nas yang shar du* dpag tshad nyi shu nas* /	D nas B, D na,
C omits nas	
tshe'u* dal gyis 'bab pa bya ba* /	B chu, C, D mtshe'u B, D ba yod, C
ba yod do	
gru 4 lam sar yod pa'i ngos re	
C brub bzhi yod pa'i ngos	
D dbyibs gru bzhir yod pa'i ngos rer	
dpag tshad lnga bcu* /	C lnga bcu re yod, D
lnga bcu ste	
tha* skor la 2 brgya yod* /	C, D mtha' D
gnyis brgya'o	
mtsho de'i mtha' la*	C mtha' ma na, D
mtha' ma la	
me tog padma dang / padma*	C, D omit
padma B ste, ste	
ha los skor* de:*	C ha lha las, D ha los sogs kyis D bskor B,
C ste, D te	
sdong po bshol* (C 6b) 'dab* tsam*:	D gshol C, D
mda' D tsam la	
'dab ma* srab thug*	C, D
ma'i C, D 'thug	
ma he* 'brong gi* ko ba tsam /	B, D
he'i C 'bring	
B adds sdong po cang gsar lo brgyad 'gro ba tsam /	
mtha' skor* tshe lo brgya pa'i dus kyis*	
C, D skor la	B, D kyis, C kyis
mi 'bring gis	
mtho* bcu gsum* (B 8b) yod* /	C lus tshad
mtho D sum cu	B tsam mo, C mod
do, D re yod	
de ltar (D 5b) bar snang* la gnas* pa'i	D
bar la C yod	
ri tsho* brag shing tshe'u* de rnams ni /	B, D mtsho B, C,
D mtshe'u	
D ri brag mtsho shing mtshe'u rnams ni /	
sgrib pa byang* pa dang*	B med

D omits dang	
rdzu 'phrul zhabs yod* men pa*	C, D yod pa B, C min
pas D yin pas	
gzhan kun gyis* mi mthong ngo /	C, D omit
zhan kun gyi	
brag shing mtsho dang tshe'u* de rnams la /	D
omits tshe'u	
B brag de'i shing mtsho dang bcas pa la	
C brag shing mtshe'u dang de rnams la ni	
lha'i* dbang po brgya* byin gyi*	C rgyal
C lha D gyis	
glang po* rab stan*	B, D po che C brtan, D
omits rab stan	
'khor dang bcas pa gnas* ste* /	C rnams
D byas D te	
rab stan* de la dpang* du	B rten, C, D brtan
C, D 'phang	
dpag tshad phyed dang 3* /	
D gsum	
mtha* bskor la bdun* yod* /	C mtha' C
lnga C yod do	
de'i* 'khor glang* phran stong gis bskor nas* /	C, D de la C glang po B,
D te, C ste	
'dog* thal ka* /	
B, D thams cad mdog B dkar, D kha	C
mdog sngo skya	
gzugs* mdzes*	C gzug B, D mdzes
pa, C 'dzes	
nor bu chu shel gyis 'go* can /	B, D gyi B mgo, C
mdog, D mdogs	
mngon shes rdzu 'phrul ldan* pa /	C,
D dang ldan	
dus snga dro byung tshad*:	
D tshad du	
C dus snga gro byung dus;	
glang po che* rab stan* la*	C omits glang po che B rten, C, D brtan D omits la
mnyen* skur* byed do /	B snyan, C bsnyen, snyen C
bkur, D bskur	
de ltar glang* chen 'khor dang bcas pa rnams /	
spyid shing dang brag bya skyibs can du bsdad /	
C ston spyid shing sa le ljon par sdod /	
dgun brag bya skyibs	

- g.yar mtshe'u dal 'u can na 'dug go /
 D dpyid ni shing sa le'i 'gab na sdod /
 dbyar ni mtshe'u dal babs kyi mtha' na sdod /
 ston ni 'khor gyi mtshe'u phran brgyad stong la sdod /
 dgun ni brag bya skyib can na sdod par bshad do /
 sa gnas de ston pa nyid kyis* /
 D kyi
 bon theg pa rims* pa* (B 9a) dgu B, C, D rim
 C, D *omit* pa
 phye ba'i* sa* gnas* / C 'byed, D phyes C *omits* sa B, D *add* yin
 pas, C yin
 da lta yang 'phrul dga' ba dang /
 gzhan 'phrul dbang byed pa rnam babs nas /
 B, C, D da lta yang gzhan 'phrul dbang byed / 'khrul dga' la sogs pa'i
 lha'i rigs babs ste* / C lha re re, D lha rigs C bab nas,
 D 'bab nas
 der rol mo 'bul zhing* rol (C 7a) rtсед mo byed do / D cing C,
 D *omit* mo
 de yang da lta mi kun gyis thong* pa'i
 B, D mthong
 ti se* dang ma pang* B sti si, C, D ti
 rtse B spang
 ces zer ba de 2* C ces pa de yang,
 D ces pa ni
 'dzam bu gling gis* dbus yin par nges te* / B, D
 gi C *omits* te
 gangs de ya bag sha ra* /
 D ra dang
 mtsho de* ma* gros ces bya'o / C de
 la C, D mal
 mtsho de la bar snang gis*
 B, D gi
 C mtsho mal gros zer ba de'i bar snang la /
 ti se* dang C gang ti
 rtse, D ti rtse
 spos ri ngad (D 6a) ldan* gyis* chu 'bab ste* / C shim phod B, D gyi,
 C kyis C pa
 C *continues*:
 brag rus sbal gyis lto bar 'bab ste /
 g.yung drung sems dpa' 'khrus byed kyis chu yin /
 sgrib pa byang nas ye shes spyang dang ldan pa men bab /
 mis* mi mthong ngo / C,

D *omit* mis

de ltar yin tshul ni* /

C, D yin pas

klu rigs* (A 4b) mang po*

C ris D pos

khrus byed du* song bas* /

C khrus su C yong pa,

D 'ong bas

mi khyags* mi 'khol bas

D 'khyag

C dgun mi khyag / dbyar mi khol pas /

mtsho gnyan* ma* gros* ces bya'o* /

C gnyen C, D mal C grol,

D dros D pa

NOTE IN MARGINE ALL'ARCHIVIO FOTOGRAFICO DI FOSCO MARAINI

ERBERTO LO BUE

(University of Bologna)

Il mio primo contatto con Fosco Maraini risale al marzo del 1992, quando gli inviai una copia di *Tibet: dimora degli dei*, catalogo di una mostra da me curata a Milano nell'ottobre dell'anno precedente, primo in una serie di pubblicazioni che gli avrei donato negli anni successivi. Maraini le riponeva "in una cartella di 'LoBuiana' in biblioteca", come ebbe a scrivermi l'8 dicembre 1999 di ritorno da Milano, dove aveva visitato alla Rotonda della Besana la mostra *Tibet. Arte e spiritualità. Un contributo alla storia dell'uomo*, di cui ero stato consulente scientifico e al cui catalogo avevo contribuito.

Incontrai Maraini per la prima volta nel tardo pomeriggio del 16 dicembre 1995 a Palazzo Borghese a Firenze, dove ero stato invitato dall'Associazione Culturale Italiana a tenere una conferenza sul simbolismo del Grande Stupa di Gyantse, nel Tibet meridionale, fotografato da lui in bianco e nero durante la spedizione guidata da Giuseppe Tucci nel 1937, da Ernani Orcorte a colori durante la spedizione del CeSMEO di Torino cui partecipai insieme al prof. Franco Ricca nel 1987, e nuovamente da Gabriele Mariotti nella spedizione organizzata da Ricca due anni dopo. Al termine della conferenza fummo invitati a casa della sig.ra Flora Fabbrini Boccetti, in via dei Bardi. L'occasione non ci consentiva di conversare approfonditamente dei nostri rispettivi soggiorni a Gyantse, dove mi ero nuovamente recato quell'anno e dove sarei tornato l'estate successiva, e Fosco mi invitò a pranzo per il giorno seguente nella sua bella casa di "Torre di Sopra", in viale Magalotti, dove mi accolse insieme alla seconda moglie, Mieko Namiki. Nel pomeriggio di quell'indimenticabile domenica Fosco mi mostrò il suo archivio fotografico; e la vista di tanto materiale tibetano, solo in parte pubblicato, fece nascere in me il desiderio di analizzare tutte le istantanee di monumenti e opere d'arte religiosa da lui scattate in Tibet. Da quel primo incontro scaturì la pubblicazione del volume *Tibet. Templi scomparsi fotografati da Fosco Maraini* (Ananke, Torino 1998), di cui scelsi le foto e scrissi il testo, e che vide la luce durante la mia permanenza a Istanbul, dove non ebbi la possibilità di rivederne le bozze.

Incontrai Maraini nuovamente a Firenze il 24 novembre 1999, dopo il mio ritorno dalla Turchia e successivamente alla mia presa di servizio all'Università di Bologna. Fu l'inizio di una serie di incontri pomeridiani a casa sua dedicati allo studio delle istantanee da lui scattate in templi e monasteri buddhisti, soprattutto durante la spedizione del 1937, e conservate nel suo archivio fotografico. Focalizzavo le mie

ricerche sulle iscrizioni sulle pareti di edifici distrutti dalle Guardie Rosse durante la Grande Rivoluzione Culturale Proletaria. Il tempo era contato, dovendo io esaminare centinaia di immagini nell'arco del pomeriggio, e talora sorgevano complicazioni: non sempre trovavo le istantanee che mi interessavano, e una delle fotografie con iscrizione da me rinvenuta e selezionata durante il nostro incontro del 30 giugno 2000 sembrò perdersi fra le sue carte e non riuscii a ottenerne una stampa. Per tali motivi, in una lettera datata 20 maggio dell'anno successivo, gli proposi di recarmi a casa sua per riordinare le buste contenenti i negativi delle sue fotografie e recanti i loro numeri d'inventario, le descrizioni dattiloscritte delle immagini e i provini delle foto incollati sulle stesse buste, prima della sua partenza per il soggiorno estivo nella sua casa in Garfagnana.

Nelle sue lettere Fosco mi incoraggiava a rendergli visita e in quella del 25 agosto 2001, una decina di giorni prima della mia partenza per un viaggio di ricerca in Ladakh, mi offrì di trascorrere un periodo nell'appartamento ammobiliato da lui dato in affitto vicino a casa sua per consentirmi di lavorare approfonditamente sulla sezione tibetana del suo archivio fotografico. Mi sarebbe bastato un mese, ma il progetto non venne realizzato per mancanza di fondi; lo sarebbe stato soltanto dal dicembre 2011, grazie a un congedo appositamente concessomi dall'Università di Bologna, dopo il trasferimento del fondo fotografico di Fosco Maraini, oltre che della nostra corrispondenza, all'Archivio Contemporaneo "Alessandro Bonsanti" del Gabinetto Vieusseux a Firenze.¹

Fra il 5 e 15 dicembre 2011, e anche il 1° febbraio 2012, potei riesaminare il seguente materiale, in gran parte già visto a casa di Maraini, avvalendomi della collaborazione della direttrice Gloria Manghetti, dell'archivista Iliaria Spadolini,² della sua assistente Elisa Ciani, del fotografo Enrico Buonincontro e di mia moglie Stella Rigo:³

¹ Sul mio rapporto con Fosco Maraini, v. Lo Bue 2012: 161-76. Si veda anche l'epistolario conservato all'Archivio Contemporaneo del Gabinetto Vieusseux.

² Con cui collaborai alla ricostituzione del mio epistolario con Fosco Maraini anche sulla base del materiale da me conservato e donato all'Archivio Contemporaneo.

³ Quest'ultima ordinò le diapositive, in parte mescolate e comprendenti istantanee scattate da Paolo Felicetti a Gyantse, utilizzate da Maraini per le sue conferenze e contenute in una scatola numerata 100/313, e quelle conservate in una cassetta di plastica verde inventariata con gli stessi numeri, e contenente diapositive e cartoncini ritagliati su misura su cui Maraini scrisse i temi cui le diapositive si riferiscono; il materiale era ancora sparpagliato, soprattutto in superficie, perché gli elastici che tenevano insieme le diapositive con il cartoncino di riferimento si erano spezzati, a eccezione di tre. Nel suo lavoro di riordino del materiale, avvenuto sotto la mia supervisione, mia moglie notò come talora la medesima diapositiva comparisse in conferenze diverse. Nella medesima cassetta sono custodite anche tre scatolette di cartone intitolate «Tangka (Tibet). Tangka Ngonpo», numerate da 1 a 3 e contenenti diapositive 6x6 con particolari della *thang ka* donata a Fosco Maraini da un lama tibetano e riprodotta sulla copertina dell'edizione di *Segreto Tibet* di Corbaccio, della quale tradussi l'iscrizione e che descrissi al N° 12 della relazione «Tempere su cotone preparato raccolte da Fosco Maraini e descritte da Erberto Lo Bue», da me stilata su richiesta di Maraini. A

- ♦ Inventario N° 87, «F. M. Catalogo Foto Tibet 1937 e 1948 (esclusi 35 m/m)». Si tratta della custodia di un libro della casa editrice Skira contenente una collezione di stampe incollate su cartoncino relative ai seguenti temi: «Tibet, architettura» (2); «Tibet, sculture» (7); «Tibet, maschere sacre» (3); «Tibet, Lama» (3); «Tibet, uomini» (1), «Tibet, pitture» (6); «Tibet, Gyantse» (13); «Tibet, paesaggi» (4); «foreste himalayane» (1); «Tibet, cappella a Samada» (4); «Tibet, religione popolare» (0); «Tibet, gente» (4); «Tibet, monaci» (4); «Tibet, varie» (2); «Tibet, militari, burocrati» (1); «Tibet, cerimonie buddiste» (2); «Tibet, donne» (2); «Tibet, teatro popolare» (1); «Tibet, fiori» (1).⁴
- ♦ Inventario N° 88: «Archivio negativi bianco-nero, prima scelta - Tibet B - 1937 e 1948». Scatola di cartone blu numerata da Maraini col N° 3, ma in precedenza col N° 2.
- ♦ Inventario N° 98: «Archivio negativi bianco-nero, prima scelta - Tibet C - 1937 e 1948». Scatola di cartone blu numerata da Maraini col N° 2, ma recante il N° 4 sul coperchio.

quelle scatolette si aggiungevano infine due buste: una contrassegnata da Maraini con la scritta «fotocolor tangka A e B» contenente una foto del medesimo dipinto e una foto del dipinto descritto al N° 4 nella medesima relazione; e una con intestazione del Gabinetto Vieusseux, in cui mia moglie raggruppò diapositive a colori della *thang ka* N° 12 della mia relazione di 34.000 battute speditagli con una lettera di accompagnamento il 19 luglio 2002. Nella sistemazione delle diapositive adottammo due criteri paralleli. Quando, nonostante la rottura degli elastici che lo tenevano insieme, identificavamo un gruppo di diapositive con un tema o una conferenza, mia moglie le sistemava in scatolette per diapositive da noi appositamente portate a tale scopo. Si tratta di diapositive in bianco e nero ricavate da foto scattate da Maraini in Tibet nel 1937 e 1948, e suddivise in base ai seguenti temi da lui indicati sui cartoncini che le intitolavano: «Tibet – maschere e varie»; «Tibet – Opere d'arte»; «Tibet luoghi»; «Tibet – Arte»; «Tibet – Himalaya e carovana». Tuttavia molte delle diapositive collocate nelle scatolette non hanno attinenza con le tematiche sopra indicate e in tali casi adottammo il criterio di mantenere insieme il gruppo iniziale in cui si trovavano dopo la rottura degli elastici. Alcuni dei cartoncini di cui sopra, con le annotazioni di Maraini, non sembrano immediatamente riferibili a diapositive specifiche e li lasciammo in un gruppo a parte. Laddove era impossibile ricomporre le diapositive in gruppi corrispondenti a un tema o a una conferenza — in assenza del testo della medesima — mia moglie procedette a una suddivisione delle diapositive basata sulle didascalie scritte da Maraini sui telaietti delle stesse, inserendole all'interno di buste con l'intestazione del Gabinetto Vieusseux: «Testimonianza di un mondo scomparso (Tibet 1937 e 1948)»; «Bhutan»; «Danze sacre a Thimphu»; Tibet – Arte (Gyantse, agosto 1986; fotografie di Paolo Felicetti); «Tibet – arte: Pittura» (comprendente due diapositive riproducenti rispettivamente una banconota e un francobollo tibetani); Tibet – Arte: scultura; India; «Pakistan e Taxila»; «Taxila – scultura» (le virgolette, ove presenti, corrispondono ai titoli di Maraini). Nelle buste compaiono diapositive di altri fotografi, quali Paolo Felicetti, Roberto Vitali e Gabriele Mariotti, autore della maggior parte delle fotografie pubblicate in *The Great Stupa of Gyantse* (su cui v. n. 11).

⁴ I numeri fra parentesi si riferiscono al numero di fotografie disposte sopra una superficie di cartone su cui possono essere incollate da una a otto fotografie.

- ◆ Inventario N° 99: «Archivio negativi bianco-nero, prima scelta - Tibet B - 1937 e 1948». Scatola di cartone blu numerata da Maraini col N° 3.⁵
- ◆ «Tibet 1937 e 1948 vol. 1» e «Tibet - 2. Opere d'arte». Due album fotografici in formato A3.⁶

Seguono le mie osservazioni in relazione alla catalogazione e descrizione di alcune fotografie conservate nell'archivio di Maraini e pubblicate in *Segreto Tibet*.

1. Fotografia inserita nell'album «Documenti fotografici sul Tibet, vol. 1 ARTE TIBETANA lungo la carovaniera GANGTOK-GYANTSE (con testi di G. TUCCI, da Indotibetica) [sic]», del quale Maraini mi fornì una fotocopia, riprodotta in varie edizioni di *Segreto Tibet*, per esempio in quella pubblicata da Corbaccio (Milano 1998), p. 227, Foto 88, e recante la didascalia: «Monastero di Kyangphu. Qua e là nelle cappelle stupende statue, probabilmente indiane, di epoca Pala (XI-XII secolo), si trovano confuse tra le cianfrusaglie della pietà popolare. Immagine di bronzo, faccia dorata con shal-ser [sic]», altezza circa 80 cm. Forse rappresenta la sacra scrittura «Prajnâpâramitâ [sic] personificata»⁷ (Fig. 1). Una stampa della foto di

⁵ Nelle tre scatole alcune immagini del Sikkim, dell'India e anche del canale di Suez (FFM-99-N-1086-1091 - 81 A-F, in una busta in un gruppo collocato trasversalmente rispetto alle altre) sono mescolate a quelle del Tibet meridionale, e lo stesso avviene per immagini di templi e monasteri sia in siti diversi sia nel medesimo sito. Tre esempi per tutti: 1) la medesima fotografia e un suo particolare, FFM-098-N-115, FFM-098-N-252 e FFM-098-N-1271, corrispondenti rispettivamente a Serie T. 37 N° 1892 («Tibet, Gyantse: Pittore al lavoro. Sta tracciando il disegno di una 'Ruota della Vita' (Sipâ khorlo)»), T68 - 51, Serie T. 37 N° 1893 - 51 bis N° 1891 («Tibet, Gyantse: Pittore al lavoro. Sta completando il disegno di una 'Ruota della Vita' (Sipâ khorlo)») e nuovamente Serie T. 37 N° 1891 («Tibet, Gyantse: Pittore al lavoro. Sta completando il disegno di una 'Ruota della Vita' (Sipâ khorlo)», pubblicata in *Segreto Tibet* (p. 276, tav. LXX), compaiono tre volte nella scatola 2 (inventariata con il N° 98), la seconda volta a 137 numeri di distanza dalla prima e la terza a 1019 numeri di distanza dalla seconda. Tre altre istantanee, due delle quali identiche, raffiguranti il medesimo pittore all'opera sul medesimo dipinto si trovano nella scatola N° 3 inventariata con il N° 99 (FFM-99-N-50 - 1894, con il titolo «Gyantse, pittore al lavoro; sta dipingendo una 'Ruota della Vita'»), e nelle buste FFM-99-N-534 - 1890 e FFM-99-N-548 - 1895. 2) Due istantanee scattate a Elephanta, in India (FFM-88-N-672-674, Serie T.48 - 0281 A-C, e FFM-88-N-677, Serie T.48 N° L.281), sono collocate tra foto scattate nel Tibet meridionale. 3) Fotografie dell'eremo di Gyantse si trovano sia nella scatola Tibet 2 inventariata con il N° 98, per esempio FFM-98-N-1627-1631 (5348 A, B e D), sia in quella Tibet 3 inventariata con il N° 99 (FFM-99-N-475-478, 5335). Nelle medesime scatole vi sono anche fotografie non scattate da Maraini e tratte da pubblicazioni: FFM-88-N-2064-2067: «Tibet: Ganden, prima e dopo la rivoluzione culturale (1976-1977)»; FFM-88-N-2070-2075: «Gyantse dopo la rivoluzione culturale»; FFM-88-N-2076-2086: «Tibet, Valle di Chumbi; rovine del monastero Dung-kar»; FFM-88-N-3067 (Vari S.M. 32).

⁶ All'epoca della mia ricerca questi due album si trovavano al Gabinetto Vieusseux. Le pp. 13, 14, 19, 32, 37, 38, 98, 106 e 114 del secondo volume erano prive di immagini. Nessuno dei due album corrisponde a quello di cui Maraini mi diede una fotocopia in formato A4: «Documenti fotografici sul Tibet, vol. 1 ARTE TIBETANA lungo la carovaniera GANGTOK-GYANTSE (con testi di G.TUCCI, da Indotibetica) [sic]».

⁷ L'immagine viene elencata come Foto 88 e descritta da Maraini come «Statua indiana»

questa statua, incollata su un cartoncino numerato FFM-87-P-128-133 (37/2266), si trova nella raccolta conservata nella custodia di libro inventariata col N° 87 e sopra citata, ma non nell'album «Tibet – 2. Opere d'arte».

Pur pubblicandone l'immagine, Maraini non sembra citare questa statua nel testo di *Segreto Tibet* e nella didascalia la colloca nel monastero di rKyang phu; tale indicazione fu da me erroneamente seguita in *Tibet. Templi scomparsi fotografati da Fosco Maraini*, p. 32, Fig. 12. Infatti la collocazione di questa immagine a rKyang phu è in contrasto con quella assegnatale nelle descrizioni sulla busta contenenti i negativi FFM-098-N-118 - T.37-2266 (T72 – N° 2266): «Statua all'interno della cappella della fortezza (Dzong) di Gyantse. Accanto ad antiche statue di bronzo d'altissimo pregio artistico, stanno le cianfrusaglie della religione popolare (statua molto ammirata da G. Tucci)».

Un gruppo consistente di istantanee scattate da Maraini nel e dal forte di Gyantse è conservato nelle seguenti buste: FFM-098-N-729 fino a FFM-098-N-752; FFM-098-N-905; FFM-098-N-907 fino a FFM-098-N-908; FFM-098-N-927; FFM-098-N-1242 fino a FFM-098-N-1249, ecc. Il numero assegnato da Maraini all'immagine qui presa in considerazione, 2266, segue e precede immediatamente quelli di altre due istantanee, FFM-098-N-911 - N° 2265 e FFM-098-N-912 - Serie T.37 N° 2267, da lui scattate nel tempio del forte di Gyantse.⁸ Esse ritraggono un'altra importante immagine in metallo e sono accompagnate dalle rispettive diciture: «Gyantsé: cappella dello Dzong (il Forte). Statuetta indiana (?) di Dakini con monaco Gelug-pa [sic]»; e «Tibet. Monaco e statua di dakini». Una foto numerata da Maraini 2271 (FFM-098-N-90) ritrae lo stesso monaco che compare nelle foto 2265 e 2267, e reca la seguente annotazione sulla busta: «Monaco (trapa) all'interno della cappella sconosciuta del forte di Gyantse (Gyantse Dzong)». Un'altra foto, poi, numerata da Maraini 2268 (FFM-098-N-913) con il rimando «v. 2265», ritrae il medesimo monaco con il cappello adottato dall'ordine dGe lugs pa.

Se ne deduce insomma che la statua riprodotta nella Fig. 1 va collocata nel forte di Gyantse, e che sono errate le informazioni relative alla sua collocazione nella relativa descrizione sull'album, nelle annotazioni su alcune buste, nella didascalia in

nell'elenco dattiloscritto preparato per la terza nuova edizione italiana di *Segreto Tibet* (Corbaccio, Milano 1998) e la sua didascalia compare per la prima volta, dattiloscritta, nelle fotocopie delle bozze dell'edizione del 1984 (Dall'Oglio, Milano) al di sotto della Foto 88, ma non appare nella prima, seconda e terza edizione del libro (Leonardo da Vinci, Bari 1951, 1955 e 1959), nell'edizione statunitense (Viking Press, New York 1952), nella ristampa dell'edizione inglese (London 1956, pubblicata per la prima volta nel 1952), e neppure nell'edizione francese (Club des Libraires de France, autorizzata da Arthaud, Saverne 1957). Il termine tecnico che designa il pigmento giallo o aureo con cui i tibetani ridipingono ogni anno il volto delle loro statue più importanti è *zhal gser* (cfr. Tucci 1941: 103).

⁸ L'istantanea N° 2265, scattata nel tempio del forte di Gyantse secondo l'informazione dattiloscritta da Maraini sulla busta corrispondente, fu riprodotta senza didascalia nella pagina precedente il frontespizio del succitato *Tibet. Templi scomparsi fotografati da Fosco Maraini*.

Segreto Tibet e, conseguentemente, anche nel testo e relativa didascalia in *Tibet. Templi scomparsi fotografati da Fosco Maraini* (pp. 21 e 32, Fig. 12). In ogni caso la foto che ritrae la dea fu scattata in un tempio addobbato e relativamente ben tenuto, in tal senso agli antipodi di quello di rKyang phu.

In aggiunta alla collocazione erronea di questa notevole immagine, raffigurante la dea buddhista che personifica gli insegnamenti descritti nel ciclo di testi buddhisti indiani che prende il nome di Perfezione della Sapienza (Prajñāpāramitā), si noti che l'uso del termine 'bronzo' per designarne il metallo è improprio, poiché trattasi quasi certamente di ottone: le analisi chimiche dimostrano che, a parte il rame, particolarmente adatto alla tradizionale doratura al mercurio o a fuoco, la lega abitualmente utilizzata nella statuaria indiana e himalayana, anche per la sua lucentezza, evocante quella dell'oro, è a base di rame e zinco, non di rame e stagno. Lo stile indiano della statua, con una veste riccamente ageminata, non implica comunque che essa fosse stata realizzata necessariamente in India. Nel 1359 uno dei sovrani di Gyantse perse la prima moglie e commissionò una statua in argento tempestato di pietre preziose raffigurante la popolarissima dea Tārā utilizzando come unità di misura il pollice della prima moglie defunta; l'immagine fu eseguita in "stile indiano"⁹ in base a una scelta documentata da altre committenze nella storia dell'arte buddhista in Tibet.

2. Fotografia riprodotta da Maraini nelle varie edizioni di *Segreto Tibet*, per esempio in quella pubblicata da Corbaccio (Milano 1998), p. 283, foto 118, recante la didascalia: «Grande statua di rame dorato del Buddha Incoronato (Jowo Rinpoche); tempio maggiore del monastero di Gyantse»¹⁰ (Fig. 2).

L'immagine corrisponde a due buste: FFM-098-N-4 - 1031 (T3) - FFM-098-N-5 - T.37-1030, recante la dicitura «Gyantse: tempio maggiore, statua del Buddha Incoronato (Jowo Rimpoche), alta circa sei metri»; e FFM-098-N-1409 - 3079, recante la dicitura «Tibet. Gyantsé: Il Buddha incoronato. 1937». La busta contenente il negativo della stessa immagine con il provino su di essa incollato si trova in un gruppo di buste con istantanee scattate a Gyantse, ma inserito da Maraini fra quelle del Sikkim, in una sequenza né logica né cronologica,¹¹ e reca il numero (T 3) Serie T.37 - N° 1030 con la seguente dicitura: «Tibet, Gyantse: statua gigante (alta circa sei m.) del Buddha come Jowo Rimpoche. Cappella del tempio maggiore del monastero Palkor Choide, FFM-098-N/5». Due stampe di questa immagine, una recante la didascalia «Gyantse, Tempio. Buddha incoronato» su un cartoncino numerato FFM-87-P/29-30 e l'altra su un cartoncino numerato FFM-87-P-120-127 (37/1030), si

⁹ 'Jigs med grags pa, *rGyal rtse chos rgyal gyi rnam par thar pa dad pa'i lo thog dngos grub kyi char 'bebs*, nella traduzione di Giuseppe Tucci 1980, vol. II: 663. Sulla questione degli stili stranieri e del copiare in Tibet v. per esempio Lo Bue 1997 e 2008.

¹⁰ La didascalia dell'immagine riprodotta nell'edizione di *Segreto Tibet* del 1984 compare per la prima volta, battuta a macchina, nelle fotocopie delle bozze al di sotto dell'immagine (foto 118 nel testo e 119 nelle bozze).

¹¹ La schedatura delle immagini è stata realizzata seguendo l'ordine originale dei negativi in scatole o altri contenitori dato da Maraini.

trovano nella già citata custodia di un libro della casa editrice Skira intitolata «F. M. Catalogo Foto Tibet 1937 e 1948 (esclusi 35 m/m)» e inventariata col N° 87.

Le descrizioni di questa statua dattilografate da Maraini sulle buste e pubblicate nelle didascalie della medesima edizione di *Segreto Tibet* sono fuorvianti, ed errata è la collocazione che se ne fa a p. 283 del medesimo testo, in cui essa viene posta nella cappella principale — peraltro non contrassegnata nella pianta di Michael Henss riportata a p. 284, Fig. 10 — «al fondo della sala» di adunanza del tempio maggiore e descritta — sulla scorta di Tucci — con l'epiteto di «Jowo Rimpoche» (*jo bo rin po che*), che significa “Prezioso Signore”. Egualmente erronea è l'attribuzione della fotografia raffigurante un dettaglio di alone ligneo inventariata da Maraini con i numeri FM-098-N/1408 e 1030A, recante la dicitura: «particolare dell'alone di legno dorato intorno alla statua centrale (Jowo Rimpoche) del Tempio maggiore nel monastero di Gyantse».

La statua più grande e importante nella cappella principale del tempio maggiore di Gyantse è chiamata in realtà *thub chen* (traduzione tibetana dell'epiteto sanscrito *mahāmuni*, “Grande Saggio”) e anche *mahābodhi* (“Grande Illuminazione”, con riferimento alla statua custodita nel tempio omonimo a Bodhgayā, dove Siddhartha conseguì la sua Illuminazione) nel testo tibetano del XV sec. che la descrive¹² (Fig. 3). Essa venne fotografata, ma non identificata, da Maraini e corrisponde ai nn. FFM-098-N-1865 – 3515 e FFM-99-N-574 - 3516 («Statua dorata in un tempio tibetano»), sulle cui buste sono incollati i provini di due diverse istantanee della medesima immagine. Una stampa della foto di questa statua, incollata su un cartoncino numerato FFM-87-P-120-127 (37/3515), si trova sia nella raccolta inventariata con il N° 87 sia in formato A3 a p. 8 dell'album «Tibet – 2. Opere d'arte», sempre con la metà inferiore molto scura. La statua è stata fotografata da Giada Rossi (Fig. 3bis) e altri, e pubblicata per esempio da Giovanni Da Broi in *Notes from a Journey in Tibet / Tibet. Note di viaggio* (Punto Arte, Treviso 2009, p. 84). Tucci non ne pubblicò l'immagine trovando che la grandezza della statua “è a detrimento del suo pregio artistico”, non perché la giudicasse “recente e brutta” come affermato da Maraini, e fornisce interessanti informazioni in merito.¹³

La statua di cui Maraini fotografò anche un particolare dell' “alone di legno dorato” e che fu pubblicata in *Segreto Tibet* rimanda piuttosto a quella raffigurante il Bodhisattva Maitreya, il Buddha a venire, con l'avambraccio destro piegato in avanti e nascosto da paramenti in stoffa, e con la mano destra atteggiata nel gesto dell'insegnamento, fotografata da Giada Rossi nel 2013 (Fig. 2bis) nella cappella dedicata a Maitreya¹⁴ e indicata con la lettera ‘e’ nella pianta di Henss pubblicata da Maraini. Potrebbe trattarsi della medesima statua, restaurata negli anni Ottanta del

¹² Cfr. Jigs med grags pa 1987: 66.

¹³ Cfr. Tucci 1941: 148; Maraini 1998: 283.

¹⁴ Commisi un errore analogo a quello di Maraini collocando questa statua, fotografata anche da Charles Bills ed Ernani Orcorte, alla sommità del Grande Stupa di Gyantse. Si veda Lo Bue & Ricca 1990: 360, tav. 22; Ricca & Lo Bue 1993: 312; Lo Bue 1996: 98-99, 140, fig. 14.

secolo scorso, con una corona ed emblemi nuovi, con il volto ridorato e ridipinto, e con un alone ligneo dorato non restaurato, caratterizzato da elementi decorativi e iconografici identici a quelli dell'immagine fotografata da Maraini.

3. Fotografie N° 124 «In primo piano, la divinità tantrica Nairatmya/Damemà. Stucco, coloritura scurissima, quasi nero. Grandezza inferiore al naturale. Inizio Quattrocento. Secondo piano del tempio maggiore» e N° 125 «Il patriarca Virupa, uno dei capostipiti ideali nella trasmissione della gnosi, secondo i Sa-kya-pa [*sic*]» pubblicate a p. 289 di *Segreto Tibet* (Figg. 4-5).

Queste statue sono collocate da Maraini al secondo piano dell'edificio monastico principale di Gyantse, mentre si trovano al primo, nella cappella del *lam 'bras* ("Via [e] Frutto"), su cui vedasi sotto, diversa dalla cappella illustrata nella Foto 123 a p. 288, che sorge al terzo piano (non "secondo", come indicato nella didascalia) del tempio maggiore.¹⁵ L'uso del termine 'stucco', nel quale Maraini segue Tucci, è improprio, poiché tale sostantivo designa una miscela di gesso, colla e olio cotto, oppure una malta composta da calce grossa e polvere di marmo usata per coprire membrature architettoniche o per fare cornici. Nessuno di tali composti viene utilizzato nella scultura tibetana, dove si fa uso invece di una miscela di creta, cotone, carta e colla animale, cui si può aggiungere farina. Inoltre la qualifica di 'patriarca' è impropria per designare un maestro tantrico quale Virūpa, normalmente ritratto, in quanto bengalese, con una carnagione scura. Infine, l'uso del termine 'gnosi', anch'esso utilizzato da Tucci, ma non nel contesto di questa cappella, è inappropriato per definire gli insegnamenti tantrici della "Via [e del] Frutto", epiteto dato a "manuali di meditazione [...] che spiegano la strada che conduce alla liberazione e il frutto che ne risulta":¹⁶ la gnosi è una forma di conoscenza superiore di origine divina, propria degli gnostici, finalizzata alla salvezza dell'anima, concetto alieno al buddhismo.

Un po' di confusione regna infine sulla collocazione e sulle misure di una statua gigantesca e di un gruppo di statuette raffiguranti un nota serie di patriarchi del buddhismo (*arhat*, "degni"), fotografate da Maraini, ma non pubblicate in *Segreto Tibet*: Serie T. 37 – N° 5136a/A, B: FFM-88-N-2041 e 2042: «Tibet, pressi di Samada, Monastero Drigung (?): A) Testa di statua gigante (alta 8/10 m) del Buddha

¹⁵ Nelle bozze di *Segreto Tibet* l'errore è limitato alla prima immagine, che compare con il numero 125; la seconda, che reca il numero 126, non riporta la collocazione dell'immagine. L'interno del tempio situato alla sommità dell'edificio monastico principale è illustrato nella foto 123 a p. 288 di *Segreto Tibet* compare nella fotografia a p. 100 del secondo volume del già citato album di Maraini «Tibet – 2. Opere d'arte». Essa ritrae monaci intenti a leggere testi della prima parte del canone buddhista durante una cerimonia svolta "dietro la richiesta della gente che impaurita della prolungata siccità implorava dalla magica potenza del verbo divino la pioggia desiderata" all'epoca in cui le pareti, coperte da preziosi dipinti murali del XV secolo raffiguranti mandala, erano parzialmente nascoste da rozzi scaffali su cui poggiavano libri di vario genere, compresi i volumi delle due collezioni canoniche buddhiste tradotte in tibetano, ivi trasferiti probabilmente durante la guerra anglo-tibetana, che nel 1904 aveva comportato un attacco al forte di Gyantse (Tucci 1941: 158-59).

¹⁶ Tucci 1941: 154.

futuro Maitreya/Champa, vista da apposito loggiato interno del tempio; B) Statuette degli *arhat*». Diversa è l'altezza della statua fornita da Maraini nella didascalia sotto la stampa della medesima immagine recante il N° 118 nell'album «Documenti fotografici sul Tibet, vol. 1 ARTE TIBETANA lungo la carovaniere GANGTOK-GYANTSE (con testi di G. TUCCI, da Indotibetica [*sic*])» in formato A4: «Monastero di Drigun (?): grande statua di Maitreya, il Buddha del futuro. La statua è alta circa 15 metri ed occupa un tempio-torre apposito. La foto venne presa da un ballatoio che porta all'altezza della corona».

Il punto interrogativo aggiunto da Maraini fra parentesi al nome da lui assegnato al monastero ('Dre gun, anticamente 'Bras khud, ma "Riku" nella grafia delle carte),¹⁷ da lui erroneamente trascritto «Drigung» sulla busta e «Drigun» nella didascalia dell'album, e dunque confondibile con quello del ben più noto monastero di 'Bri gung (o 'Bri khung, nel Tibet centrale), pron. "Drikùn", indica incertezza riguardo alla collocazione di questa statua, un particolare della cui testa è riprodotto in *Tibet. Templi scomparsi fotografati da Fosco Maraini*:¹⁸ nella sua descrizione del monastero di 'Dre gun Tucci non menziona il 'tempio-torre' che ospita l'immagine secondo Maraini, e tale struttura non compare nella foto dello stesso monastero pubblicata in *Indo-Tibetica* e in *Tibet. Templi scomparsi fotografati da Fosco Maraini*.¹⁹ Tuttavia la foto di un monastero con un tempio a torre (Fig. 6) tratta da uno dei tre album fotografici di Maraini e recante la didascalia «Samada: Riku Gompà, "il Monastero di Riku" (circa quota 4100)» suggerisce che la gigantesca statua di Maitreya fosse custodita proprio a 'Dre gun. In merito alle statuette degli *arhat* citate sulla busta, Maraini mi disse che si trovavano in un monastero della scuola bKa' brgyud a "Yatung" (Ya grong), nel Tibet meridionale, mentre in base alle indicazioni fornite sulla busta esse sarebbero ospitate nel medesimo monastero in cui si trova la statua di Maitreya, sempre nel Tibet meridionale.

Infine in *Segreto Tibet* si riporta in maniera approssimativa il titolo del *Myang chos 'byung*, erroneamente chiamato *Myan chun* da Tucci — che lo considera sicuramente incompleto e "certamente posteriore alla prima metà del XVII secolo se il IHa btsun della scuola "Brug pa" citato a p. 213 è l'apostolo del Buddhismo nel Sikkim" — e Nyang-chung da Maraini, che lo definisce "una guida tibetana del '600 per pellegrini e pii vagabondi buddhisti".²⁰ La prefazione dell'edizione a stampa del 1983²¹ attribuisce

¹⁷ Cfr. Tucci 1941: 93, 122, n. 1.

¹⁸ Lo Bue 1998: 66, Fig. 53, dove seguì erroneamente l'ipotesi di Maraini nella collocazione della statua.

¹⁹ Cfr. Tucci 1941: 122-23, e Parte III, fig. 33; Lo Bue 1998: 64-65, Fig. 52. Sospettando che l'immagine si trovasse proprio nel tempio a torre del monastero di Riku ('Dre gun o 'Bras khud), giudicato di scarso interesse storico e artistico da Giuseppe Tucci perché ricostruito (Cfr. Tucci 1941: 122-23), scrissi a Maraini in data 14 marzo e 24 novembre 1999 chiedendogli di acquisire una stampa della fotografia qui pubblicata, che dovrebbe sostituire l'attuale Fig. 52 nel mio libro sopra citato.

²⁰ Cfr. Tucci 1941: 42-43; Maraini 1998: 188.

²¹ IHag pa tshe ring 1983.

quell'importante testo al grande studioso tibetano Tārānātha (1575-1634), fondatore del monastero di Jo nang, la cui scuola fu bandita dal V Dalai Lama (1617-1682).

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Fig.1. Prajñāpāramitā. Fosco Maraini/Proprietà Gabinetto
Vieusseux © Fratelli Alinari.



Fig.2. Maitreya. Fosco Maraini/Proprietà Gabinetto Vieusseux © Fratelli Alinari.



Fig.2bis. Maitreya nella cappella dei Dharmarāja (ora Maitreya) del tempio maggiore di Gyantse © Giada Rossi.



Fig.3 Mahāmuni. Fosco Maraini/Proprietà Gabinetto Vieusseux © Fratelli Alinari.



Fig.3 bis. Mahāmuni. © Giada Rossi.



Fig.4. Vajranairātmyā. Fosco Maraini/Proprietà Gabinetto Vieusseux © Fratelli Alinari.



Fig.5. Virūpa. Fosco Maraini/Proprietà Gabinetto Vieusseux © Fratelli Alinari.



Fig.6. 'Dre-gun (Riku). Fosco Maraini/Proprietà Gabinetto Vieusseux © Fratelli Alinari.

A CRUCIAL LINK IN 15th-CENTURY TIBETAN ART

CHRISTIAN LUCZANITS

(School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London)¹

Some art objects trigger a feeling of sensation at first sight, connecting what one has seen before in unexpected ways. This was the case when I first encountered a frameless Tibetan scroll painting, a *thang ka*, in a private collection (Fig. 1).² Colourful against a dark blue, background, figures emerged that appeared strangely familiar, but not all of them belonged to the same place. The central deity with its retinue resonated with the paintings in the Hevajra Chapel (Kye rdor lha khang) at dGon dkar chos sde Monastery,³ while the surrounding lineage figures showed facial features familiar from a famous set of repoussée sculptures of teachers from the Path with the Fruit (*lam 'bras*) lineage today at sMin grol gling Monastery.⁴ But how do these fit together and what are the implications of their common occurrence on the same painting? This tribute to my dear colleague Elena De Rossi Filibeck, whom I first met as a student traveling with a group of professors to Tabo Monastery in the Spiti in 1991, is a first attempt to answer this question, but certainly not the ultimate one.

1 I am grateful for the generous hospitality of the private collectors owning the *thang ka* under discussion, as well as for the photographs shared by friends and colleagues, in particular Anne Breckenridge Dorsey, Lionel Fournier, and Rob Linrothe. Further, the PhD thesis of Jörg Heimbelt and the MA thesis of Mathias Fermer proved to be invaluable guides through relevant historical literature, and I am grateful to their authors for generously providing them.

2 The painting is also available on HAR: no. 61137.

3 For a detailed description of dGon dkar monastery and its different parts see Fermer 2009: 137-41. The murals of dGon dkar chos sde Monastery and its Hevajra Chapel (also referred to as Yi dam lha khang or gZhal yas khang) are introduced in Jackson 1996: chapter 4, and there is a Japanese publication on them, Masaki & Tachikawa 1997, that has not been accessible to me. I reference them, thus, largely through photographs I have taken myself or which have been provided by colleagues and friends. Photographs of the Yi dam Chapel are also provided on HAR under “Tibet: Gongkar Chode Monastery”.

4 Comprehensive accounts of the sMin grol gling sculptures are available in Von Schroeder 2001: 972-85, fig. XV-11 and pl. 236A-241F, and Lee-Kalisch 2006: 118-51. This study corrects some of the identifications suggested in Von Schroeder 2001 and followed by all subsequent authors consulted.

The *Thang ka*

Although damaged and worn, the colours of the painting are remarkably strong and fresh. In the upper left corner, a section that once contained three lineage figures is torn off. At places the painting surface further shows folding and water damages, but none of them distracts from the quality and strength of the painting. In fact, it is extremely fortunate that this painting was snatched off the table of a painting conservator, whose work likely would have obscured some of the details on which the discussion below is based.

The painting is dominated by a large depiction of the aspiration deity Hevajra in union with his consort Nairātmyā. Hevajra has eight heads, set against a green nimbus, sixteen arms, and four legs. While the heads are staggered at the sides in the traditional manner, his many arms are partially drawn towards the body in a manner attributed to mKhyen brtse chen mo, the alleged painter of much of the preserved Gong dkar chos sde murals. The white surfaces of the skull-cups (*kapāla*) held in the hands, at times tilting considerably, accentuate this movement of the arms and contrast with the dark blue bodies of the deities. Their content, animals and one human in the cups held in the right hands and gods in those held left, consistently face towards the right, the direction of the deities' movement. Trampling on supine figures, the couple dances on a double lotus with ornate, colourful petals and is surrounded on this level by the eight *ḍākinī* of their mandala assembly. Iconographically the deities and their entourage conform with standard depictions, the entourage of the *ḍākinī* beginning with dark blue Gauṛī in the east depicted immediately to the left of the main lotus's stem. The goddesses are thus placed in their respective directions around the lotus stem.⁵

Comparing the composition and details of the heads of the main deities in the *thang ka* (Fig. 2) and the Hevajra Chapel at Gong dkar (Fig. 3) the two representations are remarkably similar, and both share the rather peculiar reddish brown colour used for the top head. Similar conventions can be seen in the facial features, the jewelry, the way the hair piles up above all heads, and the distribution of arms. No doubt there are differences, too, the Gong dkar wall paintings excelling in their expressions and sensuality and the *thang ka* in variation and movement. Particularly noteworthy in the latter is how the curved knife (*karṭṛkā*) and skull-cup (*kapāla*) are held in the uppermost hands with the palm facing the viewer. Otherwise

5 There have been captions identifying the *ḍākinī* in the area of their legs, some of them appear to confirm their usual Sanskrit name, such as the red *tsau ri*, while others use their Tibetan translation. The latter is the case with the multi-colored Ḍombinī, who is identified as *g.yud mo* (for *g.yung mo*; the *nga* appears to be squeezed into the space between the letters posthumously, and thus appears as *da*). For yellow *be tā lī* the caption is written on the three central petals of her lotus and can easily be overlooked. Two further notations in red ink along the bottom edge of the canvas, I read them as *mar pa sgres* and *dbu rgyan zhwa*, appear to have no relationship to the painting. Further traces of writing along the bottom edge are largely illegible.

the engagement with the viewer is stronger with the mural, a wonderful detail being the cat in the uppermost cup looking out of the picture. Similar observations can be made from a comparison of the red Caurī Ḍākinī, dancing with a *damaru* and a piglet in her hands (Fig. 4 and Fig. 5). Conceptually the two are identical, but the *thang ka* version is considerably slimmer and her breasts are less apparent. In the wall painting the realism of the pig is striking, but a similar attempt is also apparent in the *thang ka* version, in which the pig is painted in gold. In part, this comparison certainly suffers under the differences in size, the *thang ka* version much smaller than the one in the mural. In addition, the backgrounds are strikingly different, as the *thang ka* shows no sign of a landscape.

Nevertheless, a notion of space is undeniable even for the *thang ka*. Both the deity couple and the surrounding *ḍākinī* are connected through the main lotus stem. Six of these *ḍākinī* are placed in the loops of a scroll in front of the main lotus, while the other two emerge at its back where the ornate orange edge of the flame mandorla appears. Thus, the composition invites to see a spatial layering with the six *ḍākinī* in front, a central lotus cushion supporting the main couple, two dancing *ḍākinī* behind the lotus cushion and a free standing mandorla in the back. The entire composition is set against a blue background making the deities dance in space.

Actually, the background is darkened behind the mandorla of the main deity forming a central panel separated by a fine line in gold. However, the painted details do not respect this composition line strictly making it almost imperceptible in the lower half of the canvas. The bright blue outer edge of the canvas is occupied by seated figures each of which is directed towards the deities, they thus can equally read as surrounding the deities in space.

Its Lineage

The figures along the outer edges of the *thang ka* represent the transmission lineage of Hevajra, who is particularly prominent in the Sakya School. The lineage begins in the top centre and jumps from left to right, first outwards along the top row and then down along the sides. The last two figures are represented in the top corners of the central panel, their seats partly covered by the mandorla. Originally all figures of the lineage were identified by short captions added in gold, only a part of them legible today. If legible, a reading of the captions is provided in the footnotes. At times there are also notes written on the edge of the canvas, these commonly support the identification in the main caption but may also independent of them.

As noted in the introduction, these lineage figures provide a striking comparison to the repoussée images of the Path with the Fruit (*lam 'bras*) transmission preserved at sMin grol gling Monastery, establishing that this painting and the figures stem from a common cultural background. Since in a Sa skya context the practice of Hevajra and the Path with the Fruit are intimately connected, we can assume their lineages to be identical. In this section only the most obvious of these comparisons

are presented, while a detailed discussion of their relationship is provided in the following section.

The lineage commences with Buddha Vajradhara in the top centre, holding vajra and bell in the arms crossed in front of the chest. With a pink cape covering the shoulders the deity looks surprisingly female. To his right is the dark blue Nairātmyā, brandishing a curved knife (*karṭṛkā*) in the raised left hand and a skull-cup (*kapāla*) in the left that also embraces a tantric staff (*khaṭvāṅga*). She sits on a flesh coloured and rather realistically painted corpse. With both deities a scarf loops in a wide bow behind the head and curls behind the bodies, the interrelation of these parts of the scarf obscured in the case of Nairātmyā.

The deities are followed by a group of three *mahāsiddha*. To the left of Vajradhara is a rather voluminous Virūpa with his gaze focused towards the main deity of the painting and performing the teaching gesture (*dharmacakramudrā*). The following three teachers on the left side are lost. The one immediately to the left of Nairātmyā was Kṛṣṇapāda, also called Kanha. He is followed by Ḍamarūpa, to the right of Virūpa, kneeling on one leg he holds the name giving hand-drum (*ḍamaru*) in his right hand and a skull-cup (*kapāla*) in the left. Avadhūtipa, who was represented in the top left corner, is followed by Gayadhara in the top right corner. He is depicted as an Indian ascetic with a scholar's hat.

The Tibetan representatives of the lineage begin with 'Brog mi lo tsā ba Shākya Ye shes (992–1072) who is lost on the left side. He is followed by Se ston kun rig (1025–1113), who is dressed in lay garments and holds a skull-cup (*kapāla*).⁶ The following teacher on the left is shown as an ascetic with two prominent teeth visible between his lips and holding a garland of prayer beads in his left hand (Fig. 6). He is identified by caption as Zhang ston Chos 'bar (1053–1135).⁷ Although in a meditation posture there, his representation at sMin grol gling is undoubtedly related (Fig. 7), the face with the prominent teeth being identical, and the dress closely comparable, including the way the felt is wrapped around his legs.

At this point the lineage proceeds with the five Sa skya masters, the great Sa skya pa Kun dga' snying po (1092–1158),⁸ his sons bSod nams rtse mo (1142–1182),⁹ and Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1147–1216),¹⁰ as well as the two monks Sa skya paṅḍi ta Kun dga' rgyal mtshan (1182–1251)¹¹ and 'Phags pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan (1235–1280).¹² Of these, bSod nams rtse mo is shown as a young man with full curly hair, while Grags pa rgyal mtshan is an elder man with fluffy white hair and beard (Fig. 9), just

6 The caption identifies him through his alternative name Se 'khar chung ba.

7 TBRC P4574. The caption reads: *zhang ston chos 'bar /*

8 He is simply identified as *sa chen*.

9 The caption reads: *rje rtsun bsod rtse /*

10 The caption reads: *rje rtsun grags_{pa} rgyal mtshan /*

11 His caption is largely lost but presumably read: *[rje] b[tsu]n sa paṅ /*

12 TBRC P1048. His caption reads: *[']gro mgon_{chos} rgyal 'pha[gs pa]*, the *chos* added as a correction underneath.

as it is the case in the sMin grol gling sculptures (Fig. 8). In the painting the two monks are singled out through their sitting posture with pendant legs and round red hats, Sa skya Paṇḍita's depiction directly referencing that of Mañjuśrī in dialog with Maitreya. 'Phags pa, however, has both his legs pendant and simply holds a blue lily at its stem. Consequently, their depiction does not conform to the sMin grol gling sculptures, which emphasize the Buddha nature of these two individuals, Sa skya Paṇḍita is shown teaching and has an *uṣṇīṣa*,¹³ while 'Phags pa is touching the earth as the Buddha does at the time of his awakening, neither of them wearing a headdress.¹⁴ The age and mood reflected in their respective faces, however, is comparable.

The lineage continues with a middle aged monk with partially bald head identified as Zhang dKon mchog dpal (1240-1307).¹⁵ He has his right hand in the gesture of fearlessness (*abhayamudrā*) and the left in the gesture of giving (*varadamudrā*). The following elder monk holding a chain of prayer beads in both hands is Na bza' Brag phug pa bSod nams dpal (1277-1350; Fig. 10).¹⁶ His facial features with prominent folds around the mouth are very distinctive, and compare best with the sMin grol gling figure identified as 'Brog mi Lo tsā ba (Von Schroeder 2001, 241C), whose depiction is not preserved in the painting (Fig. 11). This identification is also supported by the position of the hands in the sMin grol gling figure, which clearly associates it with holding a chain of prayer beads. Above him is a small monastic figure, standing for another branch of the teaching transmission received by Brag phug pa from sNyan chen bSod nams brtan pa (1222-1370).¹⁷

On the next level, on the right side sits a young monk with his hands crossed in front of the chest as if holding vajra and bell but without attributes, he is Bla ma dam pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan (1312-1375),¹⁸ who is depicted in the same posture in a well known Vajrāvalī painting set but there also wears the crown of the tantric practitioner.¹⁹ He is followed by an elderly monk with long eyebrows and white hair seated in a posture with both hands on the knee. This is likely Lo chen Byang chub rtse mo (1302-1380),²⁰ a disciple of Bla ma dam pa, who was also known under the title Lo chen Byang rtse or Byang rtse Lo tsā ba.²¹ He has not been identified among the sMin grol gling sculptures, but Von Schroeder 2001, 241B-C is a very likely candidate, both for the facial features and the sitting posture, which are identical to those in the painting.

13 For depictions of Sa skya Paṇḍita, see Von Schroeder 2001: 240A and 240B.

14 For depictions of 'Phags pa, see Von Schroeder 2001: 240C, and Lee-Kalisch 2006: no. 10.

15 TBRC P10628. The caption reads: *zhang dkon mchog dpal* /

16 TBRC P3092. The caption reads: *nam bza'?* [*brag*] *phug pa* /

17 See Stearns 2006: 240 and n. 333. TBRC P3413. A caption underneath the figure identifies him as: *nyan chen bsod nams?*

18 TBRC P1226. His caption reads simply: *dpal ldan bla ma dam pa* /

19 See, for example, Heller 2004; Jackson 2010: 131–35.

20 TBRC P2388. The caption reads: *? byang rtse* /

21 For their relationship, see Stearns 2006: 249 and n. 380; Heimbels 2014: 108, 490-92.

The figure in the bottom left corner likely is Theg chen chos rje Kun dga' bkra shis (1349-1425),²² a nephew and disciple of Bla ma dam pa.²³ This teacher is seated in the posture of royal ease (*lalitāsana*) with the left leg pendant and wears an unusual red hat. His right hand rests on the leg, while the left is stretched towards the knee with the palm outwards as if blessing somebody. His gesture resonates with the elder monk on the opposite side, who shows the gesture of fearlessness (*abhayamudrā*) with the right hand and has the left on the lap. He is most likely Brag thog pa bSod nams bzang po,²⁴ who transmitted the *lam 'bras* teachings to Gong dkar rDo rje gdan pa Kun dga' rnam rgyal (1432-1496).²⁵

The final teachers are on the central panel to the sides of the mandorla of the main deities, and their captions are written on a black ground; traces of gold projecting from underneath the ground may indicate that these captions have been corrected. To the left is the just mentioned Gong dkar rDo rje gdan pa Kun dga' rnam rgyal²⁶ performing the gesture of argumentation (*vitarkamudrā*) and holding a lotus with a bell on top. The final figure is not in the usual monastic dress, but has the left shoulder bare and sits in mediation. He is identified as mKhan chen Chos grub seng ge.²⁷ One would be tempted to identify the last figure of the sMin grol gling lineage (Von Schroeder 2001, 241E-F) with him, as it also sits in meditation, but this is unlikely even if one considers that the head of this sculpture is a replacement.

The lineage presented above clearly places the *thang ka* painting in the wider context of Gong dkar chos sde Monastery. It remains unclear though, who the actual commissioner of the painting is. From the biography of Gong dkar rDo rje gdan pa Kun dga' rnam rgyal we know that mKhan chen Chos grub seng ge was one of his pupils. He went on to become “the lama of the great ruler (*gong ma mi'i dbang po*) and acted as the abbot of Tshogs dGe 'dun sgang” (Fermer 2009: 329). Could one of these contexts account for the existence of this painting? Fermer suggests that the ruler referred to is either dBang Kun dga' legs pa: 1433-1483 (tenure 1448-1480/81)²⁸ or Ngag gi dbang po (tenure 1481-1491), successive rulers of the Phag mo gru pa. If one of them was the commissioner of the painting, it would have been more likely the

22 TBRC P3565. His gold caption is erased, but there is another one in *dbu chen* on the edge of the canvas reading simply: *theg chen*.

23 See Heimbel 2014: 495.

24 Here, too, the caption has been erased and is illegible today. It also does not allow to decide which of the two would be more likely. On the edge of the canvas underneath the reading *brag 'og* appears possible, but cannot be considered certain. An inscribed bronze image of this teacher, recently been sold at auction in Hong Kong (<http://auction.artron.net/paimai-art5076850014/>, Lot 0014, accessed December 27, 2015), depicts a similarly aged teacher and could well be of the same time as the *thang ka* discussed here.

25 See Fermer 2009: 106–11, 179.

26 TBRC P3183. His caption reads: *//rje tsun kun dga' rna[m] rgyal /

27 TBRC P1439 contains practically no information about him. The caption reads: *// *mKhan chen chos ? grub seng ge /*

28 Fermer 2009: 356

latter, and the last two masters on the painting were still alive and active, which could account for their special position on the painting. A date in the last two decades of the 15th century would also be the earliest date possible for this painting. Of course, other scenarios are equally possible and they would attribute the painting into the early 16th century.

Given the stylistic comparisons cited above, it also appears safe to see the painting as representative of the identify the *mkhyen ris* tradition, and that it was produced from the workshop of mKhyen brtse chen mo or his immediate successors. Leaving aside any true landscape elements or colourful clouds and using a blue background strewn with gold blossoms, its approach is rather conservative, but the portrait-like lineage figures are an innovative element which, to my knowledge, is not found as such in the Gong dkar Monastery murals preserved.²⁹ It is this element that connects the lineage figures to the sMin grol gling sculptures, to which we turn now.

The Sculptures

The comparisons cited above, putting some of the identifications suggested earlier into question, invite a review of the sMin grol gling lineage in the light of the painted lineage on the *thang ka* and other circumstantial evidence. Comparing painting and sculpture is, of course, problematic as each medium has its inherent idiosyncrasies. In contrast to painting, sculptures are much less likely to have stretched out limbs, extreme postures, or floating scarfs, as is also evident from the comparisons mentioned so far. In addition, the possibility for variation is much larger in the case of paintings, as can be seen by the wider variation of postures. In terms of portraiture, hair can be rendered in many more ways in painting, resulting in some of the more obvious differences in the respective portraits of the teachers in both media. Finally, there are also differences resulting from the composition of the painting and original positioning of the sculptures, which will be reconstructed below as well.

The first figures in the lineage provide a good sample for the differences to be expected in this comparison. In the painting Nairātmyā stretches her left arm and her left right arm and a scarf loops behind her head, features not found in her representation at sMin grol gling. The compact depictions of Virūpa, in contrast, are directly comparable. Also in the sculpture Ḍamarūpa is shown with a stretched arm, but his sitting posture and movement are much less extreme than those found in the painting.

The first questionable identification among the sMin grol gling sculptures is that of the Indian lay master Gayadhara. The image identified as Gayadhara in the sMin grol gling set (Von Schroeder 2001, 238C) actually wears Tibetan monastic dress, and his identification appears solely based on the dark face which is the result of scratched off gilding. Indeed, a dark face is often a characteristic of his appearance,

²⁹ The closest comparisons in this regard is provided by the large scale lineage on the back wall of the assembly hall, but the portraits there are much less individualized.

but not in the painting at hand. It is the dress of a lay Indian yogin that distinguishes him most, and among the sMin grol gling figures only Von Schroeder 2001, 241E³⁰, hitherto identified as the last image in the lineage, is a possible option (Fig. 12). It is the yogic band underneath the added jewellery that gives away the identification of this sculpture. Note that the head of this figure does not belong to this sculpture but is a replacement. As the high hair-knot at the back of this sculpture and the forehead reveal, this was once the head of a Bodhisattva, making the sculpture taller than others in the set.

'Brog mi Lo tsā ba is the first Tibetan monk in the lineage. He is not preserved in the painting, but in inscribed Mustang sculptures of similar age he performs the gesture of argumentation (*vitarkamudrā*) with the right hand and holds a book in the left. Among the lineage figures on the painting, only Sa skya Paṇḍita holds a book, and among the sMin grol gling sculptures, Von Schroeder 2001: 240D (Fig. 14) has a writing board on his lap. However, from the comparisons cited above, I tend to identify Von Schroeder 2001, 241A as representing 'Brog mi Lo tsā ba (Fig. 13).³¹ He has a lotus bud on the palm of his left hand that could well have served as a support for a book lying on his hand. Other figures with *vitarkamudrā* are less likely to have held a book, but if the symmetry identified for this set below is not to be broken at this point, Von Schroeder 2001, 238C is to be identified as representing this great translator. Table 1, summarising the new identifications of the sMin grol gling sculptures in relation to the sculptures, contains both options.

With Se ston Kun rig we enter secure ground again. The depiction of this lay practitioner is damaged in the painting, but close observation reveals his long hair and supports the identification of the sMin grol gling sculpture.³² Inscribed bronzes of this teacher from Mustang do not show any of the features seen in these artworks from Southern dBus, putting the comparison used as a criteria above into question. The relationship of the depictions of the great Sa skya masters supports the impression gained so far that faces are better comparable than postures and gestures. While the hand positions of Sa chen and Grags pa rgyal mtshan are comparable to their sMin grol gling counterparts, bSod nams rtse mo holding a skull-cup in the painting does not compare at all. In his case, the sMin grol gling sculpture can be better understood if it is compared with his depiction in the Gong dkar wall paintings, in which he holds a lotus stem in his left hand. The depictions of Sa skya Paṇḍita and 'Phags pa have already been discussed above in relation to their depiction in the *thang ka*.

There is little we can go off to identify Zhang dKon mchog dpal among the sMin grol gling sculptures. The painting shows a middle aged man with a somewhat purged mouth and a semi-bold head performing gestures of communication. The closest

30 Note that in this publication, the full view of this sculpture is flipped horizontally, while the detail on the opposite page, 241E, is correct.

31 This figure has previously been identified as Bla ma dam pa.

32 See Heimbel 2014: 495.

match is Von Schroeder 2001, 238C, who shares these features with slight deviations, but this teacher could equally be represented by Von Schroeder 2001, 241A (Fig. 13). These are the same two sculptures that have been identified above as candidates for 'Brog mi Lo tsā ba. The latter identification has the advantage that the symmetry of the lineage figures is retained, but leaves the lotus bud on the palm of the teacher unexplained.

Brag phug pa has already been identified with Von Schroeder 2001, 238D-E above. Bla ma dam pa in contrast finds no close match at all, but mostly due to the full hair and serene expression, I tend to identify the sMin grol gling sculpture Von Schroeder 2001, 240E-F with him. This middle aged teacher is sitting in mediation. Lo chen Byang chub rtse mo has been identified above with Von Schroeder 2001, 241B-C.

While the painting has twenty-three lineage figures, there are only twenty-one figures in the sMin grol gling set. Among these, the last two sculptures may well be seen as complementary, literally forming a bracket at the outer edges of the set, as both have their outer foot projecting beyond the lotus pedestal (Fig. 13 and Fig. 15). The image I identify as Theg chen chos rje Kun dga' bkra shis, Von Schroeder 2001, 240D, has his right foot in front of the seat and a Chinese style writing board on his lap (Fig. 14). This board may well refer to the fact that he received his title "King of the Great Vehicle" (*theg chen chos kyi rgyal po*) from the Ming emperor Chengzu (1360-1424), who had invited him to China in 1412.³³ The final figure then is Von Schroeder 2001, 241D who sits in the posture of royal ease (*lalitāsana*) with the left foot pendant (Fig. 15). In contrast to the painting, which shows an aged teacher, the sculpture portrays a much younger scholar. He has his right hand perform the gesture of argumentation (*vitarkamudrā*), while the left lies palm up on the slightly raised knee. He is also the only figure shown wearing boots.

A curious feature of the sMin grol gling set is that the collars of the lower vest worn by the Tibetan teachers overlap in opposing directions. Thus, the last two figures are not only symmetrical in the position of the legs, but also in the way the collar overlaps, and the same is true for the securely identifiable pairs from Zhang ston chos 'bar to 'Phags pa (Von Schroeder 2001, 239B-240C). The latter group makes also clear that the collars not only are symmetrical, but they also alternate direction between pairs, directed inwards for the first pair, outwards for the next and so on. It is for this reason that it is probably more likely that it is not Von Schroeder 2001, 241A that is to be identified as 'Brog mi Lo tsā ba, but Von Schroeder 2001, 238C. It is, however, also possible that the symmetry of pairs is broken at times, as is the case in the painting.

The observation of the symmetry of the last two figures in relation to the entire set itself, and the alternation of collar direction from one sculpture to the next with a

33 See Fermer 2009: 178-79.

symmetry across pairs flanking the central Vajradhara not only prove the meticulous planning that underlies this sculptural set but also indicates that the set is complete as it is preserved. There are thus only twenty-one sculptures in this set and it is unlikely that the last figure represented can be Zhwa lu lo tsā ba Chos skyong bzang po (1441-1528) as has been proposed by Von Schroeder 2001 and widely accepted. Instead the last figure of the sMin grol gling set must have received the *lam 'bras* transmission from Theg chen chos rje and the historical context proposed for the set can thus not be upheld anymore.

Working Hypotheses

As reported (Von Schroeder 2001: 972), the sMin grol gling images have been moved there from Grwa thang Monastery around 1990,³⁴ which became a Sa skya seat in the late 15th century due to the activities of Zhwa lu lo tsā ba Chos skyong bzang po. Since it is assumed that the *lam 'bras* teachings were only taught at Grwa thang after Zhwa lu lo tsā ba took charge there in 1495, the set was thought to be commissioned by him after this date.³⁵ This scenario not only contradicts the identification of the teachers proposed but is also difficult to reconcile with the comparative details found in the *thang ka*.

The sMin grol gling sculpture set is two figures short of the lineage in the painting. In addition, the last figure in the sculpture set is shown considerably younger than his counterpart in the painting. Further, one may read the fact that he is the only teacher shown wearing boots as an indication that the depicted was still alive at the time of the sets commission. There is, thus, no doubt that the sculpture set precedes even the earliest possible date for the painting proposed above.

If we assume that the last figure in the sMin grol gling set is also Brag thog pa bSod nams bzang po, then it is difficult to imagine that it has not been commissioned at Gong dkar by rDo rje gdan pa Kun dga' rnam rgyal, who received the *lam 'bras* transmission and many other teachings from Brag thog pa, as is also confirmed by the *thang ka* painting.³⁶ The sculpture set must then be considerably earlier than previously thought, likely dating to the first decades after the foundation of Gong dkar chos sde Monastery in 1464.

34 Ulrich Von Schroeder 2001: 972, gives 1990 for the date of the move, while Henss 2014: 370, states that he has first seen them in sMin grol gling Monastery in 1989.

35 Accepting the proposed identifications Henss 2007 and Henss 2014: 370–72, citing stylistic comparisons, pushes the date even further into the 16th century than originally proposed, suggesting the death of Zhwa lu lo tsā ba Chos skyong bzang po as possible motivation for making this set. But Henss also links the set to the workmanship of mKhyen brtse chen mo, without considering that this is practically impossible at such a late date. At the same time, Henss 2014: 370–72, citing oral communication with David Jackson, also points out that Grwa thang has been a Sa skya before Zha lu Lo tsā ba's arrival there.

36 On the diverse teachings received from Brag thog pa, see Fermer 2009: chapter 6.

Reviewing Kaḥ thog Si tu Chos kyi rgya mtsho (1880-1925) pilgrimage account of Gong dkar and Grwa thang respectively adds a further dimension to this hypothesis.³⁷ While Kaḥ thog Si tu describes the *lam 'bras* lineage of Gong dkar in great detail and remarks on the realism and lifelike quality of the sculptures,³⁸ he only lists those at Grwa thang without providing further detail. Could the sMin grol gling sculpture set, which distinguishes itself from other sets exactly by this lifelike quality, be identical with the one described for Gong dkar chos sde and ascribed to mKhyen brtse chen mo himself?

There are several issues with this hypothesis:

- As noted above, the Gong dkar murals do not show the distinctive facial features of the teachers as they are preserved in the sculpture set. The set would thus have to postdate the murals.
- There are two *lam 'bras* sets described by Kaḥ thog Si tu for Gong dkar, one set of arrow-size gilt copper images flanking Mañjuḥoṣa as the main image, and one approximately life size in the chapel on the very top. The gilt copper set is said to consist of twenty-three images including rDo rje gdan pa. No number of sculptures is given for the other set, but there they surround a *mchod rten* of rDo rje gdan pa, who is also identified as the last figure in the lineage. To paraphrase the text, Kaḥ thog describes them as "... certainly life size; with well carved-out thrones; outer brocade (garments); a brocade as a cape and made by the hand of mKhyen brtse chen mo able to captivate the mind and transform perception. Especially with Virupa, Sa chen, Grags pa (rgyal mtshan), Brag thog pa etc. appear as [if they would be] the real teachers, like raising from a well-polished mirror(?)." ³⁹ Elsewhere they are described as being made in relief (*'bur dod*).⁴⁰ Could this term also refer to repoussée images, and would the sMin grol gling images have been identified as such? It is actually hard to imagine that a space of sixteen pillars can be filled by relief sculptures.

The sMin grol gling sculptures would probably be large enough to be considered life size, and as their display in sMin grol gling proves they can command a large space. While it is, thus, tempting to brush these issues aside and identify the sMin grol gling set with the images that once were housed in the top chapel of Gong dkar Monastery, the sources available to me are not sufficient to be certain about it. I hope future work will be able to clarify this. It is sure, though, that the sMin grol gling sculptures must

37 Kaḥ thog Si tu Chos kyi rgya mtsho 1999: 113–17 and 123–25.

38 See also Jackson 1996: 140.

39 The full section reads: ... *mi tshad che nges / khri bkod brkos legs / gos chen 'bol / ber zla gam gos chen can nang mkhyen brtse chen mo 'i phyag bzos yid 'phrog nus shing snang ba 'gyur nus pa / khyad par birwa pa / sa chen / grags pa / brag thog pa sogs bla ma dngos yin snang skye ba / pra rtse legs po snum nas bton ma thag pa lta bu /* Kaḥ thog Si tu Chos kyi rgya mtsho 1999: 115.

40 See the summaries and quotations in Fermer 2009: 204-05.

at least be closely related to that set and bear the features described for it, especially their alleged ‘realism’.

Tibetan Hyperrealism

Both the sMin grol gling sculptures and most of the teachers in the *thang ka* painting are distinguished by the individual character of each image, regardless of when the person depicted has lived, and this feature is also shared with the *thang ka* painting. If we take, for example the depiction Zhang ston chos 'bar (Fig. 6 and Fig. 7), his appearance communicates the impression that this is a portrait taken from life. But neither do other images of this teacher share the depicted characteristics, nor is it possible that the true appearance of this yogin of the 11th century was known in the 15th century. The apparent realism of the images, thus, must have a reason and function beyond the actual appearance.

In this connection it may well be important that there existed a text authored by Kun dga' rnam rgyal under the descriptive title *Lam 'bras kyi gser sku bzhegs dus so so 'i mtshan byang kha skong* (see Fermer 2009: 204). It may well be possible that this text refers to the lineage in the uppermost chapel, and that this supplement (*kha skyong*) went beyond the mere “captions (*mtshan byang*) of the respective *lam 'bras* gold images at the time of their making”, as the title states. Its very existence may have been due to the innovative nature of the teacher depictions there as well as their thoughtful composition as apparent in the sMin grol gling set. Obviously, in the absence of the text itself this is just a speculation.

For the time being we have to interpret the distinctive features of the images on a visual basis alone. There is one feature all images share, an extremely focused gaze. Regardless where this gaze is directed towards and if the eyes are narrowed to slits or widely open, each of them is shown in a state of utmost concentration. This focus also defines the mouth, which despite the considerable range of variation always communicates benevolence. The individuality of the figures thus results from the direction and openness of the gaze, the respective individual facial features and, most importantly, their depicted age. Given how well conceived the set is as a whole, there is little doubt that also the facial features are based on some underlying logic. It is probably the range of ages and practitioner types that count, rather than their individuality.

The usage of individual features in the sMin grol gling set reminds of the so-called character-heads of the Bavarian born, Austrian sculptor Franz Xaver Messerschmidt (February 6, 1736 - August 19, 1783), but the driving force behind them is not an inner demon of pain, but the achievement of awakening. Not accidentally, standing in for Sa skya Paṇḍita (Figure 16), the Buddha is one of the characters depicted in the set. Only few of the other characters are as obvious; the representation of Lo chen Byang chub rtse mo, better recognisable in the painting (Fig. 17), refers to the Arhat, and Grags pa rgyal mtshan to the benevolent ruler. It

may even be possible to read these characters across pairs, as 'Phags pa's representation also communicates the nature of the Buddha and the meditating Bla ma dam pa may well also refer to arhatship. As in the last case, young and old are often juxtaposed, which is especially obvious in the painting.

Even if I am unable at this stage to decode the concept behind the set in its entirety, the collected evidence leaves little doubt about the sophistication of the depictions. The individuality or realism that we see in the faces of the teachers is a typological one. Of course, the attribution of these types to the respective individuals is not random, but a careful choice. As a result, the individuality represented in this portraits is larger than life, I thus propose to call these likeness-like, but typological representations hyper-realistic.

