

Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines

From Khyung lung to Lhasa,

A Festschrift for Dan Martin



Edited by Jonathan Silk & Leonard van der Kuijp

numéro soixante-quatre — Juillet 2022

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*From Khyung lung to Lhasa,
A Festschrift for Dan Martin*

Edited by Jonathan Silk & Leonard van der Kuijp

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Preface

The man we all know simply as Dan Martin was born in Buffalo, New York, in 1953 as Daniel Preston Martin. Something of his history will be offered below, but the most important things to notice about Dan are undoubtedly the combination of his extreme erudition and his limitless generosity. There is arguably no other scholar—aside perhaps from the legendary Gene Smith—who has so tirelessly worked for decades to freely share his profound insights in Tibetan history and all things Tibetan.

Given this, no excuse is needed for a volume of papers offered in his honor. But a reasonable question is why the undersigned are the editors of such a volume, and the answer is simple: thanks to the trajectory of Dan's career path, and while surely in one sense almost all working Tibetan scholars are his students, Dan has never had any formal disciples. Therefore, in the absence of those who, structurally speaking, as it were, might have been expected to arrange the *Festschrift* of a scholar of his stature, the undersigned with love and appreciation undertook the task.

It is no doubt *pro forma* to offer here a requisite apology: "we well know that many more scholars would have wished to contribute, but" In the present case, however, this is much more than a *pro forma* statement. We do assuredly know that not many more, but in fact almost *all*, scholars in the field would gladly dedicate a study in Dan's honor. The proximate problem is that the energies of the two aging editors are limited, and this and other considerations led to the correspondingly limited collection of papers assembled here. We earnestly and sincerely hope that those who were not asked to contribute do not take it amiss or as any sign of disrespect, and that they simply understand that we could only do so much; we do not have even a fraction of the energy that Dan himself constantly and unabatedly demonstrates!

A final question to address here at the outset is why we publish the papers in Dan's honor in the *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines*, rather than, for instance, as a printed volume, and again, the answer is simple. Dan has demonstrated, through the years of his tibeto-logic.blogspot.com (which was initiated in August 2006), and through many other freely shared online resources (see below), his dedication to making knowledge *free*. We therefore thought it only fitting and proper that

the papers offered in his honor also be published in Open Access.¹

Before turning to an appreciation of Dan's scholarship, we might give a very short summary of his life's trajectory.² Soon after his birth in Buffalo, Dan's family returned to its home area in Michigan and North Indiana, where they frequently moved from one small city or rural area to another because of his father's occupation. Though scholarship was not a force that he could see around him, and certainly not that of the esoteric variety, when Dan was sixteen years old, he began self-study of Sanskrit. By skipping lunches at school, he saved money and ordered a book through the mail. When his religious mother found out, she said, "If you want to study a foreign language, why don't you study Hebrew?" Eventually, in fact, long years later, having ended up in Israel, he did so, and would become more than competent in the language. But all that was in the future. As a teenager, Dan would haunt public libraries and read books not known at his home. He was, in fact, the first generation in his extended family to study at university.

Since Dan's family did not financially contribute towards his academic education, when he completed high school at seventeen and a half, he took a factory job to save money for his studies. He returned to different factory jobs in North Indiana every summer during his studies, remaining extremely poor throughout his undergraduate years. Dan began his university studies at Indiana University in 1971, completing his BA, with Honors, in the Department of Religious Studies in 1976. Already before he arrived in Bloomington, he had heard about Prof. Thubten Norbu and wanted to study the Tibetan language, but his advisor told him this was not possible as a freshman (which was in fact untrue!), and Dan was sent instead to study Italian. Two years later, in 1973, he did begin his study of Tibetan, although as he will admit, he has never gained full fluency in any of its spoken varieties. Be that as it may, after completing his undergraduate degree, Dan continued to study Tibetan and to assist Prof. Norbu, Taktser Rinpoche, in various academic aspects. To support himself he worked at night as a cleaner. In the mornings he read with or helped Prof. Norbu, then slept briefly, before heading back to work. After three years, he was offered a job cataloguing the Tibetan collection of the

¹ Openness is not only about cost-free access. Dan has always been sensitive to the profound restrictions that the PRC government continues to place on Tibetan scholarship. It was fitting that he chose to dedicate his very first tibeto-logic blog of August 2006 to a Tibetan literary figure and a Tibetan historian who experienced these restrictions first-hand. His blog continues to offer evidence of his concerns even if his own scholarship sticks largely to the past.

² This has benefitted from short notes shared by Yael Bentor.

Field Museum in Chicago, a project for which two Indiana professors had received funding. The work was not well paid or rewarded.³ After three years in this job, Dan had had enough, and thanks to having saved some money, was able to make a tour of several months to Tibetan areas in India: Bodhgaya, Dharamsala, Dolanji, and to Kathmandu, Nepal. When he returned to Bloomington, it was 1982. In 1983, he began graduate studies in the Department of Uralic and Altaic Studies, later renamed the Department of Central Eurasian Studies, where he received support for three years, thanks to a fellowship. That year he met the woman who was to become his life partner, wife, and soulmate, Yael Bentor, who attended, as did Dan, the evening meetings in the home of Michael Walter, to read the *Kālacakratantra*. He always came prepared, reading the available Tibetan commentaries. Dan completed his MA in 1986, and his Ph.D. dissertation in 1991 (and Yael in the same year) in the Department of Central Eurasian Studies, with minor in Religion and Anthropology.

Dan has never held a structural academic position (which may be one reason for his incredible productivity, but if so, it is the least important one), but fortunately, his partnership with Yael provided him with a base and with the perfect environment for his work. In 1991 Yael Bentor, an Israeli native, obtained a one-year post-doctoral position at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Dan left his books with his brother, took a suitcase and joined her. Yael's one-year postdoc was extended to two, and in 1994 she obtained a tenure track position as lecturer, which she held until 1999, then becoming Senior Lecturer, and ultimately Professor Emerita. After Yael's appointment at the Hebrew University, Dan brought with him his immense card catalogue of Tibetan histories, a project he began when computers were not owned by individuals. In 1997 this catalog appeared as a book from Serindia (*Tibetan Histories*, see below), and in its latest incarnation is available online through the universally known website of the BDRC.⁴ (A task for the future remains the addition of links to the scanned histories themselves in the voluminous BDRC collections). Another card catalogue collection of Tibetan words was incorporated into the THL Tibetan-to-English Translation Tool and is now available

³ To the best of our knowledge no catalogue of the valuable collection of Tibetan books in the Field Museum has ever been published, although copies have been or are in circulation.

⁴ See <https://www.bdrclibrary.org/blog/2020/12/21/dan-martins-tibetan-histories/>. The original is also available at https://www.academia.edu/6616266/TIBETAN_HISTORIES_A_Bibliography_of_Tibetan_Language_Historical_Work.

online in a more complete form.⁵ Yet another invaluable resource is a bibliography of Proper Names.⁶ We will return to more of Dan's scholarship below.

During the 1990s, Dan travelled between different academic institutions in Europe and US. The year 1993/94 found him in the Institute of Advanced Studies in Oslo as part of a group project cataloguing the Bonpo Kanjur organized by Per Kværne. He then edited the catalogue, each part of which was compiled by a different scholar of the group. In the following academic year, he taught in the Department of Sanskrit and Indian Studies (now Department of South Asian Studies) at Harvard University, the year before one of the undersigned, Leonard van der Kuijp, joined that department. Dan was also the first Numata scholar in Hamburg University, and taught briefly at his alma mater Indiana University, and then again at Harvard. For one year he was a fellow in the Institute of Advanced Studies in Jerusalem, as part of a group organized by David Shulman on Sanskrit poetics. During that time, he also worked on the resource known to every scholar in the field, *TibSkrit*,⁷ an invaluable ocean of references, often with learned observations, which has been updated and expanded over the years. In between his travels Dan completed the Bon catalogue and published his MA thesis and Ph.D. dissertation, while also publishing numerous papers. It was also during that time that he began assisting students in the US and Europe with their research works, at times offered more help than did their own supervisors. As mentioned above, it is a hallmark of his personality, openness, and sheer generosity of spirit that Dan has always liked to share his great knowledge. Many first books by young Tibetologists list him with a sincere gratitude in their acknowledgements.

During the last twenty years, Dan has lived in Jerusalem, with of course not infrequent travel abroad, to conferences or to workshops. His links with his adopted city are deep; not long ago, he took a four-year course on the history of Jerusalem. Bringing the early aspiration of his mother to fulfillment, he completed this course, which was taught entirely in Hebrew!

⁵ <https://sites.google.com/view/tibvocab/home>. See also <https://www.thlib.org/reference/dictionaries/tibetan-dictionary/translate.php>.

⁶ <https://sites.google.com/view/tibetosophy/home>.

⁷ We believe the latest version is that found here: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/1swvt6iti39s0yj/Tibskrit%202016.docx?dl=0>. See also <https://glossaries.dila.edu.tw/glossaries/TSK?locale=en>.

The Briefest Possible Discussion of Dan's Scholarship

No full appreciation of Dan's scholarship is possible here. His interests range so widely, and his knowledge is so profound, that it is unlikely one scholar (or even a pair of scholars!) could do justice to his output. Much of it, moreover, as noted above, has not been formally published and peer reviewed, but has appeared on his famous and precious tibeto-logic blog. We think it is no exaggeration to say that the scholarly standards upheld in this blog posts far exceed the often-questionable assurances putatively offered by a peer review!

One feature of all of Dan's writing is a looseness and freedom that no doubt in part stems from his distance from the sometimes absurd expectations of academic scholarship within universities. Dan's blogs address his readers in the second person, engaging with them and their own quests for knowledge, inviting them to discover along with him, and of course to correct and educate him. That so much superb scholarship has appeared in the form of blog posts does not mean, perhaps needless to say, that Dan's more formally published scholarship is in any way deficient. In lieu of a complete (or an attempt at a complete) bibliography of his published work, we offer only a listing of books, and request interested readers to further consult both <https://rywiki.tsadra.org/index.php/>, and Dan's own academia.edu page, <https://independent.academia.edu/DanYerushalmi>, where extensive resources are to be found.⁸

Dan's monograph publications are:

Mandala Cosmogony: Human Body Good Thought and the Revelation of the Secret Mother Tantras of Bon (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1994).⁹

Tibetan Histories: A Bibliography of Tibetan-Language Historical Works (London: Serindia Publications, 1997). In collaboration with Yael Bentor. Foreword by Michael Aris.¹⁰

⁸ See further <https://sites.google.com/site/tibetological/50-tibetan-geo-texts/Home> /temporary-home-for-tibskrit

⁹ Rev. Per K. Sørensen, *Studies in Central & East Asian Religions* 10, 1997, pp. 64–69; Edgar C. Polomé, *The Journal of Indo-European Studies* 25.1/2, 1997, p. 190.

¹⁰ Rev. Phillip Denwood, *Circle of Inner Asian Art Newsletter* 6 (November 1997); Kurtis R. Schaeffer, *Journal of Asian Studies* 57.3, 1998, pp. 856–858; Katia Buffetrille, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 61.3, 1998, pp. 586–587; Roberto Vitali, *The Tibet Journal* 23.4, Winter 1998, pp. 120–128; Per Kvaerne, *Acta Orientalia* 59, 1998, pp. 327–328; Vladimir L. Uspenski, *Manuscripta Orientalis* (St. Petersburg) 5.2, June 1999, p. 72; Neil Howard, *Ladakh Studies* 9, Winter 1997/98, pp. 28–29.

Unearthing Bon Treasures: The Life and Contested Legacy of an Eleventh-Century Tibetan Scripture Revealer, with a General Annotated Bibliography of the Bon Religion (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2001).¹¹

A Catalogue of the Bon Kanjur, Senri Ethnological Reports series 40 (Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology, 2003).¹²

Forthcoming:¹³

A History of Buddhism in India and Tibet. An Expanded Version of the Dharma's Origins made by the Learned Scholar Deyu. The Library of Tibetan Classics 32 (Somerville, MA : Wisdom Publications, 2022).¹⁴

Tibet in the eleventh century, while weakened in terms of political unity and military strength, was the scene of a great revival in Buddhist learning and spirituality.¹⁵

Signing himself as Daniel Martin, this is how Dan began his very first publication some forty-three years ago, unafraid to use “Buddhist learning and spirituality” in one sentence! Three years later, and now signed “Dan Martin,” the more mature scholar would offer in the *Journal of the Tibet Society*, the successor of the *Bulletin*, a paper on the saint Mi la ras pa (11th-12th c.) that has withstood the test of time.¹⁶ This essay was a sure sign of great things to come, and in retrospect is an early indicator of what was to become his dominant or at least a central interest in terms of chronological orientation.

¹¹ Rev. Katia Buffetrille, *Acta Orientalia* 64, 2003, pp. 289-293; Per Kværne, *Indo-Iranian Journal* 47, 2004, pp. 69-71.

¹² Dan served as volume editor (‘general editor’), co-author, and author of the introduction (pp. 1-19). A catalogue of the 192 volumes of Bon scriptures, authored by a seven-person committee at the Senter for Høyere Studier (Oslo, Norway) composed of Tseyang Changngoba (Lhasa), Namgyal Nyima Dagkar (Bonn), Per Kværne (Oslo), Dondrup Lhagyal (Lhasa), Dan Martin (Jerusalem), Donatella Rossi (Rome), and Tsering Thar (Beijing).

¹³ We know of another forthcoming book, a history of the Bon tradition, the first author of which is Per Kværne, but we have no details to hand.

¹⁴ Van der Kuijp has seen a preprint of this large work which will be published shortly, and it is vintage Dan Martin, shot through with carefully considered observations and references in the capacious critical apparatus. A sheer delight to read!

¹⁵ “Gling-ras-pa and the Founding of the ‘Brug-pa School”, *The Tibet Society Bulletin* 12, June 1979, pp. 56-69

¹⁶ “The Early Education of Milarepa”, *The Journal of the Tibet Society* 2, 1982, 53-76.

Dan's scholarly interests are broad. In some respects he is seen, justly, as a specialist in the Bon tradition (or we had better say traditions), and he has indeed dedicated much attention to issues around Bon literature and history. In addition, he has been fascinated with the putative homeland of the Bon tradition and the language of Zhangzhung. It is certainly not possible to treat Bon separately from Buddhism, and Dan has not attempted to. Although he has not (one hesitates to say "never") presented himself as a specialist in Buddhist studies, in fact much of his published scholarship deals directly with Buddhist topics, many but not all tantric (and Mahāmudrā), but also including Abhidharma, Vinaya, and pilgrimage, not to mention forays into areas such as fine poetry (*kāvya*) and more. When it comes to the topics addressed in his blogs—which may superficially seem like many blogs, random dashed off notes, but are in fact finely honed often not-so-small explorations of diverse topics, with more than ample annotation—it is really impossible to offer even a brief summary of his breadth of interests. But if one were absolutely forced (at the point of a *phur pa*, let us say) to offer a single topic that lies at the center of Dan's work, it is the 12th to 13th centuries in Tibet.¹⁷ It is perhaps not impossible to speculate that this interest led Dan to compile *the* authoritative survey of Tibetan historical works, and his engagement with all that went on in this formative period which motivated many—though certainly not all—of his investigations. We might with some justification aver that there is little in the Tibetan past that is not of interest to Dan, who seems to have read everything, and what is more to have understood it in ways that few others have, or are even capable of doing. But there is also a feature of Dan's scholarship that should absolutely not be overlooked, and that is his humility. He very frequently confesses to his readers his befuddlement, his puzzlement, his ignorance, his doubt. This can be disarming unless one realizes that this stands atop a profound knowledge, which always quests to understand better, more broadly, more deeply. Question after question that might, in some cases, have even occurred to others, get Dan's full attention: what *were* in fact the historical relations between Tibet and Persia? What *is* a Tibetan bell doing in Armenia? Just as there is no end to such questions, there is no end to Dan's asking them, even if time after time he has to confess to his readers that he cannot lead them to a pat answer. And for students and seasoned scholars alike, this lesson is one of the most significant and

¹⁷ As Yael Bentor once related to one of the editors, when Dan forgot the name of an acquaintance, "If he had lived in the 12th century, Dan would have remembered his name!"

sometimes the hardest to learn: we often cannot know with confidence, we often do not know where to go next or what to do when we find ourselves in a certain spot. Rare is the scholar self-confident enough to tell us that he too does not know. In this too Dan is our constant teacher.

As touched on above, Dan's writing has a style that is uniquely his own. His approach to scholarship and scholarly writing has an informal feel to it that on occasion even becomes disarmingly colloquial. It is never pedantic or turgid and is accessible to all, to beginners in the field and to those who have been doing walkabouts for some time. He invites his readers to join him, to climb aboard his train of thought as he deftly journeys from topic to topic, sometimes ultimately circling back and tying it all together or, on more than one occasion, leaving things as they rightly should be left, in the air. Often combing the philological with the anthropological in various registers of intellectual rigor, it seems inadequate to term his interests merely "wide-ranging."

Dan characterizes his tibeto-logic blog by saying its contents are "More-or-less monthly musings on mainly antiquarian topics of Tibet-related interest." His first post, of August 2006, offered his "Two Dedications" to a Tibetan writer and a historian who suffered profoundly for their mere desire to explore their own cultural and history, and as of this writing his most recent four posts of 2022, sixteen years on, are titled "Consecration Rite of the Great Translator," "Maṇḍalas of Medieval Arabic (and Latin) Magic", "Maṇḍalas of Jewish Magic" and most recently "One Secret of the Seals." Is there a pattern here? A growing trend in scholarship is to deploy the tools of the Digital Humanities to our corpora, and Tibetan studies is no stranger to this development. One potentially fruitful exercise is to examine the topics treated in a large corpus by mapping where and how often and how intently a given author might address a particular theme.¹⁸ We can only wonder what the results would be if such a study were to be carried out on the scholarly corpus of Dan Martin: what topics would be most prominent, what themes return again and again, what connections could such an analysis show us that are less than evident on the surface? But perhaps after all a better approach is not to subject Dan's massively varied scholarship to analytical examination after all. Best of all, surely, is to sit down and allow oneself simply to read and absorb.

¹⁸ We might think in this regard of Gregory Forgues's so far unpublished "Seeing the Forest for the Trees: Text Mining Strategies to analyze the Ris med Network of Discourses: 'Ju Mi pham nram rgyal rgya mtsho's Collected Works as a Case Study." Paper presented at the 2019 IATS in Paris.

The editors are supremely confident that they join, in spirit, with all scholars of Tibetan studies, over the whole world, in joyously dedicating this volume to Dan in celebration of his work and in celebration of him as a true מענטש.

Jonathan A. Silk
Leonard W.J. van der Kuijp

Erroneous Conceptions Frequently Shared about New Bon (*Bon gsar*)*

by Jean-Luc Achard
(CNRS, CRCAO)

1. Introduction

Within the field of modern Tibetology, the recent decades have witnessed a growing interest in the studies of the Bon tradition in both academic and non-academic circles.¹ This new production of works on Bon is obviously of uneven quality, in particular with regard to non-academic books or papers.² The view of Bon as presented in this latter kind of literature is historically of questionable interest since it takes for granted the very perspectives and theories Bon has elaborated about itself in its later narratives, after entering into contact with the new traditions that sprung up at the turn of the 1000s AD in Tibet. The traditional depiction of Buddha sTon pa gshen rab for instance is problematic for the historian and has been challenged by the recent discoveries of the dGa' thang bum pa stūpa in

* I would like to thank Marianne Ginalski for her corrections and suggestions on earlier drafts of this paper.

¹ See Dan Martin, “Bon Bibliography, New Combined Version” which, as of 2013, lists thousands of references dealing with Bon. In Tibet itself, Bon has also been more active than ever and numerous indigenous publications have recently appeared, largely broadening our knowledge of Bon and literally pulverizing the limits that were entangling it up to the 1990s.

² Or even Wikipedia entries, such as the one on Bon (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bon>, last checked on April 3rd, 2019) with perplexing statements such as “Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche elaborated the Southern Treasure with shamanism” which are senseless affirmations pushing us back decades, before Bon started to be carefully investigated by modern pioneers of the discipline, such as Karmay, Kvaerne, Blondeau, and later Martin, Ramble, Blezer, etc. (not to mention Yongdzin Rinpoche who battled for years, throughout his teachings in the West, against the conflation of Bon and Shamanism). If it is true that modern Bon teaches apotropaic rituals in its lower vehicles (together with particular theories related to illnesses, medicine, prophecies, etc.), these have nothing to do with Shamanism in the strictest sense of the word. Calling anything “Shamanism” or defining as “shamanistic” what does not display the standards of doctrinal rigor is certainly a dramatic shortcut which not only deprives Shamanism of its own particular features but also waters down specific religious traditions or systems which have nothing to do with Shamanism in the first place.

southern Tibet, with written documents introducing sTon pa gshen rab in ways quite similar to those of the Dunhuang manuscripts.³

As far as academic works are concerned, the best recent collection of papers and individual works about Bon is certainly that of the series *Bon Studies* directed by Y. Nagano and S.G. Karmay, an impressive set of volumes shedding an incredibly lucid light on Bon. This collection has produced some of the most important research works on this tradition, in particular a gigantic review of probably all Bon monasteries in Tibet and related cultural areas, offering a volume of information that was dramatically not available before.⁴ One should also mention the ongoing enormous amount of work produced by Charles Ramble in the field of Bon rituals, which should be available on the latter's forthcoming website.⁵

As would be expected, academic studies of Bon often challenge the tradition's own narratives as well as the validity not only of its historical claims, but also of its teachings and their sources. The borrowings of Buddhist historical frameworks (as seen for instance in the biographies of sTon pa gshen rab), organization of scriptures (such as the three turnings of the Dharma) and so forth, have certainly influenced academic opinions in a negative manner, to the extent that some have simply repeated the radical judgments of sectarian Buddhist scholars without having ever opened a Bon work.

The borrowings of doctrinal concepts and the claims of historical antiquity are obviously some of the most challenging aspects of Bon in modern Tibetology. For instance, the traditional scheme of three kinds of Bon recognized by modern Bonpos has been heavily criticized, but the fact remains that it is through this threefold scheme that modern Bon identifies itself and the various currents with which it is associated. Such a scheme cannot be dismissed inconsequently, without proposing a more fitting—and so far still lacking—approach to defining Bon.⁶

³ In blatant contrast with the way the later tradition presents its founding Buddha. On the material coming from the dGa' thang bum pa stūpa, see Pa tshab Pa sangs dbang 'dus & Glang ru Nor bu tshe ring (eds), *Gtam shul dga' thang 'bum pa che nas gsar du rnyed pa'i bon gyi gna' dpe bdams bsgrigs*, *passim*. See also Karmay, S.G., "A New Discovery of Ancient Bon Manuscripts from a Buddhist Stūpa in Southern Tibet" in *East And West*, 2009, vol. 59, nos. 1–4, pp. 55–84; J. Bellezza, "Straddling the Millennial Divide," *passim*.

⁴ See S.G. Karmay & Y. Nagano, *A Survey of Bonpo Monasteries and Temples in Tibet and the Himalaya*, *Bon Studies* 7, Osaka 2003.

⁵ See the bibliography *in fine* under Ramble.

⁶ No matter what one's opinion may be about this threefold scheme, it remains a fact that: 1. there were priests in pre-imperial and imperial Tibet that carried the name or title of *gshen* and *bon pos/mos* (roughly corresponding to religious figures that later Bon pos associate with "Old Bon" [*bon rnying*]), 2. there are religious practitioners (both monks and lay people) associated with post-dynastic Bon, roughly

Moreover, while it is a piece of evidence that the historical frameworks proposed in the traditional scheme of the three kinds of Bon do not correspond to any historical truth, this very scheme remains in my opinion the best to explain the post-dynastic presentation of Bon by Bonpos themselves: it explains why they are Bonpos, what they reject (as modern followers), how they both distinguish and relate to “ancient Bon” (if there ever existed such a trend), and so forth. This scheme should thus be taken for what it is—an *upāya* or a manner in which modern Bonpos approach their own “history”—and not for an empirical truth, since it is predicated on the dubious fact that post-dynastic Bon is regarded as the direct inheritor of a Bon tradition that supposedly existed in the 8th century. Therefore, the scheme of the three kinds of Bon should be used within the limits of its purpose, which is to explain the doctrinal differences between 1. an ancient Bon whose ritual practices are known in Dunhuang documents, 2. a post-dynastic Bon that is heavily dependent on both *rnying ma* and *gsar ma* literature as well as their religious and doctrinal conceptions, and 3. a New Bon phenomenon which is the late product of heavy interactions and local appropriations of current doctrinal and religious contents and was largely spread throughout Eastern Tibet (Khyung po, A mdo, and Khams).

In the numerous modern researches on Bon which have recently been published (such as in the *Bon Studies* collection mentioned above), one should note that the New Bon (*bon gsar*) tradition is barely touched upon.⁷ New Bon thus remains an obscure phenomenon to the extent that there are still several misconceptions regarding this system which are spread over academic and non-academic publications aimed at a general readership. Despite a number of studies dedicated to this subject,⁸ some of these vastly shared misconceptions are tenacious and are

appearing on the religious scene around 1000 AD and defined by later Bon pos as “Eternal Bon” (*g.yung drung bon*); and 3. there are adepts of New Bon (*bon gsar*), starting around the 14th century. Both Eternal Bon and New Bon claim to have their roots in an ancient religious tradition that they present as existing in the 8th century and even prior to that. There is no historical (archeological and so forth) evidence to sustain their claim. Rather, it would seem that “modern” Bon is a *gsar ma* phenomenon which arose together with numerous newer Buddhist lineages that started to appear during the early *phyi dar*, while still having roots and connections to dynastic and probably pre-Buddhist Tibet, although certainly not in the way they picture things.

⁷ New Bon is indifferently named *bon gsar*, *bon gsar ma*, *gsar bon*, and *gsar ma bon*, all referring to the same religious tradition. I will use only *bon gsar* for the sake of consistency.

⁸ See *inter alia* Achard, *Bonpo Hidden Treasures* (Brill, Leiden, 2004); *id.*, “A Fourfold Set of Emanations, Variegated Currents and Alien Elements: Contribution to the Origins and Early Development of New Bon and its Revelations,” *passim*.

being repeated without any attempt at verifying their validity within the texts of *bon gсар* itself. Among these, I will address four problematic issues, before discussing two cases of interesting interactions between Eternal Bon and New Bon. The four problematic issues are:

- the erroneous date for the beginnings of New Bon,
- the role played by ambivalent *gter ston*,
- the role played by Padmasambhava, and
- the doctrinal squabbles between Eternal Bon and New Bon.

2. Erroneous date for the beginnings of New Bon

Some people are of the opinion that New Bon started in the 18th century.⁹ It is true that this period witnessed the religious activities of important New Bon *gter ston*, starting with Sangs rgyas gling pa (Byang chub rdo rje, 1705–1735) and Kun grol grags pa (1700–?), to mention only two of the names most frequently referred to in this context. But these two individuals rather than being the founders of New Bon are heirs to a tradition much older than they.¹⁰

According to its own sources,¹¹ New Bon originates with Dran pa nam mkha' and Vairocana in the 8th century CE. This is a statement which is of course impossible to prove historically, since we have no *bon po* source dating back to the 8th century, indicating that New Bon originated at that time. Rather, the first historical traces we have of this system go back to the 14th century with the revelations of sPrul sku Blo ldan snying po (1360–1406).

At its inception, this system is not clearly separated from the Eternal Bon (*g. Yung drung bon*) tradition, since its initiator (sPrul sku Blo ldan) belongs to both the lineages of Eternal Bon and what was to become New Bon. However, because of some of the salient features—liturgical, etc.—of New Bon, adepts of Eternal Bon have felt the need to distinguish themselves from this new emerging system, which they regard as being too close to the rNying ma tradition.

⁹ See *inter alia* <http://okarresearch.blogspot.fr/2012/07/rimay-movement.html>.

¹⁰ On Sangs rgyas gling pa and Kun grol grags pa, see in particular Samten G. Karmay, *Feast of the Morning Light*, Bon Studies 9, Osaka, 2005. See also Achard, "Kun grol grags pa and the revelation of the *Secret Treasury of the Sky Dancers on Channels and Winds*," *passim*.

¹¹ Most of these sources are quite late. The most interesting of these, the *Dran pa bka' thang*, is an early 20th century work which describes the origins of New Bon at the time of King Khri srong lde btsan. On this issue, see Achard, "L'implémentation du Bon gсар au sein de la tradition du Bon Eternel d'après les sources tardives — contribution à l'étude transhistorique et étiologique de la tradition du *Bon gSar*," forthcoming.

Because of the dates of sPrul sku Blo ldan, it would seem that the mid-14th century marks the actual historical, datable beginnings of New Bon, despite the fact that there is, to my knowledge, no mention of the expression “New Bon” in Blo ldan's works.¹² The first occurrence and use of the expression still remains to be clearly established, while it seems that it did not take long for adepts of the Eternal Bon tradition to use it in a derogatory way. In all likelihood, Blo ldan envisioned his own revelations as “pure” Bon teachings, and despite some mysterious innovations (such as combining the mythologies of Shambhala with those of 'Ol mo lung ring),¹³ he certainly displayed great skills at inscribing his *gter ma* discoveries within the traditional framework of post-dynastic Bon.

There are several reasons why the origins of New Bon are associated with Blo ldan snying po. One of these is the fact that he considered himself an emanation of Padmasambhava, signing some of his works (such as his famed sMra seng dkar po *sādhana*, still used to this day even by Eternal Bon followers) with the name Pad 'byung Nam mkha' rin chen, *pad 'byung* being an abridged form of Padma 'byung gnas (Padmasambhava's name in Tibetan).

Another important reason for ascribing the beginning of New Bon to Blo ldan is the fact that he is actually the first of a lineage of *sprul sku* which branched into several lineages of New Bon incarnates, up to the present day.

3. The role played by some ambivalent *gter ston*

Among the many *gter ston* who are defined as ambivalent, i.e., as revealers of both Bon po and rNying ma *gter ma*, one of the most frequently referred to is assuredly rDo rje / g.Yung drung gling pa (1346–1405), even though his dates on the Bon po side are most certainly too

¹² The expression *bon gsar* and its variants are often used derogatorily amongst adepts of the Eternal Bon tradition. New Bon followers prefer the expression *gter gsar* (New Treasures), which somehow conflicts with the usage of the same expression for earlier *g.yung drung bon* treasure revelations. See the defense of these New Treasures by Shardza Rinpoche (Shar rdza rin po che, bKra shis rgyal mtshan) in Karmay, *The Treasury of Good Sayings*, pp. 186-187.

¹³ This combination is rather clumsy to say the least. There is no trace of any *Kalkin* reign or lineage of *Kalkin* kings in the mythology of 'Ol mo lung ring, nor is there any Mount g.Yung drung dgu brtsegs in Shambhala (not to speak of the birthplace of a Buddha, as mythological as it may be). Furthermore, Shambhala is supposed to be located north of the Land of Snows, while 'Ol mo lung ring is conceived as lying west of Tibet. For more on 'Ol mo lung ring, see sKal bzang nor bu, "'Ol gling bkod pa rgyud don snying po," *Bon sgo*, vol. 11, pp. 25-32; D. Martin, "'Ol-mo-lung-ring, the Original Holy Place," *Tibet Journal*, vol. 20, no. 1, pp. 48-82.

ancient to be reliable.¹⁴ So far, I have not researched ambivalence in his tantric revelations, but I have explored quite extensively his two main rDzogs chen *gter mas* of the Bon tradition. The first one is the *Tshe dbang bod yul ma*, which contains the famed story relating how Dran pa nam mkha' had two sons, Tshe dbang rig 'dzin and g.Yung drung/Padma mthong grol.¹⁵ The contents of the cycle itself are difficult to classify among the three traditional series of Dzogchen¹⁶ but the cycle definitely resembles other Bon corpora that one can more or less define as a blend between *Sems sde* and *Man ngag sde*, although there is strictly no reason to classify the cycle under the rubric of *Klong sde*.¹⁷ The cycle does not contain any explicit reference to the traditional *Man ngag sde* practices of *khregs chod* and *thod rgal*, but obviously contains some doctrinal material akin to *khregs chod* (most notably in the *sNyan rgyud rtsa ba'i tshig rkang*). Despite the mention of Padma mthong grol in the narrative of the cycle, the whole corpus does not contain any particular

¹⁴ See Karmay, *The Great Perfection*, p. 219.

¹⁵ This narrative is most probably one of the inspirational sources of later *gter ston* of the *bon gsar* tradition. Such a narrative has been considered as one of the potential sources used by 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse'i dbang po in his version of the *bsGrags pa bon lugs* biography of Padmasambhava. On this biography, see Blondeau, "mkhyen-brtse'i dbaṅ-po: la biographie de Padmasambhava selon la tradition du *bsgrags-pa bon*, et ses sources," *passim*. See also the translation of the same work by 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse in Ngawang Zangpo, *Guru Rinpoche, His Life and Times*, pp. 183-205.

¹⁶ I.e. *Sems sde*, *Klong sde*, and *Man ngag sde*. Except for a relatively limited number of cycles (such as the *Zhang zhung snyan rgyud*, the *Ye khri mtha' sel* and a few others), most of the g.Yung drung Bon teachings of rDzogs chen are rather of a *Sems sde* flavor or an odd mixture of *Sems sde* and *Man ngag sde*. Conversely, as far as I have been able to figure from the literature available to me, nearly all (if not all) the rDzogs chen teachings associated with New Bon can be categorized under the *Man ngag sde* label. According to traditional accounts of rDzogs chen, there was no classification into the three series (*Sde gsum*) until the Buddhist master Mañjuśrīmitra ('Jam dpal bshes gnyen, *7-8th century) organized them into these categories. The classification is therefore purely "Buddhist," which is probably why it is rarely used in Bon in general. There are however important exceptions to that, starting with Shar dza bKra shis rgyal mtshan and his *Treasury of Space and Awareness (dByings rig mdzod)* for instance. See Achard, *Enlightened Rainbows*, pp. 120-121. Lopön Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche is of the opinion that *Klong sde* "is strictly a Nyingmapa matter" (*Bonpo Dzogchen Teachings*, p. 193).

¹⁷ *Klong sde* being sometimes defined as a bridge (*zam pa*) between *Sems sde* and *Man ngag sde*, such an idea would not seem too inappropriate in this context. However, the cycle itself does not contain any trait characteristic of *Klong sde* as traditionally defined in the rNying ma school, such as the "four symbols" (*brda bzhi*) and so forth. As I have suggested in the previous note, there are conflicting opinions in Bon regarding the existence of *Klong sde* teachings in this tradition. I will return to this issue in a forthcoming paper.

trait that one would definitely associate with New Bon.¹⁸

The second cycle is the *rDzogs chen gser thur* which is itself clearly of a *Man ngag sde* nature, even though it lacks detailed material on *Thod rgal* itself. It does not have any trait associated with New Bon either, and is also considered as a perfect example of a g.Yung drung Bon cycle.¹⁹

To judge simply by looking at the *gter mas* revealed by rDo rje/g.Yung drung gling pa, it is clear that it is not because a *gter ston* has revealed both Bon po and rNying ma *gter mas* that he should be associated with New Bon. There are however counter-examples, such as for instance the two following interesting cases:

- bDe chen gling pa (1833–1893) is said to have discovered Buddhist teachings²⁰ and he is of course one of the leading figure of New Bon in Eastern Tibet in the 19th century, as well as a lineage holder of numerous g.Yung drung Bon lineages of transmission; and
- 'Jam dbyangs mKhyen brtse'i dbang po (1820–1892), who is an eminent Sa skya figure who “discovered” a biography of Padmasambhava which can definitely be associated with New Bon.²¹

Another crucial element among ambivalent *gter ston*—which was noted decades ago by A-M. Blondeau—is the fact that many of these *gter ston* are regarded (or considered themselves) as emanations of Vairocana, the 8th century translator, clearly associated with the transhistorical roots of New Bon.²² A quick search in Kong sprul's *gTer ston brgya rtsa'i rnam thar* shows numerous example of this, such as Bon po Brag tshal, Nye mo Zhu yas, Bon po Lha 'bum, *sprul sku* Ra shag chen po, and so forth.²³

¹⁸ New Bon was probably still in its infancy with Blo ldan snying po to justify, at the time of the diffusion of the *Tshe dbang bod yul ma*, the possible classification of this cycle under the New Bon label. Karmay has shown (*op. cit.*, pp. 218-219) that rDo rje/g.Yung drung gling pa had obvious connections with the Bru family who, at that time, exemplified g.Yung drung Bon orthodoxy in Central Tibet.

¹⁹ On the *rDzogs chen gser thur*, see Karmay, *op. cit.*, pp. 217-218; *ib.*, “Dorje Lingpa and His Rediscovery of the “Golden Needle” in Bhutan,” *passim*.

²⁰ See Achard, *Bon po Hidden Treasures*, p. xii n. 9.

²¹ See note 14 *supra*.

²² This was obviously the case with rDo rje/g.Yung drung gling pa (Karmay, *The Great Perfection*, p. 217).

²³ See Kong sprul, *gTer ston brgya rtsa'i rnam thar*, *Rin chen gter mdzod*, Sechen ed., vol. 1, pp. 341-765. For the searchable file, see: <http://rtz.tsadra.org/index.php/Ter-dzo-KA-006>.

The case of bsTan gnyis gling pa (Padma tshe dbang rgyal po, 1480–1535) and his *rDzogs chen gser zhun* would certainly fit well here if it were not for the sMan ri abbot Nyi ma bstan 'dzin (1813–1875), who explicitly said that this *gter ma* cycle does not belong to New Bon.

Many of these ambivalent *gter ston* are styled so due to a relative confusion with regard to their names. In this respect, Kong sprul's approach to identifying these figures is sometimes quite unfounded, except for his explicit will to build bridges between rNying ma pas and Bon pos, in line with his *Ris med* philosophy. The inclusion of the Bon (actually mostly New Bon) texts in the *Rin chen gter mdzod* has been exhaustively discussed by A-M. Blondeau in a famous paper that has remained an unmissable work up to the present day.²⁴

4. The role played by Padmasambhava

The most frequent wrong idea concerning New Bon is certainly the belief that the texts of this system are necessarily associated with Padmasambhava and invariably connected to or dependent upon rNying ma literature. It is true that some cycles are heavily centered upon this personage, and in this respect they are quite parallel to what can be found about this figure in the rNying ma tradition, although they are far from identical.²⁵ But there are numerous texts and collections within New Bon works that are not connected to him at all. For instance, even if bDe chen gling pa (1833–1893) had numerous—nearly daily—visions of Padmasambhava (as can be seen in his autobiographical works), not a single one of his *gter ma* is related to or contains descriptions of practices centered upon Guru Rinpoche.²⁶ Rather, all his

²⁴ A-M. Blondeau "La controverse soulevée par l'inclusion de rituels bon-po dans le rin-chen gter-mjod. Note préliminaire." See full references in the bibliography.

²⁵ Some cycles blend typical rNying ma mantric formulas (such as the mantra of Padmasambhava), with formulas that are a trademark of g.Yung drung Bon (such as the use of *Aḥ Oṃ Hūṃ* instead of *Oṃ Aḥ Hūṃ* used in the Buddhist schools as well as in New Bon), together with New Bon liturgical style, and so forth. See for instance the practices of Padma thod phreng rtsal in the famed *Mi shig gu drag* cycle revealed by Mi shig[s] rdo rje (b. 1650) who regarded himself as the second Blo ldan snying po. See Achard, "A Fourfold Set of Emanations," p. 87. The *Mi shig gu drag* cycle is also known as the *Padma thugs kyi rtsa rgyud*, and also as the *Gu ru drag po'i rdo rje gur khang* (which definitely sounds more rnying ma than bon po); see *id.*, p. 110 n. 125 for the line of transmission that passes through Padmasambhava and Ye shes mtsho rgyal, before reaching Mi shig rdo rje (who is styled as Mi shig O rgyan gling pa).

²⁶ See Achard, *Bon po Hidden Treasures*, p. xv-xvi, p. 173, *et passim*. One of bDe chen gling pa's revelation of *gter ma* is however associated with Padmasambhava (*op. cit.*, p. xix), but except for a scanty reference in his *Autobiography*, it has left no trace in the latter's collected revelations.

revelations are associated with Dran pa nam mkha', mKha' 'gro 'Od ldan 'bar ma, and Vairocana.²⁷ Therefore, conceiving New Bon texts as entirely associated with or dependent upon Padmasambhava is a mistake and an over-simplification that does not correspond to reality.

Moreover, it seems that it would be daring to jump to conclusions when identifying g.Yung drung mthong grol and Padma mthong grol as being the same person as Padmasambhava. Recently,²⁸ Yongdzin Rinpoche has clearly differentiated g.Yung drung mthong grol from Padma mThong grol, presenting the first one as an individual whom he defines as being totally different from Padmasambhava. Several reasons may have prompted him to develop such a notion, an interesting innovation to add to several of Yongdzin Rinpoche's newest theories (such as the various conquests of Zhang zhung, the three Dran pa nam mkha', etc.), the core one being certainly the necessity to integrate the role Padma/g.Yung drung mthong grol played in New Bon into the more orthodox vision of history developed within the g.Yung drung Bon tradition.²⁹ In this perspective, g.Yung drung mthong grol *must* necessarily be a different individual with no dependency upon

²⁷ All three are the non-historical figures (traditionally ascribed to the 8th century) to whom New Bon traces back its origins. According to the later narratives elaborated in New Bon circles, Padmasambhava does not play any decisive role (as he does among rNying mas) in the elaboration of New Bon texts (defined as a blend between purely Buddhist works and Bon po works). Only Dran pa nam mkha' and Vairocana are actually mentioned as the "founders" of this trend. See Achard, "L'implémentation du *Bon gsar* au sein de la tradition du Bon Eternel."

²⁸ Mostly during private talks and oral teachings.

²⁹ So far, I have not found in the New Bon works at my disposal explicit elements differentiating Padma mthong grol from g.Yung drung mthong grol. It would rather seem that the names are interchangeable. It appears clearly that Padma mthong grol is conceived to be identical to Padmasambhava. For example, the form behind Padma mthong grol is clearly that of Padma thod phreng in, *inter alia*, the *Rig 'dzin kun gyi yang rtse lo rgyus gsal ba'i me long* revealed by Shel zhig g.Yung drung rgyal po (see *Bon gyi brten 'gyur chen mo*, vol. 32, p. 112). But in the same text, this figure is designated as g.Yung drung mthong grol (p. 78), which demonstrates that there is no difference between the two names. In the early 18th century, Sangs rgyas gling pa (Byang chub rdo rje, 1705–1735) went a step further with totally syncretic works in which standard Buddhist technical terms coexist with more typical Bon jargon. His *gTer byung lo rgyus* is replete with such unambiguous references to Padma 'byung gnas (p. 2), 'Chi med gu ru Padma 'byung (p. 7), O rgyan rin po che and Ye shes mtsho rgyal (p. 11), as well as other Buddhist figures such as Śrī Śiṃha (Shri seng ha, p. 11), Sukhasiddhi (Su ka sid[d]hi, p. 11), and even Ma cig lab sgron (p.11). In his own system, Sangs rgyas gling pa follows a narrative and a lexicon which obviously do not try to accommodate to the standards of g.Yung drung Bon, using explicitly Buddhist jargon such as *chos 'byung* (p. 10, instead of *bstan 'byung*), *lus rnam snang chos bdun gyi 'dug stang[s]* (p. 13, when one would expect *rang bzhin cha lugs lnga ldan* in a Bon context), and *chos skor* (p. 14, instead of *bon skor*).

the great Guru of the rNying ma tradition.

The justification of this integration is demanded by the role played by the three Father and Sons (*yab sras gsum*, who, as we have seen above, are Dran pa nam mkha' and his sons, Tshe dbang rig 'dzin and Padma/g.Yung drung mthong grol) in several cycles of the g.Yung drung Bon tradition, starting with the *Tshe dbang bod yul ma*, or specific g.Yung drung Bon cycles in which Padmasambhava plays an explicit role, such as in the *rDzogs chen gser zhun* by bsTan gnyis gling pa.³⁰

5. Doctrinal Squabbles between Eternal Bon and New Bon

One would certainly expect an established tradition such as that of Eternal Bon to be rather tolerant with multiple local *bon po* developments that self-connect to non-controversial patriarchs of the same tradition. However, this is definitely not the case. The main issue remains, as always with various Tibetan lineages, doctrinal hegemony no matter what. It would seem that the criticisms towards New Bon were somehow rather mild, as long as the concerned ritual and literary traditions remained local and did not overshadowed the sMan ri doctrinal authority. *dGe bshes* having received their diploma in sMan ri often went back to their homeland and tried to implant the sMan ri style of rituals and practices there, often to the detriment of local lineages.³¹ This certainly did not help in maintaining a relatively peaceful coexistence between the two traditions.

During one of his trips to rGyal gtso monastery in 1907, Shardza Rinpoche (bKra shis rgyal mtshan, 1859–1934) met several *dge bshes* coming from sMan ri in Central Tibet. At first, these monks showed interest in Shardza's *Collected Works* and even requested the transmissions of "reading authorizations" (*lung*) from him but, later, during their discussions with him, the subject of New Bon was brought up and these *dge bshes* made open criticisms about this tradition, which

³⁰ Other cycles revealed by rDo rje gling pa and presented as being affiliated to Bon (and more generally New Bon) do not necessarily show typical "Bon" formulations of mantric syllables, using (as we have seen above in note 24) for instance the "Buddhist" *Om Aḥ Hūṃ*, instead of the standard *Aḥ Om Hūṃ* as used in g.Yung drung Bon. See for instance his *Yab sras bcud dril gyi shog chung* included in the *Rin chen gter mdzod*, vol. 39, pp. 779-801.

³¹ One may wonder if this is a reason why so many Bon rDzogs chen texts, cycles, and lineages simply vanished throughout the history of Bon in general. As can be seen in Shardza's *Legs bshad mdzod*, there are numerous rDzogs chen cycles mentioned in this work among the discoveries of Bon po *gter ston* that are completely unknown (at least to me), and that may certainly not be extant. The existence of the sMan ri corpus and its rather hegemonic wide spread certainly played a role in this disappearance.

greatly displeased him.³²

Despite the wide fame that he had already achieved by that time (he was 49 in 1907), Shardza sought the approval of two of his most illustrious peers in the person of Grub thob Nyi ma rgyal mtshan and rGyal ba blo gros who both looked through his *Collected Works* and concluded that they showed neither influence from Buddhism nor from New Bon.³³

Nearly two decades later, Shardza's *Collected Works* were again carefully scrutinized by Phun tshogs blo gros (the then sMan ri Abbot), at the latter's request.³⁴ Shardza sent a print of his *Works* to the Abbot who, after a supposedly careful study, declared that they were in perfect harmony with the tradition of mNyam med Shes rab rgyal mtshan (1356–1415), the emblematic authority in the sMan ri tradition.³⁵

However, according to Lopön Tenzin Namdak (private conversation, Paris, 1998), the copy that was sent to the Abbot still had references to the *Klong drug* tantra³⁶ in the context of the explanation on the "Seven Bases."³⁷ As this would certainly have fed potential criticism regarding borrowings from Buddhist sources, Shardza was asked to

³² The context is not very explicit but it seems clear that these *dge bshes* questioned both the contents of some of Shardza's works (which they thought had a New Bon flavor), as well as his personal lineage, which harbors some of the most important New Bon lineage holders of his era : the Fifth Kun grol rin po che (Rig 'dzin bDud 'dul gling pa, ?–1901), bDe chen gling pa (1833–1893), and of course dBal 'bar stag slag can (dBra ston bsTan 'dzin dbang rgyal, 1832–?).

³³ Achard, *Enlightened Rainbows*, p. 71. One can certainly interpret their decision as a politically correct statement in an environment where New Bon was heavily criticized by *dge bshes* hailing from sMan ri or g.Yung drung gling. If Shardza Rinpoche's rDzogs chen works are generally viewed as being free from Buddhist or New Bon influence (dixit, for instance, Lopön Tenzin Namdak), it is an undeniable fact that his works such as the *dByings rig mdzod* borrowed entire sections from Klong chen pa's *Theg mchog mdzod* and *Tshig don mdzod*, while his famed *Kun bzang snying tig* has numerous passages directly copied from 'Jigs med gling pa's *Ye shes bla ma*. Furthermore, his *sKu gsum rang shar* relies upon the *sKu gsum don rgyud* revealed by gSang sngags gling pa, a very important New Bon treasure which connects back to the scheme of the '*chi med yab sras gsum*, as well as to a typically rNying ma approach to *thod rgal* practice with its various kinds of *khrid* guidance, such as black guidance (*nag khrid*), white guidance (*dkar khrid*), and so forth. These kinds of *khrid* do not appear under these headings in g.Yung drung Bon traditional jar-gon.

³⁴ Shardza had met him earlier in 1921, during one of his trips to Central Tibet. He was already 63 at that time and in a position of authority likely to justify his own literary choices of influence (Achard, *Enlightened Rainbows*, p. 91).

³⁵ Achard, *op. cit.*, p. 98. This examination of his works in sMan ri took place in 1926.

³⁶ This text is one of the *Seventeen Tantras* [*rGyud bcu bdun*] collection of the rNying ma tradition. On these texts, see Achard, *L'Essence Perlée du Secret*, *passim*.

³⁷ On the Seven Bases, see Achard, "La Base et ses sept interprétations dans la tradition rDzogs chen."

modify the reference to the quote, so that instead of *Klong drug las*, the text read *rDzogs chen ye khri bshad rgyud las*. This is a very interesting change since it definitely demonstrates that Shardza was clearly aware of the borrowings of the *rDzogs chen Ye khri* cycle from the *Seventeen Tantras* and related material. Since there exists no such text in the *rDzogs chen Ye khri* cycle entitled *bShad rgyud*, Shardza coined the name as a way of referring to the *Klong drug* by designating it as an *explanatory Tantra (bshad rgyud)* of the *Ye khri* itself.³⁸

The issue of integrating Buddhist texts and teachings into new corpora of works within New Bon has been a recurring subject that Shardza Rinpoche had to face several times. Despite his veneration for mNyam med Shes rab rgyal mtshan and his admiration of the canonical curriculum of studies followed in sMan ri and other g.Yung drung Bon monasteries in Central Tibet, he was several times exposed to criticisms from sMan ri *dge bshes*. One of the most famous episodes in this regard happened in 1920 with *dge bshes* Shes rab grags pa, in between rTogs ldan dgon pa and sNang zhig dgon pa. This was the start of a campaign that the *dge bshes* launched against Shardza upon his return to Central Tibet. However, it would seem that the point of contention was the differing approaches the two masters had about spiritual practices: Shes rab grags pa vouched for a definitely scholastic approach while Shardza defended a more retreat-oriented perspective. The result their respective engagement yielded is interesting in that traditional accounts among the “Shardza party” report that the *dge bshes* died of leprosy years later, while Shardza himself reached the Rainbow Body (*‘ja’ lus*) at the end of his life.³⁹

6. Two Eternal Bon Lineage Holders and their connection to New Bon in modern times

As a conclusion, I would like to briefly discuss the issue at stake by illustrating it with the examples of two important figures that one generally does not associate with New Bon.

³⁸ In *L'Essence Perlée du Secret* (p. 224-231), I have shown how Klong chen pa relied on a text of the *Ye khri* cycle. My opinion now is that the entire section on rDzogs chen teachings from this cycle (it contains both tantric and rdzogs chen instructions) is actually borrowed from earlier sNying thig texts. At the time *L'Essence Perlée du Secret* was published, this newly available material from ancient sNying thig was not available. I hope to come back to the issue in a publication about the *Ye khri* and its sources.

³⁹ On this realization, see Achard, “Le Corps d’Arc-en-ciel (*‘ja’ lus*) de Shar dza Rin po che,” *passim*. For more on the score to settle between Shes rab grags pa and Shardza, see my short contribution to the issue based on information collected from Yongdzin Rinpoche in Achard, “What of Shardza and New Bon?” (unpublished).

The first is the influential abbot Yongs 'dzin Sangs rgyas bstan 'dzin (1912–1978) who exemplifies the pure orthodoxy of g.Yung drung gling monastery in Central Tibet. He was born in the Hor region, located in the contemporary district of dKar mdzes in Khams, and belonged to the rMe'u lineage. In 1925, the young Sangs rgyas bstan 'dzin entered the sPa dgon monastery (g.Yung drung rab brtan gling) where he took the vows of *dge bsnyen* from sPa ston bsTan pa 'brug grags (1892–1959?), the famed disciple of the New Bon *gter ston* gSang sngags gling pa (1864–1959?). gSang sngags gling pa was an ardent treasure revealer who played an important role in the spread of the teachings composed by Shardza Rinpoche, and also in the diffusion of the *Bon bKa' 'gyur* whose transmission he actively disseminated throughout Eastern Tibet. The early spiritual training that Sangs rgyas bstan 'dzin received was done under the guidance of bsTan pa 'brug grags who trained him in the lore of the *Secret Treasury of the Sky Dancers on Channels and Winds* (*rTsa rlung mkha' 'gro gsang mdzod*) revealed by Kun grol grags pa (1700-?). This cycle is one of the most important New Bon set of teachings, mostly focused on *rdzogs rim* yogas performed during a practice program lasting twelve years for yogis of higher capacities and six years only for those of intermediate capacities.⁴⁰ Sangs rgyas bstan 'dzin is said to have engaged in this program, successfully completing the number of mantra recitations, and so forth. The practice of this *Secret Treasury of the Sky Dancers* is not authorized either in sMan ri or in g.Yung drung gling and affiliated monasteries. It is considered as one of the most syncretic works by Kun grol grags pa, focusing upon the Buddhist deity Vajrayogini and using a wide range of Buddhist and New Bon terminology.⁴¹

The second figure is none other than Yongdzin Lopön Tenzin Namdak (Yongs 'dzin Slob dpon bsTan 'dzin rnam dag, b. 1926) who incarnates for many what g.Yung drung Bon actually stands for. As a young monk, the Lopön was first trained as a painter assisting his uncle but he has, through his extensive studies and practices, become one of the luminaries of Bon and probably one of the most knowledgeable individual about rDzogs chen.⁴² As one of the most important religious figures in sMan ri (both in Tibet before exile, and then in India), and evidently as the head of Triten Norbutsé Monastery in Nepal, his

⁴⁰ Kun grol grags pa, *Lag len nor bu'i phreng ba*, p. 311.

⁴¹ On this cycle, see Achard, "Kun grol grags pa and the revelation of the *Secret Treasury of the Sky Dancers on Channels and Winds*," *passim*.

⁴² His knowledge of the teachings of the Great Perfection is unparalleled since he has studied nearly all texts available in the rNying ma, g.Yung drung Bon, and New Bon traditions.

monastic responsibility for the future of the sMan ri lineage was to ensure the careful education of the monks following his training. In this perspective, sticking to the traditional curriculum and maintaining its canonical rigor became the pillars ensuring that the traditional Bon po culture was handed over to the newer generations with as little alteration as possible. Therefore, in elaborating the curriculum following the ancient tradition of sMan ri as elaborated by its founder (mNyam med Shes rab rgyal mtshan), not a single work of New Bon was allowed into the collections of texts to study. Thus, since Lopön Tenzin Namdak is the holder of New Bon transmissions, this implies that the curriculum training he collated for the sMan ri monks is actually a very limited expression of all the lineages that he himself holds. Among these are:

- the *Profound Cutting* (*Zab gcod*) instructions revealed by Nyag gter gSang sngags gling pa, including the famed New Bon *gcod* cycle entitled *Byams ma snying thig*; and
- the *Long-Life Practice of Dran pa nam mkha'* (*Dran pa tshe sgrub*) also revealed by gSang sngags gling pa.⁴³

The line of transmission for these two cycles is: 1. gSang sngags gling pa → 2. rGyal tshab Blo gros rgyal mtshan (his name is actually Blo gros rgya mtsho, 1915–1952, he was Shardza Rinpoche's nephew and, like his uncle, he is said to have reached Rainbow Body at the end of his life) → 3. brTson 'grus rgyal mtshan (?–1985) → Lopön Tenzin Namdak.

These New Bon transmissions appear to have been handed over by brTson 'grus rgyal mtshan, an important meditation master affiliated to the rTse drug monastic establishment which was founded by sPrul sku Blo ldan snying po in the late 14th century. As a refugee in sMan ri (Dolanji), brTson 'grus rgyal mtshan gave Lopön numerous transmissions, as well as reading authorizations and private guidance in numerous teachings practiced in rTse drug, including a very large corpus of New Bon cycles. It looks as if the new lineages and treasures of New Bon started with Blo ldan snying po (and others after him, such as Mi shig rdo rje, and so forth) in rTse drug had come a long way to eventually reach back to masters concretely incarnating the purest orthodoxy of the sMan ri tradition. More recently, the new Lopön of sMan ri, Lopön Trinley Nyima (b. 1962) has even incorporated some of Shardza Rinpoche's teachings into the curriculum he is in charge of. As centuries passed, it would appear that the frontier dividing the two

⁴³ Slob dpon bsTan 'dzin rnam dag, *Bon phyi nang gsang gsum gyi dbang gi brgyud rim mu tig phreng ba*, p. 71.

traditions has become increasingly porous, which is probably to the benefit of New Bon as it is one of the least known and studied lineages in the West, while its religious impact in modern Eastern Tibet is outstandingly gigantic.

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Antecedents of Bon On rMa Folks and the Origins of gShen Ritual Specialists

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Introduction, The Lay of the (Holy) Land

There is no or desperately little reliable early evidence to support the historicity of the grand pre-Buddhist Bon Zhang zhung Empire of later Bon po sources and their western aficionados. Imagination is nonetheless plentiful. In the PIATS 2016,¹ I discuss the oldest historical textual sources relevant to a heartland of Bon, which is variously conceptualised as Zhang zhung, Ta zig and 'Ol mo lung ring, with special reference to a central stronghold and main seat of power in Zhang zhung: the so-called Silver Castle of Garuḍa Valley or Khyung lung dNgul mkhar.²

If one carefully examines the genealogy of knowledge and the history of invention of that grand Zhang zhung Bon Empire and its legendary Khyung lung castle, one cannot help but notice that our ideas about them derive from surprisingly late discourse, which postdates any relevant historical and geographical realities by a long stretch. The later Bon Zhang zhung literary construct is to be distinguished clearly from a probably historical and probably also small principality by the name of Zhang zhung that is located west of Central Tibet, roughly centred on the Kailash area and that seems to

¹ Proceedings of the IATS 2006: Blezer (2011), *Creation of a Myth*, henceforth “PIATS 2006” will be used.

² If we follow the spelling commonly used in later sources, the name of that castle is to be translated as: The Silver Castle of Garuḍa Valley. The earliest references to a castle by that name suggest that the name originally might have been a more prosaically descriptive *rdul mkhar* (which in written form is very similar to the old alternative spelling *rngul mkhar* and which is indeed attested in sources): a dusty or sandy castle. Such a description incidentally matches the earliest descriptions of such a castle in Dunhuang sources remarkably well. There is a good likelihood that the more lofty Silver or dNgul reading is a later literary embellishment that occurred when the narrative of a Bon Khyung lung castle started to take off and grow (Blezer 2011, *Creation of a Myth*).

have had a northern extension as well. But, interestingly, that historical Zhang chung in its descriptions carries no significant Bon po associations and in time also significantly precedes Bon traditions as we know them now.

While, as professed many times before, it is obviously self-defeating to try to *prove* that the proverbial pink elephant—*casu quo* the grand pre-Buddhist Bon Zhang chung Empire—never existed *because* it is not mentioned in early sources, there still is something more than just a *lack* of evidence to go by. Structural analyses of the earliest narratives on Bon origins reveal that those stories about Bon origins have datable origins themselves: the idea of an old Bon Zhang chung Empire has left traces in history, none of which, however, predate the turn of the first millennium AD. In fact, not a single, major, self-consciously Bon narrative can be dated before the 10th–11th century AD—and that is a rather generous assessment! All stories converge at the turn of the first millennium: the period of the early second diffusion of Buddhism or *phyi dar*. Individual story elements may be earlier, however.

Considering the relative success of Buddhist interest groups in the period, it should be obvious indeed what triggered Bon identity discourse. That fact alone already makes it unlikely that a grand Zhang chung Empire would have existed before the turn of the first millennium AD; as far as our records go, the great Empire then simply had not yet been invented. There is not a single shred of evidence that anybody in Tibet had thought of such a grander Zhang chung *before* the early *phyi dar*. Again, we are not talking about that probably minor, historical Zhang chung principality to the west of central Tibet. The conception of a larger Zhang chung in textual sources in fact even postdates the first traces of the formation of a Bon identity (PIATS 2006). Outlining how the memory of the old Zhang chung principality was recycled into a grand, vast and near-invincible Bon Zhang chung Empire is for another occasion.³

Except for a brief introduction of the problem, I also leave for later discussion those typically vague and often contradictory (Chinese) categories for peoples at their (Tibetan) borders, such as references to Yang-t'ung or Yangtong (*yángtòng* 羊同), that some have presumed is a name for Zhang chung borrowed into Chinese via Persian, or the Ch'iang or Qiang (*qiāngzú* 羌族) peoples, for that matter, that, over time, have identified with very different ethnic groups.

³ It is unavoidable that there will be overlap, mostly in paraphrase, with earlier publications when presenting this unpublished prong of a two-pronged argument; this paper will focus less on locations and more on 'people'.

The earliest Tibetan documents do not at all recommend visualising a 'territorial' extension (however constituted) of Zhang zhung that was any more extensive than for many of the other minor principalities mentioned (see, e.g., various Dunhuang 'Catalogues', discussed by Lalou, Macdonald, Stein and others). Most publications on the topic hail from a period and follow scholarly sensibilities that tended to rely on late Tibetan historical (re)constructions. The most compelling evidence for this vast Zhang zhung in fact (and quite tellingly) comes from *non-Tibetan* sources, i.e., references in Chinese sources to Greater Yang-t'ung (Ta Yang-t'ung, *dà yáng tóng* 大羊同) and Lesser Yang-t'ung (Hsiao Yang-t'ung, *xiǎo yáng tóng* 小羊同). In fact, most western-language arguments for the existence of a larger Zhang zhung are based on references to Yang-t'ung in Chinese sources, if not on much later Bon po discourse.⁴

But as is well known, Chinese sources are notoriously vague about the barbarians at their borders (a bit like references to various groups styled *barbaros* and *celtoi* by the ancient Greeks). The list of all the groups labeled 'Qiang' is long. One might dig further into the semantics of Yangtong—or, as the older literature usually has it in Wade-Giles, Yang-t'ung—and see what comes up. It may be a generic reference to various groups in Tibet that spelled the same sort of trouble for the Chinese. In any case, the exact extent and even location, particularly of Greater Yang-t'ung is utterly confused in Chinese sources, locations ranging from the far north-west to the north-east. The identification of Yang t'ung with Zhang zhung at this point is an interesting hypothesis at best (and a rather problematic and tenuous one).

Typically, it are scholars who already start from the assumption that there should be a grand Zhang zhung empire out there, somewhere, who eagerly latch onto Yang t'ung. If one doesn't start from that assumption, it all of a sudden starts to look much less convincing, and if you try to do the math for the argument for a vast Zhang zhung, purely based on primary sources, and leave all the intuitions and later historical constructions for what they are, a nice surprise lies waiting: there is really not much evidence to go by, particularly on the Tibetan side of things.

Like the ancient Chinese and so many other cultures, in our *ad hoc* labels for 'others' we tend to think in conveniently abbreviated dichotomies. Bon becomes things non-Buddhist in Tibet (besides other major world religions, of course) and Zhang zhung is everything non-Yar lung, everything non-sPu rgyal Bod etc., and

⁴ For a brief *résumé* of the proposition (and interesting linguistic arguments), see references in Beckwith (2011).

therefore at one time must have covered most, if not all, of ethnic Tibet, with the exception of central Tibet (and other well-known entities). So-called intuition more often than not leads us right into the trappings of oversimplified categorisations. Yang-t'ung looks like a Chinese exonym for diffuse groups in western and north-western—but, oddly enough, also in north-eastern— areas of 'ethnic Tibet', a pragmatic classification of groups and alliances that spelled the same mix of trouble and opportunities for 'Chinese' wheeling and dealing at their western borders. It is not a category of the same order as the Zhang zhung of Dunhuang sources or the Bon Zhang zhung myth.⁵

The construction of sacred landscape is of all ages; the Bon po-s are no exception. As an example of a surprisingly recent construction (or rather identification), elsewhere⁶ I have argued that the main identifications of those Khyung lung 'Silver Castle' sites (the alleged seat of power of that grand Bon 'Zhang zhung Empire') that presently are still up for discussion—to wit, competing locations in Khyung lung yul smad and Gur gyam—seem to be much more recent than has hitherto been assumed (mid-19th century AD, to be precise). In general, the Gur gyam site identifications seem to be best supported, albeit only from relatively late Tibetan sources. Presently, most specialists indeed seem to favour the Gur gyam sites. In PIATS 2006, I show that the earliest Tibetan sources on the other hand—and now I mean those sources that are closest to the presumed Zhang zhung period—suggest different locations for the legendary castle, (much) further east—perhaps not even too far removed from rKong po—in any case locations that clearly are incompatible with the currently designated and narrativised sites.

The identification of alternative sites for the castle, other than those presently favoured by archaeologists and intrepid explorers, and based on the oldest extant sources is an involved matter (because the earliest source that is sufficiently elaborate already appears narrativised to a significant degree and the castle appears there as a trope-like entity). Presently, we will mainly be concerned with uncovering the most ancient literary traces, if not of a heartland of Bon as such then at least of narratives that gave rise to the idea of a Bon heartland. This brings us back to the earliest non-Buddhist narratives in Dunhuang sources.

A fundamental problem in the study of emerging Bon is the paradox of Bon historiography; most quests for the antecedents of Bon have been hampered by a lack of genuinely early textual sources

⁵ See now also Blezer (2019), *How Zhang zhung Emerges in Emic and Etic Discourse and is Ever at Peril of Disappearing Again in the Same*.

⁶ Blezer (2007), *Heaven my Blanket, Earth my Pillow* and (2008), *The Silver Castle Revisited*.

that can safely be dated to before the tenth century AD, or at least to sometime deeper into the first millennium. So far, we have not been able to gain any firm historical footing in the period before the early *phyi dar*. The major clearly non-Buddhist (but not explicitly Bon) textual sources that are relevant to Bon and that may cover the last part of the first millennium are found among Tibetan-language Dunhuang sources. Informed opinion about their antiquity varies (compare e.g. the dating of McDonald, Stein, and Beckwith, and see also Dalton, Davis and van Schaik 2007). If no convincing additional palaeographical or historical evidence emerges, I think it would be wise to remain conservative and presume that most of the Tibetan-language Dunhuang documents were composed close to (that is within one or perhaps two centuries from) the upper limit for the sealing of the cave, approximately in the beginning of the 11th century AD.⁷ The structural analysis of narratives contained in these Dunhuang documents that I develop here, may, for the first time, provide a historically reliable lens into that presumed period of Bon antecedents—however narrow, aspheric, and fogged that lens may be. The image that appears is nonetheless revealing, and moreover receives confirmation from the earliest self-consciously Bon sources, which have hitherto been ignored. These sources do not sit well with later, polished origin narratives of Bon: the grand Come-from-the-west narrative that invokes Zhang zhung, 'Ol mo lung ring, and Ta zig is conspicuously absent.

In the following, we will examine the earliest evidence for a 'location' of the origin of Bon, or at least for the origin of its narratives. We find those in non-Buddhist *ritualistic* narratives of the Dunhuang period. For an overview and analysis of Dunhuang *historical* narratives, I refer to PIATS 2006 (but see also Macdonald 1971). The analysis of ritualistic narratives is significantly more involved than that of historical sources. It requires fragile attempts at connecting clusters of narrative elements that in Dunhuang sources appear loosely assembled around important names and locations to the earliest, self-consciously Bon sources, such as the *mDo 'dus*, the *Klu 'bum* and other sources, with special attention to those names and locations, of course, that are already familiar from later strata of emerging Bon. The latter begin to emerge in around the 10th–11th century AD and thus may be closely contiguous with the redaction of

⁷ Presumably 1002 AD (Rong 1999); see Blezer (2011, p.168, n.3), *It All Happened in Myi yul skyi mthing*; see the prologue on Old Tibetan in Walter (2009). Often closure in 1034/35 AD is mentioned (cf. Tangut attack, probably in 1036 AD). But cf. Rong (1999), Russell-Smith (2005:72ff) and Imaeda (2008): 1002 AD or 1006 AD (Dohi)."

Dunhuang materials. The nature of the rituals cannot be elucidated here, for reasons of space.⁸

A clear example for this I have discussed elsewhere.⁹ There I summarily connected the story of the alleged founder of Bon, *sTon pa gShen rab mi bo*, as it starts to appear in texts like the *mDo 'dus* and the *Klu 'bum*, to occurrences of the descriptive nomer *Pha gShen rab(s) (kyi) myi bo* and to names of other famous *bon* and *gshen* ritual specialists in Dunhuang sources.

rMa Folks and Skyi Places
Possible Antecedents of Bon po, gShen and Zhang zhung

As argued before (e.g., PIATS 2006), two prominent early (clusters of) names need to be examined: *rma* and *skyi*. Both show clear narrative association with *bon* and *gshen* types of ritual specialists and with a heartland for those types. By simply tracing two syllables and their narrative environments in ritualistic Dunhuang sources, perhaps for the first time in Bon studies, we are able to put a tentative foot down in a period before the 10th–11th century AD. Preliminary findings on the *skyi* cluster have already been published,¹⁰ the findings on the *rMa* cluster of names not in its entirety. It is my pleasure and great honour to offer these tentative reflections in honour of the finest imaginable Tibetan Studies colleague, Daniel Preston Martin, who incidentally was substantially involved in the research (program) underlying this paper.¹¹

rMa, sMa, sMra & Myi; rMa da (na), Myi bo & sMra bon
and Dur gshen & gShen rab(s)

This investigation starts from rather small and unseemly beginnings: two Tibetan syllables: *rma* and *skyi*. The first comprehends a couple of obscure but apparently related names in old Tibetan documents: *rma*, *sma*, and *smra*. They often occur in Dunhuang and other early sources

⁸ A recent must-read for appreciating Dunhuang type ritual in a wider temporal, geographical and social anthropological context is Huber (2020), incidentally setting straight some speculation in premature publications on the matter of Moke Mokotoff's interesting illustrated manuscripts, initially shared with me by Dan Martin.

⁹ Blezer (2008), *sTon pa gShen rab*.

¹⁰ Blezer (2012), *It All Happened in Myi yul skyi mthing*.

¹¹ *Three Pillars of Bon: Doctrine, 'Location' (of Origin) & Founder—Historiographical Strategies and their Contexts in Bön Religious Historical Literature*, NWO Vidi (2005–2010), grant number 276-50-002.

and seem part of descriptive names; they look like toponyms¹² or may derive from those.

Thomas (1957:7&53) in IOL734 (Text IV) associates the *rma* name with the rMa chu or upper Huangho (river) area.¹³ Based on association with *rma bya*, he takes it to mean “peacock”. Leaving etymology aside for a moment, it indeed makes sense to connect the profusion of *rma*, *sma* and *smra* names in Dunhuang narratives to origins in the nearby rMa river or valley area (to wit, rMa chu and rMa rong). Thomas (1957) argues, quite plausibly, that many names and narratives that have been preserved in Dunhuang documents derive from near-local traditions of this remote north-eastern quarter of Tibet. Likewise, one would obviously like to connect names that contain the toponym rTsang to the rTsang po river area. But it would be imprudent to assume, as Thomas seems to, that texts containing references that can be traced to those north-eastern areas, originally, do also entirely, or substantially ‘belong’ there. Thomas does allow for adaptation of stories through collection, translation and the like, but he neglects to take into account that names and narremes of local narratives may also become part of a repertoire that is performed more widely and thus migrate to other narrative contexts, which perhaps also pertain to other areas, or may be included in stories for reasons other than geographical or genealogical accuracy—e.g., because of similarities in name, theme or ritual performance. Elsewhere, I considered an example for the narrative concentration of two sKyī realms, including their associated clusters of narrative elements, which also involve those *rma/smra* type names (and incidentally also elaborated on the *smra* and *smrang* nexus).¹⁴

The syllable *rma* also has become productive in ways other than merely being a place name. Its obvious geographical origins notwithstanding, *rma* often appears as a name and toponym for people. Based on IOL734 and a few other old sources, one may argue that

¹² For a few useful references in later sources see Haarh (1969), who refers to dPa' bo Gtsug lag 'phreng ba (on pp.105 and 175) and to the *rGyal po bka'i thang yig* (on pp.100, 120 and 123).

¹³ See old literature on expeditions and travel in the rMa chu area by Filchner (1907), Tafel (1914)—Filchner was present in the Tafel expedition as a medical officer; and, older still, Prschewalski (1884). See also more recent literature on the area, such as Andreas Gruschke (2001).

¹⁴ Blezer (2012), *It All Happened in Myi yul skyi mthing* (“sMrā myi are ‘human folk’ from the human (*myi*, *rma* or *smra*) world: sMrā yul or Myi yul. They may, at some point, have been perceived as mythic early Tibetans, perhaps a generic self-reference for people who know how to speak [*smra*] and how to perform ritual recitation, *smrang*, properly”). Lalou (1958:159) has forwarded a very different proposal for contextualising the *smra*, *rma*, and *sma* group of names. She considers them variants of Zhang chung Mar or sMar, thus suggesting they are toponyms pertaining to an area bordering both rTsang and Zhang chung.

rma, *smra* and *sma* are synonymous with *myi*, “man”. This possibility was first suggested by Stein,¹⁵ mainly in brief notes (as so many of his brilliant ideas in fact are).¹⁶ As we shall see, this reading may directly affect the earliest formations of the legend of the founder of Bon. Developing Stein’s argument further, we will speculate that *rMa bu* is equivalent to *Myi (bo) bu* and *sMrā yul* to *Myi yul*, and even more exciting: that the *gshen* called *rma dad* and the *gshen* called *myi bo* (*dad?*) originally were similar or perhaps even identical, though distinct narrative entities.¹⁷

To start with the latter: these two strands of descriptive nomers of famous *gShen*, for example in IOL 731:124, appear as: *pha gshen rabs myi bo dad* [*dang?*] *dur gshen ma dad*: *pha gshen rab(s) (kyi) myi bo* (*dad* or *dang*, but probably the latter; cf. *rma dad*) and *pha/pa dur gshen (gyi) rma dad* (cf. *myi bo (dad)*).

The joint appearances of those two great *gshen* in PT1068, PT1134, PT1194, and IOL731 may be the result of a conflation of two originally separate strands of narratives regarding closely related categories of senior (*pha*) ritual specialists that were differentially appropriated by later narrative discourse. *Pha gShen rab(s) kyi myi bo* and *Pha Dur gshen gyi rma dad/da (na)* may be characters that originally pertained to similar or even the same narrative configurations. With the wisdom of hindsight, we now know that the *gShen rab(s) myi bo* figure was ‘elected’ for a more ambitious narrative career and his descriptive nomer may originally also have been personalised somewhat more explicitly. Note that these are *the* two personalised *gshen* names that are mentioned most frequently in these Dunhuang sources on healing and death ritual. The *Dur gshen* type—(‘)*dur* refers to tombs and funerary rites after all—contrary to later usage and for quite obvious reasons, even occurs slightly more frequently in those old ritualistic sources than does the *gShen rab(s)* type.

PT1136 and a few other Dunhuang sources are very significant for our understanding of the development of *gShen rab(s)* and its narrative environment, including visualisations of a heartland of Bon. In the second part of PT1136, for example, we find a ‘healing/funeral’ narrative in which a lord from *rTsang (chen)*, *Jo bo rTsang Ho de’i hos bdag* and his son *sMa/rMa bu* (*zing ba’i zing skyes*) are involved in providing proper ritual service for their

¹⁵ Stein (1988:48) and (1971:488 and n.26).

¹⁶ Thomas (1957:53) speculates that *rma* in names such as *rma hi*, *rma bo* and *rma mching* in Chinese was rendered by *mi* (*mitsi*, *mibo*, *michen*, successively). The IOL734 (Pu) *rMa bo* in Chinese would thus be rendered *mi bo*.

¹⁷ So much also seems to be suggested by the *Mu cho’i khrom ‘dur*, p.243, 1.2f.

unfortunate daughter and sister.¹⁸ The confusion that meets us between (Myi) sMa bu/sMra bon, the ordinary 'lay' figure and son on the one hand (cf. also the rather frequent use of sMra myi), and the occasional reference to a more priestly sounding sMra bon on the other,¹⁹ may point to the earliest narrative origins and development of the type of senior (*pha/pa/yab*) *gshen* styled *rma da (na)* or *rma dad* (who perhaps is equivalent to *myi bo [dad]*).

If we then add up one plus one, the Hos bdag and his wife, gShen za'i gyi myed ma (gShen za clearly indicates the lady of gShen affiliation), are perhaps the closest match we may ever hope to find for a 'father & mother' associated with 'personal' origins (in a narrative) for a rMa da (or Myi bo) type of senior *gshen* priest. I leave aside for a moment the question whether the later sTon pa gShen rab character derives from a generic designation for a type of ritual specialist or eventually goes back to the name of a historical person that triggered a story tradition. I thus also leave aside the possibility, or likelihood, that historical-looking, important names that are mentioned in these *rabs-* and *smrang-*type of Dunhuang ritual narratives may sometimes meet us as heavily narrativised legendary or even mythicised entities, the historical origins of which (if there ever were any) may occasionally hearken back several centuries. In any case, they most likely are irrelevant to g-Yung drung Bon that, at the beginning of the second millennium, recycled some of these entities into new narrative contexts. Thomas seems to have taken the historicity of these names and references at face value. I think we should first try to understand the configuration and history of these Dunhuang ritualistic narratives better, before jumping to any conclusions based on names alone.

In the narrative construct that meets us in PT1136, the gShen rab(s) (kyi) myi bo figure seems to appear in more than one role, in one and the same story. The figure that is actually named gShen rab(s) here acts in a supervising and advisory role, without getting his hands dirty. He shows himself as a typical late, Dunhuang-period form of a generic, senior, supervising officiant. But here he is, in a sense, portrayed as helping his own former self, for, as we saw above, in this story he assists narrative relics of his possibly earliest origins in narrative and the 'parents' of that proto rMa da or Myi bo-type of *gshen*. In the multi-layered and conflated construct of the PT1136 story, a developed version of the gShen rab(s) character (read: the

¹⁸ The exact nature of the problem is unclear. In any case, her complexion has turned dark and she may have trouble with her neck (due to suicide by hanging?), but the reading of the Tibetan is too insecure to be sure about that.

¹⁹ Cf. also the more pronounced 'priestly' role of a sMra bon (zing ba) in PT1285.1041.

Myi bo-type of *gshen*, which I argue, etymologically and practically may here be equivalent with its *rMa da* [na] or *rMa dad* funerary double) meets face to face with his earliest lay prototype with the *smra/rma* name: the *sMa bu* story character, who here clearly hasn't embarked on a 'priestly' career yet, including an encounter with 'his' or, as the case may be, 'their' parents. The contexts of later references to a figure with a name very similar to *sMa bu/sMra bon* (*gyi*) zing ba'i zing skyes, to wit *sMra bon zing ba* (in PT1285.1041), clearly indicate some kind of 'priestly' skill and function for that *rMa bon*-type of Bon po, in possibly related narrative contexts. If this admittedly speculative line of reasoning is tenable, in these few pertinent Dunhuang sources alone we would by now already have witnessed at least three stages in the development of the *gShen rab(s)* character:

1. The *sMa bu/sMra bon: rMa da* or Myi bo Zing ba'i zing skyes' lay origins, in PT1136;
2. His first narrative appearance as an expert *sMra bon* ritual specialist, in PT1285; and
3. A probably later narrative overlay of a superior supervising ritual specialist in PT1136, the great Myi bo *gshen* type, which, I would argue, at that point is not yet strongly separated from his 'dur alter ego or alternative: the *rMa da* (na) funerary type of *gshen*.

The *Klu 'bum* and *mDo 'dus* expand the *gShen* story paradigm further and add a *Leitfaden* of Bon identity (epitomised by the addition of the title "sTon pa": Teacher), and they moreover narrow down the options by preferring the *gShen rab(s)* over the *Dur gshen* type.

The *Pha Dur gshen rma da* (na) funerary type of senior ritual specialist, at the time of the formation of self-consciously Bon hagiographical literature (such as the *mDo 'dus*), in an early *phyi dar* Buddhist dominated milieu, was too tainted by his 'dur (read: blood sacrifice) associations to be able to appear centre stage and really shine in such a 'reformist' milieu. In one-upmanship with arising Buddhist sects over a prestigious founder, a more neutral 'excellent' *gshen* (or an expert man from the *gshen* clan) apparently was preferable to the old 'dur-type of *gshen*, associated as the latter was with contested, bloody funerary rites. It is telling indeed that the *rMa da na*-type of *gShen* rises to prominence once again in the mentioned 'Dur chog and *Mu cho'i khrom 'dur* rites, which consciously court and perhaps also reinvent controversial 'old and powerful' 'dur funerary expertise to be used eccentrically, specifically for cases of violent death (*gri 'dur*). For ordinary deaths these 'dur rites would not be considered appropriate. He also survives in other narratives related to Dunhuang-style death and healing paradigms, such as in the *rNel*

dri 'dul ba'i thabs (Pasang Wangdu 2007:36.9), fairly recently uncovered from dGa' thang 'bum pa in gTam shul, southern Tibet, which seems to tell and rephrase ancient Dunhuang period ritual narratives in slightly adjusted forms.

The dating of these texts is uncertain. In any case it seems improbable that the non-Buddhist section, which Pasang Wangdu identifies as Bon, would physically pertain to the imperial period. That some of the narratives and rituals continue traditions of the Dunhuang period still appears obvious. Equally obvious are the stray odd name and other anachronistic elements that reveal later redaction of the material. It may be more cautious to consider a date of not earlier than the eleventh century, for all the material, and not, as does Pasang Wangdu, only for the Buddhist texts.

At this point a brief reflection on early usage of the terms *bon* and *bon po* would be in place, as they provide the backdrop against which the present revisionist line of argument on possible origins of matters *bon* and *gshen* are to be appreciated. These sections have already been published, however, and shall therefore not be repeated here.²⁰

rMa lo & g-Yu lo, An Odd Couple

In the *mDo 'dus*—apparently out of the blue—the rMa lo and g-Yu lo pair suddenly appears in the narratives of sTon pa gShen rab, as his kin and close disciples. These exceptionally flat story characters are of somewhat confused descent and also do not seem to have much of a philological 'pedigree' in earlier sources. Moreover, the members of the rMa lo g-Yu lo pair, just like most of the offspring in the 'expedition abroad' narratives of the *mDo 'dus*, show preciously little individuality: they take up the conceptual space of approximately one, rather flat story character.

g-Yu appears much less frequently in Dunhuang names than *rma*, *sma* or *smra*. As far as I am aware, there is no convincing passage that may have informed the rMa lo and g-Yu lo pair of the *mDo 'dus* and other later sources. *g-Yu* does occasionally show up paired with *smra*, but these passages do not yield a convincing pedigree. The best match that I have been able to find, so far, is the paired occurrence of two personal names: sMra gol (skyi ma/mthing) (=Thang ma brla ma) and (Thang ba) g-Yu thang, in one of the narratives of PT1285.32 & 53. Both names contain references to a blue-green colour (i.e.: *mthing*: azure and *g-yu*: turquoise) and could be read as toponyms that refer to a sKyi mthing country and a g-Yu thang plane. Both

²⁰ For it suffices to refer to the correspondingly titled sections in Blezer (2008), *sTon pa gShen rab*.

suggest lofty blue-green grazing grounds or forests. In fact, the appearance of *sMra* folk in *sKyi mthing* touches on an important point on locations that I have developed elsewhere: as a country of the *sMra* (see IOL734), *sKyi mthing* could be identical with *sMra yul* (*thag brgyad*).²¹ Possibly, after a process of prolonged narrative reconfigurations, even all three names came to refer to a similar area with bluish greenery. In the *rNel dri 'dul ba'i thabs* (28.10f) appears a figure named *mDo lcam rMa lo rma lo sman*, daughter of *rDo rje gsum po*, the Lord of *mDo ro gsum*, and his spouse *sKyin za Thing tsun ma*.²²

Even though I am yet far from convinced, some things are already starting to add up. Stray paired references to *smra/rma* and *g-yu* in *gShen* (*rab*)-related stories, such as are preserved here in PT1285, might still be the origin of the *rMa lo* and *g-Yu lo* pair. Perhaps their name was also positively reinforced by the memory of the, later, somewhat rarefied name of the *rMa da* (*na*)-type of *Dur gshen* that also occurs in *gShen rab(s)* environment. Considering that *rma* and *g-yu* do occasionally show up in geographically remote *Dunhuang* and moreover in *rMa da* and *Myi bo* narrative environments, is it really surprising that, several centuries later, a *rma* name was remembered as, somehow, closely connected to the *gShen rab myi bo* figure in the *rMa lo* and *g-Yu lo* pair? I don't know. If that would be all we have, it would be better to drop this particular excursion. Fortunately, there is more.

Taking this conjecture just one step further: perhaps the later narrative construction of *rMa lo* and *g-Yu lo* in the *mDo 'dus* was an acceptable way of incorporating that important *rma* name into the narrative environment of the more developed *sTon pa gshen rab* figure, of a self-consciously Bon hagiography. Elsewhere, I have argued that the *Dur gshen rma da* (*na*)-type of ritual specialist originally may well have been a funerary variant of the *gShen rab(s)* *myi bo* type.²³ Something of that well-known *rma* name, which sounded so familiar and thoroughly 'Bon', was thus preserved by adjoining it to the newly invented *sTon pa, gShen-rab-the-founder* character, as a related pair of disciples. It may be telling in this regard that, in later sources, (*Dur gsas*) *rMa lo* indeed appears as a variant of the *rMa da* name.²⁴ Absorbing/preserving *rma* in(to) *rMa lo* and *g-Yu lo* may have been the best option available. This obligatory

²¹ Blezer (2012), *It All Happened in Myi yul skyi mthing*.

²² Cf. discussions of the toponym *sKyi mthing* in Blezer (2012), *It All Happened in Myi yul skyi mthing*.

²³ Cf. Blezer (2008), *sTon pa gShen rab*.

²⁴ *sNod rten 'byung ba chags 'jig pa'i mdo*, p.144.2, and *Srid pa khams gsum sems can skye mchi'i mdo*, p.124.5: '*dur gsas rma lo*.

presence has nonetheless also been reduced to insignificance, as has the presence of the rMa da (na)-type of Dur gshen *vis-à-vis* the Myi bo gShen rab(s) type, in later, run of the mill Bon rites.

Elsewhere,²⁵ I showed that the rMa name was there to stay in Bon. It continues into that famous rMa ston Bon family teaching lineage that produced the *Gling grags* cluster of historical narratives that the recipient of this felicitation volume, Dan Martin (mainly on the annotation), and Per Kvaerne (mainly on the translation) are working on. These are among the earliest surviving comprehensive Bon historical identity narratives (the profound rMa family influence ranges from the *Gling grags* historical narratives to *mDzod phug* 1-0-1 of Bon *Abhidharma*). The rMa family is closely connected to the mainly *gter ma* origins of Bon literature and thus to the early formation of a Bon canon. The rMa ston lineage is also closely connected to the origins of Bon as a cluster of traditions that arose in active dialogue with Buddhist traditions. It in fact embodies the earliest discernible traces of what later (approximately in the 15th century AD) has been styled *gter gsar* and, probably still later (18th century AD?), *bon gsar*.

Conclusion

Brief conclusions of these investigations have already appeared in print (in fact even reprint).²⁶ Because the present conclusions are so much entangled with other lines of the historiographical arguments on narrativisation of Bon origins and the emergence of early Bon identity narratives, it may be useful to reiterate (part of) the concluding sections of those earlier publications on *The World According to the rMa Family* here, including references to some of the publications where the individual lines of the complex analyses are developed and discussed in more detail.

- The grand narrative of the western origins of Bon is demonstrably later (late 11th or 12th century AD, e.g. the *Gling grags* cluster of texts) than the first historical beginnings of self-conscious Bon (the *mDo 'dus* and *Klu 'bum*).²⁷ Key narrative elements of the origin stories are, instead, traceable to areas more centrally in Tibet (*rMa* and *sKy*i localities) that are mainly known from their connections with early centres of

²⁵ Blezer (2013), *The Paradox of Bon Identity*, and Blezer (2013/2017), *The World According to the rMa Family*.

²⁶ Blezer (2013/2017), *The World According to the rMa Family*.

²⁷ See Blezer (2011), *Creation of a Myth* and Blezer (2010) *William of Ockham*.

Buddhism and often, in various ways, are deeply involved with *rMa* names.²⁸

- The name of the founder of Bon, *gShen rab mi bo*, appears to have its most immediately verifiable origins (i.e. those that are still relevant to organised Bon) in relatively late narrative constructs, as preserved in Dunhuang sources, and not in any other historical realities. The earliest occurrences of the name, in puzzling ways, are also involved with names of a *rMa*-type.
- The claimed centrality of *gShen rab(s)*-related families (*gShen* and *dMu*), before the 10th century AD, may be a later ideological construct, grafted on sparsely surviving historical data, a bit like the later projections of the western origins for Bon. Yet, this manoeuvre is scarcely able to conceal more convincingly historical realities of the ubiquitous prominence of *rMa* names, in connection with both pre-10th century narratives on *gShen* figures and with the first self-consciously Bon but also somewhat curiously 'eclectic' religious historical narratives that arise later.²⁹
- Blondeau has shown that the *rMa* family is intimately connected with the highly influential early Bon historical identity narratives that appear in the *bsGrags pa gling grags* cluster of historical texts. These texts, in her and also in my own analyses, clearly and consciously try to negotiate Buddhist heritage in Bon.³⁰
- By a quirk of history, later, more exclusivist Bon historians have chosen to gloss over almost completely all the many pivotal links to the *rMa* clan, possibly because of their ideological affinities with Buddhist traditions.

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²⁸ See Blezer (forthcoming), *Breaking the Paradigm: Tibetan Bon po-s and their Origin Narratives* (on *rMa*) and Blezer (2012), *Mi yul skyi mthing* (on *sKy*).

²⁹ See Blezer (2013), *The Paradox of Bon Identity Discourse*.

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A Short Text on the Four Phurpas attributed to Padmasambhava, passed down through the Transmitted Teachings (*bka' ma*)

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 recently completed an article on the early history of an important classification of *Vajrakīlaya* teachings in terms of Four Phurpas,² considering links between revelatory (*gter ma*) and transmitted (*bka' ma*) sources (Cantwell in press). One of the early teachings I referred to is a short text said to be by Padma Thod phreng rgyal po (AKA Padmasambhava)³ found within a group of similar texts on the *Eightfold Buddha Word* tantric deities (*sgrub pa bka' brgyad*) located within a collection of the *Fortress and Precipice* (*rdzong 'phrang*) cycle of transmitted teachings. Unlike most texts said to be by the great guru, the group of texts it is included within has been transmitted through a clear line of masters and is recorded as received by gTer bzhad rtsal (= gNubs Yon tan rgya mtsho) from his master, rDo rje Yang dbang gter, who is in fact the famous ninth to tenth century gNubs chen Sangs rgyas ye shes. I see no reason to doubt this attribution, given that we have a plausible record of the further transmission down to Myang ral Nyi ma 'od zer, and then further prominent teachers who passed on the sacred collection in

¹ This article builds on work supported by the DFG Germany under Grant number ME 2006/3–1, Myang ral's Codification of rNying ma Literature and Ritual, at the Center for Religious Studies (CERES) of the Ruhr-Universität Bochum, 2017–2019; and on work begun under earlier research projects at the Oriental Institute, University of Oxford. I must thank Dylan Esler for his help in locating additional *rdzong 'phrang* versions, especially that in the mKhan po Mun sel *bKa' ma shin tu rgyas pa* (KM), which has no outline.

² Note that in this article I am using the word, phurpa, as an English equivalent for *phur pa* or *phur bu* in Tibetan.

³ The names, Padma rgyal po, and/or Padma Thod phreng, appear to be used in some early sources when the Guru is being presented – or presents himself – as the enlightened tantric master, while the name Padmasambhava or Sambhava is perhaps more often used when presenting accounts of the historical transmission.

later times, based on a manuscript handwritten by Myang ral.⁴ The teachings had earlier passed through gNyags Jñānakumara, whose connection with gNubs chen is well known (see Esler 2018: 6), and Jñānakumara seems early enough that it would seem not beyond the realm of possibility that our short text may actually preserve a teaching transmitted by the historical Padmasambhava.⁵ In any case, it is clearly very early. After completing that article, I have reflected that the short text in question is worthy of a more detailed treatment, both because it may give a flavour of the earliest tradition of Padmasambhava's tantric teachings, and because the subject matter of the Four Phurpas becomes so central to later teachings on *Vajrakīlaya*, and this short text may be the earliest presentation of it. Thus, I present here the text and a translation of it, and I hope this will be a suitable offering for our esteemed friend and colleague, Dan Martin, who has done so much to illuminate the early history of Tibetan culture.

The earlier article considers at some length the subject matter of the Four Phurpas, including variations in lists of the four, and their significance to the *Vajrakīlaya* traditions. It also discusses connections between this particular short piece and other presentations of the Four Phurpas. I will not repeat that discussion here, but I preface the text and translation with a few brief remarks. It is clear that the text does not represent a self-sufficient practice. Rather, it sums up the approach to be taken throughout the process of performing and perfecting the tantric deity practice. As is the case in all versions of the four *phurpa* list, it is clear that the four categories are not entirely separate but illustrate different aspects of the tantric path and goal, only making sense in relation to each other.

The text in the *Fortress and Precipice* compilation is part of a series, each of which focuses on one of the eight principal tantric deities (*bka' brgyad*), and in most cases is associated with one of the early tantric masters, while the first six specifically deal with the "enlightened attention" (*dgongs pa*) needed for the practice of the particular deity (KM: 209-237). The association between "enlightened attention" and the Four Phurpas persists in numerous later presentations of *Vajrakīlaya* teachings which no longer link the subject to different

⁴ *rdzong 'phrang srog gsum gyi chings kyi man ngag*, KM: 425; see also KM: 27, 59, 63, 76, 83, 100, 106, where Myang ral's teacher, Grub thob dNgos grub is specified as passing the collection or parts of it to Myang ral. Dudjom Rinpoche's lineage list for the *Fortress and Precipice* cycle gives the intermediate figures following the two gNubs as: Padma dbang rgyal, Tshul khriims rgyal mtshan, lDan brtson, Ye shes dbang phyug, Se ston pa (Dudjom *bKa' ma* Volume Pa: 591).