Kaḥ thog Si tu and others ascribe this achievement to mKhyen brtse chen mo himself, which appears quite possible, since he also had a more realistic approach to depicting deities and their attributes, such as the animals in Hevajra's cups (Fig. 3) and the pig in Chauri's hand (Fig. 5). In this case, it is likely that he has worked with Gong dkar rDo rje gdan pa Kun dga' rnam rgyal in terms of the typology of each of the teachers. But it remains open from where these masters received their inspiration for this hyper-realistic depictions of the *lam 'bras* teachers. We can only hope that future textual and art historical research will help to clarify this.

As in terms of the background, the *thang ka* painting which has been the point of departure for this study is more conservative than the sculpture set, as it does not use the Buddha-like depictions for Sa skya Paṇḍita and 'Phags pa. Given the strength of the individual features of the other teachers on the one hand, and the close comparison of the depiction of the deities to the Hevajra Chapel of Gong dkar chos sde on the other hand, it only supports the attribution of these hyper-realistic *lam 'bras* teachers to mKhyen brtse chen mo.

Note

Since the submission of this article two relevant publications have appeared. Luo Wenhua, 罗文华, and Gesang Qupei sKal bzang chos 'phel, eds. (2016), *dPal gong dkar chos sde'i ldebs ris: Bod brgyud nang bstan ri mo'i lo rgyus kyi lam tshad rdo ring / Gongga Qude si bi hua : Zang chuan fo jiao mei shu shi de li cheng bei / 贡嘎曲德寺壁画：藏传佛教美术史的里程碑*. Beijing: Gu gong chu ban she / Forbidden City Press, gives unprecedented access to the murals of dGon dkar chos sde monastery. Further, in Jackson, David P. 2016. *A Revolutionary Artist of Tibet: Khyentse Chenmo of Gongkar*. Masterworks of Tibetan Painting. New York: Rubin Museum of Art, the author re-attributes the sMin grol gling sculptures to Kyentse Chenmo and approximately the same time as is proposed in this study.

APPENDIX

Table 1: The Gong dkar Hevajra *thang ka* in relation to the sMin grol gling sculpture set.

No.	Thang ka lineage	sMin grol gling sculpture Identification in Von Schroeder	New identifications
1	Vajradhara	236A	
2	Nairātmyā	237A-B	
3	Virūpa	237C-D	
4	Kṛṣṇapāda/Kanha	237E	
5	Ḍamarūpa	237F	
6	Avadhūtipa	238A-B	
7	Gayadhara	238C	241F
8	'Brog mi Lo tsā ba Shākya ye shes (992-1072)	238D-E	241A / 238C ⁴¹
9	Se ston kun rig (1025-1113)	238F	
10	Zhang ston Chos 'bar (1053-1135)	239A-B	
11	Sa chen Kun dga' snying po (1092-1158)	239C	
12	slob dpon bSod nams rtse mo (1142-1182)	239D	
13	rje btsun Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1147-1216)	239E-F	
14	Sa skya Paṅḍi ta Kun dga' rgyal mtshan (1182-1251)	240A-B	
15	chos rgyal 'Phags pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan (1235-1280)	240C	
16	Zhang ston dKon mchog dpal (1240-1308)	240D	<u>238C / 241A</u>
17	Brag phug pa bSod nams dpal (1277-1350)	240E-F	238D-E
18	Bla ma dam pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan (1312-1375)	241A	240E-F
19	Lo chen Byang chub rtse mo (1302-1380)		241B-C
20	Theg chen Chos rje Kun dga' bkra shis (1349-1425)	241B-C 241D ⁴²	240D
21	Brag thog pa bSod nams bzang po		241F ⁴³
22	Gong dkar rDo rje gdan pa Kun dga' rnam rgyal (1432-1496)		
23	mKhan chen Chos grub seng ge	241E-F ⁴⁴	

41 While the first option appears more likely on iconographic grounds, the underlined option retains the symmetry of the set.

42 Not identified in Von Schroeder 2001: 984.

43 Or another pupil of Theg chen Chos rje Kun dga' bkra shis (1349-1425), depending on the historical scenario one assumes for the sMin grol gling set.

44 Identified as Zhwa lu lo tsā ba Chos skyong bzang po (1441-1528) in Von Schroeder 2001: 984.

FIGURES



Figure 1: Hevajra Thangka; Central Tibet (Southern dBus), late 15th century; pigments on cloth; private collection; Credits: C. Luczanits 2015 (D0323).



Figure 2: Heads of Hevajra; detail of Figure 1;
Credits: C. Luczanits 2015 (D0330).



Figure 3: Heads of Hevajra; Hevajra Chapel of Gong dkar chos sde Monastery;
Central Tibet (Southern dBus); second half of the 15th century.
Credits: Anne Breckenridge Dorsey 2005.



Figure 4: Caurī Ḍākinī; detail of Fig. 1.
Credits: C. Luczanits 2015 (D0385).

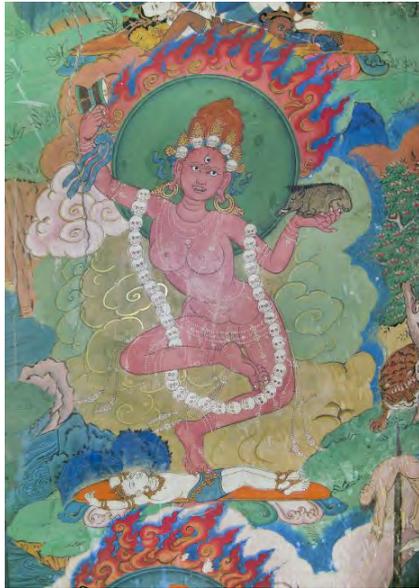


Figure 5: Caurī Ḍākinī; Hevajra Chapel of Gong dkar chos sde Monastery;
Central Tibet (Southern dBus); second half of the 15th century.
Credits: Anne Breckenridge Dorsey 2005.



Figure 6: Zhang ston Chos 'bar (1053-1135); detail of Fig. 1.
Credits: C. Luczanits 2015 (D0361).



Figure 7: Zhang ston Chos 'bar (1053-1135); Central Tibet (Southern dBus); second half of the 15th century; gilt and painted copper repoussée; h. 93 cm; sMin grol gling Monastery (after Lee-Kalisch 2006: 141, Kat. 7).



Figure 8: Head of Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1147-1216); Central Tibet (Southern dBus); second half of the 15th century; gilt and painted copper repoussée; sMin grol gling Monastery (after Lee-Kalisch 2006: 141, Kat. 7).



Figure 9: Head of Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1147-1216); detail of Fig. 1. Credits: C. Luczanits 2015 (D0338).



Figure 10: Na bza' Brag phug pa bSod nams dpal (1277-1350); detail of Fig. 1.
Credits: C. Luczanits 2015 (D0342).



Figure 11: Na bza' Brag phug pa bSod nams dpal (1277-1350); Central Tibet
(Southern dBus); second half of the 15th century; gilt and
painted copper repoussée; h. 88 cm; sMin grol gling Monastery.
Credits: C. Luczanits 2007 (D9407).



Figure 12: Indian yogin Gayadhara; Central Tibet (Southern dBus); second half of the 15th century; gilt and painted copper repoussée; h. 111 cm; sMin grol gling Monastery. Credits: C. Luczanits 2007 (D9409).



Figure 13: This sculpture of the sMin grol gling set either represents 'Brog mi lo tsā ba Shākya Ye shes (992-1072) or Zhang ston dKon mchog dpal (1240-1308); Central Tibet (Southern dBus); second half of the 15th century; gilt and painted copper repoussée; h. 98 cm; sMin grol gling Monastery. Credits: C. Luczanits 2007 (D9305).



Figure 14: Theg chen chos rje Kun dga' bkra shis; Central Tibet (Southern dBus); second half of the 15th century; gilt and painted copper repoussée; h. 90 cm; sMin grol gling Monastery. Credits: C. Luczanits 2007 (D9306).



Figure 15: Last teacher of the sMin grol gling set; Central Tibet (Southern dBus); second half of the 15th century; gilt and painted copper repoussée; h. 86 cm; sMin grol gling Monastery. Credits: C. Luczanits 2007 (D9397).



Figure 16: Head of Sa skya Paṇḍita of the sMin grol gling set; Central Tibet (Southern dBus); second half of the 15th century; gilt and painted copper repoussée; sMin grol gling Monastery. Credits: C. Luczanits 2007 (D9397).



Figure 17: Lo chen Byang chub rtse mo (1302-1380); detail of Fig. 1. Credits: C. Luczanits 2015 (D0342).

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THE *BLA MA MCHOD PA TSHOGS ZHING* OF THE DGE LUGS PA TRADITION: INTRODUCTORY ANALYSIS TO THE OLDEST IMAGES OF THE “FIELD OF THE ACCUMULATION OF MERITS”

FILIPPO LUNARDO
 (“Sapienza” University of Rome)

This article focuses on a specific iconography of the dGe lugs pa school. This iconography is known by the name of *tshogs zhing* (a spiritual field for the accumulation of merits), here analyzed in its 18th century form. The images described here are an essential tool for the religious practice prescribed by the dgGe lugs pa’s *bla ma mchod pa* tantric literature. As an esoteric literature, the *bla ma mchod pa* is based on an “essential instruction” (*man ngag*) which gathers teachings on the main *tantras* of the so called *niruttara* classes. This paper will discuss the oldest iconography of the *bla ma mchod pa tshogs zhing*, directly related to the root text of the first Paṅ chen Bla ma Blo bzang Chos kyi rgyal mtshan (1567–1662). Among the many images of *tshogs zhing* I have analyzed¹ – almost identical in the representation of this specific subject – I present here a xylograph (Fig. 2) and a *thang ka* (Fig. 1). The xylograph, realized in the style of the 18th century’s woodblocks of sNar thang,² is an uncatalogued item of the Tucci Tibetan Collection (IsIAO Library, Rome). The *thang ka* is property of a Tibetan private citizen living now in Bodhgaya, in the Indian state of Bihar.³

Within the dGe lugs pa order, the *bla ma mchod pa* literature stems from essential tantric and esoteric instructions (*man ngag*) related to the *guru* devotion liturgies and practices prescribed by *guruyoga* literature.⁴ In order to receive these particular *man*

1 Research has been done in the dGe lugs pa monasteries of Ladakh, McLeod Ganj and the Kathmandu Valley. Further sources of comparison were several catalogues on Tibetan art (see below) and the web site www.himalayanart.org. As primary sources, I also studied and translated two texts, Sangs rgyas ye shes’s *Bla ma mchod pa’i cho ga dngos grub kun ’byung*, and Ye shes rgyal mtshan’s *Bla ma lha’i mal ’byor gyi khrid dmigs kyi bsdu don snyan rgyud gter mdzod ’byed pa’i lde mig* (see the bibliography for complete references).

2 A monastery located 15 km west of Shigatse, in gTsang (Central Tibet), which is famous as a printery.

3 I wish to thank the former President of IsIAO, the late Professor Gherardo Gnoli, and Mr. Thinlay Nepali for allowing me to study and show the xylograph and the *thang ka* presented here.

4 *Bla ma mchod pa* translates the Sanskrit term *gurupūjā*. Concerning the meaning of *mchod pa*, see Makransky 1996.

ngag, practitioners must obtain the four complete initiations in one of the *niruttarayogatantra yi dam* cycles. The *bla ma mchod pa* practice focuses on the devotion of the main figure of the *guru* as a deity, a result of mixing together the instructions of the *Vajrabhairavatantra*, *Cakrasaṃvaratantra* and *Guhyasamā-jatantra*. Among the three, the latter is considered to be the main *tantra*.

One of the main preliminary practices (*sngon 'gro*) connected to the *bla ma mchod pa* instructions is the visualization of a group of *gurus* and deities gathered together as a spiritual field, called *tshogs zhing*.⁵ In particular, the *sngon 'gro* enables the practitioner to receive from the deities and the *gurus* of the lineage blessings, inspiration and transformative energy (*sbyin rlabs*) which are necessary for accumulating spiritual merits.⁶ This is the reason why the *tshogs zhing* is also known as the field of the accumulation of merits, or “merit field”.

In the *bla ma mchod pa tshogs zhing*,⁷ the main figure of the merit field is the founder Tsong kha pa (1357–1419), seen here in a particular emanation known as *bla*

5 In the compound *tshogs zhing*, *tshogs* may be translated either as the noun ‘assembly’, ‘mass’, ‘group’, or the verb ‘to gather’, ‘to collect’, whereas *zhing* means ‘field’. Very often the expression “merit tree” is used to refer to the *tshogs zhing* because of the image of a tree on which *gurus* and deities rest, but such an expression relates to a compound that does not exist in the Tibetan vocabulary. See Yablonsky 2000: 49–50, 63–64. Even if considered as a *sngon 'gro*, the visualization of the *tshogs zhing* should be continuous throughout the whole course of the practice. In the *lam rim* tradition, the visualization of the field of accumulation of merits belongs to the fourth of six preliminary practices known as *sbyor ba'i chos drug* (*sbyor chos*).

6 In the artistic representation of the highest *yoga tantra* class practices, the iconography of the *tshogs zhing* has to be understood as a real “technical instrument” that leads the adept to the deconstruction of his conventional identity. Though it has undergone changes during the centuries, its particular codification leads the practitioner toward a visionary contact with the *guru*, and an assembly of masters and deities who are to be experienced as distinguished emanations of the same true nature of the *guru* himself. The continuous presence of the *guru* through his visualization seems to recall the ancient practice of the *buddhānasmṛti*, the reminiscence of the Buddha through the constant recollection of his characteristics and qualities. This practice helped the practitioners to continuously feel the presence of the Buddha, and receive his teachings and advice. The *tshogs zhing* seems to codify a natural late tantric development of this need, putting the *guru* in the place of a Buddha as the primary source of every spiritual refuge. See Samuel 2008: 220; Williams 1989; Williams 2000.

7 The dGe lugs pa order has three traditions concerning the merit field. In the first one, the Buddha Śākyamuni has to be visualized alone, with no *gurus* or deities around him, because he represents every master and deity. The second tradition relates to the non-esoteric *lam rim* instructions: the merit field of *gurus* and deities is arranged around the figure of the Buddha Śākyamuni. This type of *tshogs zhing* is called *khrom tshogs*. It belongs to the fourth preliminary practice, mentioned above in footnote 2. The third tradition relating to the *bla ma mchod pa* literature presents Tsong kha pa as the main deity of the merit field. In this case the *tshogs zhing* is called *mtsho brtsegs*. The visualization of the *tshogs zhing* follows three phases: the taking of refuge, the self-generation in the form of a personal *yi dam* (usually the two-armed form of Vajrabhairava) and the blessing of the offerings. See 14th Dalai Lama 1991: 22, 28–39; 14th Dalai Lama 1988: 63–91; Pabonka Rinpoche 1997: 157–61, 768–69; Panchen Lama 2003: 5–9.

ma Blo bzang rdo rje 'chang.⁸ He has to be visualized surrounded by *gurus* and deities arranged in particular groups on a tree.⁹ According to tradition, the *man ngag* of the *bla ma mchod pa* was originally transmitted orally by a lineage of dGe lugs pa masters known as dGa' ldan snyan rgyud.¹⁰ This lineage, namely “the oral transmission of dGa' ldan”, is believed to have started with the *bodhisattva* Mañjuśrī and Tsong kha pa, and continued through his disciples all the way to the first Paṅ chen Bla ma Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan (1567–1662).¹¹ He was the first dGe lugs pa master to write a ritual text on *bla ma mchod pa man ngag*, which is now considered the root text of this entire literary genre. In the course of time, the root text underwent evolutions and developments that gave birth to a large corpus of exegetical literature and various lineages of transmission.¹² These elaborations were also the references for the production of the iconographies of the *tshogs zhing* linked to the *sngon 'gro* practices.

Iconography

As mentioned, this research analyzes two texts, one from the 18th century and the second from the 20th century,¹³ and then compares them with a selection of images. This type of investigation has allowed, for the first time, to identify at least three types of iconographical patterns in *tshogs zhing* images, in which the element of the wish-fulfilling tree appears as one of the main objects of the composition. The first pattern can be dated around the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century; the second, analyzed into two phases,¹⁴ to the 19th century; and the third,

8 The name of the main deity was enriched with the new title of *bla ma* Blo bzang Thub dbang rDo rje 'chang within the literary and doctrinal developments of the *bla ma mchod pa* at least from the 18th century. The name can be interpreted in the following way. *Bla ma* is to be understood as the practitioner's own *guru*. Blo bzang is the first part of the name of Tsong kha pa and in the dGe lugs pa's *guruyoga* traditions the *guru* is usually identified with Tsong kha pa himself. Thub dbang relates the *guru* to the same nature of the Buddha Śākyamuni as teacher of the *sūtra* tradition. rDo rje 'chang indicates the *guru*'s nature of Vajradhāra in giving instructions based on *tantras*.

9 In the traditional *bla ma mchod pa* literature, the merit field of masters and deities is placed on an enormous lotus, the petals of which are organized on overlapping levels arranged on the body of a wish-fulfilling tree, called *dpag bsam ljon shing*. The tree is the prominent figure used as the basis for the arrangement of the merit field in the *tshogs zhing* iconographies.

10 See Willis 1995: XIV–XV.

11 See Panchen Lama 2003.

12 See Pabonka Rinpoche 1997: 194.

13 See n. 1. See also Dalai Lama 1991; Huntington & Bangdel 2003: 168–70; Lama Zopa Rinpoche 2004a; Lama Zopa Rinpoche 2004b; Thurman 2005: 245–59.

14 The first phase develops the iconography of the first tipology. The tree assumes a pyramid-like shape. On this new modelled tree, all the divinities are placed on a multilevel structure, a sort of big lotus with eleven petals (overlapped levels for a hierarchical arrangement of different spiritual classes of deities). The lineage of *gurus* of the tantric transmissions is represented in the same way as in the images of the first tipology. The *gurus* of the indian philosophical lineages are no more arranged on the tree, but in triangular-like shape of clouds at the side of the main *guru* Tsong kha

related to the instructions of Pha bong kha bDe chen snying po (1878–1941), to the 20th century.¹⁵ This paper will discuss the first, oldest pattern of the *tshogs zhing*, directly related to the root text of the first Paṅ chen Bla ma.

The *tshogs zhing* shows a wish-fulfilling tree, a symbol of the axis-mundi and a vertical axis for the entire image. According to the visualization prescribed by the root text, the main figure of Tsong kha pa, *bla ma* Blo bzang rdo rje 'chang,¹⁶ must be depicted seated on his throne at the centre of the tree. As prescribed by the text, all the *gurus* and deities should surround Tsong kha pa on the tree “as a sea”,¹⁷ in their particular order, even if the text does not give details about this order (Fig. 2a). To the right of the main *guru* are the *yi dam* of the *yoganiruttara* classes followed by the three main Yogacāra Indian masters (Fig. 3),¹⁸ together with the *bodhisattva* Maitreya. On the left are the *yi dam* of the other three lower classes of *tantra*,¹⁹ followed by the three main Madhyamaka Indian masters (Fig. 4),²⁰ together with the *bodhisattva* Mañjuśrī. Above the head of Tsong kha pa are the figures of Vajradhara with his consort, the *siddhas* Tilopa, Nāropa, Ḍombhi Heruka and the *paṇḍita* Atiśa. This group represents the lineage of practices and blessings, the lineage of the transmission of tantric instructions (Fig. 5).

Below the main *guru* Tsong kha pa are other *yi dam* of different tantric cycles and a group of eight figures who make up the *bodhisattva* group (Fig. 6). In a lower area, we find a group of Buddha figures, with Śākyamuni at the centre, to be considered as the Buddhas of this *kalpa*, or the thirty-five Buddhas of confession. In the *tshogs zhing* showed in Fig. 2, the figures of this group also appear on the highest side of the structure of the tree, as a sort of a half moon. Some Buddha figures are also depicted in the registers of the tantric deities.

pa. In the images of the second phase, the representation of the *gurus* of the tantric transmission change as well. As for the philosophical lineages, the *gurus* of tantric praxis are represented in a triangular-like shape of clouds, directly above the head of Tsong kha pa. The number of *gurus* increases, and there are a number of Indian *siddhas* related to the main *niruttarayogatantra* cycles, with the bKa' rgyud pa masters Mar pa and Mi la ras pa as the only non dGe lugs pa Tibetan *blamas* inside the group. A lineage of dGe lugs pa masters surrounds the group of Indian *siddhas*. The evolutions of this second typology show a more rational spatial composition and an ideal arrangement for the figures of the *tshogs zhing*, but the iconography follows as always the instructions of *Bla ma mchod pa*'s text of the 18th and 19th centuries. These texts show new formulations and interpretations of the rules codified by the root text of the first Paṅ chen Bla ma.

15 See Lunardo 2012a; Lunardo 2012b; Lunardo 2014. A study of the second and third types of the *tshogs zhing* will be presented in a forthcoming work.

16 Even if the root text of the *bla ma mchod pa* recognizes the figure of Tsong kha pa as *bla ma* Blo bzang rDo rje 'chang, the following authors and holders of the lineage added another title, calling him *bla ma* Blo bzang Thub dbang rDo rje 'chang. See note 5 and note 29.

17 The text evokes an ideal endless number of deities and *gurus* surrounding Tsong kha pa.

18 Asaṅga, Vasubandhu e Diṅgāga.

19 *Yoga*, *caryā* and *kriyātantra*.

20 Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva and Chandrakīrti.

Below the Buddha group we find the *sthāviras*, usually eighteen, which include the two figures of Hva śang and Dharmatāla.²¹ The group of the *dharmapālas*, which here includes the main protectors of the faith for the dGe lugs pas like Śrī Devī, Yamārāja and Mahākāla, is depicted below the *sthāvira* group. Below the tree, external to the real merit field, are the four guardian kings, the *lokapālas*.

Brahmā and Indra are usually depicted around the trunk of the tree, with some *nāgas* emerging from the cosmic waters from which the tree itself surfaces. To the right of the tree are the depictions of the seven treasures of the universal king, the *cakravartin*,²² and to the left, the cosmic mountain Sumeru, which here also represents the offering of the *maṇḍala* to the main *guru* and to all the merit fields.

Lineage

One of the most important features of the *tshogs zhing* is the representation of the *bla ma mchod pa* transmission lineages. All masters of those lineages are depicted at the top of the images; this is the most important area for depicting figures after the central portion of the work, in this case representing the main *guru* Tsong kha pa. The number of the gurus depicted in the *tshogs zhing* of this first typology is always seventeen, and all the *tshogs zhing* images of the first type I have seen depicted on *thang kas* or in Tibetan art catalogues exhibit always the same figures.

So far it has been difficult to identify those masters in the catalogues of Tibetan art where *tshogs zhing* are shown.²³ We usually find a rough interpretation of these figures, generally analyzed as Dalai Lamas and Paṅ chen Bla mas. This is only partially correct, as in the first type of *tshogs zhing* only three of the seventeen figures are Paṅ chen Bla mas and just one, the last figure, represents a Dalai Lama, in this case the eighth, Blo bzang 'Jam dpal rgya mtsho (1758–1804). According to David Jackson, the representation of a lineage in Tibetan art translates a sort of historical concreteness, the seeds of which are also in the religious literature and practices.²⁴ Moreover, it should be noted that the identification of lineages provides scholars with more elements (other than mere stylistic analysis) to pinpoint chronologically the period in which the image was made.²⁵

In the block print of IsIAO (see Fig. 7a) each master's name is written below his image in *bsdus yig*, making it easier to identify all the *gurus* of the lineage. The first ten figures, starting with Vajradhāra and ending with the first Paṅ chen Bla ma,

21 The number of eighteen members in the *sthāvira* cycle reflects the spread of the cult of the *sthāviras* in China during the Tang dynasty. On this topic and on the meaning of Hva śang and Dharmatāla, see Lo Bue & Ricca 1990: 377–79.

22 These treasures are: the wheel, the gem, the queen, the minister, the elephant, the horse and the general.

23 See for example Rhie & Thurman 1991; Rhie & Thurman 1999.

24 Jackson 2005: 38.

25 See Jackson 1990: 129; Jackson 2005: 14.

correspond to the famous dGa' Idan snyan rgyud lineage to which the transmission of the *mahāmudrā* and *gcod* instructions also belong. From figure n. 11 to figure n. 16 the lineage continues through a line of teachers and disciples; the seventeenth figure represents the eighth Dalai Lama, who died in 1804. According to Tibetan tradition, a *guru* is usually represented after his death; nevertheless, examples of masters depicted before their death are known, so that we could say that images of the first type either precede or follow the death of the Dalai Lama. Since it conforms to the artistic style prevalent in period, these *tshogs zhing* could be dated to the end of the 18th century or the first decade of the 19th century.

A problem with the representation in the first type of *tshogs zhings* of the *bla ma mchod pa* lineage of transmission is how to accurately read the disposition of each figure in respect to the others. As David Jackson noted,²⁶ from the 16th century onwards, the usual reading of the figures of a lineage starts from the central figure, usually Vajradhāra for the *gsar ma* schools, and then jumps in an alternating way so as to have figure one at the centre, figure two at his right, figure three at his left, figure four at the right of figure two, and so on.

However, this rule is not always respected in the *tshogs zhing* images. We could expect, for example, that figure no. 4, Tsong kha pa, who himself has been regarded to have received teachings directly by Mañjuśrī, should appear on the right side of the *bodhisattva*, the figure no. 2. But here Tsong kha pa, apparently for no reason, is depicted only below the *bodhisattva*. The twelfth, fourteenth and fifteenth figures do not appear in their usual right position but rather are placed in a different way (i.e. figure number twelve appears below the eleventh and the other two below figure no. 13). It may be posited that the reason of this apparent chaotic disposition could be the relationships between masters. For example, the master no. 12, namely dKon mchog rgyal mtshan, was a close disciple of the first Paṅ chen Bla ma Blo bzang Chos kyi rgyal mtshan, represented as master no. 11, while masters nos. 14 and 15, that is to say Ngag dbang byams pa and Blo bzang bsod nams pa, were close disciples of the second Paṅ chen Bla ma, Blo bzang Ye shes (1663–1737), namely master no. 13. Thus, despite the general rule that Jackson illustrates in his article, a new convention for depicting lineages – certainly in *bla ma mchod pa tshogs zhing* representations – can be shown.

The scheme is as follows:

7	5	2	1	3	6	8
9	11	4		16	13	10
17	12				14	15

²⁶ Jackson 2005: 15, 25, n. 35. The author indicates a few examples preceding the 16th century that are linked to this kind of disposition. In Lo Bue & Ricca 1990 (433–42), we find a representation of the *lam 'bras* transmission lineage in statues of the sKu 'bum of Gyantse which was made by using the same disposition of the *lam 'bras lha khang* realized in 1425.

- 1) Vajradhāra
- 2) Mañjuśrī
- 3) dPa bo rdo rje
- 4) Tsong kha pa (1357–1419)
- 5) 'Jam dpal rgya mtsho²⁷ (1356–1428)
- 6) mKhas grub rje (1385–1438)
- 7) Ba so Chos kyi rgyal mtshan (1402–1473)
- 8) Chos kyi rdo rje²⁸
- 9) dBen sa pa Blo bzang Don yod grub pa (1505–1566)
- 10) Sangs rgyas ye shes (1525–1590)
- 11) Blo bzang Chos kyi rgyal mtshan (First Paṅ chen Bla ma, 1567–1662)
- 12) dKon mchog rgyal mtshan (1612–1687)
- 13) Blo bzang ye shes (Second Paṅ chen Bla ma, 1663–1737)
- 14) Ngag dbang byams pa (1682–1762)
- 15) Blo bzang bsod nams pa (18th century)
- 16) Blo bzang dpal ldan ye shes (Third Paṅ chen Bla ma, 1738–1780)
- 17) Blo bzang 'Jam dpal rgya mtsho (Eighth Dalai Lama, 1758–1804)

Further research on different lineages may show whether this model is also applicable to other representations or remains limited to the *tshogs zhing*.

Inscriptions

An inscription usually appears on the lowest edge of the image. This can be found in the IsIAO image as well as in several *thang khas* of the same type.²⁹ The inscription of the IsIAO *tshogs zhing* reads:

Na mo gu ru / blo bzang rdo rje 'chang gi rnal 'byor rim / gang gi bris sku dkon mchog rgyal mtshan lugs / bzhengs pa 'i dge bas 'gro ba ma lus pa / blo bzang rdo rje 'chang gi sa thob shog /

“I pay homage to the *guru*: [from] the system of dKon mchog rgyal mtshan, the image of that stage [of] the yoga of Blo bzang rDo rje 'chang. May all sentient beings attain the level of Blo bzang rDo rje 'chang by means of collected virtues!” (see Fig. 8)

27 Pabonka 1997: 241. The figure of 'Jam dpal rgya mtsho also precedes that of mKhas grub rje in the lineage of the gradual path (*lam rim*).

28 Willis 1995: 180, n. 209. As Willis points out, it is impossible to establish a certain date for this master's birth (as well as for his death). The dGe lugs pa tradition assumes that he achieved the *siddhi* of immortality.

29 See Rhie & Thurman 1991: 372–73; Rhie & Thurman 1999: 473–74.

It identifies the image of this *tshogs zhing* as the symbol of the *yoga* of Blo bzang rDo rje 'chang, the name of Tsong kha pa used in the oldest *bla ma mchod pa* literature. The inscription also tells us that the image and the system of this *yoga* are related to the master dKon mchog rgyal msthan (1612–1687). This master is the same close disciple of the first Paṅ chen Bla ma³⁰ represented in the image just below his beloved teacher. Thus, even if the genesis of the images has to be linked to the 17th century, following the closest instructions of the root text of the Paṅ chen Bla ma, actually the first depictions of this kind of *tshogs zhing* appear at least at the end of the 18th century.³¹ Moreover, some elements in the iconography do not really comply with the closest instruction of the root text.³²

Tsong kha pa

The instructions in the root text and the *bla ma mchod pa* works of the 19th century explain that the *adhibuddha* Vajradhāra must be visualized in Tsong kha pa's heart. However, in the *tshogs zhing* of the first type – as the two presented in the illustrations of this paper – Buddha Śākyamuni can be found in Tsong kha pa's heart together with Vajradhāra. The latter does not sit in the heart of Tsong kha pa, but rather in Śākyamuni's. Only the latest traditions of the *bla ma mchod pa* literature seem to use this iconography. In the 20th century both Pha bong kha bDe chen snying po and the 14th Dalai Lama state that the visualization of both Śākyamuni and Vajradhāra in the heart of Tsong kha pa shows the perfection of the main *guru*'s mastering and teaching.³³ However, these three figures together also represent particular tantric methods to attain the union of the great bliss and emptiness (Fig. 10).

30 See Pabonka 1997: 782.

31 Erberto Lo Bue (1990: 172) has demonstrated how in order to correctly identify the subject of an image in Tibetan art, it is necessary to know the specific literature on which it is based, or the historical situation that led to produce an icon. For what concerns the historical context, an example could be the creation of an image based on the development of the cult of a deity not linked to a philosophical or a tantric source, but based instead on local beliefs, such as a Dharma protector which once was the guardian of a place or of a clan. It may also happen that the creation of an image based on a particular literature can emerge several centuries after the writing of the text(s) on which the image is based, as in the case of the images analyzed in this paper.

32 These elements are, for example, the presence, in some images, of the usual lotuses at the sides of Tshong kha pa's shoulders, bearing the sword and the book, which are the symbols of both the *bodhisattva* Mañjuśrī and Tsong kha pa himself; the absence of a representation of the body *maṅdala* of the *Guhyasamājatantra* prescribed for the visualization of the *tshogs zhing*'s main *guru*; the presence of a small figure of Śākyamuni in Tsong kha pa's heart which is not mentioned by the root text. For further details, see the explanation in the description of Tsong kha pa's iconography.

33 See 14th Dalai Lama 1988: 72–73; Pabongka 1997: 188–89. Blo bzang rDo rje 'chang embodies different emanations: Śākyamuni/Nirmāṅakāya represents experiences related to the sūtras teachings; Vajradhāra/Sambhogakāya represents experiences related to the tantras teachings.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the iconography of the earlier *bla ma mchod pa*'s *tshogs zhing* is not completely faithful to its root text. As we can see in Fig. 8, the inscription on the lower edge of the *tshogs zhing* of the first type follows the instruction of the root text. However, the iconography shows something that is not present in the literature of that time. We may therefore assume the existence of a sort of parallel instructions that was transmitted orally until the end of the 19th century, or at least until the instructions of the direct *gurus* of Pha bong kha changed.

Thus, the discrepancy between the inscription and the philosophical intention behind the inscription, as well as what the iconography –most notably Tsong kha pa's one– shows, lead us to argue that in the case of the images of the fist type of *tshogs zhing*, the artistic tool is not a mere symbolic and visual translation of an experience codified only through literature. It is instead a clear indication of the process that keeps alive an instruction based on the practice performed at that time. It reveals the process of change of an instruction that adapts to the needs of new practitioners who implement the *man ngag*, and then transmit it to other practitioners. Thus, the differences between the written inscription and the iconography of the root *guru*, for example, are expressed in the image that suggests passage and transformation. The same codified literature gave birth to different lineages of transmission as well as to different interpretations.³⁴ Until we discover texts describing each details and reasons of changing interpretations of the root instruction, only the artistic representation of a *tshogs zhing* will stand to be the first and, probably, the only witness of an oral transmission of experiences related to the *bla ma mchod pa*'s *man ngag* running parallel to the codified literature (Fig. 11).

Tsong kha pa, or the practitioner's own guru, represents the essence of the whole Dharma. In this way the gurus represent all the Buddhas as expression of the wisdom of the Dharmakāya. In Tsong kha pa's heart we find an image of Śākyamuni, whereas in the heart of Śākyamuni a small Vajradhāra with his consort can be found. According to Pha bong kha bde chen snying po, Tsong kha pa and Śākyamuni showed at his heart, represent the *samayasattva*, the commitment-being; Vajradhāra with his consort represent the gnosis being, *jñānasattva*, and the union of the great bliss and wisdom with emptiness, while the *hūṃ* at the heart of the couple has to be experienced as the *samādhisattva*, the concentration-being.

³⁴ Pha bong ka assumes the coexistence of various lineages of transmission related to the visualization of the *tshogs zhing* of the *bla ma mchod pa*'s tradition. Those lineages were linked to personal interpretations of different dGe lugs pa masters. He quotes his root *guru*, Blo bzang 'Jam dpal lhun grub (1845–1919) in gathering all the instructions of those masters. See Pabonka 1997: 194–195.

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Web Sites

www.himalayanart.org

www.nitartha.org



Fig. 1: *Tshogs zhing*. Thang ka. Private Collection.

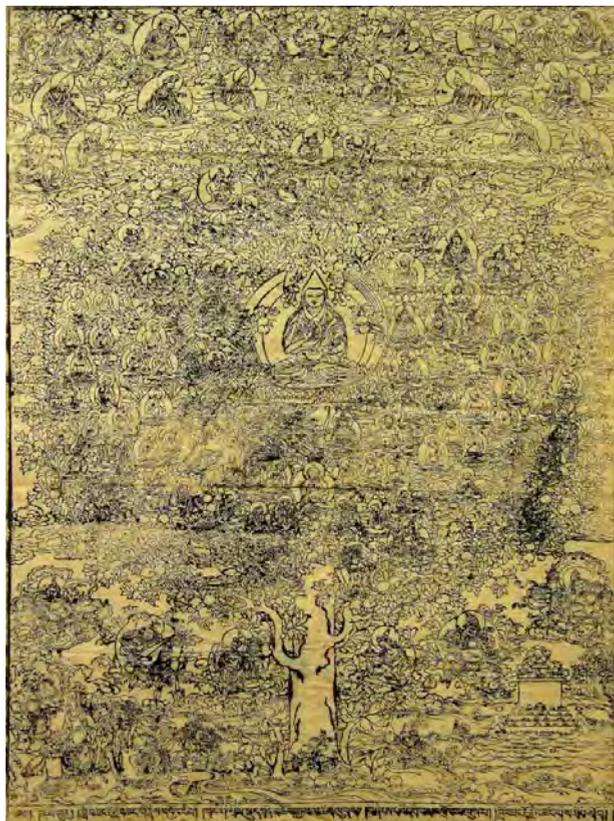


Fig. 2: *Tshogs zhing*. Wood-block. ISIAO Library.



Fig. 2a: Masters and Deities surrounding Tsong kha pa

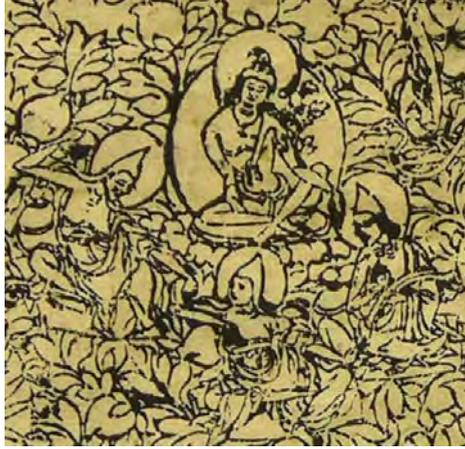


Fig. 3: Yogacāra *gurus* Lineage

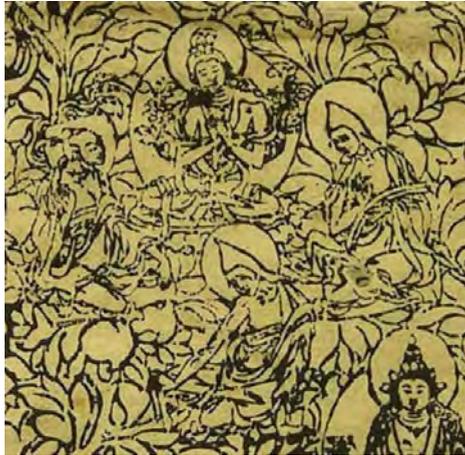


Fig. 4: Madhyamaka *gurus* Lineage



Fig. 5: Lineage of the *gurus* of tantric instructions

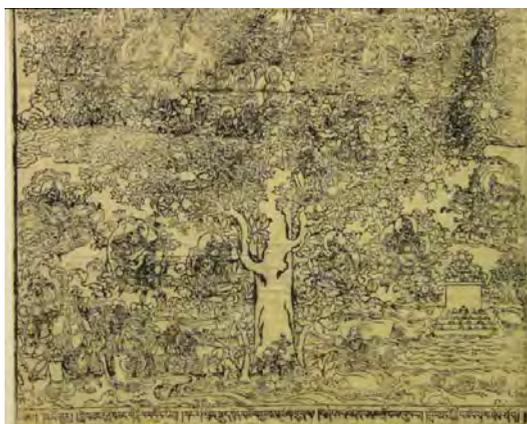


Fig. 6: Lower classes of deities and inscription



Fig. 7: Lineage of dGe lugs pa *gurus* of the *bla ma mchod pa* instruction



Fig. 7a: Reading scheme for understanding the lineage of *bla ma mchod pa* instruction's *gurus*



Fig. 8: Inscription



Fig. 9: Tsong kha pa



Fig. 10: Śākyamuni and Vajradhara at the heart of Tsong kha pa



Fig. 11: Tsong kha pa

THE MONASTERY OF THOLING IN 1933

OSCAR NALESINI¹

(National Museum of Oriental Art, Rome)

On the evening of September 18th, 1933, the Italian scholar Giuseppe Tucci and his travel companion, the physician and photographer Eugenio Ghersi, pitched their tents outside the sacred precinct of the Tholing monastery. The visit of the Italian party lasted a little more than three days, over which they collected information and shot photographs inside and outside the major buildings. On his return to India Tucci reported his discoveries in enthusiastic – albeit worried – terms to Frederick Williamson, Political Officer in Sikkim:

[...] the monastery of Toling is one of the oldest, richest and finest of Tibet. These documents are of unrivalled interest for the religious history of Tibet as well as for the history of Indo-Tibetan Art. [...] The rain dropping through the ceiling left unrepaired for years is washing away the marvellous frescoes [...]. Unless the Tibetan Government does some urgent repairs, it will shortly be a ruin yet in no other part of Tibet is possible to find finest paintings and better workmanship. This is why here also I took photos of the interior of all the temples and chapels so that if they are to tumble down western scholars might at least have an exact idea of what they were.²

A year later Tucci announced the intention to devote to Tholing a volume of the *Indo-Tibetica* series (Tucci & Ghersi 1934: 12, n. 1; Tucci & Ghersi 1936: XII, n. 1). Yet, he felt the need of a second inspection, which he was eventually able to realise in 1935. In the travelogue of that expedition Tucci wrote that he had returned to Tholing in order to “study the details that I missed during my first visit, take photographs, visit the caves of Upper Tholing” (Tucci 1937: 167).³ The warning he had sounded two years before on the conservation of the monastery had remained unanswered;⁴ he

1 My warmest thanks to Michela Clemente and Federica Venturi, who bravely took the hopeless work to improve my outrageous English. Any errors obviously are my sole responsibility.

2 *Report by Professor Tucci on his travel to Western Tibet* (INDIA OFFICE RECORDS, Political and Secret Department, External collections, 4247 = Farrington 2002: 81, 83).

3 “studiare i particolari che nella prima visita mi erano sfuggiti, riprendendo fotografie, visitando le grotte di Toling alto” (author’s translation).

4 See the letter by F. Williamson to Fraser-Tytler, Deputy Secretary of the Government of India in the Foreign and Political Department, dated at Gangtok, December 19th, 1933: “Professor Tucci hints in his reports that the Tibetan Government ought to carry out repairs to the monastery of

could only ruefully observe that “in two years the destruction made huge strides”⁵ (*ibidem*), and “many paintings we had photographed in 1933 have already disappeared completely”⁶ (Tucci 1935b). In spite of the efforts, the documentation he had gathered still proved insufficient, and six years later the book was still in the making (see Tucci 1941: 108).

He probably tried for the last time to revise his documentation on Tholing in the postwar period, as he wrote references to his 1933 field notes on the back side of some photographs presumably printed in the late 1960s.

What actually happened afterwards is a matter of guess; the fact that Tucci did not mention the mural paintings of Tholing throughout his book on Tibetan art (Tucci 1973) might be significant in this respect. He probably believed that Tholing deserved further in-depth analysis (cf. Petech 1995: 9), and postponed the publication over and over again until vivid memories faded away and his documentation was of little help to revive them. Most of his papers had probably already been lost at some point. Nothing remains nowadays of his records on the 1935 expedition, and what is known of the field notes written in 1933 is contained in a small notepad, 15×9.5 cm in size, with brown cover and squared paper (henceforth *Notepad*), which I recovered in his home at San Polo dei Cavalieri after his widow, Francesca Bonardi, passed away on March 4th, 2014.⁷

The notes are extremely simple and sketchy, as they were meant to be just reminders of the works of art seen in the buildings of the monastery. Moreover, these pages are filled with corrections, additions and afterthoughts that complicate its understanding and render the notes hard to use. Fortunately, he added to them references to the photographs taken by Gherzi, often organised according to the number of the roll film and frame: e.g. II 1, that is second [Tholing] roll film, frame 1.⁸

This is an important fact. As it is well known, the buildings and works of art of the monastery have been since then damaged by weather, as Tucci observed, and defaced by men, rendering precious the photographs taken by Gherzi. Tucci, however, published only some of them, kept the negatives at home for decades, cut the roll

Toling. This is, of course, very desirable, but I fear that it would be quite impossible to approach the Tibetan Government on such a subject” (INDIA OFFICE RECORDS, Political and Secret Department, External collections, 4247 = Farrington 2002: 91).

5 “in due anni la rovina ha fatto passi da gigante” (author’s translation).

6 “molte pitture che avevamo fotografato nel 1933 sono già completamente scomparse” (author’s translation).

7 Now in the library of the Museo Nazionale d’Arte Orientale, Fondo Bonardi Tucci, Q15 (provisional code). The *Notepad* covers Tucci’s activity since the departure from Gartok, on September 14th, through the last day spent at Tsaparang, on September 24th (cf. Tucci & Gherzi 1934: 33-114, 288-349; Tucci & Gherzi 1936: 11-53, 152-81); over half of its pages have been left blank. I will refer to the pages as f[olio] followed by digit+r[ecto]/v[erso].

8 To keep Tucci’s count of the Tholing roll films throughout the article, I numbered 0 the roll film exposed on the way from the Bogo pass to Tholing (Fig. 8).

films in short stripes (sometimes as short as one frame), jumbled them up and, on the top of it, lost some of them. This is not the place to recall what happened after he gave the photographs to the National Museum of Oriental Art in Rome through IsMEO (see Nalesini 2008: 104-8). Suffice it to say that over twenty years ago we were able to propose a reconstruction of the original sequences of the 35 mm negatives exposed in the course of the 1933 and 1935 expeditions (see Klimburg-Salter, Nalesini & Talamo 1994).

The Tholing photographs thus recovered were studied by Roberto Vitali for a book on the monastery edited on the occasion of the millennium of its foundation, but the then Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente (IsMEO), owner of the negatives, at the last moment withdrew the support to the project and the permission to publish the photographs (see Vitali 1999: 3). After having revised the Tholing photographs with the help of Tucci's notes, I was able to better appreciate the accuracy of Vitali's work, who successfully combined the analysis of the remains of the monastery with the available written and oral sources. I have therefore to regret that the photographs have not been properly published on that occasion. Even more so since a few years ago short-sighted political considerations left the former IsMEO/ISIAO library and archives in deplorable conditions.

On the other hand, I am happy to say that, after having combined Tucci's field records with the photographs exposed in 1933, the reconstructed sequence of the negatives holds up pretty well, the only major changes being the chronological order of two roll films and the attribution of a few frames to another roll film. Twenty years ago we had arranged them relying on the published travelogue of the expedition (Tucci & Ghersi 1934; Tucci & Ghersi 1936, henceforth *Cronaca*), and assuming that the two Italians always visited together the buildings, taking notes and photographs. A typed copy of Ghersi's personal diary (Bellatalla 2016, henceforth *Diario*) and Tucci's field records transcribed in the Appendix demonstrate that this was not always the case.

As I already pointed out (Nalesini 2008), the reconstruction of the textual and visual sources of the expedition, as well as the establishment of a strong connection between the sequences of the photographs and the chronicle of the activities of the two Italians are the best way to attain a credible identification of the images. The discovery of Tucci's *Notepad* is – no doubt – a significant addition to the sources on the 1933 expedition, as it gives the opportunity to identify more precisely the photographs taken in that year, and to revise our old work. For the first time it is thus possible to publish these photographs as a whole, though by necessity in small size, proposing a new sequence which I deem very close to the original one (Figs 8-14).⁹

The collation of the different travelogues on the 1933 expedition, and especially of *Cronaca* with *Notepad*, proved far from simple because of omissions and

9 In these figures the frame number and, in brackets, the negative or print (P-) access number are placed under each image. A question mark indicates a doubtful placement.

contradictions. According to *Cronaca*, to begin with, on September 19th Tucci and Gherzi successfully bargained with the abbot (*mkhan po*) and the treasurer (*phyag mdzod*) of Tholing the permission to visit the monastery without restrictions, but on that day they were allowed only a first survey on the exterior as the monks were performing ceremonies in the temples. Gherzi had thus the opportunity to pan over the site with his cine-camera and produce unique panoramic views of the monastery and its surroundings (Istituto Luce 1934; Fig. 1). The morning of September 20th was apparently spent again in discussions with the local authorities. Only in the afternoon Tucci and Gherzi were finally able to start fieldwork exploring the ruins of Upper Tholing (Tholing alto).¹⁰ The visit to the monastery took place on September 21st, and according to *Diario*, Gherzi had to photograph works of art and books for six hours (Bellatalla 2016: 169).

This version is partially contradicted by *Notepad*. According to it, Tucci visited the so called Ye shes 'od temple, i.e. the dPal dpe med lhun gyis grub pa'i gtsug lag khang,¹¹ soon after the first meeting with the authorities (f. 2r and Fig. 2).

On the next folios of *Notepad*, 3r and 4r, Tucci sketched two plans of this building. The first one basically is a schematic representation of the entire temple (Fig. 3), while the second is a plan of the entrance to the complex and the *lha khang* of its core, the rNam par snang mdzad (Fig. 4).¹² Above the latter, Tucci wrote “foto rotolo Tolin Anticamera” (photo roll film Tholing Antechamber), where ‘Anticamera’ obviously is the 'du khang Thub dbang bDul 'dul ma, positioned between the entrance to the temple and the rNam par snang mdzad (see Vitali 1999: 84-85). This plan bears references to the photographs taken by Gherzi in this part of the temple, consecutively numbered 1 through 8.

Even a quick look at the Tholing roll films shows that no one of them can possibly contain a sequence of frames numbered 1 through 8 showing images that might be compatible with the decorations of the rNam par snang mdzad. The figures on the plan in fact do not refer to the frames numbers, which were still unknown to Tucci since he was writing while Gherzi was photographing, but to the subjects of the photographs and the order in which Gherzi took them.

The analysis of the sequence of the frames in this roll film demonstrate it. As can be seen on Fig. 9, the exterior views of the door of the lHa khang dkar po (frame 9)

10 Shing gra hill (Vitali 1999: 103, 105), where Gherzi discovered the well known manuscripts (see De Rossi Filibeck 2003: 437-46; De Rossi Filibeck 2007; Heller & Eng [in press]). According to Tucci (1937: 167), the Tibetan name of Upper Tholing was Phyi murti.

11 As a rule, I refer to Vitali 1999 for the names and position of the buildings.

12 Recent plans of this area, as published by Luczanits 1996, Vitali 1999 and Wang 2001, differ significantly from Tucci's drawings. He apparently did not realise that the western wall of 'anticamera' was also dividing this hall from the Mi skyod pa lha khang in the rNam par snang mdzad. Therefore, he sketched a second non-existent hall between the entrance to the rNam par snang mdzad and the wall of the 'du khang with a Buddha statue (Figs 3 and 4; cf. Tucci & Gherzi 1934: 311, fig. 227; Tucci & Gherzi 1936: 163).

and of a corner of the dPal dpe med lhun gyis grub pa'i gtsug lag khang (frame 10) mark the beginning of the photographs taken inside the temple. Then follow four images of mural paintings representing the Life of the Buddha (frames 11-14). They certainly correspond to the “མཛད་པ་ 12” written in the lower left corner of the plan sketched on f. 3r,¹³ and, arguably, to the “Id[em]” written in the lower right corner of the same plan (Fig. 3 letters N and O). This may mean that the Life of Buddha was painted on the two different walls, on the left and right sides of the hall. This fits with the second plan of the hall, drafted on f. 4r, where one can find references to “Fotog. 1” and “Fotog. 2” on the walls to the left and right of the entrance to the first *lha khang* of the brGya tsa, the 'du khang Thub dbang bDul 'dul ma.

There is a second possible reading of these notes: “Fotog. 1” may refer to the paintings as a whole (frames 11-14), while “Fotog. 2” indicates the place where stood the statue of Maitreya pictured in the next frame 15, and erroneously published by Tucci as Avalokiteśvara (Tucci 1934d: 282). Vitali (1999: 126) and Luczanits (2004: 209) supposed it stood in the Byams khang of the brGya tsa. The plan on f. 3r in fact shows a “Campa grande in piedi” (large standing Byams pa) in the westernmost *lha khang* of the brGya tsa. However, in this case, Gherzi would have to pass through the entire brGya tsa to shot a unique picture and then walk back to the entrance of the temple. In my opinion, the statue pictured in this frame more likely is the statue of Byams [pa] mentioned in the *Me glang rten deb* of Tholing, f. 53r (Vitali 1999: 73 and 169), standing to the left of the main statue of Thub dbang in the 'du khang Thub dbang bDul 'dul ma. Tucci drawn its rectangular base in both plans, and marked it with a “Sakya tuba” on f. 3r and “Statua/e di Buddha” on f. 4r.

“Foto 3” on f. 4r corresponds to frame 16, and portrays the statue of Rin 'byung (Ratnasambhava), which, according to *Cronaca* (Tucci & Gherzi 1934: 314, fig. 229; Tucci & Gherzi 1936: facing p. 167) was in the southern *glo 'bur* of the rNam par snang mdzad.¹⁴ Unfortunately, the following frames are lost.

The last survived frame of this sequence, and possibly of the roll film, is an exterior view taken at sunset (Fig. 9/26; cf. Tucci & Gherzi 1934: 299, fig. 217)

13 It obviously is the representation of the Life of the Buddha called *mdzad pa bcu gnyis* (cf. Tucci 1935a: 77). These paintings have been discussed by Klimburg-Salter 1988: 193-94, and correctly located by Vitali 1999: 125.

14 Vitali (1999: 124, n. 119) located in the Rin chen 'byung ldan lha khang also the first two frames of roll film 3 (Fig. 12/0-1), mainly on the basis of the memories of the monks and elders who lived in Tholing at the time of its destruction. These two photographs, which can be better appreciated once they are stitched together (Fig. 7), show, however, mural decorations that – in my view – are stylistically not compatible with those surrounding the statue of Rin 'byung. Moreover, the main sculpture visible in this *lha khang* is an eight-armed eleven-headed sPyan ras gzigs, and there is no visible trace of the statue of Ratnasambhava with its surrounding elaborated stucco decoration. Last but not least, there is a strict correspondence of what can be seen in these photographs and the description of the *lha khang* written by Tucci (see below f. 4v). I am grateful to Roberto Vitali for having expounded his opinion on the identification of these two photographs.

marking the end of that day. Contrary to the statements of *Cronaca* and *Diario*, therefore, Tucci and Gheresi visited the rNam par snang mdzad on the first day passed at Tholing.

The folios written during the following days are a bit more puzzling. After the rNam par snang mdzad, Tucci described the “cappelle” (i.e. *lha khang*) of the surrounding brGya tsa. Surprisingly, the photographic references on these folios are not to roll film 2, as one would have expected, but to roll film 3. Roll film 2, in fact, appears several folios below in connection with the temple of 16 Arhats (i.e. gNas bcu lha khang; see Vitali 1999: 88-89, 97), the 'Du khang and the ruins of Upper Tholing (ff. 11r-13v). These photographic references have been added later, as their thicker and softer strokes drawn with a dull point clearly show (Fig. 5).

The key to understanding this inconsistency is on f. 13r, where Tucci wrote “Escursione di Gheresi alto Toling” (Gheresi’s hike Upper Tholing). Contrary to the claims of the published travelogue (Tucci & Gheresi 1934: 303; Tucci & Gheresi 1936: 160), Tucci’s field notes let us know that on the afternoon of September 20th Gheresi explored Upper Tholing alone, while he remained at the monastery; a circumstance confirmed by Gheresi’s *Diario* (Bellatalla 2016: 168).

The most plausible interpretation is that on the morning of September 20th Gheresi photographed the temple of 16 Arhats and the 'Du khang while Tucci was discussing with the authorities. In the afternoon, Gheresi climbed to Upper Tholing and Tucci visited the brGya tsa, sTon rgyud lha khang, lHa khang dkar po and gSer khang. Tucci therefore wrote on his notepad first the notes on the temples he had explored alone (ff. 8r-11r), and then the observations on the temples visited by Gheresi on the basis of the photographs that the photographer had developed in the meanwhile to check the quality of his work, and perhaps printed on a contact proof sheet as an easy reference tool (ff. 13r-v). On September 21st, Tucci guided Gheresi through the *lha khang* he had previously visited alone, indicating him what had to be photographed. This was done with the third roll film, as the second has been exposed the day before.

Not all doubts on the photographic documentation of Tholing have been solved. The location of the painting in frames 5-7 of roll film 1 remains unclear. Vitali (1999: 96) believes that they were in the entrance room (sGo khang) of the brGya tsa, but this hypothesis contrasts with the position of the frames in the roll film, which clearly shows that Gheresi took them before entering the brGya tsa (Fig. 9). There remain doubts also on the mural paintings of roll film 4,¹⁵ frames 1-3 (Fig. 14). Vitali (1999: 128) located them with sound arguments in the gSung chos ra ba. Tucci otherwise somewhat linked them to the paintings of the Tshe dpag med lha khang in the brGya tsa, by drawing an arrow in his notes (f. 7r; Fig. 5), but it remains unclear whether he meant the location of the paintings, or just inserted a reminder of iconographic or stylistic similarities.

15 Named ‘Stantze I’ (my most plausible reading, see Fig. 5) by Tucci. It contains the last photographs taken at Tholing and the first shot at Tsaparang (as on f. 17r, not transcribed here).

The position of these frames is not very helpful to solve the question. They have been exposed immediately after the paintings and the door of the gSer khang (Fig. 13/27-38), and immediately before the frames showing again the door of that temple (Fig. 14/4-9; cf. f. 10r), which suggests that all these photographs have been taken there. On the other hand, the two frames under discussion are at the very beginning of a roll film containing also the first photographs taken at Tsaparang. Consequently, they might have been exposed the day after. If the latter was the case, what might have happened is that Gheresi has discovered, on developing the negatives at night, that his photograph of the door was not as good as expected, and decided to take it again next morning, before leaving Tholing. As he would have developed the negatives in Tsaparang, he decided to shot a series of photographs to the door of the gSer khang with the same framing but with different exposure settings (Fig. 14/4-9; cf. f10r).

Though several points of the documentation on Tholing gathered or produced by Tucci are still cryptic, the discovery of his *Notepad* allowed a more reliable identification of Gheresi's photographs. Hopefully, a small progress toward a better knowledge of the 'mother' monastery of Gu ge.

Appendix 1

The *lha khang* of the brGya tsa

The correspondence of “I cappella” and “luogo diverso” with the actual *lha khang* is uncertain.¹⁶ The position of the Byams pa ngal gso lha khang according to Vitali (1999: 92, pl. VII no. 18) differs from Tucci’s drawing (Fig. 3, letter I “Ciampa seduto”).

FIG.	TUCCI	VITALI 1999	WANG 2001
1/11-16	Anticamera	’du khang Thub dbang bDul ’dul ma	释迦殿 Shijia dian
3/0-1	I cappella	’Jigs byed lha khang lTung bshags (or A tsa ra) lha khang	护法神殿 Hufashen dian 阿扎惹殿 Azare dian
3/2	II cappella	lHa khang bKra shis ’od bar	扎西威巴殿 Zaxiweiba dian
3/3	III cappella	sMan lha khang	药师殿 Yaoshi dian
3/4	IV cappella	Thugs rje lha khang	观音殿 Guanyin dian
3/5	V cappella	sGrol ma lha khang	度母殿 Dumu dian
	VI cappella	rGyal ba rigs lnga lha khang bSrung ma khang Byams khang	五佛殿 Wufu dian 护法殿 Hufa dian 强巴殿 Jiangba dian
3/6-8	VII cappella	Phyag rdor lha khang	金刚持殿 Jingang chi dian
3/9-10	VIII cappella	Byams pa ngal gso lha khang Bla ma lha khang	佛母殿 Fumu dian 修习状强巴殿 Xiuxi zhuang jiangba dian
	Altra cappella	Yum chen mo lha khang	宗喀巴殿 Zongkaba dian
3/11-13	Altra cappella	Tshe dpag med lha khang	无量寿佛殿 Wuliangshoufu dian
3/14	Altra cappella	’Jigs brgyad lha khang	甘珠尔殿 Ganzhuer dian
3/15-16	Luogo diverso	gSung chos lha khang ’Jam dbyang lha khang	丹珠尔殿 Danzhuer dian 文殊殿 Wenshu dian

¹⁶ The sGrol ma and Tshe dpag med lha khang have been discussed also by Luczanits 1996 and Luczanits 2004: 282-83 respectively.

Appendix 2

Tucci's Field Records

What follows is a semi-diplomatic transcription of folios 1r-16v of the *Notepad*. Wylie transcription of Tibetan words is in footnote when Tucci's transcription may generate confusion. A “|” marks the end of line when there exist doubts on the correct syntactical or semantic link. My additions are in square brackets; [?] indicate doubtful reading, and a number in bold square brackets (e.g. [1r]) marks the beginning of a folio, recto or verso. Tucci traced dividing lines (—) to separate the descriptions of different *lha khang* or other features. Please note that he normally omitted diacritics, aspirations and 'a chung.

[1r] Settembre 14 partenza da Gartok

གོང་སྤུ་ ཚོ་རིང་

Gargunsa Garyarsa[?]

15 [settembre] sera al passo

16 [settembre] passato il Bogo La | accampato tenda[?]

[1v blank]

[2r] སྤྱི་རི་སྐྱར་ནས་ལྗོང་པོ་ཐོ་གླིང་ཕྱོག་ལ་འགོ་བའི་ལའི་མིང་པོ་གོ་ལ་ (Pogola)

17 [settembre] Discesa a Donbo | molti ciorten¹⁷ e rovine di un tempio | poche antichità presso[?] templi [Fig. 8/10-21]

ལྗོང་པོ། རིན་ས།

18 [settembre] a Toling passando per rovine di རིན་ས། molti tsatsa [sic]

[2v] 19 [settembre] Toling visita del Chanzod¹⁸ | anche al Khampo¹⁹ | visita al tempio

di Ye ses od ← རོན་ཡོད་གྲུབ་པ། | མི་བསྐྱོད་པ་

[on the left margin:] Rinchen[illegible]

[plan of a building; Fig. 2]

[3r] དཔལ་དཔེ་མེད་ལྷན་གྱིས་གྲུབ་པའི་ལྷ་ཁང་ [Fig. 3]

17 *mchod rten*.

18 *phyag mdzod*.

19 *mkhan po*.

[A] *campa*²⁰ grande in piedi [B] *Od pa med*²¹ [C] *Rinchen chulden*²² [D] *Rnam par Snan mzat*²³ [E] རྫོན་ཡོད་གླུ་པའི། [F] *Lokanata* [*sic*] *Lhak[hang]* [G] porta [H] མི་བསྐྱོད་པ། [I] *Campa seduto* [L] 16 arhat [M] *Sākyatuba*²⁴ [N] མཛེད་པ་ 12 [O] id.

[3v] Tempio centrale | Viste le pitture | vicino[?] di *Dechog*²⁵ | le statue di *Kunrig*

[4r] Foto Rotolo Tolin Anticamera [Fig. 4]

[A] Statua [or: Statue] di Buddha [B] Statua foto

[4v] Rotolo III di Tolin

1^a cappella pitture

Fot III 44 ལྷན་ལྷ་ e 1 ཨ་ར་པ་ཅན་ | ལྷན་རས་གཟིགས་ | 2 ལོ་རྒྱུ་བ་ 2 [Fig. 12/0-1]

Foto 2 [Fig. 12/2] II^a [cappella] | parete laterale ambiente[?] | *Canrezig*²⁶ | sinistra *Zepamed*²⁷

[on the right margin:] Centrale[?] | Buddha | rientro[?]

[5r] *Od zer*[?] *jam mo*

Foto 3 [Fig. 12/3] 3^a cappella

centrale

| *Vairocana* | ← intorno *tanc'a*²⁸ sulle pareti

8 *Sman lha*

circumambulazione con *bskalbzhan po*

4^a [cappella] vuota

Foto 4 [Fig. 12/4] 5^a [cappella] Statua di *Samvara* in bronzo e *Tara* in bronzo [5v] e sulle pareti *tanc'a* arrotolate

(yum libri)

20 *Byams pa*.

21 *'Od dpag med*.

22 *Rin chen 'byung ldan*.

23 *rNam par snang mdzad*.

24 *Shākya thub pa*.

25 *bDe mchog*.

26 *sPyan ras gzigs*.

27 *Tshe dpag med*.

28 *thang ka*.

Foto 5 [Fig. 12/5] 6^a [cappella] Rigs lna²⁹ con Vairoca[na] in mezzo tanc'a[?] [6r] e drup tob³⁰ (bkargyud[?]) vicino a Vairocana sulla parete centrale

Foto 6, 7, 8 [Fig. 12/6-8] 7^a [cappella] pyag dor³¹
kyil k'or³²

3 “ [small scheme] uno al centro e uno per lato

Foto 9, 10 [Fig. 12/9-10] 8^a [cappella] | yum c'en mo in stucco e una in bronzo in pose diverse e sulle pareti tanc'a [6v] con un guru | dieci od pa med

altra [cappella] tsonk'apa³³ in bronzo | nascita di Budda | ལྷོ་མ་གཙོ་འཛེར་ [?]
[on right margin a small sketchy drawing/plan and] k'rims[?] rab

[7r] Fot 11, 12, 13 [Fig. 12/11-13] altra [cappella]

Tsepamed | tso k'or³⁴ | circumambulazione di bskalbzhan po e kyil k'or di Vairocana [simple drawing, perhaps showing the position of] pittura di Lotsava del Tsok'or → Fot. Stantze[?] I 1,2,3 [Figs 5 and 14/1-3]

[7v] altra [cappella] Fot. 14 [Fig. 12/14] drol ma e immagine del sabdag del luogo debellato da Rincen bzhan po | dorje c'en mo e Sman lha (Yum lha mo) sulla parete

Arapacana al centro (Jampel rdorje)³⁵

luogo diverso | Kun rig a sinistra foto 15 | d[estra] Vairocana foto 16 [Fig. 12/15-16]

[8r] Poi[?] tongyud lha k[hang]³⁶ | grande mani [dung skor] | parete bskalbzhan [po al] centro[?] e Sakyatuba

Cianrezig Drolma

intorno bskalbzhan po

29 *rigs lnga*.

30 *grub thob*.

31 *Phyag rdor*.

32 *dkyil 'khor*.

33 *Tsong kha pa*.

34 *tshogs 'khor?*

35 *'Jam dpal rdo rje*.

36 *sTon rgyud lha khang*, or *Ma ñi lha khang* (see Vitali 1999: 90).

[8v] Altro tempio con ingresso barbarico fotografato rotolo I° [Fig. 9/9] ལྷ་ཁང་དཀར་པོ་

Sakyatuba[?] | Sman lha [two illegible characters] in stucco

parete a destra pitture: [Figs 12/17-19, 13/20-26] Zonk'apa 17 Pan c'en 18 Rnal jor ma³⁷ 19 Yum c'en mo 20 [9r] 21 གདུགས་ཀྱངས། | སོ་སོར་སྐད་མ་ 22 | drol ma 23, 24 | dei dei cimiteri 25 | sulla parete alla destra della porta rnam tos [sic] sras (Vaisravana) [9v] sulla parete di sinistra nascita di Buddha 26

[small drawing/plan/scheme]

[10r] porta Serk'an³⁸ (foto Stantze[?] I 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 [Fig. 14/4-9])

ingresso con molti di[pi]nti di demc'og[?]

I sala [Fig. 13/27-34] centro Sambuta[?] kyil k'or 27

sinistra Sambu[?] jamdpal dorje 28 | destra demcog³⁹ 29

a sinistra della porta in alto dus kyi korlo⁴⁰ 32

a destra Kye rdorje 30, 31 | [10v] in basso a destra 34 ཡ་མན་དཀར། | a sinistra 33 དམ་ཅན་ཚོས་
ཀྱི་རྒྱས་པོ་

ingresso circumambulazione Buddha

35 (porta a scene[?]) [Fig. 13/35]

[11r] II° piano | [crossed out: ingresso] 3 kyilkor [Fig. 13/36-38]

foto 36 Rnam par snang zad⁴¹ e Kun rig (Kunrig)

37 id

38 id

III° piano vuoto

37 rNal 'byor ma.

38 gSer khang.

39 bDe mchog.

40 Dus kyi 'khor lo.

41 rNam par snang mdzad.

[crossed out: III° piano | (illegible) | 16 kil k'or | bskalbzhan po]
 tempio dei 16 Arhat statue in stucco recenti pareti bskalbzhan po [11v] in basso a sinistra
 proseguimento[?] della astasahasrika⁴² scritta e raffigurante བྱང་རྒྱལ་སེམས་དཔལ་ཉག་⁴³ ཏུ་སུ་
 (sadāprarudita)

vicino[?] alla porta re del Tibet Srontsen bsangpo[?] | Lotsava | (Foto II 44, 1, 2, 3
 [Fig. 10/0-3])

[12r] dopo la porta ཏུ་རྩོམ་མོ་དམག་ཐོང་མ་། ལྷ་མོ་གུར་ཇོ་མ་ sa bdag del luogo

di fronte nicchia con Śākyatuba

Dus k'an

[12v] Sakyat[uba]

Tzepamed Ciampa

Foto rot[olo] II°, 4 [Fig. 10/4]

dietro figura di Budda e affreschi di tara[?] che davanti[?] va scomparendo

Sala delle adunanze

[13r] Escursione di Gheri alto Toling | Toling alto visita di Gheri

Tempio in basso rosso

Foto II 13, e 9 interno | 14 vista d'insieme | 7 particolare di ciorten vicino al 14 [Fig.
 10/7-14]

18 laterale sinistra | 19 statua centrale | 20 sinistra parete porta | 21 parete sinistra | 22
 parete destra | 23 estrema parete sinistra | 24 25 26 zoccolo[?] parete destra | 27 parete
 destra estrema | 28 laterale destra | 29 destra[?] e alto[?] [Fig. 10/18-29] | statue ed
 affreschi [13v] del tempio [illegible] pure rovine in un[?] [illegible]

21 [settembre?] C[illegible] in tenda 48 gradi[?]

[14r] [incomplete outline drawing of the outer walls of the Ye shes 'od temple]

[14v blank]

[15r] 3 piano[?] del serk'an སྐ་མེད་རྒྱུད་ཡིན་། ལྷོ་རྒྱུད་ཡིན་། བྱ་རྒྱུད་ཡིན་།

[15v] [pianta] [A] Ser k'an [B] dus k'an [C] gompa dkar po [D] ton gyud [E] ye se[s
 'od] [Fig. 6]

42 *Aṣṭasāhasrikā prajñāpāramitā sūtra*.

43 ཏུ་སུ་

[16r] ai quattro angoli del cag rim⁴⁴ ci sono a distanza diseguale 4 lhababs ciorten. In quello posto a NE⁴⁵ si dice siano i resti del Lotsava | nel convento non c'è biografia di Rin c'en [bzang po]⁴⁶ [16v] e di [?] molte [?] [illegible] Tibet [?]
 22 [settembre] a Tsaparang
 [omissis]

Appendix 3

Index to the Tholing roll films exposed in 1933

Frame	Fig.	ACC. NO.	PLACE, SUBJECT	PUBL.
Roll film 0				
0-8	8	omitted	From the Bogo pass to Dongbo	
9	8	6041/09	Petroglyphs	
10-11	8	6041/10-11	Dongbo, ruins	
12-17	8	omitted	Dongbo, portraits	
18	8	missing		
19-20	8	6046/19-20	Drinsa?, ruins	
21	8	6061/21	Drinsa?, view	<i>Cronaca</i> : 211
22-24	8	missing		
25-26	8	6067/25-26	The Tholing valley	
27-29	8	6067/27-29	Tholing, the chain bridge	
30?	8	missing	Tholing, the chain bridge	<i>Cronaca</i> : 213
31?	8	P-2749	Tholing, the chain bridge	<i>Cronaca</i> : 214
32?-36	8	missing		
37	8	6059/37	Tholing, lha 'bab mchod rten	<i>Cronaca</i> : 218
38	8	6059/38	Tholing, view	
Roll film 1				
1-3	9	missing	Tholing	
4	9	6062/5	Tholing, general view	<i>Cronaca</i> : 216
5-7	9	6025/5-7	Tholing, mural paintings	

44 *lcags ri*.

45 According to Tucci & Ghersi (1934: 301; Tucci & Ghersi 1936: 158) this *mchod rten* stood Northwest. On the alleged presence of relics of Rin chen bzang po, see Vitali 1999: 101, n. 108.

46 Cf. Tucci & Ghersi 1934: 302; Tucci & Ghersi 1936: 159.

Frame	Fig.	ACC. NO.	PLACE, SUBJECT	PUBL.
8	9	missing	Tholing	
9	9	6077/9	Tholing, lHa khang dkar po, door	<i>Cronaca</i> : 232
10	9	6077/10	Tholing, Ye shes 'od temple, view	<i>Cronaca</i> : 228
11-14	9	6035/11-14	Tholing, rNam par snang mdzad, Life of the Buddha	
15	9	6035/15	Tholing, rNam par snang mdzad, Mañjuśrī	Tucci 1934d
16	9	6018/16	Tholing, rNam par snang mdzad, Ratnasambhava	<i>Cronaca</i> : 229
17-25	9	missing		
26	9	6572/26	Tholing, view at sunset	<i>Cronaca</i> : 217
27-38	9	missing (perhaps unexposed)		

Roll film 2

0-2	10	missing	Tholing, temple of 16 Arhat	<i>Cronaca</i> : 236-39
3	10	6571/3	Tholing, temple of 16 Arhat	
4	10	6082/16	Tholing, 'Du khang, Buddha	
5?	10	missing		
6?	10		Upper Tholing, view	Tucci 1934a
7	10		Upper Tholing, Lower temple	<i>Cronaca</i> : 220
8	10	missing	Upper Tholing	
9	10		Upper Tholing, Lower temple	<i>Cronaca</i> : 221
10-12	10	missing	Upper Tholing, Lower temple	
13	10	6061/13	Upper Tholing, Lower temple	
14	10	6057/14	Upper Tholing, Lower temple	<i>Cronaca</i> : 222
15-17	10	missing	Upper Tholing	
18-23	10	6002/18-23	Upper Tholing, Upper temple	19= <i>Cronaca</i> : 224
24-25	11	6002/24-25	Upper Tholing, Upper temple	
26?	11		Upper Tholing, Upper temple	<i>Cronaca</i> 223
27?-29	11	missing	Upper Tholing	
30-32	11	6017/30-32	Panoramas from Upper Tholing	30=Tucci 1934d
33	11	6055/33	Panorama from Upper Tholing	<i>Cronaca</i> : 215
34	11	missing	Panorama from Upper Tholing	Bellatalla 2016: 157

Roll film 3

0-1	12	6074/44-1	Tholing, brGya tsa, 'Jigs byed or lTung bshags lha khang	
2	12	6074/2	Tholing, brGya tsa, bKra shis 'od bar l.k.	