⁵ Jñānakumara is said to have received all the *Fortress and Precipice* teachings from the Four Wise Humans (*m khas pa mi bzhi*), that is, Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra, gNubs nam mkha'i snying po, and either Vairocana or g.Yu sgra snying po.

types of "enlightened attention" needed for the other principal deities.

The teaching is in Padma Thod phreng rgyal po's voice. At the outset, he proclaims his identity with the deity Vajrakīlaya, and at the end of the text tells us that he wrote it at the rock cavern of Yang-le-shod, famed throughout the Vajrakīlaya traditions as the place where Guru Padma displayed his realisation of the Phurpa deity. A potentially confusing feature of the presentation is a phrasing apparently so reminiscent of Treasure revelations: annotations on the title suggesting it to be sealed by samaya; the final seals at the end; and above all, the statement that rDo rje Yang dbang gter has hidden the text as treasure in entrusting it to gTer bzhad rtsal. Many of the other short texts and sections of this *Fortress and Precipice* collection give similar statements, and even more share the seals which serve to mark off many of the sections. Yet although the language is reminiscent of Treasure revelation, a careful examination of all such wording throughout the compilation led me to the conclusion that at this early stage, such phrasing was not confined to the revelatory traditions, and that in this case, the idea is simply that this is a secret tantric teaching hidden in the mind of the recipient, so that it can later be transmitted without corruption.⁶

In the initial introduction to the topic, the first reference to the *bodhicitta phurpa* apparently refers to the broadest category: the *phurpa* of the enlightened mind, rather than the specific *bodhicitta phurpa* which is one of the four, and referenced in the idea of sameness or non-dual union in the final words of introduction.

A more extended comparison with other early sources on the four-fold classification is made in the earlier article. I do note here, however, short specific parallels with two texts in Myang ral's *Eightfold Buddha Word, Embodying the Sugatas* (*bka' brgyad bde gshegs 'dus pa*). As mentioned above, Myang ral is a key figure in the line of transmission for this *Fortress and Precipice* collection, as well as the fount of the *Eightfold Buddha Word* revelatory traditions. In general terms, those familiar with teachings on the four *phurpas* will observe that the im-

⁶ This is discussed at greater length in the previous article. In brief, I reiterate here an example of the early lineage transmission, in which each master "buries" the text as "treasure" within the heart/mind of each recipient (མྱུ་དང་བོད་ཀྱི་མཁམས་པ་མི་བཞི་ལོས། ། ལུ་གཅིག་པོ་གཏོན་ཞེས་བྱུགས་ཀྱི་གཏིར་དུ་སྦྱས། ། དེས་མོག་པོ་སྦྱང་དཔལ་གྱི་ཡི་ཤེས་གཏིར་དུ་སྦྱས། ། དེས་དོན་ཡང་དབང་གཏིར་གྱི་ཐུགས་ཀྱི་གཏིར་དུ་སྦྱས། ། དེས་གཞུབ་ལུ་ལྷང་པ་ཡོན་ཏན་རྒྱ་མཚོ་ཡི་གཏིར་དུ་སྦྱས། ། དེས་པསྒྲ་དབང་རྒྱལ་གྱི་ཐུགས་ཀྱི་གཏིར་དུ་སྦྱས།, KM: 126). Note also an example of gTer bzhad rtsal "burying" a teaching inwardly (གཏིར་བཞད་རྩལ་གྱིས་ཁོང་པར་སྦྱོས།, KM: 200; 248).

agery in this short text is very much in line with standard presentations found throughout rNying ma traditions of Vajrakīlaya. However, perhaps one aspect stands out as a little distinctive. This is the treatment of the *uniquely special bodhicitta phurpa*, which concerns the tantric practice of sexual union. Generally, this *bodhicitta phurpa* is linked with yogic teachings on the channels and airs (*rtsa rlung*) which may emphasise the avoidance of conception, yet here the fundamental purpose is stated to be the production of bodhisattva children,⁷ a purpose which fits well with hereditary transmission so important to rNying ma pa mantra practitioner (*sngags pa*) traditions.

As typical, the material symbolic *phurpa* is primarily to be associated with the rite of release or liberation (*sgrol ba*, *bsgral ba*), and its purpose defined in terms of protecting the Buddhist dispensation, suggestive of clearing away outwardly manifesting as well as inward obstacles of mental conceptualisations. Yet it is interesting that the presentation here rather merges into the final section which focuses on the main principles of the practice as a whole. Thus, here the sense of an equation between the practitioner, the deity, and the *phurpa* implement is rather pronounced.

The text concludes with the classic categories of body, speech, mind, qualities and actions, all of which are to be in line with pure vision, in this case connecting with enlightened attention to the four *phurpas*. One's body is the buddha body of the deity, whatever one is doing. One's speech is the deity's mantra and the mind is constantly attending to the enlightened attentions. Thus, the buddha qualities are continually present. The buddha actions are the tantric rituals, but they are also nothing other than the expression of primordial buddhahood. Such enlightened attention to the four *phurpas* is summed up in the closing words as, "flawless and uncontrived".

Text and Translation

I have not attempted a critical edition, but simply present an eclectic text; there are in any case mostly minor variant readings. I have followed the pagination of the *bKa' ma shin tu rgyas pa* mKhan po Mun sel edition Volume Ju (KM) which reproduces the same manuscript and gives the same pagination as the mKhan po 'Jam dbyangs edition Volume Ha (KJ), although KM includes a few minor spelling corrections, which have most likely been introduced by the editors. The later computer input version (KT; this text is found p. 258-262) intro-

⁷ This purpose is shared with the presentation in the two texts which deal with the topic in Myang ral's *Eightfold Buddha Word*, where it is developed at slightly greater length. It is reflected also in later teachings which appear to derive from Myang ral but does not otherwise seem to be witnessed widely.

པོ་རིག་པས་གདབ། །སེམས་ལ་བཏབ་པས་རིག་པ་ཤར། །དབྱིངས་ལ་བཏབ་པས་དོན་དམ་རྫོགས། །གཉིས་སུ་མེད་པས་མཉམ་
པའི་ངང། །བྱང་རྒྱལ་སེམས་ཀྱི་ཕུར་པ་ཡིན།

The *bodhicitta phurpa* sharpens one's view of beings throughout the three planes of existence.

It perfects spontaneously, as if there were no striking at all; for pure awareness which is the king of sameness, will strike.

By striking the mind, pure awareness arises; by striking the spatial field, the ultimate truth is perfected. The condition of their non-dual sameness is the *bodhicitta phurpa*.

དེ་ལ་ཕུར་པའི་རྒྱ་བཞི་སྟེ། །རིག་པའི་ཡི་ཤེས་ཀྱི་ཕུར་པ། །ལྗག་པ་བྱང་རྒྱལ་སེམས་ཀྱི་ཕུར་པ་དང། །རྒྱུ་མེད་སྦྱིང་རྗེའི་ཕུར་པ་
དང། །འདུས་བྱས་རྒྱས་ཀྱི་ཕུར་པ་དང་བཞི་སྟེ་དེ་ལ་རིག་པ་ཡི་ཤེས་ཀྱི་ཕུར་པ་དེ་ཡུལ་གང་ལ་འདེབས་ན། །ཡུལ་ཚོས་ཀྱི་དབྱིངས་
ལ་གདབ།

In this, there are four *phurpa* materials: the *pure awareness primordial wisdom phurpa*; the *uniquely special bodhicitta phurpa*; the *immeasurable compassion phurpa*; the *material manufactured phurpa*.

These are the four, and of these, what object does the *pure awareness primordial wisdom phurpa* strike? The object it will strike is the *dharmadhātu*.

[KM 231]

དེ་ལ་དགོས་པ་ཅི་ཡོད་ན། །དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པའི་བྱགས་ཡང་དག་པའི་ཡི་ཤེས་རྟོགས་པར་བྱ་བའི་ཕྱིར་བཏབ་སྟེ། །དེ་ཡང་བཀའ་
ལས། །བྱང་རྒྱུ་རྟོགས་ནས་ཐེབས་པ་ཡིན། །ཅེས་པས་གསལ་ལོ།

Why does it need to do so? It strikes so that there should be realisation of the authentic primordial wisdom of the mind/heart of the tathāgatas. The scriptural authority clarifies further: "realising vividly is the striking/planting".¹³

ལྗག་པ་བྱང་རྒྱལ་སེམས་ཀྱི་ཕུར་པའི་ཡུལ་ནི། །ཡུམ་གྱི་མཁའ་ལ་གདབ་པའོ། །དེ་ལ་དགོས་པ་ཅི་ཡོད་ན། །དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་
པའི་སྲས་རྣམས་འཕྲོན་པར་བྱའི་ཕྱིར་གདབ་སྟེ། །དེ་ཡང་བཀའ་ཉིད་ལས། །གཉིས་སུ་མེད་ན་སྦྱར་བ་ཡིན། །ཅེས་འབྲུང་བས་སོ།

¹³ Here, I have emended *lhangs* to *lhang*; the same point is made in *The Commands of the Secret Mantra Scriptural Authorities* (*gsang sngags lung gi bka' bsgo*), from Myang ral's *Eightfold Buddha Word, Embodying the Sugatas*: "the sign of striking/planting is vivid realisation" (ཐེབས་པའི་རྟོགས་ནི་བྱང་རྒྱུ་རྟོགས་ནི་ཐེབས་ཏེ། TSH volume 4: 491). Note that TSH gives *bka' mgo* in the text title but I am assuming that *bka' bsgo*, found in the Kah thog version (KAH), is intended.

The object which the *uniquely special bodhicitta phurpa* will strike is the consort's *space*.¹⁴ Why does it need to do so? It strikes in order to produce sons of the tathāgata (i.e. bodhisattva children). Further, it says in the scriptural authority itself: "(Their) non-duality is *union*".¹⁵

ཀའ་མེད་སྤྱིང་རྒྱུ་ལོ་གདབ་པའི་ཡུལ་ནི། འགྲོ་བ་རིགས་དྲུག་གི་སེམས་ཅན་ལ་གདབ་པའོ། །དེ་ལ་དགོས་པ་ཅི་ཡོད་
ན། དཔུང་ཐག་ཚད་པའི་འགྲོ་བ་རྣམས། ལྷན་མེད་པའི་གནས་སུ་བྱངས་བར་བྱ་བའི་ཕྱིར་གདབ་སྟེ། དེ་ཡང་བཀའ་ལས། དཔུང་
ཐག་ཚད་པ་ལྷགས་རྗེས་བརྒྱད་སྤྲད་དུ། ལྷུ་ཐབས་འདི་ནི་བདག་གིས་བཤད་པར་བྱ། ཞེས་འབྱུང་ངོ།

The object that the *immeasurable compassion phurpa*¹⁶ will strike: it will strike/be planted in sentient beings of the six classes of transmigrators. Why does it need to do so? It strikes so that those beings who have been cast adrift¹⁷ should be led to the incomparable abode (buddhahood). Further, it says in the scriptural authority: "In order that those who have been cast adrift should be seized by compassion, this practice method is to be explained by me."¹⁸

[KM 232]

འདུས་བྱས་རྗེས་ཀྱི་ཕུར་པ་ནི། གདབ་པའི་ཡུལ་ཡིད་ཀྱི་དམིགས་པའི་དབྱེ་ལ་གདབ་པོ། དེ་ལ་དགོས་པ་ཅི་ཡོད་ན། བསྐྱར་པ་ལ་
བར་བྱ་གཙོད་པ་བསྐྱལ་པའི་ཕྱིར་རོ། དེ་ཡང་བཀའ་ལས། དཀར་ནག་མཚམས་ནས་བྱངས་ནས་སུ། ལྷུ་གཟུགས་བྲལ་ཉེ་ཚོས་
བསམ་ན། །ཐོ་རྒྱུ་རིགས་ཀྱང་འཇིགས་པར་འགྱུར། །ལྷིག་ཆེན་གཞན་ལྟ་སྤྲོས་ཅི་དགོས། ཞེས་འབྱུང་བས།

The object that the material manufactured *phurpa* will strike: it will strike/be planted in the hostile forces of mental conceptualisations. Why does it need to do so? It strikes so that hindrances to the (Buddha's) dispensation should be *released*. Further, it says in the scriptural authority: "Considering that (they) have been dragged by (their

¹⁴ *Space* (*mkha'*) here is a euphemism for the female genitals.
¹⁵ The same point is made in *The Commands of the Scriptural Authorities for the [Tantric] Practice* (*sgrub pa lung gi bka' bsgo*), from Myang ral's *Eightfold Buddha Word, Embodying the Sugatas*: "striking space, there is non-dual union" (མཁའ་ལ་ཐེབས་པས་གཉིས་མེད་སྤྱིང་། TSH volume 4: 528). Note that both TSH and KAḤ give *bka' mgo* in the text title but I am assuming this to be a non-standard or incorrect spelling of *bka' bsgo*.
¹⁶ *snying rje'i*: KM, KJ, KT give *snying rjes* (*snying rje'i* is, of course, given above).
¹⁷ literally, whose (rescue) rope has been cut.
¹⁸ The same point is made in *The Commands of the Secret Mantra Scriptural Authorities* (*gsang sngags lung gi bka' bsgo*), དཔུང་ཐག་ཚད་པ་ལྷགས་རྗེས་ཟེན་ཉི། (TSH volume 4: 491); and in *The Commands of the Scriptural Authorities for the [Tantric] Practice* (*sgrub pa lung gi bka' bsgo*), དཔུང་ཐག་ཚད་པ་ལྷགས་རྗེས་བརྒྱད་པའི་ཆེད་། (TSH volume 4: 528).

hearts at) the locus of white and black,¹⁹ their body parts dismembered, and eaten, even vajra rock²⁰ would be destroyed, so there is no need to mention (the fate of) others of great evil."

དགོངས་པ་གོང་མ་དེ་ལྟ་བུ་དང་ལྷན་ནས་ནལ་འབྱོར་ལ་གནས་ན། སུར་པ་ཐལ་འབྱིན་གྱི་དགོངས་པ་ཞེས་བྱའོ། དགོངས་པ་དེ་ལྟ་
བུ་དང་ལྷན་པའི་སྒོ་ནས་འདུས་བྱས་རྗེས་ཀྱི་སུར་པའོ། དེ་ཡང་རི་རབ་ལྷར་བརྗེད་པ་བཏབ་ན་ཐལ་འབྱིན་པ། གསོར་ན་གསོར་བྱིན་
པ། སྤུང་གསུམ་ཤེར་གྱི་དགྱིལ་འཁོར་ལུས་ལ་རྗོགས་པ། སྣོད་ཁྲོ་བོར་ཞལ་གསུམ་ཕྱག་དྲུག་པ་སྐད་ལྷགས་ཀྱི་སུར་པ་རྒྱར་གསུམ་
པས་ཐལ་འབྱིན་པ།

If you abide in this yoga, endowed like this with the above-mentioned enlightened attentions, it is called, Enlightened attention in perforating with the *phurpa*. Through being endowed with such enlightened attention, [the *phurpa*] becomes the *manufactured material phurpa*. For even if a mountain as imposing as mount Meru should be struck, it would be perforated/ reduced to ashes. If (the *phurpa*) is brandished, (it) will drill into (the object), perfecting the wisdom maṇḍala of the three (body, speech, and mind) accomplishments in this [ordinary] body.²¹ It is the *phurpa* whose upper body is the wrathful deity, with three faces and six arms; and whose lower body is an iron *phurpa*, with a three-sided blade, who is performing the perforations.

[KM 233]

སྤྱོད་གསུམ་གྱི་སུར་པ་སྦྱོར་བ་གཅིག་ཏུ་བདག་ཉིད་འབྲོ་ཉལ་འདུག་ལྟོད་དུ། དེ་ལས་མི་ཉམས་པར་གནས་པར་བྱའོ། སྤྱོད་འཁོར་ལས་
མི་འདའ་བློ། གསལ་ལ་རྟོག་པ་མེད་པར་གནས་པའོ།

So you yourself should always dwell on the level of the three *kāyas* unified in a single [deity] form, whether moving, sleeping, or resting, never degenerating from this. Not relinquishing²² the condition of this buddha body, you abide in clarity without discursive thoughts.

¹⁹ *dkar nag*: KM, KJ give *dka' nag* (a clear spelling error; this locus is evidenced throughout the *Vajrakīlaya* literature as the point at which to aim the *phurpa*).

²⁰ *brag*: KM, KJ, KT give *rig*, although KM adds a final *sa* as a small letter beneath the line, giving *rigs*. Here we have a meaningful variant. Instead of *vajra rock*, the KM, KJ, KT readings would suggest, *those of vajra nature* (literally, of vajra family, assuming that *rigs* and not *rig* is intended).

²¹ *grub gsum sher gyi dkyil 'khor*: KN, DB give *gru gsum shel gyi dkyil 'khor*, triangular crystal maṇḍala. This reading would not seem to make very good sense here, although it is possible that it refers to a feature which was later lost. The central maṇḍala of Vajrakīlaya generally has a dark blue triangle.

²² *'da' ste*: KM, KT give *'das te*; KJ gives *'das ste*.

གསུང། ལོ་བཟླ་གྱི་ལི་གྱི་ལ་ཡ་སྐབ་ལིག་ནན་བུ་རྩྱུ་ཡལ་ ཅེས་རྒྱན་མི་ཁད་པར་འབྲིན་པའོ།

Your buddha speech recites continually without interruption, drawing on [the mantra], *om vajra kili kilaya sarva vighnan bam hūṃ hūṃ phaṭ*.²³

ལྷགས་དགོངས་པ་གོང་མ་རྣམས་ལས་མ་གཡོ་བའོ།

Your buddha mind is unmoving from the above-mentioned enlightened attentions.

ཡོན་ཏན་དེ་རྣམས་རྫོགས་པས་ཡོན་ཏན་ཟད་མི་ཤེས་ཏེ་ཚེ་བུ་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་དང་འབྲེལ།

By perfecting these buddha qualities, such qualities become inexhaustible, so they are like a precious gem.

ཤིན་ལས་ནི། ཞི་རྒྱས་དབང་དང་མངོན་སྲོད་ལ་སོགས་པ་རྣམས་པ་བཞི་འམ་ལྔ་ལ་ཡོངས་སྲོད་ཅིང་རོལ་བའོ།

Your buddha actions are to indulge in and enjoy the four or five actions of pacifying, increasing, controlling, destroying etc.

འདི་དག་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱང་རང་གི་བྱང་རླབ་གྱི་སེམས་ལས་མ་འདས་ཏེ། བྱང་རླབ་གྱི་སེམས་ལས་གཞན་མེད་ལ་སེམས་ཡེ་ནས་

མངས་རྒྱས་ཡིན་བས། དེ་ལྟར་ཤེས་ཤིང་དོན་མ་བཅོས་པའི་ངང་ལས་མ་ཡིངས་པ་ནི། །ཕུར་པ་ཐལ་འབྱིན་གྱི་དགོངས་པ་ཞེས་བྱའོ།

None of them go beyond your own bodhicitta; they are nothing other than bodhicitta, the mind primordially buddha. So understanding in this way, you do not waver from the uncontrived ultimate state. This is called enlightened attention to the *phurpa* perforations.

[KM 234]

འདོན་དེ་ལྟར་བྱ་དང་ལྷན་ན། ལྷེ་བར་ཕུང་བའི་ཕུར་པ། བྱི་ཏོ་ཏེ་འབུམ་གྱེ། སྐབ་པར་ཕུང་བའི་ཕུར་པ། ཕུར་པ་ཕུན་སུམ་ཚོགས་

པ། ཤིན་ལས་སྐུ་ཕུང་བ་ནི་དོན་གཞན་ཅུའོ།

If you are endowed with the meaning in this way, the *phurpa* emerging from the navel is the *Vidyottama-la 100,000 Collection*.²⁴ The *phurpa*

²³ KJ, KN give a slightly unconventional rendition of the name, *ki li ki la yā*, and DB gives *ki li ki la yā*.

²⁴ This refers to the early textual authority for the entire Phurpa tradition, variously called, the *Phur pa 'bum sde*, or *Kilaya 'bum sde* (the 100,000 Phurpa Collection), or a Tibetan transcription of Sanskrit, *Vidyottama-la*, sometimes given as *Rig pa mchog kyi rgyud* in Tibetan (the *Supreme Pure Awareness Tantra*). The title is used either for a specific text or collection of *Phurpa* tantras associated with Guru Padma and/or with his preceptor for *Phurpa*, Prabhahasti, or it may also be used as a general term to describe the Phurpa tantras as a whole.

which emerges in the practice, is the *phurpa* perfections (*phun sum tshogs pa*). (That) emerging in buddha actions, is Vajrakumāra.²⁵

དེའི་ངང་ལས་མི་འདའ་བར་གནས་པས། །དེ་དག་གྲང་དོན་རང་གི་བྱང་རྒྱལ་གྱི་སེམས་ལས་མ་གཡོས་པར་ཤེས་ན། །ཡང་དག་དོན་
གྱི་སྤར་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་སྟེ། བློ་འདོད་དཔོངས་པ་མ་ཞོར་མ་བཅོས་པ་དེའོ།

Dwelling without relinquishing this state, when you understand all these [*phurpas*] as in truth unmoving from your own *bodhicitta*, this is called the authentic ultimate *phurpa*. This buddha enlightened attention is flawless and uncontrived.

ལགས་ཡང་ལེ་ཤོད་གྱི་བྲག་ལྷག་ལྷ། པདྨ་ཐོད་ཐེང་རྒྱལ་པོངས། ཕྱིར་བས་རྣམས་ལ་སྤྲོན་སྤྲད་དུ། །འདི་བཙུམ་དགོ་བའི་རྩ་བ་
རྣམས། །འཕྲོ་བ་རྣམས་གྱི་དོན་དུ་བསྟོ། སྤར་པ་ཐལ་འབྱེན་དཔོངས་པ་འདི། རྫོུ་ཡང་དབང་གཏིར་ངཡིས། །གཏིར་བཞུང་
རྩལ་ལ་གཏད་པ་ནི། །སྤེལ་བའི་གནས་མེད་གཏིར་དུ་སྟོས། རྒྱ་རྒྱ། མཁའ་དོ།

At the place of the Yang-le-shod rock cavern, I, Padma Skullgarlanded King, composed this as a medicine for later generations,²⁶ and I dedicate the roots of virtue for the benefit of beings. This *Enlightened Attention to the Phurpa Perforations* has been entrusted by myself,²⁷ rDo rje yang dbang gter, to gTer bzhad rtsal; hidden as treasure, not (in) a place where it will be spread.²⁸ Sealed sealed sealed! *īthi!*²⁹ Kept secret!

²⁵ *gzhon nu*: KJ gives *gzhan nu*.

²⁶ *phyi rabs*: KM, KJ give *phyi rab*, but KM adds the final *sa* of *rabs* as a small letter beneath the line.

²⁷ *nga yis*: KM, KJ, KT give *ba yis* (generally, in this compilation, we find the impersonal, *yang dbang gter gyis*, but there are several other instances of *yang dbang gter nga yis*, KM, KJ: 186, 254, 269, 281, 415, 425).

²⁸ *spel ba'i*: KM, KJ, KT give *srel ba'i*; KN's reading is uncertain, *srel ba'i* or *spel ba'i*; DB *spel bas* (The verb in KM, KJ, KT suggests taking care of/keeping something safe, holding and maintaining it, which in this case is not necessary. So the translation would be: *hidden as treasure, and not (in) a place where it needs to be looked after*. See the bTsan lha dictionary entry for *srel ba/bsrel ba*: འཚང་བ་དང་འཛོན་སྤོང་བྱེད་པ་སྟེ་ཉར་བྱེད་

པའི་མིང་. A similar point is made in another section of this compilation, where we

have: སྤེལ་བའི་གནས་མེད་རིག་པའི་གཏིར་དུ་སྟོས། (KM, KJ: 372). This would suggest hiding the teaching in the awareness, which is a place where it will not be spread or propagated. In this case, *spel* is clear in KM and KJ, so it would seem more likely that in our text, *srel* may be an error for *spel*, rather than the other way round, although both readings are coherent.

²⁹ see note 11 above.

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The Treasure Discoverer from Dwags-po: Two Texts on the Life of Chos-rje gling-pa (1682–1720)

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1. Introduction

In the historiographical literature of the rNying-ma-pa school, Chos-rje gling-pa is generally presented as the previous incarnation of 'Jigs-med gling-pa (1730–1798) as part of the impressive list of the so-called “Thirteen Incarnations of rGyal-sras lHa-rje” (*rgyal sras lha rje'i yang srid bcu gsum*), reaching back to mChog-grub rgyal-po, the son of Mu-tig btsan-po, and Sangs-rgyas bla-ma (b. ca. 1000), who is regarded as the first treasure discoverer in the tradition following the Precious Guru Padmasambhava. The relevant details of his religious career (he was also known as Rog-rje gling-pa, Chos-rje 'Dzam-gling rdo-rje or bDe-ba rdo-rje) including his teachers and main students have already been assessed, one conclusion being that he was born in the Dwags-po region in 1682, discovered various treasure cycles in the course of his life and supposedly died in his 43rd year, which would correspond to 1725.¹

Several of his treasure finds are contained in the *Rin chen gter mdzod chen mo*, compiled by 'Jam-mgon Blo-gros mtha'-yas (1833–1899). They are devoted to such cycles as the long-life practice *bDe gshegs rtsa gsum 'chi med dril sgrub*, the *Zab lam thugs kyi nor bu* (dealing with Padmasambhava in his wrathful form), the Avalokiteśvara practice *'Jig rten dbang phyug yid bzhin nor bu*, and evocations of Yangdag Heruka known as *Yang bdag bde chen snying po*. In light of such texts, Rig-'dzin Chos-rje gling-pa is seen to have been a prolific re-

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¹ See Dudjom Rinpoche 1991: I, p. 835 & II, p. 171 for Rig-'dzin Chos-rje gling-pa as an incarnation of Sangs-rgyas bla-ma and the list of the Thirteen Incarnations of rGyal-sras lHa-rje. For an overview of his teachers and students, both rNying-ma-pa and bKa'-brgyud-pa, and the problem of determining the correct year of death, see Goodman 1992, pp. 198–199, note 33.

vealer of Buddhist treasures. The colophons of the individual finds provide evidence of the sites where the various texts were discovered and the circumstances of their codification. In the case of the Avalokiteśvara practice, for example, it is known that it was “completed as a treasure” (*gter sgrub*) at a site known as a “Hidden Land” (*sbas yul*), the original find having taken place at the Bu-chu lha-khang in the Kong-po region.²

Further aspects of his life have been described in the context of the treasure discoverers of the rNying-ma-pa school who were attracted to the region of gNas Padma-bkod in south-eastern Tibet. It is known that he served from the years 1687 to 1706 (i.e. from his fifth to his twenty-fourth year) as the representative of Ras-chung phug, an influential monastery of the Dwags-po bKa'-brgyud-pa school in the Yar-klungs valley; subsequently he travelled to Tsa-ri, the famous Cakrasamvara pilgrimage site, and from there to Kong-po and sPo-bo, there discovering most of his numerous treasure works. It has been noted that in addition to the Bu-chu lha-khang in Kong-po revelations occurred in the mDung-chu'i lha-khang in sPo-bo, a further temple from the scheme ascribed to Srong-btsan sgam-po. Having been recognized as a “master of teachings” (*chos bdag*) of the treasures of sTag-sham Nus-ldan rdo-rje (1655–1707), he returned to Central Tibet once more before setting out on a journey to gNas Padma-bkod, where he passed away soon after his arrival.³

As by now two voluminous texts dealing with the life of Rig-'dzin Chos-rje gling-pa have become available, I will present in the following these new literary sources. Particular attention will be paid to the structure of these texts when they were written down and how they are related to each other. Additional attention will be paid to (auto)biographical writings contained in a recently surfaced xylograph edition of his collected writings.

² A description of the texts of the mentioned five cycles can be found in Schwieger (1990: 78–81 [Nos. 98–103], 179–180 [Nos. 264–266] & 302–307 [Nos. 476–481] and Schwieger 1995, pp. 335–336 [Nos. 933–934] & pp. 424–430 [Nos. 1053–1055]). For the location of the Bu-chu lha-khang in Kong-po, one of the *mtha'-dul* temples ascribed to the first Buddhist king Srong-btsan sgam-po, see Sørensen & Hazod 2005, p. 209).

³ For the activities of Rig-'dzin Chos-rje gling-pa as representative of Ras-chung phug in the Yar-klungs valley and as a treasurer discoverer attracted to the site of gNas Padma-bkod, see Ehrhard 2013a, pp. 354–355. With the help of one of his treasure finds it was possible to identify the mDung-chu'i lha-khang in sPo-bo as the *yang-'dul* temple known as Tshang-pa rlung-gnon; for the location of this temple in the mentioned scheme, see Sørensen & Hazod 2005, p. 209.

2. *The first text*

An incomplete manuscript consisting of the “sketches” or “notes” (*zin bris*) of Chos-rje gling-pa can be found in the collection *Bod kyi lo rgyus rnam thar phyogs bsgrigs* preserved in the library of ‘Bras-spungs monastery and published by the Peltsek Research Institute (Lhasa). It bears the title “A sequence of prepared sketches of the deceptive world of the Holy Madman of Dwags-po, the unreliable one: The trunk of a wish-fulfilling tree [producing] whatever manifests, the extended gibberish of a carefree soul of wide experience” (*gtad med dwags po smyon pa’i ‘di snang ‘khrul ‘khor rags bsdus zin bris su bstar ba’i rim pa gang shar ljon shing gi sdong po nyams yangs blo bde’i ‘chal gtam ring po*). This autobiography covers 283 folios and is indeed a long if incomplete narrative. Written in the Tibetan cursive script with sometimes obscure abbreviations, the text has been used in a modern history of the Dwags-po bKa’-brgyud-pa, which quotes the full title at the end of the biographical sketch of the so-called “Treasure Discoverer of Dwags-po” (*dwags po gter ston*), and in further sections it has served as an important literary source for the history of Dwags-lha sgam-po and various persons associated with the monastery.⁴

As an incomplete work, it has no colophon, and there are no introductory verses either. In structural terms, it can be divided into two sections, the first one presenting the “cycle of the birth stories” (*skyes rabs kyi skor*) and the second one the “cycle of the deeds of this life” (*skye ba ‘di’i byas tshul gyi skor*). The first one is a discussion of the previously mentioned Thirteen Incarnations of rGyal-sras lHa-rje, referring to prophecies from the *Padma bka’i thang yig* and from treasure texts including a certain *Gab pa mngon phyung rgyal sras zhu lan*; this section goes also into details of the different names of Rig-’dzin Chos-rje gling-pa.⁵

The second section covers the complete remainder of the text and begins with the “family lineage” (*rigs rus*). Here the author relies on a

⁴ This sketch of the life of Rig-’dzin Chos-rje gling-pa is contained in dKon-mchog rgya-mtsho: *Dwags po bka’ brgyud chos ‘byung*, pp. 641.6–643.15. Further references to the autobiography can be found in accounts of the lives of the Third sGam-po sPrul-sku bZang-po rdo-rje (1636–1700), Zhabs-drung Don-grub rab-brtan (b. 1680), Zhabs-drung Chos-kyi grags-pa (b. 1684), and lHun-grub Nges-don dbang-po (1674–1720); see *ibid.*, pp. 621.24–26, 629.14–15, 632.9–10 & 640.16. The two persons mentioned under the title Zhabs-drung (or Klu-mkhar Zhabs-drung) are an elder and younger brother of Rig-’dzin Chos-rje gling-pa.

⁵ For the first section of the text, see *rNam thar I*, fols. 1b/1–7a/6. It should be noted that its list of the thirteen incarnations differs from the one transmitted in the later historiographical literature of the rNying-ma-pa school; it includes, for example, Sog-bzlog-pa Blo-gros rgyal-mtshan (1552–1624) and refers to the latter’s writings when presenting the lives of the previous incarnations.

work with the short title *Baidūrya'i lhun po*, dealing with the lineage of the abbots of the prominent Dwags-lha sgam-po monastery and including a history of its succession lineage. Another version of this abbatial history, with the title *Baidūrya'i phreng ba*, is available, having been composed between the years 1620 and 1662 during the lifetimes of the Second sGam-po sPrul-sku 'Dzam-gling Nor-bu rgyan-pa (1589–1633) and his disciples. Chos-rje gling-pa, it turns out, was a member of this lineage, known as rNyi-ba, which supplied the throne-holders of Dwags-lha sgam-po and was regarded as comprising the successors of the patriarch and first abbot rJe sGam-po-pa bSod-nams rin-chen (1079–1153). Among the remote scions of the founder of the Dwags-po bKa'-brgyud-pa was one O-rgyan Rig-'dzin rdo-rje (17th cent.), who had his residence in Klu-mkhar. His son, rDo-rje grags-pa (1652–1698), was the father of Chos-rje gling-pa. These details are presented in a very concise form in the autobiography, the author giving only a short résumé of the life of his father, who had been a disciple of the Third sGam-po sPrul-sku bZang-po rdo-rje.⁶

The latter master also played an important role in Rig-'dzin Chos-rje gling-pa's life, for after his birth in the year 1682 it was this abbot of Dwags-lha sgam-po who identified the newborn child from Klu-mkhar as an incarnation of his grandfather O-rgyan Rig-'dzin rdo-rje. As at the same time Zhabs-drung 'Chi-med dbang-po (17th cent.), the resident teacher of Ras-chung phug in the Yar-klungs valley, had passed away, it was nevertheless decided—in consultation with the search committee from Ras-chung phug—that the boy was his re-embodiment. Rig-'dzin Chos-rje gling-pa thus became a member of an incarnation line going back to rGod-tshang ras-pa (1482–1559), a disciple of the illustrious gTsang-smyon Heruka (1452–1507). This decision was confirmed by the Seventh Zhwa-dmar-pa dPal-ldan Yeshe snying po (1631–1694) and received official recognition in the form of a document issued by the regent sDe-srid Sangs-rgyas rgya-mtsho (1653–1705). The invitation from Ras-chung phug was sent at

⁶ The introductory part of the second section can be found in *rNam thar I*, fols. 7a/6–8b/6, including the short note on his father. Rig-'dzin Chos-rje gling-pa states that he had written a biography of his father but had no access to it at the time he was composing his own life story. For the chronicle of the hierarchs of Dwags-lha sgam-po from the time of 'Dzam-gling Nor-bu rgyan-pa and his disciples, see Sørensen & Dölma 2007, pp. 45–50; the text with the short title *Baidūrya lhun po* seems to have been a sequel to this earlier work. Concerning biographical accounts of O-rgyan Rig-'dzin rdo-rje and his two sons Chos-nyid klong-gsal (1646–1673) and rDo-rje grags-pa, see dKon-mchog rgya-mtsho: *Dwags pa bka' brgyud chos 'byung*, pp. 624.7–627.27. Consult Akester (2016: 398) regarding the establishment of Klu-mkhar rdzong on the riverbank below the monastery of Dwags-lha sgam-po in the 16th century and its becoming the seat of the rNyi-ba lineage from then on.

the age of five years, i.e. in 1687. The text provides a detailed description of the enthronement ceremony, attended by the ordained and lay populations of the Yar-klungs valley. Already at this early age he received the first tantric empowerments and teachings, including the “Old [and] New Aural Transmissions” (*snyan brgyud gsar rnying*) according to the tradition of Ras-chung-pa rDo-rje grags-pa (1084–1161); this happened under a teacher called bKa'-brgyud bstan-pa'i sgron-me (d. 1690).⁷

Although it has no introductory verses and provides only general information in the section dealing with the family lineage, the text presents precise data, personal and otherwise, for the first years up to the enthronement at Ras-chung phug. It obviously relied on sketches or notes, as already mentioned in the title, which must have been kept on a regular base from an early age onwards.

3. *The early years in Ras-chung phug*

The first date in the text is given as a “dragon year” (*'brug lo*), i.e. 1688. The entire remaining part of this extensive text situates events in time by giving the zodiacal animal for the year, the lunar mansion for the month, and—in later sections—the “Mongolian month” (*hor zla*). There are no individual chapters, but it is possible to isolate three parts taking up a decade each so as to provide structure to the continuous flow of the narrative.

The first period covers the years 1688 to 1697 and can be described as that part of the text which presents the education of the young incarnation as a lineage-holder of the Dwags-po bKa'-brgyud-pa (and especially its Ras-chung snyan-brgyud) tradition. As already mentioned, his first teacher in this regard was bKa'-brgyud bstan-pa'i sgron-me, but these studies continued only for a period of 2½ years, up to when the master passed away in Ras-chung phug in 1690. The following year is marked by the ordination of Rig-'dzin Chos-rje gling-pa as a Buddhist novice; the ceremony took place in the Jo-khang temple in Lha-sa and—as the text clearly states—was conduct-

⁷ For the birth of Rig-'dzin Chos-rje gling-pa, his recognition as the rebirth of rGod-tshang ras-pa and the events up to the year 1687, see *rNam thar I*, fols. 8b/6–17a/6. bKa'-brgyud bstan-pa'i sgron-me, the incarnation of one mKhas-grub Chos-rgyal, was the second member of an incarnation line called the Ras-chung-phug sPrul-skus; see TBRC P10275. An important role in the confirmation of Rig-'dzin Chos-rje gling-pa as a rebirth was played by one dPon-slob Don-ldan (17th cent.), another teacher in the tradition of the Aural Transmissions and a disciple of Zhabs-drung 'Chi-med dbang-po. Already before the description of the actual birth, a long passage deals with a statement of the master regarding the future benefit the child would bring to this particular teaching lineage; see *ibid.*, fols. 9b/2–16b/4.

ed in the interregal period between the Fifth Dalai Bla-ma Ngag-dbang Blo-bzang rgya-mtsho (1617–1682) and the Sixth Dalai Bla-ma Tshangs-dbyangs rgya-mtsho (1683–1706); the person acting as *ācārya* on that occasion was dGe-slong 'Jam-dbyangs grags-pa, a personal attendant of the Great Fifth.

After his return to Ras-chung phug, another master of the Ras-chung snyan-brgyud tradition, Yon-tan rgya-mtsho (d. 1693), arrived from Byang-chub gling monastery in gTsang. The transmission of his teachings is given in extenso, and he himself is termed the “mentor” (*nyongs 'dzin*) of Rig-'dzin Chos-rje gling-pa.⁸

In the following year this teacher passed away in Byang-chub gling monastery in gTsang, the autobiography stating that both his reincarnation and that of bKa'-brgyud bstan-pa'i sgron-me were recognized as a pair of brothers who came from a Khri-smon family in the On valley, members of which had acted as donors to Ras-chung phug in previous times. The year 1694 mentions a spiritual retreat of the twelve-year-old Buddhist novice at a site called lHun-grub bde-chen, a former residence of Grub-mchog dbang-po (1563–1618), the second member of his own incarnation line. In that section, information is provided on the shifting bKa'-brgyud-pa and rNying-ma-pa affiliations at Ras-chung phug down to the time of his immediate predecessor, Zhabs-drung 'Chi-med dbang-po. After the retreat, philosophical studies were taken up under one dKa'-chen Ye-shes bzang-po, who had been a teacher at Dwags-lha sgam-po, while a second stay in Lha-sa provided the opportunity for an encounter with Rig-'dzin gTer-bdag gling-pa (1646–1714), the treasure discoverer from sMin-grol gling. A final event in the year 1695 concerns the young reincarnation of the teacher bKa'-brgyud bstan-pa'i sgron-me; this first meeting took place at the estate of Khri-smon in the On valley before Rig-'dzin Chos-rje gling-pa returned to Ras-chung phug, now referred to as a second rTsa-mchog [grong].⁹

⁸ The years 1688 to 1692 in Ras-chung phug and the ordination ceremony in Lha-sa can be found in *rNam thar I*, fols. 17a/6–24a/1. The teacher from the monastery of Byang-chub gling in gTsang was the reincarnation of one Shes-rab dpal-bzang, a disciple and relative of an individual called 'Phrin-las rgya-mtsho, who in turn was the reincarnation of rGod-phrug Sangs-rgyas rdo-rje, a direct disciple of gTsang-smyon Heruka. These details are learned from the autobiography of Rig-'dzin Chos-rje gling-pa; see *ibid.*, fols. 20b/6–21a/2. Both rGod-phrug rin-po-che 'Phrin-las rgya-mtsho and his own “great-nephew” (*dbon chen*) bShad-sgrub (sic) dpal-bzang are known to have been teachers active also in Ras-chung phug; see Karma Blo-bzang: *mKhas grub chen po karma blo bzang gi rnam thar mchod sprin rgya mtsho*, pp. 476, 14–477.2.

⁹ For the years 1693 to 1695, the first retreat in lHun-grub bde-chen, the journey to Lha-sa and the return to Ras-chung phug, see *rNam thar I*, fols. 24a/1–29a/3. The description of the shifting religious affiliations during the times of rGod-tshang ras-chen and the following incarnations can be found *ibid.*, fols. 26b/2–27a/1;

The beginning of the year 1696 was spent again in spiritual retreat in lHun-grub bde-chen, but the death of his mother occasioned a return to Klu-mkhar. During the ensuing stay in Dwags-lha sgam-po he received further transmissions from the throne-holder bZang-po rdo-rje. His former teacher dPon-slob don-ldan arrived as well during that time, and prior to his return to Ras-chung phug a further encounter with Rig-'dzin gTer-bdag gling-pa is recorded in the autobiography; this latter meeting took place at the monastery of Khra-'brug in the Yar-klungs valley.

The entry for the year 1697 begins with reflections on the studies undertaken up to his fifteenth year, while the arrival of one dPal-'byor rdo-rje from mDo-bo-che in mNga'-ris Gung-thang is recorded—described as a siddha well versed in the practice of the deity rTamgrin yang-gsang. A personal meeting with the Sixth Dalai Bla-ma Tshangs-dbyangs rgya-mtsho, junior to him by one year, took place as well during this period; the latter had arrived at sNye-thang bKra-shis sgang during his initial journey from the Mon region to Central Tibet. Rig-'dzin Chos-rje gling-pa met him again later that same year at the Potala palace in Lha-sa, where further encounters with religious dignitaries, including Rig-'dzin gTer-bdag gling-pa, are mentioned. Back in Ras-chung phug a master called Sangs-rgyas bzang-po (17th/18th cent.) arrived from 'Bras-mo ljongs, modern-day Sikkim, where a branch monastery of the above-mentioned Byang-chub gling monastery was located. On that occasion the young incarnation from Ras-chung phug performed religious services using the ritual staff of gTsang-smyon Heruka thus fulfilling the duties expected of him. The remaining part of the entry for this year describes the last meeting with his teacher bZang-po rdo-rje, the Third sGam-po sprul-sku; it includes the statement that he received from the master the full transmission of the Dwags-po bKa'-brgyud-pa doctrine in the same way as 'Dzam-gling nor-bu rgyan-pa, the Second sGam-po sprul-sku, had given them to sGam-po bSod-nams rin-chen (1612–1649), who was a previous throne-holder of Dwags-lha sgam-po and the teacher of bZang-po rdo-rje. In a hermitage in the 'On valley, the vows of a Buddhist layman were also conferred upon the reincarnation of bKa'-

consult Ehrhard 2010, p. 146 for the affiliation of rGod-tshang ras-chen, according to himself, to teaching traditions of the rNying-ma-pa school. A biographical note on dKa'-chen Ye-shes bzang-po, a teacher from the Sa-skyapa monastery of gSer-mdog-can, can be found in the modern history of Dwags-lha sgam-po; see dKon-mchog rgya-mtsho: *Dwags po bka' brgyud chos 'byung*, pp. 640.20–641.5. The author quotes from the autobiography of Chos-rje gling-pa; see *rNam thar I*, fol. 28b/1–5.

brgyud bstan-pa'i sgron-me, the deceased now being referred to under the name Ngag-gi dbang-po.¹⁰

As can be seen from this section of the autobiography with its reflections and personal considerations, especially on the subject's role as an incarnation from Ras-chung phug and holder of the Dwags-po bKa'-brgyud-pa lineage, the text can be regarded as a reworking—or rewording—of the original sketches. The look back at this early period from a later perspective is an elaborate and historically rich account, written by an author engaged in literary production already in his teens.

4. Resident teacher and first treasures

If one brings the next decade in the life of Rig-'dzin Chos-rje gling-pa into view, it can be divided into further activities at Ras-chung phug, a journey to Tsa-ri in the year 1705, and additional travels to the region of sPo-bo, where he stayed up to 1707 and his twenty-fifth year. This is also the period when he became strongly steeped in the treasure tradition of the rNying-ma-pa school, during which various revelations took place.

A first "entrustment" (*bka' babs*) of a treasure is recorded for the beginning of the year 1698 at the retreat site lHun-grub bde-chen, the former residence of Grub-mchog dbang-po. A vision of Padma-sambhava is related, followed by mention again of Chos-rje gling-pa's predecessor, one of whose disciples had been active in the region of sPo-bo. Through the reincarnation of the latter, one mKhas-grub dbang-po, a special connection had been established with the rulers of sPo-bo which resulted in the building of a hermitage called Brag-rtsa ri-khrod [Thub-bstan 'od-gsal gling], from which regular offerings were sent to Ras-chung phug from that time onwards. In the following year it is especially noted that Chos-rje gling-pa conferred upon Ngag-gi dbang-po, the Ras-chung phug sPrul-sku, the teach-

¹⁰ The entries for the years 1696–1697, including the meetings with bZang-po rdo-rje and the second journey to Lha-sa, are contained in *rNam thar I*, fols. 29a/3–34b/4. For the tradition associated with mDo-bo-che in Gung-thang and the transmission of the cycle known as *rTa mgrin yang gsang* or *Padma dbang chen yang gsang khros pa*, i.e. Avalokiteśvara in his wrathful form as Hayagriva, see Ehrhard 2008, pp. 65–66, note 13 & 114, note 15. It is noted in the autobiography that the monastery in 'Bras-mo lJongs had been founded by one Ras-rkyang Sangs-rgyas shes-rab, a disciple of the above-mentioned rGod-phrug Sangs-rgyas rdo-rje; see note 8. In the year 1699 a further delegation from this monastery paid a visit to Ras-chung phug. At that time the reincarnation of Ras-rkyang Sangs-rgyas shes-rab is called lCags-phug sku-skyes, and the name of the site, a "door" (*sgo*) to the hidden valley of 'Bras-mo lJongs, is given as sGer lCags-phug; see *rNam thar I*, fols. 41b/4–42a/2.

ings of the “Old [and] New Aural Transmissions”. At that time the first literary compositions are mentioned, including “some sketches of an autobiographical narrative up to my eighteenth year” (*rang lo bco brgyad phan gyi rtogs brjod zin bris ka gcig [=cig] bris*).

After a further journey to Lha-sa, where he met again the Sixth Dalai Bla-ma, and also sDe-srid Sangs-rgyas rgya-mtsho, a visit to Khra-brug and another encounter with Rig-'dzin gTer-bdag gling-pa are recorded in the autobiography. Further teachings for the young Ras-chung phug sPrul-sku are mentioned, along with the visit of another incarnation of the bKa'-brgyud-pa school at the end of this year. This latter was 'Phrin-las mchog-ldan ['Dri-med legs-pa'i blo-gros] (17th/18th cent.), regarded as the rebirth of Ras-rkyang Karma Chos-'phel from Brag-dkar rta-so in Mang-yul Gung-thang. At that time another vision of Padmasambhava occurred, this time in his aspect as rDo-rje khro-lod—later recorded in a written draft.¹¹

In the year 1700 the teachings for the “pair of reincarnations” (*sprul sku zung*) from the 'On valley continued, followed by a visit to sMin-grol gling and ensuing discussions with Rig-'dzin gTer-bdag gling-pa. Once he had returned to Ras-chung phug, one reads of visions of Padmasambhava of the sort which had already occurred at an early age; they become more intense from that year onwards, with indications of individual sites and how the treasures would be retrieved. At the beginning of 1701, at the age of nineteen, his first public teaching of the Mahāmudrā doctrine took place, after the performance of rituals for the teacher bZang-po rdo-rje, who had just passed away. In the following months he delivered this teaching in combination with the “Six Doctrines of Nāro[pa]” (*nā ro chos drug*) to a wider audience at Ras-chung phug; he also continued his studies, especially poetics, under one Yongs-'dzin Gung-thang-pa. In the fourth month of the same year an “autobiographical note” (*rnam thar gyi zin bris*) was written down describing an episode on the

¹¹ For the years 1698 to 1699, the teaching activities and the third visit to Lha-sa, see *rNam thar I*, fols. 34b/4–43a/3. According to modern historiographical literature, the building of the hermitage called Brag-rtsa ri-khrod was undertaken in later times, during the rule of Nyi-ma rgyal-po, an influential Kah-gnam sde-pa ruler of sPo-bo in the second half of the 18th century; see Schwieger 2002, pp. 222–223 and Lazcano 2005, pp. 48–49. A biographical sketch of 'Phrin-las mchog-ldan is contained in the monastic chronicle of Brag-dkar rta-so; see Chos-kyi dbang-phyug; *Grub pa'i gnas chen brag dkar rta so'i gnas dang gdan rabs bla ma brgyud pa'i lo rgyus*, pp. 566.4–570.2. This teacher was also a native of the Dwags-lha sgam-po region and had received his first religious name from the Third sGam-po sprul-sku bZang-po rdo-rje; the chronicle identifies him as one of the “masters of the teachings” (*chos bdag*) of the treasures of Rig-'dzin Chos-rje gling-pa. A second visit to Ras-chung phug is recorded in the autobiography for the year 1704; see *rNam thar I*, fol. 67.2–3.

eighth day of Sa-ga zla-ba; at the beginning of the text the writer invokes his teachers Yon-tan rgya-mtsho and bKa'-brgyud bstan-pa'i sgron-me. The account is available in the print edition of the collected writings of Chos-rje gling-pa (see Appendix I, ka [5]).

During this same time, he also composed his first major writings, namely two biographies. These works bear full titles and treat the lives of his teacher Ngag-gi dbang-po from Byang-chub gling monastery in gTsang and an individual called Gar-dbang Chos-dbyings rnam-grol, obviously from the same monastery. At the end of the year his younger brother Chos-kyi grags-pa arrived from Dwags-lha sgam-po together with Chos-rje lHun-grub Nges-don dbang-po, a common half-brother who would play an important role as teacher and travel companion in later years.¹²

The next four years were spent mainly at Ras-chung phug, but also included some more extensive travels. It was at that time, at the beginning of his twenties, that he raised the first treasure texts. One such find is recorded for the year 1702, during a visit to the site of Yar-klungs Shel-brag, a famous site of the treasures of Padma-sambhava; it took place in a cave previously frequented by such persons as Rig-'dzin Kumārārādza (1266–1303) and lHa-btsun Kunbzang rnam-rgyal (1697–1653). This is followed by a vision at Ras-chung phug wherein he received “introductory lists” (*kha byang*) of four future treasure revelations, and another vision announcing an impending find in the region of Kong-po. At the beginning of the year 1703 Rig-'dzin Chos-rje gling-pa was at Dwags-lha sgam-po, where the reincarnation of his teacher bZang-po rdo-rje had been recognized as the Fourth sGam-po sPrul-sku; in an extensive description of a spiritual retreat conducted during that stay one finds various visions of Padmasambhava and the words of the master urging his disciple to benefit the Buddhist teachings and the Tibetan people by proceeding to the east, and in particular to such regions as Padma

¹² The years 1700 to 1701, mainly spent at Ras-chung phug, can be found in *rNam thar I*, fols. 43a/3–50b/2. The teacher called Yongs-'dzin Gung-thang-pa urged his student to compose further writings and served for a total of 200 folios as scribe. See *ibid.*, fols. 51b/3–52a/2. The biographies of the two teachers from Byang-chub gling monastery bear the following titles: *mNyam med dpal ldan rdo rje 'chang yon tan rgya mtsho'i rtogs brjod ngo mtshar dam bu ra'i sgra dbyangs* and *Khyab bdag gar dbang chos dbyings rnam grol gyi rtogs brjod pa nyer bsdus thugs rje'i rol mtsho*. lHun-grub nges-don dbang-po had the same mother as Rig-'dzin Chos-rje gling-pa and was regarded as the reincarnation of Chos-nyid klong-gsal, concerning whom see note 6. A biographical sketch of lHun-grub nges-don dbang-po can be found in dKon-mchog rgya-mtsho: *Dwags po bka' brgyud chos 'byung*, pp. 634.19–640.19; he counted among his teachers the above-mentioned Gar-dbang Chos-dbyings rnam-grol, who especially focused on passing on the doctrine of the Aural Transmissions.

sBas-pa'i tshal (i.e. sPo-bo) and a "Great and Small Padma-bkod" (*padma bkod che chung*).

In Lha-sa, the Sixth Dalai Bla-ma Tshangs-dbyangs rgya-mtsho was enthroned together with the new *sde-srid*, Ngag-dbang rin-chen (17th/18th cent.), the son of the former regent. The representative from Ras-chung phug was present during this ceremony, together with other dignitaries of the bKa'-brgyud-pa school. It was on that occasion that news reached him from Ras-chung phug that a delegation from Byang-chub gling monastery in gTsang had arrived at his monastery; a message had been delivered that a certain Rin-chen rgya-mtsho had raised a treasure containing a *lam yig* for Rig-'dzin Chos-rje gling-pa to travel to Tsā-ri in order to open "a door to the sacred site" (*gnas sgo*). During a following trip to bSam-yas and Yum-bu bla-mkhar he kept up his official duties relating to Ras-chung phug by writing missives, while also composing a further biography, a more extended version of the life of his predecessor Zhabs-drung 'Chi-med dbang-po. As a final event in this year, the autobiography mentions his ordination as a Buddhist monk. The ceremony was performed at Mal-gro Dag-po by a teacher of the dGe-lugs-pa school called Khri Rin-po-che Tshul-khrims dar-rgyas (17th/18th cent.); he received the ordination name Ngag-gi dbang-phyug Blo-bzang Chos-dbyings dpal-bzang. Returning to the region of 'On, he arranged initial tantric initiations for the young Ras-chung phug sPrul-sku Ngag-gi dbang-po.¹³

The year 1704 begins with further literary activities: the borrowing of various books from the monasteries of sMin-grol gling and Gong-dkar and composing ritual manuals for both the Old and New Schools. It is also stated in the autobiography that the private chambers of the young representative of Ras-chung phug contained a library of fifty volumes, headed by those of the Aural Transmissions. For a wider audience, he was teaching once again at Ras-chung phug the Six Doctrines of Nāro[pa], but in order to celebrate the fifth month of the "monkey year" (*spre lo*), commemorating the birth of

¹³ The two years from 1702 to 1703 that witnessed the raising of the first treasures, the stay at Dwags-lha sgam-po and the ordination are contained in *rNam thar I*, fols. 50b/2–65a/3. The Fourth sGam-po sPrul-sku, Kun-bzang Nges-don dbang-po (1702–1754), served as the twenty-fourth throne-holder of Dwags-lha sgam-po; see Sørensen & Dölma 2007, p. 50. The biography of Zhabs-drung 'Chi-med dbang-po bears the title *Blo gsal dad pa'i padma rgyas pa'i nyin byed*; it was based on a shorter account composed by dPon-slob don-ldan, the above-mentioned teacher of Rig-'dzin Chos-rje gling-pa. For the later journeys of Chos-rje gling-pa to the hidden lands of gNas Padma-bkod in the years 1718 to 1720, see Ehrhard 2021, p. 168–175. The area where the hermitage of Brag-rtsa Ri-khrod was located is described as part of Padma sBas-pa'i tshal; see the colophon of the Chos-rje gling-pa treasure referred to in note 19.

Padmasambhava, he specifically transmitted the treasure cycle *Zhi khro nges don snying po* of Rig-'dzin 'Ja'-tshon snying-po (1585–1656). Among the religious dignitaries visiting Ras-chung phug valley, special mention is made of the recently installed sDe-srid Ngag-dbang rin-chen and the Sixth Dalai Bla-ma Tshangs-dbyangs rgya-mtsho, whose visits occurred on different occasions during travels through the Yar-klungs region. Another visitor who arrived from Lha-sa was the above-mentioned Rin-chen rgya-mtsho, from Byang-chub gling monastery in gTsang; the autobiography relates in detail the items he had discovered and provides an extensive account of their transmission, labelled the “entrustment of the treasure” (*gter gyi bka' babs*).

At the beginning of 1705 further visions of Padmasambhava occurred, and during a subsequent journey treasure scripts and introductory lists were discovered in the vicinity of the [s]Kar-chu[ng] lha-khang in the sKyid-chu valley. These finds are accompanied by personal reflections concerning whether it is possible for someone residing in a bKa'-brgyud-pa monastery to be a treasure discoverer of the rNying-ma-pa school. Further travels from Ras-chung phug included a visit to the monastery of bDe-chen chos-'khor in Gro-bo lung and the Sa-skya-pa institution of Gong-dkar chos-sde. The current political situation in Central Tibet is also referred to, including the rows between sDe-srid Sangs-rgyas rgya-mtsho and Lha-bzang Khan. After the return to Ras-chung phug, the invading troops of the Mongolian khan, who had assumed rule over Tibet that very year, are mentioned, along with the fact that after the violent death of sDe-srid Sangs-rgyas rgya-mtsho the mortuary rituals for him were performed on behalf of some dGe-lugs-pa monks from Lha-sa. The literary compositions Chos-rje gling-pa completed during that time included works on the Kriya Tantras and ritual manuals relating to the *Padma dbang chen yang gsang khros pa* cycle received earlier.¹⁴

Up to this point the duties of a resident teacher of Ras-chung phug and the transmission of teachings to Ngag-gi dbang-po, the Ras-

¹⁴ Concerning the events in the years 1704 to 1705, the further travels and the raising of treasure works, see *rNam thar I*, fols. 65a/3–81b/2. For the travels of the Sixth Dalai Bla-ma in the monkey year of 1704, including a visit to the treasure site of Zab-phu lung in gTsang, see Ehrhard 2015, pp. 140–141. Rig-'dzin Chos-rje gling-pa again visited this site during a journey to Central Tibet in the year 1716, another monkey year; see *rNam thar II*, fols. 293b/3–297/3, and Ehrhard 2021, pp. 164–166. He also began the composition of a “record of teachings received” (*thob yig*) at the end of 1704; see *rNam thar I*, fol. 70b/4–5: *khyad par du gyur pa'i ris med kyi dam pa'i chos tshul ji ltar thob pa'i thob yig spro ba bsrang byed sems brtsams*. The Mongolian troops who turned up at Ras-chung phug in 1705 had to be pacified with the gift of a statue of a protector deity, one fashioned by rGod-tshang Heruka, i.e. rGod-tshang ras-chen; see *ibid.*, fols. 78b/2–79a/1.

chung phug sPrul-sku, are regularly recorded in the autobiography. The latter's brother, rDo-rje dbang-po—otherwise known as Byang-gling-pa after his monastery in gTsang—is noted as a visitor to the Yar-klungs valley in the year 1705 in hopes of receiving teachings. Later historiographical literature states that from the treasurer discoverer Chos-rje gling-pa onwards the cycle of the instructions of the Aural Transmissions was kept alive at Byang-chub gling monastery.¹⁵

5. Composing the biography

The years 1706 to 1707 cover eighty-four folios of the autobiography and can be singled out as the most extensive part of the text. In a minute account, the journey to the sacred site of Tsā-ri and his prolonged stay in the domain of the Kaḥ-snam sde-pas, the rulers of sPo-bo, are described. His notes were again kept on a regular basis, even during the actual travelling or under other not entirely comfortable conditions. I will not reconstruct the individual steps of this fascinating journey and the ensuing stay in sPo-bo and Kong-po in a chronological order; instead, I will look at the beginning of the next decade, the years 1708 to 1717, where it becomes clear when the initial part of the biography was composed. Although not noted in the autobiography, it should be mentioned that an account of his life up to the twenty-fourth year (i.e. 1706) was also written by Chos-rje gling-pa before embarking on his trip to the east; it was composed in Ras-chung phug and is available in the print edition of the collected writings (see Appendix I, ka [2]).

The beginning of the year 1708 was spent in Dwags-lha sgam-po after the journey to the east, Chos-rje gling-pa remarking that he did not celebrate the upcoming Tibetan New Year due to a different calculation of this festival in the Kong-po region, where festivities had already taken place. It was Chos-rje gling-pa who performed the name-giving ceremony for the young sGam-po sPrul-sku. (The teacher lHun-grub Nges-don dbang-po, whom he refers to as rJe Bla-ma, was also present on that occasion.) Among the treasures he had revealed in the past two years, special mention is made of the *Zab lam*

¹⁵ The visit of Byang-gling-pa rDo-rje dbang-po to Ras-chung phug can be found in *rNam thar I*, fols. 76b/3–77a/4. For the statement concerning the continuity of the Aural Transmission teachings, along with the fact that the Seventh dPa'-bo gTsug-lag dga'-ba (d. 1781) received them later from rDo-rje dbang-po, see Chos-kyi dbang-phyug (as in note 11), p. 571.2-3: *gter ston chos rje gling pa nas gtsang byang chub gling pa mchog sprul rdo rje dbang po'i sku thog tu snyan brgyud kyi gdams skor yongs su rdzogs pa bzhugs la / phyis rje dpa'o rin po che gtsug lag dga' bas kyang byang gling pa las snyan brgyud yongs rdzogs gsan cing*. For the reincarnation lines at Ras-chung phug and Byang-chub gling and the teaching of the Aural Transmission at these sites see Sernesi (2021:236-242).

thugs kyi nor bu, whose find meant that the cycle was now complete (*gter sgrub*). Immediately afterwards preparations were made for the next journey to Kong-po and, in the same way as in 1706, the region of La-thog served as the entry point to south-eastern Tibet. LHun-grub Nges-don dbang-po served as a travel company to the area of sNyim-phu and on to O-rong, a region in Kong-po already visited during the first journey. A family of local benefactors belonging to the landed nobility had its residence at dGa'-chags, from which he travelled on to a sacred site known as gTsang-po mGo-dgu. Returning to O-rong and sGa-chags, Rig-'dzin Chos-rje gling-pa finally settled in at a site for his spiritual retreat called Nor-bu gling.¹⁶

During that time, he composed a further biography, this time of his teacher bZang-po rdo-rje, the Third sGam-po sPrul-sku; one Rwa-ston served as scribe. It seems that around the same time, when he was twenty-six, the project of rendering an account of his own life was initiated by Chos-rje gling-pa. The autobiography has the following short reference in this regard, mentioning the scribe who assisted in this endeavour:

From the retreat for my spiritual realization, I started to write scrolls containing the sketches of [my] [auto]biography, most of the initial section being set down by the monk Phan-bde.

There follows an invitation from the region of brTul, where he again conferred the complete empowerments of the *Zab lam thugs kyi nor bu* cycle upon the local population, after which the subject of composing the autobiography resurfaces. The author reflects on the nature of this kind of literature, his family's genealogy, and the status of his own incarnation line, this last being now traced back to its individual members in both India and Tibet.¹⁷

¹⁶ The extensive description of the years 1706 to 1707 can be found in *rNam thar I*, fols. 81b/2–165a/1. For the beginning of the second journey, see *ibid.*, fols. 165a/1–171b/2. During both stays at La-thog, Rig-'dzin Chos-rje gling-pa was supported by the Zur-mkhar family, just as Sha-ra Rab-'byams-pa Sangs-rgyas seng-ge (1427–1470), the teacher of gTsang-smyon Heruka, had been in previous times; see *ibid.*, fols. 89b/1–90a/2. Concerning the sacred site of gTsang-po mGo-dgu in Kong-po, which had initially been a favourite destination of rDzogs-chen-pa bSod-nams rin-chen (1491–1559), see Ehrhard 2013b, pp. 70–71, note 14. The Third sGam-po sPrul-sku bZang-po rdo-rje, too, had stayed there; see Guru bKra-shis: *bsTan pa'i snying po gsang chen snga 'gyur nges don zab mo chos kyi 'byung ba*, p. 731.23.

¹⁷ The initial phase of the composition of the autobiography and the following statements can be found in *rNam thar I*, fols. 171b/5–174a/2. The scribe of the biography of the Third sGam-po sPrul-sku was none other than Rwa-ston sTobs-ldan rdo-rje (17th/18th cent.), an important disciple of Rig-'dzin Chos-rje gling-pa

I will come back later to this initial phase of the composition of the autobiography but will restrict myself now to the remaining events of the year 1708. Attention should be paid to tantric empowerments given to the dGa'-chags hosts, especially the "ruler brothers" (*mi dbang mched*), followed by the arrival of lHun-grub Nges-don dbang-po from Dwags-lha sgam-po and by the transmission of his own revelations—now called "New Treasures" (*gter gsar*)—to a wider audience. After an encounter with the Sixth 'Brug-chen Mi-pham dbang-po (1642–1717), who obtained sacramental substances from Rig-'dzin Chos-rje gling-pa, construction activities are described in some detail. These concerned the building of a private residence for the young treasure discoverer in O-rong. The place was called dPal Kun-tu bzang-po nags-khrod, a name reminiscent of the illustrious hermitage of the Dwags-po bKa-brgyud-pa forefathers in Central Tibet; for its consecration all the local donors of O-rong and dGa'-chags were present. An ensuing journey led to different places in Kong-po, including rTse-le[gs], where the monastery of rTse-le[gs] sNa-tshogs rang-grol (1605–1677) was located. The previously mentioned Bu-chu lha-khang and a treasure site of Rig-'dzin 'Ja'-tshon snying-po called Chos-mkhar were two other places visited during this trip. The final destination of this journey was dGa'-rwa sgang, where the reliquary shrine of sTag-sham Nus-ldan rdo-rje had recently been set up. Rig-'dzin Chos-rje gling-pa was a lineage-holder of the latter's treasures, having met the master during his first stay in the sPo-bo region. Now he was welcomed by one O-rgyan [bSam-gtan] dpal-'byor (17th/18th cent.), the former "steward" (*mgron gnyer*) of sTag-sham Nus-ldan rdo-rje, and up to the end of the year various rituals were performed for the community residing at the latter's monastery known as Byang-chub gling.¹⁸

The remaining years of the decade up to 1717 are not covered fully in the incomplete version of the autobiography, the text focusing on events from 1709 to 1714, years spent by Rig-'dzin Chos-rje gling-pa

and a treasure discoverer in his own right; see Goodman 1992, pp. 137 & 200–201, n. 38. For the quotation concerning the composition of the autobiography, see *rNam thar I*, fols. 171b/6–172a/1: *grub mtshams nas rnam thar zin bris kyi shog dril bri ba'i dbu tshugs shing stod cha phal cher dge slong phan bde btab*. At the end of this passage, it is noted that the work was written down especially for the monks of Ras-chung phug.

¹⁸ For the final events in the year 1708 and the journey to the monastery where sTag-sham Nus-ldan rdo-rje had passed away in the previous year, see *rNam thar I*, fols. 174a/6–187/2. The detailed description of the meeting with this treasure discoverer in the year 1706 can be found in *ibid.*, fols. 139a/2–144b/6. Concerning sTag-sham Nus-ldan rdo-rje, whose teachings were mainly confined to sPo-bo and who was supported by the Kaḥ-snam sde-pa rulers, see Ehrhard 2013a, p. 358, note 14.

in the regions of sPo-bo and Kong-po. At the beginning of the latter year the support of the rulers of dGa'-chags is highlighted once again, including details of the production of a golden bKa'-gyur manuscript in O-rong; among the persons responsible for this project were one rJe-drung Nam-mkha' rdo-rje and one mGon-po ye-shes. The final events in the text can be dated to the tenth day of the "monkey month" (*spre zla*)—the fifth month—of the year 1714, at which time an extensive ritual of the Avalokiteśvara cycle *'Jig rten dbang phyug yid bzhin nor bu* of the New Treasures was performed. The text breaks off with the statement that the circumstances were auspicious and would last as long as space endures.¹⁹

After the compilation of the written sketches in 1708 into a biographical narrative, Rig-'dzin Chos-rje gling-pa continued keeping regular notes, the incomplete text being the version that takes the reader, without any final editing, up to 1714.

6. *The second text*

A second work on the life of Chos-rje gling-pa can be found in the collection of the Buddhist Digital Resource Centre (BDRC); it covers 390 folios. The full title is "An extensive biography of Padma-[sambhava]'s representative, a Dharmarāja of great treasures, [he who is called] 'Dzam-gling rdo-rje: A creeping vine for the fortunate faithful" (*padma'i rgyal tshab gter chen chos kyi rgyal po'i 'dzam gling rdo rje'i rnam thar rgyas pa skal ldan dad pa'i khri shing*). Its main part is a verbatim reproduction of the sketches that go to make up the autobiography—with minor changes, mainly in the introduction to the text. It continues the narrative from the year 1714 onwards and presents events up to the ninth day of the ninth Tibetan month of the year 1717; this indicates that Chos-rje gling-pa's notes covered up to the end of this decade and were still available. Once again, I will not deal with the activities and travels described in the text so much as with the beginning of the work, to find out how it was transformed by the editors.

In contrast to the earlier version, there are introductory verses, and, significantly, a statement concerning the nature of autobiographical writing. The reason for such endeavours is articulated in the following words:

¹⁹ The year 1714 up to the tenth day of the fifth Tibetan month is treated in *rNam thar I*, fols. 278b/2–283a/5. The *'Jig rten dbang phyug yid bzhin nor bu* cycle was the treasure discovered by Rig-'dzin Chos-rje gling-pa in the Bu-chu lha-khang in Kong-po; see Schwieger 1995, p. 335 [No. 933]. Its completion as a treasure had taken place at Thub-bstan 'od-gsal gling, the above-mentioned hermitage also called Brag-rtsa ri-khrod; see note 11.

Regarding this, although there is the custom of calling [those] biographies secret [which are] proper [treatments] in the biographies of some individuals of how the visions they saw manifested, from the very beginning I noted down as [the actual content of] secrets what needed to be kept secret. These and the other things I set down [in the autobiography] at length. Afterwards, what mouths have, as it were, picked up [from others] and given the name “secret” to—these, too, I set down as models. Later those desiring a heart that sees will be able to see [not just the models but the actual secrets]; those not so desirous, although [the actual secrets] have been made public, will not have acquired the ear for [them]. So that’s how it is. As the saying goes:

In the south the signs of realization are [only] taught,
[but] in the north one cries [them] out, [having ac-
quired them] by one’s own effort.

Still, [feeling] as if I should [otherwise] not be returning dues or loans to those who appealed for them, I have plunged into setting down whatever I remembered.²⁰

This statement has been lifted from the autobiography and can be found in the latter work in the previously mentioned passage describing the compositional activity in the year 1708. The initial impetus for setting out to write such a work is described more elaborately in the second text, where also the title has been added:

From the retreat for my spiritual realization, [and] at the strong urging of the ruler-brothers of dGa-chags [to write down] a basic record [of my life] in order to arrange it anew into an autobiography, I prepared to begin to write scrolls of the sketches, [calling it] “Talk of the deceptive world: The trunk of a wish-fulfilling tree of whatever manifests”; most of the initial part was set down by the monk Phan-bde.

²⁰ See *rNam thar II*, fols. 2b/2–3a/1: *de la gang zag la la’i rnam thar du mthong snang byung tshul legs gsang ba’i rnam thar zhes byed srol ’dug rung / gsang dgos pa rnam ni ye gsang la bris kyang / dgos pa dang / gzhan dkyus su bkod pa phyin de khas ’thus ’dra zhing gsang ba zhes btags kyang dpe la bkod phyin lta snying ’dod pa tsho ni lta thub pa dang / mi ’dod pa tshe ni khrom bsgrigs byas kyang nyan mkhan ma byung ba de’i phyir de ltar dang / lar lho phyogs su grub rtags bstan no zhes / byang phyogs su rang gi ’bad nas sgrags / zhes pa’i dpe ltar ’gyur kyang bskul pa po yi g.yar khral mi bzlog pa bzhin du gang dran thol byung du bkod pa ni. Consult *rNam thar I*, fols. 172b/4–173a/2, for this passage and its variant readings.*

It is thus obvious that the donors from dGa'-chags were the driving force behind the composition of the autobiography and that this version served as the basis for the second text. The latter work can be regarded as a nearly identical copy: besides the changes to the introduction, only a small note concerning the genealogy of the family having been added at the beginning of the second section. In the process of copying the original version—assuming that our first text is this version—certain passages were also lost; up to now I have been able to locate one passage of ten folios missing in the second text.²¹

These autobiographical notes were also used for a biography of Chos-rje gling-pa composed shortly afterwards in 1709 by one of his disciples, who bears the name Tshe-dbang tshogs-gnyis dar-rgyas 'Jig-rten dga'-ba'i rgyan a.k.a. Rigs-'dus Tshe-dbang rtsal. It covers its subject's life up to his twenty-sixth year, being a full-fledged account up to the arrival in dGa'-chags. Like the second (extended) text of the autobiography, it was composed in the residence called g.Yu-'brug lha-rtse. In the print edition of the collected writings of Chos-rje gling-pa, it consists of eight chapters (see Appendix I, e).

The draft of Rig-'dzin Chos-rje was available up to the year 1717, when he returned from his final journey to Central Tibet to dPal Kuntu bzang-po nags-khrod, the above-mentioned hermitage in the domain of the rulers of dGa'-chags. This state of affairs is adverted to in the second text in the following words:

These have been up to now the stainless pronouncements of the Honourable One himself. We his followers produced (*phro lus pa*) the final parts of the [auto]biography, adding them on at the end, [and so] established them as seeds of a truthful basic record.

These words are partially repeated in the colophon of the text, which will be presented in Appendix II. According to this closing section, the full biography as contained in the second text was finalized in the year 1723 during the consecration of the reliquary shrine of Rig-'dzin Chos-rje gling, which was constructed—together with a similar shrine for sTag-sham Nus-ldan rdo-rje—during a period of nearly

²¹ For the extended version of the composition of the autobiography see *rNam thar II*, fol. 168a/1–3: *grub mtshams nas dga' chags sde pa sku mched nged kyis rnam thar gsar bsgrig gnang rgyu rtsa tho nan bskul gnang ba bzhin / nged rang gi (= gis) 'di snang gi 'khrul gtam gang shar ljon shing gi sdong po zin bris kyi shog dril bri ba'i dbu tshugs sham (= bshams) stod cha phal cher dge slong phan bdes phabs*. The minor additions to the genealogy can be found *ibid.*, fols. 8b/4–9a/5 & 10a/3–4. The missing passage of ten folios concerns travels in sPo-bo and Kong-po dating to the period from 1709 to 1710; see *rNam thar I*, fols. 211b/6–222a/2, for the full account and *rNam thar II*, fols. 205b/6–206a/1, for the lacuna.

one and a half years at the residence of the ruler of dGa'-chags. It was on that occasion that the ruler's son, Padma rab-rgyas rol-pa'i rtsal, was installed as the reincarnation of sTag-sham Nus-ldan ro-rje.²²

7. Conclusions

The second text treats events in the life of Chos-rje gling-pa, based on his own sketches, up to the year 1717. One can speculate that the routine of keeping regular records of the daily activities was interrupted by the Dsungar invasion, which began in the month of December of that very year. It resulted in the sacking and pillaging of monasteries along the gTsang-po River as far down as Dwags-lha sgam-po. It is known that in 1716 the treasure discoverer had undertaken a visit to the monastery and that he travelled also to gTsang on a pilgrimage to the above-mentioned site of Zab-phu lung. After the last teachings for the Fourth sGam-po sPrul-sku Kun-bzang Nges-don dbang-po, who had just been installed on the abbatial throne of Dwags-lha sgam-po, he returned once more to the Kong-po region, this time heading for the hidden lands of "Great and Small Padma-bkod" (*padma bkod che chung*). During this period of political instability and persecutions some residents of Lha-sa too, including the Jesuit Ippolito Desideri (1684–1733), were vacating the capital and seeking refuge in hidden sanctuaries.²³

A separate text has survived which treats the initial stages of the journey to Central Tibet in the year 1717; this detailed account is available in the print edition of the collected writings of Chos-rje gling-pa (see Appendix I, ka [1]).

²² The passage which separates the autobiography from its continuation can be found in *rNam thar II*, fol. 328a/1: 'di yan sku zhabs de nyid kyi bka' stsol dri ma med pa yin / 'jug (= mjug) mthud rnam thar smad cha'i skor mdzad 'phro lus pa rnam re rang rjes 'jug rtsa tho drang po'i sa bon du bkod pa ni. For the events surrounding the consecration of the reliquary shrine of Rig-'dzin Chos-rje gling-pa and the recognition of the reincarnation of sTag-sham Nus-ldan rdo-rje according to the former's prophecies, see *ibid.* fols. 387b/1–390a/5.

²³ The final journey to Central Tibet and the opening of the hidden lands of gNas Padma-bkod have been summarized, based in part on the second text, in dKon-mchog rgya-mtsho: *Dwags po bka' brgyud chos 'byung*, pp. 642.1–643.6; a description of these journeys is given in Ehrhard 2021, pp. 164–175. On the persecutions of rNyings-ma-pa and bKa'-brgyud-pa monks during this period, see Pomplun 2006, pp. 37–39 and Pomplun 2011, pp. 114–119. As a witness to these events, Ippolito Desideri escaped from Lha-sa to the region of Dwags-po with the help of one "Luggar Lama". It has been suggested that this individual could be Rig-'dzin Chos-rje gling; a more plausible candidate would be the latter's younger brother Chos-kyi grags-pa, also known as Klu-mkhar spyang-snga. Concerning the latter's assistance to 'Bri-gung monastery during these difficult times, see dKon-mchog rgya-mtsho: *Dwags po bka' brgyud chos 'byung*, pp. 633:17–23.

Even if the final part of the life of Chos-rje gling-pa is here passed over, it may be pointed out that it is possible to fix the date of his death—which in the historiographical literature is generally dated to after his entering gNas Padma-bkod. According to the detailed description in the second text the exact date can now be established as the beginning of 1720 when he had reached his 38th year.²⁴

The following comparisons can be made regarding the two texts on the life of Chos-rje gling-pa: From the first sketches of an autobiography, started at the age of seventeen, up to the beginning of the composition of a coherent narrative in his 26th year in 1708, the regular records of daily events provided the framework for the autobiography. This account included later reflections and personal considerations, for example on his role as an incarnation within the Dwags-po bKa'-brgyud-pa school or his ambitions as a revealer of Padmasambhava's treasures. An early version of the autobiography must have circulated, one example being the manuscript containing events up to 1714. While the practice of keeping records eventually stopped in 1717, the remaining years in the life of Chos-rje gling-pa were documented by his disciples up to his death in 1720; three years later the complete biography was finalized at the time of the consecration of the reliquary shrine.

Appendix I

An extensive collection of rare manuscripts and block prints has been made available by the BDRC under the title "Collection of rare Nyingma texts from Kham, Tibet" (*kham khul nas 'tshol bsdu zhus pa'i dpe rnying dpe dkon*) [= W3PD982]. It consists of 76 volumes, volumes 42 and 43 of which contain a xylograph edition, printed in red ink, of a *gsung 'bum* collection relating to Chos-rje gling-pa. The first volume (marg. e) is a biography, composed in the year 1709, while the second volume consists of two books (marg. ka and kha) with various texts including autobiographical writings.

Vol. e

Thub dbang gnyis pa slob dpon padma ka ra'i rgyal tshab gter chen chos rje gling pa'i rtogs pa brjod pa rje btsun mchog gi zhal lung dad pa'i 'khri shing, 178 fols.

²⁴ For the years 1719 to 1720 in the biography see *rNam thar II*, fols. 348a/4–387b/1. The date of his passing is given as the 15th day of the first Tibetan month of the year 1720; see *ibid.*, fols. 375b/5–376a/5. The death of lHun-grub Nges-don dbang-po, who accompanied his half-brother during the journey to the hidden lands, occurred soon after, on the tenth day of the third month of the same year; see *ibid.*, fol. 379a/1.

Vol. ka

[1] *shing lug dbus gtsang phyogs su bskyod pa'i tshul gyi lam yig kun tu bzang po'i zlos gar*, 55 fols.

[2] *Śākya dge slong rdo rje 'dzin pa 'dzam gling rdo rje'i spyad pa dū ku li'i (= dū ku la'i) gos*, 43 fols.

[3] *gSang ba'i rnam thar*, 29 fols.

[4] *Mi mnyam pa'i bsod nams chen pos lugs zung gi mkhyen pas mngon par chub pa'i rigs ldan o rong gi mi dbang sgam po bsod nams dang dga' chags mi dbang sku mched gnyis la gsang ba'i lung byang stsal ba'i skor*, 9 fols.

[5] *bDag cag gi rnam 'dren dam pa rje btsun 'dzam gling rdo rje'i bar skabs kyi rnam thar sa bon*, 3 fols.

[6] *Rig 'dzin chos rje gling pa'i bka' rtsom 'thor bu rnams phyogs gcig tu bkod pa*, 27 fols.

[7] *gNas mchog rma kung lung gi lam yig mtsho byung dāki sgra ma'i glu dbyangs*, 13 fols.

[8] *sDom rgyun brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs*, 1 fols.

[9] *Nā ro mkha' spyod kyi sgrub thabs mkha' spyod bde ldan gling du 'jug pa'i ngogs*, 4 fols.

[10] *Rigs dang dkyil 'khor kun gyi gtso bo khyab bdag rdo rje 'chang dbang po o rgyan chos rje gling pa'i gsung 'bum las dag snang 'thor bu'i skor dang lung bstan*, 28 fols.

[11] *Sangs rgyas gnyis pa pad 'byung chos rje gling pa'i gsung 'bum las / kun bzang phan bde dang ngag dbang thog (= thogs) med zung gi dris lan bzhugs pa'i dbu phyogs la gzigs*, 37 fols.

[12] *Dug 'joms 'chi gsos bdud rtsi dga' ston*, 3 fols.

[13] *rGyal dbang padma kā ra'i (= padma ka ra'i) rgyal tshab rig 'dzin rdo rje 'chang dbang o rgyan chos rje gling pa'i gsung 'bum las / gsol 'debs kyi rim pa phyogs gcig tu bkod pa dad pa'i padmo kha 'byed byin rlabs 'od stong 'gro ba'i nyin byed dbang po*, 64 fols.

Vol. kha

- [1] *Phur ba drag sngags las phur pa byin rlabs*, 1 fol.
- [2] *Khyad par gdab kha drug*, 2 fols.
- [3] *Phur srung gi gsol mchod rgyun khyer*, 1 fol.
- [4] *bDud btsan klu gsum gyi gtor 'bul khyer bde*, 1 fol.
- [5] *dPal yang dag la brten pa'i bdud rtsi ril bu'i sgrub thabs rig 'dzin zhal lung*, 2 fols.
- [6] *Yang bdag (= dag) bde chen snying po'i bsnyen yig gsang lam brda mtshon*, 5 fols.
- [7] *dPal rdo rje gzhon nu'i bsnyen yig dngos grub mchog gi nye lam*, 6 fols.
- [8] *Tshe gcig byang chub sgrub pa'i gsang lam yang bdag bde chen snying po las chos thams cad kyi sngon 'gro thun mong ba*, 19 fols.
- [9] *dPal rdo rje gzhon nu'i smad las man ngag gi yi ge gsal bar byed pa khyab 'jug mtshon cha 'khor lo*, 14 fols.
- [10] *gTer gsar phyag rdzogs kyi sngon 'gro bzhi sbyor lhan thabs rnam mkhyen bgrod pa'i them skas*, 16 fols.
- [11] *Phur ba'i bsnyen rkyang bya tshul*, 2 fols.
- [12] *Phur ba'i bsnyen dmigs*, 2 fols.

Appendix II

The colophon of *Padma'i rgyal tshab gter chen chos kyi rgyal po 'dzam gling rdo rje'i rnam thar rgyas pa skal ldan dad pa'i khri shing*, fol. 390a/3–b/5; the work was composed in the year 1723.

[I]

zhes u rgyan chen po sangs rgyas gnyis pa padma ka ra'i rgyal tshabs (= tshab) 'gro 'dul chos rje gling pa padma gar dbang ye shes rol pa'i rtsal mtshan yongs su grags pa de nyid kyi rnam par thar pa dad pa'i khri shing pa'i rtsa tho sku zhabs de nyid kyi mdzad pa'i [zin bris] gang shar ljon shing gi sdong po'i mjug mthud smad cha'i skor 'di rnams / dam pa gang gi chos

srid kyi bka' babs 'dzin pa lha gnyer gyi btsun pa o rgyan bsam gtan dpal 'byor gyis / gtso cher 'phags mchog rig 'dzin de nyid kyi rgyun gzigs phyag tho rnams la zhag yig rtsibs pa gzhi byas / re gnyis ma gtsang ba dang sbas gnas su phebs [pa skor sogs] pa 'gengs pos dgos [390b] rigs rnams rje drung nam mkha' rdo rje / ma yum sprul sku padma / mgon po ye shes / dad ldan mi yi dbang po lha dbang rnam rgyal / grub chen lho brag pa / dbu mdzad chos 'byung sogs dang bka' bgros shing khyad par 'jug brgyan tshig sbyor gang ci rig 'dzin nus ldan rdo rje'i dbon drung chos kyi khri bzhugs pa kun bzang nam mkha' rdo rjes mdzad de /

[II]

khong yul sngags spyod kyi zhing 'o shod gad pa skya ba dang mi ring bar / dga' bde'i dpal gyi mngon par 'char ba'i phrod pa yu (= g.yu) 'brug lha rtse'i gzim chung nyi 'od 'khyil bar zin bris su rang blo'i 'ol tshod du ma song ba'i drang po'i sa bon du bkod pa nor 'khrul mtshams tshe bla ma lha daki mkhyen ldan rnams kyi spyan sngar snyams nas bshad shing / bdag sogs gdul byar gyur pa'i mkha' khyab sems can thams cad dpal ldan bla ma mchog gi go 'phang rin po che thob pa'i rgyur gyur cig /

Translation of the colophon:

[I]

“The basic register [called] ‘A creeping vine for the faithful’, a biography of ‘Gro-’dul Chos-rje gling-pa Padma gar-dbang Ye-shes rol-pa’i rtsal (whose name is known everywhere), a representative of the Great One from Oḍḍiyāna, the Second Buddha Padmakara. The sections of the final part [of his life-story] [were] joined to the end of ‘The trunk of a wish-fulfilling tree [producing] whatever manifests’, [a work] created by the Honourable One himself. I used as a basis the framework of the daily records in the notebooks [composed by those individuals] who regularly saw this Vidyādhara, the best among the Noble Ones—above all, [those composed] by O-rgyan bSam-gtan dpal-’byor, the monk who was in charge of the temple [Byang-chub gling] [and] held the transmission of the teaching domain of the deceased.²⁵ [In addition,] a few incomplete notes [were consulted,] and the types [of oral information] necessary for filling in the sections on how [the master] proceeded to the hidden site [of gNas Padma-bkod], including [information gathered from] rje-drung Nam-mkha’ rdo-rje, Padma, the [treasure discoverer’s] consort (and an incarna-

²⁵ O-rgyan [bSam-gtan] dpal-’byor had been sTag-sham Nus-ldan rdo-rje’s steward and the person who welcomed Rig-’dzin Chos-rje gling-pa to his master’s monastery in the year 1708; see note 18.

tion), mGon-po ye-shes, the faithful ruler lHa-dbang rnam-rgyal, the Mahāsiddha lHo-brag-pa and the chant-leader Chos-'byung,²⁶ together with [more general] conversations. And whatever particular phrasing [was needed] to insert [into the text so as to] adorn [it] it was done by [me,] Kun-bzang Nam-mkha' rdo-rje, the nephew of Rig-'dzin [sTag-sham] Nus-ldan rdo-rje [and] the one [now] occupying his teaching throne.

[II]

It has been set down in the form of sketches. as the seed of a truthful basic record, where no assumptions of one's own mind have entered,—[set down] not far from Gad-pa skya-bo, in the lower part of O[-rong], a field for mantra practice in the land of Kong[-po], in a private chamber [called] 'Radiant Sunlight' of [the great assembly hall] gYu-'brug lha-rtse, [which is a place] conducive to the complete manifestation of the glory of joy and bliss.²⁷ Whenever error [and] illusion have met each other I imagined [myself] in the presence of [my] knowledgeable teacher, [personal] deity [and] Ḍākinī. and discussed [the work]. May this be the cause for all beings that need to be trained—I [and] others, [whose number] fills [the limits of] the sky—attaining the precious state of the highest teacher, the Glorious One!"

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mKhas grub chen po karma blo bzang gi rnam thar mchod sprin rgya mtsho, 48 pp. In "Gangs can dol po khul gyi ris med kyi bstan 'dzin skyes

²⁶ Among these persons, both rje-drung Nam-mkha' rdo-rje and mGon-po ye-shes are known to have been donors to the production of a golden manuscript bKa'-gyur produced in O-rong in the year 1714; see note 19. lHa-dbang rnam-rgyal (from the ruling family of dGa'-chags) urged Rig-'dzin Chos-rje gling-pa to compose one of his treasure texts from the *bDe gshegs rtsa gsum 'chi med dril sgrub* cycle; see Schwieger 1990, p. 79 [99]. Among the persons accompanying Rig-'dzin Chos-rje gling-pa to the hidden lands, the mentioned person named Mahāsiddha lHo-brag-pa played a particularly active role; see *rNam thar II*, fols. 342a/1 ff. & fols. 360a/2 ff., and Ehrhard 2021, pp. 171-175.

²⁷ The "great assembly hall" (*tshoms chen*) bearing the name g.Yu-'brug lha-rtse was located in the residence of the rulers of dGa'-chags. After a period of retreat at dPal Kun-tu bzang po nags-khrod, which lasted from 1712 to 1715, Chos-rje gling-pa had conducted an extensive *sGrub-chen* ritual at this residence, attended by the ruling family; see *rNam thar II*, fols. 265b/1-267b/1. It was at this residence that the reliquary shrine of Rig-'dzin Chos-rje gling-pa was produced with the support of the above-mentioned ruler lHa-dbang rnam-rgyal; see *ibid.*, fol. 386a/2-b/1.

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Why Did the Cannibal King Fly? Tantric Transformations of an Indian Narrative in Tibet

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Stories featuring Kalmāṣapāda, the human-flesh devouring king with “spotted feet” (*kalmāṣa-pāda*), have been told throughout Indian literature ranging from Vedic, Epic, and Purāṇic narrative traditions to Jain and Buddhist narrative traditions in both Pāli and Sanskrit. With the spread of Buddhism from India, renditions of the Kalmāṣapāda story circulated across Central Asia, China, Japan, Tibet, and the rest of the Buddhist world. This paper traces the transformations of this narrative that took place in Tibet through the introduction of tantric Buddhist elements from the 11th to the 17th century. I argue that these tantric transformations of the Kalmāṣapāda story enabled it to serve in Tibet as a charter narrative for a tantric practice featuring the consumption of the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara’s flesh that survives to the present. In so doing, I seek to show how the transformations of this narrative in Tibet reflect changes in the rhetorical and material relationships to the practice of human-flesh consumption as Tibetans assimilated Indian Buddhist tantric traditions and made them their own.

The discussion draws from a broader book project tracing the history of the seven-times-born flesh in Tibetan Buddhism from the 11th century to the present. This avenue of research would likely be unthinkable without Dan Martin’s pioneering contributions to the study of Tibetan material culture, polemics, and the complex interactions between Tibetans and their neighbors. I am particularly grateful for Dan Martin’s studies of relics, reliquaries, and pills of power in Tibet, and the polemical discourses about them among some of Tibet’s leading intellectuals.¹ These studies have made new inroads into the study of Tibetan material religion that have only recently begun to surface and gain traction. The present discussion, and the broader project of which it partakes, draws inspiration from Dan’s capacious historical approach to material culture to explore what tracing the historical trajectory of a single narrative vignette featuring the consumption of human flesh can contribute to our knowledge of

¹ Martin 1992, 1994a, 1994b, 1996.

how Tibetans have received and adapted Indian Buddhist tantric traditions in the formation of distinctly Tibetan systems of Buddhist theory and practice.

1. *Kalmāṣapāda in Indian Narrative Literature*

Our story begins by considering a particular rendition of one of the most widespread narratives in the history of Indian literature: the story of the king Kalmāṣapāda who is cursed by a sage to eat human flesh. King Kalmāṣapāda, otherwise known as the “son of Sudāsa,” appears as a character in the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*, *Bhadrakalpāvadāna*, *Jātakamālā*, *Rāṣṭrapālāparipṛcchā*, **Damamūkāvadāna* and other Buddhist texts. In a 1909 article, Watanabe traced the narratives featuring Kalmāṣapāda throughout these and other scriptural sources to demonstrate that core features of the Buddhist accounts also appear in many non-Buddhist Indian narratives of Jain, Purāṇic, Epic, and even Vedic provenance.² Watanabe’s brilliant work of charting the relationships between these various renditions has enabled us to isolate for analysis his “second group” of Buddhist narratives—the versions from the *Siṃhasaudāsamānsabhakṣanivṛtti*, *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*, *Jātakamālā*, *Bhadrakalpāvadāna*, the **Damamūkāvadāna*—for the particular influence they may have exerted on the Tibetan narrative traditions associated with the tantric practice of eating human flesh.³ Ironically, this group of narratives, according to Watanabe, teaches the evils of eating meat, in addition to honesty, generosity and other virtues.

For the present purposes, elements found in the **Damamūkāvadāna*, otherwise known as the *Sūtra of the Wise and the Foolish* (*mDzangs blun zhes bya ba’i mdo*, **Damamūkanāmasūtra*) stand out as particularly significant.⁴ The Tibetan text of the **Damamūkanāmasūtra* was translated based on a Chinese source text in the first half of the 9th century by the Sino-Tibetan translator ’Gos Chos grub, or Wang Facheng in Chinese, who has active in Dunhuang during this period.⁵

² Watanabe 1909. Nearly a century later, Zin (2006) departs from Watanabe’s work to argue that the character Aṅgulimāla is a literary transformation of the cannibal king Kalmāṣapāda (Pāli Kammāsapada). Zin claims to trace this development from the *Mahābhārata* character Saudāsa / Kalmāṣapāda to the *Mahāsutasoma-jātaka*, and from there to the *Aṅgulimāla-sutta* in the *Majjima-nikāya*, and on to Pāli commentaries and Chinese translations. For a critical discussion of Zin’s work in the context of a narratological reading of the *Aṅgulimāla-sutta*, see Galasek-Hul 2015.

³ Watanabe 1909, 261–270.

⁴ Watanabe 1909, 266–268.

⁵ Terjék 1969, 289; Stein 2010, 8. The Tibetan translation of this *sūtra* can be found in *Bka’ ’gyur (dpe bsdur ma)* 2006–2009, Tōh. 341, Mdo sde, A (vol. 74), 399–803. For an

The Chinese source text was translated and compiled no later than the year 445 based on Indian source materials by Chinese and/or Central Asian monks active in Khotan.⁶

The Kalmāṣapāda narrative therein is part of the back story of Aṅgulimāla, “Finger-Necklace,” the brahmin boy, who, cursed by a *ṛṣi*, killed 999 people, and wore a necklace made of their fingers until he encountered the Buddha, renounced his murderous ways, and entered the monastic order. The Aṅgulimāla story forms chapter 36 of the Tibetan canonical translation (Tōh. 341) and chapter 51 of the Chinese translation in the Taishō canon (Taishō 202).⁷

Kalmāṣapāda enters the story when king Prasenajit, in pursuit of the serial killer Aṅgulimāla, is shocked to discover that he has given up non-virtue and entered the Buddhist saṅgha. In response to king Prasenajit’s extraordinary surprise, the Buddha offers an account of their previous lives together, in which the Buddha also tamed Aṅgulimāla.