Frame	Fig.	ACC. NO.	PLACE, SUBJECT	PUBL.
3	12	6074/3	Tholing, brGya tsa, sMan l.k.	
4	12	6077/4	Tholing, brGya tsa, Thugs rje l.k.	<i>Cronaca</i> 231
5	12	6077/5	Tholing, brGya tsa, sGrol ma l.k.	<i>Cronaca</i> 230
6-8	12	6097/6-8	Tholing, brGya tsa, Phyang rdor l.k.	
9-10	12	6097/9-10	Tholing, brGya tsa, Byams pa ngal gso l.k.	Tucci 1973: 127
11-13	12	6097/11-13	Tholing, brGya tsa, Tshe dpag med l.k.	Tucci 1934d
14	12	6097/14	Tholing, brGya tsa, 'Jigs brgyad l.k.	
15-16	12	6097/15-16	Tholing, brGya tsa, gSung chos or 'Jam dbyang l.k.	
17-19	12	6097/17-19	Tholing, lHa khang dkar po	
20-24	13	6061/20-24	Tholing, lHa khang dkar po	20= <i>Cronaca</i> : 233
25-26	13	6004/25-26	Tholing, lHa khang dkar po	
27-30	13	6004/27-30	Tholing, gSer-khang, Mandala	28=Tucci 1949: II
31-32	13	6005/31-32	Tholing, gSer-khang, Mandala	
33-38	13	6007/33-38	Tholing, gSer-khang, Mandala	
Roll film 4 (Stantze 1)				
1-3	14	6071/1-3	Tholing gSung chos ra ba?	
4	14	6071/04	Tholing, gSer khang, door	
5-6?	14	missing	Tholing, gSer khang, door	
7?	14	P-0787	Tholing, gSer khang, door	
8-9	14	6025/8-9	Tholing, gSer khang, door	
10	14	6025/10	Tholing, row of stupa	
11-14?	14	missing		
15?-34	14	omitted	Tsaparang	
Not assignable to any roll film				
	15	P-1616	Tholing, row of stupa	<i>Cronaca</i> : 219
	15	missing	Tholing	<i>Cronaca</i> : 240
	15	missing	Tholing	Tucci 1934d
	15	missing	Tholing	Tucci 1934e
	15	P-1047	Tholing	
	15	P-1062	Tholing, gSer khang, exterior view	<i>Cronaca</i> : 239
	15	P-3268	Tholing, general view	

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dPal dpe med lhun gyis grub pa 'i gtsug lag khang (Ye shes 'od temple) sTon rgyud lha khang (Ma ri lha khang) 'Du khang (lHa khang dmar po)

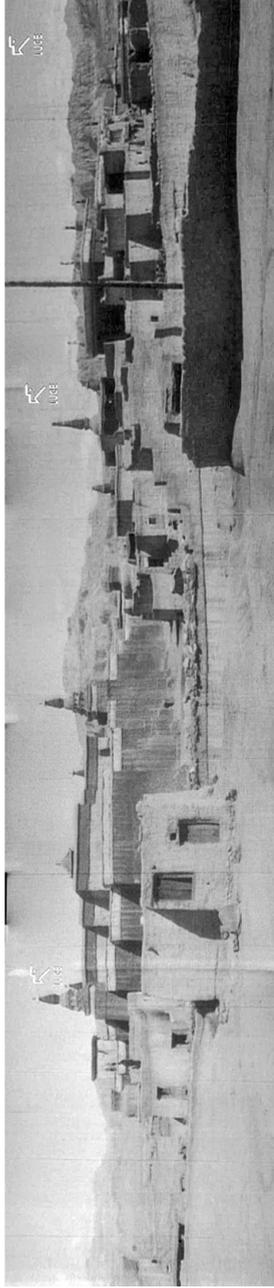


Fig. 1. Panoramic views of Tholing from Gherzi's documentary film (Istituto Luce 1934). Above: The monastery from south; below: rows of *mchod rten* in the neighbourhood of the monastery (Courtesy: Archivio Istituto Luce - Cinecittà).

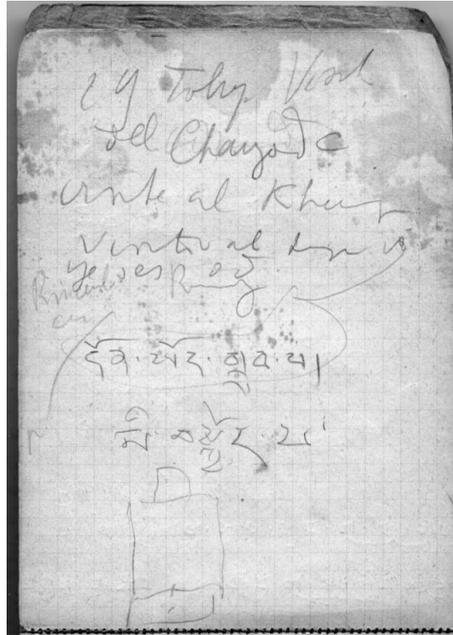


Fig. 2. Giuseppe Tucci, Taccuino, f. 2v.

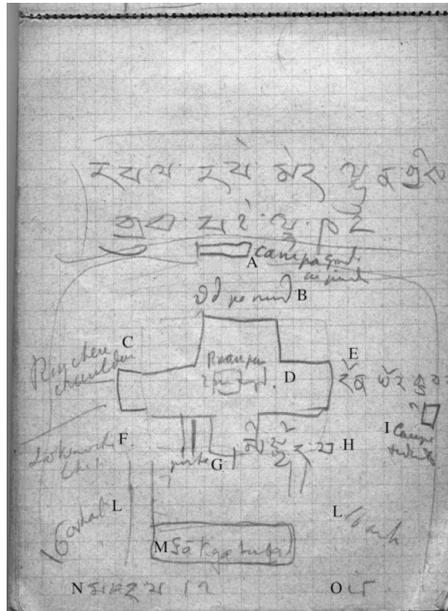


Fig. 3. Giuseppe Tucci, Taccuino, f. 3r.

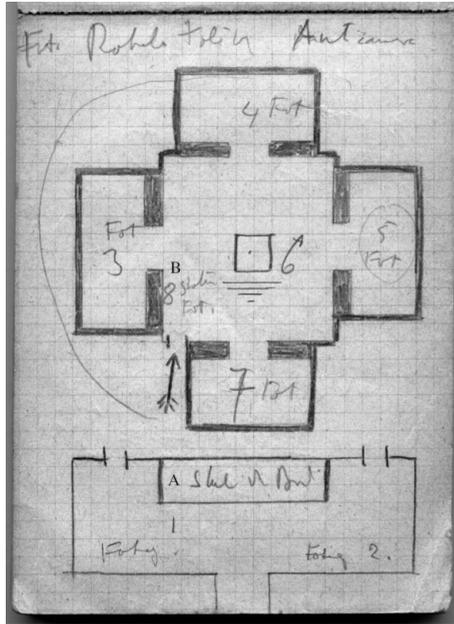


Fig. 4. Giuseppe Tucci, Taccuino, f. 4r.

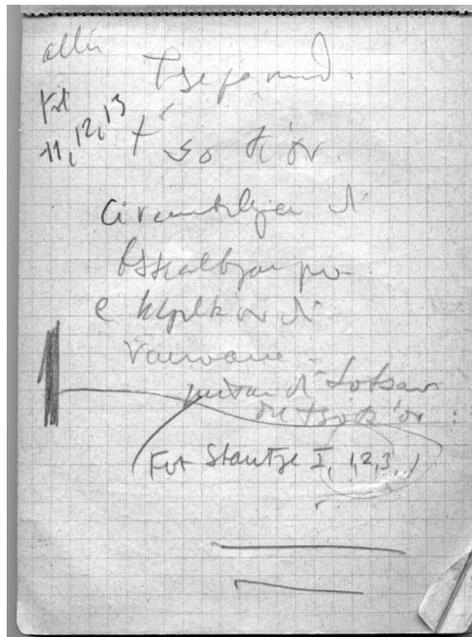


Fig. 5. Giuseppe Tucci, Taccuino, f. 7r.

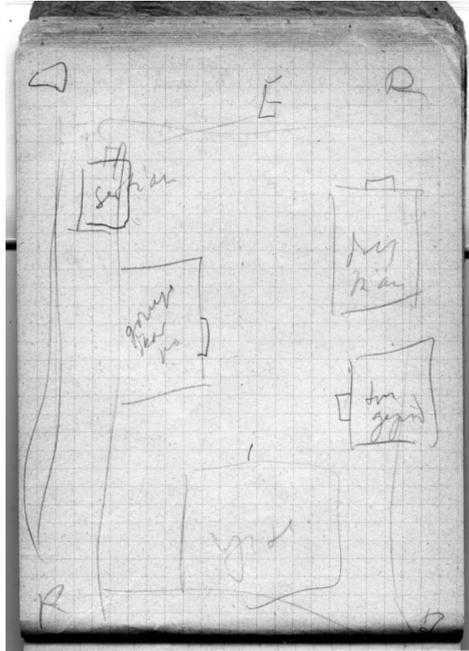


Fig. 6. Giuseppe Tucci, Taccuino, f. 15v.



Fig. 7. The mural paintings of the Jigs byed or ITung bshags lha khang in the brGya tsa.

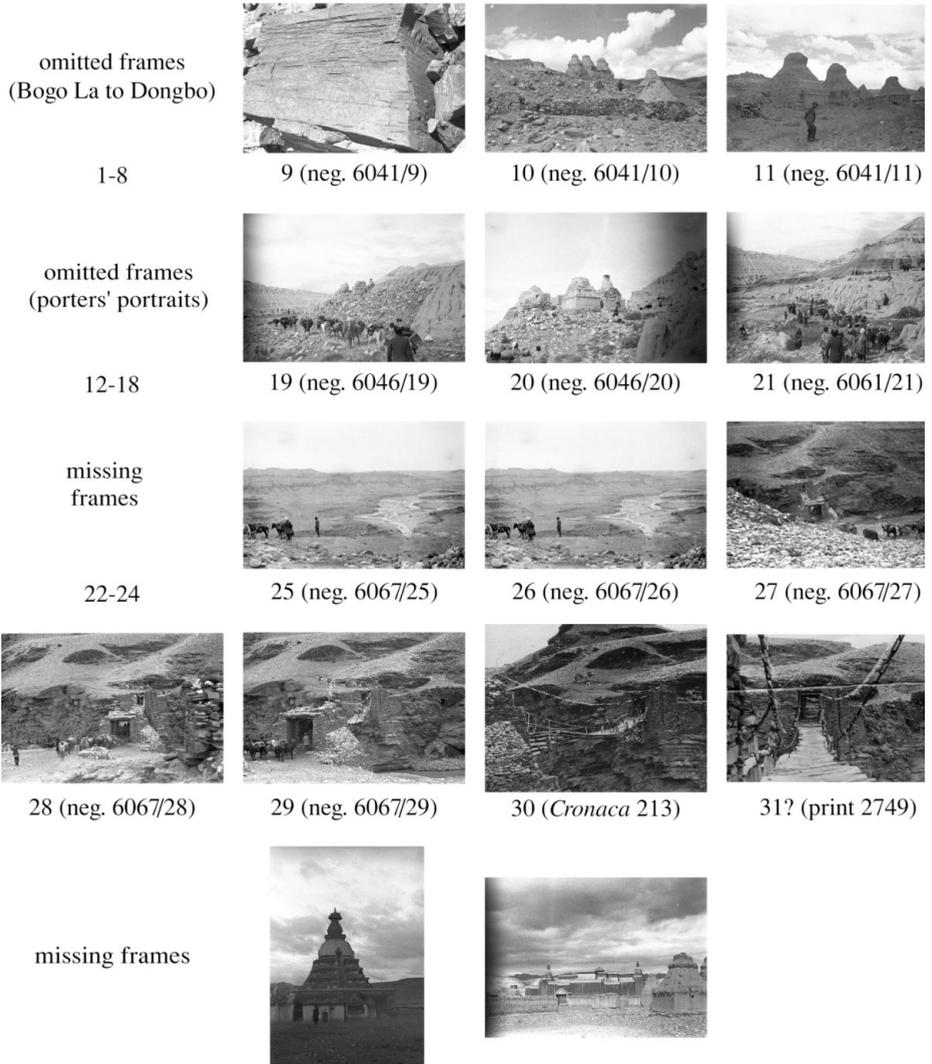


Fig. 8. Tholing roll film no. 0.

missing frames



1-3

4 (neg. 6062/5)

5 (neg. 6025/5)

6 (neg. 6025/6)



missing frame



7 (neg. 6025/7)

8

9 (neg. 6077/9)

10 (neg. 6077/10)

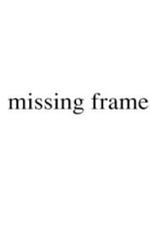


11 (neg. 6035/11)

12 (neg. 6035/12)

13 (neg. 6035/13)

14 (neg. 6035/14)



15 (neg. 6035/15)

16 (neg. 6018/16)

missing frames

17-25

26 (neg. 6572/26)

Fig. 9. Tholing roll film no. 1.



Fig. 10. Tholing roll film no. 2 (frames 1-23).



Fig. 11. Tholing roll film no. 2 (frames 24-34).



0 (neg. 6074/44)



1 (neg. 6074/1)



2 (neg. 6074/2)



3 (neg. 6074/3)



4 (neg. 6077/4)



5 (neg. 6077/5)



6 (neg. 6097/6)



7 (neg. 6097/7)



8 (neg. 6097/8)



9 (neg. 6097/9)



10 (neg. 6097/10)



11 (neg. 6097/11)



12 (neg. 6097/12)



13 (neg. 6097/13)



14 (neg. 6097/14)



15 (neg. 6097/15)



Fig. 12. Tholing roll film no. 3 (frames 0-19).



20 (neg. 6061/20)



21 (neg. 6023/21)



22 (neg. 6023/22)



23 (neg. 6023/23)



24 (neg. 6023/24)



25 (neg. 6004/25)



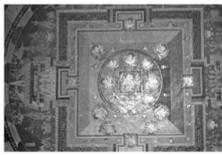
26 (neg. 6004/26)



27 (neg. 6004/27)



28 (neg. 6004/28)



29 (neg. 6004/29)



30 (neg. 6004/30)



31 (neg. 6005/31)



32 (neg. 6005/32)



33 (neg. 6007/33)



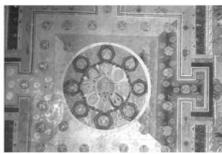
34 (neg. 6007/34)



35 (neg. 6007/35)



36 (neg. 6007/36)



37 (neg. 6007/37)



38 (neg. 6007/38)

Fig. 13. Tholing roll film no. 3 (frames 20-38).



Fig. 14. Tholing roll film no. 4.

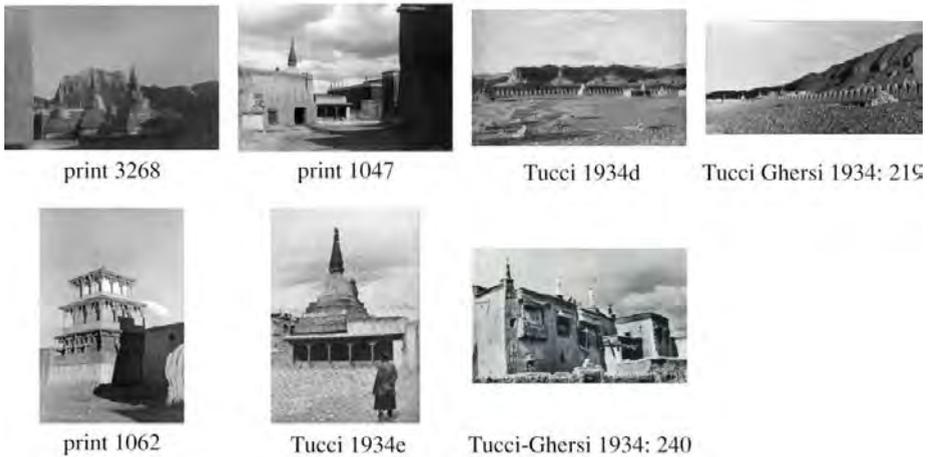


Fig. 15. Photographs not assignable to any specific film.

THE GREAT SEAL AND THE PATH OF MEANS ACCORDING TO PAR PHU PA BLO GROS SENG GE

MARCO PASSAVANTI

(Rome, Italy)

Introduction

Many of the ideas contained in the *Dohās* ascribed to Saraha became the basis for the great development of the doctrine and the practice of Mahāmudrā that took place in Tibet from the 11th century onwards. In this period, the rhetoric of spontaneity and innatism related to the notion of *sahaja*, the “Innate”, became prominent among many Indian and Tibetan followers, especially within the lineages originating from Maitrīpā and his disciples.¹ Tibetan masters like sGam po pa bSod nams rin chen (1079-1153), who inherited Maitrīpā’s teachings, taught Mahāmudrā as a unique distinct path, different from (and even superior to) the conventional Path of Means (*upāyamārga*).² The ideas contained in the entire *Dohā* corpus of Saraha surely played a central role in these developments. The case of Par phu pa Blo gros seng ge is emblematic in this sense. Although he makes no direct reference to sGam po pa in his works, he seems to share with the latter the same view of the Mahāmudrā as a spontaneous and direct path, quite distinct from the conventional tantric path. Both authors draw a clear line of distinction between Mahāmudrā and Upāyamārga, emphasizing the direct recognition of mind’s nature in a spontaneous and effortless way. In this article I will focus in particular on Par phu pa’s critique of the yogic techniques of the Upāyamārga, a topic treated in detail in his commentary on Saraha’s *King Dohā*.

Par phu pa Blo gros seng ge

Par phu ba blo gros seng ge,³ founder of the monastery of sPar phu dgon, authored some of the earliest indigenous commentaries on Saraha’s Three Cycles of *Dohā* (*Dohā skor gsum*).⁴ According to ’Gos lo tsā ba, he was born in g.Yor ru gra and

1 On the innovations introduced by Maitrīpā and the formation of a sūtra-based Mahāmudrā, see Mathes 2006.

2 On sGam po pa’s view of Mahāmudrā, see Jackson 1994: 9-38. On the influence of Saraha’s *Dohās* on bKa’ bryud Mahāmudrā, see Braitstein 2011.

3 His name is differently spelled as sPar phu ba Blo gros seng ge, sPa phu ba Blo gros seng ge, Par phu pa Blo gros seng ge.

4 See Passavanti 2008: 485-86.

belonged to the ancient family of rNgan.⁵ In his youth he engaged in extensive studies under the guidance of the abbot of the gSang phu monastery⁶ Phyā pa Chos kyi Seng ge (1109-1169), eventually becoming one his ‘four wise disciples’ (*shes rab can bzhi*). Phyā pa belonged to the lineage of rNgog Blo ldan shes rab (1059-1109), one of the key figures in the history of the Madhyamaka thought in Tibet during the early *phyi dar* period. As we can imagine, Par phu pa’s early career was definitely scholastically-oriented. It was only in a later phase that Par phu pa became familiar with the Mahāmudrā teachings. The definitive turnpoint in his life was the meeting with Gru shul ba, from whom he received the formal transmission of Saraha’s *Dohā skor gsum* and the related oral instructions.⁷ Another important event in Par phu pa’s life was the meeting with Phag mo gru pa rDo rje rgyal po (1110-1170), whom he met in gDan sa mthil in an unknown date between 1162 and 1168. ’Gos lo tsā ba tells us that when Yel pa Ye shes brtsegs,⁸ one of Phag mo gru pa’s disciples, heard from Par phu pa the teachings on the *Dohās*, he asked him to pay a visit to his master.⁹ Par phu pa eventually accepted to meet Phag mo gru pa and had a long conversation with him. According to ’Gos lo tsā ba, during this first meeting Phag mo gru pa urged Par phu pa to adopt the Cittamatra view, but the latter apparently thought that the master had nothing new to teach him. During a second meeting, Phag mo gru pa offered to Par phu pa a piece of brown sugar on which he made an imprint of a lotus flower; Par phu pa initially refused to eat it, but after being urged by Yel pa, he finally accepted to eat the piece of sugar. This episode can perhaps be interpreted as a symbolic reference to Phar pu pa’s former intellectual knowledge (the lotus flower) *versus* Phag mo gru pa’s approach, which was based on direct experience (the sugar). In any case, the role of Phag mo gru pa in Par phu pa’s career seems to have been crucial. ’Gos lo tsā ba portrays Par phu pa before his meeting with Phag mo gru pa as a sort of proud and arrogant scholar, who was teaching Mahāmudrā without a genuine realization of its deep and experiential meaning, but only of its intellectual aspects. ’Gos lo tsā ba summarizes the content of Par phu pa’s teaching as follows:

“Since he thought that one’s own realization and the realization of a Buddha were not different in their essence, he had his own tenet called ‘The Realization of non-origination’: therefore, he taught that there are no stages of realization of the gradual experience of the four yogas.”¹⁰

5 Cf. DTG: 667; BA: 556. Guenther (1969: 18) has g.Yor po for g.Yo ru gra, and rNga for rNgan. The LGR has Ru’i gra pa rNgan.

6 This monastery, situated to the south of Lha sa, was founded by rNgog Legs pa’i shes rab, a pupil of Atiśa and ’Brom ston, probably around 1073. See Seyfort-Ruegg 2000: 28.

7 Cf. DTG: 1010; BA: 864.

8 Yel pa (Sangs rgyas Yel pa, b. 1134) spent six years with Phag mo gru pa between 1162 and 1168. In 1171 he founded the Shar yel phug monastery in Khams.

9 Cf. DTG: 667-69; BA: 566-67.

10 *rang gyi rtogs pa dang sangs rgyas kyi rtogs pa gnyis ngo bo la khyad med dgongs nas / rtogs*

This passage underlines Par phu pa's straightforward approach: since the awakened qualities are present *ab aeterno* within each individual's mindstream, the realization of Mahāmudrā should take place instantaneously, naturally and spontaneously, without depending on a series of progressive stages of mental development, but rather on the direct and immediate recognition of mind's nature.

According to 'Gos lo tsā ba, Par phu pa's teachings were transmitted to sGyer sgom (1144-1204), who visited the Par phu monastery in 1174. sGyer sgom founded the Nye phu Shug gseb monastery in 1181, and later gave rise to the Shug gseb bKa' brgyud pa order, one of the lesser bKa' brgyud pa schools descending from Phag mo gru pa.¹¹ This school became renown for its specialization in the exegesis of the *Dohās*. Indeed, it was through the Shug gseb lineage that Par phu pa's teachings were handed down to 'Gos lo tsā ba¹² and to Karma 'phrin las pa (1456-1539).¹³ After the 16th-17th century the tradition of Par phu pa seems to have progressively lost its influence and to have become marginal. The oblivion in which the works of Par phu pa have fallen in the last four centuries is perhaps explained by the dramatic decline of the Shugs gseb monastery around the 17th century.

The Origin of the Lineages of Gradual Awakening and of Instantaneous Awakening according to the *Bla ma brgyud pa'i rim pa*.

The *Bla ma brgyud pa'i rim pa* [LGR]¹⁴ contains an account of the legendary origin of the lineage of Mahāmudrā starting from the Buddha Śākyamuni up to Par phu pa Blo gros seng ge. Its anonymous author, who belongs to Par phu pa's lineage and lived two generations after him, speaks of two separate lineages of teaching, related respectively to the gradual (*rim gyis*) awakening and to the immediate (*cig car*) awakening. These two lineages are associated respectively to Mañjuśrī (*alias* Ratnamati) and to Avalokiteśvara (*alias* Mahāsukhanātha Śrī Hayagrīva), to Nāgārjuna and to Saraha, and to the two peaks of Śrīparvata, i.e. Cittavṛāma and Manabhaṅga:

Śākyamuni, the Emanation Body, perfectly and completely exposed to his disciples the three wheels of the teaching. Through [the teaching of] the three

pa skyed med bya ba'i grub mtha' yang yod / des na rnal 'byor bzhi po nyams rim yin gyi rtogs pa'i rim pa min zhes gsung / (Cf. DTG: 669).

11 Cf. DTG: 1042; BA: 893.

12 'Gos lo tsā ba lists the names of the masters of the lineage through which he received the *Dohās* according to the system of Par phu pa (*par lugs*): sGyer sgom, Sangs rgyas dbon, Brag 'bur ba, Shug gseb ri ba, Dam pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan, Mi nyag she rab bzang po, Ri mi 'babs pa bsod nams rin chen. (Cf. DTG: 1010; BA: 864-865). For a history of the Shug gseb lineage deriving from sGyer sgom see DTG: 1042-47; BA: 893-96.

13 See Guenther 1993: 29.

14 Ms. 1095.1 of the Tucci Tibetan Collection in the Library of IsIAO in Rome. For the cataloguing of the text, see De Rossi Filibeck 2003: 395-96. Diplomatic edition in Passavanti 2008: 435-88.

vehicles he thoroughly tamed his disciples. Then, after completing all his holy activities, he went to Karahaṭa to the South of Jambudvīpa. On that occasion, the eight main Bodhisattvas and the Eight Chief Spiritual Sons circumambulated the Lord and asked him: “The Lord has exposed different vehicles for the sake of his disciples; we have [already] requested all the vehicles of provisional and definitive meaning, [but] we still haven’t requested the essential meaning of the instantaneous awakening. We ask you to teach it for the benefit of the Bodhisattvas and for the benefit of all the other disciples.”

The Lord said: “If you wish to realize the essential meaning, summon also the other Bodhisattvas of the Ten Directions.” Then, also the other Bodhisattvas of the Ten Directions gathered. Among them there were the main Bodhisattvas – Maitreya, Mañjuśrī, Avalokiteśvara, Vajrapāṇi, Kṣitigarbha, Ākāśagarbha, Āvaraṇaviṣkambhin, Samantabhadra – and the Chief Spiritual Sons – the Bodhisattvas Candraprabha, Sūryaprabha, Vimalaprabha, Vimalakīrti, Ratnamati, Dharmodgata – and also the Ḍākas etc. He empowered them by displaying the Dharmadhātumaṇḍala of the naturally pure dimension to the countless number of hundreds and thousands of millions that surrounded [him]. In that moment the Bodhisattvas could not see any *dharma* whatsoever; because of not seeing any *dharma* whatsoever, each *dharma* became free from mentation (*yid la byar med pa*). In that moment there wasn’t any *dharma* that was not completely pure to be seen, nor [any *dharma*] that was not pure to be meditated, nor [any *dharma*] that was not pure to be experienced, nor any *dharma* that was not completely pure to be obtained. [The Awakened One] thus spoke: “This indeed is the right view, the right meditation, the right conduct and the right fruit.” In that moment the Bodhisattvas received the empowerment into the nature of things just as it is, they had the direct vision of the absolute truth of the nature of things, they directly realized the essential meaning and gained certainty.

The Lord said to Mañjuśrī and Avalokiteśvara: “Among the people of Jambudvīpa there are worthy ones who are capable of gradual awakening (*rim gyis pa*), and worthy ones who are capable of instantaneous awakening (*cig car pa*): you should act for their benefit!” At that point he made a prophecy: “I see that, right after my *parinirvāṇa*, in the land of Jambudvīpa, two Emanation Bodies will appear: they will ripen and liberate those [who belong respectively] to the Lineage of Gradual Awakening and to the Lineage of Instantaneous Awakening. You will hold these [two lineages]!”. So he prophesied.

Then, in Kuśināgarī, he reabsorbed the manifestation of his Emanation Body, so that the beings who regard things as permanent could generate disenchantment and the lazy ones could practice with diligence. While he was displaying the mode of the *parinirvāṇa* he was dwelling in the Akaniṣṭha dimension in the form of the Body of Complete Enjoyment.

Then, the two mighty Bodhisattvas Mañjuśrī and Avalokiteśvara saw with their eye of gnosis that, among the sentient beings of Jambudvīpa, there were noble persons, fortunate ones who were suitable vessels for the instructions on gradual awakening and for the instructions on instantaneous awakening. Thus, they went respectively on the Cittaviśrama Mountain and on the Manabhaṅga Mountain. Mañjuśrī manifested himself as the Bodhisattva Ratnamati (Blo gros rin chen). He went to the Cittaviśrama Mountain and ripened the mind-stream of the *ācārya* Nāgārjuna through the instructions on gradual awakening. The noble Avalokiteśvara manifested himself as Mahāsukhanātha Śrī Hayagrīva (bDe chen mgon po dpal rTa 'grin). He went to the Manabhaṅga Mountain and ripened the mind-stream of the Great Brahmin Saraha through the instructions on instantaneous awakening. [Avalokiteśvara] went to Śrīparvata in the South: gazing with his eye of gnosis he saw the youngest of the [five] sons of the court-Brahmin of Mahāpāla, the king of the region of Varaṇāsi; he recognized him as the suitable vessel for the teaching on the instructions on instantaneous awakening; he saw that he was to be converted by any means whatsoever. Seeing that he had to be converted by displaying a young girl, he emanated his body [in the form of] five *ḍākinīs* of gnosis: he manifested himself as four Brahmin girls and as one fletcheress (*mda' mkhan ma*).¹⁵

In other parts of the text, the author gives specific informations about the nature and content of the teachings of the two lineages. In the account of the legendary life of Saraha, we read:

At that time he had a vision of the Bodhisattva [Mahā]sukhanātha Śrī Hayagrīva: he apprehended the instructions on the essential meaning which is the Great Seal of instantaneous awakening. He became free from all the worldly and transcendent conceptualizations: he became free from all those conceptualizations such as “I’m a Brahmin, I’m not a Brahmin”, “I’m an ordained monk, I’m not an ordained monk”, “I’m a yogin, I’m not a yogin” and so forth. Because of being instantly liberated by the power of the holy master’s blessing (*byin rlabs*) and by the power of the master’s symbols (*brda'*) – without depending on a path and without depending on a meditative practice (*lam bhem*)¹⁶ *ba la ma ltos par*) – he was called an ‘instantaneist’ (*cig car ba'i gang zag*).¹⁷

In the account of the legendary life of the *ācārya* Nāgārjuna, we read:

The first master [of the Lineage of Gradual Awakening] was the *ācārya* Nāgārjuna. He was born within a family of Brahmins, in the market-town of Bheta in the

15 Cf. LGR: ff. 1b4-3a2.

16 Abbreviated form (*bsduṣ yig*) for *bhāvanā*.

17 Cf. LGR: f. 4a2-4a6.

South. His father was the Brahmin Krig gra ya, his mother was called Gha ti. At the moment of his birth the name “Nāgārjuna” resounded in the sky. His father and his mother called him Dāmodara. As an ordained monk, his name was Śākyamitra; when the Bodhisattva Ratnamati accepted him as a disciple, his name was Advayavajra; he was famed as Nāgārjuna. He met the Bodhisattva Ratnamati – an emanation of Mañjuśrī – and studied with him the five stages, the four seals etc. He learned from him all the instructions on gradual awakening. Then he met the Great Brahmin Saraha and learned from him all the instructions on instantaneous awakening.¹⁸

If we put together the different elements found in these parts of the LGR, we can easily get a picture of the hermeneutic framework thorough which Par phu pa and his followers structured their teachings. According to this school, the tradition of Saraha is related to the Lineage of Instantaneous Awakening stemming from Avalokiteśvara, it is based on the master’s blessing and on special kind of direct symbolic transmission, and it does not rely on the transformative methods of conventional tantric practice. On the contrary, the tradition of Nāgārjuna is related to the Lineage of Gradual Awakening stemming from Mañjuśrī, it is based on the five stages¹⁹ and on the four seals (*phyag rgya bzhi, caturmudrā*).²⁰

This picture is further clarified in another long part of the LGR, where the author describes the encounter between Maitrīpā and his master Śabareśvara[pāda].²¹ On the two peaks of Śrīparvata, Maitrīpā receives the textual transmission of both lineages by the master and his two consorts. In the long account of Maitrīpā’s life the author traces a fundamental distinction between the teachings of Mahāmudrā and those of the Upāyamārga. We can sum up this distinction with the use of the following scheme:

Lineage of Gradual Awakening	Lineage of Instantaneous Awakening
Mañjuśrī	Avalokiteśvara
Ratnamati	Mahāsukhanātha Śrī Hayagrīva
Nagarjuna	Saraha
Means (<i>upāya</i>)	Discriminating wisdom (<i>prajñā</i>)
Path of Means (<i>upāyamārga</i>): stages of creation and completion	Great Seal (<i>mahāmudrā</i>)
Transmission of <i>Yoganiruttara</i> texts	Transmission of <i>Dohās</i> and <i>Vajragītis</i>
Cittaviśrāma	Manabhaṅga

18 Cf. LGR: f. 5a8-5b3.

19 The five stages are outlined in the homonymous work by the tantric Nāgārjuna, the *Pañcakrama*: (1) *vajrajāpa*, (2) *cittaviśuddhi*, (3) *svādhiṣṭhana*, (4) *abhisambodhi*, (5) *yuganaddha*. Together they encompass the whole system of practice of the Upāyamārga. See Wayman 1977: 171-73. On the five stages in the lineage of Maitrīpā / Maitreyanātha, see Isaacson & Sferra 2014: 329.

20 See n. 40.

21 For an English translation of this part of the LGR, see Passavanti 2014.

As we will see in the following pages, the distinction between Mahāmudrā and Upāyamārga plays a central role in Par phu pa's interpretation of Saraha's *Dohās*, especially in the case of the *King Dohā*.

The *King Dohā* and Par phu pa's Commentary.

The Indo-Nepalese Bal po A su (end of the 11th century) is credited with the first commentary on Saraha's *Dohākoṣanāmacaryāgīti* or '*King Dohā's* (*rGyal po'i dohā*). This work, titled *Do ha mdzod ces bya ba spyod pa'i glu'i 'grel pa don gyi sgron ma*, is the earliest irrefutable proof of the existence of the *King Dohā*. In fact, any reference to the existence of this text before the end of 11th century is purely hypothetical. Indeed, many Tibetan authors, especially Sa skya pa, questioned the authenticity of the *King* and *Queen Dohās* by claiming that these texts were in fact forged by Bal po A su himself; this claim, though based on serious grounds, has been repeatedly rejected by bKa' brgyud pa authors, for whom the *Dohā* trilogy represented one of the most precious teachings of their school.²² Among the works ascribed to Saraha, the *King Dohā* can surely be read as sort of *manifesto* of the spontaneous path of *sahaja*, a path that, in the view of several bKa' brgyud pa commentators, is clearly distinguished from the approach of the Upāyamārga, which is based on the gradual and systematic application of yogic techniques and rituals.

The *Zla ba'i 'od zer* (ZBO) authored by Par phu pa Blo gros seng ge is an extensive commentary on Saraha's *King Dohā*.²³ As far as we know, the ZBO is the first native Tibetan commentary on the *King Dohā*, and thus can be considered one of the earliest sources for the study of the doctrinal history of Mahāmudrā in Tibet. The ZBO and the other works on the *Three Cycles of Dohā* authored by Par phu pa Blo gros seng ge were written in an unknown date, presumably by the end of the 12th century, when the author was head of the monastery of Par phu.²⁴ Until the 16th century, Par phu pa's commentaries seem to have enjoyed a vast reputation, as we can suppose from the mention made by 'Gos lo tsā ba, who affirms that these texts spread everywhere.²⁵ Furthermore, we find frequent quotations of Par phu pa's commentaries in the works of Karma Phrin las pa, who regards him as an authority in the exegesis of the *Dohās*. Nevertheless, despite their wide diffusion, Par phu pa's works have been progressively neglected during the centuries.

22 For a detailed analysis of the controversies on the authenticity of the *Dohā*, see Schaeffer 2006: 71-78.

23 Ms. 1095.7 of the Tucci Tibetan Collection in the Library of IsIAO in Rome.

24 For a summary of Par phu pa's works, see Schaeffer 2005: 65; Passavanti 2008: 485-86.

25 Cf. BA: 864.

Criticisms of the Yogic Techniques of the Upāyamārga in Saraha's *King Dohā*: English Translation of Stanzas 21-28 with Par Phu pa's Synopsis.

Some of the most striking and problematic features found in the *King Dohā* are undoubtedly related to the author's critical hints to several popular and illustrious yogic techniques. As one immediately notices, the author seems to deny any soteriological value to some of the most important practices of the Upāyamārga. This critical attitude is particularly evident in the stanzas from 21 to 28, where the author addresses the following topics:

- 1) Critique of the well-known sexual practice involving the presence of a *karmamudrā* (stanza 21).
- 2) Critique of different kinds of somatopsychic manipulations involving the control of the vital energy (*prāṇāyāma*) and involving the meditation on the subtle body (stanza 22 and 23).
- 3) Critique of an unnamed technique similar to the *khengarīmudrā* (stanza 24).
- 4) General refutation of any kind of ecstatic experience or particular meditative state which might be confused with an authentic awakening (stanzas 25-26).
- 5) Critique of the practices involving the meditation on the dream-state (stanza 27).
- 6) Critique of the practice based on the four seals and on the symbolism of the syllable EVAM.

In this paragraph I provide an English translation of the stanzas from 21 to 28, together with Par phu pa's synopsis, which adds more clarity to the root text.²⁶

Translation

II.2) The detailed explanation of the subdivisions dealing with the path and with what is not the path is divided into two sections:

- The necessity of] leaving aside the conceptualizations²⁷ of the Path of Means.
- The path of the Great Seal and its result.

The first section is divided into three subsections:

- Liberation cannot be achieved through the experience of [the union] of means and wisdom.

²⁶ For the tibetan text of the stanzas 21-28 and Par phu pa's synopsis, see Appendix I below.

²⁷ It is worth noting that here the author defines the whole system of practices related to the path of means as a form of conceptualization (*rnam par rtog pa: vikalpa*): in fact, from the point of view of Par phu pa's approach to Mahāmudrā, any meditative support – be it a visualization, the recitation of a *mantra* or the intercourse with a *karmamudrā* – involves some kind of conceptualization or mental elaboration, which prevents the yogin from the realization of the innate.

- Liberation cannot be achieved through the experience of dreaming.
- Liberation cannot be achieved through the experience of the four seals.

The first subsection is further divided into two sections:

- A specific refutation.
- A general refutation.

The first refutation is twofold:

- Liberation cannot be achieved through the experience based on someone else's body as the source of discriminating wisdom:

21 Being attached to the bliss of sexual union,
 the fool speaks of it as the ultimate truth.
 He is like somebody who leaves his house
 and asks for reports of Kāmarūpa right at its gate.

- Liberation cannot be achieved through the experience based on one's body endowed with skillful means. This section is twofold:

Here the actual meaning [is explained]:

22 Through [the manipulation] of the vital energy,
 in the empty house [of his body],
 the yogin gives rise to an artificial [bliss] in many
 different ways.
 Since he yearns for the faulty [experience] of the
 nectar that falls from the sky, he will fall unconscious.

Here an example is given: liberation cannot be achieved through the experience of melting the syllable HAM:

23 Like a brahmin who, with butter and rice,
 makes an offering in a blazing fire,
 [the yogin] gives rise [to an experience of bliss]
 using the nectar that falls from of the sky.
 He knows that [experience] and clings to it as if it
 were reality as it is.

Liberation cannot be achieved through the experience of sucking the uvula:

- 24 Some people raise the luminosity to the abode of
Brahmā
and with the tongue tickle the uvula as in a
coition.
What fetters them has made [their mind] utterly
confused.
Under the power of pride they call themselves
yogins.

Now a general refutation:

- 25 Positively evaluating their self-knowledge, they
teach it to others.
What has fettered them, that indeed they call
'liberation'.
By discriminating [only] its color, they call
emerald a glass trinket.
The fools do not know to have imagined it to be a
jewel.

- 26 They take brass to be gold:
taking onto the path [their subjective] experience,
they use it to establish the absolute.

Liberation cannot be achieved through the experience of dreaming:

They become attached to the bliss [experienced in] dreams:
they call 'eternal bliss' the impermanent aggregates.

Liberation cannot be achieved through the experience of the four seals:

Having a subjective understanding of the syllable
EVAM
and establishing four seals by differentiating
[four] noetic moments,
they call what they experience 'The Innate'.
It is like looking at reflected images in a mirror

- 28 Like deers that, under the power of illusion,
run towards the water of a mirage without recognizing it,
the fools don't quench their thirst and become fettered:
they hold onto their bliss calling it 'the absolute'.

Upāyamārga and Mahāmudrā in Par phu pa's *Zla ba'i 'od zer*

When we turn our attention to Par phu pa's ZBO, we notice that he does not feel compelled to attenuate the radical content of the statements contained in the stanzas 21-28, but that he reads them quite literally. In one passage of his commentry he speaks of the two paths of Mahāmudrā and Upāyamārga in the following terms:

With regard to the accomplishment of the fruit of the Truth Body, there are the path of inborn Great Seal (*phyag rgya chen po gnyug ma'i lam*) and the path of artificial means (*bcos ma thabs lam*). The path of inborn Great Seal is effortless. Being distinct from all the sorrows of conceiving hope and fear or acceptance and rejection etc., it is the path of great bliss. On the other hand, the path of artificial means involves effort (*'bad rtsol*). It is never free from the sorrows related to hope and fear or to acceptance and rejection. Therefore, it is a path pertaining to the level of the great bliss with defilements (*zag pa dang bcas*).

Those who abandon the sublime bliss of the Great Seal, and roam about elsewhere, in the Path of Means, rely on a path of liberation based on a forced bliss (*rtsol ba'i bde ba*), which arises from the faulty effort of one's body endowed with skillful means, or [they rely on a path based] on what arises from the union of *vajra* and *padma*: they will be far away from the Truth Body, the non-dual Innate.²⁸

As it is evident from this passage, Par phu pa draws a solid line of distinction between Mahāmudrā and Upāyamārga. In his view, the path of Mahāmudrā is effortless, natural and rooted in equanimity, while the Upāyamārga requires a special kind of effort and is constantly associated with the ups and downs of hope and fear, of seeking pleasure and avoiding pain. Both paths, he says, involve bliss (*bde ba, sukha*), but these two kinds of bliss are radically different: the bliss of Mahāmudrā is 'sublime', in the sense of being natural and unfabricated, whereas the bliss experienced by means of somatopsychic techniques or through ritual intercourse with a consort is a 'forced bliss'. Such forced bliss is said to be unnatural and artificial, as it is fabricated by means of a technique. Thus, the bliss of the Upāyamārga is seen by Par phu pa as nothing more than a refined form of attachment.

Commenting upon the stanza 8, Par phu pa lists three different types of individuals or 'vessels' (*gnod pa*) of the teachings: the ordinary ones, the precious ones, and the poisonous ones. He describes the last group of individuals as follows:

Apart from the ordinary and the precious vessels, there are also other vessels, namely the poisonous ones. These vessels [are filled with] the poison of attachment for what is not worthy of attachment. They are those who are involved with the imaginative process (*bsam pa*) of approach and accomplishment (*bsnyen sgrub, sevāsāadhanā*); they are attached to the pure sensory objects of form and so on.²⁹

28 See appendix II, quote 1.

29 See appendix II, quote 2.

This passage refers to the various practices involving deity-yoga (*lha'i rnal 'byor*, *devayoga*) which are based on the visualization of a deity (*yi dam*) and its *maṇḍala*, on the recitation of its *mantra*, etc. These practices are supposed to bring about a complete purification of one's body, speech and mind (which become the body, speech and mind of the deity) and a purification of one's perception of the world (ultimately seen as the *maṇḍala* of the deity). In Par phu pa's view, the practice of deity-yoga has no soteriological value, because even the state of purity experienced through this practice is a potential source of clinging and attachment.

Par phu pa discusses in more detail the techniques of the Upāyamārga in his commentary on stanzas from 21 to 28. First of all he deals with the sexual practice involving the ritual intercourse with a *karmamudrā*:

Stanza 21

No liberation is possible through the experience of relying on someone else's body as the source of discriminating awareness. This topic is treated in the stanza starting with: “**Being attached to the bliss of sexual union**” (*kha sbyor bde la yongs su chags nas*), etc. The foolish [yogin], being attached to the bliss of the union of *vajra* and *padma*, speaks of it as the actual gnosis³⁰ of ultimate truth: he won't get liberated by means of such [bliss]. This fact is illustrated through the simile of the fool who leaves his house in the town of Kāmarūpa. Not recognizing [the town he lives in], he asks right by its gate how Kāmarūpa is like. Similarly, [although] his mind dwells [already] in the Innate, the foolish yogin is unaware of it; he keeps on looking for the innate mind in the [experience of] bliss of the Path of Means, but he won't find it.

In the commentary on the next two stanzas, we find a detailed critique of one of the most important practices of the Upāyamārga, namely the practice of inner heat (*gtum mo*). According to Par phu pa's view, the practices involving the manipulation of the vital energy (*rlung*, *prāṇa*) are bound to produce in the yogin a state of stupefaction, a sort of unnatural and unbalanced condition, similar to a state of intoxication.³¹ Such state is not a natural and spontaneous condition, but rather an artificially-produced experience that can be easily mistaken for a genuine realization of reality. Furthermore,

30 The 'actual gnosis' (*don gyi ye shes*) is the gnosis experienced by the yogin during the fourth empowerment. It is opposed to the 'gnosis based on a similitude' (*dpe'i ye shes*) which is related to the previous three empowerments.

31 These kind of yogic techniques are ridiculized in Saraha's *Mind Treasury* (*Thugs kyi mdzod skye med rdo rje'i lus*): “Drawing energies up and down in the turning centres, guided by those methods, the truth cannot be found; although you may grasp and eject and unite and ignite, there is no difference between these breath control practices and a fool suffering from asthma.” See Braitstein 2011: 77-78.

such state of forced bliss is seen as a powerful source of attachment, not at all different from the common sensual pleasures to which normally one clings onto in daily life:

Stanzas 22-23

No liberation is possible through the experience of melting the [syllable] HAM. This topic is treated in the stanza starting with **through [the manipulation] of the vital energy** (*rlung gi rgyu la*) etc. Within the house of one's body, which has been made empty inside according to the principles of the meditation on the vital energy,³² one gives rise to an artificial [bliss] in different ways and through different methods of meditation on the vital energy. If one extends it, purifies it, shoots it like an arrow, makes it whirl like a wheel and raises it as it whirls, one finally experiences the downward flow of the ambrosia of *bodhicitta* from the HAM located in the center of the great bliss, right in the space of the crown of the head.³³ Such yogin yearns for the experience associated with the faulty act of penetrating into the specific points of the vital energy.³⁴ He will be intoxicated [with that experience] and will fall unconscious. By practicing in this way he

32 The vital energy is generally divided into five main 'winds' (*rlung lnga, pañcavāyu*): 1) *prāṇa* (*srog 'dzin*); 2) *apāna* (*thur sel*); 3) *udāna* (*gyen rgyu*); 4) *vyāna* (*khyab byed*); 5) *samāna* (*me myam*). These five winds are further associated with five Buddha-families, five colours, five elements, five seats and five bodily functions. Cf. Torricelli 1996: 151.

33 The melting of the the syllable HAM refers to the practice of 'inner heat'. After visualizing the multitude of energy channels of the subtle body, the yogin meditates on the ignition of the red syllable A visualized in the navel. The ignition of the A is realized by means of different techniques of *prāṇāyāma* (the so-called 'vase-breathing', *kumbhaka, bum pa can*) and by means of yogic postures (*yantra, 'phrul 'khor*). The blazing A is then visualized as entering the central channel and finally as melting the white syllable HAM located in the head. The progressive 'dripping' of nectar slowly permeates his whole body giving rise to a set of four distinct joys (*dga' ba, ānanda*) which are gradually experienced at the level of the four energy centers. These joys culminate in the fourth joy, the so-called 'innate joy' (*lhan cig skyes pa 'i dga' ba, saḥajānanda*). The practice of inner heat as outlined here follows the concise exposition found in Tilopa's *Ṣaḍdharmopadeśa*. See Torricelli 1996.

34 The specific points (*gnad pa, marman*) of the vital energy refer to the channels of the yogin's subtle body; here the term refers mainly to the central channel (*rtsa dbu ma, avadhūtī*) in which the vital energy is forced to enter by means of various techniques. I base the translation of this line on the emendation I made on the manuscript: the scribe writes *rlung nad du 'gro* ('get a wind-disorder') while I read *rlung gnad du 'gro* ('penetrate into the specific point of the vital force'). Both choices could be accepted as possible translations: the first one has a less technical meaning, implying that the yogic techniques of forcing the vital energy are bound to produce an imbalance in the body. The second choice of translation is more specific, as it refers to the techniques based on the manipulation of the vital energy flowing into the subtle channels. The choice between these two possible translations is complicated by the fact that Karma phrin las pa in his commentary [GDT 189.4] writes *nad du 'gro ba* instead of *gnad du 'gro ba*.

won't attain liberation.³⁵ This topic is illustrated by the stanza starting with **like a brahmin** (*ji ltar bram ze*) etc. A brahmin who wishes to attain liberation makes an offering in a blazing fire using butter and rice, but since he will never be free from clinging, he won't attain it. Similarly, [a yogin] gives rise to a meditative experience by contemplating (*bsams pas*) the downward flow of ambrosia as the nectar of the HAM [located] in the space of the center of the great bliss on the crown of the head. He will not attain liberation because he knows the bliss of that experience and clings to it as if it were reality as it is (*de kho na nyid*).

The next stanza deals with an unnamed practice that probably refers to the *khacarīmudrā* described in many texts of tantric Śaivism and in *haṭhayoga* treatises. It involves the freeing and lengthening of the tongue in order that it might be turned back and inserted above the soft palate to reach the door of Brahmā, (*brahmadvāra* or *brahmarandhra*) so that the yogin can drink the *amṛta*, the nectar of immortality, which is stored behind it:³⁶

Stanza 24

Through the experience of sucking the uvula no liberation is possible. This topic is treated in the stanza starting with **some people** (*kha cig*) etc. Some monks, after raising the luminosity from the syllable located in the navel up to the abode of Brahmā located on the crown of the head,³⁷ meditate on the downflow of bodhicitta. [The act of tickling the uvula] with the tongue as in a coition, refers to the pleasurable experience that occurs by sucking and tickling the uvula with the tip of the tongue. Since [these monks] become attached to it, that experience actually fetters them and confuses the stream of their mind. Under the manifest power of pride they call themselves yogins. They won't be liberated by means of this technique.

In the next section Par phu pa deals with the risk of mistaking the meditative experiences of the Upāyamārga for authentic awakening:

35 Karma phrin las pa follows almost *verbatim* Par phu pa's commentary: *rang lus thabs ldan gyi gdams pa la brten nas rtsa rlung thig le nyams su blang na grol bar 'gyur ro snyam na de yang zag bcas bcos ma'i lam yin pas gnas lugs mthong bar mi 'gyur ro ci'i phyir zhe na rlung bsgom pa'i rgyu mtshan las rang lus khang stong lta bur bsgoms pa'i khyim du ni rlung sbyor sgom thabs rnam pa sna tshogs du ma'i tshul gyis bcos ma'i thabs mang du byas pa stong l mda' ltar 'phang ba dang 'khor lo ltar bskor ba dang bum pa ltar dgang ba sogs la brten nas nam mkhas mtshon pa spyi bo'i ham las byang sems bab pa'i nyams la zhen te nad du 'gro ba'i nyes pa dang bcas pa'i nyams kyi gdung bas myos shing dran med du brgyal bar 'gyur ba'i skyon yod pas de 'dra'i rnal 'byor pa de ni grol bar mi 'gyur bas na rang lus thabs ldan la yang zhen pa thong zhig (GDT 189.2).*

36 For an overview of the development of this technique, see Mallinson 2007: 17-33.

37 In this context, the abode of Brahmā (*tshangs pa'i gnas*, *brahmāvihāra*) refers to the *tshang pa'i bu ga* (*brahmarandhra*, 'the aperture of Brahmā') located on the crown of the head.

Stanza 25 and first two lines of stanza 26

And now a general refutation. This topic is treated in the stanza starting with **[positively evaluating] their self knowledge** (*rang rig de nyid*) etc. and in the following half stanza. **Their self-knowledge** means ‘their own subjective experience’ (*rang gyi nyams su myong ba*).³⁸ **Positively evaluating** means ‘taking as authoritative’ (*tshad mar byas*). Thus, taking as authoritative their own subjective experience, the [foolish yogins] do even teach it to others. Under the influence of the afflictive emotions, using as a means what in fact fetters them, **they call it liberation**; however, **the fools do not know to have imagined it to be a jewel**. Since they are confused about its green color, **they call emerald a glass trinket** and, since they are confused about a piece of gold, **they take brass to be gold**. Carrying onto the path (*lam du khyer*) their [subjective] experience and using it to establish the absolute actual gnosis (*don dam don gyi ye shes*), they become confused.

The commentary on the next half stanza contains a direct critique to the well known practices of ‘dream yoga’, which involve the recognition and the manipulation of dreams as a means of liberation. Again, Par phu pa regards this kind of practices as ephemeral and as a potential source of attachment:

Second two lines of stanza 26

The half stanza starting with **they become attached** (*rmi lam bde la rjes su chags par byed*) etc. deals with the [necessity] of abandoning attachment to the experience of dreaming. Some people say that if one [is able to] recognize the dream-state, one [will be able to] recognize the intermediate state and therefore will attain liberation. However, as these people recognize the dreams, refine them, build them up and change their course, they become progressively attached to the bliss of the dream-experience. Claiming that the aggregates are impermanent while the bliss of the dream-experience is permanent, they affirm that they will be liberated by recognizing the intermediate state. [However], because they are attached to that experience and because [that experience] is impermanent, they won’t be liberated.

The next section opens with a discussion of the syllable EVAM and the four seals. The point that is stressed by the author is the absolute transcendence of *sahaja*. The

38 In Cittamātra literature, the term *rang rig* (*svasamvedana*), which I translated here as ‘self-knowledge’, refers to self-reflexive awareness. In this particular case, as it is clearly suggested by Par phu pa’s commentary, this term should be interpreted in a more vague and general sense. It refers to all the subjective and fabricated yogic experiences which one may wrongly take as authentic realizations of awakening.

realization of the Innate cannot be the result of any specific technique, nor it can fit in a particular meditative experience, for any individual experience is necessarily dualistic, as it implies a subject and an object, a realizer and something realized. Thus, any meditative or ‘ecstatic’ experience is necessarily limited and dualistic because it is an object for the mind. It has a number of specific characteristics (*mtshan ma, lakṣaṇa*) that a meditator can perceive as objects of his meditation. On the other hand, the innate, being completely devoid of characteristics and being not an object for the mind, cannot be reduced to any particular meditative state nor should be conceived in terms of a subject-object relationship:

Stanzas 27-28

No liberation is possible by means of the experience of the four seals. This topic is treated in the stanza starting with **having a subjective understanding of the syllable EVAM** (*e baṃ yi ger rang gis*³⁹ *go bar byed*) etc. It is said that one understands the ignition and the movement of the syllable E on the crown and of the syllable VAM at the navel. Moreover, E is discriminating awareness or emptiness, while VAM is means or appearance. After the two syllables are joined together, one has a personal understanding indicated by the syllable EVAM. Moreover, by differentiating four noetic moments – i.e. the moment of development, the moment devoid of characteristics and so forth – the so-called *karmamudrā*, the *dharmamudrā*, the *samayamudrā* and the *mahāmudrā* are established.⁴⁰ Although what lies at the core of such experiences is said to be the Innate, the characteristics (*mtshan ma*) of these experiences are not the Innate: an experience without foundations (*rtsa bral*) and non-dual, [that indeed] is the Innate! Therefore, those who claim that a [particular] experience (*myong ba*) is the Innate are deluded. They resemble someone who clings to the reflected images in a mirror as if they were concrete objects, or a herd of deers

39 *gis* DC; *gyis* NQ.

40 One of the first mentions of the symbolism of the syllable EVAM is found in the *Hevajratana* (II.iii.4-9), where it symbolizes the union of the opposites realized by the yogin. It is further linked with the four joys (*ānanda, dga' ba*) and with the four noetic moments (*kṣaṇa, skad cig*) that the yogin is supposed to experience during the four empowerments. The four moments are: 1) the moment of variety (*vicitra, rnam pa sna tshogs*); 2) the moment of development (*vipāka, rnam pa smin pa*); 3) the moment of consummation (*vimārda, rnam pa nyed pa*); 4) the moment devoid of characteristics (*vilakṣaṇa, mtshan nyid bral ba*). These elements are associated with four kinds of emptiness (*stong pa, śūnya*) and with four types of seals (*phyag rgya, mudrā*). As to the four seals, they are listed in different orders according to the different authors: 1) *karmamudrā*; 2) *dharmamudrā* (sometimes referred to as *jñānamudrā*); 3) *mahāmudrā*; 4) *samayamudrā*. For a discussion of the complex distinction between the various seals and the four moments, the four emptinesses and the four joys, see Snellgrove 1959: 34; Snellgrove 1987: 243-66. On the four seals in Saraha's adamantine songs, see Braitstein 2011: 62-65; for a discussion of the nature and arrangement of these fourfold elements in the lineage of Maitrīpā / Maytreyaṅātha, see Isaacson & Sferra 2014: 94-111; 385-409.

who mistake the water seen in a mirage for real water, and run towards it. But since a mirage is nothing more than an immaterial appearance, and since no water can be found in it, [the deers] cannot quench their thirst. Similarly, [the yogins] mistake the bliss of the Path of Means for the Innate and, as a consequence, hold onto that bliss: they will not be liberated by means of this method.

Conclusions

In this article I have tried to shed light on the elements that, according to the tradition of Par phu pa Blo gros seng ge, distinguish the path of Mahāmudrā from the conventional tantric methods of the Upāyamārga. To do so, I highlighted several passages from the LGR and the ZBO that are of particular relevance for our discussion. How should we realize Sahaja, the Innate? Is it the outcome of a technique? Is it something that can be produced or fabricated? Is it possible to grasp it within the framework of a meditative experience? Is it possible to perceive the Innate as an object or a mental state, i.e. in terms of a subject-object relationship? In Par phu pa's view all the meditative techniques of the Upāyamārga are ultimately dualistic and artificial, as they are based on a subject (the 'yogin') and on an object (the 'experience'). Furthermore, the subtle state of bliss experienced in many tantric practices – such as ritual intercourse, deity yoga, meditation on subtle-body, *prāṇāyāma*, *khecarīmudrā*, dream yoga, etc. – is a kind of 'intoxication', and is always accompanied by a trace of craving or attachment that eventually reinforces the dualistic framework in which the experience occurs. Clinging is thus the most powerful obstacle to Sahaja, because it urges the yogin to seek something outside himself and prevents him from realizing non duality.

For Par phu pa, the genuine realization of Mahāmudrā cannot be based on techniques, since it involves the complete withdrawal from any dualistic attitude and from any form of grasping. The Great Seal is beyond effort, and requires a simple and direct act of recognition: like the fool of Kāmarūpa, each individual has to recognize the Innate he dwells within. From this point of view, the search for the Innate – the 'quest' itself – is what prevents one from realizing it.

Appendix 1

Stanzas 21-28 of the *Dohākoṣanāma Caryāgīti* together with Par phu pa's Synopsis

The following edition of the Tibetan text of the stanzas 21-28 of Saraha's *Dohākoṣanāma Caryāgīti* or 'King Dohā', is based on one xylograph printed by lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal (1473-1557). I compared lHa btsun's edition with four canonical sources. The variants between the different sources are quoted in footnote. lHa btsun's xylograph is titled *Bram ze chen pos mdzad pa'i dho ha bskor gsum / mdzod drug / ka kha dho ha / sa spyad rnams*. This text is a 37 folios xylograph containing several *Dohākoṣas*. According to the colophon, it was printed by lHa btsun Rin chen rnam rgyal at Brag dkar rta gso monastery in 1543 (*sa pho phyi ba*). The four canonical sources that I consulted are from *sNar thang* (N), *sDe dge* (D), *Cone* (C) and Peking (Q) printed editions of the *bsTan 'gyur*. N and D were accessible to me in the original blockprints of the Narthang and Derge Tanjur kept in the Library of IsIAO in Rome. I consulted Q in the reprint edition of the Peking *Tibetan Tripiṭaka* of the Otani University, Kyōto (TT) and C in the microfiche reproduction of the Cone Tanjur kept in the Library of Congress.⁴¹ I have included in the present edition also a synopsis authored by Par phu pa Blo gros seng ge. This short text, titled *Dho ha bzhi bcu' ba'i don bsdu pa* gives a succinct outline of the topics treated in the *King Dohā*. In order to clearly distinguish the text of the *King Dohā* from Par phu pa's synopsis, the root text is written in italics.

Legenda

<i>gcig</i>	[1]
<i>gnyis</i>	[2]
<i>gsum</i>	[3]
<u>gyin</u>	[Uncertain or unclear reading]
MED	[Ideographic sign meaning <i>med</i>]
ci ltar	[<i>Incipit</i> of the sections of the <i>King Dohā</i>]
{mda'}	[Reconstructed]

laṃ dang laṃ ma yin ba'i dbye' ba bye brag du bshad pa la *gnyis* ste | thabs laṃ gyi

41 N: *rGyud*, vol. *TSI*, ff. 26b5-28b3; Q: *rGyud*, vol. *TSI*, ff. 31b3-34a2; D: *rGyud*, vol. *ZHI*, ff. 26b6-28b6; C: *rGyud*, vol. *ZHI*, ff. 27a2-29a3; lHa: ff. 2a5-4a6.

rnam par rtog pa spang ba dang | [1b5] phyag rgya chen po'i lam 'bras bu dang {b}
cas pa'o | dang po la *gsum* ste | {thab}s dang shes rab kyi nyams kyis myi grol ba dang
| rmi lam rmi lam gyi nyams kyis myi grol ba dang | e bam phyag rgya bzhi'i nyams
[1b6] myong gyis myi grol ba'o |

dang po la *gnyis* ste | so sor dgag pa dang | mthun mong du dgag pa'o | dang po la *gnyis*
ste | gzhan lus shes rab la brten ba'i nyams myong [1b7] gyis myi grol ba dang |

21 | *kha sbyor bde la*⁴² *yongs su chags nas ni*⁴³ |
| 'di nyid don dam yin zhes rmongs pas⁴⁴ smra |
| gang zhig khyim nas byung nas sgo drung du |
| kā ma rū pa'i gtam ni 'dri bar byed |

rang lus thabs ldan la brten ba'i nyams myong gyis myi grol ba'o | | 'di la *gnyis* ste |
rlung gyi don dang |

22 | *rlung gi rgyu la*⁴⁵ / *stong pa'i khyim du ni* | D 28a
| rnam pa du ma'i tshul gyis bcos ma bas |
| *nam mkha' las bab*⁴⁶ *nyes pa*⁴⁷ *dang / bcas pa*⁴⁸ | Q 33a
| *gdung bas brgyal bar gyur pa'i rnal 'byor pa*⁴⁹ |

ci ltar dpe *gnyis ham* bzhus pa'i nyams kyis myi grol [2a1] ba dang |

23 | *ji ltar bram ze mar dang 'bras kyis ni*⁵⁰ |
| 'bar ba'i me la sbyin sreg⁵¹ byed pa ni |
| nam mkha'i bcud kyi rdzas kyis bskyed pa ste |
| 'di de nyid du zhen par shes pa nyid |

kha gcig lce chung nu ba' nyams kyis myi grol ba'o |

24 | *kha cig tshangs pa'i gnas su 'od spar nas* |
| lce yis kun du ru yis lce chung bskyod |
| 'ching bar byed pa shin tu⁵² dkrugs byas te⁵³ |
| nga rgyal dbang gis rnal 'byor pa zhes zer |

42 *la* DC; *ba* NQ.

43 *ni* NQ; *su* DC.

44 *pas* NQ; *pa* DC.

45 *la* NQ; *las* DC.

46 *bab* DC; *babs* NQ.

47 *pa* DC; om. NQ.

48 *pa'i* DC; *pa yi* NQ.

49 *pa* DC; *pa'o* NQ.

50 *ni* DC; *su* NQ.

51 *sreg* DC; *bsreg* NQ.

52 *tu* NQ; *du* DC.

53 *byas te* DC; *byed de* NQ.

mthun mong du dgag pa ni

25 | *rang rig de nyid rig pas gzhan la ston* |
 | *gang gis bcings / pa⁵⁴ de nyid grol zhes zer* | N 28a
 | *kha dog dbye bas 'ching bu mar gad⁵⁵ zer* |
 | *rmongs pas rin cher brtag⁵⁶ pa ma shes pas* |

26 | *de ni ra gan gser gyi blo yis len* |
 | *nyams myong khyer nas don dam sgrub par byed* |

rmi lam rmi lam gyi nyams kyis myi grol ba dang |
 | *rmi lam bde la rjes su chags par byed* |
 | *phung po mi⁵⁷ rtag bde ba rtag ces zer* |

e bam phyag rgya bzhi'i nyams [1b6] myong gyis myi grol ba'o |
 27 | *e bam yi ger rang gis⁵⁸ go bar byed* |
 | *skad cig dbye bas phyag rgya bzhi bkod cing* |
 | *nyams su myong bas lhan cig skyes pa / zer* | C 28b
 | *gzugs brnyan zhes pa⁵⁹ me long lta ba bzhin⁶⁰* |

28 | *ji ltar ma rtogs smig⁶¹ rgyu'i chu la ni* |
 | *'khrul pa'i dbang gis ri dags rgyug par byed* |
 | *rmongs pa⁶² skom pa mi ngoms 'ching bar 'gyur* |
 | *don⁶³ dam zer zhing bde ba len par byed⁶⁴* |

54 *bcings pa* DQC; *bcing ba* N.

55 *mar gad* NQC; *margad* (ligature of *ra* and *ga*) D.

56 *brtag* DQC; *brtags* N.

57 *mi* NDQ; *ma* C.

58 *gis* DC; *gyis* NQ.

59 *pa* DC; *pas* NQ.

60 *ba bzhin* DC; *bzhin no* NQ.

61 *smig* DC; *mig* NQ.

62 *pa* DC; *pas* NQ.

63 *don* NQ; *gang zhig don* DC.

64 *len par byed* NQ; *len* DC.

Appendix II

Excerpts from Par phu pa's Zla ba'i 'od zer

Legenda

Tham<s ca>d	[<i>bsdus yig</i>]
dgo _{ng} s	[written with small characters]
<i>gcig</i>	[1]
<i>gnyis</i>	[2]
<i>gsum</i>	[3]
<i>bzhi</i>	[4]
<u>gyin</u>	[Uncertain or unclear reading]
MED	[Ideographic sign meaning <i>med</i>]
SOGS	[Ideographic sign for <i>sogs</i>]
=	[Unreadable]
{mda'}	[Reconstructed]

Quote 1

'bras bu chos kyi sku sgrub ba la phyag rgya chen po myug ma'i lam⁶⁵ dang | bcos ma thabs kyi lam *gnyis* las | phyag rgya chen po ma bcos pa'i lam ni rtsol ba MED ci re dogs dang blang dor la [4a8] sogs pa rtog pa'i zug rngu tham<s ca>d dang *gnyis* la bas bde' ba chen po'i lam yin la | bcos ma thabs kyi lam ni 'bad rtsol dang bcas shing | re dogs dang blang dor la SOGS pa'i zug rngu dang yang ma bral [4b1] la | zag pa dang bcas pa'i bde' ba cen po'i sa ma yin ba'i lam ma yin ba'o || de lta 'dir phyag rgya chen po dam pa'i bde' ba spangs nas thabs lam gzhan du 'gro zhing [4b2] | <r>do <rj>e dang pad ma 'dus pa las 'byung ba'm | rang lus thabs ldan gyi rtsol ba'i skyon las skyes pa'i rtsol ba'i bde' ba la thar pa'i lam re ba byed de | gnyis MED lhan *gcig* skyes pa chos kyi [4b3] sku las ring du 'gyur te | dper na sbrang mas me tog la sbrang rtsi bshibs shing rang gyi khar bcug pa de nyid phung bar myi byed cing snod gzhan du bsags pas gzhan gyis khyer nas longs [4b4] spyad du MED cing ring bar 'gyur ba bzhin du ces bya'o ||

Quote 2

chags pa'i gnas ma yin ba la chags pa snod dug can ni zhes bya ba'i shu log *gcig* dang tshig yig gcig gyis ston te | rin po che'i snod dang | [5a5] phal pa las gzhan dug can

65 Read: *gnyug ma'i lam*.

bsnyed pa⁶⁶ bsgrub ba'i bsaṃ pa can ni | gzugs la SOGS pa'i yul rnaṃs dag⁶⁷ la rnaṃ
par chags so |

Commentary on stanza 21

gzhan lus shes rab brten ba'i nyaṃs kyis mi grol ba ni [9b4] kha sbyor bde' la zhe bya
ba'i shu log *gcig* gyis ston te | ḍo⁶⁸ dang pad ma khaḥ byar⁶⁹ ba'i bde' ba la chags nas
'di nyid don daṃ don kyī ye <sh>es yin no zhes rmongs pa rnaṃs smra ste des rnaṃ
par myi grol lo || [9b5] dper na rmongs pa gang zhig grong khyer ka ma ru pa'i khyim
nas byung nas ka ma ru pa ngo ma shes nas sgo drung du ka ma ru pa gang yin zhes
'dri ba dang 'dra bar rang gyi seṃs lhan *gcig* skyes pa la gnas [9b6] bzhin du | de ngo
ma shes par thabs laṃ gyi bde' ba la seṃs lhan *gcig* skyes pa tshol bar byed de mi
rnyed ces bya ba'o |

Commentary on stanzas 22-23

‡ | haṃ bzhu' ba'i nyaṃs kyis myi grol ba ni | rlung gyi rgyu las zhes bya [9b7] ba'i
shu log *gcig* gyis ston te | rlung bheṃ ba'i⁷⁰ rgyu mtshan las rang gyi lus khong stong
du byas pa'i khyim du rlung bsgoṃs ba'i thabs rnaṃ pa du ma'i thsul gyis bcos ma
byas pa ste | bsring ba dang *bsang* ba dang [9b8] mda' ltar 'phang ba dang | 'khor lo
ltar bskor ba dang | 'khyims na gdon pa la SOGS pa byas na naṃ mkha' spyi bo bde'
ba chen po'i 'khor lo la gnas pa'i haṃ las bdud rtsi byang chub kyī seṃs [10a1] 'bab
pa'i nyaṃs ni | rlung nad du⁷¹ 'gro ba'i nyes pa dang bcas pa'i nyaṃs myong la gdung
bas myong zhi rgyal bar 'gyur ba'i⁷² rnal 'byor pa de ni nyaṃs des myi grol zhes bya
ba'o | [10a2] dpe' ni ji ltar braṃ ze zhes bya ba shu log *gcig* gyis ston te | ci ltar braṃ
ze mar dang 'bras kyis su | 'bar ba'i me la sbyin sregs byed pas thar pa thob bar 'dod
pa ni zhen pa dang ma bral bas [10a3] myi thob ba *bzhin* du | spyi bo bde' ba chen po
nam mkha'i haṃ gyi bcud kyī rdzas bdud rtsi 'bab bar bsaṃs pas ni nyaṃs myong
skyed par byed pa ste | nyaṃs kyī bde' ba 'di de kho na nyid du zhen par shes pa
[10a4] nyid yin bas thar pa myi thob bo |

66 Read: *bsnyen pa*.

67 Read: *rnam dag*.

68 *bsdus yig* for *rdo rje*.

69 Read: *kha sbyar*.

70 *bhāvanā*.

71 Read: *gnad du*.

72 Read: *myos shing brgyal bar 'gyur ba'i*. Cf. GDT 189.5: *myos shing dran med du brgyal bar 'gyur*.

Commentary on stanza 24

| lce chu⁷³ 'jib ba'i nyams kyis myi grol ba ni kha *gcig* ces bya ba'i shu log *gcig* gyis ston te | dge' slong la SOGS pa kha *gcig* spyi bo tshangs pa'i gnas su lte ba'i yi [10a5] ge las 'od spar nas byang chub kyi sems 'bab bar bsgom mo || lce'i kun du ru ni lce'i rtse mos lce chung la 'jib cing bskyod pa nyams myong bde' ba skyes pa la zhen pas 'ching bar byed pa'i nyams des [10a6] rang gyi rgyud bkrugs par byas ste | mngon ba'i nga rgyal gi dbang gyis bdag ni rnal 'byor pa yin zer mod kyi | des ni mi grol zhes bya'o |

Commentary on stanza 25 and on the first two lines of stanza 26

mthun mong du dgag pa ni | rang rig de [10a7] nyid ces bya ba'i shu log phyed dang *gnyis* ston te | rang rig ni rang gyi nyams su myong ba'o | rigs pas zhes bya ba ni tshad mar byas nas so | des na rang gyi myong ba tshad mar byas nas gzhan [10a8] la yang ston te | nyo<n> m<ong>s pa'i dbang gyis bcings pa de nyid thabs dang ldan bas grol lo zhes zer mod kyi | rmongs pas rin po che'i rtag pa ma shes pas de ni mdog ljang kur 'dug pa la 'khrul [10b1] nas nor bu 'ching bu la rin po che mar gad yin zer ba dang | ser ba tshal la 'khrul nas ra gan gser yin snyam ba'i blos len ba bzhan du⁷⁴ | nyams myong lam du khyer nas don dam don gyi ye <sh>es [10b2] sgrub bar byed ste 'khrul zhes bya ba'i don ho |

Commentary on the second two lines of stanza 26

rmi lam gyi nyams la zhen pa spa ba⁷⁵ ni | rmi lam zhes bya ba'i shu log *gnyis* kyis ston te | kha *gcig* na re rmi lam du zin na bar 'dor zin bas thar pa thob [10b3] ces rmi lam bzung ba dang | sbyang ba dang | spel ba dang | mos pa sgyur ba la gos pa rmi lam gyi nyams kyi bde' ba la chags par byed cing | 'di skad ces phung po 'di mi rtag ces cing yang rmi lam gyi nyams [10b4] kyi bde' ba rtag pas bar 'dor zin nas grol bar 'gyur zhes zer te | nyams la zhen pa dang myi rtag pas des myi grol ces bya'o |

Commentary on stanzas 27-28

| phyag rgya bzhi nyams kyis mi grol ba ni | e bam zhes bya [10b5] ba'i shu log *gnyis* kyis ston te | spyi bor e | lte bar bam | de'i bsreg g.yos go bar byed gsung | yang na e shes rab stong pa dang | bam thabs snang ba dang | sbyar nas e bam gyi yi ges [10b6] mtshon nas rang nyid go bar byed de | de yang rnam par smyin pa'i skad *gcig* ma dang mtshan nyid dang bral ba'i skad *gcig* ma la SOGS pa'i dbye' ba *bzhi* las rten <na>s las kyi phyag rgya dang | chos kyi phyag rgya dang | [10b7] dam thsig gi phyag rgya

73 Read: *lce chung*.

74 Read: *gzhan du*.

75 Read: *spang ba*.

dang | phyag rgya chen po zhes bya bar 'god *gcig*⁷⁶ cing | de tham<s ca>d kyang
 nyams myong ba'i ngo bor gnas pa la lhan *gcig* skyes pa zhes zer mod kyang | nyams
 su myong mtshan ni | [10b8] lhan *gcig* skyes pa ma yin te | nyams rtsa ba dang bral
 zhing *gnyis* su MED pa ni lhan *gcig* skyes pa yin no | myong ba lhan *gcig* skyes par
 'dod pa ni 'khrul pa ste | gzugs rnyan la don du zhen [11a1] pas me long la lta ba 'am
 | smyigs sgyu⁷⁷ la chur 'khrul bas ri dags rgyug par byed kyang gzugs gzhan la gzugs
 MED pa dang | smyig 'gyu⁷⁸ la chu MED pas ngoṃs par myi 'gyur [11a2] ba bzhin
 du | thabs lam gyi bde' ba la lhan *gcig* skyes par khrul nas bde' ba len par byed de des
 myi grol zhes bya ba'o |

76 Scribal error.

77 Read: *smig rgyu*.

78 *Ibid.*

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Abbreviations

- BA *Blue Annals* (Roerich 1976).
- DTG *Deb ther sngon po* by Gos lo tsā ba gzhon nus dpal.
- GDT *rGyal po do ha’i ṽ ka* By Karma ’phrin las pa.
- LGR *Bla ma brgyud pa’i rim pa* (Passavanti 2008)
- ZBO *Zla ba’i ’od zer* by Par phu ba Blo gros seng ge (vol. 1095/7, Tucci Tibetan Collection).