The Buddha tells the story of king Brahmadata (Tib. *ba la ma da*, Ch. 波羅摩達⁸), a past ruler of Vārāṇasī, who had intercourse with a passionate lioness to produce a son that was human in form, but had the spotted feet of a lion, thus earning him the name Kalmāṣapāda, or “Spotted-feet” (Tib. *rkang bkra*, Ch. 駁足). After Kalmāṣapāda grows up and assumes his father’s throne, he prompts his two queens—one of brahmin caste and the other of *kṣatriya* caste—to compete for his attention by chasing him through the park, promising that whichever one catches him can spend the day with him. The brahmin queen gets upset one day when her piety for the deva of a local shrine slows her pace, allowing the *kṣatriya* queen to get the better of her and catch up to the prince. The brahmin queen, out of anger against the deva for not coming to her aid, has the shrine destroyed, leaving the local deva angry and bewildered.

Seeking his vengeance against the king and his house, the deva notices that the king makes regular food offerings to a certain *ṛṣi*, and one day, when the deva gleans that the *ṛṣi* is not set to arrive, he transforms himself into the *ṛṣi*’s form and refuses the king’s food,

English translation of this *sūtra*, see Frye 1981. For an English translation of the *Jātakamālā* story featuring this character, see Āryasūra 1983, 309–329 (“Sutasoma”).

⁶ Mair 1993, 18. For comparison between the Chinese and Tibetan versions, see Takakusu 1901, Stein 1914 and 2010, and Mair 1993.

⁷ For the Tibetan version, see chapter 36 of the *sūtra*, entitled “Undistressed Aṅgulimāla” (*mi gdung ba sor ’phreng can*), *Bka’ ’gyur (dpe bsdur ma)* 2006–2009, vol. 74, 698–733. For the Chinese translation, see chapter 51 of *Xianyu jing* 賢愚經, entitled *Wu nao zhiman* 無惱指鬘 (Taishō 202, 423b06–427c28). For an English translation of this chapter, based primarily on the Tibet, see Frye 1981, 186–201.

⁸ Mair 1993, 90.

asserting that he would henceforth eat only meat and fish. When the actual *r̥si* arrives the next day to an offering of meat and fish, he is offended and curses the king, “May you eat nothing but human flesh for twelve years!”

This sets the stage for a vignette that bears a striking resemblance to later narratives in Tibet:

Then, one day, the king’s cook ran out of meat for the king to eat, so he went out in search of some but could find nothing. Along the road he encountered the corpse of a dead child. Thinking, ‘This will do,’ he cut off its head, hands and feet, cooked it, and, seasoning it well, served it to the king. The king ate the meat and found it to be the most delicious meat he had ever tasted. He thus asked the cook: ‘We have never had meat like this before. It is particularly delicious. What kind is it?’ Terrified, the cook prostrated himself and said: ‘Your Majesty, if you promise not to punish me, I shall tell you.’ When the king had promised that there would be no punishment, the cook told him that since they were suddenly out of meat, he prepared the corpse of a dead child he had found. The king said: ‘Still, the meat was particularly delicious. In the future prepare only such meat.’⁹

With the meat of the dead child now consumed in this initial feast of human flesh, the king commands the cook to start kidnapping the children of the kingdom under the cover of night to cook and serve their flesh to him each day. When the king’s ministers discover that the king is responsible for the spate of missing children, they surround him with an army and prepare to kill him. The king cleverly buys a few moments to invoke his past virtuous deeds and thereby transforms himself into a *rākṣasa* (*srin po*) that can fly through the sky. The king thus escapes into the sky to continue wreaking havoc on the kingdom until he captures prince Sutasomaputra, the Buddha in this

⁹ Bka’ ‘gyur (*dpe bsdur ma*) 2006–2009, vol. 74, 713–714: /*de nas nyin gcig rgyal po’i g.yos mkhan gyis sha ma ’byor nas ’phral du sha gzhan ma rnyed de/ byis pa’i ro zhig dang phrad nas/ sha ’di yang rung ngo snyam bsams nas mgo dang rkang lag bcad de g.yos su byas tel spos sna tshogs kyis btab nas rgyal po la byin no/ rgyal pos kyang sha de zos nas sngon gyi sha bas lhag par zhim mol/ g.yos mkhan la sngan cad kyi sha ’di lta bu ro med dol/ sha ’di ni lhag par zhim na ci’i sha zhes dris pa dang/ g.yos mkhan skrag nas lto ba sa la phab ste/ rgyal po la ’di skad ces gsol to/ gal te rgyal pos gyod mi rmo na drang por gsol lo zhes smras pa dang/ rgyal pos kyang khyod kyis drang por smras dang/ gyod mi rmo’o zhes bsgo’ol/ g.yos mkhan gyis smras pa/ bdag cag ’phral brtad pas sha gzhan ni ma rnyed de/ byis pa chung ngu ’gum pa’i ro zhig rnyed de de g.yos su bgyis te gsol ba las rgyal pos mkhyen par gyur to/ rgyal pos bsgo ba sha ’di lhag par zhim gyi da phyin cad sha ’di lta bu rtag tu sbyor cig/ ces bsgo ba dang/. For my rendering of this passage, I consulted the translation in Frye 1981, 194. For the corresponding passage in the Chinese version, see *Xianyu jing* 賢愚經 (T202), 425c08–425c17.*

previous lifetime, while the prince is receiving a Dharma teaching from a brahmin. Prince Sutasomaputra convinces king Kalmāṣapāda, turned flying *rākṣasa*, to spare his life for seven days, promising that he will return to meet his fate once he has finished receiving the Dharma teaching. Returning after seven days as promised, Kalmāṣapāda is impressed by prince Sutasomaputra's honesty and his courage to face death equipped with the Dharma instruction he had received in the meantime. Kalmāṣapāda thus asks the prince to repeat the Dharma teaching that was so important to him. Instantly upon hearing it, Kalmāṣapāda feels remorse, renounces his murderous ways, and resumes his righteous rule as king, never to eat human flesh again.

There are a few core features of this narrative that should be kept in mind as we compare it to its subsequent transformations: 1) the curious origin of the king from his father's union with a lioness; 2) the king's consumption of human flesh; 3) that the king is first served the flesh by a deceitful cook, in response to running out of meat to serve; 4) that the cook procures the flesh from the corpse of a child and seasons it; 3) that the cook is frightened of punishment but nonetheless divulges the source of the meat; 4) and that this leads to the power of flight. With these core elements of the story in mind, we turn now to consider the transformations that this narrative underwent in subsequent tantric retellings.

2. *Kalmāṣapāda Goes Tantric*

Hevajratantra Commentary in Tibet and its Indian Precedents

The 12th century Tibetan scholar rNgog Zhe sdang rdo rje composed a *Hevajratantra* commentary called the *Rin chen rgyan 'dra* in which he narrates a story that appears to be an adaptation of the Kalmāṣapāda vignette featured in the *Sātra of the Wise and the Foolish*.¹⁰ He presents it in his commentary on verses 9, 10, and 11 of chapter 11, part one of the *Hevajratantra*.¹¹ These verses of the tantra recommend that success in the practice of *Hevajra* requires practitioners to consume the five ambrosias, and, specifically, the flesh of a "seven timer" (Skt. *saptāvarta*, Tib. *lan bdun pa*), that is, a person born for seven successive lives as a human being.¹² The verses also tell how to identify a "seven-timer" by virtue of their traits of a pleasant voice, beautiful eyes, a fragrant body, and a fine physique, which casts seven shadows," before promising that consuming their flesh will instantly confer flight.

¹⁰ Zhe sdang rdo rje 1976.

¹¹ Zhe sdang rdo rje 1976, 218.1–219.7.

¹² Snellgrove 2010, 86–87.

Zhe sdang rdo rje titles his discussion of these verses “the teaching on the *samaya* of eating (*bza’ ba’i dam tshig bstan pa*), which he divides into two sub-sections: 1) “the teaching on eating the five fleshs and the five ambrosias as *samaya* supports;” and 2) “the teaching on eating the seven-timer, along with its benefits.”¹³ After briefly glossing the five fleshs (Tib. *sha lnga*, Skt. *pañcamāṃsa*) as human flesh, elephant flesh, horse flesh, dog flesh, and cow flesh; and the five ambrosias (Tib. *bdud rtsi lnga*, Skt. *pañcāmṛta*) as feces, urine, blood, semen, and marrow, Zhe sdang rdo rje tells that consuming these substances leads to accomplishment of the two-fold *siddhi*, that is, the mundane feats and ultimate awakening itself.¹⁴

Zhe sdang rdo rje dwells longer on the flesh of the seven-timer.¹⁵ Introducing it as “another specialty of *samaya* substance taught in the *Hevajratantra*,” he explains that it is the flesh of someone born for seven successive lives as a human being, before elaborating some on their identifying traits as listed in the *tantra*. Importantly, he explains that since such beings have embarked on the practice of a bodhisattva, when they are identified, we should circumambulate and prostrate before the bodhisattva *yogin*, toss flowers in their direction, and supplicate for their flesh, whereupon the seven-timer *yogin* bodhisattva will transfer their consciousness elsewhere and forfeit their body to be of benefit to not only the *mantrin* with *samaya*, but to many other beings as well. Zhe sdang rdo rje continues that the practitioner should then form pills out of their entire flesh and skin. Just eating one, he adds, will instantly confer flight and a lifespan equal to the longevity of the sun and moon.

Zhe sdang rdo rje then offers an illustrative story.¹⁶ He refrains from identifying his source, but the core features bear a striking resemblance to the Kalmāṣapāda narrative. According to Zhe sdang rdo rje’s rendition, one night, a king by the name of *Siṃha* (Seng ge), who is served each day’s meals by his queens in turn, orders his youngest queen to go buy meat for the following day’s meal. The next morning the rains are too heavy, so she cuts off some flesh from the corpse of a three or four-year old child cleansed by the rain which she incidentally encounters in a nearby charnel ground. Upon returning, she cooks it, sprinkles it with fine seasoning, and goes to offer it to the king. As soon as he is struck by the steam wafting from the flesh his feet lift off the ground. The king becomes suspicious, grabs the queen, and threatening her with his sword, commands her to tell him the

¹³ Zhe sdang rdo rje 1976, 218.1–2.

¹⁴ For analysis of the use of these substances in Indian Buddhist tantra, which does not touch upon the flesh of a seven-timer, see Wedemeyer 2013.

¹⁵ Zhe sdang rdo rje 1976, 218.5–219.7.

¹⁶ Zhe sdang rdo rje 1976, 219.3–7.

truth about the flesh's origin or he'll kill her. She reports what happened, and the king has her retrieve the corpse in its entirety. They make pills out of it, using even the skin and bones, and feed them to the entire court, including the king, his queens and ministers, and even his horses, oxen, and other animals. All of them take flight to the celestial realms.

Zhe sdang rdo rje's narrative shares several elements with the Kalmāṣapāda vignette from the *Sūtra of the Wise and the Foolish* presented above. The most conspicuous commonalities are 1) the character of a human-flesh eating king; 2) that he was first served human flesh by a deceitful cook, who procures it from the corpse of a child before cooking and seasoning it; 3) that the cook is frightened of punishment but nonetheless divulges the source of the meat; 4) and that it leads to the power of flight. Less direct parallels are that the king is here called *Siṃha*, "Lion," thus obliquely preserving Kalmāṣapāda's association with his lioness mother; the detail that the king's two queens take turns spending time with the king; and, of course, that the number seven in "seven-timer" might reflect the number of seven days it took prince Sutasomaputra to receive the Dharma teaching before he returned to Kalmāṣapāda.

Notwithstanding these commonalities, the complete reevaluation of human-flesh consumption witnessed here, from a cursed act that leads to depravity in the *sūtra* telling above, to a desired act that confers flight and longevity in Zhe sdang rdo rje's version, signals a new context and direction for the Kalmāṣapāda story. In the *Hevajratantra* context of Zhe sdang rdo rje's commentary, the flesh of the seven-timer is a special substance to be consumed by practitioners alongside the other transgressive tantric sacramental substances of the five ambrosias and five fleshes. However, for Zhe sdang rdo rje, the seven-timer flesh does not signal pollution, but purity, as it is embodied in bodhisattva *yogins* with pure features who have vowed to enlist their body, speech, and mind in the service of beings.

Bodhisattva flesh to be consumed by others is not the only gloss that Zhe sdang rdo rje gives the seven-timer. Earlier in Zhe sdang rdo rje's commentary, when commenting on verses 21 and 22 of chapter seven, part one of the *tantra*, he relates that he understands the "seven timer" not only in the literal sense of a special substance to be eaten, but also in the figurative sense of the seven-stage digestive process that results in seminal fluid, the physiological "conventional bodhicitta" (*kun rdzob byang chub kyi sems*) which serves as a basis for the experience of bliss-emptiness elicited through sexual yoga.¹⁷ Zhe sdang rdo rje also understands the flesh as "conventional bodhicitta"

¹⁷ Zhe sdang rdo rje 1976, 153.4–7. 154.6.

itself, glossed here as “the elemental seven-born” (*khamts kyī skye ba bdun*) which results from this digestive process.¹⁸ These more abstract senses are its “internal meaning” (*nang don*), which in no way compromises its meaning as the flesh of bodhisattvas on the external level.¹⁹

In its diversity of interpretations, Zhe sdang rdo rje’s comments reflect knowledge of the broader field of late Indian tantric commentarial literature that discusses the seven-timer’s flesh.²⁰ The influential 10th or 11th century *Kālacakratantra*-inspired commentary on the *Hevajratantra* called the *Ṣaṭsāhasrikā Hevajrapinḍārthaṭīkā* (Tōh. 1180), attributed to the bodhisattva Vajragarbha, best represents the range of senses that Zhe sdang rdo rje evokes in his commentary.²¹ The *Vajrapadasārasaṅgrahapañjikā* attributed to Yaśobhadra (Tōh. 1186), probably among other late *Hevajratantra* commentaries, cites Vajragarbha’s commentary to offer much the same interpretation.²²

Vajragarbha’s commentary first mentions the “seven-times-born” in its explanation of the term *mahāpaśu*, or “great sacrificial victim,” in chapter five.²³ This term, David Gray argues, is a vestigial reference to the practice of animal and human sacrifice which tantric Buddhists partially adapted and absorbed in the slightly less objectionable form of the consumption of meats, including human flesh, as tantric

¹⁸ Zhe sdang rdo rje 1976, 153.4–154.5.

¹⁹ Zhe sdang rdo rje 1976, 154.3.

²⁰ The *Cakrasamvaratantra* and its explanatory tantras, among other Indian Buddhist tantric scriptures, also give a range of interpretations of the flesh of a seven-timer, several of which overlap with the those in the *Hevajratantra* commentarial literature. Here my concern is to situate Zhe sdang rdo rje’s narrative within its broader doctrinal context, so I will only treat the *Hevajratantra* commentarial interpretations that relate to Zhe sdang rdo rje’s interpretations. For more on how the flesh figures in the *Cakrasamvaratantra* tradition, see Gray 2005; and 2007, 206–208, 209, 219, 226–231, 367–369.

²¹ For a critical edition of the Sanskrit text and the Tibetan translation, as well as an English translation, see Vajragarbha and Shendge 2004. For further analysis of this commentary, see Sferra 2009a, Sferra 2009b. Vajragarbha’s commentary is famously part of the “bodhisattva corpus” of Indian *Kālacakratantra* commentaries. For more on the “bodhisattva corpus” (*byang chub sems dpa’i skor*) or the “bodhisattva commentaries” (*byang chub sems dpa’i ’grel rnams*)—consisting of the *Ṣaṭsāhasrikā Hevajrapinḍārthaṭīkā* attributed to the bodhisattva Vajragarbha, the *Vimalaprabhā* attributed to the bodhisattva Puṇḍarīka, and the *Laghutantraṭīkā* attributed to the bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi, and its instrumental role in the formation and promulgation of the *Kālacakratantra* tradition, see Sferra 2005.

²² *rDo rje’i tshig gi snying bsdus pa’i dka’ ’grel*, *Bstan ’gyur (dpe bsdur ma)* 1994–2008, vol. 2, 887–1100.

²³ Vajragarbha and Shendge 2004, 29–30, verses 23–36, and 185–186. The canonical Tibetan translation is located in Vajragarbha, *Kye’i rdo rje bsdus pa’i don gyi gya cher ’grel pa*, *Bstan ’gyur (dpe bsdur ma)* 1994–2008, vol. 1, 823–824.

sacrament.²⁴ Here this process of sanitizing the “great sacrificial victim” reaches another level, as the term is enlisted to describe a combination of yogic techniques and human physiological processes.

The commentary starts out by citing the long lost *Hevajra* root *tantra*, which glosses the “seven-timer” broadly in terms of the yogic subtle-body contemplative practice of arousing and manipulating the flow of subtle seminal fluid and the internal warmth characteristic of sexual pleasure. This citation connects this yogic practice with the seven-stage process of digestion by which the human body is formed and fortified according to Indian Āyurvedic medical theory.²⁵ The citation from the root *tantra* gives special attention in this regard to the “drop” (Skt. *bindu*, Tib. *thig le*)—seminal fluid, in its coarse and subtle dimensions—which is the most refined product of this digestive process. Manipulating the flow of such drops, which form only with the full maturation of the physical and subtle body, is integral to tantric subtle-body yoga.

In keeping with Āyurvedic theory, the commentary implies that all humans are “seven-timers,” since everyone undergoes the seven-stage process of digestive formation. Moreover, it also outlines how this gross physiological process maps to the physiology of the subtle body, the yogic practices by which it and its seminal fluid/*bodhicitta* are enlisted, and how these correspond in turn with the *maṇḍala* of tantric *sādhana* practice. This abstract treatment of the act of “ingesting” the “seven-timer” means that it not only confers flight (Skt. *khecaratvaṃ*, Tib. *mkha' la spyod nyid*), but also vanquishes all illness, signals the yogic “melting of the aggregates and constituents,” bestows “universal rule” (Skt. *cakravartitvaṃ*, Tib. *'khor los sgyur ba nyid*), and, finally, “swiftly grants buddhahood” (Skt. *buddhatvaṃ dadate kṣipraṃ*, Tib. *myur du sangs rgyas nyid ster byed*).

However, when glossing the mention of the “seven timer” in part one, chapter seven of the *Hevajratāntra*, the commentary starts with more detail on the literal sense of the term.²⁶ Here it simply defines a “seven-timer” as any man or a woman who has transmigrated in human form for seven consecutive lifetimes. Such people, the text goes on to relate, are identifiable by their unique traits of casting seven shadows, having unblinking eyes, three creases on the forehead, and wafting a pleasant body odor. Once such a person has been identified, the text tells us, one should offer them flowers, circumambulate them,

²⁴ Gray 2005, 62–65.

²⁵ Wujastyk 1998, 5 and 320–327; Maas 2008, 131, 135–136, 142.

²⁶ Vajragarbha, *rDo rje snying po'i 'grel pa, Bstan 'gyur (dpe bsdur ma)* 1994–2008, vol. 1, 919–921. Vajragarbha and Shendge (2004, 232–233) provides partial English translations but mostly summaries of this section and the rest of the commentary in the absence of a Sanskrit source text.

and, kindly addressing them as *yogeśvara*, that is, “lord of yoga,” ask them to forfeit their body for the benefit of others. Once they comply and their flesh is procured, it should be made into pills “the size of a juniper seed” and eaten. Consuming such a pill, the commentary promises, averts the aging process, and, most importantly, confers flight.

Immediately thereafter, however, the commentary slips into the “definitive meaning,” revisiting the gross and subtle body physiology of Indian Āyurvedic theory and the yogic manipulation of the body previously cited in reference to the “great sacrificial victim.” Here, consuming the “seven-timer” means internally “ingesting” the “flesh” of *bodhicitta*, or seminal fluid, in its gross and subtle senses. The commentary buttresses this interpretation by reiterating the seven-stage digestive process of the body’s formation using slightly different phrasing.²⁷

In this way, the commentary interprets the flesh on the levels of both expedient meaning (Skt. *neyārtha*, Tib. *drang don*) and definitive meaning (Skt. *nīthārtha*, Tib. *nges don*). This rubric works to correlate the practice of eating human flesh with the gross and subtle physiological processes of the person, on the one hand, and with the yogic manipulation of these processes and the pragmatic and soteriological results of doing so, on the other. This reflects the *Kālacakratantra*’s correlative logic of linking cosmos, human physiology, and the yogic path designed to transform these (its interlinked frameworks of “external,” “internal,” and “alternative”), while weaving into this intricate system of macro-micro-mesocosmic homologies the literal practice of anthropophagy prescribed in the *Hevajatantra*. In this way, the commentary combines in the “seven-timer” medical, alchemical, and soteriological registers.

The passage in Vajragarba’s commentary that discusses the occurrence of the flesh in chapter eleven, part one of the *Hevajatantra* follows a similar pattern.²⁸ It begins by reciting the traits of a seven-times born person, expanding some on the list of characteristics, and reiterating the directive to form the flesh into pills and consume them.

²⁷ Vajragarba and Shendge (2004, 233) translate this particular passage as follows: “That body which is the body of all embodied beings is the seven born. From the eating and drinking, the food and drinks with six flavours are digested and the body is nourished. That is the first birth. Then the blood is formed and that is the second birth. The formation of the flesh is the third. The formation of the skin is the fourth and the formation of veins is the fifth. From it come the bones which is the sixth and the formation of fat and marrow is the seventh.” For another English rendering and reproduction of the Tibetan, see Snellgrove 2010, 71.

²⁸ Vajragarba, *rDo rje snying po'i 'grel pa, Bstan 'gyur (dpe bsdur ma)* 1994–2008, vol. 1, 973–974; Vajragarba and Shendge 2004, 232–233.

But it concludes by expanding the result of flight to include loftier Buddhist goals:

By eating it one will take flight and live for immeasurable eons; with a body ripened into such a form, that body will purify whoever has committed the deeds of immediate retribution and veered from the exalted bliss of the expanse of reality. Thus, it is taught:

Through just eating it
one will instantly take flight.²⁹

The text thus glosses the goal of flight from the *Hevajratāntra* in literal terms, as actual ascent into the sky; and figuratively, as the purification of particularly heinous karma and the consequent ascent into the “expanse of reality,” another way of saying ultimate reality. Moreover, the commentary reminds us, the power of the flesh to effect such transformations hails from the purity of the being in which it was once incorporated—one with a body that has been ripened, or cooked, over the course of seven lifetimes, to become a form that can bring benefit to others.

It seems that these and other details of the seven-timer according to the “interpretable meaning” proposed by the likes of Vajragarbha’s commentary led Zhe sdang rdo rje to understand the seven-timer as a bodhisattva. The conception that it is primarily bodhisattvas who possess this kind of flesh reflects mainstream Mahāyāna conceptions regarding the perfection of the bodhisattva’s body in conjunction with the perfection of their mind. When coupled with the bodhisattva’s compulsion to perfect their practice of generosity in fulfillment of their bodhisattva aspiration to make the ultimate sacrifice of offering even their flesh and blood for the welfare of others, this conception that it is not just the mind but the body too that transforms through the path of training becomes closely associated with relic veneration, among other devotional aspects of Buddhist practice.³⁰ There is certainly ample material in the various lists of the qualities of seven-times-born people presented in Indian *tantras* to interpret seven-timers as bodhisattvas.

²⁹ Vajragarbha, *rDo rje snying po'i 'grel pa, Bstan 'gyur (dpe bsdur ma)* 1994–2008, vol. 1, 974: *bskal pa dpag tu med par 'tsho la de lta bu'i rnam par smin pa'i lus kyis ni/ gang dag mtshams med pa byas pa dang / gang gis chos kyi dbyings kyi bde ba khyad par du gyur pa las bshung ba yang lus de nyid kyis 'dag par bsungs so/ de bas na/ de ni zos pa tsam gyis kyang / skad cig la ni mkha' spyod 'gyur/ /zhes gsungs pa yin no/*. The citation of the *Hevajratāntra* here is the final part of verse 11, chapter 11, part one; cf. Snellgrove 2010, 42–43: Skt. *tasya prāṣitamātreṇa khecaratvaṃ bhavet kṣaṇāt//*. Tib. *de ni zos pa tsam gyis ni // skad cig la ni mkha' spyod 'gyur //*.

³⁰ Mrozić 2007, Ohnuma 2007.

But one of the few Indian commentators to make this connection explicit was the famous 11th century Indian Buddhist scholar Abhayākaragupta, who picked up on this interpretative possibility to put it forth in chapter 17 of his *Samputatantra* commentary, the *Āmnāyamañjarī* (Tōh. 1198).³¹

The *Samputatantra* includes only one reference to the flesh, in a passage drawn directly from chapter seven, section one of the *Hevajratantra*. The *Samputatantra* includes this passage in chapter five, but its context and phrasing correspond very closely to that of the related *Hevajratantra* passage.³² Abhayākaragupta comments on this as follows:

Only bodhisattvas who have made the vow “I will accomplish the aim of all beings even through my own flesh, bones, marrow, and so forth,” are ‘seven born,’ after reaching the very end of seven consecutive lives as a human being. It is such a one, who can be identified by the seven shadows they have obtained, that ‘should be consumed specifically;’ ‘when they die of natural causes’ remains [to be supplied].³³

Abhayākaragupta thus understood seven-timers not just as beings whose purity unwittingly propels them through seven successive human rebirths, but more specifically as bodhisattvas, whose bodies become potent forces of beneficial activity through the stabilization and materialization of their bodhisattva vow and its attendant ethical conduct.

In keeping with this interpretation, Abhayākaragupta also reflects on the ethical implications for beings who might eat a bodhisattva’s flesh and what that could entail for Buddhist propriety and precept.

³¹ Abhayākaragupta 2015, vol. 1.

³² For a new edition of the Sanskrit text and an English translation of this *tantra*, see Dharmachakra Translation Committee, 2020. Abhayākaragupta’s commentary concerns verse 5.1.21 and verse 5.1.22, *saptajanma...*

³³ Abhayākaragupta 2015, vol. 1, 886.5/6–887.3/4: Skt. *svamāmsāsthinañjābhir api sarvasattoābhilaṣītārthaṃ kariṣyānti kṛtaprañidhir bodhisattva eva nīrantarānāṃ mānuṣajanmanāṃ saptānāṃ anta eva vartanāt saptajanmā yasya sapta chāyā bhavanti sa tābhir lakṣayitavyaḥ svayaṃ yadā mṛtas tadā sa viśeṣato bhakṣayitavya iti śeṣaḥ / naiva mārayitavya iti //; Tib. *rang nyid kyi sha dang rus pa dang rkang la sogs pa rnams kyis kyang sems can thams cad kyi mngon par ‘dod pa’i don bdag gis bya’o zhes smon lam byas pas’i byang chub sems dpa’ rnams kho na bar ma chad par mi’i skye ba bdun rnams kyi mthar ‘jug pa’i phyir na skye ba bdun pa’o/ |gang gi grib ma bdun rnams su ‘gyur tel/ de ni de rnams kyis mtshon par bya’o/ |de gang gi tsho rang nyid shi ba de’i tsho khyad par du bza’ bar bya’o zhes pa lhag ma’o/ |gsod du gzhug par bya ba ni ma yin pa kho na’o zhes... For the canonical Tibetan version, see A 360–362; D 311.1–312.6; and Q 172b.3–173b.2 (*rang nyid kyi sha* to the end of the chapter).**

If the bodhisattva gives their own flesh, and so forth, because they are requested, the supplicants will not be blamed for harming a living being. Otherwise, bodhisattvas would not be endowed with the perfection of generosity, because, out of concern about sin for the person requesting, there would be no giving [of their body]. Other than the ill-intentioned, it is unheard of that supplicants go to hell.³⁴

Although Zhe sdang rdo rje makes no explicit reference to Vajragarbha's or Abhayākaragupta's interpretations in his related glosses, the combination of meanings he proposes for the seven-timer nonetheless reflects knowledge of all these interpretative strands. Nowhere in these Indian commentaries, however, is there a narrative vignette resembling that of Zhe sdang rdo rje's tantric retelling of Kalmāṣapāda's story. Nonetheless, the different valences that Zhe sdang rdo rje and his Indian Buddhist predecessors associated with the flesh of the "seven timer" would come to be reflected in different retellings of this tantric rendition of the Kalmāṣapāda story in Tibet. As we will see below, the story's selective foregrounding of certain strands of interpretation at the expense of others can provide insights into changing conceptions of human flesh consumption in Tibet.

Pha Dam pa sangs rgyas's Pacifying (Zhi byed)

Another tantric inversion of the Kalmāṣapāda story featuring the flesh of the seven-timer appears in the literature of Pha Dam pa sangs rgyas's (b. 11th c–d. 1117) *Zhi byed* tradition. This rendition, which probably first surfaced in Tibet in the 11th or early 12th century, appears in an instructional manual called *Dam chos zhi byed gyi ngo mtshar brgyud pa'i rnam bshad*.³⁵ The narrative appears in the context of the "instruction of king sTobs ldan snying po" as the "story of how this king attained accomplishment." According to this version, there was a universal emperor called Āryasiṃha ruling over Uḍḍiyāna in western India. He had a blind son named sTobs ldan snying po who was

³⁴ Abhayākaragupta 2015, vol. 1, 887.5/6–888.1/2: Skt. *yadā tu sa bodhisattvo yācitaḥ svamāṃsādīkaṃ dadāti tadā yācakānām avadyaṃ sattvapīḍākr̥tam / anyathā bodhisattoānām dānapāramitā na syād yācakajanapāpaśankayā dānābhavāt / na ca kvacic chr̥tīyate yācakā narakaṃ yānti duṣṭāśayebhya iti //*; Tib. */gang gi tshe byang chub sems dpa' bslang bar bya ba des rang gi sha la soḡs ps ster ba de' i tshe slong ba po rnam la sems can gdung ba byas pa' i kha na ma tho ba med dol/ gzhan du na byang chub sems dpa' rnam kyis [D=kyi] sbyin pa' i pha rol tu phyin mi 'gyur te/ slong ba po' i skye bo la sdig par dogs pas na/ sbyin pa med pa' i phyir rol/ /gdug pa' i bsam pa can rnam las gzhan slong ba po [D omits po] dmyal bar 'gro ba ni gang du yang ma thos so/*

³⁵ Thugs sras kun dga' 1979, vol. 2, 73.7–74.5; Dam pa sangs rgyas 2012–2013, vol. 1, 664.1–.6.

eventually enthroned as king. Residing with a harem of 1,000 queens, they would take turns serving king sTobs ldan snying po. One day it was the turn of the youngest queen, only 16 years old, to feed the king, but they were out of suitable meat. She therefore took some flesh from a fresh corpse in a local charnel ground, sprinkled it with seasoning, cooked it, and served it to the blind king with a container of beer.

Since the meat was in fact the flesh of a seven timer, he opened his eyes and could see. He then questioned the queen and praised her effusively before he took off in flight the following dawn. The flesh of the seven-timer, the story concludes, is revered to this day. Then comes a verse, cast in the voice of Pha Dam pa himself:

Siddhi was found from charnel ground flesh,
igniting experience with spring beer.
The qualities of the ten bodhisattva levels were attained at dawn.
Amazing how Tārā prophesied
that this too would be my guru.³⁶

After detailing the contemplative practice that accompanies this vignette and verse, the text continues with the story of how the young queen also attained accomplishment.³⁷ It narrates that after the king had flown away, the queen eats from the remainder of the flesh and gives a piece each to the horses and cattle, but it does not work to confer flight. Considering how it happened that the king is able to take flight, the queen recalls that a drop of her menstrual blood had fallen into the flesh before she served the king. Thus replicating the formula, she consumes her menstrual blood, combining it with the semen of the king, and also takes off into the sky instantly. This is why, the story concludes, the menstrual blood (*sindhura*) of a sixteen-year old girl is so revered to this day. The following culminating verse from Pha Dam pa is then given:

By sprinkling the catalyst with the two *bodhicittas*
[of menstrual blood and semen]
in the substance of the seven-timer,
the supreme *siddhi* was attained
by means of the ambrosia of nonduality.
Amazing how Tārā prophesied
that this too would be my guru.³⁸

³⁶ Thugs sras Kun dga' 1979, vol. 2, 74.5–.6; Dam pa sangs rgyas 2012–2013, vol. 1, 665.1–2.

³⁷ Thugs sras Kun dga' 1979, vol. 2, 75.5–76.1; Dam pa sangs rgyas 2012–2013, vol. 1, 666.1–4.

³⁸ Thugs sras Kun dga' 1979, vol. 2, 76.2–.3; Dam pa sangs rgyas 2012–2013, vol. 1, 666.4–.5.

The final story connected to this episode is how the sage dPal gyi zla ba, a teacher to the king, also attains accomplishment when he visits the palace following the disappearance of the king and queen.³⁹ The story relates how the sage witnesses the king's palace flooded with light for three days. Coming to the palace to investigate, he is told that the king and queen have flown away and are no longer present. When he asks the ministers what happened, they tell him that they flew away by means of an amazing substance, but that it does not work when they eat it. The sage understands that it happened through a concoction, so he reconstitutes the dregs of the flesh, forms it into a pill with the five ambrosias, and eats it. Immediately, his defilements are exhausted, the eye of wisdom dawns, and he takes off into the sky. This is why, the story once again concludes, ritual practitioners esteem the pill so highly. The concluding verse from the mouth of Pha Dam pa goes as follows:

From accomplishing a pill the defilements were exhausted,
intelligence became astute and virtues perfected,
and the sage possessed control over the clouds.
Amazing how Tārā prophesied
that this too would be my guru.⁴⁰

Much like Zhe sdang rdo rje's telling, the *Zhi byed* rendition enlists core features of the Kalmāṣapāda vignette as a charter narrative for consuming the flesh of the seven-timer. In the *Zhi byed* tradition, however, the scene shifts to Uḍḍiyāna, in western India. The names of the main characters also change. King Siṃha in Zhe sdang rdo rje's rendition changes to sTobs ldan snying po here, although the *Zhi byed* retelling similarly preserves a trace of Kalmāṣapāda's origins in the name of sTobs ldan snying po's father, Āryasiṃha, meaning "Noble Lion." Moreover, the narrative is expanded further in the *Zhi byed* rendition to provide charters for mixing in with the flesh menstrual blood, seminal fluid, and the five ambrosias. The range of outcomes also expands, from ordinary flight to the curing of blindness, the conferral of wisdom, and the accomplishment of the Buddhist path. In these *Zhi byed* narratives, however, it is never stipulated what exactly it is about the seven-timer that makes their flesh so efficacious.

In another narrative drawn from the biographical corpus of Pha Dam pa sangs rgyas (d. 1117?), the source of the power of a seven-timer is implied to be the extraordinary purity of having been born as

³⁹ Thugs sras Kun dga' 1979, vol. 2, 77.2–.7; Dam pa sangs rgyas 2012–2013, vol. 1, 667.5–668.2.

⁴⁰ Thugs sras Kun dga' 1979, vol. 2, 77.7–78.1; Dam pa sangs rgyas 2012–2013, vol. 1, 668.2–.3.

a brahmin for seven consecutive lifetimes “endowed with the Dharma.” The setting of this story is the cremation ceremony of Pha Dam pa sangs rgyas at Ding ri in La stod, Tibet, presided over by his Tibetan students.⁴¹ Three Indian students suddenly arrive at the cremation and notice to their great sadness that their master’s body had already been so thoroughly consumed by the fire that not even his bones remain. When asked by the Tibetans why they are so disturbed by this, they remark that there are three special techniques for reaching awakening without having practiced the Dharma: 1) the practice of sexual yoga, 2) the practice of the transference of consciousness (*pho ba*), and 3) the ingestion of the flesh and blood of someone who has lived for seven consecutive lifetimes as “a brahmin endowed with the Dharma” (*bram ze chos ldan*), or a “pure brahmin” (*bram ze gtsang ma*). “Dam pa was such a seven-born one,” they lament; “now not even his cremated bones remain.”

This funerary narrative implies that the seven-timer’s flesh is efficacious in the way a bodily relic is thought to be, due primarily to the purity of its source in realized buddhas or bodhisattvas. Here this is Pha Dam pa himself. But in the *Zhi byed* stories of the flesh’s origin explored further above, the source is unspecified. Moreover, other elements of the narrative, such as the mixture of the flesh with menstrual blood, semen, and the five ambrosias, among other details, clearly imply the transgressive and antinomian context of the *mahāyoga* and *yoginī tantras*, where the injunction to eat human flesh is part of its evocation to transcend the dualisms of precept and prohibition, purity and pollution, in the realization of nondual gnosis. Similarly, the range of effects experienced by the king, queen, and sage—flight, renewed eyesight, exhaustion of conceptual defilements, enhanced wisdom, and buddhahood—spans medical, alchemical, and epistemic registers, thus reflecting the combination of interpretations of the earlier *Hevajra-tantra* commentarial literature. Throughout, however, greater emphasis is placed on the epistemic transformations of insight into nondual gnosis, completion of the Buddhist path, and perfect awakening. In this, the *Zhi byed* narratives place greater weight on the ultimate soteriological senses of the flesh than on its more provisional alchemical or health effects.

⁴¹ This story is told with different details in several sources. This rendition follows ‘Dul ‘dzin mKhyen rab rgya mtsho 1981, 548.4–549.1; and Sog bzlog pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan 1975, vol. 2, 112.6–113.3, which also differ slightly on the details. For a later version, which expands the list of “special techniques” to four, see Chos kyi seng ge 1992, 158–160. For an English translation of this later version of the episode, see Molk 2008, 134.

3. *Kalmāṣapāda Revealed as the Flying Cannibal King of Za hor*

By the middle of the 14th century, the *Kalmāṣapāda* narrative, as filtered through the tantric revisions of Zhe sdang rdo rje's *Hevajratāntra* commentarial tradition and Pha Dam pa sangs rgyas's *Zhi byed* tradition, was transformed yet again to find its way into a Tibetan biography of Padmasambhava: U rgyan gling pa's (b. 1323) *Padma bka' thang*. Purported to be a Treasure text revealed from its site of concealment in 1352, the narrative of the *Padma bka' thang* is arguably the most widely read biography of Padmasambhava in Tibetan history.⁴²

The appearance of this narrative in the *Padma bka' thang* can be better understood in light of developments in rNying ma flesh practice that took place prior to the 14th century. In the 13th century, and likely well before, Tibetan visionaries started to excavate the seven-timer flesh directly from Tibet's landscape and ancient temples, together with ritual manuals through which to collectively consecrate it, form it into pills, and distribute it to the wider public. The 13th century visionary Guru Chos kyi dbang phyug (1212–1270) was a key figure in this movement.⁴³ He is credited with first popularizing the flesh through revealing it together with a major Treasure cycle and widely propagating it throughout Tibet.⁴⁴ This Treasure revelation is known as the *Thugs rje chen po yang snying 'dus pa*.⁴⁵ It includes a *tantra* and commentaries featuring the flesh, short histories detailing the flesh's initial emergence and transmission to Tibet, and ritual manuals centering on the flesh that range from collective initiations and great accomplishment rites to *sādhana*s and daily practices. As its title suggests, the cycle centers on Avalokiteśvara, the Great Compassionate One (Tib. *Thugs rje chen po*). The seven-times-born flesh is construed therein to be none other than that of Avalokiteśvara, the bodhisattva of compassion, who willingly took seven consecutive rebirths to offer his body for the benefit of countless beings. The flesh-pill great accomplishment (*sgrub chen*) of the *Thugs rje chen po yang snying 'dus pa* is a group *sādhana* practice in which participants mix the flesh with other ingredients to form pills while performing intensive visualization practice and mantra recitation focused on further consecrating the substance as Avalokiteśvara made flesh.⁴⁶

⁴² *chu 'brug*. U rgyan gling pa 1985, 726.

⁴³ For details on the life and legacy of Guru Chos dbang, see Gyatso 1993 and 1994, and Phillips 2004.

⁴⁴ Karma chags med 2010, vol. 14, 482.4–.5.

⁴⁵ Guru Chos kyi dbang phyug 1982.

⁴⁶ Comparison with Guru Chos dbang's *Accomplishing Nectar Medicine* (*bDud rtsi sman bsgrub*) cycle, which Garrett (2010, 311) has pointed out in her excellent work

Guru Chos dbang's revelation and propagation of the *Thugs rje chen po yang snying 'dus pa* marks a major turning point for flesh practice in Tibet. Bradford Phillips has shown how Guru Chos dbang was instrumental through his development and dissemination of the *Mañi bKa' 'bum* cycle of his predecessor Nyang ral Nyi ma 'od zer (1124–1192) in popularizing the cult of Avalokiteśvara and the recitation of his mantra throughout all strata of 13th century Tibetan society.⁴⁷ When viewed in light of these wider efforts, which Phillips highlights as “more evangelistic and sociopolitical in nature” than those of his predecessors, Guru Chos dbang's Avalokiteśvara flesh cycle emerges as a way to quite literally materialize the bodhisattva from within the Tibetan landscape.⁴⁸ Propagation of the collective “great accomplishment” rite, culminating with the distribution and consumption of Avalokiteśvara's body, can then be seen as a way to induct as wide an audience as possible into his vision of Avalokiteśvara's intimate involvement with the Tibetan populace as Tibet's destined spiritual patron. This stands out as a particularly visceral instance of what Matthew Kapstein has described as a shift among Tibetans from the 12th century on toward finding India, the sacred source of Tibet's Buddhist traditions, within Tibet and Tibetans.⁴⁹ With Guru Chos dbang's flesh practice, the Indian Buddhist bodhisattva of compassion Avalokiteśvara, turned seven-times-born brahmin, could now be found not only within the past lives and mindstreams of Tibet's ecclesiastical elite, as made known through their writings. He could also be found scattered throughout the Tibetan landscape, such that his body, formed into pills, could be directly sensed on the tongues and in the mouths and stomachs of Tibetans from all walks of life.

Guru Chos dbang's cycle set the gold standard for the Treasure tradition's seven-timer flesh practice to the present. Many subsequent Treasure revealers followed Guru Chos dbang's lead, claiming to unearth fragments of the seven-times-born Avalokiteśvara's flesh in their own Treasure revelations. The most influential among them were Ratna gling pa (1403–1479), who revealed the flesh in the 15th century as part of his cycle called the *Thugs rje chen po gsang ba 'dus pa*, which is far more voluminous than Guru Chos dbang's earlier revelation and awaits detailed comparison with Guru Chos dbang's cycle; and Padma gling pa (1450–1521), who revealed the flesh in the late 15th century as

on this and related practices incorporates the flesh of a seven-times-born brahmin and other shared ingredients and procedures in its “inner practice,” must be left aside for a future study.

⁴⁷ Phillips 2004, 343–346.

⁴⁸ Phillips 2004, 344.

⁴⁹ Kapstein 2003, 774–776.

part of his cycle called the *Bla ma nor bu rgya mtsho*, and later, more extensively, as part of his *Thugs rje chen po mun sel sgron me*.⁵⁰ The popularization of collective consecration rites invariably accompanied the revelation and propagation of the flesh over the centuries. This ritual came to be known as *maṇi ril sgrub*, “the maṇi-pill accomplishment;” *ril bu bum sgrub*, the “pill-vase accomplishment;” or simply *bum sgrub*, the “vase accomplishment,” after the vase containing the pills in the rite.⁵¹ It also came to be associated with collective *maṇi dung phyur*, or “one hundred million maṇi recitation session,” since mass intensive mantra recitation is considered an integral facet of the flesh’s consecration process.⁵²

The popularization of rNying ma flesh practice from the 13th century on did not escape criticism. Judging by the circulation of polemical texts, falsely attributed to famous 13th and 14th century Tibetan scholars, that specifically target Guru Chos dbang and his flesh practice, rNying ma seven-timer flesh revelation and practice had become widespread by that time and was perceived as a threat to Buddhist decorum by certain sectors of Tibetan ecclesiastical society.⁵³ The *Padma bka’ thang* Treasure rendition of the Kalmāṣapāda story can be interpreted in part as a response to these polemical attacks. In one of its chapters, it traces the origins of the flesh in South Asia back to the court of the king of Za hor; and in another chapter it connects its spread to Tibet back to the Tibetan imperial period of the 8th and 9th centuries, specifically to the Indian tantric master Padmasambhava’s interactions with emperor Khri srong lde’u btsan and his court.

⁵⁰ Ratna gling pa 2014, vols. 5 and 6; Padma gling pa 1975–1976, vols. 2 and 7. For more on Padma gling pa’s involvement with the seven-born flesh, see Gayley 2007.

⁵¹ The *maṇi ril sgrub* (*maṇi rimdu*) ritual has been documented in detail by Kohn 2001. However, Kohn (2001, 114–115) was not privy to the ingredients of the “pill’s [sacred] substance” (*ril dzas*); he reports that his main informant, ‘Khrul zhig Ngag dbang chos kyi blo gros (1924–2011), expressed “reticence and vagueness on the subject” of the pill’s active ingredient when asked.

⁵² Karma chags med 2010, vol. 14, 451–496.

⁵³ Guru Chos dbang and his flesh practice are singled out for criticism in an attack on the authenticity of *gter ma* that appears in a short polemical writing attributed to Bu ston Rin chen grub (1290–1364), in *sNgags log sun ’byin gyi skor* 1979, 25.6–31.6. For compelling arguments for the false attribution of this work, see Kapstein 2000, 253–254n35; and Raudsepp 2009, 296n70. Guru Chos dbang is also targeted in a polemical writing attributed to Chag *lotsāwa* Chos rje dpal (1197–1264), in *sNgags log sun ’byin gyi skor* 1979, 13.5–14.2. See Raudsepp (2009) for compelling evidence of this work’s false attribution. However, Raudsepp (2009, 288) also wrongly identifies Gru gu dBang phyug (*sNgags log sun ’byin gyi skor*, 10.5) as Guru Chos dbang, when here he is more likely Gru gu Yang dbang, who is credited for having revealed Hayagrīva and other fierce deity cycles. For more about this figure, see Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Taye 2011, 186–187; and Jamgön Kongtrül 2012, 233–234.

The *Padma bka' thang* stands out as the most famous text to include these two narratives. But Sangs rgyas gling pa (1340–1396) also revealed a nearly identical pair of narratives in his *bKa' thang* biography of Padmasambhava and Padma gling pa (1450–1521) followed suite nearly a century later to include these in his own revealed *bKa' thang* Padmasambhava biography. The two narratives constitute chapters 38 and 102 in U rgyan gling pa's *Padma bka' thang shel brag ma*; chapters 34 and 99 in Sangs rgyas gling pa's *bKa' thang gser phreng*; and chapters 34 and 97 in Padma gling pa's *bKa' thang mun sel sgron me*.⁵⁴ Accurately deciphering the contents of these chapters, their larger *bKa' thang* narratives, and the relationships between them, is significantly complicated not only by inconsistencies between these three *bKa' thang* narratives, but also by textual problems between different versions of each. Nevertheless, to give a preliminary glimpse into these two narrative vignettes, particularly as they appear in U rgyan gling pa's telling, which has enjoyed the most enduring popularity, I will present below the Tibetan text and English translation of the first, followed by a summary of the second.