THE *DON GSUM* (THREE TEACHINGS) OF LADY CO ZA BON MO. A BON PO *GTER MA* FROM THE G. TUCCI TIBETAN FUND

DONATELLA ROSSI
("Sapienza" University of Rome)

All things are divided into their several classes, and succeed to one another in the same way though of different bodily forms. They begin and end as in an unbroken ring, though how it is they do so cannot be apprehended. This is what is called the lathe of heaven. And the lathe of heaven is the Heavenly Element in our nature.¹

Introduction

A few centuries before the advent of the Common Era, a master called Zhuangzi (莊子 ca. end of IV century BCE) expounded in a series of discourses his philosophical reflections about the nature of existence, the mysteries of life, and the quest for spiritual evolution towards freedom from the limitations generated by our conceptual mind. His discourses, which were later collected and organized in a text that carries the author's name, express with metaphors and parables a jewel of inspiring wisdom which preserves its validity and pertinence even, and maybe more especially so, in our present times. From a purely phenomenological standpoint we can detect similarities between his discourses and the teachings of the masters of the *rDzogs pa chen po* lineages in both Buddhist and Bon po heritages.

Within the *rDzogs pa chen po* context, the contents of the lyric attributed to Lady Co za Bon mo, one of the few female figures openly recognized for their spiritual caliber by the Bon tradition, represent an opportunity for further delving into *rDzogs pa chen po* tenets and for appreciating, from historic-religious and transcultural comparative perspectives, the articulated diversity of metaphysical speculations conveyed by the Asian world.

This contribution is the third one dedicated to the lyric by Lady Co za Bon mo. The first part of the *Don gsum* (folios 1a through 4b5) was presented in Rossi 2009 and includes *ad hoc* translations from the line by line, in-text commentary; it is

¹ Zhuangzi, Book XXVII, quoted in Waltham 1971: 313.

concerned with the View (*lta ba*) of the *rDzogs pa chen po* in the Bon tradition.² The second part of the text (*folios* 4b5 through 7a7) is translated and presented - without the commentary - in Rossi 2016, where references and information concerning Lady Co za Bon mo and the discoverer of the text, bZhod ston dNgos grub Grags pa, can also be gathered. It is focused upon advices on the Conduct (*spyod pa*) that an adept of the *rDzogs pa chen po* is invited to pursue.

In the following pages, an analytical translation of the entire commentary related to the aforementioned *folios* 4b5 through 7a7 will be proposed, preceded by some concise observations on specific themes deemed salient in terms of doctrinal significance.³

Observations on the Text

In general, the discourse on Conduct presented by the text brings about clear, synthetic instructions geared toward aspiring practitioners, who are expected to raise to a higher altitude or attune to a finer frequency, so to speak, and re-educate their body, speech, and mind in order to integrate spiritual evolution in the relative world. In this regard it is interesting to note the comment offered by the Ven. Lopon Trinley Nyima (slob dpon 'Phrin las Nyi ma) Director of the Dialectic School of New Menri Monastery (Dolanji, HP, India). Namely, he asserts that the mind should abide in the state of *rDzogs pa chen po*; speech and energy should be conformed to the teachings of Tantra; and bodily activities should conform to the principles of the Sūtras.⁴ Such a statement reflects the nature of the three series of teachings which respectively influence conduct, i.e. self-liberation, transformation, and renunciation (cf. 4b7).

The trope of example (or words, *tshig*) and meaning (*dpe don*) utilized in *rDzogs pa chen po* literature is an important doctrinal device to make the state of the Nature of the Mind more intelligible to adepts and is reaffirmed here (cf. 5a2),⁵ mirroring the binomial aspect of truth exemplified in Buddhist philosophy by the terms *nītārtha* and *neyārtha* and also discernible in Taoist philosophy through the principles of innate nature and phenomenal world (*xing ming* 性命).

The text emphasizes that Conduct is to be carried out in thorough coalescence with the View; nevertheless, that does not mean that the relative aspect and consequences of the law of cause and effect should be neglected. 'Extreme' examples, as well as examples derived from simple utensils, such as that of the food ladle (4b7), serve the purpose of reminding how one's true Nature remains unaffected by the restraint of conceptual conventions and in that regard "[t]he so-called lower vehicles

2 For which see e.g. Rossi 1999.

3 For reasons of consistency and clarity, the commentary will be preceded by the main text with its translation, quoted from Rossi 2016.

4 Personal communication, Erlangen, Germany, Oct. 2014.

5 Cf. Rossi 1999: 56-57.

represent the awareness of all extremes and limitations” (5a6). That is why “[n]ot realizing that even the five actions without interval are [to be viewed] as the Nature will make one collapse [again] into cyclic transmigration” (5b1). Hence, if “[one understands that] causal factors have no [inherent] existence, the accumulation of merits, the cause, is [spontaneously] accomplished. Since one understands that the real state is non-dual, the accumulation of wisdoms, the fruit, is [spontaneously] accomplished” (6a1); and “[i]f phenomena do not exist, because they are conceptualized mind forms, everything can be designated as the Body of Reality (6a3)”. In order to clarify this last principle, the text adopts a paradigmatic threefold trope involving Space and water Waves, whereby with the first Wave surging, Ultimate Reality manifests itself in Space; with the second Wave surging, the Mind-itself manifests in Space; and with the third Wave surging, phenomena appear from the Dimension of Emptiness (6b4-7a1). Such display is not to be envisaged as a temporal succession of events, but as the potentiality of the state of the Primordial Buddha (Kun tu bZang po) which manifests itself at the visible (*rtsal*) and invisible levels (*rol pa*).

The state of a perfect Teacher who has actually realized such knowledge is doctrinally appraised as being equivalent to, and in all respects unified with the archetypal state of the Primordial Buddha and to that of pertinent Lineage Holders (*rig 'dzin*). It is necessary that aspiring adepts receive a direct introduction and transmission into the Nature of the Mind by accomplished masters, who for that reason become one's fundamental figure of reference (*rtsa ba 'i bla ma*) for progress on the Path; that explains why at the higher Tantric levels - and all the more so at the level of the *rDzogs pa chen po*, which is praised as the peak of all tantric teachings - it is unthinkable and unworkable to prescind from such complement.⁶ It is in such spirit that this contribution is dedicated, with gratitude, to Prof. Dr. Elena De Rossi Filibeck.

Don gsum

The Three Teachings

[Transliteration and Translation, folios 4b5 through 7a7]

4b5

sTon pa kun du bzang po 'i sku la phyag 'tshal lo //

Homage to the dimension of Kun tu bZang po, the Teacher!

sTon pa zhes pa mi shes pa ston pa las sogs so / kun...

6 Cf. 5a1, note 11.

4b6

...du bzang po ces pa / dper na rin po che'i nang na sa rdo mi snyed pa 'dra / bde ba 'di sdug
bsngal dang bral ba de la bdag nyid ting nge 'dzin yid kyi [sic] phyag 'tshal lo //

The 'Teacher' is the one who is not known, and so forth.⁷ It is called 'Kun tu bZang po' [The All-Good, because it is devoid of defilements], like for example the inside of a precious jewel where impurities are not [to be] found. This [dimension is] bliss [because it is] devoid of suffering. That [is the] Essential Nature [to which] homage is paid with the mind [abiding in the state of] contemplation.

lTa dang sgom dang spyod pa gsum /

[As regards] the View, Meditation, [and] Conduct...

Khyung lta bu gang la yang mi g.yo ba'o / glang po chur zhugs pa lta bu'o / zhen...

4b7

...chags med pa zas kyi skyogs lta bu'o //

[The View is unshaken] like the Khyung,⁸ which is unmoved by anything whatsoever. [Meditation is relaxed] like an elephant which has entered a river. [Conduct is imperturbable] like a food ladle which is devoid of attachment [and] desire.

Gol ba'i sa dang rnam pa gcig /

...the locus for error and appearance [is] one.

lTa ba'i gol sa rtag chad gnyis / bsgom pa'i gol sa bying rgod gnyis / spyod pa'i gol sa zhen chags gnyis/

The pitfall of the View [is] affirmation [and] denial. The pitfall of Meditation [is] dullness [and] agitation. The pitfall of Conduct [is] desire [and] attachment.

Gang yin sems kyi thag chod na /

When it is determined that whatever [appears] is the [Nature] of the Mind,

De'i don thag rbad kyi [sic] chod na /

When the state of that [Nature] is resolutely determined,

5a1

Bla ma'i gdam ngag thob pa yin /

The advise of [one's] teacher [and],

⁷ *I.e.*, the Teacher who cannot be perceived as an intellectual object, because it constitutes the primordial nature of all beings beyond conceptualization.

⁸ Apart from the symbolic nature attributed to the Khyung, this is also the name of one of the original tribal groups of Zhang zhung. Cf. Namkhai (Rossi transl.) 2009: 75.

gShen rab bla ma'i gdam ngag thob pa yin //

the core instructions of gShen rab will be accomplished.⁹

bsGgom pa'i ngang la don gsal na /

When the Nature reveals itself in the condition of meditation

Gang bsgom pa de'i don rang gi blo la gsal ba lta bsgom spyod pa las sogs so //

[For] whomever [becomes] acquainted, the state of that [Nature] will manifest itself in one's conceptual mind; [the same will occur with respect to] the View, Meditation, Conduct, and so forth.

Las 'phro...

5a2

...skal par sbyangs pa yi [sic] /

Through training [actualized by virtue of] good karmic connections,

sNga ma'i las 'phro dang skal par sbyangs pa'i 'phro yod pa yin no //

[Knowledge] is generated through practice [which can be performed thanks] to previous good karmic connections and fortune.

Gong 'og don ni 'dra sbyor gcig /

The meaning of higher and lower [becomes] the same, [it is] unified, [it is] one.

sKyes bu las 'phro yod pa gcig gi go ba las gzhan gyi mi go ba dpe don sdebs gcig pa'o //

An individual with karmic fortune [will] comprehend [it as being] just one, not [as] something else, [and will] integrate the example with the meaning.

E ma ho //

E ma ho ni ngo mtshar che ba'i tshig /

E ma ho [is] a term expressing great wonder.

5a3

lTa ba'i de bzhin thag chod na /

If it is approached in accordance with the View,

lTa bas thag chod na sangs rgyas su thag chod do //

If it is discovered through the View, it is considered Enlightenment.¹⁰

9 First of all, one has to intellectually know the focal point; then students are supposed to discover the original nature by way of a direct introduction from the Teacher; only when that nature is discovered and integrated in daily life instructions are achieved. In this case gShen rab may not specifically refer to the founder of *g.Yung drung Bon*, but to a master who has both full knowledge and full-fledged experience of the matter at stake.

10 The View echoes the principle of the Base-of-All (*kun gzhi*), which is considered as the

sPyod pa'i 'di bzhin la dor te //

Conduct [that is] 'like this' is discarded.

sPyod pas la dor bar bstan /

[If it is discovered] through Conduct [it is] taught as the abandonment [of sanctioned Conduct].

bDer gshegs nyid du bdag rtogs na /

If one's state is understood as Buddhahood,

gShen rab bdag nyid kyī thams cad sangs rgyas sam bder gshegs kyī sku ru rtogs na /

If gShen rab's essential nature is understood as the dimension of all the Buddhas and Enlightened Beings,

5a3

Thams cad...

5a4

...bder gshegs spyod pa ste /

All [forms of Conduct will be like the] Conduct [of the] Buddhas, [that is to say],

mDzad spyod thams cad sangs rgyas sam bder gshegs kyī spyod pa'o //

all actions and behavior are the Conduct of the Buddhas and of Enlightened Beings.

dPag gi dpogs par mi 'gyur te /

It will be unfathomable.

Sangs rgyas kyī mdzod spyod dpag gi mi dpogs te thams cad sangs rgyas kyīs spyod pa'o //

The actions and behavior of the Buddhas are immeasurable: they are all performed through [the dimension of] Enlightenment.

'Dod chags zhe sdang gti mug can /

Being with desire, hatred, [and] ignorance,

gTi mug bon gyis [sic] sku...

Ignorance [is] the Body of Reality,¹¹

receptacle of both transmigration and liberation and for that reason it is assimilated, at the microcosmic level, to the primordial condition of individuals, and at the macrocosmic level, to the ultimate nature of reality. These correspond, in and by themselves, to the state of Enlightenment.

11 In terms of the three poisons or disturbing emotions, ignorance of the real nature is the fundamental one, the first error which generates all suffering of transmigration; but in the transformative path presented by tantric teachings, its essence is the Body of Reality because it is contained in such quiescent state at a potential level, as all phenomena are.

5a5

...`dod chags gsung / zhe sdang thugs /
 desire [is] the Voice, hatred [is] the Mind.
Nga rgyal phrag dog kun spyad pas /
engaging in all [possible forms of] pride [and] jealousy,
 Nga rgyal ba ston `phrang [sic] dog `phris [sic] /
 Showing arrogance [and] underrating [one's] shortcomings

5a5

dNgos por ma mthong spyod byed pa /
[but] acting without perceiving [phenomena] as [inherently] existent:
 De yang dngos por ma grub dug lnga la dug lnga'i zhe `dzin men na /
 Moreover, if [phenomena] are not considered as something concrete, [and] with respect to the
 five poisons there is no fixation toward them,
De nyid mchog ste...
that itself is the most excellent,

5a6

...bla na med /
unsurpassed [Conduct].
 sPyod pa thams cad spyod pas mchog /
 all [forms of] conduct [are made] superior by Conduct [itself].
Rigs ngan rdol [gdol] pa dme sha can /
[Beside that, there are just] low castes, outcastes, impure blood relations,
 Rigs ngan yang spang rgyu med de spang blangs gnyis su med pa'o //
 There is no reason to rid oneself of lowly people: [one's behavior] is devoid of acceptance and
 rejection.
Theg dman lta ba log pa dang /
lower vehicles, erroneous views,
 Theg dman zhes pa phyogs mtha' dag pa'i shes pa'o //
 The so-called lower vehicles represent the awareness of all extremes and limitations.
Ma rabs...
common,

5a7

*...tha ma las / stsogs pa /
inferior [ones], and so forth.*

Theg pa chen mor khong du ma chud na so so skye bo dang 'dra'o //
If the Great Vehicle is not thoroughly comprehended, [one] is [just] like all
ordinary beings.

bSod pa don la bsgrub pa rnam /

Those who take delight in realizing [its] meaning

Theg mchog 'di'i don sgröl ba'i don shes pa dang ldan na /

When one understands the soteriological implications of this Supreme Vehicle,

Theg mchog 'di'i grub par 'gyur /

will accomplish the realization of this Supreme Vehicle.

gSang yang...

5b1

*...spyod pa chen po ste / chen po'i yang chen po ste / 'tshams med pa lnga yang rang bzhin du
ma rtogs pa 'khor bar 'khyams pa lhung pa bya'o //*

[One will keep it] secret and [will consider it] a great practice, the greatest of the great. Not
realizing that even the five actions without interval¹² are [to be viewed] as the Nature will
make one collapse [again] into cyclic transmigration.

'Tshams med lnga po dbang byed dang /

Even those who have committed the five actions without interval,

pha'i ma rtogs na pha yang bsgral / ma'i ma rtogs na ma yang bsgral /

[The concept] of father is not followed, but the father is liberated [as well]. [The concept] of
mother is not followed, but the mother is liberated [as well].

5b2

Bu tsha zla rogs med bzhin no //

The same applies to [one's] children, nephews, spouses, and friends.

Chen po rkun po dmag dpon dpung /

chieftains, robbers, army commanders, soldiers,

¹² Killing one's father, killing one's mother, killing an Arhat, causing the body of a Tathāgata to bleed with malicious intent, and sowing discord among the *saṃgha* are called the five actions without interval or with immediate result, because at the time of death they cause rebirth directly in the lower states of existence without the interval of the intermediate state (*bar do*).

Lung las kyang ni sems can gyi nor rnams ni ma byin pa yang blang par bya zhes byung //
 Scriptures refer to the above-mentioned categories as to people who seize possessions of sentient beings without their consent.

sDig pa'i grogs rnams thams cad yang /

and also all evil companions,

Rang bzhin med par rtogs na sdig bya'i...

5b3

...ming yang med /

When it is understood that [everything] is devoid of [inherent] nature, even the name of wrongdoing does not exist.

Bla med rdzogs pa chen po yis /

through the unsurpassed Great Perfection,

Theg pa chen po 'di rtogs na ni gang yang spyod par bstan pa'o //

When this Great Vehicle is understood, any [action] is indicated as the Conduct.

Theg mchog 'di'i 'grub par gsung / srog gcod pa dang g.yel ba dang /

are said to [be able] to achieve [the spiritual fruit] of this Supreme Vehicle. Also [those who] kill and are indolent,

Srog gcod med pa g.yung drung...

5b4

...sku / 'dod chags ni gsang ba'i lam mo //

Without interruption of life is the Eternal Body. Desire is the secret path.¹³

Ma byin len dang rngam sems byed /

[who] take what is not given and act with greed [as well as those who]

Ser sna can gyis rdzas nor /

rTag tu 'dod pa spyod byed pa /

always act with covetousness.

'Dod pa'i long spyod mi spang deng [sic] du blang ngo //

[Even those who] never abstain from enjoying the pleasures of the senses [and] covet possessions and riches with avarice

¹³ This could easily be viewed as a reference to tantric practices of longevity (*tshe sgrub*) implying hierogamy, but at an ontological level limitations of the immanent world can become the means to comprehend the transcendental aspect of reality.

Theg mchog 'di'i snod du bsngags /
are praised as receptacles of this Supreme Vehicle.

Gang la...

5b5

...yang rnam rtog chud pa de snod du bsngags /
 are praised as receptacles of conceptual thinking.¹⁴

5b5

Ma sring bu mo sbyor byed cing /
[Those who] copulate with mothers, sisters, and daughters,
 rTogs shing don dang ldan la ma sring bu mo dang sbyor ba'o //
 Those who possess understanding and knowledge [and for whom having intercourse is like]
 copulating with mothers, sisters, and daughters, [and...]
gShang [sic] ci [sic] zas su za byed dang /
[who] take urine [and] excrements as [their] food,
 gShang [bshang] gci dang bdud rtsi la dbyer med pa'o //
 ...those who consider] urine [and] excrements as undifferentiated from nectar¹⁵
dGe bsnyen drang srong gsod pa...

5b6

...dang /
[who] kill lay devotees [and] holy hermits,
 sKye ba lnga brgya'i bsdug bsngal rtan 'brel [?]¹⁶ nas grol ba'o //
 will be freed from [the twelve links of] interdependent origination [and from] the suffering of
 taking rebirth for 500 times.

14 Hence, they may have the capacity of practicing the instructions.

15 The sentence up to this point may be interpreted as references to the principle of cause and effect explicitly followed by adepts of the Lower Vehicles and to the cathartic praxis of higher tantric vehicles.

16 The contracted word is unclear; the reading proposed seems to be the most probable and appropriate to the context. I take the opportunity to thank Dagkar Namgyal Nyima, Lecturer of Tibetology at the Universität Bonn, Institut für Orient- und Asienwissenschaften (IOA), Abteilung für Mongolistik und Tibetstudien, for his kind help in confirming the reading of some contracted words (*skung yig*).

lHa sku shog shog bsreg byed dang /

[or simple-minded people who] make money offers [and] burn [incense and lamps in front of] divine images [as well as]

bDer gshegs la mchod pa byed pa'o //

Worshipping the Buddhas,

De yis bder gshegs mnyes byed pa /

those who pay respect [to oneself as if] to the Buddha

bDag mnyes zhes bya ba'i tha tshig go //

This is an expression indicating self-praise.

'Phrul ngag don yang 'dzin...

5b7

...par 'gyur /

will grasp [the meaning] of Emanation, Voice, and Nature of Reality.

'Bras bu theg pa chen po'i bon 'dzin pa'o //

will take hold of the results [which derive from practicing] the teachings of the Great Vehicle.

sKal ldan gshen po de nyid kyang /

[That is even more so in the case of] those fortunate practitioners [who],

rTogs pa dang ldan pas skal ldan de dang /

Fortunate because of their being endowed with understanding [of the nature of Reality] and because

Yang dag gshen po dbyer med de /

being inseparable [from the] sublime gShen po,

Yang dag pa'i rdzogs pas gshen rab dang dbyer med de mnyam pa'o //

[they abide in] the state of Great Perfection, which makes them inseparable from gShen rab and [thus] identical to [the Teacher].

Tshogs chen gnyis kyang...

6a1

...rdzogs par 'gyur /

will also complete the two great accumulations.

6a1

rGyu la ma chags pas rgyu bsod nams kyī tshogs rdzogs / gnyis su med pas don rtogs pas 'bras
bu ye shes kyī tshogs rdzogs /

Since [one understands that] causal factors have no [inherent] existence, the accumulation of merits, the cause, is [spontaneously] accomplished. Since one understands that the real state is non-dual, the accumulation of wisdoms, the fruit, is [spontaneously] accomplished.

Shan pa spu gri rno thogs shing /

Butchers [with their] razor-sharp blades and

dpa' bo chen po thams cad bsgal yang bsgal ba'i tha snyad med pa'o //

All great champions are liberated, yet [even] the conventional designation of 'liberated' does not exist.

6a2

'Gro drug gnas su sgröl byed pa /

the six classes of beings will be freed in [their own] realms.

'Gro drug rang rang gi /

Sentient beings of the respective six classes,

Thar lam dpa' bo byang chub sku /

The intrepid ones [on] the path of evolution [are the fabric of] the Body of Enlightenment.

kun du bzang po'i spyod pa yis /

by [adopting] the conduct of Kun tu bzang po,

gShen rab kun gyis gshegs shul bde ba'i mchog /

All Enlightened Beings [reach] ultimate bliss [by following the same] path.

bDe ba chen po gshen rab kun gyis gshegs shul lo //

[will be freed in the body of] great bliss [in the same] way [followed by] all Enlightened Beings.

6a3

rTog med mnyam nyid bon gyi sku /

The Body of Reality [is] empty [and] beyond thoughts.

rNam par rtog pas snang pa med na thams cad bon gyis sku yin bya ba'i tha tshig go //

If phenomena do not exist, because they are conceptualized mind forms, everything can be designated as the Body of Reality.

gZung pa'i mi zin 'phra ba'i phyir /

Hence, it cannot be conceptualized [even] as [something] subtle.

Thams cad gzung 'dzin bral dang ci byas ci byed spyad kun du bzang po'i rol pa'o //

Everything is beyond [the duality of] subject [and] object and acting [is beyond the concept of] purpose: they represent the manifested potentiality of [the state of] Kun tu bzang po.

Kun du bzang po'i rol...

6a4

...pa yin /

It represents the potentiality of [the state of] Kun tu bzang po.

De la thabs dang mdzad spyod thams cad /

In that regard, when all skillful means, actions, and behaviors

gShen lha dkar po'i spyod pa yin /

It is the Conduct of gShen lha dkar po.¹⁷

gshen lha dkar po'i spyod pa yin na /

are performed as the Conduct of gShen lha dkar po [and are]

Theg dman thams cad dbyings la bkod /

All lower vehicles are established in the [ultimate] dimension.

de ltar rtogs na theg dman gyis spyod pa'o //

understood in such a way, [also the Conduct adopted] by lower vehicles becomes the Conduct [of gShen lha dkar po].

E ma ho //

E ma ho ngo mtshar che'o //

E ma ho [means] great amazement.

6a5

Bon gyi don phyung pa /

The state of Reality is revealed.

Bon nyid zad med kyid don phyung pa'o //

The everlasting state [of] the ultimate nature of phenomena is revealed.

¹⁷ This deity is principally known as gShen lha 'Od dkar. According to the Bon tradition, he is said to appear and teach at the level of the Body of Perfection or Body of Enjoyment (*rdzogs sku, longs sku, sambhogakāya*).

Khyad par rdzogs chen theg pa'i gzhi /

In particular, [on the subject of the general instructions related to] the Base of the Great Perfection Vehicle,

Khyad par rdzogs pa chen po yis /

In particular, due to [the nature of the teachings of] the Great Perfection,

sPyi ti 'di yi bon po gang /

any adept [who is the follower] of these instructions

Thams cad kyi gzhi 'am spyi ti yin te de la mos pas gang zag ni / sangs rgyas kyi yang sangs rgyas te /

[all] individuals possessing the aspiration [to practice] the general instructions or [the teachings concerning] the Base-of-All will regain their Enlightened Nature.

6a6

gTsang rme med par kun za zhing /

eats everything without [distinguishing] the pure [from] the impure and

Glang chen bzhin du kun la mi 'jigs pa /

Like elephants, they are afraid of nothing [and]

sNying rje med pas kun gsod te /

Kills all, because is deprived of compassion.

Gang la yang thog chags med pa /

are not thwarted by anything whatsoever.

Glang chen khyi phag lta bu ni /

[It is] like [the behavior of] an elephant, a dog, [or] a pig.

Khyi phag bzhin du gtsang rme med pa'o //

Like a dog [or] a pig, [this type of behavior] does not distinguish between pure and impure.

Theg chen 'di 'i spyod pa ste /

The Conduct of this Great Vehicle

Theg...

6a7

...mchog gi spyod pa'o //

It is the Conduct of the Supreme Vehicle.

Ris su chad pa gang yang med /

is without any kind of partiality.

'Di yin 'di men [sic] gang yang med de ris su chad pa gang yang med /

It is without any kind of [conceptual] bias, [such as] 'it is this' [or] 'it is not this' [or] 'it is none whatsoever'.

Ces kun du bzang po 'i spyod pa 'o //

Such is the Conduct of Kun tu bzang po.

rGya chad pa dang phyogs su lhung pa gang yang med pa'o //

It is totally devoid of partiality and limitations.

Ye gshen gtsug phud kyi man ngag go //

These are the pith instructions of Ye gshen gtsug phud.

La zla...

6b1

...spyod pa'i don /

The state of the transcendent Conduct

6b1

Co za bon mo 'i thugs dam /

The spiritual advice of Co za Bon mo.

'Bral med yengs med spang med sgrub med do /

is inseparable [from the View], it is undistracted, it is without nothing to abandon, nothing to be accomplished.

sPyod pa 'i don rdzogs s.ho //

The teaching on Conduct is hereby completed.

rGya rgGa rGya rGya rGya rGya rGya rgya rGya //

Sealed Sealed Sealed Sealed Sealed Sealed Sealed Sealed Sealed

Kun du bzang po bde...

6b2

...ba 'i ngang la phyag 'tshal lo //

Homage to the blissful condition of Kun tu bZang po!

Kun du bzang po ces pa bzang ngan med de dper na rin po che'i gling nas sa rdo mi rnyed pa dang 'dra'o / bde ba ni sdug bsngal dang bral ba'o / ngang de las bdag nyid ting nge 'dzin gyis phyag 'tshal lo

It is called 'Kun tu bzang po', [The All-Good], because it is [entirely] devoid of [concepts of] good and bad, like for example an island made of precious jewels where earth and rocks are

not [to be] found. This [dimension is] bliss, [because it is] devoid of suffering. Homage is paid by oneself [with the mind abiding in the state of] contemplation [which is inseparable] from that Condition.

E ma ho //

Ngo mtshar che'o //

How wondrous!

Kun gyis mi...

6b3

...rig 'phra bas phyir /

Since it cannot be perceived by everyone because it is subtle,

Don 'di kun gyis mi rig ste zab cing cha 'phra'o //

This state cannot be perceived by everyone [due to its] profoundness and subtle nature.

Don gyis man ngag nyung 'dus pa 'di /

These quintessential, condensed instructions [presented] through [the three] teachings

Blo yang rab kyi don du nyung 'dus su bstan /

It is explained in a condensed fashion as [the three] teachings [for the benefit of individuals] of superior capacity.

Yid bzhin nor bu rin chen 'dra /

are like a precious Wish-Fulfilling gem:

Bon nyid sems nyid yid bzhin gyis nor...

6b4

...bu dang 'dra ste /

The Ultimate Nature, the Mind-itself, is similar to a Wish-Fulfilling jewel:

dGos 'dod thams cad 'di las 'byung /

all wishes and wants arise from it.

Gang gi brtags pa bzhin du snang ngor dgos 'dod kyis rang bzhin 'byung ngo //

wishes and wants spontaneously materialize according to what is conceived.

rBa klong rnam pa gsum zhig bstan /

They are described [as] the three kinds [of] Waves [and] Space.

6b4

Klong na dbyings sba na de'i don la sangs pa de ngang du zhi nas ye shes so //

The dimension [of Ultimate Reality] is concealed in Space: that is the pristine state; it is the primordial wisdom peacefully [abiding] in the Condition [of Emptiness].

Bon nyid...

6b5

...rnam par dag pa'i klong na /

When the Ultimate Reality, which is pure, [manifests itself] in Space,

dPer na chu'i rba yang chu rang yin klong yang chu rang yin /

For example the waves in the water are part of the water; Space is also part of the water.

Des 'khrul bon can mtshan mar snang / pa'i rba 'phyo /

That creates an illusion [and] phenomena are perceived as having [inherent] characteristics. That is the [first] Wave surging.

'Khrul nas snang pa'i bon can yang bon nyid ngang yin /

[Although they appear as] illusion, also apparent phenomena belong to the sphere of Ultimate Reality.

Sems nyid skye 'gag med pa'i...

6b6

...klong na /

When the Mind-itself, which has no origination or cessation, [appears] in Space,

Sems can yang sems nyid las byung la /

Also sentient beings arise from the Mind-itself; in this regard,

Des 'khrul sems can sdug bsngal sna tshogs spyod pas rba 'phyo /

That creates an illusion [and] sentient beings experience all sorts of suffering; [that is the second] Wave surging.

Sems nyid lhag gi rtogs na sems can yang sems nyid kyi ngang du zhi /

if sentient beings are understood [as not abiding] beyond the Mind-itself, [then] also their existence is pacified in that very Condition.

Don dam ci yang ma yin pas dbyings na /

The Ultimate Reality is nothing in and of itself; that is why [it is called] the dimension.

Don ni skye ba med pa'o / skye ba...

6b7

...med pa yang brtags na / ci yang ma bsgrub ste ci yang ma yin pa'o //

The Ultimate Reality is without origination; when [the state] without origination is investigated, it cannot be established as [being] anything whatsoever, [because] it is not concrete in and of itself.

sNa tshogs cir yang 'gyur pa'i rba 'phyo /

In the dimension [phenomena] can appear in all sorts of ways: [that is the third] Wave surging.

De las sna tshogs cir yang snang pa 'di 'khrul nas snang pa'o / des na yang dang yang du brtag go //

From that [dimension] appearance manifests itself in various ways; this [appearance] is perceived in a mistaken manner [and], for this reason, it is scrutinized over and over again.

rBa klong zung gsum ya dang drug /

The three dyads [of] Waves [and] Space [and] the six single [aspects of the three dyads]

7a1

Klong gsum du rba gsum zhi na sangs rgyas kha [kho] na yin /

When the three Waves are pacified in the three Spaces, [that] is exactly [the state of] Enlightenment.

Zhi ba nam pa gsum du 'du /

*are unified in the three-fold quiescence.*¹⁸

dPer na rgya mtsho'i ngang du chu bo'i rba sna tshogs zhi ba'o //

It is, for example, [like] the subsiding [of] all the waves of [many] rivers in the dimension of [a single] ocean.

7a1

Bon can mtshan mar snang pa yang /

Even if phenomena are perceived as characterized [by substantiality],

Bon can mtshan mar snang pa thams cad rtogs...

¹⁸ This may represent a reference to the state of liberation with respect to the Base, the Path, and the Fruit which in the *rDzogs chen* philosophical view are appreciated as being spontaneously liberated and perfected from the very beginning and through the course of the three times.

7a2

...na bon nyid /

When [the real nature of] all phenomena, which are perceived as being characterized [by substantiality], is understood, [that corresponds to understanding] the real condition of existence.

Bon nyid rnam par dag pa'i klong du zhi /

*they are pacified in the space of the completely pure and authentic condition of existence.*¹⁹

Bon nyid rtogs na bon can rang bon nyid che'o //

When the real condition of existence is understood, phenomena are [understood as] the great [display of] the real condition of existence.

Sems can bde sdug sna tshogs yang /

Also the various kinds of pleasures [and] pains [experienced by] sentient beings

Sems can gyis bde bsdug sems nyid yin te zhi zhes bya bas tha tshig go //

Pleasures [and] pains [experienced] by sentient beings are the Mind-itself; that is why [the Mind-itself] is defined as peace.

sems nyid skye 'gag med pa'i klong...

7a3

...du zhi /

are pacified in the space of the Mind-itself, which is without origination or cessation.

Sems can rtogs na sems nyid / sems nyid las ma g.yos /

Understanding [the real nature of] sentient beings [corresponds to understanding] the Mind-itself [and the realization that sentient beings] have never departed from it.

sNa tshogs cir yang 'gyur ba yang /

Even if phenomena manifest themselves in all sorts of ways,

sNa tshogs cir yang 'gyur ba yang don dam par cir yang ma yin pa'o //

Even if phenomena manifest themselves in all sorts of ways, in actuality they are not concrete in and of themselves.

Don dam ci yang ma yin pa'i ngang du zhi /

they are pacified in the condition of the Ultimate Nature, which is not concrete in and of itself.

don dam ci yang ma...

19 That is to say, in their essential condition of emptiness.

7a4

...yin pa de gang gi rtogs na / sna tshogs su snang pa ci yang ma yin pa de yin /

When one understands that the Ultimate Nature is not concrete, [one also understands that] the plurality of appearance is just as insubstantial.

'Khrul pa rnam rtog sems kyis ma bskyud par /

The mind does not forget delusive conceptualization; [but when conceptualization]

'Di ltar dkar dmar du snang pa de yang shes pa 'khrul nas snang pa yin / 'khrul pa de'i blo la ma bskyod na /

Similarly, also the red and white visual experiences²⁰ are a manifestation determined by a deluded consciousness; when conceptuality linked to that delusion is not stirred,

7a5

zhi ba byung ba sems kyis don rtogs pa'o //

pacification arises [and] the real nature of the mind is realized.

Zhi ba byung ba sems kyis don rtogs na /

is put at rest, the mind has the experiential realization of the Ultimate State, [and] when that occurs,

7a5

Zhi ba byung ba sems kyis don dang ldan nam rtogs na ni /

When pacification has occurred [and] the mind possesses or has realized the ultimate meaning,

bsGom par bya bas tha snyad ming yang med /

not even the name [of what is] conventionally designated as meditation exists.

bsgom par bya bas yul med la bsgom par byed pas...

7a6

...sems med pas bsgom zhes bya ba yang med do //

there is no subjective mind that performs meditation and no object to be deliberately created for meditation; hence, also the so-called meditation does not exist.

²⁰ That is to say, the visual experience of the tantric meditation related to peaceful and wrathful deities.

Ye gshen gtsug phud kyi man ngag / man ngag gi don rdzogs s.ho //

[This represents a] direct transmission of [the Teacher] Ye gshen gtsug phud. The teaching of the pith instructions is hereby completed.

rGya rGya rGya rGya rGya rGya rGya rGya rGya //
 Sealed Sealed Sealed Sealed Sealed Sealed Sealed Sealed Sealed
 IHo brag khom mthing gi gter ma / lha rje bzhod...

7a7

...ston la mkha' 'gro'i dngos grub tu gnang nas / rim pas rgyud nas bdag la'o // dge'o // bkra shis //

[This is a] revealed text of Khom mthing [in] IHo brag. It was bestowed to the sacred master bZhod ston as the blessing of the *dākinī* and in gradual succession it has been transmitted to me. May it be virtuous! May it be auspicious!

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THE APPEARANCE OF *GCOD* IN THE RNYING MA SCHOOL*

FABIAN SANDERS AND MARGHERITA PANSA
(SHANG SHUNG FOUNDATION)

The *gcod* practice, having been formulated in the 11th to 12th century by the famous *yoginī* Ma gcig lab sgron, should technically be considered a *gsar ma* tradition. Nevertheless, this dramatic and extreme Tantric *sādhana* has been widely taught and practiced in the rNying ma school for a remarkable number of centuries.

This paper aims to provide an analysis of what major *gcod* historiographers argue with regards to the origin and the most representative figures of *gcod* in the context of the rNying ma school of Tibetan Buddhism. In this school, the practice seems to be mainly linked to what we might call the '*khrol/’phrul gcod* issue as well as to the *gter ma* tradition. We will also briefly analyse the earlier *rnying ma gcod* text corpuses available to us at present, mostly dating up to the 14th century. In a forthcoming paper we will examine them in greater depth.

The *gcod* Historiographies: The '*khrol/’phrul gcod* Issue

In his well-known treatise *gCod kyi gdengs bshad nyung ngur bsodus pa bzhuḡs pa’i dbu phyogs*, Karma chags med (1613-1678) states that there are two sets of teachings, Indian and Tibetan, that constitute the *gcod* corpus. As for the first set of teachings, he mentions four currents that account for Indian *gcod* (*rgya gcod*). These are:

- a) Āryadeva’s *Great Poem [of the Perfection of Wisdom]* (*Tshigs su bcad chen mo*),
- b) Nāropa’s *The Equal Taste* (*ro snyoms*) and *The Secret Conduct* (*gsang spyod*),
- c) the *Teachings on Pacification* (*zhi byed*) by Pha dam pa sangs rgyas and
- d) O rgyan padma’s (Padmasambhava) *Severance of Illusion* (*’phrul gcod*).¹

The first three items mentioned in this list were transmitted in Tibet during the later translation period,² only O rgyan padma’s *Severance of Illusion*, since it is attributed

* Our sincerest thanks to Katarina Turpeinen for information about the *dGongs pa zang thal* and to Susan Schwarz for reviewing the English.

1 Cf. Karma chags med 1981 : 231.

2 *The Great Poem of the Perfection of Wisdom* (Skt. *arya prajñāpāramitā upadeśa*, Tib. *shes rab*

to Padmasambhava himself, can rightfully be understood as being the true, original source of *rnying ma gcod*. Thus, if we are to look into the origin of *gcod* in the rNying ma school, whatever may be designated as '*phrul gcod*' seems to be the correct starting point, although unfortunately we have very scarce information in its regard.

What does the term '*phrul gcod*' refer to, however? Among the above sources mentioned by Karma chags med, only Āryadeva's 'Great Poem' is a clearly identifiable text. Nāropa's *Equal Taste* and *Secret Conduct*, as well as the teachings on Pacification (*zhi byed*) by Pha dam pa sangs rgyas, are doctrinal, philosophical and soteriological complexes in their own right, presented and discussed in a variety of different texts. Furthermore, being themselves autonomous traditions, these teachings cannot actually be considered to be *gcod*, although they do bear similarities with it. Rather, they are mentioned because they are understood to constitute the various streams that were later combined to inspire and form the main current of the Tibetan *gcod* practice. Thus, it seems plausible that Padmasambhava's '*phrul gcod*' should not be understood as an individual text either, but as a textual corpus containing doctrines and practices outlining actual *gcod* ideas and *sādhanās*, as well as practices and instructions that can be considered progenitors of the well-known *gcod* constellation.

Unfortunately, the only explicit reference to '*phrul gcod*' in Karma chags med's text occurs in the list of the four Indian sources of *gcod* mentioned above. Aside from that, Karma chags med does not give any indication whether he considers '*phrul gcod*' to be a specific text or a doctrine, nor whether it has been transmitted by Padmasambhava directly or via the *gter ma* tradition. On the other hand, at one point he quotes two passages he attributes to Padmasambhava, yet without specifying whether they are linked to '*phrul gcod*'. One of these quotes actually comes from a *gter ma* discovered by Ratna gling pa (1403-1478), the *Thugs sgrub yang snying 'dus pa*, in particular from a text contained therein called *Gu ru 'i dmar khrid rim lnga*.³

kyi pha rol tu phyin pa 'i tshigs su bcad pa chen mo) by Āryadeva the Brahman can be dated around the 9th century. The text itself states that the teaching therein contained had been taken from India by Pha dam pa sangs rgyas, who taught it in Ding ri to Zha ma lo tsa ba; Zha ma, in turn, revisited it and produced the definitive version (see Edou 1996: 22, and Āryadeva 1974: 8-9). Regarding Nāropa's *Equal Taste* (*ro snyoms*) and *Secret Conduct* (*gsang spyod*), Ma cig's biography mentions that she received the five cycles of the *Single Taste* from Pha dam pa sangs rgyas (cf. Edou 1996: 80). *The Teachings on Pacification*, on the other hand, were given to Ma cig by Pha dam pa Sangs rgyas himself or, according to other sources, through sKyo ston bsod nams bla ma.

³ At the beginning of the text the Sanskrit title *Gu ru guhya dhana pañca na ma* (see Rin chen gling pa 1984, vol. 1: 124) is given. This text contains instructions that bear clear similarities and analogous imagery to a *gcod sādhanā*. Karma Chags med wrote a commentarial note on this *gter ma* text, with the title *Notes on the Teaching on Severance, Benefitting from the Five Gradual Secret Instructions* (*gSang khrid rim pa lnga 'i nang nas bog 'don gcod khrid kyi zin bris*). This work contains a visualisation practice focused on the dark blue form of Varahī (*phag mo mthing nag*). In the colophon of this text (Karma chags med 2010: 117) it is mentioned that it summarises the *gcod gter mas* of Padmasambhava, other textual traditions, and the teachings of the Kaḥ thog tradition, i.e. the main *bka' ma* and *gter ma* traditions of *rnying ma gcod*, to which we will come back later.

Karma chags med writes:

In the “Comment on the Exploits to Be Gained from Severance” by O rgyan rin po che (*O rgyan rin po ches mdzad pa'i bogs 'don gcod kyi 'khrigs las*) it is said: “[the benefits of severance are that] the obstacles to the path are cleared, the advantages of comprehension surface and the conceptual structures of dualism are released. Therefore the objects, [nothing more than] illusory manifestations, are removed. [Furthermore] existence and appearance are severed as mental [productions], and from that *samsāra* and *nirvāna* are by themselves liberated: once the true reality that underlies [everything] is comprehended, the profit is gained. As for that, meditating on a seat for a year, the resistances of pride are broken in haunted lands, and that is a great advantage.”

ཨོ་རྒྱན་རིན་པོ་ཆེས་མཛད་པའི་བོགས་འདོན་གཅོད་ཀྱི་ཁྲིད་ལས། ལམ་གྱི་གོགས་སེལ། རྟོགས་པའི་བོད་ཐོན། གཉེས་ཚོས་ཀྱི་
མཚན་མ་གྲོལ་བས། འབྲུལ་སྤང་ཡུལ་འབྲུད། སྤང་སྲིད་སེམས་སུ་ཚོད་པས་འཁོར་འདས་རང་སར་གྲོལ་བར་འབྱུང་ཏེ། གནས་
ལུགས་རྟོགས་ནས་བོགས་འདོན་པ་ལ། སྟན་ཐོག་དུ་ལོ་གཅིག་བསྟོམས་པས། གཉན་སར་བསྐྱེམས་ཐག་གཅིག་བཅད་པས་བོགས་
ཆེ། ཞེས་གསུངས་པ་དང་།⁴

Then he goes on saying:

Further, O rgyan rin po che has spoken of the benefits of the offering of the body: “It is said that, since the Jewels appreciate [the offering of the body], the current of the realizations will be prolonged; since one gives away⁵ this dearly cherished body, inner and outer obstacles are appeased; since the Jewels appreciate [it, offering the body to them,] one remedies to the imperfections of *samaya*; since *dākinī* and guardians of the teachings enjoy it, [we offer the body to them and] they protect us from internal and external obstacles; since [such an offering] repays karmic debts, obscurations of actions are thus purified; since with the mind the concept of an individual ego is abandoned⁶ existence and appearance are put under one’s control and act as allies, [which] is very profound. Further, in general, among all offerings, the offering of the body [counts as] ten million: it is as uncountable offerings of *dharma*.”

ཡང་ཨོ་རྒྱན་རིན་པོ་ཆེས་ལུས་སྤྲིན་གྱི་ཡན་ཡོན་གསུངས་པ། དཀོན་མཚོག་མཉེས་པས་དངོས་གྲུབ་ཀྱི་རྒྱན་རིང་། ལུས་ཀྱི་གཅེས་
འཛིན་ཐེང་པས་ཕྱི་ནང་གི་བར་ཆད་ཞི། དཀོན་མཚོག་རྣམས་མཉེས་སྟེ་དམ་ཚིག་གི་ཉམས་ཆག་བསྐྱང། མཁའ་འགོ་ཚོས་སྤྱོད་
མཉེས་པས་ཕྱི་ནང་གི་བར་ཆད་སྤྱང། ལན་ཆགས་བྱ་ལོན་འཁོར་བས་ལས་ཀྱི་སྤྲིབ་པ་དག་བདག་འཛིན་སྟོམས་ཐེང་བས་སྤང་སྲིད་

4 Karma chags med 1981: 234-35, and Rin chen gling pa 2010, vol. 1: 157-58.
5 We read *thong* instead of *theng*.
6 We read *thong* instead of *theng*.

དབང་དུ་འདུས། ལྷ་འདྲེས་ལྗོངས་གྲོགས་བྱེད་པ་ཤིན་ཏུ་ཟབ་གསུངས་སོ། སྤྱིར་ཡང་སྦྱིན་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱི་ནང་ནས་ལུས་སྦྱིན་པ་གྲོ་
བར་འགྱུར་བ་སྟེ། ཚེས་ཀྱི་སྦྱིན་པ་གྲངས་མེད་དག་ཏུ་འགྱུར། ཞེས་གསུངས་སོ།⁷

Another very interesting area to investigate while searching for the origins of *gcod* in the rNying ma school is the enormous *gter ma* repertoire. In this regard Karma chags med states that the *gcod* texts hidden by Padmasambhava “were rediscovered by Rin chen gling pa, Sangs rgyas gling pa and others.” He also mentions a number of texts which “Ma cig, her sons, Gangs pa sMug sang and others have hidden at bSam yas, mChims phu and the sKyo thang of Lha sa, and which were later revealed by Ma cig shes rab gsal ldan, Kun spang brtson ’grus seng ge and others” plus a number of texts for which there is no clear reference to their having ever been concealed, where and by whom.⁸ He even quotes from a text introduced with the words *ma cig gis gcod gter ma las*.⁹ So it seems that among *gter ma*, he also mentions a number of texts which have not followed the usual process of being originally taught or composed by Padmasambhava, later hidden, and finally rediscovered in later times. Probably he is referring here to the *gcod gter ma* that Ma cig is said to have concealed in order to purify the *gcod log* in later times, as we will see with greater detail in Dharma seng ge’s (1890-?) historiography.¹⁰ Our interest here is limited for the time being to the ‘proper’ *gter ma*, since they are more closely related to the rNying ma school.

Thus, the information we obtain from the aforementioned passage is mainly that Karma chags med considers Sangs rgyas gling pa (1340-1396) and Rin chen gling pa (1295-1375) to be the most important *gter ston* of *gcod gter ma*. Sangs rgyas gling pa’s famous *gter ma* cycle, the *Bla ma dgongs ’dus*, includes a rather extensive section containing thirteen *gcod* texts,¹¹ as well as another section containing an initiation ritual for *gcod*, the *gCod dbang nam mkha’ sgo ’byed*.¹² We will briefly discuss these texts later. As for Rin chen gling pa, a few questions arise. We have in fact not been able to locate any *gcod gter ma* among the texts discovered by this early *rnying ma gter ston*. At present we tend to think that Karma chags med, while referring to Rin chen gling pa, might actually have had Ratna gling pa in mind, a possibility worth considering since the two terms *rin chen* and *ratna* are Tibetan and Sanskrit words with the same meaning. We set this hypothesis forth for two main reasons: firstly, as mentioned above, Karma chags med actually quotes from the

7 Karma chags med 1981: 234-35. To date we have not been able to locate this quote, despite the fact that the *Gu ru ’i dmar khrid rim lnga* by Ratna gling pa – from which the previous quote is taken – also contains a section about the *lus sbyin* (Rin chen gling pa 2010, vol. 1: 156-57).

8 Karma chags med 1981: 230-31.

9 *Ma cig gis gcod gter ma las kyang* in Karma chags med 1981: 237.

10 See Gyatso 1985: 335.

11 These texts constitute part of the vols. 11 and 12 in the Gangtok edition (Sangs rgyas gling pa 1972, vol. 11: 483 - vol. 12: 120). See also Sanders & Pansa 2016: 173-75.

12 Sangs rgyas gling pa 1972, vol. 5: 583-602.

Thugs sgrub yang snying 'dus pa, a *gter ma* discovered by Ratna gling pa containing instructions which are clearly connected with *gcod* practice. Karma chags med even composed a commentarial note on this *gter ma*.¹³ Secondly, in a much later historiography which we will consider more in detail, Ngag dbang bstan 'dzin nor bu (1867-1940) mentions Ratna gling pa instead of Rin chen gling pa.¹⁴

Let us now consider what other historiographical sources on *gcod* say about '*phrul gcod* and its relationship with *gter ma* literature. Dharma seng ge's *Zhi byed dang gcod yul gyi chos 'byung rin po che 'i phreng ba thar pa 'i rgyan* contains only a single occurrence of the term "Severance of Confusion" ('*khrol gcod*), which is clearly a spelling variant of '*phrul gcod*, and which is used in Ngag dbang bstan 'dzin nor bu's historiography as well. Dharma seng ge mentions '*khrol gcod* among the teachings which do not belong to Ma cig's transmission, but he associates it to the various *gter ma* teachings extracted from different repositories (*o rgyan rin po che 'i 'khrol gcod skor gter kha so so nas*).¹⁵ Without mentioning the names of the *gter ston* responsible for their discovery, he associates Guru Padmasambhava's '*khrol gcod* with different *gter ma* cycles on *gcod*. He refers to Ma cig's revelations with the designation *gter ma* as well,¹⁶ similarly to the way Karma chags med uses this term in an enlarged sense, not only to refer to the texts concealed and later rediscovered in the usual fashion. In fact he mentions a number of *gter ma* which were hidden in various repositories in order to be rediscovered and taught in future times to counteract the perverted teachings (*gcod log*).¹⁷ In any case, it may be useful to remark here that Dharma seng ge does not seem to make any reference to the earlier *gter ston*, but he mentions Kaḥ thog bya bral kun dga' 'bum (1332-1381), abbot of Kaḥ thog, in relation to the cycle of the profound meaning (*zab don skor*).¹⁸ We will come back later to the *gcod skor* attributed to him and included in the *bKa' ma shin tu rgyas pa* of Kaḥ thog.

Ngag dbang bstan 'dzin nor bu, in his *gCod yul nyon mongs zhi byed bla brgyud rnam thar*, mentions the '*khrol gcod* three times. First, following Karma chags med,

13 See note 3.

14 Ngag dbang bstan 'dzin nor bu 1972: 110.

15 Cf. Khams smyon dharma seng ge 1974: 549. See also Kollmar-Paulenz 1993: 194-95.

16 Khams smyon dharma seng ge 1974: 477.

17 Khams smyon dharma seng ge 1974: 557. Interestingly Dharma seng ge refers to the cycle of teaching of the four daughters (*bu mo bzhi 'i chos skor*) as a *gter ma* teaching hidden for this specific purpose. It is not clear if these are the four daughters of Ma cig, usually collectively called 'the four daughters' (*sras mo bzhi*) or 'the four ornament daughters' (*sras mo rgyan bzhi*) since each have the word 'ornament' (*rgyan*) as part of their names (see Harding 2003: 19). They were recipients of the transmission combining Sūtra and Tantra (see Edou 1996: 91) and Karma chags med (1981: 233) defines theirs as the female lineage of *gcod* (*mo gcod*). See also Edou 1996: 80. In a work by Kun dga' 'bum pa (1332-1381), the only reference to the *gter ma* transmission are the *sras mo bzhi* (*gter ma ni / sras mo bzhi la byin rlabs kyi bka' bab cing / sras mo bzhi 'i chos thams cad la ma rgyud gter ma 'i chos skor bya ba grags so*, cf. 'Jam dbyangs 1999: 16). On *gcod log* in Dharma seng ge's text see also Gyatso 1985: 335.

18 Cf. Khams smyon dharma seng ge 1974: 549; Kollmar-Paulenz 1993: 194.

he mentions it among the four Indian streams of *gcod*.¹⁹ Later he mentions it as a separate section of Tibetan *dharma* (*bod chos*), alongside Ma cig's teachings. On this occasion he states that the '*khrol gcod* cycle had instead been hidden originally by Padmasambhava and later rediscovered in various repositories by Sangs rgyas gling pa, Ratna gling pa, rGod ldem can (1337-1408) and others.²⁰ Like Dharma seng ge, he seems to employ the term '*khrol gcod* to designate the whole corpus of *gcod gter ma*, hidden as various treasure texts by Padmasambhava, referring in particular to those discovered in more ancient times by the earlier *gter ston*. Thus, if we compare the list compiled by Karma chags med to Ngag dbang bstan 'dzin nor bu's list, we note that the latter maintains the reference to Sangs rgyas gling pa, substitutes Rin chen gling pa with Ratna gling pa and adds rGod ldem can. We already briefly discussed the *gcod* texts of the first two. As for the latter, some sections contained in the *dGongs pa zang thal*²¹ clearly exhibit *gcod*-related imagery. Finally, while describing the *gter ma* succession, Ngag dbang bstan 'dzin nor bu does mention the lineage of the '*khrol gcod* treasure hidden by O rgyan rin po che (*o rgyan rin po che 'i 'khrol gcod gter gyi brgyud ni*).²² He actually uses this designation to refer to the particular lineage of the section of the Northern *gter ma* (*byang gter*) which was later revealed as *yang gter* by mNga' ris gter ston gar dbang rdo rje (1640-1685).²³

From the analysis of these occurrences, it seems to us that the '*khrol gcod* or '*phrul gcod* formula is probably not used to designate a particular text, since both Dharma seng ge and Ngag dbang bstan 'dzin nor bu refer the term to *gter ma* rediscovered by different *gter ston* and not to a specific text or cycle. Rather, this term seems to carry a more general meaning, like Pha dam pa's *zhi byed* or Nāropa's *ro snyoms*. In fact, it seems to refer in a rather general way to those teachings attributed

19 He gives the four as Āryadeva's *tshigs bcad*, Nā ro pa's *ro snyoms*, O rgyan's '*khrol gcod*, Pha dam pa's *zhi byed*. Ngag dbang bstan 'dzin nor bu 1972: 4-5.

20 This Indian '*khrol gcod* (which both Karma chags med and Ngag dbang bstan 'dzin nor bu include in the four Indian streams of *gcod*), imported and concealed by Padmasambhava, becomes *bod chos*, Tibetan *dharma*, once it has been rediscovered, an interesting way to indicate how these teachings were 'tibetanized' by virtue of being rediscovered on Tibetan soil. Cf. Ngag dbang bstan 'dzin nor bu 1972: 5.

21 Cf. rGod kyi ldem 'phru chen 2000, vol. 4: 515-89, and vol. 5: 271-79. Many thanks to Katarina Turpeinen for pointing this out.

22 Cf. Ngag dbang bstan 'dzin nor bu 1972: 193.

23 He initially expounds the general transmission of the *rnying ma* teachings, both the *bka'* series (*bka' sde*) and the *sgrub* series (*sgrub sde*), from Kun tu bzang po down to the human realm, from India to Tibet via *bka' ma* and *gter ma*. Then he lists the *gter ma* lineage of mNga' ris from Padmasambhava giving also the biographies of sNa nam rdo rje bdud 'joms (pp. 203-04), rGod ldem can (pp. 204-08), mNga' ris gter ston zla ba rgyal mtshan, alias Gar dbang rdo rje (pp. 208-23), Rigs mchog rdo rje bzhad pa rtsal (alias Kun mkhyen chos kyi dbang phyug, pp. 225-359), Gar dbang 'phrin las rnam rgyal (pp. 359-73), rGyal sras padma 'jigs bral (pp. 373-98), Sems dpa' dbang phyug rgyal po (pp. 398-401), Gar dbang ye shes mchog grub (pp. 401-02), 'Gyur med padma bstan 'dzin (pp. 402-03) and E rje 'phrin las rnam rgyal (pp. 403-10).

to Padmasambhava which can be considered to be progenitors and inspiring sources of *gcod*, as well as to those *gter ma* in which the *gcod* practice and doctrine is fully present,²⁴ particularly those rediscovered in more ancient times. There are a few other important occurrences of '*khrol*/'*phrul gcod* in *gcod*-related texts, but their origin is not explicitly attributed to Padmasambhava.

'Jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha' yas (1813-1899), in the section of his famous *Shes bya kun khyab mdzod* in which he discusses *zhi byed* and *gcod*, quotes from a text by the title "Severance of Illusion" ('*phrul gcod las*):

A triple classification emerges: the severance [realised by means of] the point of view [which looks at] the essence of phenomena (*dharmatā*) is supreme; the severance [realised by means of] a remembrance which leads to control is middling; the severance of the proliferation of thought is inferior.

རབ་ཚོས་ཉིད་ལྟ་བུ་བའི་གཅོད། འབྲིང་དབང་གྱུར་རྟེན་པའི་གཅོད། ཐ་མ་རྣམ་རྟོག་སྣོལ་པ་གཅོད་པ་དང་གསུམ་གྱི་རྣམ་གཞག་གྱུར་
འབྱུང་ངོ།²⁵

'Jam mgon kong sprul gives also a different nomenclature for the four Indian streams that converge in *gcod*: instead of '*phrul*/'*khrol gcod* he mentions *The Secret Severance of the Guru* (*gu ru'i gsang gcod*) and instead of Āryadeva's *Great Poem* (*tshigs su bcad chen mo*) he refers to the *Orally Transmitted Meaning Severance* (*bka' brgyud don gcod*). He omits Nāropa's *Equal Taste* (*ro snyoms*), mentioning only his *Secret Conduct* (*nā ro'i gsang spyod*), and yet he does mention Pha dam pa sangs rgyas's *Pacification*.²⁶

Without the attribution to Padmasambhava, the term '*khrol gcod* also appears in Ma cig's biography, and is listed among the doctrines transmitted to her by Pha dam pa sangs rgyas.²⁷ It also appears in Tsong kha pa's commentary on *gcod* (*Zab lam gcod kyi khrid yig*), where we find some quotes from a text called '*khrol gcod* discussing the choice of the correct place and time for doing the practice of Severance.²⁸

24 This possibility has already been suggested by Janet Gyatso 1985: 338.

25 'Jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha' yas 1997, vol. 4: 166 (f. 82b). Cf. Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Taye 2008:,284.

26 'Jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha' yas 1997, vol. 4: 159 (f. 79b); Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Taye 2008: 277-78, 433. The formulas implied by 'Jam mgon kong sprul seem to diverge only from a merely formal point of view from the list given by Karma chags med, and probably they refer to a set of less specific terminology to refer to the same teachings.

27 Cf. Edou 1996: 138, and Savvas 1990: 66.

28 In reference to these quotes Savvas considers the possibility of a mistake attributing them to the Pha dam pa sangs rgyas's *Six Sections* ('*brul tsho drug pa*), a text frequently quoted in commentarial works on *gcod*, which is supposed to constitute the foundation of the teaching of this *siddha* on the topic of severance. Unfortunately, the location of this text is uncertain and thus it is not possible to confirm or deny this supposition. Cf. Savvas 1990:,316-17.

To conclude the discussion of *'khrul'phrul gcod* it might be interesting to note that among the works of the *rnying ma* master gTer bdag gling pa 'gyur med rdo rje (1646-1714) is a *gter ma* with the title “Oral Instruction for the Severance of the Confusion of Dualism” (*gnyis 'dzin 'khrul gcod man ngag*) which, although extremely short, contains instructions clearly stemming from a *gcod* background. It says:

From the Realisation of the Heart of Vajrasattva, the oral instructions for the severance of the confusion of dualism. If one wants to rescind the root of dualism, one should go to cemeteries, islands, lonely trees and other places which terrify the distracted mind. Here, after having purified one's continuum, one clearly visualises in the space in front numberless guests and offerings, and without attachment one offers one's own body, flesh, blood and all that is desired and then relaxes in equanimity free from mental activity. At that time, as for the deluded conceptual visions, [one understands that] illusory appearances, [like] the arising of many dreams and concrete meditative experiences, prove that the permanence or nonexistence of the phenomena of *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, apparent yet nonexistent in their empty real condition, are an illusion similar to [the reflection of] the moon in water. In this way cutting through²⁹ one's own baseless and rootless mind, it is of the same nature as ether, the self-luminous state of spontaneous knowledge in which there are no mind or objects, conceiver and conceived. [Thus] the base of confusion, hope and fear, acceptance and rejection, is severed, and [thus] one recognises one's own abode, the naked perception [of reality]; one remains present in a state free of pride and adverse circumstances self-liberate. [These are] the authentic secret instructions on severing confusion, which lead to perfection.³⁰

The *gcod* Texts in the rNying ma School: Earliest Examples

At present the most ancient texts on *gcod* in the rNying ma school we have been able to identify are from the 14th century:³¹ one from the *bka' ma* and three from the *gter ma* tradition.

The only *bka' ma* corpus is the *Kaḥi thog kun dga' 'bum gyi bka' srol bka' ma'i gcod skor*.³² It is positioned as an addendum (*zhar byung*) to the texts distributed

29 The words *tshur bcad*, ‘in this way cutting through’, could also be read *tshar bcad*, ‘taming’, ‘to cut off completely’.

30 gTer bdag gling pa 1998, vol. 12: 61.

31 Here we will give only a brief overview of these large corpuses. We are currently preparing a more detailed paper on this topic, analysing in particular the approaches that the ancient *rnying ma* masters have adopted to bypass the anachronism generated by considering their teaching to belong to a far earlier age than the life of the official founder of *gcod*, while at the same time keeping this doctrine and the related practice among their most treasured repertoire.

32 See 'Jam dbyangs 1999.

according to the nine-vehicle doxographic structure of the *rnying ma* school seen in the *bKa' ma shin tu rgyas pa* of Kaḥ thog. It contains *gcod* texts attributed to Kun dga' 'bum pa himself, along with invocations, *sādhana* texts and addenda by other authors. According to a recent biography written by Kaḥ thog mkhan po 'Jam dbyangs rgyal mtshan (b. 1929), Kun dga' 'bum pa was the throne holder of Kaḥ thog from 1357 to 1369³³ and himself a *gcod* and *zhi byed* specialist. 'Jam dbyangs rgyal mtshan emphasizes his interest in these practices and tells us that before becoming abbot of Kaḥ thog he became holder of the teachings of the oral transmission of *zhi byed* and *gcod* (*zhi gcod snyan brgyud*). As throne holder, Kun dga' 'bum pa later introduced the *gcod* practice into Kaḥ thog monastery and his transmission, contained in a lengthy volume which is still available, became known as “the *gcod* teachings according to Kun dga' 'bum pa's system” (*gcod kyi gdams pa kun dga' 'bum pa'i lugs srol*). His other compositions are no longer extant.³⁴ The introduction to this cycle (*kaḥ thog pa'i gcod kyi lo rgyus*), written by one gZhan phan mthar phyin, whose exact identification has proven difficult, describes Kun dga' 'bum pa's *gcod* tradition as the only *bka' ma* tradition of *gcod* in the rNying ma school. It also asserts that the teaching traditions related to the three series of the inner tantras, taught by masters such as gNubs chen sangs rgyas ye shes (9th century) and his disciples So ye shes dbang phyug and Zur shākya 'byung gnas, are completed in Kun dga' 'bum pa's treatises, belonging to the lineage of Pha dam pa sangs rgyas and sKyo ston bsod nams bla ma.³⁵

In the *gter ma* tradition, as we notice examining the historiographies above, we have the treasure texts which Sangs rgyas gling pa extracted from the sPu ri cave on 23 August 1364. In fact, the *gcod gter ma* unearthed by Sangs rgyas gling pa belong to the famous, albeit little-studied, collection of *gter ma* called *Bla ma dgongs 'dus*. They include one text for the initiation ritual, the *gCod dbang nam mkha' sgo byed*, and thirteen further texts grouped under the title *rDzogs rim bdud kyi gcod yul zab mo shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i dgongs pa*, which are actually understood to be part of the practices of the completion stage (*rdzogs rim*). Interestingly, almost all titles of the individual texts contain a metaphoric reference to *nam mkha'*, starting from the initiation (*nam mkha' sgo byed*).³⁶

The *gCod skor gter chen rdo rje gling pa'i gter chos*³⁷ by rDo rje gling pa (1346-1405) seems to be a rather non-homogeneous collection of sixteen texts on *gcod* composed or revealed by rDo rje gling pa. At present we have had the opportunity to study it only in a rather preliminary way, yet we can say that it contains two histories

33 According to Karenina Kollmar-Paulenz (1993: 194), he was the seventh abbot.

34 See 'Jam dbyangs rgyal mtshan 1996: 46-47; Samten Chhosphel, *Kun dga' 'bum*.

35 'Jam dbyangs 1999: 6.

36 We already published a paper on this topic. See Sanders & Pansa 2016: 173-75.

37 Cf. rDo rje gling pa 1984.

of *gcod*, one brief³⁸ and one extensive,³⁹ with lineages and biographies of lineage holders, at least one commentary to Ma cig's *bKa' tshom chen mo*,⁴⁰ plus initiations (*dbang*), introductions (*ngo sprod*) and instructions on the practice. For the most part they are *gter ma* texts which mention the *gter ston* rDo rje gling pa and the place of discovery, the *ka ba bum pa can*, a pillar in the Jo khang in Lha sa, but do not mention who hid them and when, nor the circumstances of their rediscovery. It contains other texts difficult to classify, for example one titled '*Khrul pa rtsad gcod / gcod yul 'phags ma sgrol ma'i rdzogs rim*,⁴¹ which not only lacks *gter tshog* mark in the first part of the text, but also starts with the common formula introducing translations from Sanskrit (*rgya gar skad du*) and the typical sūtra opening formula ('*di skad bdag gis thos pa'i dus cig na*). The first part of the title could be an extended form of '*khrul gcod*, and it also appears to belong to the *rdzogs rim* as does Sangs rgyas gling pa's texts.

A number of sections within the *dGongs pa zang thal*, the most important *rdzogs chen* cycle in the Northern Treasures (*byang gter*) collection unearthed by rig 'dzin rGod ldem can, contain statements and practices connected to the *gcod* imaginary. Examples include the explanation of demons as aspects and tendencies of one's own mind, the selection of awe-inspiring places like ravines and cemeteries for practice, a process of offering the physical body which includes a '*pho ba* like visualization, the visualization of one's own bodily remains becoming enormous in size and so forth. However, unlike the other texts we just mentioned, here we do not have a homogeneous corpus, but instead some rather scattered instructions included in a much larger context. The first *gcod* instructions are distributed in the text titled *gSang ba rmad du byung ba'i lde mig*⁴² and the second, shorter instance, is contained in the *Gegs sel nor bu rin po che'i mdzod*.⁴³ In both cases we have a *gcod*-like *sadhānā* suggested by Padmasambhava as a useful and effective practice to be adopted as yogic conduct (*brtul zhugs*) in the context of the behaviour (*spyod pa*) one should apply.

So, unlike the scattered *gcod* instructions contained in the *gter ma* rediscovered by rGod ldem can, the other three instances of ancient *gcod* texts in *rnying ma* context we just mentioned are quite extensive textual cycles explaining the doctrine and the practice of *gcod* in a manner which is already explicit, well structured and organized, as well as integrated with the crucial aspects of the *rnying ma* doctrine. This seems to be particularly true for the texts by Kun dga' 'bum pa and the *gter ma* discovered by Sangs rgyas gling pa. It is all too reasonable to think that these are not the earliest examples of the integration of *gcod* into the corpus of *rnying ma* doctrinal and practical heritage. On the other hand, an important antecedent and inspirer of the

38 Cf. rDo rje gling pa 1984: 5-16.

39 Cf. rDo rje gling pa 1984: 17-52.

40 rDo rje gling pa 1984: 365-447. See also Sorensen 2013: 257-58.

41 rDo rje gling pa 1984: 53-123.

42 rGod kyi ldem 'phru chen 2000, vol. 4: 515-89.

43 rGod kyi ldem 'phru chen 2000, vol. 5: 271-79.

appearance of this extensive *gcod* literature in rNying ma school could probably be identified in the earlier fervent commentarial production present in the bKa' brgyud school, such as the works of the Third Karmapa Rang byung rdo rje (1284-1339).⁴⁴ Furthermore, although these four are the earliest examples we found of *gcod* texts in an explicitly *rnying ma* context, this does not, of course, exclude that from the doctrinal perspective some concepts expressed in earlier *gcod* texts can be assimilated, or at least read, in a *rnying ma* and/or *rdzogs chen* fashion. Also, it goes without saying that many earlier *rnying ma* masters had practiced *gcod*, giving birth to various transmission lineages, and it could be that they also included some *gcod* instructions and *sadhānās* in their works. However, at the present state of our research, it seems that it was not until the 14th century that a widespread need emerged in the rNying ma school for both *bka' ma* commentarial literature and treasure texts on *gcod*.

To conclude, it would be appropriate to mention a few earlier *rnying ma* masters to whom *gcod* texts are attributed, but regrettably we were unable to locate any or confirm the respective attribution. One of the more prominent examples is the popular account of a transmission of *gcod* and the figure of Khros ma nag mo⁴⁵ going back to Nyang ral nyi ma 'od zer (1124-1192). Nevertheless, according to Dan Hirshberg,⁴⁶ although there are links between the lineages of Nyang ral nyi ma 'od zer and Pha dam pa sangs rgyas,⁴⁷ most probably the *gcod gter ma* assigned to Nyang ral in reality belong to the re-discovered texts (*yang gter*) by gTer bdag gling pa after he had visions of this master. On the other hand, Karma chags med and other historiographers never explicitly mention *gcod gter ma* discovered by that great *gter ston*. As stated above, this obviously does not exclude the possibility of the existence of a *gcod* tradition linked to his figure or that, buried somewhere in his *gter ma*, some *gcod*-like instruction or some recommended practice might be found.

Also, a recent edition of Klong chen pa's (1308-1364) *gsung 'bum*⁴⁸ includes a volume with *gcod* texts discovered in Bhutan in 2003; nevertheless, as mentioned in its preface (titled *gCod kyi gsal bshad nyung bsdus*), although in the colophons of most of these texts the author is said to be Klong chen pa, a thorough analysis is required to establish the correctness of this statement;⁴⁹ the transmission of these

44 See Gyatso 1985: 335.

45 The deity Khros ma nag mo frequently appears in *gcod* liturgies. Incidentally, she is also mentioned in the initiation text of the *dGongs pa zang thal* collection with the title *gSang ba rmad du byung ba 'i dbang zab mo 'i cho ga* (Cf. rGod kyi ldem 'phru chen 2000, vol. 4: 573-89).

46 See the comment by Dan Hirshberg in the *kīli kīlaya* blog available at <http://blogs.orient.ox.ac.uk/kila/2011/09/19/the-wonderful-orgyan-ling-manuscript-kanjur/#comment-802>.

47 It is said that Nyang ral nyi ma 'od zer received a transmission of *gcod* from Bla ma rdzong pa, who is mentioned in the Blue Annals (see Roerich & Gendūn Chöphel 1976: 914) among those who had received teachings from Pha dam pa sangs rgyas and was the holder of some teachings on Pacification. See the comment by Dan Hirshberg in the *kīli kīlaya* above-mentioned blog.

48 Cf. Dri med 'od zer 2009.

49 Cf. Dri med 'od zer 2009: 19-20

teachings is attributed to Padma gling pa (1450-1521), considered to be the immediate rebirth of Klong chen pa. For the most part, the teachings contained in this volume of the new edition of Klong chen pa's *gsung 'bum* correspond exactly to the *Zab don thugs kyi snying po bdud kyi gcod yul gyi skor*⁵⁰ by Padma gling pa, except for the initial invocation and the concluding vajra verses, plus a quite interesting historical/biographical text.⁵¹

50 Padma gling pa 1981.

51 Cf. Dri med 'od zer 2009:101-123.

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MANUSCRIPT FRAGMENTS FROM MATHO. A PRELIMINARY REPORT AND RANDOM REFLECTIONS*

HELMUT TAUSCHER

(University of Vienna)

Several years ago, Klu sdings mkhan chen Rin po che, the head of the Sa skya – Ngor lineage, detected some 50 *mchod rten* on an alluvial plateau at the edge of the village of Matho (Mang spro) in Ladakh as the origin of some malign influence on the wellbeing of the community and decided that they should be destroyed.¹ One of these *mchod rten* used to be referred to popularly as the “King’s stupa” (*rgyal po’i mchod rten*), and another one as the “Queen’s stupa” (*rgyal mo’i mchod rten*). This local usage has obviously preserved the memory of historical facts, but it apparently mixes up names and persons and periods of time.

Although probably not all of these *mchod rten* were contemporary, they are generally said to have been erected “at the time of the Mongol war”. “Normally”, this expression would refer to the Tibet/Mongol-Ladakh-Mughal war around 1680,² and the local tradition does, in fact, associate these *mchod rten* in some way with dGa’ ldan Tshe dbang (1644–1697), the commander of the Tibetan-Mongol army that invaded Ladakh at that time. Born a Mongol prince from the family of Guśri Khan, he became a devote Buddhist monk. It is reported that, due to his aversion to bloodshed, he hesitated to accept the command when he was appointed leader of this military campaign by the 5th Dalai Lama.³ Nevertheless, his troops raided Ladakh for some four years before they could be driven back with the help of Mughal forces. Accordingly, dGa’ ldan Tshe dbang is not remembered sympathetically by Ladakhis other than dGe lugs pa followers, and it seems to be easy to ascribe some sinister influence to places connected with his name. The connection with dGa’ ldan Tshe dbang might be a good excuse for destructing the *mchod rten*. Historically, however, it is not possible, as the *mchod rten* were much older.

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1 The “story” surrounding the destruction of the *mchod rten* is based on personal communications from Nelly Rieuf, manager of the “Matho Museum Project”, and on local gossip.

2 On these events, see, e.g., Petech 1947; Petech 1977: 71ff.; Emmer 2007; Nawang Jinpa 2015.

3 See Petech 1947: 174; Bray 2007: 4.

Possibly, the memories of this 17th century war mix with those of some military campaign by the sTod Hor (Chagatai Mongols) in mNga' ris skor gsum in mid-13th century,⁴ but this is mere speculation.

Alternatively, the *mchod rten* are locally said to originate from “the times of the kings”, i.e. from the times when there were kings at Matho, before Mar yul was turned into “Ladakh” under the rNam rgyal rulers.

Be this as it may – historians and archaeologists may bring more light to this matter –, the villagers apparently did not consider the threat by the *mchod rten* very serious or urgent, as about a decade was allowed to pass before they eventually took action and destroyed these *mchod rten* in spring 2014. Once they had started, however, they did their job thoroughly. They tore down the *mchod rten* and began shovelling the rubble together with all the grave goods into the river, even making use of a bulldozer. Much archaeological material was lost in this way: skeletons, a mummy, ritual objects, manuscripts, etc.

By lucky coincidence and the intervention of locals who were concerned about the fate of these relics this action was stopped, and the remaining grave goods were saved and collected at Matho Monastery by the Matho Museum Project, among them a *thangka*, long human hair, *tsa tsa* and various ritual items, and manuscript fragments. The majority of these items – though not the skeletons and the mummy – and practically all the manuscripts are from the “King’s stupa”.

The recovered *thangka* has been dated by the art-historians of the Matho Museum Project to the 12th century, but the early 13th century could also be considered possible.⁵ Assuming that it was painted for the funeral ceremony, it could provide a date for the erection of the *mchod rten*, and the *terminus ante quem* for all the items found inside. The manuscript fragments, too, suggest this early dating. Apparently, not all of them were produced at exactly the same period, and it is not possible – at least not at the present stage – to date any of them within the narrow frame of half a century. In general, however, their formal characteristics such as *mgo yig* (fig. 1a), ornamentation (fig. 1b), the foliation systems, orthography, and palaeography indicate an early phase from the 10th to 12th century, or the early 13th century at the latest, according to the criteria presented by Scherrer-Schaub (1999: 25). On the other hand, there are very few leaves or later additions on apparently older leaves that create the impression of more “modern” writing (fig. 7c). These cases must be investigated in detail.

In addition, the only two illuminated folios discovered so far (fig. 2a) show iconographic and stylistic characteristics found in works from 11th-12th century mNga' ris, and a third fragmentary miniature, which was found inside a *tsa tsa* in a stupa at Matho village (fig. 2b), could tentatively be dated to the late 11th or early 12th century.⁶

4 Discussed in Vitali 2005: 100 ff.

5 Christian Luczanits, in an e-mail communication of 3 August 2015.

6 Amy Heller, in e-mail communications of 22 July and 7 October 2015.

With regard to content, these manuscript findings contain fragments from a great variety of literary genres: ritual texts, *pūja*, practice manuals (*khrid yig*), pith instructions (*man ngag*), eulogies (*bstod*), etc., but also “Kanjur” and “Tanjur” texts (i.e. texts that were later included in the various Kanjurs or Tanjurs), as well as philosophical commentaries that could be of Tibetan or even local origin, frequently with interlinear glosses.

From these few superficial observations we can conclude two things:

- a) The “King’s stupa” must have been the burial place of an important person. Nothing is known – to my knowledge – about the particular history of Matho in the 12th century or about the Matho “kings” in general. In pre-rNam rgyal times, many of the villages were “kingdoms” of their own. Some of them gained wider influence, but Matho, presumably, did not, as it had access neither to mining nor to major trade routes. Nevertheless, as an agricultural area with no competitors for pastoral land some distance up the Indus, Matho might have acquired some importance and also wealth as a supplier of food and an ally (or vassal?) of the kings of Shel (or She ye, i.e. modern-day Shey).⁷ Again, I leave it to historians and archaeologists to clarify these matters, but I am afraid that the identity of the king who found his rest in the “King’s stupa” – at least for some 800 years – will remain a mystery.
- b) The nature and the variety of texts represented among the manuscript fragments presuppose the existence of a monastic centre of high educational standards. Some of them, like the ritual and prayer texts, may originate from Matho, but the greater part is not from “village manuscripts”. Which villager of 12th century Matho would have been interested in, e.g., Dharmottara’s *Nyāyabinduṭīkā*? The remains of two manuscripts of this text could be identified. With their philosophical and commentarial texts, their interlinear glosses and their “writing exercises”, whereby novice monks practiced writing in the margins of old manuscripts, etc., these fragments very much reflect scholastic monastic life. In this respect, there are not too many alternatives, and one would immediately think of the nearby Nyar ma (now in ruins), the only monastery in Ladakh that can be identified with certainty as a foundation of Rin chen bzang po;⁸ as the crow flies, it is only some 6 km from Matho on

7 Quentin Devers in a personal communication of 12 September 2015. On Shel, see Vitali 1996: 245ff. (in particular, n. 352 on the different versions of the name) and 495ff. (in particular, n. 834 for a clear statement of the *Deb ther dmar po gsar ma* on the distribution of power in present-day Ladakh, though the situation might not have been all that clear and easy as bSod nams grags pa makes us believe).

8 On this site, see Panglung 1983; Snellgrove & Skorupski 1977: 19. Snellgrove & Skorupski 1980: 84 mentions a description of Nyar ma Monastery as it once was, included in a biography of Rin chen bzang po composed in 1976 by Blo bzang bzod pa from Tiksey Monastery and published by rDo rje tshes brtan in *Historical Materials Concerning the bKra-sis-lhun-po and Rin-chen bzang-po Traditions from the Monastery of Kyi in Lahoul-Spiti (Himachal Pradesh)*, Delhi 1978.

the opposite bank of the river. Nowadays, there are bridges at Choglamsar, Tiksey, and Stakna, and if the assumption is correct that Matho delivered agricultural products to Shey, a safe and easy crossing of the Indus must have existed in the area also in the 12th century. The petroglyphs that once could be seen near the Stakna bridge – they have since given way to modern developments – indicate that this was an ancient crossing of the Indus, but others might have existed as well.

Did Nyar ma monks performing or attending the funeral ceremonies of the Matho king bring their waste manuscripts to deposit them in the stupa, and are the “Matho manuscripts” – at least parts of them – actually “Nyar ma manuscripts”? This scenario seems very likely.

However, it is much too early to speak publicly about these findings. The study of the manuscripts cannot even be called “work in progress”; it is merely in the very beginning phases. Everything contained in this paper represents the state of investigation from September 2015; it is full of question marks, and a good deal reflects on and speculates about possibilities rather than discussing facts in well-founded argumentation. With certainty much of it will have to be revised at a later stage: the documentation of the material has not even been completed, and so far only the “canonical” texts could be identified to some extent; all the others are still more or less mysterious, and many detailed investigations in various aspects still have to be conducted.

Nevertheless, as these fragments appear to be the oldest manuscripts hitherto known in Ladakh, and some insight into the history of textual transmission can be expected from their examination, or at least hoped for, a short preliminary report might be justified.

With regard to writing media, there are two kinds of manuscripts: birch bark and paper. The manuscripts were certainly incomplete and damaged already when they were deposited in the *mchod rten*, yet due to the treatment suffered during the destruction of the stupa they were additionally torn to pieces and scattered. Those recovered were found in total disorder, which makes it difficult to identify texts and compile units of related leaves and fragments.

This applies in particular to the birch bark manuscripts. Of these, only very few reasonably substantial units are extant; the majority consists only of small pieces (fig. 3). This material has not yet been investigated at all. Special preparation was necessary before it could even be touched without risking damage to the birch bark. It is thanks to the efforts and the achievements of Irene Martinez-Maeso that the more essential parts of this material could be documented photographically.

Birch bark has been in use in Ladakh for ritual purposes to the present day. Some scrolls inside the *mani* wheels along the walls of temples and monasteries, e.g., are written on this medium. Ladakhi birch bark manuscripts, however, have not been identified so far. They might (!) be of Kashmiri origin and lead us right back to the days

of Rin chen bzang po.⁹ Radio-carbon dating the birch bark could clarify this question, yet some bureaucratic hurdles must still be overcome before testing can occur.

The paper manuscripts were found to be in unexpectedly good condition after cleaning and flattening by the team of the Matho Museum Project. Only a few leaves are affected by fungi or other impairments, and the greater part of them is reasonably legible. Of course, many leaves are torn, and many of the “units” established so far consist only of a single folio; related folios might simply not have been discovered or their relation to others might not be recognized yet. However, there are also bigger units with up to some 100 folios, and 36 of them in succession.

Both with regard to style and format and to content they display a great variety, and not all details can be presented in this paper. Very provisionally one can distinguish three groups: a) “various”, b) “non-canonical”, and c) “canonical” texts, i.e., texts that were included into the Kanjurs or Tanjurs some 100–150 (?) years later. None of these groups is homogeneous or clearly defined. In particular, the difference between groups a) and b) is blurred, but also b) and c) can be clearly distinguished only if all the texts could be properly identified. Further investigation will be necessary to draw clearer lines between them, or to find better ways of classification.

a) Various ritual and religious texts

Since no attempt has yet been made to investigate or identify any of these texts, this group shall not be taken into account in this paper or described in any detail. Many of the texts have a very small format, the smallest folios measuring 7 × 8 cm; some are in the form of “booklets” with the folios folded and stitched together (fig. 4), and there are a few drawings and paintings, mainly tantric in nature (fig. 5). The majority of these texts are written in *dbu med* script.

b) “Non-canonical” religious and philosophical texts and commentaries

Apparently most of the manuscripts in this group were not part of any larger collection, but only individual texts, or smaller collections of Sādhana and the like. A considerable number of them do not exhibit any foliation at all, and high page numbers occur primarily in longer canonical texts. Therefore, a description of the various systems of foliation will be included below in the discussion of this group of texts, taking account of the non-canonical texts, too.

Paper seems to have been scarce when these manuscripts were written: the margins range from narrow to non-existent and the script is tiny, with up to 23 lines on 11 cm. This group encompasses manuscripts of various formats, from 32–35 ×

⁹ This theory was expressed by 'Jam dbyangs rgyal mtshan from the Central Institute of Buddhist Studies at Choglamsar during a conversation in August 2014.

5–6 cm with 9–12 lines or 22 × 8 cm with 7 lines to 58 × 5 cm with 8 lines or 62–65 × 9.5–12 cm with 10–14 lines. The last seems to be some sort of a “standard”; there are quite a number of manuscripts in this format. Occasionally, however, these folios were obviously considered too large for everyday usage; they were divided into two columns and folded in the middle (fig. 6).

A peculiarity of the Matho fragments are a few folios used for two texts simultaneously, with the folio turned upside down and the second text written between the lines of the first one (the bottom right examples of fig. 7a and 7b). It is unclear whether this was done due to the shortage of paper or for some other reason, and at the present stage it is also not known whether these texts are in any way related.

Most of the “standard-size” manuscripts of this group appear to be commentaries of some sort, and some of them use numerical figures in their *sa bcad*, abbreviations (*skung yig*) and contractions (*bsdu yig*) of syllables (see Eimer 1992: 53ff.), just as they can be found in early manuscripts in the *bKa' gdams gsung 'bum*, frequently with interlinear glosses. Occasionally pith instructions (*man ngag*), eulogies (*bstod*), etc. are also in this format. The script is exclusively an archaic *dbu med*. There are, of course, various types of script and handwriting represented among the Matho fragments (fig. 7b), but in general they resemble some of the Dunhuang manuscripts as well as the *dbu med* inscriptions at Alchi¹⁰ (fig. 8).

Not a single text of this group could be identified so far. As is to be expected from the particular overall situation of the fragments, beginnings and endings of texts are rare. Even if they are extant, they pose questions rather than provide answers at the present stage, as they seem to indicate texts unknown to western academia and to local scholars, both laymen and monks. Not all these cases can be listed in this paper, and not all of them have been discovered yet. Two examples will suffice:

མཚོན་རྟེན་ལ་མཚོན་པ་དབུལ་བ། ལྷོབ་དཔོན་ལྷ་སྲུབ་ཀྱིས་མཛོད་པ།

A **Caityapūjāpradāna* (or similar) is not included among the works ascribed to Nāgārjuna, the author of the *Madhyamakakārikā*, and at least I do not know about such a text ascribed to any Nāgārjuna.

སྤྲད་པ་ཚིགས་སུ་བཅད་པའི་ཀླ་འགྲེལ་གྱི་ཉི་ཀ། ཤག་གྲ་དགོ་སྣོར་བྱང་རྒྱལ་ཡིས་ས་སྤྲར་བ།

Regarding the author, Byang chub ye shes, one might think of the 11th century *bKa' gdams pa* scholar Ar Byang chub ye shes, author of the *sDud pa tshigs su bcad pa'i 'grel ba* (*bKa' gdams gsung 'bum*, vol. 3: 137–277). However, no ... *dka' 'grel kyi ti ka* is known from either Ar Byang chub ye shes or any other author. Be this as it may, the text seems to consist of “notes” on the *sDud pa tshigs su bcad pa'i dka' 'grel by*

10 See Denwood 1980 and Tropper 1996, in particular pp. 30–38 on orthographic and palaeographic peculiarities.

Buddhaśrīñāna, apparently composed by a bKa' g'dams pa scholar.¹¹ The text originally consisted of 54 folios, 30 of which are extant.

c) “Canonical” texts

These manuscripts also appear in various formats, the smallest measuring 28 × 10 cm. There is, however, a clear tendency towards larger formats and script. The majority of these manuscripts have the size 56–60 × 9–12 cm, with 6–9 lines per page. Obviously, large format leaves of some 60–65 × 18–20 cm (thus coming close to the standard “Kanjur size” of ca. 70 × 20 cm of later days) did already exist at that time, and they were prepared for the scribes with wide margins and “symbolic” string holes surrounded by red circles. However – and this seems to be a peculiarity of this collection – they were not used in this form, but cut in half before the manuscripts were written (fig. 10).

String holes, with or without surrounding circles, can be found in roughly 25 % of these manuscripts. The scripts are *dbu med* as well as *dbu can* (fig. 7a), showing to a varying degree all features of old orthography and palaeography. While the *ma-ya btags* (e.g., *myed*, *myi*, *smyin*, etc.) is used consistently, the inverted vowel *i* (*gi gu log*) is relatively rare.

Like the previous group, many of the canonical texts were individual texts rather than part of bigger sets. There is, however, also evidence of such units at Matho/Nyarma, like *mdo mangs* volumes or possibly even proto-canonical collections: one manuscript of the *Tathāgatoṣṇīṣasitātapatre-aparājitāmahāpratyaṃgiraparamasiddhi*, e.g., shows the foliations 7 and 12, i.e. 207 and 212 of a volume 1 (Ka), but this text covers only 6.5 folios in the Derge Kanjur (vol. rGyud Pha 212b7–219a7). Two leaves of a *Prajñāpāramitā-saṃcayagāthā* manuscript bear the foliation 187 and 188; in the Derge Kanjur this short text is included in the volume of “various (*sna tshogs*) Prajñāpāramitā texts”, fol. 189a2–215a4. Strong evidence for the existence of larger manuscript units is also provided by a manuscript of the *Vinayasūtraṭkā* (below).

Systems of Foliation

1. Numerals or numerical figures

The vast majority of the Matho fragments use only numerals without any indication of a volume. For folios from 101 onwards, the units of hundred are marked by crosses. In three cases numerical figures are used instead of numerals.

Two manuscripts denote numbers from twenty-one to twenty-nine with the syllable *rtsa* plus a numeral (e.g., *rtsa gnyis* = 22). The following decade is indicated by the commonly used *so* plus numeral. No folios between ten and twenty or above forty are extant of these manuscripts.

11 J. L. Panglung, in an e-mail communication of 14 January 2015.

2. Letters used as numerals (type I of Scherrer-Schaub 1999: 22)

ྐ, ྑ, ྒ, etc.

Apparently, this system was used only in shorter texts; no folios with combined letters or other additions were discovered.

3. Letters indicating the hundreds, followed by numerals (type II of Scherrer-Schaub)

ྐ 1–100, ྑ (10)1–200, ྒ (20)1–300, etc.

4. Letters indicating the volume, and subscribed letters denoting the units of hundreds from 101 onwards (type III of Scherrer-Schaub)

ྐ 1–100, ྑ (10)1–200, ྒ (20)1–300. No folios with higher numbers were discovered at Matho.

5. A combination of the systems 3) and 4) is used in manuscripts of the *Daśasāhasrikā* and of Dharmamitra's *Vinayasūtraṭīkā*. Here, letters apparently indicate units of hundred, and letters with subscribed ྑ the same units of a second series. The folios or fragmentary folios that are extant, in both cases from the units ྑ and ྒ exclusively, suggest a sequence ྐ - ྑ - ྒ - ྒྷ and ྑ - ྒ - ྒྷ - ྔ, each time followed by the numerals 1–100.¹² In this case, the *Vinayasūtraṭīkā* would not have been the first text in its set; just like in the Tanjurs, it might have been preceded by the *Vinayasūtravrṭtyabhīdhānasvayākyāna*. However, the foliation ྑ 400 does not fit into this assumed system.¹³

6. Letters indicating the volume, and crosses the units of hundred from 101 onwards (type IIIb of Scherrer-Schaub)

Of this type, two examples were discovered at Matho.

The greater part of these canonical texts could be identified with a high degree of certainty, though not all of them. Given the fact that some of the fragments are rather small, and quite a number of passages within canonical literature appear with more or less identical phrasing in several texts, occasionally there are a number of possibilities when attributing a fragment to a specific text.

In addition, the Matho material apparently preserves versions that divert considerably from the editions in the various Kanjurs and Tanjurs, some even representing distinct translations from the Sanskrit. Due to this fact a number of fragments are suspected to be from “canonical” texts, but they cannot (yet?) be related to any one in particular. Till now, two instances of a Tibetan translation differing from that contained in the canons could be singled out; one of them will be presented below. There are most likely some more of them.

Almost all the major canonical sections (according to the arrangement of the Kanjur and Tanjur of Derge) are represented among the texts hitherto identified. From the Kanjur sections only Avataṃsaka (Phal ches) and Ratnakūṭa (dKon brtsegs) are missing, and from the Tanjur no texts in the sections “Hymns” (bsTod tshogs),

12 Cristina Scherrer-Schaub in an e-mail communication of 3 November 2015.

13 For other ancient systems of foliation, see Dotson 2015.

“Sutra commentary” (mDo ’grel), Abhidharma (mNgon pa), Jātaka (sKyes rabs), and of the sections on the general fields of knowledge, “Grammar” (sGra mdo), etc., have been found. On the other hand, the sections Vinaya (‘Dul ba) and Tantra (rGyud) from both Kanjur and Tanjur are particularly well represented.

Both the absence of Avataṃsaka and, in particular, Ratnakūṭa texts and the strong presence of Tantra are striking. Ratnakūṭa is prominently represented among the western Tibetan proto-canonical collections from late 13th to early 15th century (Tholing, Tabo, Gondhla, Phukthar), and it can also be found among the approximately 900 folios from roughly the same period at Basgo. Its absence from Matho might, of course, be sheer coincidence, and it does not necessarily mean that no fragments of these texts were initially contained in the *mchod rten*; their remains might simply be drifting in the Arabian Sea by now. However, it would be a strange coincidence, if this was the fate of all the remains of this group of texts without exception. Likewise, the absence of these texts does not necessarily imply that Avataṃsaka and Ratnakūṭa were not studied at Nyar ma (or wherever the manuscripts originated), but it might indicate that they did not exist in great number, so that at a particular time there were no waste copies around to be deposited in the *mchod rten*. In any case, it is rather unfortunate that no Ratnakūṭa texts are extant. Their arrangement in most of the proto-canonical collections and the Kanjurs of Shel dkar/London, Shey, Hemis, and Basgo is evidence for a particular western Tibetan line of transmission,¹⁴ and it would have been interesting to discover whether this arrangement already existed in the 12th century.

The strong presence of Tantra texts as such is not at all surprising, considering the strong tantric inclination of Atiśa, Rin chen bzang po, Zhi ba ’od, and others who were active in these western parts of Tibet during the early days of *phyi dar*, and the time of production of these manuscripts, which is presumably only slightly later and still to be considered as early *phyi dar*. Nevertheless, it is striking in the context of the general situation of tantric literature in the area:

- 1) The proto-canonical collections mentioned above contain nothing that could be counted as “tantra” apart from gZung ’dus (*Dhāraṇīsaṅgraha) texts. gZung (’dus), however, was occasionally considered a category distinct from rGyud, and it appears as a separate section, e.g., in the Early Mustang Kanjur (see Eimer 1999) and in the Kanjur of Derge.
- 2) In the Kanjur of Basgo (around 1635) the rGyud section is fully represented, but it is not (yet?) known according to which tradition. It contains a considerable number of *rnying ma* tantra, in a separate section as well as intermingled with *gsar ma* tantra, as well as texts not included in any other known Kanjur. The same was probably also true for the contemporary Kanjurs of Hemis, but only

¹⁴ See Tauscher & Lainé 2008. The Kanjurs of Hemis and Basgo were not known to us at that time.

very few rGyud volumes are extant, among them, however, one volume of *rnying ma* tantra (see Tauscher & Lainé 2015).¹⁵

- 3) The Kanjurs of Stog and Shey (around 1730), in turn, did not continue this (Ladakhi?) tradition, but presumably took over their rGyud sections from a Kanjur of the 'Phyin ba stag rtse sub-division¹⁶ of the Tshal pa group.

Like in Hemis and Basgo, in Matho we have *rnying rgyud*, which actually does not correspond to the early bKa' gdams pa position.¹⁷ One text, the *rDzogs pa chen po 'khor ba rtsa[d] nas gcod pa chos sku skye myed rig pa 'i rgyud* (gTb 142), could clearly be identified, others could be either *rnying rgyud* or *gsar rgyud* texts with considerable divergences from their canonical versions, possibly even representing different translations from the Sanskrit.

The *Śrī Hevajrapañjikā nāma Muktikāvali* (*dPal dgyes pa'i rdo rje'i dka' 'grel mu tig phreng ba*) by Ratnākaraśānti (D 1189) appears to be an example of such a different translation. Only one folio exists in Matho, but it contains the end of chapter two, and the title mentioned there (Matho: *Mu tig gi 'phreng ba' zhes pa dgyes pa'i rdo rje'i dka' 'grel* vs. Derge: *dGyes pa'i rdo rje'i dka' 'grel mu tig phreng ba*) leaves no doubt that it is actually the same text. However, the Matho folio contains several passages missing in Derge, and it omits a few others. Either Matho represents a different translation, or the canonical version is severely corrupt.

Among the fragments there are also texts that are not preserved in any generally known Kanjur or *rNying ma rgyud 'bum*, such as the *Chos spyod thams cad kyi man ngag mngon par rtogs pa'i rgyud* (**Sarvadharmacaryopadeśābhisamaya tantra*); only a commentary on apparently the same text, the *Chos spyod thams cad kyi man ngag mngon par rtogs pa'i rgyud kyi rnam par bshad pa gzi brjid snang ba*, is contained exclusively in the Tanjur of Narthang (N 3536). One folio of this text has been discovered at Matho. This text is, however, contained in volume Ja of the Kanjur of Basgo, though incomplete and with its leaves presently scattered over several volumes. The work of analyzing this Kanjur and correctly ordering its folios is still progressing, though only slowly.

Another example is the (*rGyud thams cad kyi gleng gzhi dang gsang chen*) *dPal Kuntukhasbyor lasbyung ba* [*zhes pa'i (b)rtag pa 'irgyal po*] (*[*Sarvatantrasyanidāna-mahāguhya*] *Śrī Samputa* [*tantrarāja*]). Its commentary is contained in all Tanjurs (e.g., D 1199), but the root text is not preserved in generally known Kanjurs. However, nine folios were discovered at Matho, and the complete text is contained in the

15 The "Golden" Kanjur of Chemdey, which might originate from the same period of Seng ge rnam rgyal, sTag tshang ras pa, and Nam mkha' dpal mgon (on those, see Tauscher & Lainé 2015) and belong to the same group as the Kanjurs of Hemis and Basgo, still has to be investigated.

16 For this group of Kanjurs see Eimer 1992: xvii.

17 Cf., e.g., the open letter (*bka' shog*) of Zhi ba 'od (see Karmay 1980).

Kanjurs of Basgo (twice, in vol. rGyud Cha and Na) and O rgyan gling¹⁸ (vol. rGyud Kha).

The *Abhidhānottaratantra*, which is contained in the main-stream Kanjurs as *mNgon par brjod pa'i rgyud bla ma* (D 369) is represented by at least four manuscripts among the Matho fragments. Three contain various chapter endings and two even include the beginning of the text, so that we have the title mentioned several times: *Nges par brjod pa'i rgyud bla ma'i bla ma*, in one case with the specification *rdzogs pa'i rim pa bshad pa*. This form of the title (without the specification) appears in Derge exclusively at the end of chapter 9, and the colophons of the mainstream Kanjurs record a mixture of these two forms of the title: *mNgon par brjod pa'i rgyud bla ma'i bla ma*. Meanwhile in Basgo (vol. rGyud Ka, 49a1–216b7), this text is transmitted as *Nges par brjod pa'i rgyud bla ma'i bla ma zhes bya ba'i rgyud kyi rgyal po chen po*.

Of course, these various forms represent nothing other than different translations of *Abhidhānottaratantra*, but even if this was the sole divergence it would be a very strong indication of the respective line of transmission, in this particular case, pointing to a common tradition of Basgo and Matho (or Nyar ma), in the same way that the two texts mentioned above do. Yet it is not only an issue of an alternative translation of the title. Apparently, Basgo and Matho preserve a different translation, or a different version of the translation transmitted in the mainstream Kanjurs. The very few, short passages of the Matho fragments that have been compared so far do not contain any major and essential deviations from the mainstream Kanjurs; a detailed investigation of the texts is necessary.

The colophon, however, suggests distinct versions. While that from Matho is not extant, the Basgo colophon does not give the names of the translators, but it does mention two steps of revision: by Kumāra (= Kumārakalaśa?) and Byang chub shes rab, and by Jñānaśrī, Blo gros snying po, and Rab bzhi. This seems to be the same translation by Dīpaṃkara and Rin chen bzang po that is mentioned in the colophon of Phug brag (No. 446) as “another translation” (*'gyur gzhan*).

These two translators also appear in the majority of Kanjurs (Stog and Shey mention Padmākaraśrījñāna instead of Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna); however, the revisers vary: Jñānaśrī and Khyung po Chos kyi brtson 'grus in a first step, and Ānanda and the “junior translator” (*lo chung*) (= Legs pa'i shes rab)¹⁹ in a second. The Kanjur of Phug brag preserves yet a different version of this text as *Nges par brjod pa'i rgyud bla ma* – the title appears also in the *dkar chag* of O rgyan gling in this form – or *Nges par brjod pa'i rgyud bla ma'i bla ma* (in the colophon), translated by Jñānākara and Rig pa gzhon nu, and revised by Prabhākara and Shākya ye shes. In addition, its

18 Unfortunately this Kanjur was not accessible, and only the handwritten *dkar chag* in the possession of the Central Institute for Higher Tibetan Studies at Sarnath could be compared.

19 See, e.g., *Shel phreng*: 22, 12f.: *lo chung Legs pa'i shes rab ni ...*; cf. Snellgrove & Skorupski 1980: 91, n. 22.

colophon mentions two more translations, one by Chos kyi brtson 'grus, the other by Dharmasrībhadrā and Rig pa gzhon nu.²⁰ This would mean that Rig pa gzhon nu translated this text twice, each time in collaboration with a different Indian master, and Chos kyi brtson 'grus not only revised Rin chen bzang po's translation, but also made one of his own.

Even without closer study of the fragments mentioned, these three examples are sufficient at least to suspect a distinct line of transmitting tantric literature from early *phyi dar* times as represented in Matho (Nyar ma) and Basgo. It might also be reflected in the Kanjur of O rgyan gling (around 1700),²¹ which contains – just like Basgo – a number of *rnying ma* tantra within its general Tantra section (see Mayer 2011) and corresponds with Matho and Basgo in some details (above). In Ladakh, this tradition was still known or revived in early 17th century, but forgotten or neglected before and after the period of Seng ge nam rgyal and sTag tshang ras pa. What happened? This paper will make no attempt at answering this question and also the matter of the rGyud sections in Ladakhi Kanjurs shall not be pursued any further.

The following two examples which illustrate rare (or unique?) text versions found among the Matho (Ma) fragments are both verse texts from the Madhyamaka section of the Tanjur. Although only small portions of them will be discussed, the full texts of the fragments are given in the appendices, both times in comparison with the respective verses of the Derge (D) Tanjur²² as a representative of the canonical version(s).

Bodhi(sattva)caryāvatāra (བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་དཔའི་རྫོད་པ་ལ་འཇུག་པ།) (BCA) by Śāntideva (D 3871).

Only a very small fragment of this text (fig. 9) is extant, consisting of about half a folio with the reverse blank, as it contains the very end of the text. It is a lucky coincidence that this small fragment preserves parts of two *pāda* that are not extant in the canonical versions of BCA. Being from chapter 10, which contains only benedictions, these two *pāda* are, of course, in no way of philosophical or doctrinal relevance. They might, however, contribute one small piece to the huge puzzle of the transmission of Buddhist texts.

Did these two *pāda* disappear in the course of the Tibetan transmission of the text, or were they already missing in the Sanskrit version that was translated by Sarvajñādeva and dPal brtsegs in the 9th century? The textual situation does not permit an answer to this question. IF the latter were the case, the Matho fragment

20 Cf. Samten 1992: 163, n. 1.

21 See Samten 1994.

22 The Derge texts are as provided by ACIP, taken over without systematic verification. Only in cases of doubt the blockprint edition provided by TBRC was consulted, and one or two typos in the ACIP version were tacitly corrected.

would not merely represent a more complete version, but a different translation than that contained in the Tanjur, produced from a different Sanskrit manuscript. However, the rest of the fragment contains only four variants, and none of these would convincingly support any hypothesis for a different translation from the Sanskrit:

v. 54b: *don rnams* : *kun don*

v. 55d: *thard par* : *sel bar*

v. 56d: *-ig* : *shog*

v. 58d: *la phyag 'tshal lo* : *la'ang bdag phyag 'tshal*.

In any case, the Matho fragment shows that a complete translation of BCA did exist and was available in Western Tibet in the 12th century. This version might not have been present in Central Tibet when the Tanjur was compiled in the early 14th century, or it was simply neglected for some reason or other.

In Sanskrit, chapter 10, verse 50 reads:

प्रत्येकबुद्धः सुखिनो भवन्तु श्रावकास्तथा ।

देवासुरनरैर्नित्यं पूज्यमानाः सगौरवैः ॥

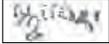
“Equally, may the Pratyekabuddhas be happy, and also the Śrāvakas, constantly worshiped by respectful gods, demigods and humans.”

The canonical versions of the Tibetan translation preserve only *pāda* a and b:

འདི་བཞིན་རང་སངས་རྒྱལ་རྣམས་དང་། ཉན་ཐོས་རྣམས་ཀྱང་བདེ་སྐྱེར་ཅིག

In Matho, however, a part of *pāda* c and the whole *pāda* d are extant:

[ལྷ་དང་ལྷ་མིན་མྱི་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་། ཉན་ཐོས་ཏུ་གུས་བཅས་སྐད་/[བ]སྐྱེར་བར་ཤོག་



The missing beginning of *pāda* c is easy to reconstruct, translating *devāsūranarair* as *lha dang lha min mi rnams kyis*, but the equivalent for *pūjyamānāḥ*, *xx bar* (facsimile left) *shog*, poses a problem and at the same time allows room to speculation. At first sight, one would read *lkyang bar*, but such a word does not exist in Tibetan. A closer investigation of the handwriting of this page, however, suggests reading *sa-mgo* instead of *la-mgo*, and “the other *ya-btags* are generally larger than what we see here. It could be that the scribe did not mean to write a *ya-btags* and stopped it short, and perhaps made a desultory attempt at striking it through.”²³ In that case we would arrive at the reading *skang bar* (“satisfying”, etc.). However, this is not attested as a translation of any derivative of *pūj*-. In this particular case, the term to be expected is *bskur bar*,²⁴ but this reading seems to be highly unlikely here. Could

23 Brandon Dotson, in an e-mail communication of 19 December 2014.

24 J. L. Panglung, in an e-mail communication of 14 January 2015 and Tshe dbang rig 'dzin from Hemis Monastery in a personal communication of 28 September 2015.

this be older terminology, to use *skang ba* as an equivalent for *pūj*-? As the canonical translation of BCA is already an “old”, a *snga dar* translation, we should probably rather assume a (severe) scribal error, until more evidence for *pūj*- being translated as *skang ba* is found.

The second example is clearly a different translation from the canonical one, and it is certainly not the only one among the Matho fragments.

Ālokamālaprakaraṇa (ལྷོང་འཕེལ་བའི་རབ་རྒྱུད་པ།) by Kampala/Kambala(pāda) (D 3895).

Kambalapāda (Kampala in the colophon of Derge), an approximate contemporary of Jñānagarbha (8th century) is regarded as Yogācāra-Svātantrika-Mādhyamika and a representative of the Madhyamaka-Vajrayāna synthesis.²⁵ His *Ālokamālaprakaraṇa* consists of 281 verses plus one introductory verse of veneration, paying homage to “the *munīndra*, who taught the mind-only (doctrine)” (... *gang gis sems tsam du gsungs pa'i* || *thub dbang de la phyag 'tshal lo*).

The fragment consists of four folios (1, 2, 10 and 11, numbered *ka*, *kha*, *tha* and *da*) of probably twelve. They contain the introductory verse and 77½ of the 281 verses of the complete text.

From the different terminology, word order, and arrangement of *pāda*, occasionally even across the limits of a *śloka*, etc., it is evident that this fragment represents a translation different from and apparently older than the one by Kumārkalaśa and Shākya 'od, which is preserved in the Tanjur. Unfortunately, the last folio is not extant; the colophon might have mentioned the name(s) of the translator(s). One variant, of which there might be others, could hint at the regional origin of the translator of the Matho version, perhaps hailing from Western Tibet or maybe even Ladakh. In verse 224d the idea of “falling” (*lhung bzhin*) is expressed by *lhung bas khyer bas* in Ma. Local informants tell me – and in this respect I simply have to rely on them – that formulations with ... *khyer bas* are still used in contemporary Ladakhi to express the gerund idea of “being in the process of doing or experiencing something” just like ... *bzhin* in Classical Tibetan. Alternatively, it could be an “intensifying verbal compound” (“when thoroughly fallen”, or similar) as used in contemporary Ladakhi. In this case it could provide evidence for a translator of Western Tibetan, Ladakhi, or even Dard origin.²⁶ Alternately, it might simply be the case of an old Tibetan verbal usage that was preserved in Ladakhi, but not in Classical Tibetan. Here, I leave it to linguists to find an answer.

Some variances even suggest that the Matho translation was made from a – slightly – different Sanskrit version than the canonical one. In some cases it is hard to comprehend how alternative translations could be based on one and the same Sanskrit model. More importantly, two of the 315 *pāda* in this fragment (216a and 241c) are found exclusively in Ma, whereas D 256a is not represented there. In the latter case,

25 See Seyfort Ruegg 1981: 106f. and note 341. On Kambala see also Tucci 1965: 211ff.

26 Bettina Zeisler, in an e-mail communication of 9 October 2015.

the idea of *yul rnams 'ga' yang sems pa med* is not expressed in the Matho version; apparently, this *pāda* has simply been omitted due to a scribal error. In verses 216 and 241, however, five-*pāda śloka* in Ma are replaced – without any loss to the message – by formally correct *śloka* in the ideal form of metric units of four *pāda*, expressing logically and contextually coherent ideas: for example, in verse 216 *rang bzhin legs bslab de nas ni || rnal 'byord goms byas de phan 'chad* (Ma) is shortened to *de nas sbyor ba byas pa yis*. A similar procedure is to be observed in verse 241 (discussed below).

As one would not expect a *lotsāba* to add or omit a *pāda* to his liking, these differences must have existed already in Sanskrit. So, the Matho translation of these verses is either dilettante, or it is based on a different, less refined Sanskrit version. At the same time, other verses are very similar, apart from terminological differences and minor variants.

It is not possible to discuss all the verses in this paper; three of them have to suffice as examples of the differences between an old and a new translation of the same text. No attempt shall be made at reconstructing one common Sanskrit “original”. The provisional, tentative and occasionally clumsy translation of the two Tibetan versions aims at being faithful to the respective version and retaining its peculiarities, while still conveying a common general message despite all deviations.

Matho	Derge
240 །ཐམས་ཅད་ས་ལུས་བག་ཚགས་ཀྱིས། །རི་མོ་བྲིས་པ་ལྟ་བུ་དང་། །ཁོར་ལོ་ལྟ་བུར་འཁྲུལ་དང་པ་ལས།། །ཉོན་མོངས་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་གཡོགས་པ་དང་། “Everything without exception is, due to being (<i>las</i>), by (the force of) the residues, like a painting and straying like a wheel, obscured by afflictions,”	།བག་ཚགས་ལྷག་མའི་རི་མོ་ཡིས། །ཐམས་ཅད་བྲིས་པ་ལྟ་བུ་བྱ། །ཉོན་མོངས་ཉིད་ཀྱིས་བྱུང་པ་དང་། །འཁོར་ལོ་ལྟ་བུར་འཁོར་བ་དང་། “Through (being) a painting by the remaining traces, everything appears like painted, permeated by afflictions, spinning like a wheel,”

Here, the sequence of causal dependencies appears slightly different. In Ma, the residues (*vāsana*) are the reason for everything to be like a painting or like a wheel, and due to this fact everything IS obscured by afflictions (*kleśa*) (240d) and without characteristics (*alaksāṇa*) (241b). In D, on the other hand, the fact that everything is a painting of/by the residues is the cause for everything to APPEAR like painted (*bris pa lta bu ru*, 240b), etc., up to “without characteristics” (*mtshan nyid med par snang*, 241b).

The terms *bag chags* (Ma) and *bag chags lhag ma* (D), translated here as “residues” and “remaining traces” respectively, appear equally to represent *vāsana*, unless *ma lus* (Ma), *lhag ma* (D) and *thams cad* (both versions) reflect a slightly redundant

formulation like “everything without exception – everything” (*lhag ma ma lus – thams cad*) that was resolved differently in the two translations.

Although *g.yogs pa* (“to obscure, cover”) (Ma) and *khyab pa* (“to permeate, cover, pervade”) (D) are not attested elsewhere as translations of the same Sanskrit term, their meanings are similar enough that we can take them as the equivalents for the same Sanskrit expression.

Similarly, the verbs *'khrul pa* (“to deceive” etc., here in its “perfect tense” form *'khrul d pa* “being/having deceived” etc.) (Ma) and *'khor ba* (“to revolve” etc.) (D) apparently stand for the same Sanskrit expression, or at least for the same idea. These two terms frequently appear in combination, as *saṃsāra* (*'khor ba*) is delusive or deceiving by nature. Apart from that, they are “normally” not lexically related. However, they are both attested (according to Lokesh Chandra 1961) as translating Skt. (*vi*)*bhrama*, a term that combines the meanings of “roaming around” and “illusion, confusion, error”.²⁷ Probably the idea of *saṃsāra*-like revolving could – in a particular context and time – be expressed by the verb *'khrul ba*. There is no evidence in this fragment that it also works the other way, and the idea of “deceiving” etc. could be expressed by *'khor ba*. Possibly, the Matho version *'khrul(d) pa* is an example of an old convention in translating; the details require much closer investigation.

“To stray”²⁸ is not a verb that would usually be used in connection with a wheel. Here, it is an attempt at covering the double meaning of *'khrul ba* and *'khor ba* (as in Skt. (*vi*)*bhrama*), taking into consideration that the “wheel” alluded to is *saṃsāra*.

241	བརྟན་པའི་རྩི་ལམ་སང་ཤེས་ལ། མཚན་གཞིའ་མཚན་ཉིད་མེད་ལྡན་པ། སྟོང་ཉིད་སྟོང་ཉིད་མཐོང་རྣམས་ཀྱི། མཐོང་བས་འཇིག་པ་ལྟ་བུ་ཉིད། ཅི་ཡིན་ཞེས་ཀྱང་མཐོང་བ་ཡིན།	རྩི་ལམ་གསལ་སང་ཤེས་པ་དང། མཚན་དང་མཚན་ཉིད་མེད་པར་སྣང། - - - - མཐོང་ནས་མི་སྣང་དང་མཚུངས་པར། ཅི་ཞིག་ལྟ་བུར་སྣང་བ་ཡིན།
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“And, [like] a vivid dream in a wakeful cognition, it is without the basis of characteristics and characteristics. In the seeing of those who see emptiness as emptiness, it is like destroyed/faded. What is it that is seen?”

“(Like) the wakeful cognition of a clear dream, and without sign and characteristic. When one sees (this), it is like not appearing; so, like what does it appear?”

27 J. L. Panglung (in an e-mail communication of 5 August 2015) points to the fact that in colloquial Tibetan the idea of “to err, to be deceived” can be expressed by *mgo 'khor ba* as well as by *mgo 'khrul ba*.

28 This term was suggested by Daniel Berounsky in an e-mail communication of 29 July 2015.

In Ma, *dang* at the end of verse 240, in the translation represented by “And” at the beginning of this verse, seems to be understandable only if 241a is taken as a comparison – just as in D – exemplifying a second predicate to “everything”: “it is without the basis of characteristics and characteristics”. In D, on the other hand, *dang* of 240d clearly continues the list of how everything appears. However, the statement “(everything appears like) the wakeful cognition of a clear dream” (241a) is not easily comprehensible, and *dang* might have to be replaced by some other expression.

The alternative formulations brten *pa'i rmyi lam* (Ma) vs. *rmi lam gsal* (D) and *shes la* (Ma) vs. *shes pa dang* (D) (241a) need no further discussion; the implications of *myed ldan pa* (Ma) vs. *med par snang* (D) (241b) are clear from what has been said above.

The equivalents “like destroyed/faded” (*'jig pa lta bu nyid*, Ma 241d) and “like not appearing” (*mi snang dang mtshungs par*, D 241c) might, just like the variants in 241a, reflect different conventions of translating, either of the respective times or simply of the respective translator. Unless more evidence for these variations can be found in other texts, it is probably not justified to speak of “old” and “new terminology”.

The same is also true for the alternative renderings of the last *pāda*, in particular the variant “is seen” (*mthong ba yin*) (Ma) vs. “does appear” (*snang ba yin*) (D). Both terms probably translate some form of *dr̥ṣ-*, and the use of *mthong ba* in these cases is apparently a characteristic feature of the “old”, i.e., the Matho terminology: in six more cases Matho reads *mthong ba* instead of *snang ba* as found in Derge. However, it is reversed twice, and Ma reads *snang ba* vs. *mthong ba* in D.

In verse 238d, on the other hand, Ma reads *bdag gi nang du* vs. D *bdag gi snang du*. The commentary of Asvabhāva (102b5) confirms the version of Ma. The main issue in this verse is the additional *pāda* found in the Matho version, without an equivalent in Derge. It offers an elaborate specification of the lapidary “when one sees (this)” (*mthong nas*) of D (241c). As discussed above, this editorial intervention obviously represents the attempt to render the idea expressed in the Matho version in five *pāda* in a formally correct *śloka* of four *pāda*, and it does not seem likely that this happened in the course of the translation into Tibetan. Rather, we should assume the efforts of a Sanskrit editor who formally “straightened” an older version through a contextually minor alteration without effect on the general message of the verse.

These reflections lead to the question of which of the two Tibetan translations is actually the older one. The fact that the Matho manuscript was apparently written prior to the first compilation of a Tanjur suggests, though not conclusively, that it also preserves the older version. Yet this is relevant only if we assume the same Sanskrit model for both translations. Otherwise the question of age is pushed back in the line of transmission: which of the Sanskrit versions is the older one, regardless their translation into Tibetan? In this respect, the formally “correct” translation of D seems to represent the younger version.

The expression *stong nyid stong nyid mthong mams* begs for interpretation, as one would not expect that the dogmatic concept of “emptiness of emptiness” (*stong nyid stong nyid, sūnyatāsūnyatā*)²⁹ to find reference in this context. The present translation is based on the same formulation in verse 250a (Ma), which appears as *stong nyid stong par mthong ba* in D (251a).

The following verse is an example of practically identical translations in both versions.

242	<p> ཡོངས་སུ་གྲུབ་པ་ཤེས་ན་ནི། ཐམས་ཅད་རྩི་ཅིག་བདག་ཉིད་ཅན། རྣམ་དགེ་ལྡོད་ཅིང་ཐོག་མཐའ་ལྡེད། རྣམ་པ་ལྡོད་ཅིང་འཛོལ་ལྡེད།</p>	<p> ཡོངས་སུ་གྲུབ་པ་ཤེས་པ་ནི། ཐམས་ཅད་རྩི་གཅིག་བདག་ཉིད་དེ། ཆུ་ཤམ་མེད་ཅིང་ཐོག་མཐའ་མེད། རྣམ་པ་མེད་ཅིང་གཟུང་དུ་མེད།</p>
	<p>“When one cognizes the absolute, everything has the nature of being essentially identical, it is not differentiated and without beginning and end, it is without aspects and not apprehensible.”</p>	<p>“The cognition of the absolute [comprises that] everything has the nature of being essentially identical: it is without parts and without beginning and end, it is without aspects and not apprehensible.”</p>

The variant *shes na* (Ma): *shes pa* (D) in verse 242a is taken into account in the translation, but in fact it could be neglected in the present context, just as the variants *bdag nyid can* (Ma): *bdag nyid de* (D) (242b), *mam dbye myed* (Ma): *cha shas med* (D) (242c), and *dzin pa myed* (Ma): *gzung du med* (D) (242d) can be neglected.

Verses like this one call into question the hypothesis of distinct Sanskrit manuscripts translated into Tibetan. Even if this hypothesis turns out to be correct, for the greater part the difference between the two Sanskrit versions could certainly not have been substantial, apart from rendering 5-*pāda* stanzas into 4-*pāda śloka*.

When the people of Matho followed the advice of their Rinpoche and destroyed these *mchod rten*, they revealed a fraction of the oldest layer of Buddhist literature known in Ladakh. Much material was destroyed by the heedless actions of the villagers, the manuscript findings consist exclusively of fragments, the majority of them rather small ones, and the study of the material has only just begun. The full extent of information that it might provide cannot even be estimated. Nevertheless, even at this early stage of research it is possible hypothetically to assume that a part of the manuscripts found at Matho were initially in use at the monastery of Nyar ma.

It is obvious that hitherto unknown texts or versions of texts are among the fragments, and one can expect information about the development and transmission of Buddhist canonical literature.

29 Cf. MAV 6.186ab: | *stong nyid ces bya'i stong nyid gang* | | *stong nyid stong nyid du 'dod de* | “The emptiness of what is called emptiness is asserted as emptiness of emptiness.”

Communalities between some versions of Matho and the Kanjur of Basgo suggest a common origin of their tantric literature. While the Sūtra sections in the Kanjurs of Hemis and Basgo are closely related to the Early Mustang Kanjur (see Tauscher & Lainé 2015: 472ff.), their Tantra sections apparently represent a tradition distinct from Mustang as well as from all better known Kanjurs. However, traces of it might have survived in the Kanjur of O rgyan gling.

All this is merely hypothesis; for the time being, nothing else can be offered, and much more detailed and comprehensive analysis of the material is required to evaluate all the information provided by the recently discovered Matho manuscript fragments.

APPENDIX 1

Bodhi(sattva)cāryāvatāra 10.50c-58

verse	Matho	Derge 3871, 39b6–40a7
50c	[ལྷ་དང་ལྷ་མིན་མྱོ་རྣམ་]ས་གྱིས།	missing
50d	རྟོག་ཏུ་གྲུ་བཅས་སྐང་/[བ]སྐྱར་བར་ཤོག།	missing
51	བདག་ཀྱང་འཇམ་དབྱངས་བཀའ་རྒྱུ་གྱིས་	བདག་ཀྱང་འཇམ་དབྱངས་བཀའ་རྒྱུ་གྱིས། ས་རབ་དགའ་བ་ཐོབ་པར་དུ། རྟོག་ཏུ་ཚོར་བས་འདྲན་པ་དང་། རབ་ཏུ་བྱུང་བ་ཐོབ་པར་ཤོག།
52	འཚོ་བར་ཤོག། ཚོར་བས་ཀུན་ཏུ་བཞེན་གནས་པ། སྐྱེན་སྐྱེས་ལྷན་པ་ཐོབ།	བདག་ནི་ལ་ཟས་ཀྱི་ནས་ཀྱང་། ཉམས་དང་ལྷན་ཞིང་འཚོ་བར་ཤོག། ཚོར་བས་ཀུན་ཏུ་དབེན་གནས་པར། སྐྱེན་སྐྱེས་ལྷན་པ་ཐོབ་པར་ཤོག།
53		གང་ཚོ་བལྟ་བར་འདོད་པའམ། ཚུང་བད་འི་བར་འདོད་ན་ཡང་། མཐོན་པོ་འཇམ་དབྱངས་དེ་ཉིད་ནི། གོགས་མེད་པར་ཡང་མཐོང་བར་ཤོག།
54	ལྷོགས་ཚུའི་ནམ་ཁའི་མཐས་གཏུགས་པའི། སེམས་ཅན་དོན་རྣམས་བ	ལྷོགས་བཟུའི་ནམ་ཁའའི་མཐས་གཏུགས་པའི། སེམས་ཅན་ཀུན་དོན་བསྐྱབ་པའི་ལྱིར། ཇི་ལྟར་འཇམ་དབྱངས་སྐྱོད་མཛད་པ། བདག་གི་སྐྱོད་པའང་དེ་འདྲར་ཤོག།
55	གྱུར་པ། དེ་སྲིད་བདག་ནི་གནས་གྱུར་ནས། འགྲོ་བའི་སྐྱེག་སྐྱེལ་ཐར་པར	ཇི་སྲིད་ནམ་མཁའ་གནས་པ་དང་། འགྲོ་བ་ཇི་སྲིད་གནས་གྱུར་པ། དེ་སྲིད་བདག་ནི་གནས་གྱུར་ནས། འགྲོ་བའི་སྐྱེག་བསྐྱེལ་སེལ་བར་ཤོག།
56		འགྲོ་བའི་སྐྱེག་བསྐྱེལ་གང་ཅིའང་རུང་། དེ་ཀུན་བདག་ལ་སྲིན་གྱུར་ཅིག།

	ིག།	།བྱང་རྒྱལ་སེམས་དཔའི་དགོ་འདུན་གྱིས། །འགོ་བ་བདེ་ལ་སྦྱོད་པར་ཤོག།
57	འགོ་བའི་སྤྱག་སྤུལ་སྤྲན་གཅིག་ཤུ། བདེ་ཐམས་ཅད་འབྱུང་བའི་གནས། བསྟན་པ་ཚེད་དང་བཀ།	།འགོ་བའི་སྤྱག་བསྤུལ་སྤྲན་གཅིག་ཤུ། །བདེ་བ་ཐམས་ཅད་འབྱུང་བའི་གནས། །བསྟན་པ་ཚེད་དང་བཀྱར་སྦྱི་དང་། །བཅས་ཏེ་ཡུན་རིང་གནས་ལྟར་ཅིག།
58	གང་གིས་རྗིན་གྱིས་བདག་དར་དེ་པ། དགོ་བའི་བཤེས་ལ་ཕྱག་འཚའ་ལོ།	།གང་གི་རྗིན་གྱིས་དགོ་སྦྱོ་འབྱུང་། །འཇམ་པའི་དབྱངས་ལ་ཕྱག་འཚའ་ལོ། །གང་གི་རྗིན་གྱིས་བདག་དར་དེ། །དགོ་བའི་བཤེས་ལ་འབང་བདག་ཕྱག་འཚའ་ལ།

APPENDIX 2

Ālokamālāprakaraṇa

verse	Matho fol. ka-kha	Derge 3895, 51a1-52b2
(acc. D)		
	༄། །།རྒྱ་གར་སྐད་དུ། ཨ་ལོ་ཀ་ལྷ་ལ་ན་མ་བྲ་ཀ་ར་ན། །བོད་སྐད་དུ། སྤང་བ་འཕྲིང་བའི་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ། །སངས་རྒྱལ་དང་བྱང་རྒྱལ་སེམས་དཔའི་ཐམས་ཅད་ལ་ཕྱག་འཚའ་ལོ།	༄༄༄། །།རྒྱ་གར་སྐད་དུ། ཨ་ལོ་ཀ་ལྷ་ལ་སྤུ་ཀ་ར་ཆ་རྣ་མ། །བོད་སྐད་དུ། སྤང་བའི་ཕྲིང་བ་ཞེས་བྱ་བའི་རབ་ཏུ་བྱེད་པ།
0	།སྤྱི་ཤེས་གསུམ་ནི་བཅོམ་ཕྱིར་དང་། །ར[ང་] ka b2 བཞིན་གསུམ་ནི་བསྐྱོམ་བྱེད་པ། །གང་གིས་སེམས་ཅམ་དུ་གསུངས་པའི། །ཐུབ་དབང་དེ་ལ་ཕྱག་འཚའ་ལོ།	།སི་ཤེས་གསུམ་ནི་སྤང་བའི་ཕྱིར། །རང་བཞིན་གསུམ་ནི་བསྐྱོམས་པ་ཡིས། །གང་གིས་ 51a2 སེམས་ཅམ་དུ་གསུངས་པ། །ཐུབ་དབང་དེ་ལ་ཕྱག་འཚའ་ལོ།
1	།།སྤིད་པ་གསུམ་ལོ་མཐར་མཚན་པ་ཡིས་མདོར་བསྟུས་ནས། །སྦྱོས་པ་སེམས་ཀྱི་རྣམ་རྟོག་ཅམ་དུ་གསུངས་པ་ཡིན། ། ka b3 དེ་ནི་སྤིང་ལས་མ་ལུས་སྤངས་པར་ལྟར་དཔ་ན། །སྤྱི་བའི་ཉིང་ཚམས་སྦྱོར་བའི་འཆིང་བ་ཡང་སྤངས་པ་ཡིན།	།སྤིད་གསུམ་མཐར་ཅུ་བྱོན་པས་སྦྱོས་གསུངས་པ། །བསྟུས་ནས་སེམས་ཀྱི་རྣམ་པར་རྟོག་པ་ཅམ། །གལ་ཏེ་དེ་དག་སེམས་ལས་མ་ལུས་སྤངས། །ཡང་སྤིད་འཆིང་བའི་སྤྱི་བ་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན།
2	།སྤིད་དང་གོལ་བ་ཡོངས་ཤེས་ལས། །གཏོང་བ་ཐོབ་པའི་འབྲས་འབྱུང་བ།	།སྤིད་དང་ཐར་པ་ཡོངས་ 51b1 ཤེས་པས། །དེ་སྤངས་ཐོབ་པའི་འབྲས་བུ་འབྱུང་།

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|---|--|--|---|
| | <p> །སློབ་མཐུང་ཀླན་གྱིས་འདི་ཉིད་ནི།
 །ནང་བདག་བསྐྱོམ་ ka b4 །ལ་འབད་པ་བྱ། </p> | | <p> །སློབ་མཐུང་པོ་ཐམས་ཅད་ནི།
 །ནང་སེམས་པ་ལ་བརྩོན་པ་ཡིན། </p> |
| 3 | <p> །འདོད་ཆགས་ལ་སོགས་རྒྱུ་བཅས་སེམས་།
 །འཁོར་བ་དེ་ལེས་རྣམ་དབེན་པ།
 །ཐར་དཔ་ཡིན་པར་མདོར་བསྡུས་ནས།
 །སྤྱི་བ་པ་སྤངས་པའི་རྒྱལ་པས་གསུངས། </p> | | <p> །འདོད་ཆགས་ལ་སོགས་རྒྱུ་བཅས་སེམས།
 །འཁོར་ཡིན་དེ་ལས་དབེན་པ་ཉིད།
 །སྤྱི་བ་པ་སྤངས་པའི་རྒྱལ་པ་ཡིས།
 །བསྡུས་ནས་ཐར་པ་ཡིན་པར་གསུངས། </p> |
| 4 | <p> །འདོད་ཆགས་སྤོང་པ་ཞེ་སྤང་རྣམས།
 །ལུས་ཅན་རང་སེས་ ka b5 རྟོག་པ་ཡིན།
 །བྱིས་པ་ཕྱིན་ཅི་ལོག་རྣམས་གྱིས།
 །ཚོས་གང་ཡིན་པ་གཞན་ཡང་བརྟགས། </p> | | <p> ། 51b2 །འདོད་ཆགས་ཞེ་སྤང་གཉི་ལྟ་གཉི།
 །ལུས་ཅན་རང་སེམས་རྟོག་པ་ཡིན།
 །གང་ཞིག་ཚོས་ནི་གཞན་དག་ཀྱང།
 །བྱིས་པས་བརྟག་པ་བརྟུན་བདག་ཉིད། </p> |
| 5 | <p> །དམ་པའི་དོན་ནི་རྣམ་རྟོག་ལ་འང།
 །མཁས་པས་ཞེན་པར་སྤྱི་བྱེད་དེ།
 །དགོའ་བ་འམ་ཡང་ན་སྤྱི་དགོའ་ལ།
 །རྣམ་རྟོག་ལ་ལྷད་ཅི་ཞིག་ཡོད། </p> | | <p> །དམ་པའི་དོན་གྱི་རྟོག་པ་ལ་འང།
 །མཁས་པ་དེ་ཡིས་གནས་མི་བྱ།
 །དགོའ་བའམ་མི་དགོའ་བ་ཡི་ཡང།
 །རྟོག་ལ་བྱེ་བྲག་ཅི་ཞིག་ཡོད། </p> |
| 6 | <p> ka b6 །། །སྤྱི་ནི་སྤྱི་གསུང་བྱེད་པ་ལ།
 །རྟོན་ཐ་དད་ལས་ཐ་དད་སྤྱེད།
 །ཚན་རྒྱན་འབར་བ་འདི་ལ་ཡང།
 །རེག་ན་སྤྱི་གསུང་བྱེད་པ་ཉིད། </p> | | <p> ། 51b3 །བརྟེན་ཅིང་དབྱེ་བ་ལ་བརྟེན་པའི།
 །མེས་སྤྱི་གསུང་བྱེད་བྲག་མེད།
 །ཚན་རྒྱན་གྱི་ནི་མེ་འདིས་ཀྱང།
 །རེག་པ་ཚམ་གྱིས་སྤྱི་གསུང་ཉིད། </p> |
| 7 | <p> །ཡོངས་སུ་རྟོག་པ་རྣུང་ཡང་ནི།
 །ཐམས་ཅད་སྤང་བར་བྱ་བ་ཉིད།
 །སྤྱིང་ལ་ kha a1 །བསྐྱེད་པར་བྱེད་པ་ཉིད།
 །རྟོག་པ་ལྷུའད་པའི་རང་བཞིན་ཏེ། </p> | | <p> །རྣམ་པར་རྟོག་པ་རྣུང་ལྟ་ཡང།
 །ཐམས་ཅད་ཉིད་དུ་སྤང་བར་བྱ།
 །འཇུལ་པའི་རོ་མོ་རྣམ་རྟོག་གིས།
 །སེམས་ནི་མདོན་པར་བསྐྱེད་པ་ཡིན། </p> |
| 8 | <p> །འཇུལ་དཔ་པའང་རྣམ་པར་མ་དག་ཕྱིར།
 × × × × × × × × །འཇུལ་པ་ཡིན།
 །སྤྱི་གསུང་སེམས་ཀྱི་རྣམ་འཇུལ་པ།
 །ཚམ་དུ་རྣམ་པར་ཤེས་པར་བྱ། </p> | | <p> །འཇུལ་པ་ 51b4 །ཡང་ནི་མ་དག་ཕྱིར།
 །མིག་འཇུལ་གྱི་ནི་རྣམ་འཇུལ་ཡིན།
 །མིག་འཇུལ་ཡང་ནི་ཤེས་བྱ་སྤྱི།
 །སེམས་ཀྱི་ཡང་ནི་རྣམ་འཇུལ་ཡིན། </p> |
| 9 | <p> །དེ་ལྟར་སེམས་དང་དེ་ kha a2 །ནི།
 །འཇུལ་པ་གཉིས་སུ་བྱེད་མཐོང་བ།
 །དབྱེད་མར་རྟོགས་པ་དེ་ཉིད་དེ།
 །དེ་ཉིད་ཚོས་ལ་བདག་བྱེད་པ། </p> | | <p> །དེ་ལྟར་སེམས་ཀྱི་དེ་དང་དེ།
 །འཇུལ་པར་གཉིས་སུ་མཐོང་བ་བཟ།
 །དབྱེད་མའི་ལམ་ནི་དེ་ཉིད་དེ།
 །དེ་ཉིད་ཚོས་ཀྱི་བདག་མེད་པ། </p> |

- | | | |
|----|---|--|
| | ཡང་དག་ལྱིན་ཚོན་སྤང་གྱུར་དུ་ཉེ།
 ཡང་དག་ཚོན་ཚི་བསྐྱིབས་ཉེ་རྣམ། | མ་རིག་པ་ཡིས་བསྐྱེད་པ་ཉིད།
 མིག་སེར་ནད་ 52a2 ཀྱིས་བཏབ་པ་བཞིན། |
| 18 | kha b1 ལུས་ཀྱི་རྣམ་སྤྲི་མ་ཡིས།
 ཐ་དད་ལྱིན་ཡང་ཐ་དད་དང་།
 ཕྱི་རོལ་ལྱིན་ཡང་ཕྱི་རོལ་དང་།
 སེམས་ནི་དུ་མར་སྤང་བར་འགྱུར། | ཐ་དད་མིན་པའང་ཐ་དད་དང་།
 ཕྱི་རོལ་མིན་པའང་ཕྱི་རོལ་དུ།
 ཡུལ་གྱི་རྣམ་པའི་རྩོག་པ་ཡིས།
 སེམས་ནི་རྣམ་པ་དུ་མར་སྤང་། |
| 19 | ཉི་མ་རྒྱ་བ་མཁལ་འདི་དང་།
 སྐར་ནའི་འཁོར་འོ་འི་རི་རྣམས་དང་།
 རྩུ་བོ་རྩུ་མཚོའི་ཕྱོགས་དང་བྲག།
 འདི་དག་སེམས་ཀྱི་འབྱོར་དཔ་ཡིན། | ཉི་མ་རྒྱ་བ་ནམ་མཁལ་དང་།
 སྐར་མའི་རྩོགས་དང་ས་རྣམས་དང་།
 རྩུ་བོའི་རྩུ་མཚོའི་ཕྱོགས་དང་ནི།
 འདི་དག་སེམས་ཀྱི་སྤྱུལ་པའོ། |
| 20 | kha b2 ཁམས་གསུམ་འདི་དག་ཅི་སྲིད་དུ།
 སྲིད་ཚེའི་མཐར་ཐུག་འཁོར་ལྷན་པ།
 ཅི་ལྟར་སྤང་བ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཉིད།
 རྣམ་ཤེས་དུག་གི་རྩུ་བུར་བཞིན། ॥ | 52a3 སྲིད་པའི་ཚེ་མོས་ཡོངས་བཅད་པ།
 ཁམས་གསུམ་པོ་ནི་འདི་དག་པར།
 རྩི་ལྟར་སྤང་བ་འདི་ཐམས་ཅད།
 རྣམ་ཤེས་དུག་གི་ཐིག་ལེ་ཡིན། |
| 21 | གལ་ཉེ་སྤང་ན་ཅི་ལྟར་ལྟེད།
 སྤང་ན་འང་ཅི་ལྟར་ལྟེད་བདག་ཉིད།
 སྤང་ལས་ཡོད་ལྱིན་དེ་སྤང་བ།
 རྩི་ kha b3 ལམ་དུ་ཅི་མ་མཐོང་ངམ། | གལ་ཉེ་སྤང་ན་རི་ལྟར་མེད།
 སྤང་བ་རི་ལྟར་མེད་དེངས་ཡིན།
 སྤང་ཕྱིར་ཡོད་པ་སྤང་མ་ཡིན།
 ཅི་ག་མི་ལམ་མི་སྤང་ངམ། |
| 22 | རྟེན་ལ་སྐྱེས་པའི་དྲི་མ་འེས།
 བདག་ཉིད་ངེས་པར་བསྐྱིབས་པས་ན།
 སློལ་གཞན་གིས་ × བཞིན་ནི།
 སྤང་བར་གྱུར་དུ་ཤེས་བཞིན་ནོ། | ལྟག་པའི་དྲི་ 52a4 མ་སྐྱེས་པ་ཡིས།
 རང་གི་ངོ་བོ་ངེས་རྟོགས་བསྐྱིབས།
 གཞན་གྱི་ངོ་བོ་སྤང་བ་སྟེ།
 སློབ་རྣམས་ཤེས་དང་འདྲ་བ་ཡིན། |
| 23 | རང་བཞིན་ཉིད་ཀྱིས་སྤང་ལྱིན་ཡང་།
 འདུ་བྱེད་བག་ཆགས་དྲི་མ་ཡིས།
 ཉེ་བར་ཤེས་བ་ kha b4 ཐོབ་དུས་སྟེ།
 རྣམ་རྟོག་སྤང་བུ་འགྱུར་བ་ཉིད། | རང་བཞིན་ཉིད་ནི་མི་སྤང་བའམ།
 དུས་ཀྱི་བརྟེན་པ་ཐོབ་པ་ཡིས།
 འདུ་བྱེད་བག་ཆགས་ཀྱིས་བརྟོོས་པས།
 རྣམ་པར་རྟོག་པ་སྤང་བར་འགྱུར། |
| 24 | སེམས་ཉིད་རྣམ་པར་བསྤྲད་པ་ལས།
 བརྒྱུད་དང་འཛིན་པའི་བྱེད་བ་ × × ×།
 གཅིག་ཉིད་གཉིས་སུ་སྤང་བར་འགྱུར།
 ཅི་ལྟར་ཡང་ནི་གོམས་པ་ལས། | སེམས་ 52a5 ནི་རྣམ་པར་བསྤྲད་པའི་ཕྱིར།
 གཅིག་ཉིད་གཉིས་སུ་སྤང་བ་ཡིན།
 གཟུང་དང་འཛིན་པའི་དབྱེ་བ་ལ།
 ཤིན་ཏུ་མཁལ་བ་ཅིས་མ་ཡིན། |

25 །བཟུང་བའི་རྣམ་པ་ལྷོ་འདོད་ཕྱིར།
 །ཕྱི་རོལ་ kha b5 །ལྷ་བུར་ལྷག་གནས་པ།
 །འཛིན་དང་བྱེད་པ་སྲོག་བཅས་ཕྱིར།
 །ནང་དུ་གསལ་བ་ལྷ་བུ་ཡིན།

།གཟུང་བའི་རྣམ་པ་མི་གཡོའི་ཕྱིར།
 །ཕྱི་རོལ་ལྷ་བུ་ཉིད་དུ་གནས།
 །འཛིན་པ་འདང་སྲོག་དང་བཅས་པའི་ཕྱིར།
 །ནང་ནི་གཡོའ་བ་ལྷ་བུ་ཉིད།

26 །པན་རྩོན་གྲུབ་ཕྱི་××××××།
 །ནང་དང་ཕྱི་རོལ་ཅུང་ཟད་ཕྱེད།
 །བར་ན་ཡོད་ཕྱིན་སེམས་ཅམ་དུ།
 །རྣམ་པར་གནས་ཕྱིར་ཕྱེད་ཉིད་ཕྱིན།

། 52a6 །འདྲིང་ནི་ཕྱི་ནང་ཅུང་ཟད་མེད།
 །པན་རྩོན་དག་ནི་གྲུབ་པའི་ཕྱིར།
 །བར་ན་མ་ཡིན་མེད་མིན་ཏེ།
 །སེམས་ཅམ་དུ་ནི་གནས་ཕྱིར་རོ།

27 །འདོད་ཆགས་ kha b6 །དབང་པོའི་གྲོང་ལ་ནི།
 །དོན་རྣམས་ལ་ཕྱེད་སེམས་ལ་འང་ཕྱེད།
 །གཞན་ལ་སྲི་གནས་བདག་སྲི་གནས།
 །འདི་ནི་ཡོད་ཕྱི་×××××× [ཕྱིན།]།

།དབང་པོའི་གྲོང་དུ་འདོད་ཆགས་མེད།
 །དོན་རྣམས་ལ་མིན་སེམས་ལ་མིན།
 །བདག་ལ་གནས་མིན་གཞན་གནས་མིན།
 །དེ་ནི་ཡོད་མིན་མེད་པ་འང་ 52a7 མིན།

28 །འབྲེལ་དང་པོ་ལྷོ་ལ་ཕྱེད་པའི།
 །རྩུ་དང་སེམས་ཀྱི་འབྲེལ་དང་པོ་ནི།
 །འགའ་ལས་སྤྲིན་གི་མཐོངས་ལས་ནི།
 །དོ་རྩེའི་ kha b7 །སྲི་བཞིན་སྲི་བ་བཞིན།

།མ་བརྟགས་འབྲེལ་བའི་རྩུ་ཡིས་ནི།
 །སེམས་ནི་འབྲེལ་པར་གྲུབ་ལས་ཡིན།
 །ག་ལ་ཡིན་ཡང་སྤྲིན་ནང་*ནས། * read ལྷང་?
 །གནས་ལྷགས་འབབ་པར་འབྲུང་བ་བཞིན།

29 །ཞེ་སྤང་གཏིང་ལྷག་གང་གཞན་ཡང།
 །ཉོན་མོངས་དེ་བཞིན་སྲི་བ་ཡིན།
 །འམས་ག་××××××××××ས།
 །རྟོག་པའི་དུག་ལས་འབྲུང་བ་ཡིན།

།དེ་བཞིན་ཞེ་སྤང་གཏི་ལྷག་དང།
 །ཉོན་མོངས་རིགས་གཞན་གང་ཡིན་པ་འང།
 །འམས་གསུམ་དུ་ནི་ 52b1 །ལྷབ་བྱེད་པ།
 །རྟོག་པའི་དུག་ལས་ཀུན་ཏུ་བྱུང།

30 །རྟོག་པ་ཡང་རྟེན་ནི་ཕྱེད་པའི་ཕྱིར།
 །དོན་དམ་པར་ནི་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན།།

[ga a1]

།རྟོག་པ་ཡང་ནི་གཞི་མེད་པ།
 །ཡང་དག་ཉིད་དུ་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན།
 །འགའ་ཡིས་མེ་ལྷེ་འབར་བ་ནི།
 །ནམ་མཁའ་ལ་མཚེད་མཐོང་ངམ་ཅི།

verse Matho fol. tha-da

Derge 3895, 59a3-61a1

209 །ལ་སྤྲེད་ནས།
 །ཁྱིམ་པར་གྲུང་དང་ཀྱང་བསྐྱོན་པར་བྱ།
 །དཀྱིལ་ཀྱང་ལེགས་པར་བཅས་ནས་ནི།
 །གཡོའ་ཉིད་སྤྲ་ཅེར་གཏང་ནས་ནི།

།སྐད་ཅིག་ཅམ་ཡང་སྐབས་ལྟན་ན།
 ། 59a4 །ཁྱིམ་པར་གྲུང་པ་ཡིན་ཡང་བསྐྱོན།
 །སྤྱིལ་མོ་ཀྱང་ནི་བཅས་ནས་སུ།
 །སྤྲ་ཅེར་གཡོའ་བའི་ཡིད་བསྐྱུས་ལ།