The Kalmāṣapāda narrative is clearly detectable in the first of these two narratives, in the chapter called “Princes Mandāravā Discovers Brahmin Flesh.”⁵⁵ The chapter begins with the king of Za hor pondering with whom his daughter Mandāravā should be betrothed. Frustrated by the prospect of displeasing any of the neighboring kingdoms with their choice, he sends the princess to ponder her own preference in private. The princess, however, pines only to practice the Dharma. After delivering a spirited soliloquy in which she takes stock of her curious mixture of freedom and worldly entanglement, and reinforces her fervent wish to accomplish the Dharma and gain true freedom in this and future lives, she approaches her father for a word:

*lha lcam yab kyi drung du phyin nas su:
'di phyi gnyis sdug khyim thab nga mi byed:
byed dbang byung na dam pa'i chos shig byed:*

The princess went before her father and said:
“I'm not getting married—it'll bring misery in this and future lives!
If I have the freedom to do so, I will practice the Dharma.”

*byed dbang ma byung lus 'di spangs nas su:
chos byar yod pa'i lus shig smon lam 'debs:*

⁵⁴ U rgyan gling pa 1985, 255–261, 644–654; Sangs rgyas gling pa 1985, 231–237; 685–693; Padma gling pa 1981, vol. 1, 210–216, vol. 2, 298–306.

⁵⁵ U rgyan gling pa 1985, 255–261; Sangs rgyas gling pa 1985, 231–237; Padma gling pa 1981, vol. 1, 210–216.

*de skad zhus pas rgyal po ma dgyes nas:
lha lcam g.yog mo lnga brgya'i dkyil bcug nas:*

“Without the power to do so I'll discard this body
and aspire for a body in which I can practice the Dharma.”
The king, displeased with her words,
put the princess in the care of five hundred female servants.

*pho brang nang nas phyi ru ma btang byas:
gal te 'di nyid lcebs sam bros pa na:
g.yog mo lnga brgya gson por khyis zar 'jug:
ces pa g.yog mo rnams la ngag bcug go:*

Forbidding her from leaving the palace,
he commanded the servants:
“If she kills herself or runs away,
I will feed you five hundred servants alive to the dogs.”

*rgyal po'i yul lugs btsun mo re re yi:
pho brang zhag re mal re sdod pa la:
bzhes pa 'dren pa gzob pa'i re mos byed:
btsun mo rgan pa ha'u ke'i res la:*

According to royal custom, each queen had a quarters
and each night [the king] slept in one or another of their beds in turn,
such that they took turns with the responsibility of feeding him.
When it was the old queen Ha'u ke's turn,

*phyogs kyi gnye po mang nas rgya ri zad:
bzhes pa 'dren pa'i lpags ni med par gyur:
rgya ri nyo bar gzhan gtong blo ma khal:
lha lcam tshong 'dus rgya ri nyo ru btang:*

there were too many retainers from the surrounding realms, so she
ran out of meat,
leaving no skin with which to feed [the king].
She did not trust anyone else to send to buy meat,
so she sent the princess to the market to buy it.

*char pa che nas tshogs 'dus ma 'dzoms par:
log nas 'ongs pa'i lam ka zhig tu ni:
khye'u lo rgyad pa zhig shi nas 'dug:
char pas dag nas skya lgang 'dug pa de:*

The rain was heavy, so the market did not convene.
On a path during her way back
there was an eight-year old boy who had died.
Cleansed by the rain, he was perfectly white.

*lha lcam nywa bzhi thams cad legs par bregs:
snod du bcug nas pho brang nang du 'ongs:
btsun mo'i ngag nas rgya ri rnyed dam zer:
lha lcam rnyed smras khyod kyi tshos shig zer:*

The princess cut off all the calf flesh,⁵⁶
put it in a container and returned to the palace.
The queen asked, "Did you find meat?" The princess replied, "Yes I
did find some."
[The queen then told her:] "Then you can cook it!"

*lha lcam btsos shing khu ba yang yang phos:
spod kyi rigs byed mang po btab nas su:
a ma sha tshos bzhes pa drongs shig gsol:
rgyal por btsun mos gzhes pa drangs pa yis:*

The princess cooked it and drained the juices repeatedly.
She added many kinds of spices,
and when the king ordered, "Mama, feed me the meal of cooked
meat!"
the queen fed the king his meal.

*bzhes pa 'ju bar gyur pa'i dus skabs na:
rgyal po'i lus la bde ba me ru 'bar:
stan gyi kha nas 'dom gang 'phags nas su:
nam mkha'i dbyings la bya bzhin 'phur la khad:*

When he had digested the meal,
the king felt the fire of bliss blaze forth in his body,
he began to levitate a full fathom off his seat,
and he was on the verge of flying away into the expanse of the sky
like a bird.

*de ltar byung ba'i skye bdun sha ru rig:
rgyal po lkugs pas mi la 'bod pa bzhin:
nga ro'i sgra yis ha'u ke⁵⁷ zhes bos:
rgyal po'i mdun du btsun mo shog zer phyin:*

Knowing it to be seven-born flesh that gave rise to such,
the king beckoned for Ha'u ke with a roar,

⁵⁶ Krang dbyi sun, et al. 1993, 974: *nywa bzhi/ rkang lag gi nywa'i sha ril/*. However, below in this vignette the term reappears as *nywa sha*; additionally, Sangs rgyas gling pa (1985, 235.2) has *nya sha*, which is likely *nywa sha*, "calf flesh;" and Padma gling pa (1981, vol. 1, 213.5) has *nywa sul*, also meaning, "calf flesh."

⁵⁷ This was emended from *ki* in light of the consistent appearance of *ke* above in U rgyan gling pa (1985, 259.4) and its appearance in Sangs rgyas gling pa (1985, 235.4) and Padma gling pa (1981, vol. 1, 214.4).

like a deaf-mute calling out for someone.
Commanding the queen to come, she went before him.

*lag pa g.yon pas gtsun mo'i thong rtsa bzung:
g.yas pas gri bzung rtse chung ba la btsugs:
ma mgal khar brdzangs sna gong bzhin gner nas:
khyod kyis da nang nga la drangs pa yi:*

He grabbed the queen by the jugular with his left hand
and holding his knife in his right hand, he stuck it against her throat,
and with his teeth clinched and his brow furrowed, he said:
"The meat that you fed me today—

*sha de gang byung 'chad dam mi 'chad zer:
mi 'chad gyur na khyod nyid gsod do zer:
btsun mo bred cing sngangs nas ma bzod de:
nga la rgyud med mandā ra bar dris:*

will you tell me where it comes from or not?
If you won't say, I will kill you!"
The queen was terrified and couldn't bear it,
so she replied, "I don't know. Ask Mandāravā!"

*'bras bskur tshong 'dus nyo ru btang ba yin:
de skad smras pas rgyal pos phyag btang nas:
'o na mandā ra ba khrid shog gsung:
btsun mos lha lcam khrid nas yongs pa yis:*

"I sent her to buy it carrying rice."
Thereupon, the king unhanded her and demanded,
"Well then, bring me Mandāravā!"
The queen returned escorting the princess.

*rgyal pos phyag g.yon lha lcam thong rtsa bzung:
g.yas pas gri bzung rtse'u chung la gtsugs:
bdag la drangs pa'i sha de gang nas nyos:
'chad dam mi 'chad mi 'chad gsod do zer:*

He grabbed the princess by the jugular with his left hand
and holding his knife in his right hand, he stuck it against her throat
and said:

"Where did you buy the meat that was fed to me?
Will you tell me or not? If you don't say I'll kill you!"

*lha lcam bred sngangs rdzun smra ma shes par:
nga la a mas mām sa nyor song zer:
char pa che pas tshong 'dus mi 'dug nas:
log nas 'ongs pa'i lam ka zhig na ni:*

Terrified and unable to lie, the princess said:
 “Mother told me to go buy meat,
 but since the rain was heavy there was no market,
 and on a path while I was returning,

khye'u'i ro zhig char pas dag nas 'dug:
ras sgye'i 'bras pho nywa sha bregs nas bcug:
tshos par btsos nas chu pho spod ttab drangs:
sha dug byung ngam ci byung gsol pa dang:

“there was the corpse of a child that was cleansed by the rain.
 I cut off the calves and put it in the rice sack.
 I cooked it, drained the juices, added spices, and served it.
 Was the meat poisoned or what?”

'o na ro de dzangs po khyer shog gsungs:
lha lcam ro de yod dam med na snyam:
bya dang gcan gzan zos sam ma zos sam:
mgyogs par myur du lus bkol phyin pa dang:

The king said, “Well then, bring me the whole corpse!”
 Wondering whether the corpse was still there,
 or if the birds and wild animals had eaten it,
 the princess quickly made her way back.

ro de 'dug pas lha lcam khur nas 'ongs:
yab kyi drung du bskyal bas yab nyid mnyes:
rkang lag mgo lus sha lpags ma lus kun:
rdo yis btags nas ril bu dpag med byas:

The corpse was still there, so the princess brought it back,
 and carried it before her father; her father was pleased.
 He used a stone to pulverize the whole body,
 including the flesh and skin of the legs, arms, head, and torso, and
 made innumerable pills out of it.

rin che sna bdun sgrom gyi nang du bcug:
kha la rin chen sna bdun rgyas ttab nas:
dur khrod dga' ba'i tshal du gter du sbas:
ma mo mkha' 'gro rnams la gnyer byang gtad:

He placed it inside a box made of the seven precious substances,
 sealed the lid with the seven precious substances,
 and concealed it as treasure at Pleasure Grove charnel ground.
 He entrusted a stewardship certificate to the *mātrkā dākinīs*.

mkha' 'gro bdud 'dul ma la bya ra bcol:

dus mtshan ko sha de yi btsas su bzhag:

He entrusted the *ḍākinī* Tamer of Demons as its sentinel,
and left it as a harvest for the treasury of temporal signs [to come].

*u rgyan gu ru padma 'byung gnas kyi skyes rabs rnam par thar pa rgyas par
bkod pa las:
lha lcam mandā ra bas bram ze'i sku sha rnyed pa'i le'u ste so rgyad pa'o:*

This concludes the 38th chapter of the extensive past-life stories and biography of Padmasambhava of Uḍḍiyāna: “Princes Mandāravā Discovers Brahmin Flesh.”⁵⁸

The commonalities between this narrative and the *sūtra* Kalmāṣapāda core are readily discernible. Still featured here are the elements of a human-flesh eating king; that the flesh originates from a child; that it is found, prepared, and served by a cook who is deceitful, frightened, and truthful, in turn; and that consuming the flesh leads to flight. The revaluation of these elements, however, reflects commonalities with the previous tantric transformations of this narrative core registered in the 11th and 12th century renditions of *Zhe sdang rdo rje* and the *Zhi byed* tradition. Eating human flesh directly brings only positive effects for the king in these tantric revisions. The flesh’s conferral of flight remains a constant throughout these iterations, even while the *Zhi byed* tradition expands this to include the loftier epistemic transformations of heightened wisdom and accomplishment of the Buddhist path. In the *Padma bka' thang* telling, the king additionally feels the “fire of bliss blaze forth in his body,” but he experiences this and begins to levitate off his seat only after he has digested his meal, not instantly, as in the *Hevajratantra*, *Zhe sdang rdo rje*, and the *Zhi byed* tradition.

It also evident in other ways that the *Padma bka' thang* narrative is by no means a straightforward retelling of the previous tantric revisions. Firstly, it is more complex than what we have encountered thus far. The character of the young queen in the previous tantric versions is replaced by two female characters—princess Mandāravā and her mother Ha'u ke—the former finds and cooks the flesh, while the latter serves it. Stylistically, it is also more lyrical than the previous tantric versions. The vividness of its imagery harkens back to the style of the *sūtra* Kalmāṣapāda rendition considered above.

But the most conspicuous differences in the *Padma bka' thang* rendition are perhaps its overall framing, along with different and additional placenames and personal names. The king’s arrangement

⁵⁸ U rgyan gling pa 1985, 257.6–261.3; Sangs rgyas gling pa 1985, 234.3–237.2; Padma gling pa 1981, vol. 1, 212.4–216.2.

of princess Mandāravā's marriage, in light of her wish to only practice the Dharma, sets the stage for the flesh vignette. Once the magical potency of the flesh is discovered, it is concealed by the king in a charnel ground for posterity under the guardianship of *ḍākinīs*. This framing effectively situates the flesh of a seven-timer as a forerunner to narratives that tell Padmasambhava's involvement with the court of Za hor, his relationship with Mandāravā, and his subsequent role in bringing the flesh to Tibet and concealing it as Treasure throughout the Tibetan landscape.

The placenames of Za hor and Pleasure Grove charnel ground (*dur khrod dga' ba'i tshal*), and the personal names of gTsong lag 'dzin, Mandāravā, and the *ḍākinī* Tamer of Demons harken back to the *Zang gling ma* biography revealed by the Treasure revealer Nyang ral Nyi ma 'od zer (1124–1192). This is probably the earliest revealed Treasure biography of Padmasambhava and thus an early precursor of the 14th century *bKa' thang* biographies.⁵⁹ The *Zangs gling ma* also features these places and this cast of characters. However, it only includes them in the context of Padmasambhava's conversion of the court and all its subjects to Buddhism, which features the narrative vignettes of Padmasambhava's first trip to Za hor to practice meditation at Pleasure Grove charnel ground, where he is empowered and blessed by the *ḍākinī* Tamer of Demons; his return to Za hor to secure the 16-year old princess Mandāravā as his yogic consort; the failed attempt by the people of Za hor to burn the couple alive, featuring the famous image of Padmasambhava and Mandāravā comfortably in union on a cool lotus seat engulfed in flames above the surface of a lake; and the subsequent embrace of Buddhism by the people of Za hor and their king gTsong lag 'dzin.⁶⁰ But nowhere does it mention the flesh of the seven-born, or any narrative vignette from the episode that features it in the *Padma bka' thang*. Therefore, also missing from the *Zangs gling ma* is any mention of queen Ha'u ke. The name Ha'u ke, which on the surface appears to be a transliteration of an unknown Chinese name, is peculiar. Odd too is that the name gTsong lag 'dzin is given in Tibetan, while Mandāravā is given as the transliteration of a Sanskrit name. Za hor, moreover, is said in the *bKa' thang* to have its own unique language. This cosmopolitan mélange of personal names stands out as an intriguing story element—a window into the Tibetan imaginaire of the multiethnic court life of Za hor—that appears to lack any clear precedent in other renditions.

Whatever their origins and significance, by drawing most of its placenames and personal names from the *Zangs gling ma* biography,

⁵⁹ Doney 2014.

⁶⁰ Tsogyal 1993, 39–40, 45–51.

the *Padma bka' thang* flesh episode effectively inscribes Padmasambhava into the tantric transformations of the Kalmāṣapāda human-flesh eating story witnessed in the renditions of Zhe sdang rdo rje and the *Zhi byed* tradition. In this, the *Padma bka' thang* bridges through the figure of Padmasambhava the Treasure tradition of revealing seven-timer flesh in Tibet with the South Asian origins of the flesh in Za hor. More significantly, by locating the origins of the flesh in Za hor, and nowhere else, this narrative evokes older associations that link the land of Za hor and its king Indrabhūti and his court with the mythical origin of the Buddhist *tantras* on earth.⁶¹

The culmination of this narrative threading of seven-timer flesh between Za hor and Tibet can only be witnessed in the unfolding of the broader *Padma bka' thang* narrative. This comes to a head in chapter 102, titled “The Chapter that Prophesies Lha rje and Teaches the Benefits of the Seven-Born Flesh” (*Lha rje lung bstan cing skye bdun sha'i phan yon bstan pa'i le'u*).⁶² This chapter is the second of the two *bKa' thang* tradition's flesh-centered narratives introduced above. It weaves the flesh into Tibet through a speech delivered by Padmasambhava to the Tibetan prince rGyal sras lha rje mChog grub rgyal po, the grandson of emperor Khri srong lde'u bstan and son of prince Mu tig btsan po. The scene takes place after the emperor has died and Mu tig btsan po has assumed the throne. It begins, tellingly enough, after the letting out of an accomplishment rite, when Padmasambhava beckons for rGyal sras lha rje to be brought before the assembly so that the master can deliver a prophecy about his future incarnations for all to hear. Padmasambhava opens his prophecy by associating the prince with the king of Za hor gTsug lag 'dzin himself, who, accepted as a disciple by Padmasambhava's own past emanation, will go on to inaugurate the tradition of Tibetan Treasure revelation by returning as a Treasure revealer for thirteen successive incarnations.⁶³ These incarnations include, by Padmasambhava's account, Sangs rgyas bla ma (1000–1080), usually regarded by the rNying ma tradition as Tibet's first Treasure revealer, and the 14th century Treasure revealer U rgyan gling pa himself.⁶⁴

The second part of the chapter consists of Padmasambhava narrating that the prince is in fact a seven-timer himself, whose flesh—in this and his next thirteen lifetimes—will yield a staggering range of

⁶¹ Garson 2004, 151–173; Kuijp 2010.

⁶² U rgyan gling pa 1985, 644.6–654.3. Corresponding chapters are in Sangs rgyas gling pa 1985, 685.6–693.3; and Padma gling pa 1981, vol. 2, 298.5–306.7.

⁶³ U rgyan gling pa 1985, 645.6–646.5.

⁶⁴ Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Taye 2011, 73–75; and 122–126. For details on subsequent identifications of the king of Za hor gTsug lag 'dzin pa's reincarnations, see Kuijp 2010, 145.

pragmatic, karmic, and ultimate benefits to all who consume it. Padmasambhava then declares that the prince will die at the young age of 15 and commands that after his passing the body be concealed as Treasure for later generations of Treasure revealers to excavate when most needed.⁶⁵ He goes on to detail the future signs of the times by which to identify the appropriate moments for its revelation. In this, the *Padma bka' thang* extends the earlier tantric revision of the Kalmāṣapāda flesh-eating narrative to Tibet, enlisting it to associate rGyal sras lha rje with king gTsug lag 'dzin, the flesh-consuming king of Za hor, as a charter for the prince's identity as a seven-timer and his future incarnations as a prophesied revealer of his own and others' seven-timer flesh in Tibet. These associations effectively relate through the flesh the origin of *tantra* in Za hor with the origin of the Treasure tradition in Tibet, by means of the flesh and its intermediary, Padmasambhava.

4. *The Apotheosis of Kalmāṣapāda and his Flesh through Polemic*

In the middle of the 16th century, the *Padma bka' thang's* tantric transformation of the Kalmāṣapāda story, as inflected by the earlier renditions of Zhe sdang rdo rje and the *Zhi byed* traditions, came under criticism in what was the most extensive polemical attack ever waged against Treasure seven-times-born flesh practice. This polemic was only a small part of a much broader literary critique of the rNying ma school's most revered scriptures, histories, doctrines, practices, and sacra. It was attributed to none other than Karmapa VIII Mi bskyod rdo rje (1507–1554), perhaps the most powerful hierarch in Tibet at the time. The discussion that follows considers this polemic's criticisms of the *Padma bka' thang* narrative, alongside four rebuttals to this critique composed within roughly 25 years of the polemic, to chart how this literary argument prompted further transformations of the core Kalmāṣapāda narrative.

Before we delve into the polemic and its rebuttals, a few observations are in order. First, it is important to note that credible doubt has been cast on whether Mi bskyod rdo rje in fact composed the polemical text or it was only falsely attributed to him.⁶⁶ Perhaps the most compelling evidence to suggest its false attribution is that a rebuttal was also attributed to Mi bskyod rdo rje, and in it, the author, presenting himself as Karmapa VIII, denies having written the original polemic and defends against its critiques point for point.⁶⁷ Mi bskyod

⁶⁵ U rgyan gling pa 1985, 652.3.

⁶⁶ Gentry 2017, 181–182; Kuijp 2018, 93.

⁶⁷ Mi bskyod rdo rje 2004.

rdo rje's rebuttal was likely composed in 1552 or 1553.⁶⁸ In addition to it, there were three other rebuttals composed in response to the original polemic. One rebuttal was likely composed in 1555 by a figure identified in the colophon as Lho pa Bya bral ba, "the renunciate from the south," whose identity is somewhat obscure, save his claim to have been a direct disciple of the Treasure revealer Padma gling pa.⁶⁹ Another was probably composed in 1557 by 'Dul 'dzin mKhyen rab rgya mtsho, from g.Yag sde in gTsang, who by his own account was also a lineage holder primarily of the Treasure revelations of Padma gling pa, among others, one generation removed from the great Treasure revealer.⁷⁰ If the figure by the name of Lho pa Thams cad mkhyen pa listed in 'Dul 'dzin mKhyen rab rgya mtsho's lineage records refers to Lho pa Bya bral ba, then 'Dul 'dzin claims to have received the Pad gling Treasures directly from Lho pa himself.⁷¹ Finally, there is a rebuttal composed in 1576 by Sog bzlog pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan, whose links to the tradition of Padma gling pa, among other Treasure revealers, I have discussed elsewhere at length.⁷²

The polemic targets not only the flesh's charter narrative from the *Padma bKa' thang*. It also attacks the flesh's nature and capacity too. In the interest of space, however, I will only touch on the narrative.

After claiming the narrative "source" of the flesh to be "inauthentic," the polemic summarizes it before attempting to pick it apart on a few fronts. Beginning with the summary:

[1] Concerning the source of the pill of the seven-times-born, you state the following:

There was a girl called Mandāravā, who was the daughter of the universal monarch of Za hor called gTsong lag 'dzin. There were many retainers through which the surrounding kings of India, China, and elsewhere were requesting her as their queen. Her parents, without acknowledging to whom she should be betrothed, had Mandāravā sent to the turret of the castle to consider for herself whom she preferred. Meanwhile, once, the king ran out of meat, so Mandāravā was sent to buy meat at the market fair,

⁶⁸ Rheingans 2017, 106 and fn185; and Kuijp 2018, 94 and fn28.

⁶⁹ Lho pa Bya bral ba. For some suggestive traces of Lho pa's life, see Kuijp 2018, 92.

⁷⁰ 'Dul 'dzin mKhyen rab rgya mtsho 1981 and Chu smad snag tsang manuscript. For evidence of his associations with the tradition of Padma gling pa, see 'Dul 'dzin mKhyen rab rgya mtsho 1981, 4.3, 387.6–388.1, 388.2, etc. For some of this figure's additional associations, see Kuijp 2018, 91.

⁷¹ 'Dul 'dzin mKhyen rab rgya mtsho 1981, 388.2.

⁷² Sog bzlog pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan 1971, 1–173; 1975, vol. 2, 1–143; 1999, 5–250. Gentry 2017.

giving her rice as payment. But the rain was too heavy, so the market fair did not convene. [Having veered] the wrong way, [Mandāravā] spotted the corpse of a dead child. She shaved off some of its flesh and offered it to the king. This is known as the seven-times-born [flesh].⁷³

After thus paraphrasing the *bKa' thang* narrative, the polemic adopts a common-sense approach to the presumed cultural practices and culinary habits of the royal court and populace of ancient Za hor to attack the feasibility of this account:

There are three reasons why this is untenable: [1] teaching that the king of Za hor had the power like that of a universal monarch, it would be impossible for him to run out of meat to eat; [2] even supposing it were possible for him to run out, teaching that he had an immeasurable number of servants, it is impossible that he would send the princess, whom he would have cherished like his own eyes, to the market fair with a sack of rice on her back; and [3] even had he sent her, generally, none of the people of Za hor had the tradition of eating human flesh, and in particular, it is impossible [for the princess] to introduce to the king meat through which he would be consuming another person. Therefore, the source for obtaining the seven-times-born is inauthentic. One should thus know that it was the invention of tantric priests. If there were any proof why those [stories] should be [deemed] faultless, then it would behoove you to explain it.⁷⁴

⁷³ Sog bzlog pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan 1975, vol. 2 [Sd], 106.5–107.2; 'Dul 'dzin mKhyen rab rgya mtsho 1981 [Kd], 541.6–542.2; Lho pa Bya bral ba [L], 88a.7–88b.5: *de la skye bdun ril bu'i khungs ma dag pa ni* [Kd, L dang po skye bdun sha ni] / *za hor rgyal po* [Kd, L po'i] *gtsug lag 'dzin zhes* [Kd, L ces] *bya ba 'khor los* [K lo] *bsgyur ba'i rgyal po* [L + lta bu] *zhig gi bu mo mandā* [Kd, L manda; Sd mandh] *ra ba* [Kd + zhes, L + ces] *bya ba gcig* [K, L zhig] *yod pa la* [Kd - /] *rgya dkar* [Kd gar] *nag* [Kd - nag] *la sogs pa* [Kd - pa] *phyogs kyi rgyal pos* [Kd, L po'i] *btsun mor slong ba'i gnye* [Kd skye, L snye] *bo mang* [L mangs] *ste* [L te] / [Kd - /] *yab yum gyis* [L kyi] *byin ngo ma shes par* [L + /] *mandha* [Kd, L manda] *ra ba nyid su la* [L ma] *dad* [Kd, L dad; Sd dang; Sg, Sk, Sm, Sr gtong] [L + gtong gi] *pho brang gi yang rtser bsam gzhigs* [Kd, L gzhig] *btong* [Kd - btong, L stong] *bcug pa las* [Kd - /] *lan gcig rgyal po'i skrums* [Kd srung, L krum] *sha 'thogs te* [Kd ste] [L + /] *mandha* [Kd, L manda] *ra ba* [L - ba] *la rin* [L rid] *du 'bras bskur te* [Kd + /] *tshong 'dus su sha nyor btang* [Kd gtong] *ba* [Kd pa] *na* [L + /] *char ches nas tshong 'dus ma 'dzoms* / *log pa'i lam na byis pa shi ba'i ro zhig 'dug pa las* [Kd - las] *sha bregs* [Sd bregl te] [Sd ste] [L + /] *rgyal po la zhus pas* [Kd pa na, L pa] *skye bdun du rig* [L rigs] *ces smra* /

⁷⁴ Sog bzlog pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan 1975, vol. 2 [Sd], 107.2–5; 'Dul 'dzin mKhyen rab rgya mtsho 1981 [Kd], 542.2–5; Lho pa Bya bral ba [L], 88b.5–89a.4: *de la mi 'thad pa'i rgyu mtshan gsum ste* / *za hor rgyal po 'khor los bsgyur ba* [L ba'i rgyal po] *lta bu'i* [L bu] *mnga' thang yod par bstan nas* [Kd pa] [L + /] *gsol ba'i* [Kd - ba'i] *skrum* [Kd, L krum] *sha la thogs* [L 'thogs] *pa mi srid/ gal te thogs* [Kd, L 'thogs] *srid* [Kd - srid] *kyang bran g.yog dpag tu med par* [Kd pa] *bstan nas* [Kd pa] / *lha lcām* [Sd mo] *mig 'bras* [Kd, L - 'bras]

Most noteworthy in this critique is the polemic's appeal to commonsense assumptions among Tibetans of the cultural practices of ancient Za hor and its royal court. It is not credible as an authoritative historical account, by the standards of the polemic, because the details in no way conform to known South Asian courtly practice and decorum. Anthropophagy, the polemic additionally declares, was not an accepted custom among the Za hor people. The critic goes on to interpret the seven-timer flesh and the tantric injunction to consume it not as calling for the literal consumption of human flesh, but as a figurative expression that signals the physiological development of seminal fluid. This interpretation recalls one of the many interpretations supplied in Zhe sdang rdo rje's and Vajragarbha's *Hevajratantra* commentaries considered above.

The first rebuttal to this polemic was probably that attributed to Mi bskyod rdo rje himself. After paraphrasing the polemic's rejection of the rNying ma history of Treasure flesh, he counters with an analogous history of his own: that of king Mürdhaja (sPyi bo skyes), who once had control over the four continents but subsequently fell from power.⁷⁵ "If this is possible," states Mi bskyod rdo rje, "it is not impossible that with the power of only the king of Za hor, he would not find the mere enjoyment of meat."⁷⁶ Mi bskyod rdo rje offers little more on this aspect of the polemic. Interestingly, however, like Kalmāṣapāda, king Mürdhaja appears in several different *sūtras*; he is even the feature character in chapter 45 of the *Sūtra of the Wise and the Foolish* named after him.⁷⁷

Lho pa Bya bral ba's rebuttal to the polemic was likely the next to circulate. In response to the rejection of the narrative's authenticity, Lho pa first has this to say:

ltaṅ gces [Kd ces] pa de la 'bras kyi sgye'u zhig rgyab du sbrags te tshong 'dus su btang [Kd gtong] ba mi srid/ gal te btang [Kd gtong] du [Kd srid] zin [Kd - zin] na'ang [Kd, L kyang] spyir za hor ba kun la mi sha za ba'i srol dang [Kd med] mi ldan [Kd - mi ldan] zhing [Kd cing] / khyad par rgyal po la gzhan gyi [Kd gyis] mi sha [Sd - sha] bza' [Kd, Sd za] ba'i zas [Sd sha] 'dren pa [Kd - pa] mi srid/ des na [Kd - na] skye bdun rnyed [L, Sd snyed] pa'i khungs ma dag ste/ 'di yang [Kd 'ang] sngags btsun skye bo dag gis [Kd, Sd gi] blo bzor [gzur bor] rig par bya'o/ de dag skyon med du 'gro ba'i sgrub byed yod na smra bar rigs so/.

⁷⁵ Mi bskyod rdo rje 2004, 441.2–.3. This section of the rebuttal can also be found in Mi bskyod rdo rje 2009, 87–89; Mi bskyod rdo rje 2013, 76; and Mi bskyod rdo rje 2013?, 171.2–.3.

⁷⁶ Mi bskyod rdo rje 2004, 441.3–.4.

⁷⁷ *Bka' 'gyur (dpe bsdur ma)* 2006–2009, Tōh. 341, Mdo sde, A (vol. 74), 767–775. For an English translation of this narrative, see "King Forehead-Born," in Frye 1981, 229–233.

It is feasible that the deeds of all buddhas and bodhisattvas can find expression, appear, and manifest in any way whatsoever. For natural *nirmāṇakāyas*, supreme *nirmāṇakāyas*, *nirmāṇakāyas* that tame beings, born *nirmāṇakāyas*, fabricated *nirmāṇakāyas*, the emergence of medicine and fruit trees, and so forth, appear anywhere whatsoever and act for the welfare of the teaching and beings.⁷⁸

Thus appealing here to standard Mahāyāna buddha-emanation theory, Lho pa buttresses this statement with a pertinent citation from the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṅkāra*.⁷⁹ This serves as a platform for him to declare that all the characters featuring in the *Padma bka' thang* charter narrative partake of different identities on the external, internal, and secret levels.⁸⁰ For instance, Lho pa continues, although king gTsug lag 'dzin was externally adorned with the signs and attributes of a universal monarch, internally he was a manifestation of Padma-sambhava, secretly, he was Avalokiteśvara, and exceedingly secretly, he was Amitābha. The princess too, he adds, was already a *ḍākinī* in her external form, but was Vajravārāhī internally and Samantabhadrī secretly. Likewise, the seven-times-born humans themselves—whom he names here as the brahmins Padma dkar po, Dung rna can, and mChog sred—were in actual fact *nirmāṇakāyas* of the noble bodhisattvas, emanated illusory forms to benefit illusory beings out of their compassion and skillful means. Further in this vein, Lho pa makes an allusion to chapter 102 of the *Padma bka' thang* to argue that the Buddha himself also underwent 500 pure rebirths and 500 impure rebirths to enact benefit, and, moreover, that Avalokiteśvara, the bodhisattva of compassion, out of his compassionate vow to benefit beings until *saṃsāra* is emptied, had his head fragment into a thousand pieces and his arms multiply into a thousand arms to thus become the thousand buddhas and thousand universal monarchs of the Bhadrakalpa.⁸¹

Lho pa concludes his defense of the historical source's authenticity by adding that buddhas and bodhisattvas diversify their forms because beings can only be properly benefited by something of similar kind. After providing the example of how a famous past Indian king assumed the body of a fish to bring a famine to an end, he supplies a pertinent verse from the *Uttaratantraśāstra*:

⁷⁸ Lho pa Bya bral ba, 92a.1–3.

⁷⁹ Lho pa Bya bral ba, 92a.3–4.

⁸⁰ Lho pa Bya bral ba, 92a.5–92b.3.

⁸¹ Lho pa Bya bral ba, 92b.3–5. This is a clear reference to the passage in U rgyan gling pa 1985, 650.1–3.

The constituent of a buddha, the qualities of a bodhisattva, the qualities of a buddha, and the activities of a buddha cannot be conceived of even by pure beings. They are the purview of [only] the guides.⁸²

Lho pa thus confronts the polemic's claim of inauthenticity by invoking Mahāyāna emanation theory and relegating the actual dynamics of the charter narrative to the rarified sphere of the inconceivable wonder-working activities of buddhas. It could be argued that by thus removing the story from the domain of ordinary conceivability, and hence falsifiability, he effectively seals the narrative off from any cross-examination that might disprove it. Lho pa's identification of gTsug lag 'dzin as an emanation of Padmasambhava would indeed appear to be a detail that frustrates "ordinary" narrative expectations, since the two meet and interact as separate beings during Padmasambhava's stay in Za hor. The effect of Lho pa's counterargument is a thoroughgoing apotheosis of the seven-timer flesh and all the characters who handle it.

As delineated above, 'Dul 'dzin mKhyen rab rgya mtsho's rebuttal was likely the next one to follow. Addressing the flesh's source, he divides his discussion into two subdivisions: an explanation of the example of other kings, and an explanation of the significance of the king of Za hor himself.⁸³ In the first subsection, 'Dul 'dzin invokes as an example the story of the Indian king Prasenajit, in which the king ended up homeless and starving despite his previous power and wealth.⁸⁴ 'Dul 'dzin remarks that stories of such dramatic turns of fortune for Indian kings are common, thus countering the polemic's claim that the Za hor king's peculiar circumstances are unheard of in the historical record. In this he seems to have taken a page from Mi bskyod rdo rje's rebuttal, which similarly invokes the fall from power of an Indian king—king Mūrdhaja—as a counterexample to the polemic's claim that the king of Za hor would never run out of meat and send his daughter to fetch some.

'Dul 'dzin mKhyen rab rgya mtsho's next move, in subsection two of his defense of the flesh's historical source, mimics Lho pa Bya bral ba's remarks on the topic nearly to a tee.⁸⁵ Like Lho pa, 'Dul 'dzin dips into Mahāyāna buddha-emanation theory to declare that all the

⁸² Lho pa Bya bral ba, 92b.7–93a.1. This citation appears nearly verbatim in *Bstan 'gyur (dpe bsdur ma)* 1994–2008, vol. 70, 975.

⁸³ 'Dul 'dzin mKhyen rab rgya mtsho 1981, 544.5–6. For another version of this portion of the rebuttal, with minor variations, see the Chu smad snag tshang manuscript, 'Dul 'dzin mKhyen rab rgya mtsho, 287b.5–288b.1.

⁸⁴ 'Dul 'dzin mKhyen rab rgya mtsho 1981, 544.4–545.2.

⁸⁵ 'Dul 'dzin mKhyen rab rgya mtsho 1981, 545.2–5.

characters featured in the *Padma bka' thang* charter narrative partake of different identities on the external, internal, and secret levels. However, 'Dul 'dzin's identifications are somewhat different from Lho pa's. 'Dul 'dzin declares that although king gTsug lag 'dzin was externally adorned with the signs and attributes of a universal monarch, internally he was a manifestation of Avalokiteśvara, and secretly, he was Amitābha. The princess too, he continues, while being a *ḍākinī* in her external form, was in fact internally Vajravāhī, and secretly Samantabhadrī, who is the indivisibility of the expanse of reality and non-dual awareness. The flesh itself, moreover, he identifies as the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara as well, who manifested as the seven-born brahmins Padma dkar po, Dung rna can, Dri med snying po, and mChog sred to bring benefit to beings through surrendering their bodies.⁸⁶

Notably absent from 'Dul 'dzin's discussion is the identification of Padmasambhava with the king's internal identity. In this it seems that 'Dul 'dzin was more concerned than Lho pa to maintain some consistency with the narrative rationale of the *Padma bka' thang*. Another difference is 'Dul 'dzin's addition of a fourth brahmin emanation—Dri med snying po—and, most importantly, his identification of these as emanations of not just any bodhisattva, but of Avalokiteśvara in particular.

Aside from these details, and 'Dul 'dzin's inclusion of a final flourish to qualify Samantabhadrī, his phrasing is identical to Lho pa's. 'Dul 'dzin even ends this section of the rebuttal with nearly the same remark that Lho pa closes his discussion with:

In this way, it is feasible that the activity of buddhas and bodhisattvas can find expression, appear, and manifest in any way whatsoever. This is because natural *nirmāṇakāyas*, supreme *nirmāṇakāyas*, born *nirmāṇakāyas*, fabricated *nirmāṇakāyas*, and *nirmāṇakāyas* of material objects act to tame in whatever way is called for.⁸⁷

The only major differences here from Lho pa's similar remarks come at the end, where Lho pa's "medicine and fruit trees" is subsumed under the category of "*nirmāṇakāyas* of material objects" (*gdos bcas sprul sku*), along with the slightly simplified conclusion that follows, whose "act to tame" replaces Lho pa's category of "*nirmāṇakāya* emanations that tame beings."

Toward the close of his rebuttal on the issue of rNying ma seven-timer practice, 'Dul 'dzin returns to the issue of the flesh's narrative

⁸⁶ 'Dul 'dzin mKhyen rab rgya mtsho 1981, 545.5–6.

⁸⁷ 'Dul 'dzin mKhyen rab rgya mtsho 1981, 545.4–5.

source to reference and paraphrase the narratives of Zhe sdang rdo rje's *Hevjaratantra* commentary and the *Zhi byed* tradition considered above: "These stories," he declares at their conclusion, "have emerged at the origin of this teaching" (*'di rnams ni bstan pa 'di'i thog ma la byung ba yin no*).⁸⁸ In this, 'Dul 'dzin claims to have identified these as the earliest narrative literary sources of seven-times-born flesh consumption, and by implication perhaps, the source of U rgyan gling pa's *Padma bka' thang* narrative as well.

Finally, we turn to the rebuttal of Sog bzlog pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan, the final one known to have been composed.⁸⁹ To counter the polemic's criticisms of the *Padma bka' thang* charter narrative Sog bzlog pa adopts an approach that is somewhat different from those of his predecessors. He provides three reasons for the narrative's authenticity, namely that 1) the king had an unfathomably virtuous mind, such that he had the requisite fortune to attain liberation based on this flesh; 2) the brahmin flesh spoken of in the story originated from none other than Avalokiteśvara, who deliberately incarnated for seven consecutive lifetimes to benefit beings through its powers; thus the princess was none other than a *dākinī*, with the nature of a goddess, who alone had the fortune to take hold of it; and 3) the kings of India would eat their morning and evening meals in the company of their queens in turn.⁹⁰ In other words, implies Sog bzlog pa, the critic understood neither the extraordinary, awakened nature of the figures involved, nor the cultural practices in which these figures were participating at the time. In this we can see resonances with the rebuttals of Lho pa and 'Dul 'dzin, but Sog bzlog pa exhibits less concern with mapping out layers of identity for each character on the external, internal, and secret levels. Sog bzlog pa also declines to enlist Mahāyāna emanation theory, as Lho pa and 'Dul 'dzin do, even as he claims that the seven-times-born are in fact Avalokiteśvara. Interestingly, on this note, Sog bzlog pa here elects to describe the bodhisattva of compassion's process as one of willfully "taking birth seven times" (*skye ba lan bdun bzhes pa*) rather than "emanating" (*sprul pa*), as Lho pa and 'Dul 'dzin describe it.⁹¹

⁸⁸ 'Dul 'dzin mKhyen rab rgya mtsho 1981, 553.2.

⁸⁹ *Lung rig 'brug sgra*. Sog bzlog pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan 1975 (D), vol. 2, 109.3–110.3. See also Sog bzlog pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan 1971 (G), 129.4–130.5; and 1999 (K), 188.3–190.1. Also consulted were several unpublished versions. For their details and proposed sigla, see Gentry 2017, 449–451.

⁹⁰ Sog bzlog pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan 1975, vol. 2, 109.4–110.1.

⁹¹ Sog bzlog pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan 1971, 129.6; 1999, 186.6–190.1. Sog bzlog pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan 1975 (vol. 2, 109.5) is missing the number seven (*bdun*) in this passage.

Sog bzlog pa does, however, appear to follow 'Dul 'dzin's lead in attempting to enlist an alternative and uncontroversial scriptural source that more or less mirrors the *Padma bKa' thang* Treasure narrative. But unlike 'Dul 'dzin, who references Zhe sdang rdo rje's Tibetan *Hevajratantra* commentary and the Tibetan *Zhi byed* corpus, Sog bzlog pa attempts to go further back to draw his narrative source from an unnamed *sūtra*. Sog bzlog pa's cognate narrative goes as follows:

When it came time for the lowliest queen to serve king Kalmāṣapāda, she could not find any meat, so she shaved some flesh from the corpse of a dead child in a cemetery and cooked it at home. When its steam wafted into her face, her feet lifted off the ground. Seeing that, he [the king] was amazed. He scolded her, so she became frightened and offered up the best of it, and then explained. He then told her to bring the rest to him. Upon eating it, he flew into the sky.⁹²

Striking here is that the Tibetan name of the king featuring in this story, *rkang bkra* (here, spelled with *khra*), translates the Sanskrit Kalmāṣapāda.⁹³ In this, Sog bzlog pa certainly appears to have correctly identified the narrative source of the seven-timer charter narrative in Tibet. However, it is immediately apparent that this rendition more closely resembles the tantric revisions of the Kalmāṣapāda narrative than the *sūtra* version in the *Sūtra of the Wise and the Foolish* examined above. I have been unable to identify this citation or anything else resembling it in any *sūtra* or *tantra* in Tibetan translation. This raises the question of whether Sog bzlog pa's citation truly does provide the narrative missing link of the tantric transformations of the Kalmāṣapāda in Indian Buddhist literature, or whether Sog bzlog pa, on his own or following some unacknowledged precedent, might have reworked the tantricized form of the narrative to include the name Kalmāṣapāda, thus enabling him to ascribe its source to an unnamed *sūtra* and thereby lend Treasure seven-timer flesh an added air of Indian Buddhist authenticity. That Sog bzlog pa's attempt to supply an authoritative *sūtra* source for the narrative follows on the heels of 'Dul 'dzin's similar endeavor to identify the

⁹² Sog bzlog pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan 1975, vol. 2, 110.1–110.3: *rgyal po rkang khra [D-khra] btsun mo chung ba ngan shos kyi bsnyen [K,P,S=bsnyan] bkur [N=bskur] res la bab pa na/ sha gzhan ma rnyed [A,D,N=snyed] pas [A=na] dur khrod na [N=nas] byis pa shi ba'i ro zhig 'dug pa las sha bregs te khyim du btsos pa dang/ de'i rlang pa [G,R=ba] byad bzhin la phog pas mo rkang pa sa la ma reg par 'gro'ol/ lde khos mthong nas ngo mtshar tel mo la sdigs pas skrag stel/ mchog byin nas bshad pa dang/ lhag ma kun yang khyer shog zer te zos pas kho nam mkha' la 'gro'ol.*

⁹³ Negi 1993, vol. 1, 134.

narrative's origin certainly suggests, in light of the criticisms Treasure flesh was then facing, an overzealous editorial intervention more than an actual untraceable *sūtra* source. However, in the absence of further evidence, it is difficult to know for certain if the tantric transformations witnessed in Zhe sdang rdo rje's commentary and the *Zhi byed* literature are not in fact rooted in previous tantric transformations of the core Kalmāṣapāda narrative in India.

When we step back to consider the trajectory of the polemic and its rebuttals together, there is a noticeable progression that takes place. First, in Mi bskyod rdo rje's rebuttal there is no attempt to link the character to exalted buddhas or bodhisattvas. Mi bskyod rdo rje simply references an analogous tale of a king fallen from power. However, that he selects the story of king Mūrdhaja, who, although appearing in several sources, famously features only a few chapters after the story of Kalmāṣapāda in the *Sūtra of the Wise and the Foolish*, raises the question of whether Mi bskyod rdo rje might have been obliquely referring here to this *sūtra* as the source of the *Padma bka' thang* narrative.

Lho pa Bya bral ba adopts the very different approach of enlisting Mahāyāna emanation theory to identify the narrative's characters as multilayered manifestations of buddhas and bodhisattvas. He thereby frames the narrative as part of the inconceivable activity of awakened beings, well beyond ordinary reckoning. Avalokiteśvara, Amitābha, Padmasambhava, Vajravārāhī, and Samantabhadrī all figure in these equations, whereas the flesh itself is identified as bodhisattvas manifest as the three brahmins Padma dkar po, Dung rna can, and mChog sred.

'Dul 'dzin starts by following the same approach as Lho pa, but with slightly different details. He subtracts Padmasambhava from the identifications, presumably because he appears as a character in the *Padma bka' thang* narrative alongside the others. 'Dul 'dzin also adds a brahmin manifestation, Dri med snying po, and explicitly identifies his list of four brahmins as manifestations of Avalokiteśvara. 'Dul 'dzin also sharply departs from Lho pa by endeavoring to supply the narrative sources of the *Padma bka' thang* rendition with reference to Zhe sdang rdo rje's *Hevjaratantra* commentary and Pha Dam pa sangs rgyas's *Zhi byed* tradition.

Sog bzlog pa, unlike Lho pa and 'Dul 'dzin, refrains from identifying all the narrative's characters as emanations of buddhas and bodhisattvas—for him, it is the brahmin flesh in particular that originates from an exalted bodhisattva, Avalokiteśvara, who does not “emanate” brahmins, but willfully takes rebirth in their form for seven successive lifetimes. Moreover, inspired perhaps by 'Dul 'dzin's quest for the narrative's origin, he includes a citation from an unnamed *sūtra*

that appears to be a reworked version of the tantric rendition, but with the name Kalmāṣapāda (*rkang bkra/khra*) standing in as king.

Discernible in all this as perhaps the most defining common threads are the mounting apotheosis of the seven-timer flesh as Avalokiteśvara and the related search for the narrative precedent of the *Padma bka' thang* charter narrative in authoritative Indian scriptural sources. We turn now to consider how these two tendencies find more elaborate expression in a 17th century iteration of the narrative told by Karma chags med.

5. *Flesh Made History, History Made Flesh*

The final transformation of the Kalmāṣapāda story we will consider is narrated by the famous 17th century scholar and contemplative Karma chags med (1613–1678).⁹⁴ Karma chags med's interest in the flesh was part of his decades-long passion for Avalokiteśvara and his mantra. Sometime late in Karma chags med's life he composed a brief text about the history of the seven-times-born flesh in India and Tibet and the virtues of ritually consecrating and eating it.⁹⁵ We learn from a brief autobiographical vignette there that after discovering the virtues of Avalokiteśvara's mantra from the *Kāraṇḍavyūhasūtra* when he was 28 years old, he plunged himself into the study and practice of Avalokiteśvara-related teachings and even devoted 13 years of his life to the practice of only Avalokiteśvara.⁹⁶ During those years, he received inspiration to institute seven-times-born flesh consecration rites in a dream encounter with none other than Karmapa X Chos dbying rdo rje (1604–1674).⁹⁷

Throughout his subsequent writings Karma chags med vigorously promoted the consumption of seven-times-born brahmin flesh as a way to unite with Avalokiteśvara and reach the pure land of Sukhāvātī, even as he sternly warned his fellow Buddhists of the ethical infractions incurred from eating meat.⁹⁸ In addition to his text on the history and benefits of the seven-times-born flesh, he also composed several ritual manuals devoted to it and compiled copious

⁹⁴ For a brief biography of Karma chags med, see Halkias 2013, 113–116.

⁹⁵ *Thugs rje chen po gsang ba 'dus pa'i maṇi bum sgrub ril bu'i lo rgyus dang phan yon*. Karma chags med 2010, vol. 14, 451–496. See other versions in Karma chags med 1974–1984, vol. 1, 431–483; and Karma chags med 1999?, vol. 5, 409–466.

⁹⁶ *Za ma tog bkod pa, Bka' 'gyur (dpe bsdur ma)* 2006–2009, vol. 51, 529–640. For an English translation of this *sūtra*, see Roberts and Yeshe 2013. For a study of this *sūtra*, see Studholme 2002.

⁹⁷ Karma chags med 2010, vol. 14, 491.2–492.1.

⁹⁸ Karma chags med 2010, *Sha yi nyes dmigs dang gnang bkak gi sa mtshams dbye bay ul byang phyogs rgyud kyi paṇḍita 'jam dbyangs bla ma'i zhal lung*, vol. 35. See Barstow (2019, 181–205) for a complete English translation of this text.

notes outlining the procedures for how to properly form it into pills and “accomplish” it through these ritual proceedings.⁹⁹

Among all of Karma chags med's writings on the flesh, his writing on the flesh's history and benefits stands out as an important overview of seven-times-born flesh practice as it was received in mid- to late-17th century Tibet. There the Kalmāṣapāda narrative core is transformed yet again through being embedded in the broader historical trajectory of the pill's main ingredient—brahmin flesh. Karma chags med structures his retelling according to how 25 brahmins formed by the Great Compassionate One first came into being; how three brahmins among them emerged as emanations of the Great Compassionate One's awakened body, speech, and mind; and how their flesh first arrived in Tibet.¹⁰⁰

Starting with the story of the 25 initial emanations, he relates that a group of the five families of Avalokiteśvara manifested from the *dharmakāya* Buddha Amitābha's awakened body, speech, mind, qualities, and activities, making 25 in total; these manifested further emanations; and they all taught innumerable gateways of the Dharma to beings afflicted with the five poisons.¹⁰¹ Karma chags med then draws from the Mahāyāna narrative tradition associated with the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara to explain how it happened that he first manifested as brahmins whose flesh would be intended for human consumption:

Upon leading limitlessly innumerable beings by so teaching them, he (i.e., Avalokiteśvara) thought that *saṃsāra* had been emptied. But looking out, he saw that there had been no fluctuation in the field of beings and that most were still engaged in nonvirtue and would thereby experience unbearable suffering in the lower realms. He also saw that even those born in the higher realms would have difficulty encountering the Dharma, and even were they to encounter the Dharma, it would be difficult for them practice it. Thus seeing that it would be difficult to benefit beings by teaching them the Dharma, the Great Compassionate One beseeched all the buddhas throughout the ten directions, asking them to give him a method by which one could attain buddhahood

⁹⁹ Karma chags med 2010, vol. 14, 373–400 constitutes the notes, while the numerous ritual manuals make up much of the rest of volume 14; Karma chags med 1999?, vol. 5, 409–466 is the notes, and the numerous ritual manuals constitute much of the rest of volume 5; Karma chags med 1974–1984, vol. 1, 311–340 is the notes, whereas the associated ritual manuals, fewer than in the other editions, are in volume 1, 261–284, 285–310, 341–364, 365–430, and 485–522.

¹⁰⁰ Karma chags med 2010, vol. 14, 456.4–.6.

¹⁰¹ Karma chags med 2010, vol. 14, 456.5–.6.

without needing to gather the accumulations and purify the obscurations, and without needing to put the Dharma into practice.

To that all the buddhas rose from the state of the empty *dharmakāya* in a form body and consented:

“Excellent! Excellent! There are many means to attain buddhahood without needing to meditate or practice. In particular, the regent through whom all buddhas confer initiation and entrust realization for the benefit of beings is none other than you, noble Avalokiteśvara. Thus, manifest three brahmins from your awakened body, speech, and mind. Ensure that their awakened bodies come in the form of material bone, flesh, and blood. All beings in whose stomach a mere morsel of their flesh and bones enters will no longer wander in *saṃsāra*, and after their present existence they will attain the fruition of unexcelled buddhahood.”¹⁰²

It is here where Karma chags med weaves into his biography of Avalokiteśvara a variation on the *Padma bka' thang* narrative considered above.¹⁰³ By his account, Avalokiteśvara's emanation of awakened body (*sku'i sprul pa*) manifests in Za hor as a brahmin child called Dri med snying po. Dri med snying po announces to everyone gathered at the market that if any among them have the requisite fortune and karma, then by taking up his body they will surely attain the *siddhi* of the two-fold benefit of self and others. Thereafter, he displays a semblance of his death, but no one comes to take his corpse.

This is when Mandāravā enters the scene. Inspired by the compassion of all the buddhas, she sees the young brahmin's corpse on the way home from an unsuccessful trip to the market to buy meat for the king. Shaving off some flesh from the rain-washed corpse of the brahmin child, she cooks and serves it to king gTsong lag 'dzin. The king's obscuration of ignorance is instantly dispelled, he attains the great illumination of wisdom, and with the warmth of bliss blazing forth in his body like fire, he starts to levitate a full cubit off the ground. Understanding this to be because of the flesh of the seven-born, continues Karma chags med, king gTsong lag 'dzin takes the corpse and makes pills out of it, puts them inside a box made of the seven precious substances, and conceals it at the great charnel ground of Pleasure Grove, entrusting it there to the *ḍākinīs*.

Instead of ending there, Karma chags med continues with the next chapter of the *Padma bka' thang* narrative to relate how Mandāravā and

¹⁰² Karma chags med 2010, vol. 14, 456.6–458.2.

¹⁰³ Karma chags med 2010, vol. 14, 458.2–459.4.

her entourage of 500 servants then became *bhikṣuṅīs*, and while living in a temple, Padmasambhava arrives in Za hor and teaches them the Dharma. With no segue, Karma chags med continues to narrate that the king punishes Padmasambhava and Mandāravā by burning them alive. But when they are seen sitting on the pyre atop a lotus, unharmed by the fire, the king is stirred by faith and offers Padmasambhava not only his whole kingdom, but also Mandāravā to serve as his consort, along with the Treasure of the seven-born flesh. Padmasambhava then conceals the flesh in a storied pavilion.

When we recall the details of the *Padma bka' thang* rendition of this narrative, Karma chags med's telling is clearly a further elaboration. First, unlike the *Padma bKa' thang* version, Karma chags med's telling frames the Za hor story in terms of Avalokiteśvara's manifestation of the brahmin child Dri med snying po, who declares to the public his intention to offer his body and makes a display of dying. Another innovation in relation to the *Padma bKa' thang* rendition is that from eating the flesh the king is purified of the obscuration of ignorance and attains the great illumination of wisdom, in addition to the bodily warmth of bliss and flight described in the *Padma bKa' thang*. Missing from the *Padma bKa' thang* narrative too is how the flesh serves as a narrative thread linking the king of Za hor flesh story with the story of Padmasambhava's relationship with Mandāravā.

Karma chags med then shifts away from Avalokiteśvara's "emanation of awakened body" in Za hor to relate how Avalokiteśvara's "emanation of awakened speech" similarly manifested in Kashmir as a brahmin called Shel phreng can, and how Avalokiteśvara's "emanation of awakened mind" manifested in front of the Svayambhū Khasarpaṇi temple in India as a brahmin called Dung rna can.¹⁰⁴ By Karma chags med's account, Padmasambhava takes possession of these corpses too, conceals them, and allows them to remain hidden until Khri srong lde'u btsan invites Padmasambhava to Tibet. Thereupon, Padmasambhava recovers the three Treasures of the seven-born and multiples the flesh into innumerable pills. Having concealed several pills throughout Nepal and Eastern and Western India, Padmasambhava then brings most of it to Tibet, where he conceals it in numerous Treasure sites.

Karma chags med goes on to relate how later still, the "samaya substances" of the *bodhicitta* fluids of Padmasambhava and Ye shes mtsho rgyal are added to the pills and consecrated again.¹⁰⁵ This time the pills are rolled by the hands of Ye shes mtsho rgyal herself, whose thumb prints leave traces of the syllables *a* and *ma* on each pill, thus

¹⁰⁴ Karma chags med 2010, vol. 14, 459.4–460.6.

¹⁰⁵ Karma chags med 2010, vol. 14, 461.2–.4.

earning them the name “*a ma* pills.” Before concealing them for future generations, the couple make an aspiration that, like a wish-fulfilling jewel, the pills never run out. Accordingly, Karma chags med concludes, the pills are still not running out, but rather multiplying.

Karma chags med then transitions into an account of Ratna gling pa’s 15th century recovery of the flesh pills and his subsequent efforts to propagate them through multiplying, consecrating, and distributing them in the context of collective great accomplishment rites.¹⁰⁶ He concludes this account by reporting that Ratna gling pa staged over 300 great accomplishments focused on the flesh over his lifetime; Karma chags med then traces the lineage up to his own time.

When considering Karma chags med’s history in light of the peregrinations of the Kalmāṣapāda narrative considered thus far, a number of observations come to the fore. First and foremost, the tendency toward apotheosizing the flesh as Avalokiteśvara and rooting it in an authoritative Indian Buddhist discourse finds its fullest expression in Karma chags med’s retelling. By his account, the *Padma bka’ thang* episode is only one among many vignettes in the ever-unfolding cosmic drama of Avalokiteśvara’s struggles to benefit beings. Not only are the seven-timer brahmins produced by the great bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara; this act is prompted by “all the buddhas” and ultimately goes back to the *dharmakāya* buddha Amitābha’s creative act of emanating multiple Avalokiteśvara forms to guide beings. Moreover, according to Karma chags med’s version, the events in Za hor that are told in the *Padma bka’ thang* rendition are only one of three related series of events. Avalokiteśvara also manifested as seven-timer brahmins in Kashmir and India, thus drawing two additional regions into the story and thereby mapping out a spiritual geography of South Asian seven-timer origins. Karma chags med’s rendition also bridges these South Asian origins with Tibet, narrating Padma-sambhava’s collection of the brahmin flesh in South Asia, his distribution of some throughout Nepal and Eastern and Western India, and his carrying of the rest to distribute throughout the Tibetan landscape. In this, Karma chags med’s telling represents the culmination of the apotheosis of the flesh, its assimilation in Tibet, and its grounding in the South Asian origins of the Buddhist tradition.

6. Concluding Reflections

This exercise of tracing a narrative from the Tibetan translation of the *Sūtra of the Wise and the Foolish* through Zhe sdang rdo rje’s *Hevajratantra* commentary, the *Zhi byed* tradition, the *Padma bka’ thang*,

¹⁰⁶ Karma chags med 2010, vol. 14, 461.4–464.5.

and the successive renditions told in the 16th and 17th century, culminating with Karma chags med's, suffices to conclude that these are all iterations of the story of Kalmāṣapāda, cast in the idiom of late-Indian Buddhist Tantra, in which the practice of human flesh consumption had become something to adopt rather than to abandon.

New framings of the core narrative within other narratives and explanations, along with the introduction of new characters, story elements, and the new associations that these formed, enabled the Kalmāṣapāda story to acquire roles in tantric practice in Tibet that were unprecedented in India and Tibet. These narrative transformations were an integral part of the assimilation of what was arguably one of the most challenging features of tantric theory and practice—the injunction to consume human flesh as part of tantric sacraments.

The transformations of the narrative reflect changing conceptions about this practice among Buddhists in India and Tibet. These changing conceptions can be summarized generally in terms of shifts between a rhetoric of transgression and a rhetoric of purity. In the *Sūtra of the Wise and the Foolish*, the tale was about a king who ends up cursed to eat human flesh as a backstory to one of the most notorious sinner-turned-saint narratives in the history of South Asian literature: the story of Aṅgulimāla. As the story entered tantric Buddhist milieus it was transformed; the consumption of human-flesh had transitioned rhetorically from being a curse to a tantric precept. In Tibet, as the story found its way into the *Zhi byed* and Treasure traditions, it registers yet another shift of values. The flesh, which in standard *mahāyoga* and *yoginī tantra* discourse is associated primarily with the transgression of dualistic concepts of pollution and purity, and the conferral of boons such as flight, longevity, and power, was gradually transformed into a relic, to be consumed primarily for the spiritual benefits brought from encountering a pure being. Marking this transition was the gradual interweaving into the narrative core of Mahāyāna values and tropes through the augmentation of the narrative in new renditions and explanations.

This combination of features—transgressive power substance, and/or pure relic—was beginning to surface already in late Indian Buddhist tantric commentarial literature. The complex and ambiguous relationships between power, pollution, transgression, purity, and liberation in Indian literary discourses are brought into pronounced tension in the tantric injunction to consume the flesh of a pure being, one born seven consecutive lifetimes as a brahmin. The tantric transformations of the myth in Tibet give witness to the disparate foregrounding and accentuation of certain elements at the expense of others rather than entire reworkings. Elements of the Kalmāṣapāda

story—kingship, courtly sexuality, meat eating, human-flesh consumption, violence, the interplay between purity and pollution, and magical flight—were foregrounded and reevaluated as they were brought into a resolutely tantric textual environment.

With this revaluation, we can witness key shifts between pollution and purity. In the *sūtra* telling, since human-flesh consumption is resolutely bad, flight comes not from eating the flesh but from recollecting and instrumentalizing past virtue to escape from the repercussions of having so wrongly indulged in this forbidden meat. In the renditions of Zhe sdang rdo rje and the *Zhi byed* tradition, however, we find a curious interweaving of values, combining pollution and purity, where the flesh is said to come from an exalted and pure bodhisattva, but its consumption is nonetheless associated with the transgressive practice of consuming the five ambrosias—the *samaya* of eating—rooted in the *mahāyoga* and *yoginī tantras*, along with the conferral of flight, dominion over the spirit world, and other such boons. When the flesh reaches the 14th century retelling of U rgyan gling pa's *Padma bka' thang*, it still retains the undertones of earlier transgressive associations, but its new framing, along with changes to the narrative details, marks a trajectory toward greater purity and away from pollution. We witnessed this shift in the successive reactions to the polemic against the *Padma bka' thang* narrative, each of which introduced layers of Mahāyāna doctrinal values and literary tropes to purify the flesh as not just belonging to any fledgling bodhisattva, but to the bodhisattva of compassion, Avalokiteśvara himself. Karma chags med's reframing of the core features of the story continues this process of transformation by contextualizing the flesh and their owners in terms of the ever-unfolding spiritual biography of Avalokiteśvara as the patron bodhisattva of Tibet and Tibetans. The ritualized production, distribution, and consumption of Avalokiteśvara seven-born flesh-pills continues to this day. Tracing core elements of Kalmāṣapāda's story of human-flesh consumption has thus offered us a view onto the history of how Tibetans adapted Indian Buddhist narratives in their process of assimilating tantric Buddhist discourses and practices to form vibrant and distinctively Tibetan traditions of their own.

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The lion of Gung thang

A historical-ethnographic note on Tshal Gung thang

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his is a brief note on Tshal Gung thang, on Gung thang Bla ma Zhang (1123–93), the founder of this famous monastic centre due east of Lhasa, and on Ngan lam, the old name of the district where Bla ma Zhang established his monastery and temple.¹ The background for this note was a day trip that I took together with colleagues from the “Tibetan Tumulus” project in May 2019.² The objective was to look for a stone lion in Gung thang, of which a Tibetan colleague had informed us, adding that it is very likely a figure from the imperial period. We also wanted to visit the rock carvings in the nearby side valley of Zhal, which became public a few years ago. This place is not far from two burial mound fields that we knew only from satellite photos and which it was planned to visit as part of the 2019 fieldwork campaign. These cemeteries belong to the total of six tumulus fields that today we register for the Tshal Gung thang/ Ngan lam district. One theory is that the stone lion and its now-vanished counterpart originally stood at one of these Ngan lam graves, from where they were moved to Gung thang on the initiative of the founder Bla ma Zhang himself. But there are also indications of the scenario of their much later relocation in connection with the renewal of the Gung thang Flower Offering festival (*Me tog mchod pa*) in the early phase of

¹ Dan Martin, for whose *Festschrift* we have the honour to contribute this short note, was one of the first to work on Tshal pa, especially on the peculiarities of Bla ma Zhang, his teaching and practice (Martin 1992, 2001). Later works include the somewhat broader study on Tshal Gung thang, supplemented with ethnographic data, by Sørensen and Hazod (2007, hereinafter RCP) or the works by Yamamoto, with a particular focus on Zhang and his writings (Yamamoto 2009, 2015).

² “The Burial Mounds of Central Tibet” (hereinafter TTT) is a research project financed by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF P30393-G25), in whose framework the 2019 fieldwork was also carried out. I wish to thank the project team for their tireless efforts in the surveys and accompanying documentary work under not always easy on-site conditions: Hubert Feiglstorfer (architect), Martin Gamon (archaeologist), Theobald Hazod (geologist), and Georg Zotti (archaeo-astronomer). In addition, I would also like to thank Shawo Khacham, an archaeologist at the Tibet University, Lhasa, for his cooperation and exchange of data in connection with the TTT project.

the Lhasa Ganden Phodrang government.

1. The lions at the Gung thang temple complex

The monastic centre of Tshal Gung thang, which was expanded in different phases, goes back to the foundations by Gung thang Bla ma Zhang, a charismatic and at the same time controversial figure, whom later history classifies as one of the “Three jewels of Tibet”.³

The monastic complex basically consisted of two sections (approx. 1 km apart) in the area called Tshal; this refers to today’s Tshal Village and Gung thang Village, which together form the “Tshal Gung thang district” (*xiang*) of the Lhasa Municipality. In Tshal Village there is the founding monastery of Yang dgon, established by Bla ma Zhang in 1175, as well as a number of later, partly no longer existing or derelict religious foundations (Dbus gling monastery, the Rgyud smad grva tshang, Pe har Lha khang), and it was the place where the secular ruler of Tshal, the Tshal pa *khri dpon* had their residence in the 13th and 14th century – the *khri dpon khang* (no longer extant).⁴ Gung thang Village is the location of the famous *vihāra*, which Bla ma Zhang founded in 1187. The main sanctuary, the great Jo bo Byang chub chen po (or Lha chen Dpal ’bar) statue, was installed two years later in the presence of important contemporaries – Dus gsum mkhyen pa (1110-93), Gling chen Ras pa (1128-88) and Rgya ma Sangs rgyas dbon ston (1138-1210) (RCP: 259). Today only the main building of the temple complex remains, which in turn is the remainder of the renovations from the time when the temple (and Tshal as a whole) became part of the Dge lugs pa school and the Lhasa central government. Similar to the case of Tshal Yang dgon, the establishment of the *vihāra* was later followed by a series of buildings and institutions, above all the imposing Sku ’bum chen mo *stūpa*, during the construction of which, according to the tradition, Zhang died and which served as his grave monument.⁵ Imme-

³ *bod nor bu rnam gsum*, i.e. Phag mo gru pa Rdo rje Rgyal po (1110-70), Tsong kha pa Blo bzang Grags pa (1357-1419) and Bla ma Zhang – referring to the enormous influence of these spiritual fathers on the religious and political developments in early and later post-imperial Tibet (RCP: 379, et passim).

⁴ RCP (Garden): 597.

⁵ According to the textual tradition, the body was cremated on the half-finished *stūpa*, at the construction site, so to speak, and the ashes were later placed in the upper part of the *bum pa* (i.e. dome of the *stūpa*) – with the exception of the heart, tongue and eyes, which together with other relics were given into the ossuary called Bkra shis ’Od ’bar. For details see RCP: 270ff. The *stūpa* was not rebuilt after its destruction during the Cultural Revolution. A large hill of debris with a diameter of ca. 40m is now bordered by a circumambulation path. For photographs of the intact Sku ’bum chen mo see RCP: 315.

diately to the south there were further historical *stūpa*-s (today partially rebuilt), and finally the well-known “colleges” and “residences” – i.e. Chos 'khor gling and Chos khri grva tshang (aka Chos khri lho lcog) and the Sgom sde Gzims khang Shar ma and the Gzims phug nub ma alias Chos khri nub ma (Fig. 2). These institutions, which were built between the 13th and 15th centuries, have disappeared today or there are only some remains of the wall (RCP: 228-74). A special place was immediately west of the colleges, in the area of the “great sandy plain” (Bye thang chen mo – related to the Tshal thang Bye ma can of the written sources), which was once laid out as a garden where the inauguration ceremony of the Tshal pa ruler was traditionally held (RCP (Garden): 601).

A satellite image from 1966 provides a good impression of the architecture of the Gung thang temple district before its destruction in the late 1960s (Fig. 2). The buildings that we see here still intact can be easily brought in line with historical descriptions, especially those of the representative inventory text *Gung thang dkar chag* (written in 1782).⁶ Despite the structural changes, especially in the last few decades, the basic streets have been preserved, even if the streets have partly been widened or narrowed due to renovations of the residential buildings. This fact is relevant to understanding the place of the stone lion that we visited in May 2019, following the information given to us by Shawo Khacham, an archaeologist at the Tibet University. The figure stands behind a walled partition between a residential building and an incense offering shrine (*bsangs khang*) right on the street, about 50m from the entrance to the courtyard of the Gung thang temple (Fig. 3). This shaft-like construction (internal dimension ca. 130x190cm), with a tiny, barred window facing the street, is likely to date from more recent times, built in connection with the construction of the house behind it.

The lion was half covered in garbage, its legs half buried in the ground. We had no official permit for an inspection, so the exposure had to be taken quickly. At least for a measurement and first photographic documentation, this somewhat bizarre clearing out action was sufficient – accompanied by the benevolent curiosity and partial help of the neighbours.

The stone lion is a sturdy figure of approx. 110cm (length), height: 100cm; width (distance between the front legs): 62cm. The massive head, which makes up almost a third of the body, measures 35cm (distance between the tips of the ears), eye distance 16cm.⁷ The figure is

⁶ I.e. the basic text of RCP (see RCP: 13ff.); an earlier translation is in Everding 2000.

⁷ Measurements by Hubert Feiglstorfer, May 5 2019.

facing the street, and, as it appears, in a half-lying or crouching position. The mane is made differently, with a longitudinal mane on the forehead area and a curly mane on the back of the head. The tail has broken off; it may originally have pointed upwards from the body. There are remains of red colour on the sides of the body, there is also some blue. The massive overall composition of the stone figure, details such as the designs of the curly mane and the form of crouching posture are strongly reminiscent of the imperial grave lions of 'Chad kha (size 120x90cm), and like them the Gung thang lion is indeed impressive, but rather crudely carved.⁸ We share the assessment of Shawo Khacham, who in 2016 was the first to inspect this stone sculpture and who has little doubt that it represents a product of the imperial era; he thinks the face and the front part of the mane, however, may be a later working.⁹

The village people and the monks of Gung thang call the stone figure the lion of Gung thang Bla ma Zhang, who used it as his mount, they say – possibly an allusion to one of the so-called “three offences” of Zhang, according to which he used to undertake his pilgrimages on the back of a snow lion.¹⁰ But there were originally two lions, because on the opposite side of the road there was a second stone lion, the neighbours say, which has long since disappeared. This means that we have here the characteristic situation of a pair of stone lions, which usually act as guardians of prestige buildings, in one of the three positions – facing forward, facing each other (as in this case) or facing the monument.

The lion's present position indicates that it belonged to the entrance complex of the temple and not to the former Chos khri grva tshang situated behind the (left) lion, whose entrance was on the north side (Fig. 2). In Fig. 2 we see a widening of the street shortly before the entrance to the temple courtyard; this is the place where, during the fa-

⁸ Cf. Hazod 2015. More recent discoveries of stone lions as guardians of imperial grave mounds relate to a pair of lions from the site 0242 (see TTT, site 0242) and a pair of lions that are kept in Shigatse (in the new Gzhis kha rtse *rdzong*, which has been set up as a museum) and allegedly came from one grave field in Bo dong (most likely related to the TTT site 0325). Both pairs have stylistic similarities, but differ from the 'Chad kha and Gung thang lions.

⁹ Shawo Khacham, personal communication, December 2016.

¹⁰ The “three offences” (or pretensions) of Gung thang Bla ma Zhang: 1) Contrary to the advice of the protector god Pe har, he did not build his monastery on the mountain, but (arrogantly) on the river (Skyid chu), a location reserved for the Jo khang. 2) Zhang did not make his pilgrimages on foot, but on a snow lion. 3) He only allowed *bla ma*-s from Lhasa (meaning the core of Central Tibet?) to be abbot of his religious site; see RCP (Garden): 615.

mous Gung thang Flower Offering festival (*Me tog mchod pa*), the divine couple Grib Rdzong btsan and the Gung thang Lha mo¹¹ used to meet for the first time and perform a dance before going to the temple to spend a night there together – a key scene in one of the most spectacular festivals of the traditional Lhasa year.¹² It appears that the lions once marked this small forecourt, although they are not mentioned in any of the temple descriptions known to us (including the reports by early western visitors such as those of H. Richardson in the 1940s). At the same time, it can be assumed that there were older relocations of the figures within Gung thang – but only if we think that their presence goes back to the founding days, when the architectural situation of the temple and forecourt was completely different.

If we pursue the assessment of an imperial-era origin of the stone figures, the question of where they came from arises, and when and under what circumstances they came to Gung thang.

2. In Ngan lam

2.1 Burial grounds and rock carvings in Zhal phu

Tshal (lit. grove, park, garden)¹³ referred to a larger area in Bla ma Zhang's time, which included Gung thang and neighbouring settlements (such as Tsha ba gru, Zhang's birthplace at the foot of the Tsan dan ri; Fig. 1; cf. RCP (Garden): 600ff.), and Grib, the southern valley across from Lhasa, is also said to have been part of Tshal at that time.¹⁴ And it has been argued that Tshal was probably a derivative of the imperial place name of Ngan lam Ts[h]al gsar ba, "new Tshal of Ngan lam", with the place name Ngan lam being associated with the imperial Ngan lam family of the same name. This family originally came

¹¹ I.e. the Lhasa protector Rdzong btsan of Grib and the protectress of Tshal Gung thang, Dpal ldan lha mo 'Dod khams dbang phyug ma, one of the three Dpal lha sisters of Lhasa. The statues of these deities are kept in their respective residences, in Grib Lha khang and in the Gung thang temple.

¹² This meeting reflects the union of the secular and religious throne of Tshal pa (cf. also below fn. 14); for details of the *Met tog mchod pa* (held at *sa ga zla ba* – middle of the fourth Tibetan lunar month) see RCP (Garden): 585-93.

¹³ For other spellings ('Tshal, Mtshal) and their interpretations in the local tradition see RCP (Garden): 600-01.

¹⁴ The territorial union of Tshal and Grib is reflected in the local account which says that the two areas were once covered by a huge snake (with its head lying in Grib). Zhang beat the monster and divided it into a northern and southern part, with the northern half representing the area of Tshal and Gung-thang and the southern half representing the area south of it, the zone of Sri, Zhal, etc. including Grib (RCP (Garden): 596). Behind this story is the union between the religious throne in Tshal and the house of the secular ruler represented by a branch of the Mgar family, which had an old relationship to Grib and the Grib Rdzong btsan (cf. RCP (Garden): 573ff.).

from 'Phan yul and had a branch in this part of the Lhasa valley from the late 7th century at the latest.¹⁵ District catalogues related to the imperial period list the district (*yul sde*) of Ngan lam for the period from the middle of the 8th century (Hazod 2009: 204, 209), which probably refers to the Ngan lam in the Lhasa valley and not to that of 'Phan yul.¹⁶ How far the district extended in the east and west is not so clear; in the early Tshal pa period, Ngan lam included Tshal and Gung thang as well as the two southern valleys of Zhal and Sri, which often appear as a compound (*sri zhal*), including the intermediate mountain ridge of Byang mkhar, best known as one of the central retreat sites of Gung thang Bla ma Zhang (RCP: 81, 86f.). Past Byang mkhar, over the upper Zhal and Sri and past the "Pleiades mountain" (Smin drug Rdza ri, one of the four holy mountains of the Lhasa valley), old roads lead to the south, to 'Phrang 'go and Sgrags, and southwest to Gsang, place of the Gsang phu Ne'u thog, which was closely linked to Gung thang and the Gung thang Chos 'khor gling college (RCP: 644, 689).

In the database of the "Tibetan tumulus" project (TTT), a long-term research on the burial mound fields in Central Tibet, mostly from the imperial period (above fn. 2), six grave fields are registered for the area of Ngan lam (i.e. the Ngam lam in the geographical delimitation of the Tshal pa time, Fig. 1). We have previously visited the tumulus sites of Sri and discussed them in more detail,¹⁷ while those of Zhal (TTT 0408 and 0463) have so far only been known from satellite recordings. The cemetery 0408 in the lower Zhal is a smaller site with a dozen badly weathered, but otherwise little damaged oval-shaped mounds (M-1 approx. 16m). 0463 is located in Upper Zhal (Zhal phu), next to an alpine farm or *'brog pa* place, and consists of two step-shaped, stone grave monuments (with a square floor plan of approx. 12 m) as well as traces of other graves in the vicinity, which are not so clearly identifiable. It cannot be ruled out that the step-like structures are the remains of *stūpa* tombs, such as those found in the tumulus fields of neighbouring Sri (i.e. 0397, 0398).¹⁸ Several traces of older buildings (such as foundation stones) bear witness to a possibly greater history of this

¹⁵ See recently Hazod 2019: 92-94.

¹⁶ In these catalogues, Ngan lam is listed between the *yul sde* (or *yul dpon tshan*) of Ba lam in the east and Brang in the west (i.e. in Lower Stod lung).

¹⁷ Hazod 2019: 92-94. The site 0614 (marked on Fig. 1) was not yet registered at that time; it concerns a smaller cemetery with badly weathered mounds behind the village Rten dkar (var. Rten mkhar). On this section around Rten dkar see RCP (Garden): 599.

¹⁸ See the graphic reconstruction of 0463 (M-1 and M-2) and of the *stūpa* mound of 0397 in Feiglstorfer 2018: 112, 127, 137 and Feiglstorfer 2019: 26-28. The site 0398 was not accessible during our visits (2015, 2019). Shawo Khacham (personal communication, December 2015) was able to visit the site in 2014 and documented the remains of a *stūpa* tomb.

place.

Clear indications of such a larger (religious) history can be found not far to the west, around the rock paintings of Zhal phu, which were discovered or made public in 2017 – one of the most important rock art discoveries in the central Tibetan area in recent decades, with an age estimate of ca. the 11th century.¹⁹ The central part is a group of up to 4m high boulders, located in an idyllic spot on a western side stream of the Zhal phu river, with carvings of representatives of the Five Buddha Families (*rgyal ba rigs lnga*) and their retinue (partly with associated *dhāraṇī*-s and names of the deities in Tibetan script). In addition, there are depictions of Maitreya, Rnam thos sras and others. There is also a large representation of the “seven precious emblems of king-ship” (*rgyal srid rin chen sna bdun*), which differs stylistically from the other carvings and, in our opinion, is of a younger age.²⁰ In the middle of one of the figures the (scraped) contours of a red deer can also be found, which may indicate a much older use of the rock site. Only a detailed stylistic and (infrared) technical investigation of this extraordinary place can provide information about the site’s historical contexts. This also includes the immediate surroundings, which are littered with traces of an older religious site: remains of buildings, structural components with religious symbols carved on them, collapsed *stūpa*-s, remains of accommodation. According to the structural condition, the abandonment of this site may have an older history, i.e. to be dated before the destructions of the last century.

As far as identification is concerned, first it seems to be obvious to associate it with the hermitage complex of the above-mentioned Byang mkhar mountain. In addition to the central *ri khrod*, hermitage, visible from afar on the mountaintop of the Byang mkhar ri (Fig. 8), Bla ma Zhang’s writings and the locals mention a number of other, not precisely localised Byang mkhar retreats (Byang mkhar ’Brong bu, Chu bzang, Gongdang (*Dgongs thang/lidang?), Gnam sgo, Stag tshang, Ding gi Dpal khungs, Brag rtse; cf. RCP: 86-88). Finally, there are two other sites in Zhang’s writings that are explicitly specified as places *in* Zhal. This is the Re’u chung dgon of Zhal (Zhal gyi Re’u chung dgon/gdong) as well as the religious site known as Gnam khang

¹⁹ The discoveries were made by a collaborator of the Cultural Relics Bureau, Lhasa, in February 2017 – following advice from shepherds in Zhal phu. A first documentation can be found online at:

<http://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/0BwHFOX1nbpYNqW-x4VOKg>;

<http://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/J1LjWPQFf5p-cOopxyIRAw>.

²⁰ At one point in his writings (RCP: 6), Zhang claims that the central *nāga* queen Gtsang chab *klu mo* offered him the entire Tibetan realm, filled with the cakravartin (universal ruler) specific *rgyal srid rin chen sna bdun*; it is quite possible that the representation in Zhal phu signals the presence of the Tshal pa founder or the beginning of the Tshal pa history of this place.

(*Rnam [rgyal] khang?), a place that obviously coincides with the much older religious settlement of Rnams khang of Zhal (var. Bsname khang).²¹ The founder was 'Bring Ye shes Yon tan, one of the central figures in the history of the new dissemination of the Teaching (*bstan pa phyi dar*) in Central Tibet in the early 11th century. His followers formed the 'Bring Community ('Bring *tsho*, named after his family (or lineage name), 'Bring), which was later divided geographically into upper, middle and lower 'Bring *tsho*. The Rnams khang belonged to the middle 'Bring community ('Bring *tsho bar*). It is said that Ye shes Yon tan founded this site after the reopening and occupying the imperial Skar chung temple (in Ra ma sgang, not far west of Zhal). Starting from Zhal, several branches emerged, one of them in the immediate vicinity: the Sri'i Rgya phibs (Rgya phibs of Sri), known as the temple where the great teacher-reformer Atiśa (Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna, 980-1054) had stayed for two weeks on the way from Bsam yas to Lhasa (around the late 1040s).²² It is quite possible that he also visited the idyllic place of the Rnams khang in the upper Zhal. In any case, we can state that this early 11th century settlement of the 'Bring *tsho* is the best candidate for identifying the religious site around the Zhal phu rock art, which was later used by Bla ma Zhang and the early Tshal pa, i.e. the Gnam khang of Zhal. The Re'u chung dgon could again refer to the religious site, which, as mentioned, we suspect to be behind the building remains next to the tumulus site of 0463.²³

2.2 The tumulus situation in Sri

Returning to the question of the origin place of the Gung thang lions, we see it as not very likely that the lions come from the structural context of an early (pre-Tshal pa) temple like those of Zhal phu, and there are hardly any examples of this type of guardian lions known from that time. Rather, such figures are known from the burial-mound context of the imperial period, and in this context in a recent paper the author argued that the Gung thang lions, of whose existence we had first heard at that time, were originally from a grave mound. And we referred to the most important grave in the Tshal Gung thang district,

²¹ RCP: 88, 163-64.

²² See RCP: 663f. Rgya phibs is not precisely identified; possibly the site refers to ruins behind Rten dkar (Fig. 1; above fn. 17), which are associated with a temple of the Zhang teacher Rgva lo Gzhon nu dpal (1110/14-1198/1202) (RCP (Garden): 599).

²³ An earlier proposed identification of Re'u chung dgon refers to Ri chung, the name of the isolated rocky mountain at the entrance to Zhal and Sri, between Gung thang Village and Rten dkar Village (Fig. 1). In Zhang's writings there is also talk of a temple called Re'u rtsa'i gtsug lag khang (RCP: 88), which may be identical with the Re'u chung dgon.

namely the tomb M-1 of 0157, which has been identified as the resting place of the top general and inner minister (and later chief minister) Ngan lam Stag sgra Klu khong (Hazod 2019: 94). The place gained greater prominence in literature some time ago, as it was identified as the place of origin of the famous Zhol stele of Lhasa, whose inscriptions are dedicated to the Ngan lam family and Stag sgra Klu khong in particular. Made during the lifetime of the Klu khong, the stele may originally have been located in the village area below the cemetery, but indications from the local tradition suggest that before being transported to Lhasa at the end of the 17th century it had stood by the grave (Hazod 2009: 181-83; Hazod 2010).

Yet we see a certain chronological problem in identifying the grave as the place of the Gung thang lions: Stag ra Klu khong was appointed chief minister around 782, the highest government post, which he held only briefly – together with his successor, Sna nam Zhang Rgyal mtshan lha snang, who acted alone as chief minister from 783 onwards (Dotson 2009: 153; Hazod 2019: 94f.). 783 was probably also the date of death of the Stag ra Klu khong. His grave, a monumental trapezoidal building of 65m at the front, was probably laid out during his lifetime, possibly before his appointment as chief minister.²⁴ If the stone lions decorated the grave from the beginning, then they would be the earliest example of the Central Tibetan grave lions, to be dated before the well-known pair of lions at the grave of Khri Srong lde brtsan (completed in approx. 800). Lions are a significant part of Buddhist iconography and from the beginning were used architecturally in various ways in the complex of imperial temples in Tibet, but the example of the grave guardians, we think, has a special status: it signals an image of power that we believe was not realised at a regional level, but was first initiated by the imperial side. In other words, the combination of grave and guardian lions, of which we know a number of examples today,²⁵ was an establishment from the Buddhist period, where the later regional examples quasi copied the situation at Khri Srong lde brtsan's tomb.²⁶

In the tumulus landscape of Ngan lam there are at least two *stūpa*-shaped graves (in 0397 and 0398),²⁷ a form of tumulus burial that (from the late 8th century) was arguably reserved for Buddhist dignitaries, even if one grave account lists “the *mchod rten* replacing *bang so* (tumulus)” only as a resting place for (Buddhist) ladies from the imperial house (cf. Hazod 2018: 71). For Ngan lam it is quite possible that one

²⁴ For details of this argument see Hazod 2019: 24-25; 77; 92f.

²⁵ Related to the TTT sites 0105, 0242, 0339, 0329 (cf. fn. 8).

²⁶ Bialek recently expressed certain doubts about this conclusion (as given in Hazod 2015: 197; 2019: 72), in my eyes not very convincingly (Bialek, forthcoming: fn. 53).

²⁷ Above fn. 18.

of the *stūpa* mounds represents the resting place of Ngan lam Rgyal ba mchog dbyangs/skyong, the famous monk and Buddhist master of Bsam yas, who is mentioned in an Old Tibetan document as the younger brother of the Stag sgra Klu gong.²⁸ It is possible that the Gung thang lions once decorated this *stūpa*-mound or one of the other Buddhist tumuli in Ngan Lam. Also conceivable is the scenario according to which the making of the lions and their placing at the tomb of the chief minister represent a later story – representing part of a new conceptualisation of the burial grounds of Ngan lam Sri, which started with the *stūpa* mound burial of this eminent Buddhist member of the Ngan lam family. However, in this case one would have to ask why at that time (end of the 12th century?) only the lions and not also the stele of Ngan lam Sri were brought to Gung thang?

3. The “wars” of Zhang, the “crazy beggar monk” of Ngan lam

Bla ma Zhang (birth name: Dar ma grags, ordination name: Brtson 'grus grags pa) came from Tsha ba gru, a place not far west of Gung thang Village (Fig. 1). On his father's side he was a descendant of the Sna nam, known as one of the noble *zhang* or heir-producing families of the imperial period, hence the form Zhang sna nam (or also Sna nam zhang). On his mother's side, too, he came from an old noble family (i.e. Shud phu). In one of the oldest references, his closer homeland is described as a place of noble families of the imperial period.²⁹ It is possible that this aristocratic background played a certain role in Zhang's self-image, but in principle it was the religious background combined with a special character that produced one of the most extraordinary

²⁸ Van Schaik and Doney 2007: 200, 209; but see Akester 2016: 330 for a different chronology of Rgyal ba mchog dbyangs. For Ngan lam Rgyal ba mchog dbyangs, the place of birth is given as the Ngan lam of 'Phan yul (see RCP (Garden): 606 and the sources given there); if this information is correct, one is inclined to assume that the older brother (Stag sgra Klu Khong) was also born there. The Ngan lam of 'Phan yul has two grave fields (situated opposite the ruins of Ngan po dgon) which do not seem to have any graves from the (imperial) Buddhist period and which give the overall impression of being older burial grounds (see TTT site 0216, 0217 for an initial documentation). The burial of the Ngan lam brothers in Skyid shod would reflect a situation according to which the “family cemeteries” were divided into two (Ngan lam) areas. It has been noted that the historical background of these two Ngan lam (in 'Phan yul and Skyid shod – an example of a “wandering toponym”) – was perhaps related to the inclusion of the Ngan lam family line in the circle of the *btsan 'bangs rus drug* (“six firm subject clans/ family lines”), a group that belonged to the closer entourage of the emperor and was responsible for his safeguarding during his stay in the Lhasa valley (i.e. Lo (= Lo mi) and Bran ka, Sba (= Dba's) and Ngan lam, Gshu rings and Phur pa; Hazod 2018: 16, 45f.).

²⁹ This refers to the name “Tsha ba gru of Btsan 'bangs sa” (RCP (Garden): 602), with Btsan 'bangs sa (“place of the *btsan 'bangs*”) apparently being related to the above-mentioned group of the *btsan 'bangs rus drug* (fn. 28).

figures of the religious and political scene in post-imperial Tibet. The founder of the Tshal pa Bka' brgyud pa school united in himself the identities of a yogi and an esoteric teacher, author of a comprehensive writings (including religious songs, *mgur*)³⁰ as well as that of a warlord and strategist, whose military activities laid the foundation for the later dominion of the Tshal pa in the Lhasa Valley and beyond in the 13th and 14th centuries. Zhang himself never tires of emphasising his uniqueness: nobody, he says in his autobiographical writings, is able to understand his qualities, and there is only him and nobody else in the world who can safeguard and uphold the Teaching of the Buddha etc. And he saw the "wars" that he waged as a means to salvation, not only for his student-soldiers, but also for the opponents; thus, he swore "that anyone killed would not be reborn in hell", rather such a killing will produce "miraculous signs like rainbows and relics" (RCP: 6). One study on Zhang summarises: "his ruthless recourse to martial means to fulfill his objectives were all covered by the cloak of active compassion – the whole, it seems, a form of mystic *mahāmudrā*-style battlefield philosophy and activism" (RCP: 12).

At the same time, he linked his martial demeanour with the image of the beggar monk; "I, this beggar monk Zhang" (*bdag rang zhang gi sprang ban 'dis*) is a common phrase, or also the "crazy (*smyon pa*) beggar monk Zhang", or in connection with his homeland simply the "beggar of Ngan lam" (*ngan lam pa'i sprang ban*). And the soldiers of his fighting force are also addressed as beggar monks.³¹

Even if it is not very clear how exactly we should imagine these wars of Zhang, their "philosophy" and extent etc.,³² the political implications are quite clear: several of the "battlefields" mentioned in the sources (such as those of 'Phrang 'go, Zur mkhar, Grva, Dol, Lcang, Sgrags and Ldan) correspond with the territories of the later Tshal pa rule, represented by the Tshal pa *mi sde* (RCP: 153-183; 300). In this context, the sources speak of the procurement of materials that Zhang needed to build his monastic centre (cf. BA 714-15), or more specifically of the demolition of local religious establishments (temple, monastery, *stūpa*-s). In this connection we have referred to the example of Ldan, the later Tshal pa *mi sde*, the Mdan of the *Old Tibetan Annals*, situated next to Ba lam in central Skyid shod; here the local tradition tells of the violent appearance of Gung thang Bla ma Zhang and his group, who once tore down a *stūpa* at a place in Lower Ldan in order

³⁰ Cf. Yamamoto 2015.

³¹ Cf. Yamamoto 2009: 45f. 98, 175f. 200, 368 et passim); for the many names and aliases of Zhang see also RCP: 37.

³² Cf. here the statements in RCP (Garden): 617. See also Yamamoto's discussion of this topic (Yamamoto 2009: 253).

to use it to build the *vihāra* in Gung thang.³³

In this context it is easy to imagine that the lions of Gung thang came to Tshal Gung thang as “souvenirs” during a similar action as in Ldan – in connection with the construction of the Gung thang temple.³⁴ As mentioned, we assume that they represent guardian figures at a grave mound from the (later) imperial period. There are numerous burial mound fields with large graves of the aristocratic elite³⁵ in the areas that later belonged to the patchwork-like structure of the Tshal pa dominion in Skyid shod and Ngam shod.³⁶ It is also conceivable that the lions belonged to a grave of the Sna nam Zhang, the paternal line of Bla ma Zhang, but such a “kinship criterion” in this context is rather speculative and the “Sna nam graves” identified so far (Hazod 2019) do not really fit in the proposed chronological framework of monuments after 800 CE.

4. The situation in Chos lung

Even if a much larger area is theoretically possible for the identification of the origin place of the Gung thang lions, in our opinion the best candidate remains a grave from one of the imperial cemeteries in the immediate vicinity of Gung thang. In addition to the above-mentioned burial grounds of Zhal and Sri, one must also include Chos lung, the valley to the east of Sri (today under the district administration of Bsam grub gling), which is also registered as the location of a central Bla ma Zhang retreat (cf. RCP: 125) and was probably part of the Ngan lam *yul sde* (district) of the imperial period. Of the three grave fields of Chos lung (0150, 0405, 0406) the trapezoidal tombs of 0150 (with a size of up to 55m at the front) represent one of the remarkable elite mounds

³³ This seems to refer to the relic shrine of Rva lo *tsā ba* (who died in Lower Ldan) and was linked with the taking over of a specific tradition (here of Yamāntaka). On the other hand, the event shows clear parallels to a later story, when Rva lo’s relics were taken from Ldan to ‘Bras-spungs in the early 15th century. See RCP (Garden): 617; Hazod 2004.

³⁴ Such actions of relocating older monuments were apparently not so exceptional. In another context, we have speculated that the Karma pa Dus gsum mkhyen pa (1110-93), an avowed critic of Zhang’s warlike activities (RCP: 35-36), may have been responsible for the relocation of the imperial stele of the Lcang bu Lha khang (at the entrance to the Tshur valley in Stod lung) to its present place in Mtshur phu dgon – brought there in connection with the foundation of this central Karma pa seat in 1187. It has also been speculated that at about the same time the famous “uncle-nephew pillar” (*zhang dbon rdo ring*) which documents the Tang China and Tibet agreement of 821/22 came from its (proposed) place of origin in Rgya ma to Lhasa. See for details Hazod 2014: 35-36.

³⁵ See RCP: 23, *et passim*.

³⁶ Kriz and Hazod 2020.

in the Lhasa valley. Due right (north) of the burial ground are the extensive remains of an abandoned settlement, including a ruined *stūpa* complex (not identified).³⁷

It is worth mentioning a somewhat puzzling story from the local tradition, according to which the Gung thang Lha mo (see above) was born in Chos lung, in today's Chu lung Village; one shrine (a *bstan ma khang*) in this village refers to this birthplace. (The shrine is not far from the ruins of the Pe har House, itself an important station in the transfer history of the Bsam yas protector Rgyal po Pe har to Lhasa; RCP: 571ff.). The locals say that originally the meeting of the Gung thang Lha mo and her lover, Grib Rdzong btsan, took place once a year at this place in Chos lung, but every time the visitors became so drunk at this festival that people decided to move the meeting to the temple in Gung thang.

This story (recorded by the author in 2009) seems to be related to the history of the re-establishment of the Gung thang *Me tog mchod pa* in the time of the Fifth Dalai Lama or shortly afterwards, when the festival was incorporated in the ritual calendar of the Lhasa year.³⁸ The following scenario is conceivable:

1. The stone lions had been in Chu lung, namely at this site of the Gung thang Lha mo, where, in a manner similar to the later situation in Gung thang, they marked the place where the Lha mo and Grib Rdzong btsan met – in some (probably simpler) form of presentation at that time.