- 210 || ཨ || ཡུལ་ལ་རིང་དུ་གནས་མྱིན་ཏེ། །འཛུལ་པར་ཉེ་བར་ཚེད་པའི། །དམྱིགས་པ་འདུན་ཏུ་བྱས་ནས་ནི། །^{tha a2} ཇི་ལྟར་སེམས་ཀྱི་སྣང་བ་ལ།།
- 211 །ཆགས་ཅན་འདོད་ཆགས་དབང་འགྲུར་མྱིན། །ཉེས་ལྡན་ཞེ་སྣང་བཅས་པ་འད་མྱིན། །དམྱིགས་པ་ལ་མཁས་གཏིའ་སྲུག་གིས། །སྲུག་པ་ཅན་དུ་བྱེད་པ་མྱིན།།
- 212 །ཆགས་ཅན་ཆགས་པའི་གནས་སུ་བྱེད། །སྣང་ཅན་ཞེ་སྣང་གིས་^{tha a3} གཞོད་བྱེད། །ཉོན་མོངས་འཇུག་པ་དེས་པ་ཡང། །གཏིའ་སྲུག་གཏིའ་སྲུག་གིས་འཛོམས་བྱེད།།
- 213 །ཏིང་འཛིན་ད་བརྟན་པ་མ་ཡིན་མྱིར། །རྣམ་རྟོག་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་མ་ཚང་བས། །འཇིག་པའི་སློ་ནི་དེ་དང་དེས། །གཞན་ཉིད་རབ་ཏུ་རྟོགས་པར་བྱེད།།
- 214 །མོངས་^{tha a4} པ་མོངས་པའི་འདུ་ཤེས་མྱིར། །དངོས་པོ་སེམས་དཔའ་ལ་མོངས་ཏེ། །ལོང་བ་བཞིན་ཏུ་འབྲུལ་དཔའ་འིས། །དེས་པར་སྲུག་པར་ཆེར་སྣང་ངོ།།
- 215 །མཁས་པས་དམྱིགས་པའི་གནས་ལ་ནི། །ཡིད་ནི་བསྐྱོག་པར་བྱ་བ་སྟེ། །ཉོན་མོངས་རྩལ་ཅམ་གོམས་བྱས་ན། །^{tha a5} མེ་ལ་མར་བཞིན་འཕེལ་བར་འགྱུར།།
- 216 །རང་བཞིན་ལེགས་བསྐྱབས་དེ་ནས་ནི། །རྣལ་འབྱོར་ད་གོམས་བྱས་དེ་མན་འཆད། །གཡུལ་གི་ནང་དུ་དཔའ་བ་བཞིན། །འདོད་ཆགས་ལ་སོགས་སྐྱེ་རྣམས་ལ། །དཔའ་བོས་དག་ལྟར་རྟེན་པར་བྱེད།།
- །ལོངས་སྣོད་ཉིད་ནི་ཉེར་གནས་པ། །བརྟུན་དང་སྲུ་བར་བྱེད་པ་ཡིན། །ཇི་ལྟར་སྣང་བའི་རང་གི་སེམས། །དམིགས་པ་མཁུན་དུ་བྱས་ནས་ནི།།
- །འདོད་ཆགས་གནས་ལ་ཆགས་མི་^{59a5} བྱ། །ཉེས་དང་ལྡན་ལ་སྣང་མི་བྱ། །གཏི་སྲུག་བཅས་པས་མོངས་མི་བྱ། །མཁས་པས་དམིགས་པར་མི་བྱའོ།།
- །ཆགས་པའི་གནས་ལ་ཆགས་བྱེད་དང། །ཞེ་སྣང་ཅན་ལ་སྣང་བས་གཞོད། །ཉོན་མོངས་ཤིན་ཏུ་འཕེལ་བའི་ཕྱིར། །མོངས་པ་གཏི་སྲུག་གིས་ནི་ཉམས།།
- །ཏིང་ལེ་^{59a6} འཛིན་ནི་མི་བརྟན་མྱིར། །རྣམ་པར་རྟོག་པས་ཉམས་བྱས་ནས། །ཉམས་པའི་སློ་ནི་དེ་དང་དེས། །གཞན་དག་ཉིད་ནི་རབ་ཏུ་རྟོག།
- །མོངས་པའང་འདུ་ཤེས་མོངས་པའི་ཕྱིར། །མོངས་པའི་དངོས་པོ་སེམས་དཔའ་ཡིན། །ཤིན་ཏུ་སྲུག་ནག་སྲུག་ཏུ་སྐྱབ། །འབྲུལ་པ་ཡིས་ནི་ལོང་^{59a7} བ་བཞིན།།
- །མཁས་པས་དམིགས་པའི་གནས་ལ་ནི། །བསྐྱོག་པ་རུ་ནི་ཡིད་ལ་བྱ། །ཉོན་མོངས་རྩལ་ཟད་གོམས་པ་ཡིས། །མེ་ལ་སྲུམ་གྱིས་བཞིན་དུ་འཕེལ།།
- - - -
- །དེ་ནས་སྣོད་བ་བྱས་པ་ཡིས། །གཡུལ་པོ་རུ་ནི་དཔའ་བོ་བཞིན། །འདོད་ཆགས་ལ་སོགས་པ་ཡི་གནས། །དཔའ་^{59b1} བའི་དག་ལ་བསྲུན་པར་བྱ།།

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| <p>217 །དེ་ཉིད་མ་ལུས་^{tha a6} གཟིགས་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་།
 །ཉོན་མོངས་བསོགས་བསྐྱབས་ཡིན་པར་གསུངས།
 །དེ་ཕྱིར་འབད་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱིས།
 །སྤང་པར་བྱ་བ་ལོན་ཉིད།</p> | <p>།མ་ལུས་པ་ནི་གཟིགས་པ་ཡིས།
 །ཉོན་མོངས་དེ་ཉིད་སྐྱབ་པར་གསུངས།
 །དེ་ཕྱིར་འབད་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱིས།
 །དེ་དག་ཉིད་ནི་སྤང་བར་བྱ།</p> |
| <p>218 །དེ་ཕྱིར་བརྟག་པ་ལསོགས་པ།
 །མཁས་པས་སྤང་བ་གསུམ་བྱ་སྟེ།
 །དོན་འཛིན་པ་དང་དོན་སྤང་བ།
 །སྟོང་^{tha a7} ཉིད་དོན་དང་ལྷན་པ་ཡིན།</p> | <p>།རྟགས་སོགས་བདག་ཉིད་མ་ལུས་པ།
 །དེ་དག་གསུམ་དུ་དམིགས་པར་བྱ།
 །དོན་འཛིན་དོན་དུ་ངེས་སྤང་དང་།
 །^{59b2} དོན་རྣམས་སྟོང་པ་ཉིད་བརྟག་པ།</p> |
| <p>219 །སེམས་བདག་ཡིན་ཞེས་རྣམ་འབྲེད་པའི།
 །ཤེས་རབ་ཀྱིས་ནི་བསམ་པར་བྱ།
 །ཤེས་རབ་པ་ལོལ་དུ་ཕྱིན་འཚུལ་གིས།
 །བསམ་སྤྱི་བྱེད་པ་ཉིད་བསམ་བྱ།</p> | <p>།བསམས་པ་ཡིས་ནི་ཤེས་རབ་ཀྱིས།
 །དབྱེ་བ་ངེས་པར་ཡང་བསམ་བྱ།
 །ཤེས་རབ་པ་ལོལ་ཕྱིན་པའི་ཚུལ།
 །བསམ་གྱིས་མི་བྱེད་བསམ་པར་བྱ།</p> |
| <p>220 །གང་ཞིག་སྤང་བ་དེ་ཉིད་ལྷིན།
 །གང་ཞིག་སྤྱི་སྤང་དེ་དེ་ཉིད།
 །^{tha b1} དངོས་རྣམས་ཉིད་ལ་རྣམ་རྟགས་ནས།
 །རབ་རིབ་སྤྲད་པལ་སྟོགས་བཞིན།</p> | <p>།གང་སྤང་དེ་ནི་དེ་ཉིད་མིན།
 །གང་ཞིག་མ་མཐོང་དེ་དེ་བཞིན།
 །དངོས་པོར་རྟོག་པ་ཉིད་ཀྱིས་ལོང་།
 །^{59b3} རབ་རིབ་ཀྱིས་ནི་འབྲུལ་པ་བཞིན།</p> |
| <p>221 །དངོས་པོ་འགང་ཞིག་སྤེད་སྤང་བ།
 །བརྟགས་པས་འབྲུལ་དང་པ་ཚལ་ཡིན་ནོ།
 །མཚན་སྤེད་མཚན་མ་ཉིད་ལ་ཡང།
 །མཚན་མ་འཛམས་པའི་སྤྱོད་པ་བྱ།</p> | <p>།བདག་གིས་བྱུང་བ་མཐོང་བ་དེན་མིན།
 །ཀུན་ཏུ་བརྟགས་པ་འབྲུལ་པ་ཚལ།
 །རྒྱ་མཚན་མེད་པའི་མཚན་མར་ཡང།
 །ཡུན་རིང་གནས་ནི་མཚན་མས་བཙོམ།</p> |
| <p>222 །བརྟན་པ་ཤུགས་ཀྱིས་འབྲུལ་རིག་པ།
 །^{tha b2} ཅེ་མའོ་འཛིག་རྟེན་གྱི་དམིགས་ཀྱིས།
 །རི་ཕྱིར་སྤྱོད་ནི་མཐོང་བྱེད་ཀྱི།
 །རགས་པའི་རི་ནི་མཐོང་བྱི་བྱེད།</p> | <p>།ཀྱི་མ་འཛིག་རྟེན་པ་ཡི་མིག།
 །བརྟན་པའི་དབང་གིས་འབྲུལ་པ་ཡིན།
 །རི་ཡི་ཕྱེ་^{59b4} མའོ་སྤྱོད་མཐོང་ཞིང་།
 །རགས་པའི་རི་ལོ་མཐོང་མ་ཡིན།</p> |
| <p>223 །གང་ཞིག་འགྲོ་བར་འཕོང་རྟེན་པ།
 །རྩ་མ་སྤྱོད་ཀྱི་འབྲིགས་པ་དག།
 །མཚན་མ་འབྲིགས་ལས་རིང་རྒྱུད་པས།
 །དེ་དག་ཀྱང་ནི་མཁས་མ་ཡིན།</p> | <p>།སྤྱོད་ཀྱི་སྤྱོད་ཀྱི་འཕོང་པ།
 །འགྲོ་ན་འཕོང་རྟེན་གང་ཡིན་པ།
 །མཚན་མ་ལ་ཕོག་བྱུང་འཕགས་པར།
 །རྟེན་ཏེ་གཉིས་པོ་རྟེན་མ་ཡིན།</p> |
| <p>224 །དོན་མཐོང་རྣམས་^{tha b3} ལ་བརྟགས་པ་ཉིད་ཀྱི་རྗེ་མ་
 ཐམས་ཅད་བྱེད་པའི་དོན་ཉིད་སྤང་འབྲུང་ཏེ།</p> | <p>།དོན་དུ་ལྟ་བུ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀུན་བརྟགས་ལོན་པའི་
 །དོན་ནི་མིན་ཏུ་གསལ་བར་སྤང།</p> |

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| <p>231 །དེ་བས་ལ་དོན་ཏུ་སྟོང་། da a1 ཉིད་ནི།
 །འདྲིར་ནི་སྐྱར་ཡང་དམིགས་པར་བྱ།
 །ལྟ་བས་བྱས་པ་ཀུན་ལ་ཡང་།
 །མཐར་ནི་སྟོང་པ་ཉིད་སྟན་ཏོ།</p> | <p>།དེ་ནི་སྤང་བའི་དོན་ཕྱིར་ 60a2 ཡང་།
 །སྟོང་ཉིད་ཤིན་ཏུ་དམིགས་པར་བྱ།
 །སྤྱོད་ཀྱིས་ལྟ་ཀུན་སྤང་བའི་ཕྱིར།
 །སྟོང་བའི་སྟོང་ཉིད་བསྟན་པ་ཡིན།</p> |
| <p>232 །དོ་རྗེ་འཇི་བས་བྱུགས་པའི་།
 །ལྟ་མ་ཡིན་གྱི་སྟོ་ལྟ་བུ།
 །འོགས་གཉིས་དག་ལས་མ་རེག་ན།
 །རྣལ་འབྱོར་དུ་རྣམ་རིག་ལ་འཇུག་བྱེད།</p> | <p>།དོ་རྗེ་སྤྱིན་གྱིས་བྱུགས་པ་ཡི།
 །ཁང་པའི་སྟོ་ལ་ལྟ་མིན་བཞིན།
 །རྣམ་རིག་ལ་འཇུག་རྣལ་འབྱོར་པས།
 །འཇུགས་གཉིས་ཡང་དག་རེག་མ་ཡིན།</p> |
| <p>233 འགའ་ da a2 །ཞིག་གང་རུང་ལ་རེག་ན།
 །མཐའ་དེ་དག་ལ་བག་ལྷེད་པས།
 །དོ་རྗེ་འཇི་བས་བརྒྱད་བ་ཡིས།
 །བརྒྱད་བས་ལུས་ནི་ཉམས་པར་འགྱུར།</p> | <p>།དེ་གཉིས་དབྱུས་སུ་བག་ 60a3 མེད་པས།
 །གཞན་འགའ་ཞིག་གིས་རེག་གྱུར་ན། །
 །དོ་རྗེ་སྤྱིན་གྱིས་བརྒྱད་ནས་ནི།
 །དེ་ཡི་ལུས་ནི་བསྐྱེད་པར་འགྱུར།</p> |
| <p>234 །སྲུབ་ལ་ལྷུའད་པ་ལྷེད་པའི།
 །ཤེས་པ་རྣམས་ལ་འདྲི་བརྟགས་རྣམས།
 །དུ་བ་ནག་པོས་ལྷེ་བཞིན་ནོ།
 །སྤང་ཐོབ་རྣལ་འབྱོར་དུ་ da a3 ཡིསོ།</p> | <p>།སྤང་བ་ཐོབ་པའི་རྣལ་འབྱོར་པས།
 །དེ་ཡི་རྟགས་ཀྱང་ཤེས་བྱ་སྟེ།
 །དངོས་སུ་མེད་ན་མི་འབྱུང་སྟེ།
 །དུ་བ་སོལ་བ་དངོས་པོ་བཞིན།</p> |
| <p>235 །འདྲིའི་རྟོག་པ་བསལ་བའི་ཕྱིར།
 །ཅུང་ཞིག་ཕྱིས་པའི་རི་མོ་བཞིན།
 །བསམ་གཏན་ལྡང་ཡང་འགོ་བ་ནི།
 །མཐ་དག་དྲི་མ་ཅན་མཐོང་རོ།</p> | <p>།ཀུན་ཏུ་བརྟགས་པ་སྤང་བ་ 60a4 དེས་།
 །མི་གསལ་བ་ཡི་རི་མོ་བཞིན།
 །བསམ་གཏན་ལས་ནི་ལངས་པ་ཡིས།
 །འགོ་བ་ཐམས་ཅད་མི་གསལ་སྤང་།</p> |
| <p>236 །འཇིག་བཞིན་རྩིངས་པ་ཉིད་དེ་བཞིན།
 །ཤིན་ཏུ་འཇིག་པ་ཉིད་དང་ནི།
 །གྲོང་སྟོང་བཞིན་ཏུ་འཇིག་པ་དང་།
 །དགའ་བ་ da a4 ལྷེད་ཅིང་རྟེན་ལྷེད་པ།</p> | <p>།ཟད་དང་རྩིང་པ་ལྟ་བུ་དང་།
 །ཀུན་ཏུ་ཞིབ་པ་ལྟ་བུ་དང་།
 །གྲོང་སྟོང་ལྟ་བུར་དབེན་པ་དང་།
 །དགའ་བ་མེད་ཅིང་རྟེན་མེད་པ།</p> |
| <p>237 །ཤིན་ཏུ་སྟོོ་བ་བསྐྱེད་པ་དང་།
 །ཅོ་རིའི་སྤྱོ་བཞིན་གཏོང་པར་བྱེད།
 །བདག་པོ་ལྷེད་ཅིང་བདག་གིར་བྱེད།
 །ལྷིང་ཅོམ་འབའ་ཤིག་ཉིད་ཡིན་ནོ།</p> | <p>།ཤིན་ཏུ་སྟོོ་སྟེ་འགོ་བ་ལ།
 །ཅོ་རིའི་སྤྱོ་འདོན་པ་ 60a5 ལ་བཞིན།
 །བདག་དང་བདག་གི་མེད་པ་དང་།
 །ལིང་ཅོམ་འབའ་ཞིག་ལོ་ན་འོ།</p> |
| <p>238 །གཞན་གྱི་དབང་ཞེས་བྱ་བའི།
 །རང་བཞིན་མཐོང་བ་ཉིད་ལ་ཡང་།</p> | <p>།གཞན་དབང་ཞེས་བྱ་མཐོང་བས་ཀྱང་།
 །རང་བཞིན་འདི་ལྟ་བུ་བྱ་སྤང་།</p> |

- 1239 །རང་སེམས་ཁོར་ལོ་བརྟན་ da a5 པ་ན།
 །བདག་ནང་དུ་བཞུགས་བཞིན་དང་།
 །མྱིག་འཕུལ་འབྱུང་བ་ལྟ་བུ་དང་།
 །དེ་ཉིད་ལྷུལ་དཔ་ཚམ་ཡིན་ནོ།
 །དེ་ལ་བརྟགས་པ་མ་ལུས་པ།
 །ལུན་པས་ནོན་པ་བཞིན་དུ་མཐོང་།
- 240 །ཐམས་ཅད་མ་ལུས་བག་ཆགས་ཀྱིས།
 །རིམ་གྱིས་པ་ལྟ་བུ་དང་།
 །ཁོར་ལོ་ da a6 ལྟ་བུར་འཇུག་པ་ལས།
 །ཉོན་མོངས་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་གཡོགས་པ་དང་།
- 241 །བརྟན་པའི་རྩི་ལམ་སང་ཤེས་ལ།
 །མཚན་གཞིའ་མཚན་ཉིད་ལྷེད་ལྡན་པ།
 །སྟོང་ཉིད་སྟོང་ཉིད་མཐོང་རྣམས་ཀྱི།
 །མཐོང་བས་འཇིག་པ་ལྟ་བུ་ཉིད།
 །ཅི་ཡིན་ཞེས་ཀྱང་མཐོང་བ་ཡིན།
- 242 །ཡོངས་ལྷུ་ da a7 སྲུབ་པ་ཤེས་ན་ནི།
 །ཐམས་ཅད་རོ་ཅིག་བདག་ཉིད་ཅན།
 །རྣམ་དབྱེ་བྱེད་ཅིང་ཐོག་མཐའ་བྱེད།
 །རྣམ་པ་བྱེད་ཅིང་འཇིག་པ་བྱེད།
- 243 །སྟོ་བ་བྱེད་ཅིང་འབད་པ་བྱེད།
 །རིང་དང་རླུ་པོ་མ་ཡིན་ནོ།
 །ཉི་མས་རབ་རིབ་མཚོམ་པའི།
 །ནམ་མཁའ་བཞིན་དུ་རྒྱུ་མ་བྱེད།
- 244 །མཉམ་ཉིད་ཚོས་ནི་རྟོགས་པའི་ da b1 ཕྱིར།
 །ཐམས་ཅད་མཉམ་པས་མཉམ་པའང་ཡིན།
 །མཐོང་པའི་ཚོས་འདི་ཀྱན་རྫོབ་སྟེ།
 །དོན་དམ་པ་ལ་མཐོང་བ་འང་བྱེད།
- 245 །རྣམ་རྟོག་ཀྱན་རྫོབ་དུ་བཤད་དེ།
 །རྣམ་རྟོག་གཞན་གྱི་རྒྱ་ཡིན་ཏེ།

- །རང་སེམས་ཤིང་རྟ་ལ་ཞོན་དང་།
 །བདག་གིས་སྤང་དུ་ཞུགས་ལྟ་བུར། * read གི་ནང་
 །མྱིག་འཕུལ་འབྱུང་བ་ལྟ་བུ་སྟེ།
 །དེ་ཉིད་ལོན་འཇུག་ 60a6 པ་ཚམ།
 །མ་ལུས་སྟན་པས་བྱབ་པ་བཞིན།
 །དེ་ལ་ཀྱན་བརྟགས་སྟོང་མ་ཡིན།
- །བག་ཆགས་ལྷག་མའི་རིམ་ཡིས།
 །ཐམས་ཅད་གྱིས་པ་ལྟ་བུ་བྱ་བ།
 །ཉོན་མོངས་ཉིད་ཀྱིས་བྱབ་པ་དང་།
 །འཁོར་ལོ་ལྟ་བུར་འཁོར་བ་དང་།
- །རྩི་ལམ་གསལ་སང་ཤེས་པ་དང་།
 །མཚན་དང་མཚན་ཉིད་ 60a7 མེད་པར་སྤང་།
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 །མཐོང་ནས་མི་སྤང་དང་མཚོངས་པར།
 །ཅི་ཞིག་ལྟ་བུར་སྤང་བ་ཡིན།
- །ཡོངས་སུ་སྲུབ་པ་ཤེས་པ་ནི།
 །ཐམས་ཅད་རོ་གཅིག་བདག་ཉིད་དེ།
 །རྣམས་མེད་ཅིང་ཐོག་མཐའ་མེད།
 །རྣམ་པ་མེད་ཅིང་གཞུང་དུ་མེད།
- །སྟོ་མེད་འཚོ་བ་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན།
 །རིང་པོ་མ་ཡིན་རླུ་མ་ 60b1 པོར་མིན།
 །ཉི་མས་སྟན་པ་བསལ་བ་ཡི།
 །ནམ་མཁའ་ལྟ་བུར་རྒྱུ་མ་མེད།
- །མཉམ་ཉིད་ཚོས་ནི་རྟོགས་པའི་ཕྱིར།
 །ཐམས་ཅད་མི་མཉམ་པ་དང་མཉམ།
 །ཀྱན་རྫོབ་ཏུ་ནི་ཚོས་འདི་སྤང་།
 །དམ་པའི་དོན་དུ་སྤང་བ་ཡིན།
- །རྣམ་པར་རྟོག་པ་གཞན་གྱི་རྒྱུའི།
 །རྣམ་རྟོག་ཀྱན་རྫོབ་ཅེས་བྱར་ 60b2 བརྗོད།

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| | <p>།དེ་ཉིད་དོན་དམ་པ་ཡང་སྟེ།
 །རྣམ་རྟོག་ལྡོག་པར་བྱེད་པ་ཡིན།</p> | <p>།རྣམ་པར་རྟོག་པ་བརྫོག་པ་ནི།
 །དེ་ཉིད་ཁོ་ན་དམ་པའི་དོན།</p> |
| 246 | <p>།ཅི་ལྟར་བསྟན་ da b2 པ་དེ་ཡང་ནི།
 །ཀུན་རྫོབ་ཉིད་ལ་གནས་པ་ཡིན།
 །ཅི་ལྟར་དོན་དམ་པ་དེ་ནི།
 །དེ་ནི་དེ་ལྟར་བརྗོད་བྱ་བྱིན།</p> | <p>།རྗེ་ལྟར་མིང་གིས་བསྟན་དེ་ཡང་།
 །ཀུན་རྫོབ་ཉིད་དུ་གནས་པ་ཡིན།
 །དམ་པའི་དོན་ནི་དེ་བཞིན་ཏེ།
 །དེ་བཞིན་རྗོག་གིས་དེ་ཡུལ་མིན།</p> |
| 247 | <p>།དེ་ཉིད་ཕྱིར་ན་ཐུབ་འཛིགས་པས།།
 །བསྟན་པའི་ཚེས་ནི་བཤད་བཤད་པས།།
 །ཀུན་རྫོབ་ལ་གནས་མ་གྲུང་ཅེས།།
 །སྟོང་བདག་ཉིད་ཀྱིས་འཛོམས་པར་བྱེད།།</p> | <p>།རིག་ལ་གནས་པ་མ་ཡིན་པས།།
 །དེ་ཕྱིར་དེ་འཛིགས་ཐུབ་པ་ཡིས།།
 །སྟོང་ཉིད་བདག་ 60b3 ཉིད་གསུངས་ཤིང་གསུངས།།
 །ཐ་དད་པ་ཡི་ཚེས་རྣམས་བསྟན།།</p> |
| 248 | <p>། da b3 རྣམ་པར་རྟོག་པས་བྱིས་པ་རྣམས།།
 །ཡུན་རིང་མེལ་པས་དགའ་བ་ཡིན།།
 །སྟོམ་ལ་ཆགས་པའི་སེམས་པ་ཅན།།
 །ད་རུང་དུ་ཡང་མེལ་བ་ཉིད།།</p> | <p>།ཡུན་རིང་འཕེལ་བའི་རྣམ་རྟོག་ལ།།
 །བྱིས་པ་རྣམས་ནི་དགའ་བ་ཉིད།།
 །སྟོམ་ལ་སེམས་ནི་ཆགས་པས་ན།།
 །དེ་ལྟ་ན་ནི་འདི་འཕེལ་ལོ།།</p> |
| 249 | <p>།མཚན་མ་བཀོད་པར་བྱ་བ་ལ།།
 །འདིའི་སེམས་ནི་མཁས་པ་ཡིན།།
 །རྣམ་རྟོག་འཇུག་པ་ཞི་བ་ཉིད།།
 །འཁར་ཡང་སྤྱི་དགའ་ da b4 ཡོད་མ་ཡིན།།</p> | <p>།མཚན་*མ་འགོད་པའི་དོན་ལ་ནི། * corr : མཚན་
 །སེམས་འདི་ཡང་ནི་མཁས་པ་ཡིས།།
 །རྣམ་རྟོག་ 60b4 བྱེ་བྲག་ཞི་མ་ཡིན།།
 །མི་འགྲུབ་བ་ནི་གང་དུ་འང་མེད།།</p> |
| 250 | <p>།སྟོང་ཉིད་སྟོང་ཉིད་མཐོང་རྣམས་ཀྱིས།།
 །སྟོམ་ལས་ལྟ་བུར་འཇུག་འགྲུང་ཏེ།།
 །གཉིད་ལོག་བཞིན་དུ་སྟོབ་བྱེད།།
 །སེམས་ནི་བདག་བྱེད་ལ་དམྱིགས་ནས།།</p> | <p>།བདག་མེད་པ་ལ་སེམས་དམིགས་པ།།
 །བཏང་སྟོམས་འདྲ་བ་ཐོབ་པ་དང་།།
 །གཉིད་ལོག་ལྟ་བུར་འདོད་པ་མེད།།
 །དུབ་པ་བརྟགས་པ་ལྟ་བུ་དང་།།</p> |
| 251 | <p>།དུབ་པ་ངལ་སོ་ལྟ་བུ་དང་།།
 །ལྷིག་ནི་དམན་པར་བྱེད་པ་དང་།།
 །མགོའ་ཡང་དམའ་པར་ da b5 བྱེད་པ་དང་།།
 །སེམས་དང་སེམས་འབྲུང་སྐྱེད་པ་ཡིན།།</p> | <p>།སྟོང་ཉིད་སྟོང་པར་མཐོང་བ་ཡིས།།
 །མིག་ནི་འཇུམ་པར་བྱེད་མ་ཡིན།།
 ། 60b5 མགོ་འཕང་མཐོན་པོ་མ་ཡིན་དང་།།
 །སེམས་དང་སེམས་བྱུང་འགག་པར་འགྲུབ།།</p> |
| 252 | <p>།ང་འིས་རྟགས་ནི་མཐོང་བྱིར་ཡང་།།
 །དེ་ཉིད་མཐོང་བས་དོན་བྱས་བསྟན།།
 །བརྟན་པས་བསྟོམ་པ་སྤང་བྱ་བྱིན།།
 །མཚོག་དེ་ལས་ཀྱང་མཚོག་ཡོད་དོ།།</p> | <p>།རྟགས་ནི་འདི་དག་མཐོང་ནས་ཀྱང་།།
 །བདག་གིས་དོན་བྱས་འདི་ཉིད་མཐོང་།།
 །དཔའ་བོས་བསྟོམ་པ་འདོར་མ་ཡིན།།
 །མཚོག་ལས་ཀྱང་ནི་མཚོག་ཡོད་ཕྱིར།།</p> |

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| 253 | དེ་ནི་དེ་ལྟར་ཞེས་འག་ཡིས་།
 དེ་ནི་བཤད་པར་ da b6 ལུས་མ་ཡིན།
 འདིའི་རྣལ་འབྱོར་ད་གོ་མས་པ་འེས་།
 རང་ཉིད་ཀྱིས་དེ་རྟོགས་བྱུང་ད་ཏེ། | དེ་ཡང་འདི་ཞེས་འགའ་ཡིས་གྲང་།
 60b6 དེ་ཉིད་བསྟན་པར་ལུས་མ་ཡིན།
 འདི་ནི་གོ་མས་བྱས་རྣལ་འབྱོར་པས།
 བདག་ཉིད་ཀྱིས་ནི་རྟོགས་པར་འབྱུང། |
| 254 | དེ་ལྟར་མཐའ་གཉིས་དབུལ་མར་གནས།
 རྣམ་པར་རིག་པ་ཉིད་ཅམ་མཐོང་།
 འགྲོ་བ་དེ་ཉིད་ཕུན་ཚོགས་པར།
 འདི་ཡིས་མ་ལུས་སྟོན་པར་བྱེད། | རྣམ་པར་རིག་ཅམ་ཉིད་མཐོང་ན།
 དེ་ནི་མཐའ་གཉིས་དབུལ་ལ་གནས།
 འགྲོ་བ་མ་ལུས་འདི་དག་ལ།
 དེ་ཉིད་ཕུན་སུམ་ཚོགས་པ་སྟོན། |
| 255 | དེ་ཉིད་ཕུན་ཚོགས་ da b7 གནས་ཕྱིན་ཆད།
 བདེ་གཤེགས་བདག་སྐྱེས་བྱུགས་རྗེ་ཅན།
 སེམས་ཅན་དོན་ལ་སློག་གིས་གྲང་།
 འདི་ནི་བཏང་སྟོམས་བྱེད་བྱིན་ནམ། | དེ་ཉིད་ཕུན་སུམ་ 60b7 ཚོགས་གནས་ཕྱིར།
 སྐྱིང་རྗེ་ཕྲན་པ་བདེ་གཤེགས་སྲས།
 སློག་གིས་གྲང་ནི་སེམས་ཅན་དོན།
 བྱེད་ལ་བཏང་སྟོམས་འཛེག་མ་ཡིན། |
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 རྩི་ལམ་དུ་ནི་བསོགས་བྱུང་ད་པའི།
 བྲ་དང་རྩུང་མ་ལ་སོགས་པའི།
 གཞན་གིས་ཉེ་བར་ལོང་སྟོད་ [na a1] ... | ཡུལ་རྣམས་འགའ་ཡང་སེམས་པ་མེད།
 རྩི་ལམ་འཕྲུག་པ་བཞིན་དུ་བརྟེན།
 བྲ་དང་བྲ་མོ་ལ་སོགས་པའི།
 གཞན་གྱི་ཉེ་བར་ལོངས་སྟོད་ 61a1 གྲང་། |

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Abbreviations and sigla

ACIP	Asian Classics Input Project. http://www.asianclassics.org
D	Kanjur and Tanjur edition of Derge
gTb	rNying ma rgyud 'bum mtshams brag dgon pa. http://www.thlib.org/encyclopedias/literary/canons/ngb/catalog.php
Ma	Manuscript fragments of Matho
N	Kanjur and Tanjur edition of Narthang
TBRC	Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center. http://tbrc.org/

FIGURES

All photos, if not stated otherwise, are by the author, 2014 and 2015

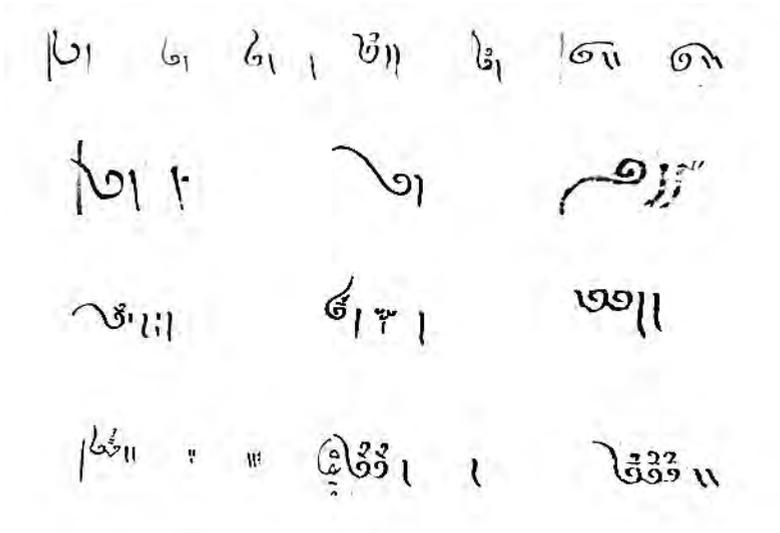


Fig. 1a: The most common forms of *mgo yig* in the Matho fragments



Fig. 1b: Examples of ornamentation



Fig. 2a: Illuminations from a *Tathāgatoṣṇīṣa-sitātapatre-
aparājitāmahāpratyamṅgira-paramasiddhi* (left) and a *rTogs pa chen po yongs su
rgyas pa'i mdo* manuscript (right) from the “King’s stupa”



Fig. 2b: Illumination from a *Tathāgatoṣṇīṣa-sitātapatre-
aparājitāmahāpratyamṅgira-paramasiddhi* manuscript from a stupa at Matho village

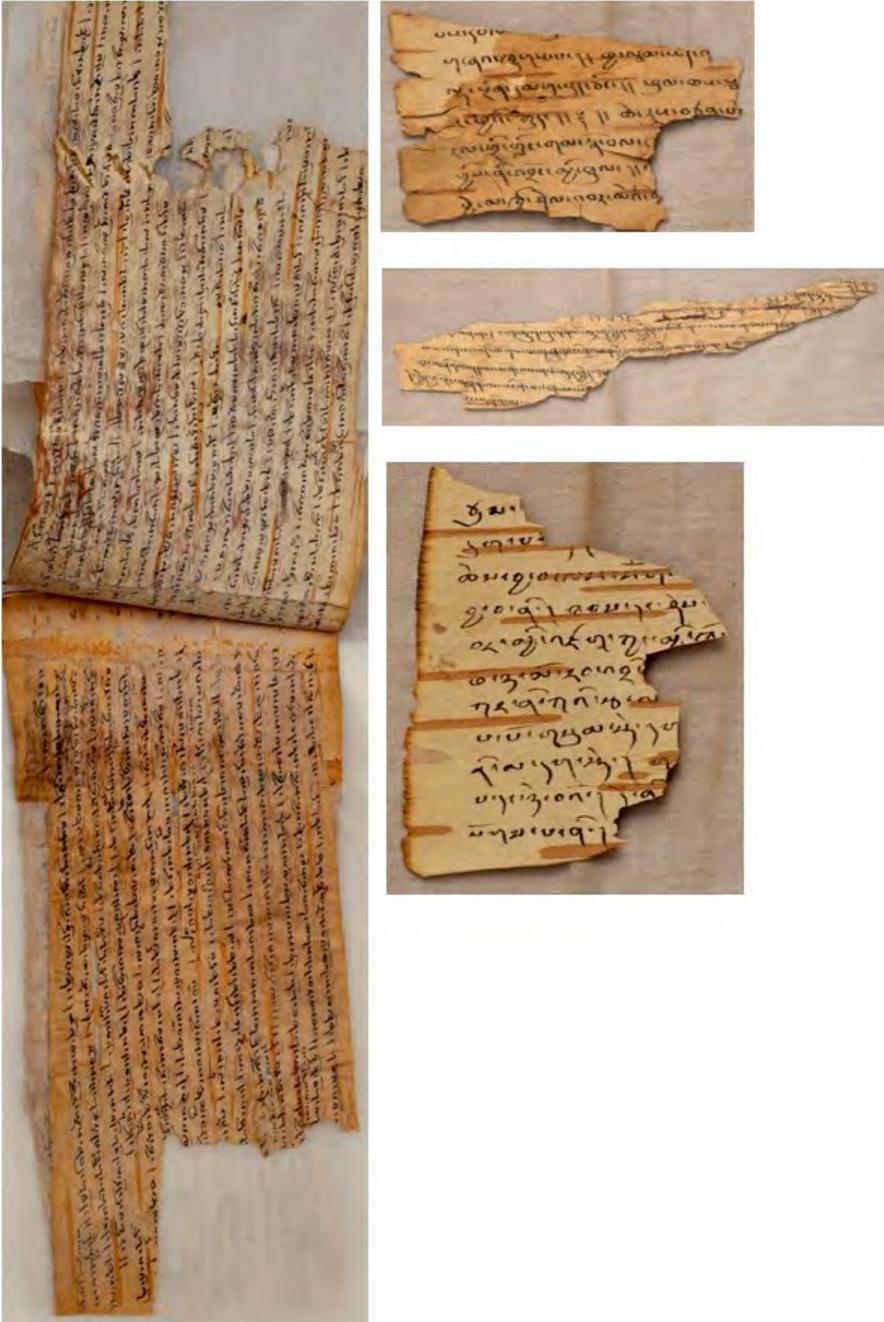


Fig. 3: Examples of birch bark manuscripts from the “King’s stupa”



Fig. 4: "Booklet"



Fig. 5: Examples of tantric paintings and drawings



Fig. 6: "Folded" folio



Fig. 7a: Samples of scripts in canonical texts



Fig. 7b: Samples of scripts in non-canonical texts

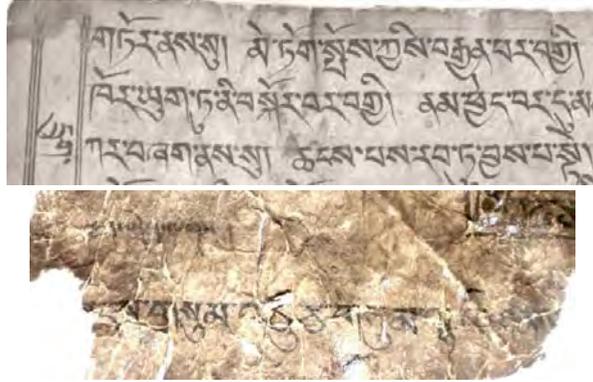


Fig. 7c: "Modern" script

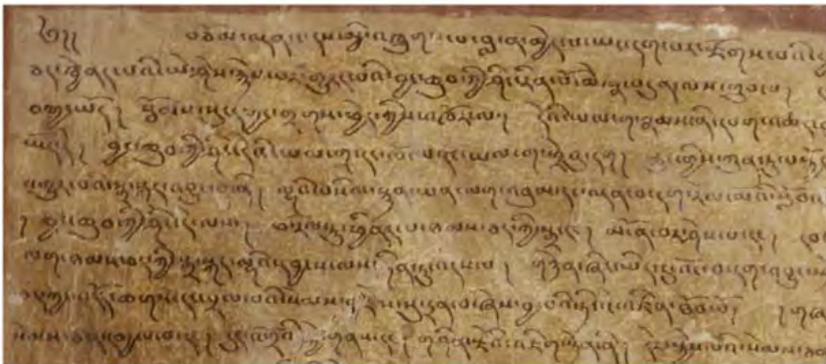


Fig. 8: Alchi 'Du khang, Inscription 1 (photo by Panglung & Uebach, 1981)

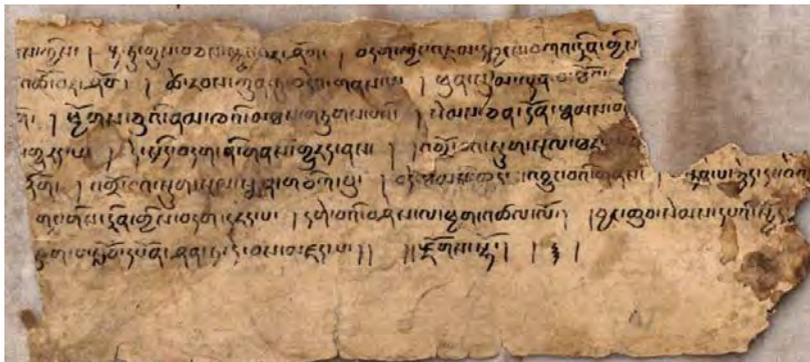


Fig. 9: Last page of the *Bodhi(sattva)cāryāvātāra* by Śāntideva

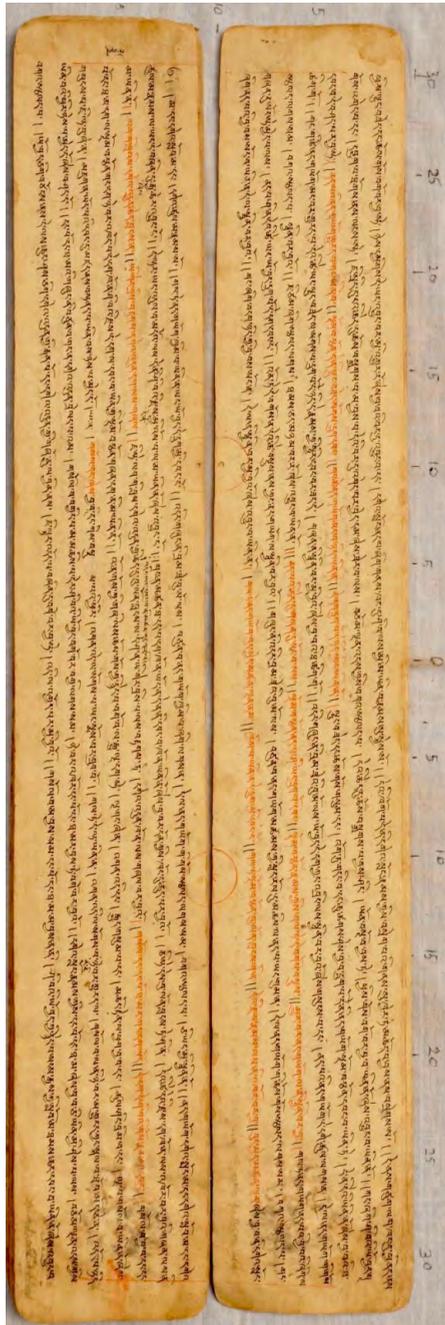


Fig. 10: Large format folio cut in half, fol. 32b-33a of a *Mūlasarvāstivādiśrāmaṇerakārikāvṛttiprabhāvatī* manuscript

MI LA RAS PA ON THE INTERMEDIATE STATE.
An Introduction and Translation of “Profound Instructions on
the Direct Introduction to the Intermediate State,
Using the Mind to Discriminate the Path”

FRANCIS V. TISO
(Isernia, Italy)

Until E. Gene Smith¹ pointed out that the well-known biography and songs of Mi la ras pa had been authored by a major figure of the late 15th century, the “Mad Yogin of gTsang” (gTsang smyon Heruka, 1452-1507), it was widely believed that an immediate disciple of Mi la ras pa composed this hagiographical classic. Recently I have published a book on the biographical tradition in a more developed form, which includes translations and discussion of early biographies and oral teachings attributed to the great rJe btsun of the 11th and 12th centuries.² The present article contributes to a further exploration of the connections between our earliest sources for the songs (*mgur*) of Mi la ras pa and the oral instructions on spiritual practice (*gdams ngag*) that continue to circulate in manuscript form among *sngags pa* yogins³ in the Himalayas to the present day.

This is not the place to go into the historical and literary details surrounding Tibetan written sources.⁴ The long-term task of establishing authentic sources requires a study of manuscripts and xylographs produced over many centuries. At times, the texts were copied by scribes who transcribed the text as it was being read aloud to them, a method that inevitably leads to errors because of the numerous homonyms in spoken Tibetan. Moreover, the tradition itself encouraged editorial transformation and creativity. In the case of Mi la ras pa, it is clear that later biographers, particularly 'Gos Lo tsā ba Gzhon nu dpal (1392-1481) in the *Blue Annals*, and gTsang smyon Heruka, made use of literary sources. 'Gos Lo tsā ba sifted the sources critically, claiming that “many were spurious”.⁵ In my published work, I have shown how gTsang smyon edited and in many cases creatively re-wrote the songs and stories of Mi la ras pa to promote a unique program of reform in the critical period of the late

1 See Smith 2001: 59-80.

2 See Tiso 2014. Hereafter: *LL*.

3 The *sngags pa* are Buddhist and Bon po yogins, usually lay practitioners of the “peripheral” regions of Tibetan culture. They are often married while directing a village temple.

4 See *LL*: Chapters 3-6.

5 See Roerich 1979: 432. Hereafter: *BA*.

15th and early 16th centuries. One source that is particularly relevant for our task in presenting Mi la ras pa's teachings on the intermediate state (*bar do*) has received very little attention from scholars. This is the *Bu chen bcu gnyis mi la rnam thar mgur 'bum*, existing in two nearly complete manuscripts,⁶ offering a compilation of Mi la ras pa's life story along with episodes of his years as a wandering yogin, encountering disciples and manifesting his enlightened consciousness. Although the work is attributed to the twelve disciples (*bu chen bcu gnyis*) present with Mi la ras pa on retreat at the time of his death, to a great extent the bKa' brgyud pa oral tradition⁷ recognizes that this work was primarily the achievement of a nearly forgotten disciple, Ngam rdzong ras pa, heir to Mi la ras pa's formal transmission of the *bde mchog mkha' 'gro snyan rgyud* teachings. In fact, the two more famous disciples of Mi la ras pa, Ras chung pa (1083-1161) and sGam po pa (1079-1153), were also heirs to these teachings. However, the *lHo rong* account of bKa' brgyud lineage biographies⁸ alludes to the role of Ngam rdzong ras pa as the source of Mi la ras pa's biographical tradition. This Ngam rdzong is the same person as Bodhi Radza (Rāja) who, with Zhi ba 'od, is among the closest disciples said to be present at Mi la ras pa's demise. These two disciples are enshrined in the *Songs of Mi la ras pa* as compilers of the "Rosary of Golden Pearls", chapters 29-31 of the well-known version redacted by gTsang smyon Heruka. It is important from the outset to note that, although gTsang smyon edited the songs of Mi la ras pa with great literary freedom, he did not do so with the "Rosary of Golden Pearls". On the contrary, these esoteric episodes of encounters with the five Tshe ring ma (Long-Life) goddesses have undergone little or no alteration from the nearly forgotten *Bu chen bcu gnyis* version in their far better known presentation in the *mgur 'bum* of gTsang smyon. It seems to us that the Mad Yogin was particularly persuaded that the legacy of Bodhi Radza and Shi ba 'od was an authentic transmission of Mi la ras pa's teachings.

The transformations in Tibetan Buddhism at the end of the 10th and during the first half of the 11th centuries have often been discussed,⁹ but the contradictions inherent to native accounts have not been fully elucidated. The role of local figures, particularly free-lance translators and *sngags pa* such as Mar pa Chos kyi blo gros of lHo brag (1012-1097), have been subordinated to other notables in the traditional narratives of the history of Dharma in Tibet. Nevertheless, Mar pa and his most famous disciple, Mi la ras pa, played key roles in the "later" or "second" diffusion of Vajrayāna from India to the Tibetan cultural zone, which also impacted the Himalayan Buddhist lineages present since at least the 8th century.

6 See *Bu chen bcu gnyis* (Tibetan Book Collection of the Newark Museum). Another, unfortunately incomplete, manuscript is kept in the Bodleian Library, Oxford (OX1 3BG Ms Tib. B. 2).

7 Oral comments courtesy of H. H. Chetsang Rinpoche of the Drikung Kagyu, 1997.

8 *lHo rong chos 'byung* (1446): 151-52 (The life of rJe Ngam rdzong ras pa); BA: 449-51.

9 See Tucci 1980: chapters 1 and 2; Kapstein 2006: chapters 3 and 4.

David Germano has contrasted the tantrism of the second diffusion with earlier forms of the practice known as *rDzogs chen* (*rDzogs pa chen po*), referring to the former as “funerary Buddhism” with its strong emphasis on death processes and charnel ground symbolism.¹⁰ He has shown, in ways that are partly sustained by other scholars,¹¹ that *rDzogs chen* masters gradually incorporated this “funerary” approach in the course of the 12th century. To elucidate these developments, we need a working hypothesis. To that end, I would propose a reading of Mi la ras pa’s oral teachings on the *bar do* that contextualizes the rJe btsun’s contribution to this tendency in the transformation of *sngags pa* tantric Buddhism in the Himalayas. Given Mi la ras pa’s intensive training under Bon po and rNying ma masters early in his life, his approach is of great importance for understanding the history of both the bKa’ brgyud order and of the 12th century evolution of *rDzogs chen*.

Bryan Cuevas¹² has indicated that the Mi la ras pa oral teaching on the *bar do* plays a key role in the development of distinctly Tibetan notions of the postmortem journey. Cuevas also points out the relationship between the oral teaching and the *bar do* songs in the “Rosary of Golden Pearls”, taking note of the probable antiquity of this particular literary source.¹³ Checking the standard editions¹⁴ of gTsang smyon’s chapters 29-31 of the *Songs* against the *Bu chen bcu gnyis* version of the same material, we can confirm that in this instance gTsang smyon reproduces the text of this very early literary source.

Following Cuevas’ reading of these materials in relation to his masterful examination of the *Bar do thos grol* (the so-called *Tibetan Book of the Dead*),¹⁵ we may understand why Mi la ras pa became a pivotal figure in the transformation of Himalayan Vajrayāna during the twelfth century. As we know from the earliest biographical accounts of Mi la ras pa,¹⁶ having learned the arts of destructive magic from Bon po and Buddhist (rNying ma) *sngags pa* masters, the rJe btsun proceeded to destroy those members of his family who, upon the death of his father, had grievously oppressed Mila’s mother, sister, and himself. These acts of vindication gave rise to remorse. Mi la ras pa sought out a master who might be able to assure him of “*liberation in one lifetime*” so as to evade the karmic consequences of his evil

10 See Germano 2005.

11 See for example Van Schaik 2004.

12 See Cuevas 2003: 46-57. Cuevas discusses the impact of these innovations on *rDzogs chen* on pages 57-68. Hereafter: *HH*.

13 A critical comparison of the two texts would extend the length of this article beyond its assigned limits.

14 See Rus pa’i rgyan can 1989: Chapter 30, pp. 489-517.

15 Cuevas outlines the history of this text, and its reception by Western scholarship, on pages 3-24, with due caution regarding redactions that manuscript and block print editions may have undergone since their discovery by an “obscure fourteenth-century mystic named Karma Ling pa” (*HH*: 14).

16 Several of these are translated in *LL*: Chapter 24.

deeds. Mi la ras pa underwent a conversion experience, a life changing “intermediate state” by becoming painfully aware of his own inability to confront the postmortem *bar do* and the hellish rebirth that awaits those who do harmful deeds. The master he sought out, Bre ston lHa dga’,¹⁷ was a teacher of the *rDzogs chen* system, traceable to several masters going back to the late 8th century. lHa dga’s method for teaching *rDzogs chen* failed to address the karmic burden that Mi la ras pa was bearing. Instead of rapid liberation, the repentant sorcerer experienced torpor. This particular episode seems to have become a crucial feature in the way the “new tantras” being introduced into Tibet by Mar pa and other *sngags pa* masters were to be presented as “superior” to earlier systems known in Tibet. *rDzogs chen* in its earliest form sought to place the yogin in direct contact with the true nature of reality by awakening intuitive cognition in what is called a “direct introduction” in which the disciple glimpses an unconditioned state of awareness of phenomena in the presence of an accomplished master. This “introduction” serves as a point of reference for subsequent contemplative training and experience in this system. The problem with the method is that the disciple needs to be quite spiritually advanced in order to benefit from the “introduction”. There seems to have been, at least in the lineage of lHa dga’, no fully developed system of *preparation* for the direct introduction. However, the “new tantras” contain abundant methods for preparing the disciple for tantric initiation and subsequent *sādhana* practice. For this reason, Mi la ras pa adhered to Mar pa’s system of tantric transmission, reluctantly transmitted after numerous trials.¹⁸ The fact that Mi la ras pa attained liberation in one lifetime, going on to become a major influence on the development of Vajrayāna in Tibet, created a real challenge to the earlier lineages that taught “pristine” *rDzogs chen*, as was the case with lHa dga’. It was the failure of *rDzogs chen* to lead Mi la ras pa to liberation in one lifetime that may have occasioned a full fledged opening on the part of the *rDzogs chen sngag pa* yogins to new methods of tantric practice, including those meant to enhance the disciple’s ability to enter the path in the first place.¹⁹

For his part, Mi la ras pa seems to have been able to incorporate his knowledge of the earlier systems²⁰ into his own system employing the Six Yogas of Nāropa.²¹ In the

17 LL: 190-91; cf. BA: 429-30.

18 Some of which, such as the construction of a series of towers, seem to have been the literary inventions of the Mad Yogin.

19 The transformation of *rDzogs chen* in the 12th century and thereafter seems to have depended on two strategies: (1) returning to the earliest sources of *rDzogs chen* and reaffirming the lineage in its tantric ritualistic origins, compiled in a canon of rNying ma scriptures and (2) producing apocryphal works (*gter ma*) that promoted the dissemination of “new-old” ritual practices useful to yogins in enhancing *sādhana* practice and to ordinary village laity by providing for their day to day religious concerns. The *Bar do thos grol* clearly serves the latter purpose while not excluding the yogins’ virtuoso interests.

20 See Martin 1982.

21 Mullin 1997.

oral teaching translated below, there are references to the Six Yogas, which Mi la ras pa presents as ways by which all the forms of *bar do* can be encountered fruitfully by the accomplished yogin. Moreover, in Chapter 30 of the *mgur 'bum*, the “Song of Perils in the Intermediate State,” Mi la ras pa encounters the Long Life Goddesses (*tshe ring ma*) at a moment of crisis, itself a kind of *bar do* that brings them into his own circle. In fact, these *ḍākinī* deities are presented as magicians tempted to vindicate themselves, as did the rJe btsun in his early life. Transformed into disciples, the *ḍākinī* become the rJe btsun’s consorts in the practice of the Six Yogas in the Cakrasaṃvara yogic cycle.²²

The text of Mi la ras pa’s “Song of Perils”²³ presents the *bar do* teachings in narrative form. Mi la ras pa is in retreat at Chu bar in autumn of the year of the male wooden horse (1114). An epidemic breaks out among the inhabitants of Ding ma brin. The cause of the outbreak is identified as an act of retaliation by local female divinities for the pollution of the atmosphere caused by a fire set by shepherds. The deities have become ill as a result of the pollution. Mi la ras pa performs a purification ritual for the deities. Later he explains the problem to the villagers and celebrates a purification rite for them as well. Later, the five Long-Life goddesses, accompanied by their familiar spirits and guardians of the site, visit Mi la ras pa in his retreat. The goddesses are described as “*worldly magicians*”, placing them in the same state of karmic risk as Mi la ras pa before his conversion to pure Dharma. The Long-Life deities, ironically, sing a long song about their fear of the Lord of Death. They implore Mi la’s protection and ask for instructions:

- How to recognize the signs of luminosity at the time of death;
- How to identify the sublime Saṃbhogakāya among the illusory forms that manifest in the intermediate state;
- How to recognize the Nirmāṇakāya of a Buddha who is capable of choosing his own rebirth;
- How to find a place of happiness that these rather worldly deities have never known.

Mi la ras pa sings a song of encouragement, outlining the Vajrayāna path as he has received it from the lineage of Tilopa, Nāropa, Maitrīpa, and Mar pa the translator. He tells them that the path of Vajrayāna alone can guide a being securely during the intermediate state that may lead to undesirable rebirths.

The deities offer a ritual requesting initiation. Mi la ras pa sings a song on the *essential teachings on the intermediate state*, which he inherited from the lineage of Nāropa and Mar pa. Since the post-mortem journey is full of risks, one should know the six stages of the *bar do* and the six possible realms of rebirth (celestials - gods and

²² Gray 2007.

²³ Newark Museum, Tibetan Book Collection, 36.280 *Biography of Mi la ras pa*, pp. 177-88. In the “standard” edition of the *Life and Songs of Mi la ras pa* (1989), Chapter 30 is found on pp. 489-517.

titans, humans, and the lower realms of animals, ghosts, and hell beings). As with earlier Buddhist teachings, there are three categories of worlds: the world of the passions, the world of pure form, and the formless world. A person should encounter the Buddha Bodies (*buddha-kāya*)²⁴ in this life. Otherwise, one risks falling into the consequences of one's deeds in the *bar do*. The *bar do* can be a “valley of fear” in which one encounters ghosts, temptations, misleading words, and deceptive pathways. After seven weeks of wandering, by the force of past deeds, the being must pass into yet another rebirth.

Mi la ras pa then recites the basic oral teachings that will later be given to Ras chung pa in the *gdams ngag* genre that we are translating below. Here, the teachings take the form of a sacred song (*mgur*), based on the “heart advice of Mar pa”. Mi la advises the Long-Life deities to:

- Meditate on *mahāmudrā* so as to recognize phenomena in their natural state;²⁵
- In the time allotted between birth and death, one should train in mental agility by meditation on the yogas of creation and completion (the two broad phases of tantric meditation practice²⁶);
- Seek to regain innate wisdom in the “open spaces” that present themselves during meditation by carefully following the oral instructions given by the guru;
- In order to transform bad habits, make use of the practice that links the material body to the clear light during sleeping and dreaming;
- At the conclusion of the intermediate state of becoming, try to reach the Pure Land²⁷ once one has seen the manifestation of the Buddha bodies;
- Should the Buddha bodies not appear during the transitional state just prior to rebirth, one should rely on the law of cause and effect. This means that one should make pure prayers now so that at that time the being will be reborn in a body endowed with the eighteen blessings that are favorable to the attainment of liberation in the next lifetime.

The Long-Life deities reply with an insistent request for entry into a “place” where the Buddha and the Guru may reside, hinting that this “place” is the central channel (*avadhūtī*) of the yogic subtle body. In a text of Vagīśvarakīrti, the *Seven Limbs* (*Saptāṅga*), written during the lifetime of Nāropa, the “place of Vajradhāra” is in fact the *avadhūtī*.²⁸ When the yogin is able to bring all the fluxes of energy in mind and body into the central channel, the state of Vajradhāra, the tantric form of the Buddha,

24 LL: 363, and Chapter 23.

25 LL: 291-92.

26 LL: Table 20.3, pp. 168-69.

27 Pure lands are created by the compassionate merits of a Buddha such as Amitābha or Amitāyus. Cf. Chang 1983: Chapter 18.

28 LL: 269-70.

is attained. This conviction is asserted in the Vajradhāra account that serves as a preface to several bKa' brgyud biographical collections. The Long-Life deities also hint at the “way of messengers” (*pho nya*²⁹), which is believed to bring on ecstasy by opening the subtle channels, so that one may abide in the contemplation of radiant voidness. This is a hint regarding the state of liberation, which unites bliss, luminosity, and voidness. The allusion (“messengers”) refers to *karmamudrā*, the sexual yoga typical of the Cakrasaṃvara cycle. Thanks to the four distinct joys of tantric practice,³⁰ the subtle energy fluxes enter the central channel to facilitate the attainment of enlightenment, in one body, in one lifetime, thus evading the perils of the *bar do*, and attaining liberation in one lifetime. Their song concludes with verses of praise alluding to their desire to practice sexual yoga with the rJe btsun.

Mi la ras pa replies to the deities' song with a description of those who are journeying in cyclic existence:

- There are those who hold and practice the instructions, finally arriving at the desired experiences;
- There are others who hold the instructions, but do not practice them, and;
- there are those who do not even have the instructions.

In order to guide the deities further, Mi la ras pa continues with his oral instructions in greater detail, “the heart marrow of Mar pa's teachings”:

- After the gradual dissolution of a sense of “inside and outside”, after the terrible transition of the time of death, the authentic nature of voidness appears to the consciousness of one who has died. In essence, this voidness is absolute openness, pacifying all doubts like a space of truth resembling the sun and moon rising in a cloudless sky, bringing about complete liberation from passionate attachments. This is the Dharmakāya, identified as the luminosity that appears at the moment of death. “Know it to be what it is”. To attain this recognition of the view of things such as they are, one must practice the clear light under the guidance of a master.³¹
- In the *bar do* of becoming, the mental body (*vid kyi gzugs*) makes one believe that once again one has a body driven by previous deeds. In fact, the body manifests the magical light of past activities. The yogin will recognize this manifestation as the Saṃbhogakāya. It is an illusion made of the fusion of voidness with appearances. “Recognize it for what it is” and practice the yoga of illusory dreaming. Visualize the body of the Buddha in the stage of creation. In effect, this method is meant to blend the perceptions of the intermediate state with the Vajrayāna training that one has perfected in retreat during the

29 Lamothe 1989: 183, n. 3.

30 *LL*: 124-27.

31 *LL*: 212, 214-15.

embodied state. The degree to which the Sambhogakāya manifests amid the fragmentary perceptions of the intermediate state depends on the extent to which the deceased has built up a supply of merit. Merit gives rise to the post-mortem perceptions, which are seen in the form of the attributes of deities and bodhisattvas.

- At the end of the journey through the post-mortem state, driven by the winds of karmic propensities, the being no longer has a choice; one is forced to take rebirth in the karma-dependent environment that presents itself to the being accompanied by its own proclivities. If one recalls the instructions, one may abide in bliss and voidness as an antidote to this final push into rebirth. This is what is termed “closing the womb door” and avoiding rebirth. In such a condition, should rebirth occur, it will be a rebirth in the manner of a Buddha’s Nirmānakāya. “Recognize it just as it is” and practice the purification of envy and jealousy, in order to attain the purpose of the third tantric initiation.³² Here one may rest within the *karmamudrā* (tantric consort, here probably blending an Abhidharma allusion to the conjugal act of one’s future parents with the icon of Cakrasaṃvara in union³³). In this way, one gives rise to the attainment of the yoga of heat (*gtum mo*), which is absolute wisdom (recognition of radical openness of all phenomena), the way of liberation.

Significantly, each chapter of the “Rosary of Golden Pearls” ends with explicit references to Mi la’s disciples Shi ba ’od and Bodhi Rādza, as compilers of this cycle of didactic songs.³⁴ In the instruction bestowed on Ras chung pa attributed to Mi la ras pa that we have translated below, it is apparent that the teachings outlined in terms related to the *Cakrasaṃvara* tantra and transmitted by Bodhi Rādza and Shi ba ’od, are developed even further by incorporating additional material from the medical traditions associated with various tantric cycles typical of the “later diffusion” period. Even more significant is the expansion of the category *bar do* to include virtually all experiences that present themselves continuously to consciousness. In this way, the post-mortem experience is taken up into a much wider perspective, one that would be familiar to a yogin who had spent many years in rigorous retreat. The perilous journey after death has its analogies in the perilous journey of this life, and indeed of the life of the entire cosmos. In this teaching, Mi la ras pa shows himself capable of assimilating the approach typical of his *rDzogs chen* teachers³⁵ to the teachings of the “new tantras” that he received from Mar pa. We find explicit allusions to the

32 Lessing & Wayman 1980: 325.

33 *LL*: 142-45, on the practice of Cakrasaṃvara.

34 A translation and study of the *Ngam rdzong snyan brgyud kyi skor* (Tibetan collection, Lehman Library, BQ 4860.C353/N36, 1985) should illuminate our understanding of Cakrasaṃvara practice in the lineage of Mi la ras pa.

35 Perhaps anticipating the cosmological and philosophical breakthroughs associated with Klong chen Rab ’byams pa (1308-1363) and Shes rab rgyal mtshan Dol po pa (1292-1361).

Kālacakra, a “second diffusion” system, but we also see a certain degree of fidelity to *rDzogs chen*’s seeing into the natural state of all phenomena from moment to moment.³⁶ As Bryan Cuevas has observed with regard to the oral teaching on the *bar do*, “This elaborate presentation seems to be rather unprecedented in the Tibetan *bar do* traditions of this period. It appears then that by the first half of the twelfth century there had already been such a remarkable proliferation of ideas inspired by the generic notion of a period of transition between two states of consciousness that for Mi la ras pa’s generation seemingly every significant experience or phase of existence (*bhava*; *srid pa*) could be divided into a graded series of intermediate states.”³⁷

Like the Long-Life goddesses driven by fear of the *bar do* to seek out a guru who can teach the Vajrayāna method for attaining liberation in one lifetime, so too did the young Mi la ras pa first seek out the *rDzogs chen* master lHa dga’ and then Mar pa, the Tibetan lay disciple of Paṇ chen Nāropa and Maitrīpa. With the passing of time and the maturation of his own practice, Mi la ras pa attained the direct vision of the nature of reality (*Dharmatā*), also called in his lineage *mahāmudrā*. This direct experience discloses each moment as a *bar do*, a risk and an opportunity to touch the enlightened state that is always present. Beyond clinging and remembering, beyond hopes and fears, the contemplative engages dynamically with reality-as-such in a perfectly existential way of being in the world. Blending the mind with the plethora of phenomena, the yogin is to blend into the realm of contemplative awareness. Mi la ras pa’s teachings on the intermediate state are given in fulfillment of his bodhisattva vow of compassion for those who wander in distress, uncertain of their own, and humanity’s, future. Mi la ras pa guides the Long-Life goddesses’ enlightened awareness both as a way-of-being, and as a way of being-for-others, thus manifesting his own perfect attainment of *samyaksambodhi*.

Translation: *Profound instructions on the intermediate state (bar do) from the Cakrasaṃvara Instruction Lineage that explain how to use the mind to discriminate the Path.*³⁸

(F. 344):³⁹

Honor to the Guru, Deva, and *Ḍākinī*.

36 This is Mi la ras pa’s understanding of *Dharmatā*. Mar pa, too, is described in an early biography attributed to sGam po pa as always abiding in *chos nyid*, the state of absolute reality. See *LL*: 249.

37 *HH*: 53.

38 Tibetan title: *Lam blo nas gcod pa bar do ngo sprod kyi gdams ngag zab mo*. Bryan Cuevas translates this title: “Oral Precepts on Cutting off the Bardo with the Mind” (*HH*: 51.)

39 The pagination is taken from the ’Jam mgon Kong sprul’s *gDams ngag mdzod*: 344-61. See also Rin chen rgyal mtshan 1974: 47-76.

Instructions on the intermediate state: an introduction to discerning the path using the mind. There are three instructions:

1. On the “intermediate state” of the basis as related to embodied beings.
2. On the “intermediate state” of definitive knowledge in relation to signs.
3. On the “intermediate state” of the fruition related to the “pointing out”.

This is the first of the three:

When the flesh and blood of an embodied being ripen fully, there is the appearance of the intermediate state between birth-and-death. This period of time from birth up until death may even be as long as a world-aeon; it can also be so short that there is no time between birth and death. This is the “intermediate state of birth and death”. In that time period, the paths of generation and of completion⁴⁰ are practiced together.

This is the second point:

The intermediate state of dreams arises from afflictive propensities. This refers to those embodied beings whose dreams arise from disturbing propensities that are active during sleep. They may last as long as an aeon or as short as the time it takes to awaken. This is called the intermediate state of dreams. One is to practice [the yogas of] lucid dreaming and clear light at that time.⁴¹

This is the third point:

In the mental body of embodied beings, there is the intermediate state of existence in the appearance of darkness [which occurs after death]. This may last as long as an aeon, or even a moment, depending on the time between death and rebirth. This is

40 That is, the stages of *utpattikrama* and *sampannakrama* in tantric practice. The former involves generating the image of the deity within the body of the yogin and reciting the relevant mantra. The latter requires the steady “presence” of the deity body that engages in the yogic practices of energy fluxes, subtle body channels, and the movement of nuclei of consciousness, typical of the Six Yogas of Nāropa. This is called the “stage of completion with form”. Moving beyond these practices, the yogin engages in the formless meditation called *mahāmudrā*, usually translated as the “Great-Seal”. However, given the fact that the *mudrā* also refers to the female tantric consort, one might consider *mahāmudrā* as referring to the practice of taking all phenomena as manifestations of the union of Cakrasaṃvara and Vajrayoginī, the deities in union in the Cakrasaṃvara maṇḍala. In this sense, *mahāmudrā* could be translated as “the Great Consort” or even “the Great Union”.

41 This is the first reference in our text to two of the practices of the Six Yogas of Nāropa. One of the purposes of this teaching is to clarify the relationship between the various referents of the *bar do* or “intermediate state” and the practices of these Six Yogas, which are the practice of completion “with form”.

called the intermediate state of existence [after bodily death]. At that time, one is to try to mingle⁴² the yogas of illusory body and clear light.

Now we expound the second category, the intermediate state of definitive knowledge in relation to signs, in three parts (ff. 345-346).

The First Part:

Having purified one's mental continuum by observing the *samayas*,⁴³ someone with limited capacity is to meditate on the instructions of the intermediate state, and, either during the [post-mortem] intermediate state or in this life during a dream, is able to attain the signs of Buddhahood. In this life, as an indication or sign that he will attain Buddhahood in the intermediate state, such a practitioner is able to visit Buddha fields⁴⁴ during dreams. Moreover for such a yogin the external world will arise as dream-like illusions.

The Second Part:

For someone of moderate capacity who is practicing meditation on the continuity of one's own mind stream, the signs that such a yogin will attain Buddhahood at the point of death are that the stages of creation and completion proceed even during the practitioner's dreams. Sleep is itself replaced by the clear light. The yogin receives interior signs such as having control over the channels, energy currents, and droplets [of consciousness in the subtle body].

The Third Part:

Someone of the highest capacity is liberated in this lifetime merely by grasping the meaning [of what has been taught]. The signs of such attainment of Buddhahood are: the realization that cyclic existence and liberation are one and inseparable; perfect comprehension of the doctrine of the two truths; secret signs and even the mental impurities arise as intuitive wisdom; the clear light spreads out coincident with the self-arising Dharmakāya and all ignorance, obscurations, and veils are exhausted. Such a being arises as a teacher of Dharma, as a bodhisattva in a pure land manifesting

42 The practice of blending or mingling one's thought stream with phenomena that are manifesting moment after moment is Mi la ras pa's orientation towards the attainment of continuous *mahāmudrā*.

43 *Samaya* refers to the regulations and precepts of tantric practice. The supreme *samaya* is to remain at all times in a state of fluid awareness, blending one's perception with that which is perceived, without conceptualizing or attachment.

44 In this way, a yogin can ascend to various paradise-like Buddha fields in order to practice with Buddhas and Bodhisattvas who reside there. This is the premise of gTsang smyon Heruka's description of Ras chung pa's "prologue in heaven" at the start of his late 15th century *Life and Songs of Mi la ras pa*. See Lhalungpa 1984: 9-11.

the thirty-two marks and eighty signs of the Saṃbhogakāya, arising from the yogin's meditation on compassion. Such a one's pure prayer would allow the yogin to see the arising of the Nirmāṇakāya even in the impure appearance of beings of the Six Realms.⁴⁵

The Third Topic:

An explanation of the intermediate state of fruition, in three parts:

The intermediate state is explained with reference to persons of the three capacities, in three families, and in the three times, all of which are mingled on the path (ff. 346-347).

The highest capacity refers to [attainment in] the intermediate state of birth and death. The moderate capacity refers to [attainment in] the intermediate state of sending off and welcoming.

The least capacity refers to [attainment in] the intermediate state of entering the womb.

The first, in three parts:

- The intermediate state of early and late, having knowledge of birth and death;
- The intermediate state of early and late, remembering dreams;
- The intermediate state of the time of dying and becoming.

The first in two parts:

- The intermediate state demonstrated by making an explanation through examples;
- The intermediate state explaining the actual meaning.

First, the intermediate state identified by means of metaphors:

Teacher shows the student "space" as a metaphor to exemplify the meaning of *Dharmatā*.⁴⁶ There are five meanings to "space":

1. The space of appearance, [as in the sky when] the clouds are melting away and the blue color is appearing; then again, the sky becomes cloudy, and adopts various appearances. This is not the space of reality (*Dharmatā*).
2. Shapes that have space such as rocks, caves, windows, and the like.

⁴⁵ This portion responds to one of the questions posed by the Long Life deities in Chapter 30 of the *Songs of Mi la ras pa*.

⁴⁶ *Dharmatā* means the true nature of things, recognition of which results in an experiential cognition of the unconditioned nature of ultimate reality, hence comparable to "space."

3. “Named space” as when there is a designation of male or female characteristics (as in the “space of the sexual organs”);
4. And the “space within a pierced bead” or the “space within a cross of multicolored thread”: These four are not the space of reality (*Dharmatā*);
5. But the fifth one *is* the space of reality,⁴⁷ but how could we exemplify it? If I could show the sun in mid-winter early in the morning of a full-moon day, in the span of time from its rising over the mountain tops up to noon (feeling its warmth), the appearance of the mid-heaven is bright and clean. This is an example that would be valid. In this example one sees the naturally existent presence of reality (*Dharmatā*), dependent on causes and conditions of the three times. In that way, for all the Six Families, stable self-arisen *Dharmatā* is seen. For the best yogins, on average it lasts for the duration of three meditation sessions,⁴⁸ for the yogin of moderate capacity, the duration of two sessions; for the least capable, one session. If one had not received this pointing out instruction, one would not be able to understand that *Dharmatā* is in all sentient beings experientially.

Another example is taken from the phenomenon of summer rain that washes the dust out of the air; when the sky clears of clouds, and before the winter storms come on, there is a naturally pure condition of the sky that occurs. At that time there is no [particular] appearance or non-appearance. Color, form, and measure are not co-emergent with any basis for perception. This would exemplify the intermediate state of *Dharmatā*.⁴⁹ All of this expounds the intermediate state that exemplifies the actual meaning. Thus, one is to practice the “reality” which is the meaning of things, exemplified by “space”. All of this expounds the intermediate state that explains the actual meaning [without examples].⁵⁰

The second instance:

In all the sūtras and tantras, it is said that all sentient beings have the essence of Buddhahood,⁵¹ but (ff. 347-348), but because it is naturally hidden [i.e. because it cannot be conceptualized], it does not appear as a [graspable] entity, even for those

47 That is, the *Dharmadhātu* (Tibetan: *chos 'byings*), the “open container of all that is.”

48 Approximately 3 x 24 minutes.

49 This refers to the inherent openness or “voidness” of all perceived phenomena, which is recognized in the “gap” between thoughts during meditation.

50 Mi la ras pa teaches that each moment of consciousness is a kind of micro intermediate state, with all that that implies. The intermediate state is naturally pure, spontaneous, free of characteristics, open (“empty”), and dynamic. It is also interesting that the freedom of such moments does not entail the union of perception with a mental object. Instead, consciousness is free of perception as well as conceptualization. This is what meditation instructors in this tradition call “a gap”.

51 Tathāgatagarbha, taken as a synonym for *Dharmatā* in this system of practice.

siddha whose minds are as capacious as space, so it is said. It is also said that all phenomena are like the sphere of space. Yet, buddhahood does not arise automatically. In fact, one can reflect on buddhahood in the intermediate state of *Dharmatā*, but cannot write it down. Though it is wide as the sky, once directly recognized, it can even be pointed out with a finger. The intermediate state of *Dharmatā* arises between the end point of one mental event and the start of another mental event.⁵² The previous event does not cease, for that which has been surpassed is not eradicated. The subsequent mental event does not arise, nor is it grasped. The ‘betwixt’ of both of them, previous and subsequent mental events, is [an instant] free from conceptualization. That is why it is called “an intermediate state”. It is free of beautiful words, free of examples.

Here the non-arising Dharmakāya is truly encountered. Place that within your awareness. But whether you place it or not, apart from any mental functioning, there will be a small amount of unwavering bliss-action. In the midst of that which is distinct from previous and subsequent mental events, in that essential moment of knowing, there is a mental event which, in a short session of meditation, should not be accepted time after time: it is like a demon or a child that steals [your meditative concentration].

Those distracting mental constructs do not touch upon the intermediate state, either before or after, nor do they depend on, nor are they separate from, the intermediate state, nor do they oscillate back and forth in the intermediate state.⁵³ This is why it is called the intermediate state, because mental constructs are separate from the mind itself.⁵⁴

[Third Point?]

Then there is the intermediate state of cognition. With eyes unwavering, the mind not grasping, resting such that it is distinct from cognitive acts (*shes pa bya*). Whether resting or not, its own character as mental activity apart from the intermediate state of *Dharmatā* cannot be exhausted. Its material character does not exist, nor does it possess color or shape, and the same is true of its immaterial character. Everything can appear within it, but it is not an assertion of eternally existing things. The nature of a thing is void; it is void of its own nature, but it is not non-existent because it is self-illuminated.⁵⁵ It has no self, it is not discovered to have a self upon examination. It

52 As taught in the *Abhidharmakośa* of Vasubandhu, with reference to the epistemology of momentariness.

53 This would be the case of having a thought that one has in some way “captured” such a state, and can return to it at will. This mistake would amount to fixating on a meditation experience as having been “perfect” and spending one’s time trying to recover, time after time, that same perfect moment.

54 This is Mi la ras pa’s way of distinguishing ordinary thought processes from direct awareness of the true nature of reality.

55 This is an example of a yogic teaching by Mi la ras pa that shows affinity to the views later developed by Dol po pa Shes rab rgyal mtshan, the “*gzhan stong*” view of Buddhahood.

is not without a self, because it is of a nature free of elaboration (ff. 348-349). It does not acquire extremes and it is free from grasping. It has no center.⁵⁶ Since it relies on something, it lacks something. There is nothing that can represent it, and no examples exemplify it, except such examples as the sky! It is free of aesthetic verbal formulations and metaphors, but it is not free from words, being the cause of all verbal formulations. The sky is void without awareness; mind is a void with awareness. Meditate on it as various signs void of substance, but manifesting various characteristics. Meditate on it continuously, making use of six methods:

1. As space, whose appearance is not dependent on a basis;
2. As a river flowing continuously;
3. As a sky flower, which has no real existence;
4. As the clarity of the heart of the sun;
5. As a lotus unstained by contaminations;
6. As a mist that is disappearing.

Thus conceptualization disappears as we contemplate *Dharmatā*. Coming forth as various reflections, one can acquire knowledge through skillful awareness. The essential expanse of the clear light, the mind in its own nature being clear light without the darkness of signs, unites non-dualistically with the awareness of voidness.⁵⁷ Like the sky, the intermediate state is distinct from the mind “before and after” [mental events]. Of all phenomena, it is the root of awareness. The Dharmakāya is the non-embodied state face-to-face with *suchness*. All needs and desires thus become the precious jewel of perfect renunciation. This is the awareness inseparable from intermediate state of knowledge, subtle experience arising in the realm of eagles! If subtle experience and lofty realization thus appear in the mind, one obtains freedom and independence inseparable from the essence of knowledge in the intermediate state of *Dharmatā*.

The Second Section (?)

In three subsections, before and after the intermediate state of remembering dreams:

1. Memory passing away like a butter lamp in the way it is put out;
2. The way it arises like becoming aware of future kindness;
3. The way the recollection of Śākyamuni⁵⁸ arises (f. 350).

56 Compare Mi la ras pa’s oral teaching on *mahāmudrā*, translated in *LL*: Chapter 24.4.

57 This section is a pithy summary of contemplative epistemology.

58 This is probably a reference to the tantric form of Buddha as Vajradhara, as in the *rdo rje 'chang rnam thar*, translated in *LL*: Chapter 23.

One considers [this recollection] both before and after, as distinct from mind [itself]. It is in essence non-dual intuitive gnosis. Thus the intermediate state of midday becomes one in existential flavor with what is grasped in the intermediate state of nocturnal dreams. In fact, in the contemplative absorption of the Clear Light, all ignorance is conquered and the thought processes of sleep cease. In this way, the unchanging Dharmakāya is gained. In this very body, one attains the supreme state. One has done the deed. One has laid down the burden⁵⁹ [of the constituent components of a self]⁶⁰ (f. 350.2). In this way, the contemplative absorption of Great Bliss spontaneously accomplishes this in the Clear Light, which is the real meaning [which is also the “real thing”]. By not encountering the time of death and by avoiding the intermediate state of becoming, [one realizes] the contemplative absorption of Great Bliss accomplished spontaneously, [which is] the Clear Light [i.e., one becomes enlightened without dying].

The Third Part

In three subsections: the intermediate state of the moment of death and existence:

1. For the best of persons, the intermediate state of Clear Light;
2. For those of middling ability, the intermediate state of Meeting at the Time of Birth;
3. For those of ordinary ability, the intermediate state of Entering the Womb.

The First, in two sections:

1. The way to stop the appearance of the path [to rebirth];
2. The way the state of the Clear Light arises.

The first explanation, in two parts:

1. The coarse dissolution, and;
2. The subtle dissolution.

The First:⁶¹

Dissolving into both earth and water elements; the body weakens as the earth element

59 An interesting allusion to the early Buddhist sūtra, “The Bearer of the Burden”, from the Puṅgalavāda tradition.

60 Sanskrit: *upagatabhara*.

61 What follows is a description of the processes of bodily death, dependent on tantric anthropology and Indian medical traditions, including material from the earliest Upaniṣads. According to *HH*: 53, this teaching by Mi la ras pa may be the oldest known presentation of a *bar do* system of this kind in Tibet.

dissolves into the water element. The person tries to support himself on the ground on all four limbs. Dirt forms on the teeth, fluid exudes from the mouth, nose, and other orifices. When the water element dissolves into fire, the mouth and nose are dry. The person forgets how to contract the limbs. Earlier in the process, heat arises and feverish sweat occurs. When the fire element dissolves into the wind element, the texture of the skin deteriorates and the nostrils split and crack. Bodily heat gathers in one part of the body. If one is to be born in the higher realms, you lose heat in the feet, and retain it in the head; if into the lower realms, you lose heat in the head, and retain it in the feet. The dying person is no longer able to recognize anyone. The wind element in the consciousness constituent dissolves and sends forth a ferociously strong sound. The final breaths are like gasps. A film spreads over the eyes, which roll upwards. There are gesticulations of the hands. At that time, the mind becomes clear from within while a sob occurs in the duct from the eye to the nose. The four dissolutions occur in this way simultaneously: place, form, sound, etc. condense and unite together.

The Second: The Subtle Dissolution.

The consciousness constituent⁶² dissolves into appearances (*snang ba*).

Its inner sign appears like smoke. Its outer sign is like the rising of the moon (end of folio 350). (F. 351.1) Then, the forty conceptualizations that arise from desire and attachment cease. Even when near to a lovely divine woman, desire and attachment do not arise. Then the mind is somewhat clear, somewhat unclear. When appearance dissolves into “increase”, then the inner sign⁶³ is like a firefly, and the outer sign is like the rising sun. The thirty-three conceptualizations arising from hatred cease. Even if one were to encounter one’s worst enemy, hatred would not arise. Consciousness becomes clearer than before. In the next attainment, which is called mind of black near attainment (*nyer thob*),⁶⁴ the inner sign is like the light of a butter lamp; the outer sign is darkness. The seven conceptualizations arising from ignorance cease, and ignorance do not occur.

At this time, consciousness becomes much clearer than before. If one has not had previous meditation experience of voidness, he will be panic struck at this time. When the attainment dissolves into Clear Light, the outer sign is like the light of dawn or daybreak. The inner sign is like a sky without clouds; moral afflictions and

62 That is, the *vijñāna skandha*.

63 These inner and outer signs of the unfolding of the process are already listed in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, as is noted in Arnold 2009: 449-55, where it is also linked to the intermediate state. In tantric Buddhism, especially in the Kālacakra system, they are a key feature in discerning the degree of attainment of a yogin. See Arnold 2009: 62-63, the “dark channel” which abides in the middle and is the same as the *avadhūtī*.

64 An expression typical of the *Kālacakratantra*.

all tendencies to sleep cease. At this time, there is clear knowledge of voidness without center or edge.

[The Second Section of the First Category]

2. The way the Clear Light arises. At that time, the Dharmakāya is made manifest. The main point being that, from the top of the head the male droplet in the form of the seed syllable Hum descends to the place four finger widths below the navel, and the mother droplet in the reddish channel, visualized with a face like a crow, ascends to that place; this is the seed of yogic heat⁶⁵ (*gtum mo*), ascending a channel like a fine slash mark on the short letter ‘a’. As distinct as fire is from the surrounding darkness, consciousness rises in the empty lotus of the central channel in the heart bringing with it the essence of bliss and voidness. One sees with obscurations the unborn primordial ‘meaning’ and in that way, the Dharmakāya by nature free from conceptualization is born in one’s mental continuum (*sems rgyud*).

In virtue of previous meditation experience, one recognizes the Dharmakāya as the Dharmakāya (f. 352). It is just like when a child sees his mother; he knows who she is, even if he is told by others that she is not his mother; he is not deceived. That is how it is with the knowledge of a yogin who is free from grasping at conceptualizations even for an instant, or whose consciousness is moved by the wind of primordial wisdom. For such a yogin, in that state (*rig pa*), free from obstruction, consciousness is moved by *jñāna* and emerges from the top of the head⁶⁶ and goes to the palace of the Dharmadhātu, or to the field of the pure Saṃbhogakāya. Therefore, such a state is called either the Clear Light at the time of death or the natural (self-dependent) Clear Light or the resultant Clear Light or the ultimate Dharmakāya.

Second subsection:

The intermediate state of “accompanying and welcoming” for those of moderate capacity: If [liberation] does not occur through familiarizing oneself with the clear light, one can use *guruyoga* at the time of death. There are six types of “meeting and welcoming”:

1. The blessing of the *bla ma* who “accompanies and welcomes”;
2. The bestowal of welcome from the *deity* who grants *siddhi*;
3. The welcome by the *ḍākinī* who remove impediments;⁶⁷
4. Welcome from Dharma brothers and sisters who secure all necessary requisites;

65 Mi la ras pa makes reference to his own attainment of enlightenment through the practice of heat yoga in several traditional songs and oral teachings.

66 A valuable early reference to the practice of *’pho ba*, forceful ejection from the top of the head, one of the Six Yogas.

67 Reference to the guru, deva and *dākinī*, the “three roots” of tantric practice.

5. Welcome by the Instruction Lineage that introduces us to the “state”;⁶⁸
6. Welcome by the wish-fulfilling jewel, which is in fact the Dharma Protector.⁶⁹

The first of these is the blessing of the *bla ma*. The *bla ma* accomplishes this by his steadiness of thought during the blessing, achieved by meditative exertion in *guruyoga*, and thus he can give such a blessing. The guru of meditative contemplation accompanies one. One meditates on each of these objects now and in the future will be liberated by them: this is the “welcome”. In the intermediate state of *Dharmatā*, one realizes one’s own mind as Dharmakāya and attains buddhahood (i.e. one is liberated in the state of Reality). Likewise for the deity, the *ḍākinī*, the Dharma protectors, the *vajra* friends, the lineage of transmission, the wish fulfilling jewel, all [practiced in the same way] together.

The Third Subsection:

The Intermediate State of Entering the Womb, for yogins of ordinary capacity, in three sections.

If unable to realize liberation through the practice of *guruyoga* and the other [five above], becoming frightened by the contemplative absorption of the clear light (ff. 352-353), driven and bound by the three winds of the roots of ignorance, the deceased wanders in the intermediate state. In such a case, this is the instruction on how to enter the womb [for rebirth]. At the moment of death, luminosity like the rising moon appears. The winds that hold the vital force are gathered towards this place. Like the rising sun, it is excellent, and the causative winds of the place are gathered in the same way as fire. Like the appearance of pre-dawn light, that which has been gained⁷⁰ is gathered together by a wind of dimmed brightness. [Even] the way in which the Clear Light accumulates becomes [an object of] ignorance. Thus, having mounted the wind of karma, being bound by the roots of ignorance of the three winds, when the consciousness constituent exits by any of the nine doors, it is diminished. Except by virtue of the force of previous meditation, even great masters are powerlessly borne away to wander in the intermediate state, and so forth. So one should meditate

68 This notion of a direct introduction to a state of consciousness as a key feature of tantric initiation is already found in the eighth century *Three Statements* of dGa’ rab rdo rje (*The face of awareness is introduced directly; One thing alone is chosen and practiced; Thoughts as they arise surely liberate themselves*). The introduction allows the disciple to have confidence about the state of higher awareness, beyond ordinary mind and discursive reasoning. However, one does not try to “return” to the experience of this state. One is training to experience this state under all present circumstances.

69 This is the [usually] wrathful deity who protects the teachings and those who practice them faithfully.

70 The accumulations of merit and wisdom, indispensable for the attainment of full enlightenment.

prior to death on rebirth for re-entering the womb.⁷¹ Consciousness, meditating on a new rebirth experiences the great power of heavenly states and the like.

The Second Part:

In three subsections, the intermediate state of three families of the three times:

1. The intermediate state of perfect qualities;
2. The teaching on Buddhahood in the first intermediate state;
3. The teaching on Buddhahood in the second intermediate state;
4. The teaching on Buddhahood in a subsequent rebirth: the intermediate state of finding family harmony from the womb.

The First:

Three and one half days after death, [the consciousness constituent], as if drunk on beer, becomes feverishly delirious; try then to remember the six objects [the three jewels; discipline, renunciation, and deities]. Knowing that one is dead, having seen one's dead relatives, and so on, one thinks, "I am wandering in the intermediate state; let my knowledge of these matters come to mind." If I do not rest my awareness on unhappy thoughts, I will not be harmed. I will not go anywhere without recognizing what it is. Dark appearances, like the light of pre-dawn, will occur. At that time, by the force of karma, I will go along amid the four continents and the six realms, and so forth, feeling very sleepy and tired. I notice much suffering, quarreling, starvation, etc. (ff. 353-354) and also karma, the deity Yama, the demon gShed po, and so on. Wherever one turns, one is harmed by these entities and suffers continuously. Afflicted by the karma of habitual emotions, seeking a refuge, previously one recalls the deity of one's meditations. Like a fish leaping up from the water,⁷² one is transformed into the Saṃbhogakāya form of the deity; this is called the attainment of the Saṃbhogakāya, in the intermediate state body. This is not a meaningless boast, because this body possesses the seven limbs of the Saṃbhogakāya.⁷³ This body of manifestation is also free from moral obscurations of the mind, and from grasping, having a bright complexion and a good age, having five types of clairvoyance. Thus one knows one's own and others' mental continua, entirely knowing all the latent tendencies. One moves without obstructions anywhere because of one's miraculous power, with the exception of three places: Vajrāsana, consecrated images, and a

71 These instructions handed down from Mi la ras pa come long before the emergence of the "treasure text" (*gter ma*) known as the *Bar do thos grol*. Cf. *HH*.

72 This characteristic expression is Mi la ras pa's way of teaching the disciple to generate the visualization of the deity "in a flash" (*LL*: 281).

73 The *Saptāṅga* is a text in the Tibetan Tanjur attributed to Vāgīśvarakīrti, discussed in *LL*: chapters 13 and 23.

mother's womb. By emanating one billion rays of light, one's body is made of light. By possessing the *dhāraṇī* of remembrance, one knows past and future lives. This body is ornamented with the major and minor marks and is a full arm span in width. By familiarizing oneself with this in the intermediate state, whether pure or impure...⁷⁴

...(f. 359.1) The *karmamudrā* mixes in non-dualistic way with inexhaustible great bliss; the *mahāmudrā* mixes in a non-dualistic way with “uniting and entering”; the desire to attain buddhahood mixes in this way with “uniting and entering.”⁷⁵ The *karmamudrā* mixing with inexhaustible [great bliss]: in three parts:⁷⁶

1. One should practice relying on the *mudrā* of wisdom light, relying on the instructions of the mobility of the winds: from the door of complete liberation to the door of the path of liberation;
2. One should practice, relying on a *karmamudrā* having the signs of attachment, from the door of the downward going door of great bliss;
3. One should practice, relying from the start on both *mudrās* and mixing;
 - a. The instructions on the *nāḍī* of the place (*avadhūtī*) from the door of union both over and under, in a non-dualistic way.
 - b. By exhausting whatever is written.

Now: Mixing ignorance and clear light in the intermediate state of dreaming, for those who are ignorant, in four sections:

1. The least able, mixing equal taste⁷⁷ with illusory body of the deity;
2. Mixing illusion and dream in equal taste;
3. Mixing sleep and contemplative absorption, its own nature with the

Clear Light;

4. Mixing the union of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa with the taste of desire, with realization attained as equal taste.

Now: Hateful ones⁷⁸ in the intermediate state of becoming should mix fear and the illusory body. In four sections:

1. Mixing [these four] as equal taste: attachment, fear, place of birth, and *bla ma*;
2. Mixing [these three] as equal taste: the thought of fear, attachment, and the inexhaustible spiritual experience of initiation;

⁷⁴ The text may have a lacuna here.

⁷⁵ I.e. seeing a couple in sexual union and entering the embryo produced by their union.

⁷⁶ This develops the content of the third song in Chapter 30 of the *mgur 'bum*.

⁷⁷ In Sanskrit, *samarasa*; in Tibetan, *ro gcig*. All phenomena have the same “taste”, the existential flavor of voidness, interdependence, impermanence, and absence of metaphysical substratum.

⁷⁸ Such as Mi la ras pa himself when he practiced destructive magic. Also his own aunt, uncle, and mother, whom he liberated in the after death state. And also, the Long-Life goddesses of the Rosary of Golden Pearls (*mgur 'bum* chapter 30).

3. Mixing [these two] as equal taste: illusory mind of hatred and attachment with a pleasing body;
4. Mixing as equal taste: the desire to obtain something with [engagement in] sin and virtue.

This instruction on the nature of the intermediate state: don't forget its words and figures of speech, with a little bit of an experience of Clear Light. Instruction on the nature of the intermediate state is complete. E MA HO!⁷⁹

The experts of the blessing of the lineage.

The worthy receptacles of the lineage of spiritual experience.

The excellent ones with realization and devotion.

This particular holy instruction is for my one son Ras chung rdo rje grags.⁸⁰

Having received a prophecy of a *ḍākinī*, because he is a worthy receptacle full of faith and devotion.

This is just like a precious jewel reliquary filled with gold.

It is entrusted into your hands: keep it fast in your mind with great intelligence.

Don't give it to ordinary people, Mi la requests:

Rare indeed is the royal realm!

Watch out for the "true and false" thoughts that arise in the mind.

If results seem delayed, you will see them in the future.

I the yogin will ransom you: keep this in mind!

Your *bodhicitta* is not small.

In my lifetime, do not give this teaching out: this is official decree of the guru transmission, bound to [provoke] the displeasure of the gatherings of the *ḍākinī*.

Unite warmth and mind:

In the future it will spread for the benefit of beings:

One lineage knows the main point.

[This is the word] of a kind teacher:

Because of your love for a noble lady,⁸¹ you are throwing away

Food and wealth and power for fame and benefit-

As if given to a boastful actor (?);

If other women desire it,

They are purified by a *ḍākinī*'s prophecy;

Even give it to a beggar if he is a worthy vessel.

Kye ho, Ras chung rdo rje grags!

79 The traditional tantric exclamation of blissful delight.

80 See Roberts 2007.

81 See Chang 1983: 604 (*mgur 'bum*, chapter 52).

A precious jewel exemplifies:
 You may not encounter a gatherer of sufficient merit,
 But in a place of practice where you [find] one who has merit,
 If there is such a person, [give him] this oral transmission of the lineage,
 Because [such a person has employed] the medicine of merit and discipline.
 But unfortunate ones have difficulty meeting with this teaching.
 In the place of practice, there are few who possess good karma-
 Faithless, coarse people
 Unfortunate, evil minded, making up heretical doctrines;
 When they ask you to bestow the Dharma wider than space
 Because of them, this [teaching] is very secret for all.
 One must have all four empowerments, permissions and oral instructions.⁸²
 If one does not have the complete directions,
 Obtain the book and the reading permission.
 If there is a teacher of evil views, keep it out of his sight.
 If seen, this Dharma delights a playful person.
 Not making inquiries, have the explanation in mind.
 If possible, only give it to disciples with pure *samaya*;
 Otherwise, Mahākāla⁸³ will cut them off;
 The *ḍākinī* will impose punishment.
 On the other hand, this Dharma is set forth for one of these
 Excellent ones, devoted disciples with good karma.
 Please assist those with bodily defilements
 This [deed], and others, is a root of virtue: this assists the spread of the
 Buddha's teaching;
 Those who adhere to black deeds will be defeated.
 Thus say the guru *ḍākinī*.
 In the *dgon pa* of Snye nam grod Cave⁸⁴
 Vajra Banner wrote this with devotion,
 When one becomes one with bliss.

The instruction of Mi la to Ras chung is completed.

82 See a discussion of the Cakrasaṃvara initiation in *LL*: Chapter 17.

83 An important protector deity for the bKa' brgyud traditions.

84 In southern Tibet, a key location for a number of episodes in the life of Mi la ras pa.

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THE GREAT MAṆI WALL INSCRIPTION AT HEMIS REVISITED

HELGA UEBACH AND JAMPA L. PANGLUNG
(Munich)

The inscription in the front of the maṇi wall at the entrance of Hemis monastery, Ladakh, was first published by Emil von Schlagintweit in 1864.¹ His publication was based on a copy which his brother Hermann von Schlagintweit-Sakülünski obtained on the occasion of his visit to Ladakh. This copy is not found among the works and unpublished papers of the brothers v. Schlagintweit kept in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek² nor among the texts bought by the Bodleian Library, Oxford from Schlagintweit.

Schlagintweit commissioned the firm of the renowned Munich lithographer Sebastian Minsinger to publish the text of the inscription in its original *dbu can* script.³ The text was arranged into 33 lines, probably in order to fit the format of the publication (see specimen in Plate 1).

Luciano Petech (1977: 120, no. 1), having used an eye-copy made by Giuseppe Tucci⁴ and having checked the inscription on the spot, “found that Schlagintweit’s text is on the whole correct; but the translation is not quite reliable and some personal names are not recognized as such.” Therefore he identified the names provided in the inscription and explained the historical context.⁵

However, a precise documentation of the inscription has yet to be made.⁶ Therefore we are presenting here the text of the inscription based on our photographs⁷ taken in 1981, together with our revised translation.

A comparison of the text published by Schlagintweit and our photographs shows a textual omission in lines 1-2. On the other hand, it can be observed that in general

1 Schlagintweit 1864: 305-18.

2 See Grönbold 1985. Schlagintweit (1864: 305) described the paper used for the copy as being very greasy so that the ink did not stick to it evenly.

3 At that time hot-metal setting for Tibetan was not available in the kingdom of Bavaria.

4 Tucci’s eye-copy in *dbu can* made in 1930 and Petech’s English translation of the inscription are kept in the Petech archive, but it was not available to us when we were finalizing this article.

5 See Petech 1977: 120.

6 According to the communication of Ven. Ane Nawang Jinpa, Paris, who had been asked by the authorities of the Hemis monastery to record the inscription, it is nowadays hardly legible.

7 The best way to document an inscription is to do a rubbing. However, this requires experience which we do not have. Further, it is time-consuming, and it would perhaps not have worked in this case because the inscription is covered with a thick layer of blue colouring.

the copyist obviously had tried to follow the inscription, e.g. in cases where a dot separating the syllables (*tsheg*) is hardly visible or not visible at all. Further, the copyist followed the inscription in places where the narrowness of the line spacing makes it impossible to put a vowel sign correctly, because a ligature in the line above leaves no space.⁸ It is evident that such textual inaccuracies led to misinterpretations in Schlagintweit's translation.

The inscription is set into the face (*gdong*) of the maṇi wall at the entrance of the monastery (see Plate 2). It shows 14 lines.⁹ The long small stone is not well preserved. It is cracked from top to bottom in its first third. Another crack runs down from the last quarter of line one to the end of line five. Further, at the beginning of line eight the stone shows a natural unevenness running down diagonally from the left. The stonemason therefore placed a series of dots to mark such places where the stone could not be carved (see Plates 3 and 4).

The inscription is covered with bright blue paint throughout. There are some lighter parts where probably rainwater penetrated and washed away some of the paint. Above and on its sides, the inscribed stone is decorated with paintings of clouds in shades of ochre, white and blue. In the middle, there is a figure of a sitting monk.

The inscription was set up to commemorate the building of the Vihāra of Hemis, a monastery of the 'Brug pa bka' rgyud, in 1782-1786. The author of the inscription is Mi pham tshé dbang 'phrin las bstan 'dzin mi 'gyur rdo rje¹⁰ *alias* rGyal sras Rinpoche, who was initiated and given his name by the renowned Bla ma of Khams, Kaḥ thog Rig 'dzin Tshé dbang nor bu (1698-1755). Tshé dbang nor bu had been sent - much against his wishes - to Ladakh in order to mediate in a complicated political conflict between Ladakh and Purig.¹¹ He turned out to be a gifted mediator, highly respected by the parties involved. During his stay in Ladakh he not only gave a great number of instructions to the people and to monastic communities but he also composed the *bca' yig*, which lays down the monastic rules and regulations for Hemis monastery.¹²

Text of the Inscription¹³

(see Pictures 3 and 4)

- 1 (om)¹⁴ svasti / na mo gu ru bhya / mtshan dpes gsal rdzogs yang dag rdzogs
sangs rgyas / bden pa ma lus ston pa¹⁵ dam pa'i chos / grol ba don gnyer 'phags

8 These cases are noted in the transliteration of the text.

9 We did not take measurements of the inscription.

10 Line 8 of the inscription.

11 For the details see Schwieger 1999.

12 Compare n. 64.

13 Signs used are: () letter contraction resolved; < > missing letters supplemented; { } emendation; (r.:) orthography corrected. S = reading in Schlagintweit's edition.

14 Letter highlighted in white colour.

15 S: *la*

- tshogs 'dus pa'i sde / mchog (gsum) bla ma'i zhabs la gus pas 'dud /¹⁶ rab tu bsten cing mchod pa'i mod nyid la / 'dod
- 2 rgu'i dpal 'byor mchog mthun dngos grub kun / rtsol mdzad yi dam mkha' 'gro dam can gyi / chos srungs nor lha¹⁷ rtag par skyong gyur cig / de yang / gsang (gsum) rgyal¹⁸ ba kun gyis 'byung ba'i gnas / rgyal ba (thams cad) kyi mngon par dbang bskur zhing / srid {b}zhi kun gyis mchod cing mngon par mchod 'os chen po'i
- 3 bdag nyid dpal (mnyam) med 'brug pa zhes yongs su grags pa sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa'i snying po yang dag pas nam mkha'i gos can yangs por khyab cing lhag par 'dzam bu gling gi sa¹⁹ gnas dang gnas khyad par yongs la dar zhing rgyas la / de snyed kyid gul bya (rnams) kyang {smin} smin cing grol ba'i²⁰ (lam) la bkod pa'i mdzad pa²¹ 'phrin las (bsam)²²
- 4 mi khyab pas²³ sa (gsum) du bstan pa 'dzin pa kun las lhag par (bka' drin)²⁴ che ba'i²⁵ skyes²⁶ chen (dam) pa (rnams)²⁷ kyang ched du bsngags brjod bla na med par mdzad / zhing 'dir yang {b}rje 'gro ba'i mgon po'i thugs sras (rdo rje) 'chang rgyal ba rгод tshang pa yab sras gyis²⁸ byin gyis rlabs shing bsgrub pa'i (ting nge) 'dzin la bzhugs dus ma dang mkha' 'gro sprin
- 5 tshogs ltar 'du zhing mchod cing bstod par²⁹ dpal cā³⁰ ri tra (ye shes) kyid ('khor³¹ lo) sogs gnas nyer bzhi dang mtshungs / rim pas³² mtshan ldan gyi bla ma skyes chen 'ga' yang byon / khyad par mchog gi sa³³ brnyes³⁴ pa'i grub dbang stag tshang ras pa chen po'i zhabs la / chos kyid rgyal³⁵ po seng ge nam par rgyal ba yab sras rje blon 'bangs dang bcas pas mi³⁶

16 S: The following text up to *de yang* in line 2 is missing.

17 r.: *lhas*

18 *rgya* written in *dbu med* style.

19 S: *gis*.

20 S: /

21 S: *pa'i*.

22 S: / *gyi*

23 S: *pa'i*.

24 S: *bkrin*.

25 S: *bar /*

26 S: *skye*.

27 Supplying *kyis*.

28 S: *kyas*.

29 S: *pa na*.

30 S: *tsva*.

31 S: *khor*.

32 S: *pa'i*.

33 S: *gis*.

34 S: *bsnyes*.

35 S: *rgya* written in *dbu med* style.

36 No script because of the crack in the stone.

- 6 phyed pa'i dad pas spyi bos mchod cing³⁷ bsten pas lugs gnyis kyi dpal 'byor phun (sum) tshogs par brten / gdan sa chen po ma bu (rnams) dang/ rgyal po'i pho brang (rnams) su yang sangs rgyas kyi sku gsung thugs kyi rten (<g>sum) (rin po che) gtsug lag khang sogs phyi nang du rgya³⁸ chen bskrun pas bstan pa nyi ma shar ba ltar byung / ³⁹skyabs rje yab (rin po che) mi
- 7 (pham) ('jam) dpal mthu stobs (rdo rje'i) sku ring la / rigs kyi bdag po dpal (mnyam) med rje 'brug pa (thams cad) mkhyen pa chen po rang phebs nas smin grol (dam) pa'i chos kyi (rjes su) gzung (r.: bzung) zhing byin gyis brlabs / rjes (mnyam) med bstan 'gro'i mgon po skyabs kun 'dus zhal dpal rig⁴⁰ pa 'dzin dbang chen pos rus / ris su ma chad pa'i
- 8 bstan 'gro spyi dang bye brag ljongs 'dir (sangs rgyas) kyi bstan pa dang 'gro ba'i bde skyid la dgongs pa'i bka' dang (thugs) rjes kho bo la'ang skal ldan gyi skyes bur (rjes su) bzungs nas mtshan mi (pham) tshe dbang 'phrin las bstan 'dzin mi 'gyur rdo rje zhes dbang bskur (gdams) pas byin gyis brlabs nas (sangs rgyas) kyi bstan pa dge 'dun la rag
- 9 las pa'i bkas / dgon phan tshun 'dus sde (rnams) la slabs (r.: bslabs) (gsum) kyi sdom khriims⁴¹ la gnas nas dge ba bcu'i spang blang 'dzol med du spyod rgya'i⁴² phyag rgya dang bcas (bka' drin) du rtsal zhing / der bsten (r.: rten) rang ngos nas kyang rje btsun dpal ldan rtsa ba'i bla ma yab sras kyi (bka' drin) yid la bcangs nas dgongs par rdzogs
- 10 phyr sngar ..⁴³ lo chu pho (stag gi) dbo zla nas 'go tshugs chu pho rta'i lor gtsug lag khang legs par grub rab gnas (bkra shis) mnga' gsol dga' ston rgya che ba grub pa'i thogs⁴⁴ lcags⁴⁵ pho khyi'i lor seng ge sgo mo 'i phyr rim pas man⁴⁶ thang so so'i ngos su ma ñi⁴⁷ ('bum) (gsum) yod pa spen spad dang bcas pa phyi nang kun tu bkod pa
- 11 po⁴⁸ phyag mdzod ...⁴⁹ bkra shis kyis bla ma mchog (gsum) la gus shing lhag pa'i (bsam) sbyor zla ba ltar dkar bas zhabs rtog phul du byung ba zhus shing / las su sbrel po lta bur shes rab tshe dbang (sogs) dang / las mi shing mkhan rtsig bzo ba (rnams) dang / mtha' na 'u (lag gi) las mi (thams cad) kyi kyang

37 Vowel *i* shifted to *nga* because of a ligature in the above line.

38 S: *rgya* written in *dbu med* style.

39 Sign of respect inserted before the name like in *dbu med* text.

40 Vowel *i* shifted to *ga* because of ligature in the line above.

41 Vowel *i* shifted to *ma*.

42 r.: *rgyu'i*.

43 Gap because of a deformity in the stone.

44 Letter *s* subscribed.

45 Letter *s* subscribed

46 Letter *na* inverted.

47 Letter *na* inverted.

48 Letter *po* highlighted in white colour.

49 Gap because of a deformity in the stone.

- 12 dad pa dang⁵⁰ ba⁵¹ chen po'i (bsam) ...⁵² sbyor (rnam) (dag gi) dang⁵³ nas
bsgrubs pa yin pas / dge ba⁵⁴ rgya chen zag med nus pa'i mthus / skyabs kun
'dus pa'i bla ma'i zhabs brtan cing / smin grol chos char 'dzam gling khyab pa
dang / bstan pa'i sbyin bdag chos rgyal⁵⁵ rje 'bangs bcas /
- 13 bde skyid yar ngo'i dpal la spyod pa dang // dbus mtha'i dmag dpung bsam
sbyor ngan pa'i tshogs / ma lus kun zhi phan tshun dga' bde'i⁵⁶ dang / thugs
mthun chos bzhin {b}sgrub la brtson gyur nas / rgyu sbyor las⁵⁷ kyi 'brel thogs
(thams cad) kyang / (rnam) kun chos spyod
- 14 bcu la 'bad pa'i mthus / phyogs bcur (bkra shis) char⁵⁸ chu dus su 'bab / lo
phyugs rtag legs rdzogs ldan bzhin spyod nas⁵⁹ / sangs rgyas go 'phang⁶⁰ myur
thob rgyur⁶¹ gyur cig // sarba mangga (lam) / dza ya dza ya su dza ya / dza
yantu //

Translation of the Text

We respectfully pay homage at the feet of the fully enlightened Buddha who is endowed clearly and completely with the major and minor marks, to the Dharma which teaches the absolute truth, to the noble assembly of the Saṃgha, to the three jewels, and to the *bla ma*. (l.1)

May the *yi dam*, the *dāka*, the *dharmapāla* and
The gods of wealth solely by our worshipping and offering
Grant us all riches desired [and] ordinary and extraordinary *siddhi*
And may they protect us permanently. (l. 1-2)

Furthermore, the renowned incomparable Śrī 'Brug pa [tradition], the origin of the three secrets of all Buddhas empowered by all the Buddhas, revered by all beings, is truly worthy of worship.

This pure essence of the teaching of the Buddha is spread in the wide earth overcast by the sky. It is especially flourishing in the region of Jambudvīpa and in all its holy places. (l. 2-3)

50 S: *dad*.

51 S: *pa*.

52 Gap because of a deformity in the stone.

53 S: *ngang*.

54 S: *di ge ba*

55 *rGya* written in *dbu med* style.

56 S: *bde*.

57 S: *yon*.

58 Gap because of deformity in the stone.

59 In *nas*, -s is not visible because a stone is placed in front of it.

60 S: *'phangs*.

61 S: *rgyud*.

[This tradition] led innumerable disciples to the path of maturity and to liberation. By the inconceivable activity [the 'Brug pa tradition] was especially highly glorified by the excellent great generous personalities among all the holders of the doctrine in the three worlds. (l. 3-4)

Also, this region was blessed by the spiritual son of rJe 'Gro ba'i mgon po,⁶² the *vajradhāra* rGyal ba rGod tshang pa [1189-1258] and his disciples. At the time when he was practising meditation and remained in *samādhi*, the *ma mo* and *ḍākinī* gathered like an accumulation of clouds, made offerings and praised him so that [this place] equals the twenty-four holy places like Cāritrajñāna. (l. 4-5)

Gradually some authentic great *bla ma*, too, came [to this place], especially also the *siddha* who had obtained the highest grade (*bhūmi*), the great sTag tshang ras pa [1574-1651]. The *dharmarāja* Seng ge nam par rgyal ba, father and sons, king and councillors, together with the subjects, venerated him in undivided faith with the top of their heads and accepted him as their teacher. (l. 5-6)

Therefore the wealth of the two traditions (religious and political) became excellent. This is why in the great monasteries and its branches and in the royal palaces precious objects of the Buddha's body, speech and mind were extensively erected inside and outside of *vihāras*. Thus the doctrine of the Buddha was like the shine of the sun. (6)

At the time of the lord protector, the *rin po che*, the father, Mi pham 'jam dpal mthu stobs rdo rje the "lord of the family", the incomparable, omniscient great rJe 'Brug pa⁶³ arrived personally and taught him the Dharma which leads to maturation and liberation and blessed him. (l. 6-7)

Thereafter the incomparable lord of the doctrine and living beings, the embodiment of all objects of refuge, the great Rig 'dzin [Tshe] dbang [nor bu] acted in an unbiased manner towards the doctrine and the beings in general and particularly, in this country, he acted kindly in favour of the doctrine of the Buddha and the welfare and happiness of the people. He, too, accepted me as pupil (lit. 'fortunate person') and gave me the name Mi pham Tshe dbang 'phrin las bstan 'dzin mi 'gyur rdo rje, and blessed me with initiation and instruction. (7-8)

"The Buddhist doctrine depends on the Saṃgha", so it is said, and Rig 'dzin [Tshe] dbang kindly granted his seal⁶⁴ "to practise correctly the vows and monastic rules of the three trainings and the ten virtues of adopting and abandoning" to the community of the different monasteries. (l. 8-9)

Therefore, I too, having kept in my heart the kindness of the venerable glorious principal *bla ma*, the father and his spiritual son, and in order to fulfil his wishes,

62 This is 'Gro mgon gTsang pa rgya ras ye shes rdo rje (1161-1211).

63 This is the 7th 'Brug chen dKar brgyud 'Phrin las shing rta (1718-1766), see Petech 1977: 101.

64 This statement refers to the *bca' yig* of Hemis monastery composed by Kaḥ thog Tshe dbang nor bu published in his collected works, vol. 5: 661-81.

started building the *vihāra*⁶⁵ in the previous year, in the second month of the water-tiger year (1782). In the water-horse year⁶⁶ the *vihāra* was well accomplished, and also the consecration ceremony and a great festival was held. (l. 9-10)

In the iron-dog year (1790) there were 300,000 *maṇi* [written on stones] and placed successively on each *maṇi*-wall together with a parapet⁶⁷ outside the lion gate.⁶⁸

The person responsible for all the interior and exterior construction work is the treasurer bKra shis who venerates the blama and the *triratna* and whose noble intention is clear like the moon. He served excellently. (l. 10-11)

As his assistant [acted], Shes rab tshes dbang etc. and the workmen,⁶⁹ carpenters, bricklayers and finally all the compulsory workers acted in the state of pure intention and motivation, in pure faith and interest. (l. 11-12)

May the Dharma-king and his subjects, the donors to the doctrine
May they enjoy the happiness of the waxing moon
The bad intentions of the armies of the centre and the frontier regions
May they all be entirely appeased and in the state of joy and happiness
May they be in harmony and strive according to the Dharma
All those who contributed materially and manually, too (l.12-13)
By virtue of their permanently applying themselves to the ten dharma activities
May there be happiness in the ten directions and be timely rainfall
May the harvest always be abundant and may one live like in the golden age
May it be the cause of attaining Buddhahood quickly!

May there be bliss, victory, victory, great victory! (l. 14)

65 See also Gergan 1976: 366, l. 7.

66 Petech (1977: 120) already stated that the element 'water' is erroneous: "We would expect Fire-horse 1786."

67 *spen spad* = "parapet", made of tamarisk stems. In Picture 2 a layer of the thin round ends of the tamarisk stems is visible on the roof.

68 The lion gate refers to the entrance to the royal palace at Leh.

69 Here probably the stonemasons who produced the *maṇi*-stones are meant.

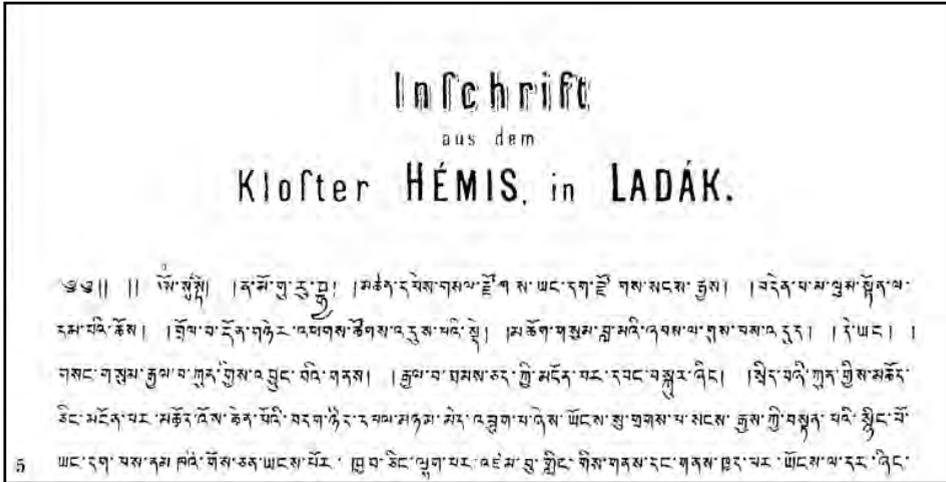


Plate 1: Specimen of the first publication of the inscription by E. von Schlagintweit in 1864.



Plate 2: General view of the inscription in the Mani wall.



Plate 3: Part A of the text of the inscription.



Plate 4: Part B of the text of the inscription.

(Note: The beginning of the text in B overlaps in part with the end of the text in A.)

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A GNAS YIG TO THE HOLY PLACE OF PRETAPURĪ

FEDERICA VENTURI

(Indiana University)

About fifteen years ago, in the collections of the photographic archives of the IsIAO Photographic archives, deposited at the Museo Nazionale di Arte Orientale (hereafter MNAO) a black and white film was retrieved which contained twenty-nine frames reproducing a Tibetan manuscript.¹ Successively, printed photographs of the same manuscript were found among the personal papers of Professor Luciano Petech after his death. The manuscript had been photographed during the Tucci expedition to Western Tibet in 1933, and contains a description and hagiographical history (*gnas yig*) of Pretapurī, a holy place on the pilgrimage route to Lake Manasarowar and mount Kailāsa. This article, including a translation of this unexpectedly recovered text, is written as a testimony to the legacy of the Rome school of Tibetan studies, initiated by Giuseppe Tucci, continued by Luciano Petech, and sustained by the latter's disciple, Elena De Rossi Filibeck, whose efforts as a teacher, researcher and mentor produced a fourth generation of scholars, many of whom, although now often scattered around the world, contributed to these pages.

Pretapurī, located in mNga' ris, along the banks of the upper Sutlej river at 31° 7' 34" N - 80° 45' 23" E, is about 70 km south-west of mount Kailāsa and is part of the circuit of holy places where pilgrims stop when on pilgrimage to Gangs Ti se. In the maps, in travel literature, and now also on internet websites where users upload travel photos, its name is variously spelled as Tirthapuri/Tirtapuri/Tirthapura,² or sometimes phonetically as Tretapuri and even Reta-puri.³ The site includes a small monastic complex and a series of rock formations, caves and hot springs of sulphuric nature that are said to be connected with episodes in the life of Padmasambhava and rGod tshang pa mgon po rdo rje (1189-1258). The *gnas yig* focuses on the mythological history and descriptions of the natural features of the site, and does not mention the temples.

The name Pretapurī is well known as that of one of the twenty-four *pīṭha*, holy places considered to have both an external function, as geographical sites for cultic

1 The photos of the manuscript are reproduced here with the kind permission of the late president of IsIAO Gherardo Gnoli.

2 See for example contemporary tourist handbooks such as Mayhew, Choy *et al.* 2002: 269; McCue 2010: 234; but also the one-hundred-seventy year-old travel diary of Strachey 1848: 144, 145, 156, 159, 336.

3 For example, see Dowman 1997: 246; Hedin 1913: 187; Tucci 1971: 376; Kawaguchi 1909: 162.

practice and pilgrimage, and an internal meaning, being associated with the organs of a practitioner's body as inner places on which to focus during meditation.⁴ The *Yoginītantras* list twenty-four (but sometimes thirty-two), of these *pīṭha*, pairing together each geographical location with a corresponding internal site. However, since the Saṃvara and Hevajra tantric cycles do not provide the geographic whereabouts of the holy sites they list, their exact position has always been uncertain and prone to interpretation.⁵ Thus, for example, in Arunachal Pradesh there is another site which is known as Pretapurī.⁶

In the Saṃvara tantra the twenty-four *pīṭha* are symbolically illustrated by a mandala divided into three levels, so that eight *pīṭha* are attributed to the celestial sphere, eight to the earthly realm, and eight more to the underworld.⁷ Pretapurī is listed as the seventeenth of the twenty-four *pīṭha*, is marked as corresponding internally with the sex organs of the meditator's body, and belongs to the group of *pīṭha* located in the underworld, the "eight underground abodes" (*sa 'og gi gnas brgyad*). In fact, the name Pretapurī means "the town of the hungry ghosts", with reference to the *preta* (*yi dwags*), a class of supernatural beings in Indic and Buddhist mythology. In Tibetan Buddhism, the *preta* are believed to be harmful, monstrous beings who populate one of the lower realms of *saṃsāra*. They are generally depicted as grisly figures with sallow skin, an enormous belly and a minuscule throat, because they are believed to be always hungry and thirsty but never able to satiate their impelling desire.

The guide to Pretapurī is a manuscript of uncertain date, never before published or translated. As far as I can ascertain, the only copy in existence is the one I have

4 On the concept of *pīṭha* in Tibetan Buddhism and its Indian origins see Huber 2008: 87-103. On the *pīṭha* of Pretapurī in particular see also Huber 2008: 101-103. More on *pīṭha* can also be found in Snellgrove 1959: 69-70, n. 2, and Templeman 1999: 187-197.

5 In this regard, the following quote from Huber 2008: 96, may be useful: "the locations and nature of the *pīṭha* were the subject of a great amount of both confusion and creative interpretation on the part of the Tibetans... Not only do the Tantras of both the Buddhist and non-Buddhist traditions contain different catalogues of *pīṭha*, but their later commentarial traditions, not to mention other independent religious developments, have generated a welter of different lists recording the names of *pīṭha* sites. The result is that often the same names appear on many different lists, and the simple assumption is that identical names must refer back to identical locations. No assumption could be more misleading when it comes to studying the *pīṭha*, the reason being that there were often multiple geographical sites identified as being the same *pīṭha* under the same name in different historical periods." Further discussion of this topic continues in Huber 2008: 86-97; and may be also found in Sugiki 2009: 515-516.

6 Its early-20th century *gnas yig* has been translated in McDougal 2016. McDougal also convincingly suggests that a number of sacred, but "hidden" sites (*sbas yul*), the exact location of which is generally discovered through the prophetic revelation of a visionary lama (*gter ston*), have gradually been revealed as being located on the Indian side of the border, where they would be more easily accessible to exile Tibetans (*ibid.*: 6).

7 See Huber 2008: 90 for a schematization of the Saṃvara mandala.

examined, a set of black and white film negatives, twenty-nine frames in total, preserved in the collection of the photographic archives of the Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale in Rome, Italy. The title of the text is *gNas Pre ta pu ri gyi gnas yig dkar chag gsal ba'i me long zhes bya ba bzhugs so*,⁸ “The mirror of clarity, guide to the holy place of Pretapurī”, but the manuscript contains two texts: a longer one, from the beginning to frame 23, line 2, and a much shorter, abridged version of the first text, from frame 23, line 2, to frame 30, the end of the manuscript. The full manuscript is in *dbu can*, with the exception of the colophon, which is added interlinearly in *dbu med*, in the last frame, between ll. 4 and 5. The pages contain either seven or eight lines, and unfortunately some of the pages with eight lines were not entirely captured in the frame of the photographs, resulting in either the left and right margins or the full last line being cut out, so that only the superscripted letters remain visible. According to the colophon, this *gnas yig* is an edited version of an older one which contained a number of repetitions and omissions and which was unintelligible or difficult to read. The author of this newer version re-wrote the guidebook from the cave of accomplishment of Gling ras pa⁹ (*Gling ras sgrub phug*), and was a lead cantor (*dbu mdzad*) by the name of Chos 'phel. Neither his lowly rank nor his all too common name allow us an even remote identification. The year of composition is an unspecified Female Water Bird year (*chu mo bya lo*), which, without the cycle number, is impossible to convert to a western style calendar date.¹⁰

Regarding the writing style, it is fairly colloquial and inelegant, being at times choppy, with sudden changes of topic. The impression of inelegance is further amplified by the abundance of orthographic mistakes. Still, the author displays a certain familiarity with the contents of the Buddhist canon and with the general body of literature devoted to the famous saint Padmasambhava, and in particular with the *Padma bka' thang* and *Padma thang yig*, two texts often referred to in the manuscript.

8 This is the corrected version of the title. An idea of the abundance of orthographic mistakes in this text is given by the following unedited transliteration of the title: *Gnas tre bsta pu ri gyi gnas yigs dkar chabs gsal ba'i me long zhes bya ba bzhugs so*.

9 Only from this mention in the colophon it may be derived that Gling ras pa (1128-1188) meditated in a cave at Pretapurī, since the *gnas yig* does not make any mention of it. Incidentally, the *gnas yig* does not mention also two other figures whom we know sojourned in Pretapurī during their travels. One is O rgyan pa rin chen dpal (1229/1230-1309), a disciple of rGod tshang pa mgon po rdo rje, and the other is O rgyan ngag dbang rgya mtsho, also known as sTag tshang ras pa (1574-1651), a 'Brug pa bKa' brgyud pa cleric who departed from Pretapurī in search of other cradles of the Buddhist tradition in Guge and Oddiyana. The fact that neither of these two personages is mentioned in the text may be taken as a temporal indication concerning the redaction of the original *gnas yig*, but the absence of Gling ras pa, who *preceded* rGod tshang pa, makes the feasibility of this *terminus ante quem* very uncertain.

10 Given the dearth of time references in the text, the exact western date corresponding with this Tibetan year cannot be pinpointed. The text merely provides rGod tshang pa's lifetime (12th-13th century) as the latest *terminus post quem* for the composition of this guidebook. Thus the Water-Bird year could be 1273, 1333, 1393, 1453, 1513, 1573, 1633, 1693, 1753, 1813, 1873, or 1933.

For example, in the *Padma bka' thang* Pretapurī is mentioned in the chapter relating the narrative of the successive rebirths of Rudra and the story of its subjugation (chapter five). Here the twenty-four *pīṭha* are listed as the abodes of the hosts of Rudra, each presided over by a terrifying lord. In particular, Pretapurī, together with Gṛhadevatā, was seized by the *nāga*.¹¹

However, Pretapurī is especially known and revered as a site blessed by the presence of Padmasambhava, the great 8th century tantric practitioner and tamer of local spirits, whose feats are also narrated in the *Padma bka' thang*. According to the *gnas yig*, Padmasambhava stayed at Pretapurī as he was leaving Tibet, and here subjugated an evil *srin mo*. Afterward he also tricked, with a miracle, a group of *asura* who were planning to trap him. Both of these achievements left visible marks in the local landscape, which the *gnas yig* duly enumerates among the signs of holiness of the site. Still, notwithstanding Padmasambhava's role, the discoverer of Pretapurī as a holy site was rGod tshang pa mgon po rdo rje, one of the most important figures in the 'Brug pa bKa' bgyud pa lineage, who visited the area of Tise at the age of twenty-five.¹²

The *gnas yig* covers three main topics, which develop in fairly linear chronological order. First, it endeavors to establish the pedigree of Pretapurī and its status as one of the twenty-four *pīṭha*. It mentions the major canonical sources on *pīṭha*, such as the class of Anuttaratantra and the Cakrasaṃvara tantra, and provides a brief history of the origins of the site. According to the *gnas yig*, in the intermediate period between the end of the doctrine of the Buddha Dīpaṅkara and the arrival of the historical Buddha Śākyamuni, *preta* were living underneath the soil of Pretapurī, and the local deities (*gnas bdag*) were a group of female demons, including *srin mo* and *ma mo*. The *preta* were miraculously satiated by the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, who produced an incessant stream of ambrosia from his fingertips. The excess of ambrosia whirled around Pretapurī, surrounding it, and *ḍākinī* gathered to bless it as a site consecrated to rDo rje phag mo (Vajravārāhī).

Also, in the same interval between the doctrine of Dīpaṅkara and that of Śākyamuni, the demon Rudra destroyed most of the world. However, as it is well known, he was subsequently subjugated by rTa mgrin (Hayagrīva) and rDo rje phag mo. As a result of Rudra's defeat, eight substances of liberation (*bsgral ba'i rdzas brgyad*) became manifest; these went on to bless eight sacred places, including Pretapurī, which consequently became even more sanctified.

The second major section of the *gnas yig* records and eulogizes Pretapurī as a setting for some of the miraculous acts performed by Padmasambhava at the end of his sojourn in Tibet. In particular, it relates that when Padmasambhava arrived here, he found that the local deity (*gnas bdag*) was an evil demoness (*srin mo*), the chief of

11 See *Padma bka' thang*, p. 30, l. 4: "Pre ta pu ri gri ha de ba ta / klu'i bzung bas 'du ba'i gnas su btags"; "Pretapurī and Grihadevata were seized by the *nāga* and were connected as places of gathering". The seizing of Pretapurī by the *nāga* is also mentioned in the *gnas yig*, cfr. ph. 4 below.

12 Thus, around the year 1213. See Martin 2008.

the *asura*. He subdued her with his exorcisms and she fled to the land of the subterranean *nāga*, while her consciousness was absorbed into a heart-shaped rock in the area of Pretapurī.

Subsequently Padmasambhava transformed this rock into a self-emptying meditation cave, where, dwelling in *samādhi*, he was able to summon the consciousness of the *srin mo*. However, the *asura* plunged a rock at the entrance of the cave to imprison him there. Through his powerful tantric skills, Padmasambhava raised his index finger and not only caused the boulder to fall into the plain below, but was also able to exit the cave flying through the top of the rock. The *gnas yig* notes all the visible markings of the miracle observable in and around the heart-shaped rock-cave, most notable among which are the self-generated imprints of Padmasambhava's feet and hand staff, as well as a self-generated image of Mañjuśrī.

Finally, the holy place of Pretapurī is linked to the figure of rGod tshang pa mGon po rdo rje, the saint and ascetic who is one of the major figures of the 'Brug pa sect, the main Buddhist sect in Bhutan, and who is known to have spent about three years in the region of Kailāsa.¹³ According to the text, it was rGod Tshang pa who recognized and revealed the status of Pretapurī as a holy place. rGod tshang pa's arrival in Pretapurī was originally prophesized by Gling ras padma rdo rje (1128-1188) and Lo ras pa (1187-1250), respectively teacher and disciple of gTsang pa rgyas ras Ye shes rdo rje, the founder of the 'Brug pa bKa' brgyud pa school and also the principal teacher of rGod tshang pa. Thus, by explicitly outlining the prestigious early lineage of the 'Brug pa, the guidebook highlights the connection of Pretapurī with this sect.

The prophecies were fulfilled when rGod tshang pa was guided here by the twenty-one Tāra emanated as a wild yak, sheep, raven and other animals. Upon arrival, he was immediately able to visualize Pretapurī as a mandala.¹⁴ He then selected a cave for meditating: here he had wonderful visions, and soon was able to disclose the sanctity concealed in a series of sites located in the area of Pretapurī. All these areas are listed in the portion of the guidebook which is the true catalogue (*dkar chag*) of the holy sites of Pretapurī (photograms 18-20). Unfortunately, they are reported simply with the name of the deity they simultaneously housed and symbolized and, sometimes, a very vague topographical indication (e.g. "on the mountain on the left"), rendering their recognition almost impossible without a knowledgeable local guide (*dgon gnyer*).¹⁵

13 See Vitali 1996: 404 and 408-409, esp. n. 671. Vitali shows that rGod tshang pa resided in the Kailāsa area between the years 1214 and 1216.

14 Visualizing a sacred space (or one's own body) as a mandala is a common mark of progress in the attainment of salvation. When a saint visually superimposes a mandala to the landscape, he or she simultaneously organizes the landscape within the cosmos and demonstrates the holiness and powers of the place. See Macdonald 1997. Notice also that a self-generated mandala appeared at Pretapurī after its blessing with the eight substances of liberation of Rudra (ph. 7).

15 The lack of specific topographic indications confirms the notion according to which the literary genre of *gnas yig* was not written for pilgrims but was meant to be internally consumed by the

The *gnas yig* also narrates how, on account of rGod tshang pa's splendor, all the demonesses of this place disappeared, and various extraordinary signs became manifest in his cave of accomplishment: the footprints of Vajravārāhī and Hayagrīva, a self-generated image of Tāra, a strong, incense-like odor, and a flow of *sindūra*, which "blazes with good warmth, and even ignites itself".¹⁶ Thus, the story of Pretapurī is cyclical: after each subjugation and conversion of the demons, new ones would come out, or threaten to come out, from crevices in the rocks and sulphuric springs deposits. Moreover, even at times when the Buddhist doctrine prevailed and the demonic presences were quelled, the extraordinary features of the landscape were explained as miraculous marks indicating the sanctity of this place and the success of Buddhist deities and saints.

However, for those of us who have not been to Pretapurī, it is sometimes difficult to imagine the features of the landscape which the *gnas yig* links to the miracles and wondrous feats performed by Padmasambhava and rGod tshang pa. Fortunately, several early explorers visited and described Pretapurī, helping to supply wherever the account of the *gnas yig* is lacking. For example, the Japanese monk Ekai Kawaguchi travelled there at the end of August 1901.¹⁷ He took note of the intertwined nature of the pilgrimage to Pretapurī with that to mount Kailāsa by mentioning a proverb stating that no pilgrimage to the former place was complete without a visit to the latter. He also asserted that the name Pretapurī was pronounced "Reta puri" by the Tibetans, who, aware of the Indian origins of the name, but wholly ignorant of its meaning, were under the impression that it had "some holy meaning" and were rather proud of it.¹⁸ On the contrary, Kawaguchi, notoriously critical of the Tibetans' notion of cleanliness, speculated that Atiśa had thus named this place on account of its filthy appearance. He was also convinced that Atiśa founded the first temple there, which was eventually enlarged to a "most imposing Lamaserai"¹⁹ by rGyal ba rGod tshang pa. However, it should be noticed that there is no mention of Atiśa in connection with Pretapurī in the *gnas yig*.

Kawaguchi reported that four or five monks were living at the monastery when he visited, and that its main hall, one storey high, measured about eight yards by ten. Its main holy objects were the statues of Śākyamuni and Padma 'byung gnas. Also, a self-manifested (*rang 'byung*) image of Padma 'byung gnas impressed on a stone could be seen after payment of a small amount, whereby the temple's caretaker (*dgon gnyer*) would lift the *thangka* protecting it from unworthy viewers. Tellingly, faithful Buddhists would not dare to look directly at the image, fearing they may become blind. While scandalized by what he considered superstitious behavior on the part of the common people and impious treachery on the part of the resident monks,

monks living in a monastery or holy place. On this idea see Venturi 2013.

16 Frame 20: "bde drod 'bar kyang rang 'bar yod pa". On *sindūra*, see n. 51 below.

17 See Kawaguchi 1909: 159.

18 Kawaguchi 1909: 162.

19 Kawaguchi 1909: 162.

Kawaguchi was still impressed by the magnificence of the natural environment, which “was such as to inspire chaste thoughts and holy ideas”.²⁰ He depicted it in a lengthy paragraph:

Let me describe here a little of this enchanting sight. First there was the river Langchen Khabab, flowing towards the west, with the opposite bank steep and precipitous, and with rocks piled up here and there, some yellow, some crimson, other blue, still others green, and some others purple. The chequered coloring was beautiful, and looked like a rainbow or a tinted fog, if such a thing could exist. It was a splendid sight. And the rocks were highly fantastic, for some were sharp and angular, and others protruded over the river. The nearer bank was equally abrupt and was full of queerly shaped rocks, and each of those rocks bore a name given to it by the priests of the temple. There was a rock which was known by the name of the “Devil Surrender Rock;” another was called the “Twin Images of the saintly Prince and his Lady;” a third bore the name of “Tise Rock;” a fourth “Goddess of Mercy Rock;” and a fifth “Kāśyapa Buḍḍha Tower”. All these rocks were objects of veneration to the common people...

About two hundred and fifty yards down the bank, from a cavern known as the Divine Grotto, several hot springs were gushing out from between the rocks. Three of them were rather large, while the other three were smaller. The water of all the springs was warm, indeed some was so hot that I could hardly dip the tip of my finger into it. The temperature of that particular spring must have far exceeded 100° Fahrenheit. The water of the springs was quite transparent, and all about them there were many hard incrustations, some white, others red, still others green or blue. The visitors to the place are said to carry away pieces of this incrustation, which are believed to possess a highly medicinal value, and so they must have, if properly used.²¹

A few years later, Sven Hedin visited Pretapurī during his third expedition to Central Asia, and described it as a small monastic complex “surrounded by a guard of *chhortens*” on a terraced slope. A 100-yard long *mani* wall led to the monastery, where twenty-one monks resided and which included two halls, a main one dedicated to Śākyamuni, and one dedicated to rDo rje phag mo. The connection of Pretapurī with Padmasambhava seems to have escaped Svedin, who only noticed that in the main temple were kept different powerful objects, including “flat dark stones cut round, which may be diabase or porphyry” bearing “rather deep impressions of the hands and feet of holy men”, as well as “the imprint of a horse’s hoof”, likely related to the cult of Hayagrīva.²² Surprisingly, he made no notable mention of the sulphuric terrain and thermal springs at the site.

20 Kawaguchi 1909: 164.

21 Kawaguchi, 1909: 164-165.

22 See Hedin 1913: 187.

On the contrary, another early traveller to the site, Giuseppe Tucci, lyrically dwelled on the landscape in *Santi e Briganti nel Tibet Ignoto*:²³

Pretapuri is the gate of hell: a green rock with whitish cone-shaped spires which seem to warn of dark omens; columns of boiling sulphur springing out from the cavities of the earth, and smoke, and gurgles of hot water spraying out from each crevice, corner, or hollow. The fantasy of the pilgrims has given a name to each of these hellish watersprings; each rock is tied to a legend, each portion of land demands a prostration.²⁴

He accounted for the existence of different names for the site in this way: “It is called Tirthapuri, that is ‘the holy city’ as a euphemism; its real name was Pretapurī, ‘the city of the dead’, but of evil dead, the Preta, i.e. Lemurs, always wandering to harm the living beings, eternally hungry, with a stomach that can never be filled and a mouth not bigger than the eye of a needle”.²⁵ His description of the area, similarly to the one by Kawaguchi, complements the *gnas yig* examined here and additionally explains how the manuscript was found:

Tirthapuri is not a village, but a group of temples and chapels: it belongs to the ‘Brug pa sect and is in care of the incarnate of Rub shu [...]. In the small temples on top, at the foot of the whitish rock, nothing noteworthy: the chapels have all been recently remade; however, I have admired a few skillfully made statues and especially a Padmapani of Nepalese art. All the rest is modern and in a state of great neglect: however, in a heap of liturgical books I discover a copy of the old guide of the gonpa, which contains, together with many legends, precious historical information; a confluence of aboriginal, Indian and Tibetan myths. The monastery is entrusted to the care of a custodian who, after having shown me the chapels, leads me through a tormented terrain with sulphur springs, and points out, one by one, the fantastic rocks erupted from the earth in fearful contortions. The pantheon of Tibetan Tantrism seems to have convened in these cones and monoliths, in which it has been placed, through connections not always clear to us, by the imagination of a people stirred and troubled by dark terrors. Here is the series of the gods, goddesses and demons whose dwellings are shown to the frightened pilgrims by the guides: the four armed protector (mGon po phyag bzhi), the miraculously born Garuda (Bya khyung rang ’byung), Samvara (bDe mchog), [...]”²⁶

For Tucci, then, in this diary written for and addressed to the larger public, the legends of Pretapurī originated from the imagination of a people “stirred and troubled by dark

23 As mentioned above, Tucci visited Pretapurī in 1933. His description may be found in Tucci 1996: 98-100.

24 Tucci 1996: 98 (author’s translation).

25 Tucci 1996: 98 (author’s translation).

26 Tucci 1996: 99 (author’s translation).

terrors” who concocted a mixture of local, Indian and Tibetan lore. Indeed the explanations of the features of the local terrain in the *gnas yig* show that the environment did affect the people inhabiting it. In this case, a sulfurous terrain of fumaroles and thermal springs was more likely to inspire thoughts of hostile chthonian deities and demons than, for example, a tranquil, grassy meadow. Accordingly, the multicolored rocks, sulfuric springs, pestilential miasma, and columns of vapour were explained by positing the existence of *preta* living underneath. With the arrival of Buddhism, the *preta* and other subterranean demons were subdued in turn by Avalokiteśvara, Hayagrīva and Vajravārāhī, Padmasambhava, and finally rGod tsang pa. However, the miraculous conversions did not remove from the landscape either the bizarrely shaped rocks, or the odorous vapours. Therefore, these were accounted for as consequences of the miraculous feats of the gods and saints, as living proof of the newly acquired sanctity of this place. It is thus that in the descriptions of the guide the environment sometimes disappears completely. It becomes entirely subsumed and explained by religion, which superimposes its structures on it, thereby leaving only a glimpse of the actual physical scenery.

For this reason in the text the physical environment is described in lists of topographical features, rather than illustrated in detail. For example, Pretapurī is designated generically as “a formation of wonderful soil, rocks, mountains and cliffs, with the river possessing the eight qualities, the five kinds of hot springs and the one hundred water springs”,²⁷ an extremely generic description that makes it impossible to visually reconstruct the appearance of the sacred site. In fact, the site is illustrated in greater detail only when the author elects to disregard its physical features in order to concentrate on its religious significance. Thus, Pretapurī is, poetically, “The blessed place of Vajravārāhī, the realm of all the *ma mo* sky-goers assembled, where the sound of mantras goes ‘*di ri ri*’”.²⁸ The sanctity of the spot is better rendered by eliminating geographic description altogether and focusing on religious attributes instead.

Secondarily, when the text mentions geographical features, it always interpretes them in light of religious explanations. For example, because in Tibet the consciousness of a sentient being is said to be dwelling in the heart, the presence of a heart shaped rock in the area is explained through the legend of the consciousness of the demoness that entered in the rock and became absorbed by it. In another example, a draft of cold air inside the same cave is explained as “an unceasing evil wind of the subterranean *nāga* [blowing] from the bottom of a spiraling hole”.²⁹

27 Frame 8: “*Chu yan lag brgyad ldan dang chu tshan rigs lnga chu mig brgya rtsa sogs las sa rdo ri brag sogs khyad mtshar chags pa mthong*”. “River by the eight qualities” is a standard metaphor for a perfect river, as well as a common epithet for the Ganges. The Ganges, however, does not originate in or flow by the area of Pretapurī; rather, the Sutlej flows nearby. On the mythical springs of the Ganges in the area of Lake Manasarovar, see Vitali 1996: 92, n. 6.

28 Frame 6: “*rDo rje phag mo'i byin gyi rlabs pa'i gnas l ma mo'i mkha' 'gro thams cad 'dus pa'i gling l gsang sngags rda'i rang sgra di ri ri l'*”.

29 Frame 15: “*bug pa dung gi kha phor nang nas 'og klu'i rlung ngan rgyun mi chad yod pa*”.

The last example of how topographic features are explained through religious elements concerns the wonders of the meditation cave of rGod tshang pa. The guide describes them as a consequence of the sanctifying presence of the famous ascetic, and points out that they include “a continuous incense-like smell of *ākāru* and *dhur ru ka*”,³⁰ and “a flow of *sindūra* that blazes with good warmth, and even catches fire by itself.”³¹ Thanks to the descriptions of the modern travelers quoted above,³² it is possible to connect the incense-like smells and the blazing flow of *sindūra* to the smell of the sulfuric springs and the glowing columns of sulfur present at this site.

This treatment of the physical environment is not a mere whim of the author; it is the concretization, on paper, of the relation of Tibetan culture with the environment. The environment both instigates the religious beliefs and is subsumed, almost swallowed, by them. Once it has inspired the religious ideas, it succumbs to their power and disappears not only from the text, but, ideally, also from the vision of the faithful pilgrims. In fact, in agreement with the Buddhist notion of skillful means (*upāya kauśalya*), the more the pilgrims perceive of the actual landscape, the less they have progressed on the Buddhist path; while the less they see of their surroundings, the closer they are to Buddhist enlightenment.

To say it along with the guide:

“Through [their] vision, gods and goddesses could see a multitude of sky-goers as a flow of nectar; through their vision, men and demonic beings could see marvelous formations of land, stones, mountains and rocks, such as the river possessing the eight qualities, the five kinds of hot springs and the one hundred watersprings; through their vision, the knowledge holders, who are holy *ṛṣi*, could see many self-manifested, particularly holy and wondrous things, such as the blessed heavenly sphere and the body of Vajravārāhī in the eastern spoke of the mandala of Cakrasamvara.”³³

Consequently the cohabitation of physical features with a spiritually charged atmosphere, that the early travelers to Tibet detected and mentioned in their diaries, was well known to Tibetans who simply explained it as a consequence and indication of an observer’s growth on the Buddhist path. The more accomplished the Buddhist

30 “Akaru” and “dhuruka” seem to be the names of two scents. See Trizin Tsering Rinpoche 2007: 352-353.

31 Frame 20: “*phug pa 'di'i nang na rgyun du spos Ā kā ru dang 'dhur ru ka la sogs pa'i dri bzang thul pa / sidhur ra dpal dang ldan pa 'bab cing / bde drod 'bar kyang rang 'bar yod pa*”.

32 See Tucci 1996: 98-100.

33 Frame. 8, l. 2: “*Lha dang lha ma rnams kyi snang ngor du bdud rtse chur mkha' 'gro ma 'dus bar snang / mi dang bdud 'gro rnams kyi mthong lam du chu yan lag brgyad ldan dang / chu tshan rigs lnga chu mig brgya rtsam sogs las sa rdo ri brag sogs khyad tshar chags pa mthong / 'phags pa'i drang srong rig 'dzin rnams gyi gzigs lam du 'khor lo sdom pa'i dkyil 'khor shar rtsib su rdo rje 'i 'phag mo'i byin gyi rlabs pa'i sku dang zhings khams sogs rang ljon 'khyed 'phags ngo mtshar can mang bar gzigs*”.

practitioner, the better his or her ability to discern the spiritual powers at play in a sacred space.

Thus, the guide to Pretapurī illustrates how the process of sanctification of the area was inspired by the extraordinary features of the landscape. In addition, the guide offers an overview of how the permanence of outstanding geographic characteristics contributed to the endurance of religious ideas intended to explain the singularity of this place. Beliefs inspired by the physical environment perpetuated themselves and even became so preponderant as to obfuscate, within the text, the actual physical environment.

TRANSLATION

(ph. 2) *The mirror of clarity, guide of the place Pretapurī.*

(ph. 3) On opening the door of the place. I salute with devotion the venerable lamas who guide the living beings. I salute with devotion and honour the actual practice. I rejoice in the reverend [lamas] through the confession of the accumulated sins. With an exhortation to turn the prayer wheel, I pray not to undergo sufferings. I exchange the love of the self with the great perfection, fundamental virtue.

[Canonical sources which establish the sanctity of Pretapurī]

The place called Pretapurī, principal place of pilgrimage, became one of the twenty-four great places, as I well wrote in the historical guide. In addition to that, formerly the Buddha made many prophecies, and in particular, (ph. 4) from the class of the *Anuttaratantra*, [Pretapurī is] the highest wondrous place of Cakrasaṃvara; from the three outer, inner, and secret, Pretapurī became part of the twenty-four places. Also, from the sixty-four tantras of Saṃvara, Pretapurī became the eastern spoke of the wheel [which symbolically represents] the twenty-four countries. From the tantra of the thirteen gods, Pretapurī became the actual place, just like the superior place which I clarified. From the *Pad ma bka'i thang yig* these two: Pretapurī and Gṛhadevatā³⁴ are said to be in a place which is held by the *nāga*.

34 One of the most common geographical identifications of Gṛhadevatā is with the oasis of Khotan in current Xinjiang. However, Alexis Sanderson has demonstrated that Gṛhadevatā appeared in the lists of Buddhist *pīṭha* because of a copying error, whereby the household deities (*gradevatā*) inhabiting the *pīṭha* of Saurāṣṭra have been listed as if they were a place name (Sanderson 1994: 95). Starting with Bu ston, the Tibetans, at a loss to locate this non-existing –but seemingly important– site, tentatively placed it in Central Asia. Further details on this may be found in Huber 2008: 95-96.

[Origins of the twenty-four pīṭha]

Formerly, at the time when the doctrine of the former Buddha Dīpaṅkara had finished (ph. 5) and the doctrine of Śākyamuni had not commenced yet, i.e. when the empty doctrine was passing, the lords of the twenty-four countries were the grasping *ma mo*³⁵ of the eight classes of demons. At this time, *nāga* and *srin mo*³⁶ served as local deities (*gnas bdag*) of both this place and Gṛhadevatā. The name of this place depends on the arising of a town having hidden *preta* (*yi dwags*) straight underneath the earth, and it is known as Pretapurī in the Sanskrit language.

[Formation of Pretapurī from the streaming milk of Avalokiteśvara]

As for the manner in which it arose: the nature and the compassionate actions of all the Buddhas, Arya Avalokiteśvara [...]³⁷ (ph. 6) in order to remove the miseries of hunger and thirst of those towns having hidden *preta* underneath the twenty-four places, the fingers of the right hand streamed down with a flow of ambrosia milk, [which] well satiated the *preta*. The excess flow of ambrosia overflowed more and more, whirling around this place. All the *ma mo dākinī*, gathering like clouds, bestowed blessings on the secret place of rDo rje phag mo, excellent mother. From the saying of the precious O rgyan (Padmasambhava):

“The blessed place of rDo rje phag mo;
the realm of all the *ma mo dākinī* assembled;
the *di ri ri*³⁸ sound of mantra vajra;
simply by going to this place you obtain the highest perfection;
(ph. 7) the prayer for this extraordinary place of pilgrimage”.
Thus said, it is similar to the light of the lotus.

35 Guardian goddesses of the Buddhist doctrine, generally described as ugly women with long, emaciated breasts and huge sexual organs. They were famously bound by Padmasambhava, and they are particularly worshipped by the rNying ma pa sect. See de Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1977: 6 and 269-273.

36 A class of demonesses who protect the Buddhist doctrine. These deities originally belonged to the pre-buddhist pantheon of Tibet, but since their identification with the indian *rākṣasī* they lost their original identity. See de Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1977: 280 ff.

37 This portion is missing in the manuscript: this line is not entirely legible because it was cut off from the frame of the picture.

38 Honomatopoeic sound.

[Subjugation of Matram Rudra at Pretapurī]

Earlier, when the doctrine was empty, the demon Matram Rudra³⁹ destroyed most of the world. The Buddhas of the ten directions, in one mass, through the nature of their united force emanated the two, horse (rTa mgrin) and pig (rDo rje phag mo), and gazed upon those who were destined for conversion. Having liberated both the male and female Rudra,⁴⁰ according to O rgyan, in the eight substances of liberation of Matram Rudra were present the blessings of the eight places which had received the secret mantras.⁴¹ From the substances indicated in the speech, it was blessed as the secret place of the *ḍāka*. The eight among the great places of tantra greatly enjoyed [this blessing] and (ph. 8) were at the peak.

[Consequences of the subjugation of Rudra]

From the vast *yoni*-heaven of rDo rje phag mo, a natural mandala of the gods, completely self generated, [was produced]. In the vision of gods and goddesses could be seen a multitude of *ḍākinī* as the flow of nectar. In the vision of men and demonic beings could be seen the formation of wonderful things such as earth, stones, mountains and rocks from the river possessing the eight qualities; [and] the five kinds of hot springs, the one hundred springs, etc. In the vision of the *vidyādhara*, who are holy *ṛṣi*, could be seen many self-arisen, particularly holy wonderful things, such as the blessed heavenly sphere and the body of rDo rje phag mo in the eastern spoke of the mandala of Cakraṣaṃvara. Then, from the speech of the protector of the world (Avalokiteśvara):

(ph. 9) “In the vast heaven of rDo rje phag mo
the river possessing the eight qualities descends ten full [measures];
unconceivable natural miracles [occur].
In this excellent place of assembled *ḍākinī*
the three signs of suitability in the path of maturation during sleep [are present]
[and] decorated with ornaments of good body signs.
The mass of *ḍākinī*, without one language or body,
[is] surrounded by a circle of offerings of saffron, tasty food.
When this appears, the party of the assembled beggars
[eat] only these: the eggs of the birds and the fruits of the trees;

39 On Matram Rudra, a terrifying demon who was vanquished and transformed into the Dharma protector Mahākāla by Hayagrīva/rTa mgrin and Vajravārāhī/rDo rje phag mo, see for example Dalton 2011; Mayer 1998; and Stein 1995.

40 That is, Matram Rudra and his consort.

41 The eight substances from the liberation of Matram Rudra are said to consecrate the sites where the secret mantra would arise. See Ngawang Zangpo 2002: 228.

the bodies which have eaten this, are filled by all that,
[and] from this place the miracles are even greater.”
Thus he said.

[Arrival of Padmasambhava]

In particular, the precious O rgyan made prostrations to the country of Tibet, (ph. 10) fulfilled the wish of the *dharmarāja* 'Khri srong lde btsan, [and] bestowed blessings on the regions of Tibet as places of perfection. The stories of the exorcisation of the demons are clear in the *Thang yig*. Also, when the Teacher went to the country of the demons of the southwest, from the Gung thang pass he went upwards to the sky. At this time and in this place, having the *asura* seized the teacher while on route, he showed wonders such as binding [them]. Because [they] saw his [act of] binding and because they were bound by an oath, today it is famous as the land of oath-binding. Namely, the vow was seen and the binding occurred. Today it is also known as “the vow cave”.

[Subjugation of the srin mo and formation of the self-emptying cave of accomplishment]

(ph. 11) Thereafter, the precious teacher went to this place, saw that there was an evil *srin mo*, chief of the *asura*, as lord of the place (*gnas bdag*) and subdued [her]. The consciousness of the *srin mo* was absorbed into a rock shaped like a heart and [she] fled to the land of the subterranean *nāga*. The teacher made a self-emptying cave out of this magically transformed rock, [and] having summoned the consciousness of the *srin mo*, [he] dwelled in *samādhi*. At that time the *asura* made an impediment. They thought: “Now the one called Padmasambhava is staying inside a narrow cave in a rock. We must close the door to this cave”. They brought down a large boulder, [but] the teacher, who was dwelling in contemplation, (ph. 12) pointed [his] index-finger and caused this heavenly stone to fall down in the plain in front of the cave of accomplishment. Concerning this, the precious teacher did not exit from the door, [but] exited on top of the rock flying up through it. Inside the self-emptying rock cave appeared clearly a self generated body of Mañjuśrī, about the size of a *khyud*, and a cloak of cloth. A footprint [appeared] in the stone and a self generated imprint of a cane was clearly set in the rock.

[Prophetic ode on the opening of Pretapurī]

Having blessed the place of accomplishment, the prophecy on the opening of the door of the place in the future [was uttered].

[He] bound the *asura* through an oath:
 namely, when the oath holders were bound by an oath,
 each thought of this excellent pure place is joyful.
 On the border of India and Tibet,
 the place where He went and that He blessed,
 [where] the mountains have good smell, perfume and fragrance;
 (ph. 13) [where] all the lotus flowers are in bloom,
 [and where] as to the water, [it is] the water of *bodhiamṛta* (“the nectar of perfection”).

Thus it said. The meaning of such words having completed the discourse on this place, also the waters are particularly holy and wonderful, and amongst the earth, stones, mountains and rocks, etc. there are immeasurable things such as the residence of image and body of each of those who are fit for conversion.

[Other prophecies of rGod tshang pa's opening]

The former *siddha* Gling ras padma rdo rje⁴² and his counterpart Lo ras,⁴³ etc. prophesied about the future opening of the door of the place by rGod tshang pa. Later the victorious rGod tshang pa, the great, went from rGyal gyi shri⁴⁴ to the snowy Kailāsa. He opened and cleared up the door of places such as the cave 'Bri thim⁴⁵ behind the Kailāsa mountain.

[The twenty-one Tāra lead rGod tshang pa to Pretapurī]

[As for] the opening of the door of the place Pretapurī, etc.: (ph. 14) [this] was prophesied by the twenty-one Tāra. [They] emanated as wild yak, sheep and raven-faced one, and, acting as a guide, led [rGod tshang pa]. [He] arrived in this place and saw many wondrous visions of interlinked connections. Not only, [but he] saw the earth as a palm of the hand, and the stones as a thumb, without [regard to their actual] existence or non existence.

42 A disciple of Phag mo 'gru pa Ye shes rgyal po and a yogin, he lived between 1128 and 1188. His main disciple was gTsang pa rgya ras Ye shes rdo rje (1161-1211), the founder of the 'Brug pa bKa' bryud pa school, and the principal teacher of rGod tshang pa mgon po rdo rje and of Lo ras pa dBang phyug brtson 'grus. The biography of Gling ras padma rdo rje can be found in Roerich 1996: 659-664.

43 Lo ras pa dBang phyug brtson 'grus (1187-1250) was, together with rGod tshang pa mGon po rdo rje one of the two main disciples of gTsang pa rgya ras Ye shes rdo rje. Thus, that rGod tshang pa would open Pretapurī was foretold both by his teacher and by his co-disciple. A short biography of Lo ras pa may be found in Roerich 1996: 672-676.

44 See De Rossi Filibeck 1988: 174, n. 70.

45 See De Rossi Filibeck, 1988: 83 and n. 95.

[A miracle and the opening of the doors of the pīṭha]

Not finding even a cooking stone for food, [he] magically brought down three heavenly stones. Then [he] opened four doors of places: on the east the striped tiger, on the south the blue dragon, (ph. 15) on the west the red bird, on the north the golden tortoise: all four were opened. Then he saw the way in which it arose: it became one of the twenty-four great places, Pretapurī, the marked place which appears similar to the shape of the eight auspicious signs, in between the eight-petalled lotus of the earth [and] resembling the eight spokes of the wheel of heaven; together with its parts of eight cemeteries, in all thirty-two places and the wondrous secret cave of the *ḍākinī*. There is an unceasing evil wind of the subterranean *nāga* [blowing] from within the bottom of the conchshell cave⁴⁶ into the empty place where the consciousness of the *srin mo* was drawn from the country of the *nāga* as far as the magically self-emptying cave of the precious teacher.

[List of the sacred and wondrous traits of Pretapurī]

(ph. 16) Regarding the image of Mañjuśrī, a cloak of cloth, the good exit and the heavenly rock, see above.⁴⁷ On the mountain on the back, which is like a white silk curtain, [is visible] the full set of a thousand inner Buddhas prophesied on the opening of the place in the future. On the mountain on the right is the palace of the Black Wrathful one (Khros ma nag mo);⁴⁸ on the mountain on the left the palace of the twenty-one Tāra; on the mountain on the front the palace of the ten thousand billions *ḍākinī* [and] the secret path of the *ḍākinī*; on the rocks [are] the dark gold Jambhala, the lion-faced *ḍākinī*,⁴⁹ the *dharmapāla* Jag pa me len, the place-lord Lha btsan chen po, the palace of the Buddha of medicine, the Kailāsa, the stūpa Bya rung kha shor (Boudhanath), the stūpa (ph. 17) 'Phags pa shing kun (Swayambunath), both self-generated; the palace of the four-armed Mahākāla; the palace of the *nāga*; a Garuḍa image and the effigies of the dead bodies of both Matram Rudra and the *srin mo*; the four gates of Saṃvara and his *śakti*; the eleven faced one (Avalokiteśvara) made of marble; a Mahākāla with a *beng* club; the triad Rigs gsum mgon po;⁵⁰ the eight manifestations of Padmasambhava [and] Amitāyus. On the crown of rTa mgrin and rDo rje 'phag mo as *śakti* are: a self-generated Indian stūpa which unravels the

46 On ph. 11 the cave where the consciousness of the *srin mo* is absorbed is said to be shaped like a heart, not like a conchshell.

47 This is the story of the miraculous exit of Padmasambhava from the cave, after which an image of Mañjuśrī and a cloak of cloth appeared in the cave. See above, ph. 11 and 12.

48 A wrathful form of Vajrayoginī.

49 Simhavaktra; see Lokesh Candra 1988: 647.

50 It includes Phyang na rdo rje (Vajrapāṇi), 'Jam dpal dbyangs (Mañjuśrī), and sPyan ras gzigs (Avalokiteśvara).

meaning at first sight; the eight auspicious signs; a self-generated [...] ⁵¹ elephant; the entourage of the Teacher; a pill of long life; the nectar of long life; (ph. 18) a medicinal stone and *sindūra* ⁵² derived from the *ḍāka* and *ḍākinī* bodhisattva; the self-generated, excellent blessed [river] which is ten measures [long] and with all its drops descends into the water having the eight qualities, one of the rivers of the four directions around Tī se; in the west it is called the source of the elephant (*Glang chen kha 'bab*) or Ha sti ga ga. In the center of the flow of the river is the Indian water source which liberates upon seeing. The self-generated river, the waters having the eight qualities, has a current of nectar which cures all kinds of diseases. The bath water of the *ḍākinī* has in it the hundred fold watersources.

[rGod tshang pa's cave of accomplishment]

As a support inside the cave of accomplishment of the precious rGod tshang pa himself, taken from among the treasures of lake Manasarovar (ph. 19) there was a treasure stone which realizes all sorts of prayers. rGod tshang pa saw a place beyond the river, [and] on a white boulder, above his cave of accomplishment, arose a vision of a white lion. Flying up in the sky, there appeared a mounting master who rode with bliss. Also, someone saw from a distance a lion-faced rock on the opposite side. In the lower forepart of the plain of the secret cave of the *ḍākinī* [he] saw the seven cities of the *ḍākinī* being bathed in the river Ganges and in the hundredfold water sources possessing the eight good qualities which liberate upon seeing.

[Disappearance of the ḍākinī in the cave and its wonders]

rGod tshang pa did the practice and went there. (ph. 20) All the *ḍākinī* could not bear his brilliance, became speechless and disappeared into that secret cave. rGod tshang pa thought: “The *ḍākinī* were immeasurable, but now there is not even one! Have they all been reabsorbed inside or some has been left?” These were his thoughts. Looking upward, in the rock of *dbu bde* also arose a merciful lama. ⁵³ Inside this cave there was continuously a good smell of incense such as *Ā kā ru* ⁵⁴ and *Dhur ru ka*. ⁵⁵ There was also a flow of *śrī-sindūra*. Blazing well with warmth, they caught fire by themselves. Looking downward, (ph. 21) a white and blue Tāra, unimaginable, self

51 Illegible.

52 This is the name of a substance used in tantric rituals. In āyurvedic medicine *sindūra* is obtained from the mixture of mercury and sulphur in various proportions. Apparently, increasing the quantity of sulphur (of which in Pretapurī there is in abundance) renders the compound more powerful. See Dash 1986: 96-99. See also Pasang Yonten Arya 1998: 275.

53 Perhaps an epithet for Avalokiteśvara; in particular it might be the contracted form of Thugs rje chen po dbu rje.

54 Maybe for *A ga ru*, ‘agalloch eaglewood’ (*lignum aquilariae resinatum*), a fragrant tree.

55 I have been unable to identify the original Sanskrit.

generated and wondrous was visible. There were clearly the footprints of rDo rje 'phag mo, the footprints of the Teacher (Padmasambhava), the footprints of Lady Yeshe mtsho rgyal, [Sangs rgyas] glang gdong, rTa mgrin and the footprints of the mule riding goddess (dPal ldan lha mo). [There are also] the bowl for the *ḍākinī*'s ritual ablutions, the debate court, the wisdom court, etc.; besides, the eight classes of *asura* reside [there].

[Concluding eulogy]

However, words are not sufficient to describe [even] partially the self generated [objects]. Fearing that there are many words difficult to understand for those of mediocre intellect, I have not written [much]. Blessings.

E ma ho! This holy place of *yum* rDo rje phag mo, glorious [...] ⁵⁶ (ph. 22) prayers to [this] famous place. Externally, ⁵⁷ it possesses special self-generated [objects]; internally, gods and goddesses; secretly, the highest blessings. [I] pray to [this] blessed place, the solitary place filled with the ten virtues, field of offering for the worship of the faithful, wonderful place for the accomplishment of saints. I pray to this wonderful place! I [pray] with respect and devotion for the appeasement of obstacles and hindrances and [the realization of] propitious circumstances for this special place and men. May the attainment of *siddhi* be common and excellent! Happiness! Blessings!

(ph. 23) The clear mirror, intermediary guide book of Pretapurī.

[I] prostrate to the precious O rgyan, protector of all the sentient beings and the doctrine, known as mTsho skyes rdo rje (“Lake-born vajra”), born from the lotus, who has assembled in one the compassion of all the Buddhas.

The place called Pretapurī by name is clearly the dominating land among the twenty-four countries: with the greatly wonderful, blessed and secret cave of rDo rje phag mo, the thirty-two places and the eight cemeteries; in between [the two]: below the eight-spoked wheel of heaven [and] above the earth resembling an eight-petalled lotus; (ph. 24) placed in a similar shape to the eight auspicious signs, and possessing unimaginable self-generated objects indeed!

56 The first line of f. 22 is not comprised in the frame of the photograph, and only a portion of the underscribed letters is visible.

57 Compare this categorization: “externally,...internally..., secretly...” with ph. 4: ‘the three categories: outer, inner, secret’

[Padmasambhava]

Also, the prophecy of the precious O rgyan on the conversion of unsuitable demons and *srin mo*, the method of blessing the place of accomplishment and making holy things like the magically self-emptying cave, the stories about the diffusion of the Buddha's doctrine in places like the holy country of India and in Tibet, Land of Snows, are made clear in the *bKa' thang*. Then, when the precious O rgyan went to this place, he saw an evil *srin mo* as lord of this place and put her in line. Concerning this, while the precious teacher was on route, he saw a red bear, and he bound it with an oath: (ph. 25) even now it is famous as the place of the bear binding. Regarding this, he saw a yellow bear, and he also bound [it]: now it is known as Dom Phug (the bear's cave).⁵⁸

[His subjugation of the *srin mo*]

Then he subdued the *srin mo*. The consciousness of the *srin mo* reabsorbed into a heart-shaped rock and fled to the country of the subterranean *nāga*. The teacher made a self-emptying cave out of the magically transformed rock. Having summoned the consciousness of the *srin mo*, at the time when he was dwelling in *samādhi*, the *asura* made an impediment: "Since that one called Padmasambhava is staying in the rock cave, let's close the door of the cave!" So they thought, and they brought down a large boulder. The precious teacher pointed his index finger and a heavenly stone fell down in the plain in front of that [rock cave]. The precious teacher did not exit from the door of the cave, (ph. 26) but exited flying up through the rock. In the place left empty by the consciousness of the *srin mo* there was an unceasing cold wind of the subterranean *nāga*, and inside the cave [appeared] a cloth of cloak, the magically manifested eight apparitions of Padmasambhava and a self-generated body of Mañjuśrī about the size of a *'khyud*. In the stone [there were] the footprints of the Teacher (Padmasambhava) and Ye shes mtsho rgyal, Hayagrīva, Sangs rgyas glang gdong, [and] Tāra.

[rGod tshang pa]

Later, the victorious rGod tshang pa the great went there and opened that place. On the east the grey tiger, on the south the blue dragon, on the west a red bird, on the north a golden tortoise. The palaces of the twenty-one Tāra, of the ten thousand billions *ḍākini*, of the four-armed Mahākāla, of the dark gold Jambhala, of the Buddha of medicine, of Jag man,⁵⁹ of [the place lord] lHa btsan [chen po], of the fierce black one (Mahākāla), of the lion faced *nāga*.

58 See De Rossi Filibeck 1988: 131 and 159; and Aufschnaiter 1976: 175-189.

59 Probably a contraction for Jag pa me len (see ph. 16, l. 6).

[Condensed list of revered objects]

(ph. 27) A Garuḍa, the Kailāsa, [the stūpa] Bya rung kha shor, [the stūpa] 'Phags pa shin kun, the four *sgo mo* of Saṃvara and his *śakti*, mGon po beng, the eight manifestations of the Guru (Padmasambhava), the eleven faced one (Avalokiteśvara), the triad Rig gsum mgon po, Amitāyus, Kilaya, [and] on the crown of rTa [mgrin] and [rDo rje] phag [mo] as *śakti*, the self-generated *stūpa* which is possessed of meaning at first sight; the effigies of the dead bodies of the two: Matram Rudra and the *srin mo*; the entourage of the Teacher; the self-generated pill and nectar of long life. The Ganges, ten measures long, etc., the watersource [of which] liberates upon seeing, cures all kinds of diseases, has a self-generated current of nectar.

[The cave of accomplishment of rGod tshang pa]

Above the cave of accomplishment, rGod tshang [pa] made a mount which was seen as a lion boulder. Inside the cave of accomplishment there was a treasure stone for the realization of each sort of prayer taken from lake Manasarovar. rGod tshang pa saw from the beginning the lion-faced rock on the opposite side. (ph. 28) From the lower forepart of the secret cave of the *ḍākinī* the seven cities of the *ḍākinī* were clearly bathed in the watersources having the eight good qualities, etc. The reverend rGod tshang pa went flying and did the practice [there]. All the *ḍākinī* became speechless and disappeared into the secret cave. In the thoughts of rGod tshang pa [this was said]: “Are there [any] left behind or were they [all] reabsorbed inside [the cave]?”. Looking at the rock of *dbu de*⁶⁰ arose a merciful lama (Avalokiteśvara). Inside the cave the blue and white Tāra blazed with warmth. A good perfume was spreading. In the current of *sidhura* there was forever a wondrous flow, etc. [There are] footprints of the eight year old rDo rje phag mo, the footprints of the mule riding goddess.

(ph. 29) It contains the assembled world prayers.

[Concluding eulogy and colophon]

E ma ho! [On] the side of the spoke of Cakrasaṃvara's mandala, excellent place among the twenty four great countries, the immeasurable Pretapurī, single among several. Prayer to the victorious mother rDo rje phag mo: [text effaced] the incarnation [holding] the compassion of the Buddha united in one; the blessing of this place converted unsuitable demons, made a wonderous self-emptying, magically-manifested cave of accomplishment.

60 Maybe “that head”; however in ph. 20, l. 4 the name of the rock is spelled *dbu bde*.

Prayer to the guru Padmasambhava: the omniscient all-seeing great lord of the Dharma, caused the opening of the door of the place and disclosed self-generated gods; such and such immeasurable wonders were uttered; the victorious protector of the sentient beings rGod tshang was disclosed; the eight manifestations of Padmasambhava; the triad Rig gsum mgon po; mGon po beng; the eleven-faced one, (ph. 30); the four gates of Saṃvara and his *śakti*; Amitāyus; Hayagrīva and his *śakti*; the four great victorious ones; the wondrous self-generated supreme deities, [all] were revealed. A Garuḍa, Kailāsa, Bya rung kha shor, 'Phags pa shing kun: [one obtains] liberation upon seeing the meritorious river which sees [these] *stūpa*; the cave of accomplishment of rGod tshang; the secret cave of the *ḍākinī*. [This] prayer has self-generated blessings.

Ten thousand billion *ḍākinī*; Tāra; the palaces of the *nāga*; the lion faced [one]; the fierce black one; Jag man; the dark gold Jambhala. There are eight pages [of this list]. Blessings! *Mangalam*! Happiness!

Since the old guidebook was not clear, it was not extensively circulated (*khod*). Well written from the cave of accomplishment of Gling ras by the lead cantor (*dbu mdzad*) Chos 'phel in the year Water Bird. All the repetitions and omissions [...]

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HOR *KHRIMS* AND THE TIBETANS: A RECAPITULATION OF ITS ENFORCEMENTS IN THE YEARS 1240-1260*

ROBERTO VITALI

The years 1240-1260 are a chapter in the history of the application of Hor *khirms* (the “Mongol law”) in Tibet that stands out from the other periods in the Tibeto-Mongol relations in view of the Hor’s several legislative efforts to find a suitable formula of governance on the plateau. The earliest provisions of the Mongol policy, devised *ad hoc* for the lands of Tibet, were formulated during this period.

The years in question cover the lapse of time in Tibetan history from the 1240 Mongol expedition on the plateau—the first Mongol campaign officially documented in the local sources, although earlier ones occurred—to the reign of Se chen rgyal po who reformed the previous policies.

O go ta’s handling of secular matters in Tibet

Following the ascent of O go ta to the Mongol throne (r. 1229-1241) after Jing gir rgyal po’s reign (1206-1227),¹ Tibet remained relatively untouched by Hor pa legislation until iron rat 1240. Hence O go ta did not influence the plateau’s affairs

* Elena is one of the few individuals in my generation, who became Tibetologists in Rome. Despite a pioneering work, a school of Tibetan studies was not born locally. It goes to her credit that she indeed has created one from her efforts and dedication. If Tibetan studies in Rome have a future is also due to Elena. She has transmitted her passion to a number of valiant students who have grown into senior Tibetologists. Decenni di lavoro meritano ben altro che questo insignificante omaggio!

¹ 1206 is the *locus classicus* for the official inception of Jing gir rgyal po’s reign as emperor of the Mongols. The Tibetan tradition has a drastically different vision of this event, for it recognises earth tiger 1218 as the commencement of his imperial spree. *rGya Bod yig tshang* (p. 254,17-255,7) says: “Tha’i dzung Jing gir rgyal po was born in wood male horse 1174. He had seven siblings. Having (p. 255) reached thirty-three years of age in earth male tiger 1218, he, by means of [his] exceedingly cruel army, took the capital out of the hands of the acting emperor of the Thang (spelled so), namely Tha rdzi, one of the rulers after Mi nyag rGyal rgod. The Hor [lord] held control of the capital of the Chinese Thang for twenty-three years (1206?-1227) and went to heaven, aged sixty-six, on the twelfth day of first month of fire female pig 1227 in the district Mi nyag Gha”.

The way Tha rdzi and rGyal rgod are positioned chronologically in the passage seems not to be consonant with their actual regnal years.

from the legal point of view for most of his reign. From O go ta's 1240 campaign on, armed intervention in Tibet fell under the direct authority of the emperor, with military actions being carried out by his generals. After this campaign—and thus at the very end of his reign—O go ta issued imperial orders, so that steps were taken to introduce his form of governance of Tibet.

A valuable record of what Tibetan historians (wrongly) consider as the first Mongol invasion of Tibet is found in ta'i si tu Byang chub rgyal mtshan's *Si tu bka' chems*.² In the course of this campaign, its Mongol chief Dor ta, as is well known, cut off the heads of 500 Rwa sgreng monks, and wiped out rGyal lha khang.

A description of Do rta's military antecedents in Eastern Tibet, prior to his appearance in Central Tibet is surprisingly missing in the sources. Next to nothing is known of his eandavours in Khams. A single sign of his military activity in the region, which does not allow a comprehensive understanding of his local strategy, is provided by the fact that he opened his way towards the west by destroying monastic institutions en route. A single case of the destruction he caused to a monastery is provided in the modern work *Nang chen nyer lnga'i rgyal rabs ngo sprod lo rgyus* which says that he levelled 'Dam dkar dgon, a Karma Kam tshang monastery in mDo stod, in earth pig 1239,³ the year before he created havoc in Central Tibet and other lands.

2 *Si tu bka' chems* in *Rlangs kyi Po ti bse ru* (p. 109,2-19): "During the time of the *khu dbon*, two in all, the Hor law came [to Tibet]. Hor Dor ta nag po, the head of the troops, cut off the heads of 500 monks of Byang Rwa sgreng. The whole of Tibet turned into a place where earth and stones shook. dPon po Dor ta then seized Ra sog 'jam mo (in Sog yul adjoining Nag(s) shod). When sPyan snga rin po che went to Dun thang, dpon po Dor ta captured dgon (sic for *sgom*) pa Shak rin. While he was preparing to murder him, [sPyan snga rin po che] prayed to sGrol ma and a rain of stones fell from the sky. dPon po Dor ta said: "You are good at producing stones" and prostrated, bowing his head to his feet. He spared the life of the *dgon* (sic for *sgom*) pa. Having entered the door of Tibetan forests, [sPyan snga rin po che] offered him the nectar of all of them on that occasion, accepted what was happening and offered submission. [Dor ta] dismantled the impregnable castles of east and west lHo brag, bsNyal, Lo ro, Byar po, Mon dPal gro, lHo Mon—that is from the land of rKong po in the east all the way to the border of Bal po. Having introduced the enforcement of the law, *chos khirms* and *rgyal khirms* rose in the sky and shone like the sun in the east. They appeared in this land where Tibetan is the only language. This was due to the kindness of sPyan snga rin po che [who benefited] the realm of Tibet. One may judge that Dor ta nag po's appearance in Tibet happened during the reign of O go ta, the son of Jing gir rgyal po".

mKhas pa'i dga' ston (p. 1416,14-17): "Later, in iron rat 1240, the Hor troops, with Dor tog (spelled so) as commander, came to Tibet for the first time from the territory [of] Byang ngos under [the command of] Go dan. As prophesied by O rgyan rin po che that peace in mDo stod, mDo smad, Sog chu, Ra sgreng and other [localities] would be disrupted and that this would be a cause for sorrow, people in mDo stod, mDo smad, Sog chu kha etc. were killed".

3 *Nang chen nyer lnga'i rgyal rabs ngo sprod lo rgyus* (p. 20,8-12): "'Dam dkar dgon was a Karma bKa' brgyud monastery established at the edge of the hill behind the 'Dam dkar settlement on the northern bank of the rDza chu, some five kilometers from sKye dgu [mdo]. Initially the monastery must have been on the rDza chu's southern bank. In 1239 Sog po Dor ta nag po, when he came to Tibet, destroyed it viciously. Then its location was moved [where it is] now".

He swept over Tibetan territory from Kong po to its southernmost reaches, all the way to the border of Bal po, tearing down all castles he found on the way in lHo brag, bsNyal, Lo ro, Byar po, Mon dPal gro and lHo Mon (present-day Bhutan).⁴

The reason for leading his warriors to the extreme limit of the Tibetan world in the opposite direction of the Mongol lands is not elucidated in the sources. I would suggest that Dor ta's strategy was motivated by two tactical reasons. He may have met local opposition, which withdrew south in front of the advancing Mongol army or may have decided to bring his conquest to the extreme limit of the Tibetan plateau in the south.

Ta'i si tu Byang chub rgyal mtshan's account adds that Shak rin, the 'Bri gung *sgom pa* at the head of the Tibetan resistance to the Mongols, was captured and on the verge of being put to death by Dor ta, were it not for the intercession of sPyan snga rin po che (1175-1255, on the gDan sa mthil throne 1208-1235), the great Phag mo gru pa religious master, who saved his life.

Dor ta's campaign in Tibet, which reached areas on the plateau close to the Himalayan range and thus remarkably far from the territory of the Mongol army's provenance, left behind devastation in gTsang, too, a region not mentioned in the sources dealing with the 1240 invasion as having been affected by the Mongol chieftain's wrath.

The inclusion of gTsang among the areas disrupted by this invasion is found in a text which belongs to a less officially historical genre than *chos 'byung-s* or *lo rgyus-s*. Neglected by the historical literature of Tibet, *gNas rnying skyes bu rnams kyi nam thar*, a monograph dedicated to this monastery, records a devastating attack by Dor ta, which caused death and destruction.⁵ The text confirms that violence was

4 In iron tiger 1290, at the time of the 'Bri gung *gling log*, dpon chen Ang len, after the sack of 'Bri gung, led the army of the Yuan and Sa skya pa alliance all the way to the areas south and south-east of 'Bri gung to crush attempts of pro-'Bri gung resistance. *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* (p. 1420,1-2) says that Ang len's army took Dwags po and Kong po. Developments of Ang len's campaign focused on targets similar to those of the military expedition led by Dor ta in 1240 (see the note above for description of the expedition in *Si tu bka' chems*).

5 *gNas rnying skyes bu rnams kyi nam thar* (f. 19a,4-19b,4): "When the Hor troops went on a rampage (*sdang pa*, lit. "became hostile") in dBus gTsang, Dor to (spelled so) seized sKyebs gNas gsar mkhar [attacking it from] the side of Cor. Many people were killed. Everyone went to Dur khrod gling (i.e. the cemetery of gNas rnying). People who travelled on the rGya road (i.e. the road from Nyang stod to lHo Mon), did not dare to leave unless accompanied by a few others. At that time, everyone heard that even various kinds of animals were lamenting. After all [kinds of] *mi ma yin-s* of Hor Bod appeared, and when everyone was in terror, [gNas rnying Chos kyi rin chen] subjugated these *mi ma yin*, and so he planted the seeds of liberation. He blessed all the places in order to restore peace. Having thought to protect all the people of the realm of Nyang po'i *rgyal kham*s from fear, he spent three days at Dur khrod gling. He blessed some corpses with *mantra-s* and carried others on his body (*glo skyor*). By being there, [Chos kyi rin chen], taken by compassion for those who were spared, was responsible for three miracles, by which he made all the phenomenal gods to appear [against] the *mi ma yin-s* of Hor Bod. He behaved like a rje btsun Mi la *yogi*

a major aspect of the campaign. The castle of sKyegs gNas gсар was seized and its temple damaged. The Hor troops, together with unspecified Tibetan allies,⁶ pillaged the place for three days, leaving behind a number of dead. Even animals were killed. This reminds one of the typical pattern of Mongol destruction, one of obliterating every form of life from a besieged site.

That the Mongols targeted the monastery may have depended upon its strategic location on the route that links Nyang stod, one of the core areas of gTsang, to the Himalayan borderlands (the hills of lHo Mon and the territory that will be later known as 'Bras ljongs), and Bengala farther away.

Hence one can conjecture that Dor ta's campaign, said by t'ai si tu Byang chub rgyal mtshan to have targeted a wide area from Kong po to Bal po (see above n. 2), was a military action articulated along several fronts rather than a single one of an improbably huge extension. After the Mongol warriors reached the centre of dBus in undescribed circumstances, where they attacked Rwa sgreng and then rGyal lha khang, their campaign split into at least three different fronts. One front was in the direction of lHo kha, and affected areas such as bsNyal and Kong po. Another was directed towards lHo brag and must have reached as far as lHo Mon. A third front of the invasion attacked gTsang and perhaps advanced towards Bal po eventually, as mentioned in *Si tu bka' chems*.

A record of efforts to prevent the pillage of a monastery is contained in Kun dga' blo gros's *Nyang stod bla ma'i mtshan gyi deb ther*.⁷ It seems that two attempts were made in succession to neutralise the impending disaster, when Hor warriors were on rampage. The first was by *bla ma*-s of the Nyang stod and 'Bring mtshams regions, the best known of them being Man lung pa. The other was by local masters, manifestly when the matter boiled down to an attack to their own monastery gNas rnying, which

[throughout the territory] all the way to 'Brin chu (the "Brin River"). Likewise inconceivable miracles took place".

6 Compulsory military service was one of the impositions inflicted by Mongol domination upon the Tibetans. The fact that Dor ta's troops were joined by an unidentified Tibetan military contingent in the siege of gNas rnying engenders unsolved historical questions. Besides ascertaining who these Tibetans were, one would like to know what circumstances had led to forcing this burden upon them. Was it the consequence of a regime of vassalage preexisting Dor ta's military action, not recorded in the sources to my knowledge, or a more topical situation at the time of the 1240 Mongol campaign?

7 Kun dga' blo gros's *Nyang stod bla ma'i mtshan gyi deb ther* (p. 462,2-5), written in earth dog 1418, says: "Before chos rje Sa pan went to brGya (sic) yul, splinter Hor groups belonging to the Hor troops, mostly bad people, were creating grave disturbance (*gnar* spelled so for *snar*). When the times were not peaceful, religious exponents of Nyang stod as far as 'Bri mtshams confronted them for talks. The heads of the mission to meet them, when they met at Za ri in the area, i.e. Man lung rin po che, Ka la drug rin po che, 'U brag rin po che and sNgo tsha rin po che from 'Bri mtshams, those four, were the chief leaders. It appears in old documents that [personalities], such as the gNas rnying mkhan po Chos [kyi] rin [chen] and the lHo pa'i *bla ma*, having worked [at the problem] locally, met the Hor, and this was when they laboured for a conciliation".

confirms that this was the main target of the action described in *gNas rnying skyes bu dam pa'i rnam thar*. That the events refer to the Dor ta invasion seem to be meant by the reference that they took place before Sa skya pandi ta left for Hor yul (wrongly mentioned as rGya yul in the source). He began his journey to Byang ngos to meet Go dan in 1244.

The allusion to splinter groups of Hor warriors being in charge of this military action is another clue that the tactics adopted were to split the Mongol army and to assign them to the multiple fronts of the campaign.

Following the invasion by Dor ta—the Mongol warrior aptly styled *nag po*, for he disseminated destruction in the lands of Central Tibet and farther away with a cruelty of which the Tibetans became aware from then on in their relations with the Mongols—O go ta was in a position of power vis-à-vis the Tibetans.

A first move was to launch a census of the Tibetan population. This well known pillar of the Mongol system of dominance was a task undertaken by Dor ta himself and Li byi ta, both addressed as military chiefs in the concerned passage of *Si tu bKa' chems* in *Rlangs kyi Po ti bse ru*.⁸

Most significantly, the well known Mongol administration of Tibet was set up in 1240 by O go ta in the aftermath of Dor ta nag po's campaign. The practice whereby military campaigns in Tibet were followed by the imposition of a Mongol structure of governance was inaugurated at that time.

It is not clear whether O go ta's reform was influenced by Go dan, a son of O go ta and a younger brother of the Hor emperor Go yug, to whom, in the previous year (earth pig 1239), the fiefdom of Byang ngos, the old frontier area of the Tangut kingdom, had been entrusted. He thus was posted near Tibet to supervise its affairs.⁹

Having identified who his new subjects were, O go ta passed orders to them for the first time in the history of the relations between the Hor and the Tibetans. O go ta decided, with an imperial decree, to delegate Tibetan officers in Tibet to run the affairs of the country. His policy was thus to leave local power in the hands of Tibetan dignitaries of well known charisma in the absence of a supreme leader of the country, whom Dor ta could not locate because he did not exist.

8 The *bstan rtsis* appended to *Si tu bka' chems* in *Rlangs Po ti bse ru* (p. 447,21-448,2) says: "In iron male rat 1240, by Hor rgyal po O ko (p. 448) ta's (spelled so) order, Hor dmag Li byi ta and Dor ta, these two, having been sent earlier and later, took censuses of the population's households (*dud*)".

9 *Si tu bka' chems* in *Rlangs kyi Po ti bse ru* (p. 110,2-3): "rGyal bu Go dan was the Byang ngos pa ruler [handling matters] in the direction of Tibet". Wylie (1977 p. 109-113) sees in Go dan the driving force behind the expedition. That Go dan's headquarters were in Byang Mi nyag (i.e. at Byang ngos) indicates that the management of Tibetan affairs was run from the erstwhile Tangut kingdom. This is explicitly mentioned by dPa' bo gtsug lag 'phreng ba (*mKhas pa'i dga' ston* p. 1416,14-17; see above n. 2) when he traces back to Mi nyag Byang ngos the starting point of the 1240 Mongol invasion of Tibet. Do be ta's campaign against Tibet in 1252 was again launched from Byang ngos (ibid. p. 1419,6-7).

The decree granted the administration of Tibet to the 'Bri gung pa/Phag mo gru pa camp, who exercised power for a brief period of time—from 1241 up to Go yug's reform of a few years later (see below).¹⁰ In the organisation of power delegated by the Mongols to Tibetans in Tibet, the 'Bri gung *sgom pa*, i.e. *sgom pa Shak rin*, was granted supreme authority over dBus gTsang (he was the *spyi dpon*), having, as subordinates, a governor (*dpon*) of gTsang—a dBus pa by the way: he was rDo rje dpal, the Phag mo gru pa *sgom pa*—and one governor (*dpon*) overseeing the Yar 'brog lho pa (presumably the people of lHo brag). This latter was gZhon nu 'bum, whose provenance I am in no position to ascertain. O go ta also appointed a governor overlooking the affairs of sTod mNga' ris skor gsum, whose title was *gnam sa dpa' shi* (see *Si tu bKa' chems* in *Rlangs kyi Po ti bse ru* p. 448,7-8, where it is wrongly spelled *gnam pa dpa' shi*).

I cannot explain the overlapping of roles between the governor of dBus gTsang, who was the *spyi dpon*, and the governor of gTsang, who was a *dpon*, but it should be noted that no role in this delegation of power to local officers was awarded to the Sa skya pa.

The *bstan rtsis* appended to ta'i si tu Byang chub rgyal mtshan's *Si tu bka' chems* adds that, on the occasion of O go ta's iron rat 1240 appointments, a *khri dpon* (lDan ma *sgom brTson*) was chosen to lead the Phag mo gru pa (see n. 9 above). The traditional assessment of the inception of the *khri skor* system is, as is well known, placed in earth dragon 1268.¹¹ The allusion to the existence of a Phag mo gru pa *khri dpon* in iron rat 1240, almost thirty years before the actual beginning of the system—a

10 The *bstan rtsis* appended to *Si tu bka' chems* in *Rlangs kyi Po ti bse ru* (p. 448,2-10) reads: “[In iron male rat 1240] the Hor law was enforced. [The Hor] supported gdan sa Phag gru and 'Bri khung thel. Local lords were chosen to establish *rgyal khirms* and *chos khirms* in Bod yul dBus gTsang [and] mNga' ris skor gsum. The emperor made 'Bri khung the main territory of dBus gTsang, and *sgom pa Shak rin* was nominated *spyi dpon* (“supreme headman”). The emperor appointed rDo rje dpal ba to be the gTsang pa's *dpon*, gZhon nu 'bum to be the g.Yor po Yar 'brog lho pa's *dpon*, [and] a *nam pa* (sic for *gnam sa*) *dpa' shi* to be the mNga' ris skor gsum *dpon*. They were appointed as leaders to administer the law in their own [territories]. In the same year, the lord (i.e. sPyan snga rin po che) appointed lDan ma *sgom brTson* to be the Phag gru's *khri dpon*”.

11 On the *khri skor bcu gsum* system see *rGya Bod yig tshang* (p. 298,7-9): “In the earth male dragon year (1268), the envoys A kon and Mi gling, these two, who had been directly sent by the imperial court, came. All the human communities and the lands [of Tibet] took the name of the great Hor-s”).

Ngor chos 'byung (p. 326,7) says: “When ['Gro mgon 'Phags pa] was thirty-four, in the earth male dragon year (1268) *dpon chen Shakya bzang po* established the *khri skor bcu gsum*”). See also Wylie (1977 p. 125), where the establishment of the *khri skor* system is connected with the Mongol census of Tibet in the same year.

If the territorial dimensions of the *khri skor* system are taken into account, it is natural to wonder why it is commonly believed that the system was introduced with the populations of Central Tibet in mind, and no others. This important historiographical question—whether this territorial restriction was actually the case—needs to be assessed on another occasion.

state of affairs aptly noted by Sörensen-Hazod (2007 p.556-557)—deserves consideration, unless it is being used anachronistically, as in literary references to the alleged existence of 15th century *khri skor-s* in mNga' ris smad and southern Byang thang (see, for instance, Vitali 2012 n. 239).

Persistence of an earlier notion is more common than transfers of events to an earlier date. If the statement under study is taken ad litteram, the process of creation of *khri skor-s* in dBus gTsang would have begun earlier than the inception of the sovereignty exercised by the Yuan dynasty over Tibet with the Sa skya pa as their agents. In any event, the matter is confusing because, in another passage, ta'i si tu Byang chub rgyal mtshan defines the same lDan ma sgom brTson not as a *khri dpon* but as a *spyi dpon*, the title held by the 'Bri gung sgom pa Shak rin.¹²

This problem notwithstanding, one has the impression that the ta'i si tu's reference to O go ta's allocations of posts is intentionally incomplete, for Byang chub rgyal mtshan seems to mention only the situation among the Phag mo gru pa and their associates, such as the 'Bri gung pa, and that other positions of authority may have been granted to other aristocratic families of Central Tibet.

O go ta was the Hor pa emperor who expanded the role of the Tibetans, until then eminently religious, as their interaction with the Tangut court shows, into more secular areas as an effect of his iron rat 1240 appointments of Tibetan officers to be in charge of functions of various regions of the plateau.

Go yug, Go dan and Sa pan

Things changed soon after O go ta's death in iron ox 1241. The new emperor Go yug (r. 1241-1246) reformed the system O go ta had enforced upon Tibet almost immediately.¹³ He chose a different political solution, namely to delegate supreme

12 *Si tu bka' chems* in *Rlangs kyi Po ti bse ru* (p. 111,16-112,2): "When sPyan snga rin po che was the *bla ma* of 'Bri gung (1235-1255; see *lHo rong chos 'byung* p. 369,21-370,1), the Hor law was enforced. The Phag mo gru *khri skor* was assigned to Hu la hu. For the sake of lDan ma sgom brTson, who was a useless *spyi dpon*, following his support of the request to sgom pa Shak rin's that troops should be brought in, but not as far as Thang po che and 'Phyong rgyas, [the 'Bri gung pa secular chieftain] offered [him] the white land, part of the sNa nam *brgya skor*. Moreover, the *sgom pa* said: "A border area at this 'Ol kha [land of ours, the 'Bri gung pa.] will turn out to be a great service [rendered] to the *gdan sa* (i.e. the Phag mo gru pa). You (p. 112) should accept it", but [lDan ma sgom brTson] replied with a prostration: "*sGom pa rin po che!* Our own community will not be able to hold it"."

13 *bsTan rtsis* appended to *Si tu bka' chems* in *Rlangs kyi Po ti bse ru* (p. 448,10-14): "In iron female ox 1241, O ko (spelled so) ta died, thirteen years on the throne having elapsed. Go yug ascended the throne in that year. Given that Go yug assigned persons of dBus gTsang to be the *bla mchod* of his younger brother Go dan, Mongol [troops] were not sent to Tibet during the reign of Go yug".

This is a reference to Sa skya pandi ta, with the additional idea that the decision to chose him as the representative of the Tibetans in Hor yul was an enterprise of the emperor.

control of dBus gTsang to his younger brother Go dan who, in charge of affairs in Tibet since 1239, modified the previous policy. As is well known, Go dan appointed Sa skya pandi ta Kun dga' rgyal mtshan (1182-1251) as his *bla ma* and Tibetan political interlocutor (see below n. 13). It is no less well known that, in wood dragon 1244, Sa pan with his two young nephews, 'Phags pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan (1235-1280) and Phyag na rdo rje (1239-1267), began his journey to the court of Go dan in the Hor yul borderland.¹⁴

The fact that Sa pan brought his two young nephews along with him to Hor yul seems to amount to the implementation of a political principle adopted by the Mongols vis-à-vis the populations they subjugated. Family members of surrendering rulers were kept at the Mongol court as hostages. Young 'Phags pa and Phyag na rdo rje may well have been considered Tibetan hostages and their Sa skya pa uncle the unofficial ruler of Tibet.¹⁵

The appointment of Sa pan transformed the type of governance in Tibet, which had been dominated by the bKa' bryud pa schools until then, in a drastic manner. The system passed from being an indirect Mongol administration with Tibetan officers in charge of dBus gTsang to a direct handling of local affairs with a Mongol prince bearing supreme responsibility. However, one should note that mNga' ris skor gsum, assigned separately to a *gnam sa dpa' shi* by O go ta, continued to be tied to the same power structure under the 'Bri gung pa/Phag mo gru pa block for a few decades more, as another passage of *Si tu bka' chems* in *Rlangs kyi Po ti bse ru* proves (ibid. p. 113,11-114,8; also Vitali 1996 p. 558 and n. 952).

That Sa pan exercised—or was forced to exercise—a secular role assigned to him by Go dan is revealed in the famous letter sent by the great Sa skya pa master to the Tibetan chieftains. Its disputed authenticity notwithstanding, Sa pan's missive to the Tibetan chieftains has next to nothing concerning religion, only a number of caveats, recommendations and orders of a secular nature.¹⁶

14 *bsTan rtsis* appended to *Si tu bka' chems* in *Rlangs kyi Po ti bse ru* (p. 448,16-18): "In wood male dragon 1244, chos rje Sa pan, uncle and nephews, three in all, were invited by rgyal bu Go dan to Hor yul Byang ngos. They reached [there]. sPyan snga rje sent along sgom pa Shak rin from 'Bri khung thel".

These statements show that the Tibetan delegation meant to meet Go dan was not restricted to the Sa skya pa but was more representative of the power structure in Tibet, for it included supreme secular authorities from the bKa' bryud pa ranks.

15 Did the Mongols, then, see Sa skya pandi ta as a ruler of Tibet? And consequently, were the many *bla ma*-s at the various Mongol courts (*ti shri*-s being a case apart) considered hostages, regardless of local acceptance of these religious masters as spiritual leaders?

16 I see in the text of the letter many issues being discussed that seem to bear closely upon the Tibeto-Mongol relations of those days, but this does not help to establish whether Sa pan composed the letter; perhaps he was only its compulsive signatory.

The way Sa pan's letter to the Tibetan dignitaries is formulated indeed gives the impression that he is writing from a Mongol perspective so much so that one wonders whether it was actually drafted by him or whether he was passing on the orders and recommendations of his overlords.

The time of Go dan's appointment of Sa pan as his Tibetan interlocutor crucially shows that it was partially ineffective. Go dan and Sa pan actually met only for the first time in fire sheep 1247, one year after Go yug's death that brought his short reign to an end.¹⁷ Go dan's father Mo 'gor was chosen as successor in the same year;¹⁸ his ascension to the throne culminated in his official appointment in earth bird 1249, followed by his proclamation as emperor in the *quriltai* of iron pig 1251 (for all this, see Boyle 1971 p. 224 n. 96 and p. 228 n. 124). The selection of Mo 'gor rgyal po frustrated Go dan's regnal ambitions.

Sa pan thus found himself with no prospects of obtaining a position of preeminence. The dominant Tibetan tradition holds that both Go dan and Sa skya pandi ta's passages occurred in iron pig 1251. But while this is valid for Sa pan, a 1251 death for Go dan is highly improbable. A reference to him for the year 1253 is *terminus post quem* for his passing (Wylie 1977 p. 110, Petech 1990 p. 14).

On the one hand, the Tibetan master's nephews were still too young to take on a significant role vis-à-vis the Mongols, so that Sa skya pa aspirations were toned down for a while; on the other, Go dan's ambitions even regarding his authority over Tibet were sidelined by Mo 'gor rgyal po's reform of its administration. It was not death that jeopardised Go dan's control of the High Asian plateau but the new emperor's system of governance over Tibet.

Mongol Campaigns on the Plateau during Mo 'gor rgyal po's Reign and his Organisation of Tibet

Tibet's system of governance was indeed modified a few years later by Mo 'gor rgyal po. In doing so, this Mongol emperor reverted to the two consolidated mechanisms priorly used by O go ta in Tibet: military campaigns and censuses.

It is well known that the Tibetan historians attribute two campaigns to Mo 'gor rgyal po. With the first, in iron dog 1250, he reminded the Tibetans of Mongol military might by sending an army led by Do be ta to invade Tibet from Byang ngos. The Mongol warriors killed a great number of people and tore down Mon mkhar mGon po gdong.¹⁹

The exact location of Mon mkhar mGon po gdong is not clear to me, but Mon mkhar, rather than being in some peripheral lower land, is the name of the territory

17 *bsTan rtsis* appended to *Si tu bka' chems* in *Rlangs kyi Po ti bse ru* (p. 448,1-20): "In fire male tiger (sic for horse: 1246), when [sPyan snga rin po che] was seventy-two years old, Go yug died, six years on the throne having elapsed".

18 *bsTan rtsis* appended to *Si tu bka' chems* in *Rlangs kyi Po ti bse ru* (p. 448,20-21): "In fire female sheep 1247, Mon gor (spelled so) rgyal po ascended the throne".

19 Among several sources dealing with it see *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* (p. 1419,6-7), which reads: "In iron bird (sic for iron dog 1250), the emperor Mong gor gan ascended the throne and sent Do be ta's Hor troops against Tibet from Byang ngos. Countless men were killed at Mon khar mGon po gdong".

associated with rNam sras gling,²⁰ the palace on the southern bank of the gTsang po, opposite the bSam yas area on the river's northern side. Hence Mon mkhar, an area traditionally under the Bya pa family,²¹ whose fiefdom was in gNyal,²² should be sought in lHo kha. One of the Phag mo gru pa *gzhi ka bcu gsum*, mostly in lHo kha, which were set up by their khri dpon rDo rje dpal during the 13th century, was Mon mkhar rGya thang (see, e.g., pan chen bSod nams grags pa, *Deb ther dmar po gsar ma* (Tucci transl.) p. 206). This is a sign that Do be ta's Mongols stroke hard in the heart of Tibet.

In the same year, iron dog 1250—and probably just after Do be ta's campaign against Tibet—Mo 'gor rgyal po issued an imperial decree, the existence of which is mentioned in the *bsTan rtsis* appended to the *Gang can rig mdzod* edition of *Si tu bka' chems* (on its significance for the policy devised for Tibet see below).²³

20 *Guru bKra shis chos 'byung* (p. 682,11-17) has this to say about the birth place of the great rNying ma master zhabs drung Padma 'phrin las: “On the south bank of the gTsang po, among the areas of g.Yon ru there is one known as Mon mkhar, in whose surroundings, [populated] with herders in later times, the battlefield of rgyal po Khyi ka ra thod, illegitimate descendant of the lineage of the earlier *chos rgyal-s*, was located. So goes an account. However it may have been, in this area—a heavenly abode—at the rival *gzhis ka* of rNam sras gling, [Padma 'phrin las]... was born ... in iron female snake 1641”. For another placement of rNam sras gling in the area of Mon mkhar, see *Si tu Chos kyi rgya mtsho, dBus gTsang gnas yig* (p. 175,1-14).

21 A lineage of the Bya pa *khri dpon-s* is found in *rGyal rabs chos 'byung shel dkar me long mkhas pa'i mgul rgyan* (p. 247,9-248,5): “It is well known that the Bya pa *khri dpon-s* stemmed from the family of 'Dab bzang and gShog bzang, the rulers of the Yar lung smad Bya. In early time that family counted on a few *mkhas grub*. Some two generations after A mi Bya nag chen po Rin chen 'od, Kun dga' rin chen attended upon the Sa skya *dpon*, Kun dga' bzang po. Thereafter, dPal bzang touched the feet of 'gro mgon 'Phags pa. His son 'Phags chen sPyan ba ba and others appeared. His son was Tshul khriims bzang po and the latter's son was dKon mchog bzang po; the latter's son bKra shis dpal bzang was appointed Bya pa *khri dpon* by gong ma Grags rgyal. His son was rGyal ba bkra shis; the latter's son bKra shis dar rgyas was especially devoted to Karma pa Chos grags rgya mtso. He made a *bKa' 'gyur* written in golden letters. His son Nor bu bkra shis [and another one] were born, two in all. His son 'Brug pa *sprul sku* was born. In accordance to the wish of his parents, he held the secular power in the later part of his life. His sons were bsTan (p. 248) 'dzin Nor bu and mTsho skyes rdo rje, two in all. His sons were Mi pham tshe yi dbang po [and another one], two in all. His sons were Karma tshe dbang grags pa [and another one], two in all. The Gangs dkar rulers appeared in succession. Likewise, in those days the community chieftains, whose secular power was truly high, were exclusively appointed by order of the imperial *sde srid-s*”.

22 The role and political status of the Bya pa aristocrats during the Mongol period—and the years that preceded it—are a rather complex issue. The Phag mo gru pa complained of some favoritism accorded to the gNyal pa by the Mongols at their own expense, which led to a territorial curtailment of the Phag mo gru pa territory. This seems to have been the scenario after the formation of the Yuan dynasty, for Do be ta's 1250 campaign was especially harsh on them. For an extremely succinct assessment of the Bya pa people and principality see, e.g., pan chen bSod nams grags pa, *Deb ther dmar po gsar ma* (Tucci transl. p. 236).

23 *bsTan rtsis* appended to *Si tu bka' chems* in *rLangs Po ti bse ru* (p. 449,3-17): “In iron male dog 1250, which was the seventy-sixth year [after sPyan snga rin po che's birth], in the presence of Mon

The 1250 military campaign was followed by another one in the next year, led by Hur ta,²⁴ whose target was again the heart of dBus and again the area south of the gTsang po, for he raided Gra, Dol and gZhung, the three areas situated in lHo kha.

Those were hectic years for Tibet, which suffered frequent Mongol attacks. *rGya Bod yig tshang* has a cryptic account of the campaign in Khams and lJang that occurred soon after the expeditions of 1250 and 1251. Its commander—manifestly rgyal bu Go pe la—is defined as the Hor *rgyal po* in the passage. The imperial title is assigned to him retroactively in this case, for this military action predated Se chen rgyal po's 1260 ascension to the throne. *rGya Bod yig tshang* (p. 277,2-5) reads:

“When the Hor sent troops against lJang yul, [people] were conscripted downwards (*mar*)²⁵ from the two 'ja' mo of mDo smad, in addition to the 'jams-s of China. [The Mongols] having struck with progressive violence, the two 'ja' mo of mDo stod, [namely] Ga re and Go dpe, turned out to be utterly gracious to dBus gTsang”.

gor rgyal po, each monk, *lo tsa*, great community and division of Tibet, each high and low ranking representative [at court], who was the *bla mchod* of the emperor and his brothers, made a petition. rGyal bu Go dan having received Tibet, the system of assigning [the Tibetans] to some leaders was introduced in the following way. The 'Bri khung pa were assigned to Mon gor rgyal po; the Sa skya pa to Go dan himself; the Tshal pa to Se chen Go pe la; the Phag mo gru pa, g.Ya' bzang pa [and] Thang po che pa to sTod Hor rgyal po Hu la hu; Rab btsun, Gru gu sngang and Kha rag, these three, to rgyal bu sBo lcog; the lHa sa (spelled so for lHa pa), 'Brug pa [and] La stod Thang chung, these three, to rgyal bu Mo gha la; except the rGya ma family, the Bya yul pa were assigned to Si ga gan (i.e. khan); the Ki kam pa [and] Khra sa ngab pa to Gal du la. As requested to Mon gor, each of [these princes] was entrusted with protecting a land. The lands of 'Jang, brKyang and Phag mo gru, each of these three, were sought from Mon gor by rgyal bu Hu la. A 'ja' sa (“patent”) was issued”.

The assignment of lands belonging to various noble families of Central Tibet, defined (anachronistically?) as *khri skor*-s, to Mongol princes is mentioned in another passage of *Si tu bka' chems in Rlangs kyi Po ti bse ru* (p. 110,1-6) but in a reductive formulation: “The throne was given to Mon 'gor rgyal po and, at that same time, rgyal bu Go dan was made lord of Byang ngogs (spelled so for Byang ngos) [located] in the direction of Tibet. Since [Tibetan] *bla mchod*-s (“officiating *bla ma*-s”) were appointed to Go dan A ka la, the 'Bri khung pa were assigned to Mon 'gor rgyal po, the Tshal pa were assigned to Se chen rgyal po, the Phag mo gru pa were assigned to rgyal bu Hu la hu and the sTag lung pa were assigned to A ri bho ga, to these four royal lineages. A leader at the head of each *khri skor* was chosen”.

24 *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* (p. 1419,8-7): “The next year (i.e. iron pig 1251, after the campaign led by Do be ta in iron dog 1250) the Hor troops of Hur ta came. They killed [many people] including rGyal tsha Jo 'ber. The proverb “This was when grass [did not] grow in Gra, Dol [and] gZhung anymore” was formulated”.

25 What does the term *mar* stand for in this context cannot be assessed with any amount of precision. Where the direction “*mar*” leads to in the unfolding of the expedition should be worked out in the light of rgyal bu Go pe la's itinerary in order to approach lJang yul (to the south of Khams), succinctly outlined in these passages. I would think that the trajectory of the Mongol army's advance was from somewhere in China to A mdo, and from there to northern Khams (mDo stod) and farther on towards an area possibly on the way to the Nan-ch'ao kingdom. But this is nothing more than a guess.

These sentences are cryptic. They obviously refer to the steps adopted by the Hor to recruit people for the lJang yul campaign. They first did it in China and then at the two 'ja' mo of A mdo. The Mongol striking force escalated in the campaign, due to the involvement of the two 'ja' mo of mDo stod (northern Khams), where recruitment also took place. The latter turned out to be beneficial to dBus gTsang in an unspecified manner. Does this being “beneficial” implies that Central Tibet was spared from providing soldiers to rgyal bu Go pe la's army?

Go pe la set out against lJang at the end of 1252, crossed the rMa chu probably in early 1253 and, in the later part of the same year, advanced in Khams territory as far as the southern reaches of the plateau (Chavannes 1903 vol. II, p. 2-3). He conquered Ta-li, the capital of lJang, in 1254 (Pellicot 1962 p. 169-p. 181 and p. 747) or else in December 1253 (Matsuda 1992 p. 252-253). The campaign in lJang is dated in the *re'u mig* of Sum pa mkhan po's *dPag bsam ljon bzang* (p. 854), which says:

“Wood tiger (1254): the Hor emperor went to war against Ga ra lJang (the Black Mywao). In the next year he turned back”.

The “next year” (i.e. 1255) was when Go pe la sent his invitation to Karma Pakshi to join him in Eastern Tibet, but the second Karma pa preferred to accept the summons of Mo 'gor rgyal po. He travelled all the way the Hor yul to meet the emperor (see below).

The fact that Mon mkhar mGon po gdong can be traced to lHo kha indicates that during the early 1250s Mongol campaigns were directed towards different Tibetan regions. Two were against Central Tibet; another affected Khams and was eventually aimed at lJang. It seems that they were the outcome of an overall strategy conceived by Mo 'gor rgyal po, after he ascended the throne, in order to exert his power over the most populated regions of Tibet and the neighbouring Yunnanese kingdom.

As for the other typical tool used by the Mongols to control a subjugated land, A skyid and A gon were assigned the duty of undertaking in unspecified territories a census of the Tibetan population which amounted to the notable number of ten millions,²⁶ a figure that exceeds the present-day demographics of its people. One wonders, given the number mentioned, whether the census covered the entire Tibetan plateau—an important issue indeed—but this is not revealed by any piece of Tibetan literature.

26 *bsTan rtsis* appended to *Si tu bka' chems* in *Rlangs kyi Po ti bse ru* (p. 448,21-449,3): “In fire female sheep 1247, when [sPyan snga rin po che] was seventy-three years old, Mon gor rgyal po ascended the throne. The next year, earth male monkey 1248, Si tu A skyid [and] A kon were entrusted to the [concerned] lands. (p. 449) They undertook the census of the people of Tibet and their households (*dud*), amounting to the number of ten millions. Both the *gdan* [*sa* and] *khri* [*dpon*] having rendered service, Mon sgor (spelled so) granted to the *rje* (i.e. sPyan snga rin po che) and rGyal ba [rin po che], uncle and nephew, a 'ja' sa and other [awards]”. 1248 is too early a date for the events described in the passage.

The orders issued by Mo 'gor rgyal po in 1250 with his ordinance were conservative but also innovative in that he expanded the organisation introduced by O go ta. He did not drastically reform the status quo established by his predecessor Go yug, for he confirmed Go dan's jurisdiction over Central Tibet and assigned the Sa skya pa to him, but this appointment was short lived.

In addition, Mo 'gor rgyal po granted authority over various lands of Central Tibet to several noble families from these territories, including the 'Bri gung pa and Phag mo gru pa, who had been dispossessed of their preeminence by the previous Hor pa administration, and to Mongol princes, in an effort that aimed at introducing a wider distribution of power.

With Mo 'gor rgyal po's 1250 reform, each one of the Tibetan aristocratic families traditionally controlling areas and estates in Central Tibet were forced to pay tribute to one or another eminent Mongol prince in exchange for protection and favours, including that of living life at court, a burden and a privilege at the same time. It was protection at a price, the reward for paying heavy taxes to the Mongol princes being the recognition of these aristocratic families' authority over the lands from which this taxation came.²⁷ Hence, the association with a Mongol prince at the same time was a guarantee of control over their respective estates.

The provision whereby the Mongol nobility exercised authority over their foreign lands collectively did not apply to Tibet (see Sørensen-Hazod 2007 p. 557). This is proven by the system conceived for Tibet, which was adopted first by O go ta and developed by Mo 'gor rgyal po. Mongol princes held exclusive control of individual appanages in Tibet.

Ta'i si tu Byang chub rgyal mtshan in his *bKa' chems* (see *ibid. passim*) spends more than a few words—adducing facts in support—on the Mongol system of dividing territories in Tibet among their princes. He says that the system of collective ownership did not apply to Tibet. He states that Se chen rgyal po, upon ascending the throne, took over apportioned estates in Central Tibet and granted them to his protégés, the Sa skya pa—and, therefore, ultimately to himself.

Besides well known burdens imposed by the Mongol chieftains upon the aristocratic families at the head of various Tibetan territories, such as taxation, compulsory labour or the maintenance of the postal relay network, another strict duty was that these families had to provide military support to their princely master. This service had been demanded already during the reign of O go ta, and an instance of its application in Tibet is mentioned in a local source (see above for the circumstances of Dor ta's attack on gNas rnying). That the Tshal pa provided compulsory military service to rgyal bu Go pe la is recorded in the reference to the military campaign waged by this Mongol prince against lJang yul. A masterly passage in *rGyal rabs*

27 In the letter Sa pan urges Tibetans to pay taxes to the Mongols, this being a direct sign that, rather than protection to the main families of the Land of Snows, it was a matter of Mongol exploitation of their subjects.

sogs Bod kyi yig tshang gsal ba'i me long depicts this state of affairs in succinct but unequivocal terms. Tshal pa troops fought in lJang alongside Go pe la's Mongols, and are praised for their bravery.²⁸

On the religious front, Mo 'gor rgyal po is well known for his close interaction with Karma Pakshi (*Karma Pakshi'i rang nam* p. 100,3-104,7). The way it is described in the biographies of the second Karma pa, this interaction seems to have been eminently spiritual, a feature confirmed by the absence of signs that this bKa' brgyud pa school benefited from any imperial endowment. Moreover, no aristocratic family from Tibet, which could be associated with them, is mentioned in the emperor's

28 *rGyal rabs sogs Bod kyi yig tshang gsal ba'i me long* affirms that dpon chen rGyal rin (1233-1289)—the Tshal pa *dpon sa* from the age of twenty-three in wood hare 1255 until his death in earth ox 1289—went to the imperial court in 1259. A member of a delegation composed of fifty dignitaries, dpon chen rGyal rin, on that occasion, met rgyal bu Go pe la who took him along when the Hor prince waged war on lJang (spelled so) yul. The Tshal pa troops did well in the campaign and rGyal rin became a loyalist of the Mongol prince. The Tshal pa *dpon sa* was back to Eastern Tibet together with his superior and participated in the *quriltai* of the first month of the monkey year 1260, during which rgyal bu Go pe la took the throne for himself. Se chen rgyal po held rGyal rin in high regard and covered him with lavish gifts on the occasion.

rGyal rabs sogs Bod kyi yig tshang gsal ba'i me long (p. 111,4-6): “In the year of the sheep (1259), [dPon Sangs rgyas dngos grub] accompanied dpon Rin rgyal (i.e. rGyal rin), who was on his way to the imperial court. The former went there taking along Ban khos pa Shes rab 'bum, Lo pa dpon Shak and Byang Ji ston pa, altogether fifty [dignitaries]. They met rgyal bu Gu be la. [dPon rGyal rin] escorted rgyal bu Gu be la, who brought troops against lJang yul, and took along [troops of his own]. [His troops' warfare] was excellent. After coming back, in the first month of the monkey year (1260), the prince was given the throne and took the name Se chen rgyal po. 'Tshal pa (spelled so) Rin rgyal (i.e. rGyal rin) [note: the three sons born to him were the eldest spyang mnga' Nyi ma shes rab, the middle dpon dGa' bde and the youngest Rin chen dbang phyug] was awarded one *bre* of silver, along with brocade and silk. He was given countless gifts”.

The chronology of rGyal rin's interaction with rgyal bu Go pe la, and therefore the lJang yul campaign, is postdated in *rGyal rabs sogs Bod kyi yig tshang gsal ba'i me long*, which places rgyal bu Go pe la's campaign in lJang yul in 1259. Go pe la's military action indeed occurred in 1254-1255 (see Chavannes 1903 p. 2-3 and Szerb 1980 p. 272-277), preceded and followed by the Mongol prince's presence in Khams. Tibet's 1259 delegation was manifestly sent after the Tshal pa *dpon sa* had participated in the successful campaign against lJang rather than before this event.

Gung thang dkar chag (see Sörensen-Hazod 2007 p. 151) has a similar late dating of rGyal rin's interaction with rgyal bu Go pe la and the lJang yul expedition. Also see *ibid.* (n. 398), where Sörensen-Hazod mention the date 1253-1254 for the campaign against lJang and say it continued until 1259.

The presence in lJang yul of Tshal pa troops led by their *dpon sa*, rGyal rin, does not help disentangle another chronological problem—the passage of the Sa skya pa under the jurisdiction of Go pe la at the expense of his brother Go dan (see below in the text). The fact that Go pe la led Tshal pa troops to lJang does not rule out the possibility that other ones under different Tibetan chieftains might have been conscripted on the occasion. The lack of a reference to a Sa skya pa military contingent participating in the expedition does not disprove that it was part of it, and thus that the Sa skya pa were at the service of Go pe la at the time. The absence of any reference to them in *rGyal rabs sogs Bod kyi yig tshang gsal ba'i me long* is useful neither to support nor to dismiss this possibility.

decree, for the simple reason that no aristocratic family of Tibet supported the Karma pa. The exception to this state of affairs was the patronage of the Karma pa by the dBu royal house of 'Bri klung, to which Karma Pakshi belonged, which did not extend to dBu gTsang, for it was restricted to areas of northern Khams (see Vitali, in press).

This observation concerning the status granted to the second Karma pa by Mo 'gor rgyal po entails another one. In the same way as the 1240 edict issued by O go ta, the 1250 decree ignores religious issues entirely. One then wonders whether O go ta's religious contacts were restricted to Tshal pa bla ma Gung thang pa (see their interaction in *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* p. 1415,19-1416,9), and Mo 'gor rgyal po's to Karma Pakshi, excluding occasional exchanges between the latter and 'gro mgon 'Phags pa.

It was during the reign of Mo 'gor rgyal po that the ties between rgyal bu Go pe la, the future Se chen rgyal po, and 'gro mgon 'Phags pa were established. In wood bird 1253, the young Sa skya pa *bla ma*, aged nineteen at that time, went to meet Mu gu du la and Go pe la,²⁹ respectively a son and a brother of Sa pan's mentor Go dan (*rGya Bod yig tshang* p. 256,2-4). Already during their first meeting the young *bla ma* favourably impressed Go pe la, with whom he established personal bonds. These events indicate that a further realignment between princely families of Tibet with Mongol princes took place soon after Mo 'gor rgyal po's edict. Go pe la, who was originally given the Tshal pa, received the Sa skya pa, whose services Go dan lost. The granting of the Sa skya pa (and the Tshal pa on a minor scale) to Go pe la remained a political constant for the entire existence of the Yuan dynasty. Hence rgyal bu Go pe la sharpened his political vision on how to handle Tibet in the years during which he was in the erstwhile Byang Mi nyag kingdom and Khams.³⁰

It would then seem that the great *bla ma*/patron relationship between the two, a milestone in the history of Tibet, was the outcome of the religious and secular policy of the Go dan camp and the Sa skya pa, initiated by the latter and Sa pan. It apparently suffered a setback with Sa skya pandi ta's death, but the seed had been planted that eventually germinated into the power structure that cemented Yuan sovereignty over Tibet.

29 *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* (p. 1419,1-5): "In water ox 1253, when he was nineteen years old, bla ma 'Phags pa met Mu gu du la, Go dan's eldest son, and rgyal bu Go pe la Se chen. Se chen realised that 'Phags pa rin po che had an excellent body, speech and mind and was pleased [with him]. He said: "I accept the Sa skya pa [as the Tibetans under my aegis]!", and asked him to stay on. ['Phags pa] became his *bla ma* when Se chen was thirty-nine years of age".

30 The sequence of events in those years in a nutshell was:

- Do be ta invaded Tibet, advancing to Mon mkhar mGon po ldong in 1252;
- Go pe la led the Hor pa military expedition against lJang in the years 1252-1254, using his presence in Khams as a base for this action;
- Hur ta led a military campaign in Central Tibet in 1253, focusing on lHo kha;
- Go pe la and 'gro mgon 'Phags pa met in 1253.

rGyal bu Go pe la's choice of 'gro mgon 'Phags pa as his own *bla ma* also had the consequence that the Tshal pa were supplanted by the Sa skya pa in the future emperor's favours, but they still remained his faithful sympathisers.

The literature mentions the location of the meeting between Go pe la and 'Phags pa took place (Lu pa'i shan; see Szerb 1980 p. 275-276 and n. 71). There is a two year gap before the next major event in the relationship between the Tibetans and this Mongol prince occurred. Having brought back his army to Khams in wood hare 1255 after his campaign in lJang, rgyal bu Go pe la is documented as having moved at least up to Zla rgyud (and almost certainly to areas south of there),³¹ if not elsewhere in the region. It is possible, then, that Go pe la and 'gro mgon 'Phags pa met in the periphery of northern Khams. And Khams was where Go pe la saw Karma Pakshi as the latter was on his way to Hor yul, following Mo 'gor rgyal po's invitation to him that had been delivered at mTshur phu by the Mongol prince's envoys earlier that year.³²

More significantly, Go pe la's interest in religious affairs and his leading an army into Khams document the future emperor's involvement with Tibet as early as the first half of the 1250s. His presence in the region represented a continuation of Go dan's responsibilities and policy on the plateau. It assured continuity to the appointment of a Mongol prince with the duty of supervising the affairs of Tibet, but whether he inherited his elder brother's role is nowhere indicated in the literature. His focus on Khams during that period probably was topical rather than strategic.³³

It seems, then, more than coincidental that, since the campaign in Khams and lJang in 1252-1254 and the 1253 encounter between Go pe la and 'Phags pa, Go dan had no part whatsoever in the unfolding of these important events. It therefore seems that there was a change in the handling of Tibetan affairs, with Go pe la taking on a major and direct role in Tibet in place of Go dan.

Given the more pronounced convergence of the political and religious functions that is to be ascribed to the undertakings of Se chen rgyal po not long after he ascended the throne, eventually *yon mchod* was no more limited to the religious sphere.

31 *Ras pa dkar po'i mam thar* in 'Ba' rom chos 'byung (p. 220,5-7): "When Hor Se chen rgyal po was known as rgyal bu Gau pe la (spelled so), he brought troops to Zla rgyud. [Hence] he came to mDo smad (i.e. to Khams in this case)".

32 *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* (p. 888,3-5) reads: "[Karma Pakshi] crossed mDo Khams and met rgyal bu [Go pe la] at Rong yul gSer stod in the year of the hare 1255 when [the Karma pa] was aged fifty-two, having been born in wooden rat 1204".

33 It is to a certain extent accepted among scholars that rgyal bu Go pe la had a larger share of power over Tibet, granted to him by Mo 'gor rgyal po's 'ja' sa. I do not see in this emperor's edict any indication that the future Se chen rgyal po was *primus inter pares*. That rgyal bu Go pe la ascended to preeminence in the handling of the Tibetan affairs was due to his presence on the eastern side of the plateau in the years after Mo 'gor rgyal po's edict. This is due to the fact other Mongol princes to whom appanages, provided by the aristocratic families of Central Tibet, were reserved did not set foot on Tibetan soil—probably not even Go dan who had been in charge of Tibet during the reign of the previous Mongol emperor.

Se chen initiated this new approach through a series of tactical steps that made 'gro mgon 'Phags pa his *bla ma*—a relationship he had begun to care about, as said above, over ten years before—followed by several Sa skya pa *ti shri*-s after the great Sa skya pa's death.³⁴

On the secular front internal to Tibet, the political scenario on the plateau underwent an evolution towards the end of the twenty year period from 1240 to 1259. The rivalry between the 'Bri gung pa/Phag mo gru pa block and the Sa skya pa grew bitter, the latter having been raised to a position of authority comparable to that of the two bKa' brgyud pa powerhouses through Go dan's choice of members of this school as his interlocutors. This created a situation that metamorphosed into a polarisation of local might in Tibet.

In the succeeding period, the enmity between the 'Bri gung/Phag mo gru pa and the Sa skya pa escalated from episodes of hostility of a limited extent to broader dimensions, impinging on Mongol affairs, when they each took side for one of the two princes—A rig bho ga and Go pe la—vying for the throne. The divergent political leaning of these Tibetan schools marked their destiny for decades to come, but this is a new chapter in the relations between the Hor, Hor *khirms* and the Tibetan aristocrats, on a more familiar historical territory—the Sa skya pa/Yuan period of Tibet—about which it has been written profusely.

34 The Sa skya *ti shri*-s to the Yuan emperors were in succession: 'gro mgon 'Phags pa (1260-1276), Rin chen rgyal mtshan (1276-1279) Darma pa la rakshi ta (1279-1286), Ye shes rin chen (1286-1294), Grags pa 'od zer (1294-1303), Rin chen rgyal mtshan (1303-1305), Sangs rgyas dpal (1305-1314), Kun dga' blo gros rgyal mtshan (1315-1325), dBang phyug rgyal mtshan (1325-1327), Kun dga' legs pa'i 'byung gnas (1325), Rin chen bkra shis (1329), Kun dga' rgyal mtshan (1333-1358) and bSod nams blo gros (1358-1362).

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