2. The lions were moved as it were together with this transfer of the festival (or part of the festival) to Gung thang – to the place in front of the temple, which we have identified as a separate architectural sector for this meeting of the divine couple.

3. The lions came from a grave in the immediate vicinity, presumably from the central mound M-1 of the opposite burial ground 0150, whose local-historical (and family-specific) context we do not know

³⁷ The burial ground consists of altogether 11 tombs, four of which are larger structures; see TTT site 0150 and especially Feiglstorfer 2019: 56-59 with a detailed reconstruction of the central mound M-1.

³⁸ Cf. RCP: 585. According to the local tradition of Gung thang, the beginnings of the festival go back to the time of Bla ma Zhang, which is rather unlikely. To our knowledge, it is mentioned for the first time in the sources for the year 1340 (RCP: 192-93).

exactly,³⁹ but which we assume represent a tomb of the later phase (after 800).⁴⁰ This is exactly the situation we find in the case of the 'Chad kha lions (0105) or also of 0242 (fn. 8), where the stone figures were brought from an elite grave to the next temple (in this case it is related to the ensemble of Pe har khang and Bstan ma shrine in Chu lung Village). The initiative here and there was probably not a grand gesture by a higher authority, as was the case, for example, with the transfer of the Zhol stele to Lhasa, a story that was immortalised in murals in the Potala (Hazod 2010, 2019); rather the initiative came from the locals themselves, and the later transfer from Chos lung to Gung thang was probably also a local issue.

To sum up:

- The Gung thang lions represent very likely former guardian figures of an imperial elite grave, most likely a tomb in a burial ground not far from the Gung thang temple. This refers to one of the tumulus sites in the Ngan lam district, including Chos lung.
- The statement by the locals which associates the lion(s) with Gung thang Bla ma Zhang is likely not to be seen as a historically reliable information. In the local tradition, the founder is held responsible for everything in the history (including later history) of the monastic centre,⁴¹ and as far as we know, this association is not mentioned in any of the written sources either. We cannot entirely rule out that the lions' relocation to Gung thang was part of the founding history of the temple, in other words, they arrived there on the initiative of the founder Bla ma Zhang and/ or his immediate environment, but we see the scenario of a "smaller" regional history as more likely.
- We suspect a connection with the history of the Gung thang *Me tog mchod pa*, about whose beginnings in the Tshal pa period (fn. 38) and the older tradition (i.e. before the incorporation into the Lhasa year) we do not know very much, but which, or a central part of which, was apparently earlier stationed in Chos lung. As regards content, the lions themselves actually had nothing to do with the festival; they were taken from a nearby grave simply to decorate a local square, and when this stage was moved to Gung thang, arguably in the 17th or early 18th

³⁹ Aristocratic lineages from the imperial period which in a wider sense can be associated with this area are members of the *btsan 'bangs rus drug* mentioned above (fn. 28), perhaps also Shud bu and Gnon (mentioned in connection with the administration of the Lower Skyi thousand district).

⁴⁰ We are not just sticking to 0150: 0405 or 0406 are also possible candidates. 0406 refers to a single (trapezoidal) mound of approx. 30m at the front, which is not more than 600m from Chu lung Village away (Fig. 11).

⁴¹ On this topic of Zhang and the "embodiment" of the fate of his temple and monastery cf. RCP (Garden): 571.

century, they were moved with it. In this sense, the lion probably has never had another place within the temple precinct of Gung thang than where we find it today.

It remains to be hoped that the stone lion, which the locals call the mount of the Gung thang Bla ma Zhang, soon emerges from the shed that currently hides it from the outside world, and is made visible, so that this historical testimony can become accessible for interested visitors and hopefully also for further investigations.

Illustrations



Fig. 1 – The old district of Ngan lam, with the monastic centre of Tshal Gung thang and the ancient burial mound sites in this area (= yellow symbols; the numbers refer to the tumulus fields as listed in TTT). (Map based on satellite photograph 4.2016; map data: Google, Maxar Technologies 2021; modifications and additional data: G. Hazod 2021)



Fig. 2 – The temple area of Gung thang. (Photo: Corona Satellite, 22 January 1966; additional data by G. Hazod 2021)



Fig. 3 – The position of the stone lion in Gung thang. (Photos by the TTT team, plus satellite photo (1.2021), with additional data by G. Hazod 2021)



Fig. 4 – The stone lion of Gung thang.
(Image-based model (IBM) by M. Gamon 2019)



*Fig. 5 – The stone construction of tomb M-1 of the TTT site 0463 in Upper Zhal.
(Photo: H. Feiglstorfer 2019)*



Fig. 6 – The rock carvings of Zhal phu (section). (Photo: G. Zotti 2019)



Fig. 7. *Vairocana*, from the rock carving of *Zhal phu*. (Photo: G. Zotti 2019)



Fig. 7a. མཎིའུ་མཎི་འུ་མཎི། – *dhāraṇī* at the *Vairocana* image (Fig. 7).



Fig. 8. A stūpa ruin next to the Zhal phu rock-art site. In the background the Byang mkhar mountain. (Photo: M. Gamon 2019)



Fig. 9. In Sri (Ngan lam Sri): the massive mound M-1 of the TTT site 0157 (backside) – the resting place of the general and minister Ngan lam Stag sgra Klu khong. (Photo: M. Gamon 2019)



Fig. 10. The stūpa mound of the grave field 0397 in Sri (cf. Fig. 1). (Photo: H. Feiglstorfer 2015)



Fig. 11. In Chös lung, the valley directly to the east of Sri. (Map based on satellite photograph 11.2009; map data: Google, Maxar Technologies 2021; modifications and additional data: G. Hazod 2021)



Fig. 12. The central mound of the tumulus site 0150 in Chos lung (cf. Fig. 11). (Photo: G. Hazod 2009)



Fig. 13. The ruins of the Pe har Rgyal po House in Chu lung Village (cf. Fig. 11). (Photo: G. Hazod 2009)

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An Early Maṇḍala of Cakrasaṃvara

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It is with a spirit of joyous gratitude and long-standing friendship that I dedicate this essay to Dan Martin whose insights and constructive criticism have been a source of constant inspiration and help to my research, while his tibeto-logic.com postings bring laughter and many reflections!

Introduction

This maṇḍala of Cakrasaṃvara (fig. 1: Maṇḍala of Cakrasaṃvara, distemper on cloth, 65 x 52.7 cm, Tibet, private collection) was first published by the present writer as plate 92 of Heller 1999. At the time, it was tentatively analyzed as a product of the 14th century, a chronology which is re-evaluated in the present essay. When I first studied this maṇḍala, only the front of the painting was accessible due to a frame surround; the private collection provided an unpublished report which identified the masters of the lineage of the upper register, allowing a tentative chronology.¹ Shortly thereafter, thanks to Dan Martin's careful reading of my essay and his spontaneous sending of insightful comments on April 3, 2000, it became clear that the chronology as published was incorrect due to misidentification of the masters of the lineage. Subsequently, the reverse of the thangka has been photographed. It is published here for the first time (fig. 2: reverse of the Maṇḍala of Cakrasaṃvara, 65 x 52.7 cm, Tibet, private collection), thus allowing the necessary corrections to be made and the source rendered visible for public attention.

1. The composition of the thangka

The composition of this maṇḍala is organized in a very simple manner. The upper register of the cloth has a horizontally aligned series of portraits of the spiritual lineage, starting from left to right, with eleven historical masters as the followers of the blue Saṃvara and the

¹ Heller 1999: 150-151, citing Stoddard 1993 (unpublished).

red Vajrayoginī, standing in tantric embrace at far left; both represented with one head and two arms. The main area of the cloth is concentrated on the maṇḍala with Cakrasaṃvara and Vajrayoginī at the center, where Cakrasaṃvara, having four faces, crowned with a moon crescent, and with twelve arms, is embracing Vajrayoginī, again with one face and two arms. Outside the outermost circle of the maṇḍala, in the four corners there are additional meditation deities and portraits of Buddhist masters. The central area of the present painting has a star configuration with 62 deities, corresponding to the specifics of the 62 deity maṇḍala of Cakrasaṃvara which stems from the transmission by the siddha Luipa (10th century).² There are two 62 deity Cakrasaṃvara maṇḍala with this star configuration. While the teaching according to Luipa has the male deities of the body cakra (*kāyacakra*) represented as white with four arms, the Cakrasaṃvara maṇḍala stemming from the siddha Nagpopa has the *kāyacakra* male deities as white with two arms.³ Luipa figures prominently among the members of the spiritual lineage of teachers (*bla ma'i brgyud*) of the present thangka (see below). In the lower register, from left to right there are eleven additional deities, with a Buddhist monk performing a ritual, apparently a consecration ritual, in the lower right corner.

The inscriptions

On the front of the thangka, there are no names inscribed beneath any of the Buddhist masters or deities. It is the reverse of the thangka that has mantra dedication inscriptions organized like a star at the center of the composition, as well as the horizontal alignment for the names of the masters of the spiritual lineage of the upper register. In the lower register, with again a horizontal alignment of deities and the monk performing a ritual, there are no names inscribed, only *oṃ-ah-hūṃ* aligned vertically behind each protective deity and the portrait of the seated monk.

It is the upper register that provides the key to understanding this thangka. From left to right, in very clear *dbu can* script in black letters on the pale beige canvas, each figure has *oṃ-ah-hūṃ* in vertical alignment and beneath, horizontally written are the following names:

Saṃvara and Vajrayoginī: Oṃ hri ha ha hūṃ hri dza

² BDRC P891

<https://library.bdrc.io/show/bdr:P8891https://www.himalayanart.org/search/set.cfm?setID=1269> Indian adepts, identifiable Mahāsiddhas.

³ Bsod nams rgya mtsho and Tachikawa 1991: 114-117.

Lu yi ba na mo : Homage to Luipa
na mo Dha ra ka pa (sic: Dārikapa) : Homage to Dārikapa
na mo Bram ze: Homage to the Brahmin (the nickname of Saraha)⁴
na mo Dril bu pa: Homage to Ghaṅṭapāda (the adept who holds a bell)
na mo A va dhū ti: Homage to Avadhūti
na mo Chos kyī rdo rje: Homage to Dharmavajra⁵
na mo Byang chub bzang po: Homage to Bodhibhadra⁶
na mo Rdo rje gdan pa: Homage to Vajrāsana⁷
na mo A phyā ka ra (sic: Abhayākara): Homage to Abhayākara
na mo dpal Rgwa Lo: Homage to Rgwa Lo tsā ba⁸
na mo Zhang sgom: Homage to Zhang the meditator, ie. Lama Zhang Brtson 'grus grags pa (1122–1193).⁹

The earlier analysis and chronology of this lineage was vitiated due to the mistake in the identification of the last two members of this lineage. In this context of homage to Dan Martin, I am most grateful to Dan for kindly informing me of the error. It is fitting to bring his judicious comments to public attention. Dan wrote, "[T]he teacher identified as Rgwa Lo tsā ba (1203–1282) was so named because he was believed to be a reincarnation of an earlier master, who was also called Rgwa Lo tsā ba (1105–1198). It was he who studied with Abhayākara Gupta in India and who gave Cakrasaṃvara initiations to Zhang Rin po che. I really see no reason to give the thangka a 14th century date, and given that the lineage representation in the upper register is 'complete' up to Zhang Rin po che, the patron was most likely a direct disciple of Zhang. In any case, it is a Tshal pa thangka, and the Tshal pa had already gone into considerable decline by the 14th century."¹⁰

⁴ The writing of the letters of his name merit attention. Instead of the typical circle of the bindu , to mark the ṃ of bram ze, here the anusvāra is indicated as two slanted lines. This is unusual and perhaps a later anusvāra, as if resembling an inverted *da* to indicate a Sanskrit letter superscript. I thank Leonard van der Kuijp for this clarification (personal communication 14.09.2021).

⁵ BDRC P4CZ15211 Paṅḍita Dharmavajra
<https://library.bdrclibrary.org/show/bdr:P4CZ15211>

⁶ BDRC P3820, Paṅḍita Bodhibhadra, teacher of Marpa (?1012–1097) .

⁷ BDRC P43, Vajrāsana the Elder, teacher of Abhayākara (1104–1125)
<https://library.bdrclibrary.org/show/bdr:P43>.

⁸ BDRC P 3674 Rgwa Lo tsā ba Gzhon nu dpal (1105–1198)
<https://library.bdrclibrary.org/show/bdr:P3674>

⁹ BDRC P1857 Lama Zhang, de facto ruler of Lhasa in the 12th century.
<https://library.bdrclibrary.org/show/bdr:P1857>

¹⁰ Personal communication, D. Martin, April 2000.

Furthermore, Dan's additional comments of the time are pertinent with regards to Lama Zhang's studies of Cakrasaṃvara: "I know Zhang received the Cakrasaṃvara initiations a few times from Rgwa Lo because it is recounted in Zhang's autobiography. Zhang also wrote a biography of Rgwa Lo (in which Rgwa Lo's studies with Abhayākara are related)."¹¹ Dan provided the following quotation, one of the lineages included among Lama Zhang's writings as published in the 1972 edition of his *Bka' thor bu*. Despite numerous misspellings of the names, it is clear that Lama Zhang specifies that he himself, *zhang gi sprang ban bdag*, "I, the beggar-monk of the Zhang [clan]," had been given the teachings by the great Rgwa lo tsā ba, who had in turn received them from Paṇḍita Abhayākara Gupta and the earlier members represented on the maṇḍala as far as Dril bu pa, who would have received the teachings directly from the Wisdom Dakini partner (*yum* Ye shes kyi mkha' 'gro ma) of Cakrasaṃvara:

lhan cig skyes pa'i dbang du byas na / bcom ldan 'das dpal
'khor lo bde mchog gi yum YE SHES KYI MKHA' 'GRO MAS /
slob dpon RDO RJE DRIL BU BA la bshad / des A BA DHU TI PA
la bshad / des SPYOD MDZAD CHOS KYI RDO RJE la bshad / de
BYANG CHUB BZANG PO la bshad / des bla ma RDO RJE BDEN
PA la bshad / des bla ma pan ti ta A BHYA KA RA GHU PA TA la
bshad / des du khrod chen po bsil ba'i tshal du dngos grub
bsnyes pa'i dpal chen RGA' LO la bshad / des ZHANG GIS (SIC:
GI) SPRANG BAN bdag la snang pa'o //¹²

More recent research on Lama Zhang, his teachings and his studies has appeared in the two *oeuvres magistrales* of Carl Yamamoto and of Per Sørensen and Guntram Hazod, in collaboration with Guge Tsering Gyalbo.¹³ Yamamoto has notably provided the citation of verses of praise written by Lama Zhang for his teacher Rgwa Lo tsa ba, where he refers to himself as Zhang sgom, Zhang the meditator, Zhang the hermit, which is the precise term written as his name in the *bla ma'i brgyud pa* on this Cakrasaṃvara maṇḍala.¹⁴ Among the epiphany of visionary empowerments during Lama Zhang's meditations in 1165 in the Jokhang, Cakrasaṃvara is prominent.¹⁵ In addition to the transmission of the teachings on Cakrasaṃvara, Sørensen, Hazod and Gyalbo in their annotated translation of the *Gung thang*

¹¹ Martin Ibid.

¹² Martin Ibid. citing *Bka' thor bu* 1972: 436.

¹³ Yamamoto 2012; Sørensen, Hazod and Gyalbo 2007.

¹⁴ Yamamoto 2012: 280, series of praise verses dedicated to rGwa Lo tsā ba.

¹⁵ Yamamoto 2015: 114.

dkar chag further elucidate the close relation of Rgwa lo tsā ba and Lama Zhang, who served as his personal assistant as of 1149.¹⁶

It is thus very clear that the chronology for the spiritual lineage is coherent with what is known of the transmission of Cakrasaṃvara teachings to Lama Zhang. In the spiritual lineage of the upper register, the portrait of Lama Zhang presents his face in three-quarter profile, emphasizing the receding hairline with two bald zones above his temples, and his hair is dark; he appears to have a very slight goatee. He is wearing red monastic robes and a voluminous yellow outer cloak. This style of portraiture corresponds closely to his representation in the famous Lhasa icon of the silk tapestry portrait now conserved in the Potala, which is understood to be a faithful copy of an earlier thanangka, ie, a later copy in woven silk (*kesi*) of a portrait thanangka painted during the lifetime of Lama Zhang or shortly thereafter (Figure 3 Portrait of Gung thang bla ma Zhang, silk tapestry, 84 x 54 cm, 13th century, Potala Palace Collection).¹⁷ Dan Martin evoked this silk tapestry in his memorable essay posted on tibeto-logic.com.¹⁸ One specific aesthetic aspect of the present Cakrasaṃvara maṇḍala that is quite distinctive is the numerous delicate floral motifs in varied colors as well as budding vine tendrils in tones of pale blue, rose, deep red, yellow and green - these are found surrounding the portraits in the corners outside the actual maṇḍala outer circle of fire. As a chronological and aesthetic parallel, one may recall the mid-13th century maṇḍala of the Sakya monastery in the Byang ma lha khang of the Lha khang chen mo, where similar smaller scale multi-color floral and vine elements are painted in the corners of the maṇḍala murals.¹⁹ (Figure 5. Detail of maṇḍala, in the Byang ma chapel of Sa skya's Lha khang chen mo). Although lacking additional Tshal pa thanangka for comparison to this exceptional Cakrasaṃvara maṇḍala, it is nonetheless proposed to re-evaluate the present maṇḍala as a 13th century thanangka produced in the context of the Tshal pa lineage, precisely as Dan Martin had identified it.

Thanks again to Dan Martin for his knowledgeable suggestion!

¹⁶ Sørensen, Hazod and Gyalbo 2007, vol 1: 78-79, fn.30.

¹⁷ Sørensen 2007, vol 2: 354-362. Sørensen 2007, vol. 2: 377 "early 1200's" date for this tapestry.

¹⁸ <https://tibeto-logic.blogspot.com/2012/01/new-works-on-works-of-lama-zhang.html>

¹⁹ Henss 2014: 747

2. *Illustrations*

Figure 1. Cakrasamvara Manḍala, pigments on cotton, 65 x 52.7 cm. Tibet, 13th century, private collection.



Figure 2. Reverse of the Cakrasaṃvara Maṅḍala, ink on cotton, 65 x 52.7 cm, Tibet, 13th century, private collection.



Figure 3. Portrait of Lama Zhang, silk tapestry, dimensions, 84 x 54 cm., 13th century (based on an earlier Tibetan thangka), collection of the Potala Palace.



Figure 4. Portrait of Lama Zhang, detail of the Cakrasaṃvara Maṇḍala, private collection.



Figure 5. Detail of a Vairocana Maṇḍala, 13th century, Byang ma lha khang, Lha khang chen mo, Sa skya Monastery, photograph by the author, 2004.

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The Politico-Religious Meanings of the Potala Palace's White and Red Palaces

Ishihama Yumiko

1. Introduction

he Potala Palace, the winter palace of the Dalai Lamas, stands on dMar po ri (Red Hill) overlooking Lhasa, the capital of Tibet. It takes its name from Mount Potalaka, the abode of the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, said to lie in the seas south of India and mentioned in Buddhist scriptures such as the *Avataṃsakasūtra*, and the palace's name derives from the fact that the Dalai Lama who lives there is identified with Avalokiteśvara.

The Potala Palace is known for its magnificent architectural beauty and the enormous stūpas and Buddhist statues studded with precious stones that are enshrined in its rooms, and it was registered as a World Heritage Site in 1994. The central part of the Potala Palace consists of the White Palace, built by the 5th Dalai Lama (1617–82), and the Red Palace, added by his regent Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho (1653–1705), and since then these two palaces have been constantly extended and renovated over the years, resulting in the Potala Palace we see today.

Until now, research on the Potala Palace has been conducted primarily in the areas of architecture and art history. Detailed ground plans and diagrams of its architectural structure are included in the *Xizang Budala gong xiushan gongcheng baogao* 西藏布達拉宮修繕工程報告 (hereafter *Gongcheng*) and *Budala gong* 布達拉宮, while descriptions of its interior and general details of its cultural relics and murals can be found in the *Budala gong mibao* 布達拉宮秘寶 (hereafter *Mibao*) and *Budala gong bihua yuanliu* 布達拉宮壁畫源流 (hereafter *Bihua*). As a result of these prior studies, it has become possible to gain a comprehensive grasp of the Potala Palace's overall structure for the first time.

On the other hand, investigations of the Potala Palace taking a historical approach based on textual sources and dealing with questions such as the historical background against which the palace was built, and the meaning embedded in its structure, have in comparison lagged behind. Accordingly, in the following, basing myself on the autobiography of the 5th Dalai Lama, who built the White Palace, and

the *Palace Inventory* (DGC),¹ a voluminous work by Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho describing the construction of the Red Palace which he himself oversaw, I wish to clarify the historical background against which the White and Red Palaces were built, and the politico-religious significance assigned to them by their respective builders.

2. *The Politico-Religious Meanings of the Construction of the White Palace by the 5th Dalai Lama*

The various *gter ma* and *chos 'byung* that appeared one after another from the eleventh century onwards all state that Tibet is a land blessed by the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara and that famous kings and monks who figure in Tibet's history were all manifestations of Avalokiteśvara. According to these works, in the remote past Avalokiteśvara appeared on the summit of dMar po ri, blessed the birth of the Tibetan people, and bestowed culture on them. Later, when the Tibetan people had matured to the extent that they were able to accept Buddhism, rays of light were emitted from the hill's summit, and from these rays of light there was born the king Srong btsan sgam po, who unified Tibet. His consorts included the Nepalese princess Bhṛkuṭī (Khri btsun) and the Chinese princess Wencheng 文成, and through them he introduced Indian culture and Chinese culture to Tibet and enabled Buddhism to take root there.

The fact that the palace of this renowned founding king was situated on the summit of dMar po ri is uniformly recorded in prominent sources, including the treasure texts *Ma ṇi bka' 'bum* (MKB) and *Ka khol ma* and the histories *Yar lung jo bo'i chos 'byung*, *rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long*, and *Deb ther dmar po gsar ma*.²

The history of the Potala Palace as the palace of the Dalai Lamas begins in 1642, when Güshi Khan of the Khoshuds defeated the Dalai Lama's political foes, unified Central Tibet, and granted it to the Dalai Lama as an offering. The following year, the 5th Dalai Lama's teacher

¹ In the *Palace Inventory* Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, who was responsible for building the Red Palace, describes the construction site, the motivation for the Red Palace's construction, its structure, the statues and stūpas enshrined in each room, the construction process, the patrons, etc., and this work is the primary source for studying the structure of the Red Palace and its interior. In this article, I have made use primarily of chapter 5, dealing with the palace's structure, and chapter 6, describing the sacred objects and so on enshrined in its various rooms. Present-day works dealing with the Potala Palace such as the *Budala gong shengji zhi* 布達拉宮勝迹志, *rTse po ta la'i gnas bshad*, and *Pho brang po ta la'i lo rgyus phyogs bsgrigs* also use the *Palace Inventory* as their source material.

² Yamaguchi (1988: 4–5), basing himself on accounts in the *Tang shu* 唐書, etc., writes that in ancient times Lhasa was a summer campsite, and although there may have been tents, there would not have been any permanent building such as a palace.

Gling smad zhabs drung proposed that a building for worshipping Avalokiteśvara be erected on dMar po ri.³

I read the like of the rNying ma pa prophecy and thought about it. Regardless of the truth of that prophecy, if there were a very large and strong fortress joining the two hills lCags po ri and dMar po ri, the two monasteries Se ra and 'Bras spungs would be connected and [the government] would be firm in both the short term and the long term. Furthermore, since [dMar po ri] is a site sacred to the Great Compassionate One (Avalokiteśvara), if a place for meditation on Avalokiteśvara were built [there], it would be good for cleansing the sins of the patron and the refuge. (D5N: 118a4-5)

The “patron and refuge” mentioned at the end of the above quotation refer to Gūshi Khan and bSod nam chos 'phel, who was the Dalai Lama's regent (*sde pa*) at the time.⁴ The idea that the government would be firm if the two hills lCags po ri and dMar po ri were connected had its origins in a legend related to Princess Jincheng 金城, a consort of the king Mes ag tshom of ancient Tibet. According to the *rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long* and other sources, the king's chief wife from the sNa nam clan felt jealous when Jincheng became pregnant and, once the child was born, she took him (the future king Khri srong lde btsan) and raised him as her own son. Overcome with grief, Jincheng severed the link between the two hills and attempted to cut off the blood line of the Tibetan royal family. But later Khri srong lde btsan declared that Princess Jincheng was his mother, and so she lifted her curse (GSM: 244–246; D5Z: 31b2–32a2). It may be noted that on the walls of the antechamber to the White Palace there are depicted Srong btsan sgam po's palace on dMar po ri and Princess Khri btsun's palace on lCags po ri (Iron Hill) linked by an iron-chain bridge (*Bihua*, pp. 41–43).

It is evident from the *Song of the Queen of Spring* (D5Z), a history of Tibet written by the 5th Dalai Lama in 1643, that views of the land of Tibet recorded in past histories provided motives for the construction of the White Palace. According to this work, Princess Wencheng used divination based on the eight hexagrams to determine the characteristics of Tibet's geographical features and declared that the land of Tibet had the shape of a demoness lying on her back, with the lake of O thang corresponding to the blood of her heart (*snying khrag*) and the two hills dMar po ri and lCags po ri corresponding to the bones of her

³ Ahmad 1970: 140; Ishihama 2001: 93.

⁴ Ishihama 2001: 73.

heart, and that the demoness could be subdued by installing a statue of Śākyamuni on the lake of O thang and erecting a palace on dMar po ri.⁵ On the basis of this pronouncement, the Nepalese princess built four “border-subduing” (*mtha' 'dul*) temples on the shoulders and groins of the demoness and four “additional subduing” (*yang 'dul*) temples on her elbows and knees, and because the demoness continued to move, a further four “district-subduing” (*ru non*) temples were built on the palms of her hands and the soles of her feet, making a total of twelve temples to prevent the demoness from moving. In addition, the Nepalese princess had the lake of O thang, corresponding to the blood of the demoness’s heart, filled in and erected the temple 'Phrul snang, in which she enshrined a statue of Śākyamuni that she had brought with her from Nepal. This temple built on land reclaimed from the lake of O thang is said to correspond to the present-day Jo bo khang standing in the center of Lhasa.⁶

The demoness who figures in the above tale is said to represent the unruly minds of the Tibetans before they converted to Buddhism, while the construction of temples and a palace on top of her to prevent her from moving is said to show how Buddhism pacified the unruly minds of the Tibetans and brought an end to fighting in Tibet. In other words, the hill dMar po ri is an extremely important location in the spiritual geopolitics of Tibet.

On the day of the ground-breaking ceremony for the White Palace in 1645, a statue of Avalokiteśvara that was said to have associations with Srong btsan sgam po and had for a long time been absent from Lhasa happened to return. This is described as follows in the 5th Dalai Lama’s autobiography:

29th day of the third month [1645].... The statue of the Noble Lokeśvara, who had been the personal deity of the Dharma-king King Srong btsan sgam po and was one of the four kindred statues naturally formed [from a single piece of sandalwood], had from the time of the Dharma-king (Srong btsan sgam po) to the times of Gye re lha pa, the myriarch (*khri dpon*) of Tshal pa, the Phag mo gru pa regents, and bKra shis rab brtan, the king of sKyi shod, resided on Mount Potala.

⁵ The biography of Srong btsan sgam po included in the D5Z (24a4-5) is by and large identical to the *rGyal po'i mdzad pa nyi shu rtsa gcig pa* included in the *Ma ni bka' 'bum* (MKB: 382–417).

⁶ The statue of Śākyamuni brought from China by Princess Wencheng was moved to various places to evade the Chinese troops who had invaded Tibet, and eventually, during Khri srong lde btsan’s reign, it was installed as the main deity of 'Phrul snang (D5Z: 35a2-3). Meanwhile, the statue of Śākyamuni brought to Tibet by the Nepalese princess became the main deity of the temple Ra mo che, which had been built by Princess Wencheng.

But during the time of the regent g-Yul rgyal ba, after it had been brought to the Brag dkar estate (*gzhis ka*), the omens were unpropitious, and it fell into the hands of the enemy at the fortress (*rdzong gzhi*) at sKyid smad. sDe pa a dpal presented it to Sechen Taiji of the Tümeds as indemnity for his loss in battle.⁷ [Sechen] Taiji took it to Kokonor, but because there was no end to fighting there and the Tümeds were scattered, it was taken to sTong skor in Khams. There monasteries and towns were destroyed by an earthquake. In brief, [after Avalokiteśvara moved from Lhasa] all of Tibet became unsettled. These events showed the truth of the prophecy made by the Great Ācārya (Padmasambhava), namely, "If Tibet's singular support is removed to the borders, Central Tibet will fall." Henceforth sensible people prayed, "Will [the statue of] Noble Avalokiteśvara not come to Tibet?" and although it was hoped that this would happen immediately, where was there anyone able to seek out [the statue of Avalokiteśvara]?

But the queen Princess Dalai (Güshi Khan's chief wife), who possessed uncommon energy for a woman, devoted the wonders of skilful means and extraordinary efforts, as a result of which she took [the statue of Avalokiteśvara] from the hands of the ruler of sTong skor and sent the Dharmaking Mañjuśrī to transport it, and it arrived [in Lhasa] at the very time of the ground-breaking ceremony [for the White Palace of the Potala]. Without any effort, the omens were naturally propitious. (D5N: 126a6–b6)

It is evident from this account that the return of the statue of Avalokiteśvara associated with Srong btsan sgam po to its original seat was regarded as an auspicious omen that would put an end to years of fighting. Construction work on the White Palace was promptly started, and it was completed in 1648 (D5N: 126b1–127b1; Ahmad 1970: 140–143).

It may be noted that about fifty years later, during the time of Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, the motive for the construction of the Potala Palace was being explicitly described as suppression of the movements of the demoness.

Again, according to one thesis, "Tibet has the shape of a supine

⁷ In 1578 bSod nams rgya mtsho (later recognized as the 3rd Dalai Lama) went to Kokonor at the invitation of Mongol princes and was given the title of Dalai Lama by Altan Khan of the Tümeds, whereupon Tibetan Buddhism once again flourished in Mongolia. On this occasion, it was Sechen (Hong) Taiji of the Ordos who was the prime mover behind bSod nams rgya mtsho's invitation to Kokonor (Yoshida et al. 1998: 200, 303, 305).

demoness. The lake of O thang at its center is the blood of the demoness's heart, and the two hills of dMar po ri and lCags po ri are the bones of her heart. If the Buddha Śākyamuni were to reside on top of this lake and suppress [the demoness], and if the naturally formed statue of Lokeśvara (Avalokiteśvara) and the statues of five buddhas made by the Dharma-king (Srong btsan sgam po) (*chos rgyal phyag nas ma*) were to reside on top of the bones of her heart, the unpropitious natural features would all disappear, and only good parts would remain." I learnt that many texts of good authority were seeking to convey the one point that it was necessary to build a temple on top of this hill in order to increase the benefits and happiness of Tibet, the land of snow. (DGC: 303)

The 5th Dalai Lama's construction of the White Palace was not only based on the above geopolitical reasons, but also had the aim of showing that he himself was a manifestation of Avalokiteśvara. In 1646 he wrote a biography of the 3rd Dalai Lama, and in 1652 he wrote a biography of the 4th Dalai Lama, and at the start of both of these works he wrote that King Srong btsan sgam po, 'Brom ston (1004–64), the founder of the bKa' gdams pa school, Kun dga' snying po (1092–1158), the founder of the Sa skya school, and others who were at the time known to be manifestations of Avalokiteśvara were his own previous incarnations. These two biographies were printed shortly afterwards in 1652–53 and circulated rapidly (D5N: 156a4–b4). In addition, in 1651, from the 29th day of the eighth month through to the twelfth month, the Dalai Lama visited temples associated with Srong btsan sgam po (D5N: 159a6–171b5) and revived the twelve temples that held down the limbs of the demoness (D5N: 178a5).

The construction of the White Palace may thus be regarded as the first of a series of moves by the 5th Dalai Lama to represent himself as a second coming of King Srong btsan sgam po, and just as he had intended, the reputation of the Dalai Lamas as manifestations of Avalokiteśvara quickly spread throughout Central Asia.

3. *The Politico-Religious Significance of the Construction of the Red Palace by the Regent Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho*

In 1679 the 5th Dalai Lama transferred political power to his regent Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho and died in 1683. The regent concealed his death for fifteen years and set about building an enormous reliquary stūpa named "World's Unique Ornament" (*'dzam gling rgyan gcig*), containing the Dalai Lama's remains, and the Red Palace (Pho brang dmar po) for housing it, and these were completed in 1697, when he announced the Dalai Lama's death. Today, that part of the Potala Palace which lies at its center and stands out on account of its red

colour corresponds to this Red Palace. In the following, I shall examine the structure of the Red Palace and the significance of its construction based on the writings of Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, who was responsible for building it.

(1) *The Red Palace Modelled on Mount Potalaka
and the Kālacakra-maṇḍala*

Prior to the construction of the Red Palace, there had stood a chapel on the summit of dMar po ri in which there was enshrined a statue of Avalokiteśvara associated with the ancient Tibetan king Srong btsan sgam po. When building the Red Palace, Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho left the question of whether to demolish this chapel to an oracle, and because the answer given was that it should not be demolished, it was incorporated into the Red Palace. This is described in the following passage:

We knew that if we built [the Red Palace] so that the core of the temple was set at the center of the hill (dMar po ri), then in the long term there would be no need for a foundation (*'bab zhol*)⁸ sitting on the ground, and in the short term we could make the design the way we wanted it. But because the Dharma-king's Cave had been consecrated by the Dharma-king King Srong btsan sgam po himself, and the chapel of Noble Avalokiteśvara was also an old blessed chapel where the Great Lord Lama (5th Dalai Lama), crown jewel of this world and beyond, had done meditation and so on, there was some hesitation as to whether or not it would be appropriate to demolish them [in order to build the new palace]. Accordingly, an empowered painting called *Lha mo gsung byon ma*⁹ was hung at the feet of the jewel-like remains of the Lord Lama, and dough-ball divination (*brtag bsgril*)¹⁰ was performed twice. The answer came back that it would be best to leave the ancient part just as it was and not disturb it. Thus, not only was the building site located on the summit of a hill, but we were also unable to demolish the old chapels, and therefore we were unable to realize everything that we wanted. But we left the main part of the north side untouched in

⁸ The meaning of *'bab zhol* is unclear, but it has tentatively been translated as "foundation."

⁹ This is the name of a painting of the Dharma-protector dPal ldan lha mo that has been passed down from one Dalai Lama to the next since the time of the 2nd Dalai Lama. The 14th Dalai Lama took it with him from a room in the Nor bu gling ka when he fled to India in 1959.

¹⁰ A method of divination in which several possible answers to a question are written on pieces of paper that are placed inside balls of barley dough; the dough balls are then placed in a bowl and rolled around until one of them falls out, and this dough ball is deemed to contain the correct answer. The 5th Dalai Lama is said to have instructed the regent Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho to administer the affairs of state after his death by means of this form of divination (Ahmad 1970: 44–50).

accordance with the answer [obtained through divination]. (DGC: 303)

The old chapels that escaped demolition because of divination are today thought to correspond to the Dharma-king's Cave on the third floor of the northern side of the Red Palace and the Avalokiteśvara Chapel immediately above it. There is a strong possibility that the buildings referred to by Okuyama Naoji as the "original Red Palace" based on a woodcut print by Johann Grüber, who visited Tibet in the seventeenth century, correspond to this Avalokiteśvara Chapel and Dharma-king's Cave (Okuyama 1989: 101–120).

In Tibet, it is customary to refer to temple buildings as the "support" (*rten*), the Buddhist statues and stūpas enshrined therein as the "supported" (*brten*), and the temple itself as the "maṇḍala of the support and the supported." Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, too, first describes the structure of the Red Palace in accordance with these concepts (DGC: 302–314) and then lists the Buddhist statues and so on that were enshrined in the palace (DGC: 314–354). As will be seen below, he constructed the "support" in imitation of Mount Potalaka, sacred to Avalokiteśvara, and the Kālacakra-maṇḍala.¹¹

The thought had occurred to me more than once of creating something wonderful in which for the unprecedented great stūpa called "World's Unique Ornament" and the exterior support, the palace for housing this stūpa, a Chinese-style roof like Mount Potalaka, which had manifested from the light of the wisdom of Noble Padmapāṇi (Avalokiteśvara), would be added, and first the foundations of the palace would be assigned to the seats of the outer deities [of the Body maṇḍala of the Kālacakra-maṇḍala] and the [central] great hall to the seats of the deities of the Speech maṇḍala; on the upper floor shaped like a three-dimensional maṇḍala the chapels and [Dalai Lama's] apartments would be placed as the seats of the deities of the Mind maṇḍala,... with a three-dimensional maṇḍala of the glorious Kālacakra-maṇḍala and the apartments of the Supreme Lord Lama (5th Dalai Lama) in the center as a symbol of the mind's support. But [with the construction site being on] the summit of a hill (*dMar po ri*) the workload would become extremely onerous, and so [this plan] was put on hold so as not to wear out the people, our subjects. (DGC: 302–303)

As mentioned, Mount Potalaka is the name of a small island in the Southern Ocean described in various sūtras as a site sacred to Avalokiteśvara. The *Kālacakratāntra* (P. no. 4), on the other hand, is a scripture that appeared in the very final stages of late Tantric

¹¹ On the structure of the Kālacakra-maṇḍala and the arrangement of the deities, see NMT: 167–170, no. 97; on the underlying ideas, see Tanaka 1994 and bsTan 'dzin rgya mtsho 1995.

Buddhism, and it teaches a correlation between the physical world centered on Mount Sumeru and the inner world of human consciousness, as well as being known as a medical and calendrical text. The sand maṇḍala known as the *Kāyavākcittapariniṣpanna-Kālacakra-maṇḍala* that is created at the time of the Kālacakra initiation ceremony is the largest of all Buddhist maṇḍalas and consists of four concentric maṇḍalas (Body maṇḍala, Speech maṇḍala, Mind maṇḍala, and Wheel of Great Bliss) symbolizing the body, speech, mind, and wisdom of the central deity, Kālacakra. It is to be surmised that the reason Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho chose the Kālacakra-maṇḍala from among many other maṇḍalas when drawing up his plans for the Red Palace was that, as a leading authority on medicine and calendrical science, he himself was familiar with the *Kālacakratantra* and the enormous Kālacakra-maṇḍala would have been suitable as the model for an imposing palace.

Like the Kālacakra-maṇḍala, the Red Palace has a four-tiered structure, and following the colour scheme of the courtyard of the Kālacakra-maṇḍala, in which east is blue, south red, west yellow, and north white,¹² the upper sections of the pillars in the four quarters of the great hall on the first floor of the Red Palace are also painted in these four colours.

The front sides of the pillars, long curves (*gzhu ring*), and beams (*gdung ma*) on the west side and in the center are [painted yellow with] the first precious material, refined gold, and the rafters (*lcam*) are [painted yellow with] yellow lacquer;¹³ the front sides of the pillars, long curves, and beams on the north side are [painted white with] the second precious material silver,¹⁴ and the rafters are [painted white with] white mica; the front sides of the pillars, long curves, and beams on the east side are [painted blue with] the fourth precious material "jewel essence" (*ri snying*),¹⁵ and the rafters are all [painted blue with] indigo; and the front sides of the pillars, long curves, and beams on the south side are [painted red with] the third precious material copper, and the

¹² Tanaka: 1994: 45–49.

¹³ The Tibetan terms *gzhu*, *gdung ma*, and *lcam* are the names of architectural elements extending from the top of a pillar to the ceiling. For illustrated explanations of the names of architectural elements, see Thubten Legshay Gyatsho 1979 and *Budala gong*, p. 162; for the Chinese equivalents of the elements of Tibetan architecture, see *Budala gong*, pp. 202–212; and for photographs of the upper sections of the pillars painted in the four different colours, see *Mibao*, pp. 54–55.

¹⁴ Tib. *khardzuram*, a transliteration of Sanskrit *kharjuram*, meaning "silver."

¹⁵ "Jewel essence" (*nor bu'i snying po*) is a eulogistic name for a blue gem (MTK: 444), and because *nor bu* and *rin po che* are synonymous, I take *ri snying* to be an abbreviation of *rin po che'i snying po*.

rafters are all [painted red with] red cinnabar [in accordance with the colours of the four quarters in the Kālacakra-maṇḍala]. (DGC: 303–304)

Avalokiteśvara is a manifestation of the compassion of Amitābha, and both belong to the Lotus family. Since Amitābha is seated in the north in the Kālacakra-maṇḍala (NMT: 168, no. 14), the fact that the Avalokiteśvara Chapel and Dharma-king's Cave are situated on the north side of the Red Palace also accords with maṇḍala theory.

Next, let us examine what was enshrined, or "supported," inside the palace. Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho explains them by dividing them into the Buddha's "body-support," or images and stūpas, the Buddha's "speech-support," or scriptures, and the Buddha's "mind-support," or three-dimensional maṇḍalas. Generally, in Tibet "body-support" refers to images, "speech-support" to scriptures, and "mind-support" to stūpas, but Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho classified stūpas as a "body-support" rather than a "mind-support" and interpreted "mind-support" as three-dimensional maṇḍalas rather than stūpas (DGC: 355–357).¹⁶ The descriptions of the three supports in the *Palace Inventory* are quite lengthy, and so the corresponding section in the more concise *Bai d'u ra ser po'i me long* (GCB) will be quoted here.

As foremost for purifying the deeds [accumulated during his life by the 5th Dalai Lama], the unprecedented offering stūpa "World's Unique Ornament" was made of refined gold.... This is the Dharma-body (*dharma-kāya*). Again, [a statue] made of alloy with the same height as the statue of Śākyamuni [in 'Phrul snang] is the enjoyment-body (*sambhogakāya*). Again, the silver statues of the Great Ācārya Padma-sambhava, Lord Mañjuśrī Dharma-king Tsong kha pa, and the Lord Great Lama (5th Dalai Lama) are the transformation-body (*nirmāṇa-kāya*) among the Dharma-body, enjoyment-body, and transformation-body. These [three] are included in the body-support among the body-support, speech-support, and mind-support.

The speech-support is ... the *bka' 'gyur* (Kangyur: sūtras and Vinaya),... *bstan 'gyur* (Tengyur: treatises),... and the writings of holy ones down to Great Lord Mañjuśrī Tsong kha pa and the Great 5th [Dalai Lama], who sported in monk's robes with a white lotus in his hand.

The mind-support is the unparalleled three-dimensional maṇḍala in the form of 734 deities complete with the body,

¹⁶ The scriptures used as authorities for the measurements of the three supports are explained in detail in the order of the supports of body, speech, and mind in DGC: 314–343, 343–349 & 349–354, while concrete explanations of the three supports are similarly given in DGC: 355–426, 426–445 & 445–449.

speech, and mind of Blessed Kālacakra and the palace of
Bhaiṣajyaguru and the deities who assemble there.... (GCB:
451–452)

According to this explanation, Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho subdivided the body-support into the three bodies of the Buddha (*dharmakāya*, *sambhoga-kāya*, and *nirmāṇa-kāya*), and he mentions the stūpa containing the remains of the 5th Dalai Lama as the support of the *dharmakāya*, the main deities of maṇḍalas such as Kālacakra as supports of the *sambhoga-kāya*, and historical saints such as Tsong kha pa and the 5th Dalai Lama as supports of the *nirmāṇa-kāya*. In addition, he cites scriptures such as the Kangyur and Tengyur as supports of speech and three-dimensional maṇḍalas of Kālacakra and Bhaiṣajyaguru as supports of the mind. It may be noted that many examples of the three supports listed in the *Palace Inventory* can be found today in the various rooms of the Red Palace just as they are described in this work.

(2) Rooms Honoring the 5th Dalai Lama

Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho assigned two functions to the Red Palace, namely, the honoring of the 5th Dalai Lama's achievements and the honoring of his own achievements. First, I wish to consider the rooms that honor the 5th Dalai Lama.

In the center of the first floor of the Red Palace there is a hall called "Perfection of This Life and Beyond in the West" (Nub srid zhi phun tshogs), the largest hall in the Potala Palace, and it is surrounded by four chapels that honor the life of the 5th Dalai Lama. To the west stands the stūpa "World's Unique Ornament" containing the 5th Dalai Lama's remains, to the north stands the Past Lives Chapel honoring past lives of the 5th Dalai Lama, to the east stands the Lamrim Chapel honoring those who had transmitted the exoteric teachings (*lam rim*, or stages on the path to enlightenment) down to the 5th Dalai Lama, and to south stands the Vidyādhara Chapel honoring those who had transmitted Tantric Buddhism (*rNying ma pa*) down to the 5th Dalai Lama (DGC: 305–306). Since this description in the *Palace Inventory* coincides with the current state of this hall and the surrounding chapels, it would appear that the first floor has remained unchanged since when it was built in the seventeenth century.

On the second floor and above, there were "seven chapels" and the Dalai Lama's "dwelling places" or apartments (*bzhugs gnas*).

Above [the first floor] is the Bhaiṣajyaguru Chapel.¹⁷ Because

¹⁷ sMan gyi bla ma'i pho brang, but commonly known as sMan bla lha khang. In 2017

there was no precedent, here we enshrined a translucent [three-dimensional maṇḍala] representing the immeasurable palace consisting of the wisdom itself [of Bhaiṣajyaguru] produced through the three observations.¹⁸ Then, a pair of chapels for the Dalai Lama's teachers,¹⁹ a Chinese chapel,²⁰ a pair of chapels for bronze images,²¹ and a chapel containing a three-dimensional maṇḍala [of Kālacakra] complete with body, speech, and mind created down to minor details in accordance with commentaries on the *Kālacakra-tantra*, wonderful and produced with perfect materials,²² seven chapels (*lha khang*) in total [were installed].

In the rooms for the apartments of the Supreme Lord Lama (5th Dalai Lama), crown jewel of this world and beyond, all the pillars were painted with powdered gold, and on the walls [tales of the Dalai Lama's past lives as told in] the *bKa' gdams bu chos* were roughly drawn.²³ ... [The names of the apartments are] *bKa' gdams 'khyil pa*, ... *Ngo mtshar 'khyil pa*, ... *bDe chen 'od gsal khang*, *Kun bzang rjes 'gro khang*, *Sa gsum zil gnon*, *'Dod dgu 'khyil ba*, *Nor rgyas dpal 'byor*, *bDe ldan 'khyil ba*, *Phun tshogs bde legs*, *bKra shis bkod pa*, *Phun tshogs bkod pa*, and *Sa gsum rnam rgyal*. These rooms, large in area and beautiful in appearance, were built in unlimited numbers. (DGC: 307)

According to this passage, the seven chapels were the Bhaiṣajyaguru Chapel, Chinese Chapel, Kālacakra Chapel, Lama Chapel, and Bronzes Chapel, the last two of which consisted of two rooms each, making seven chapels, but in real terms there were five chapels.²⁴ When one compares the names of the seven chapels and twelve apartments

it was not open to the public, but according to the *Budala gong* (pp. 248–249) it contains a three-dimensional maṇḍala centered on Bhaiṣajyaguru and various deities, just as it did when it was initially built.

¹⁸ Observations made on the basis of the three valid means of knowledge (*dpyad pa gsum*), i.e., direct cognition, inference, and information from a trustworthy person.

¹⁹ *Yong 'dzin bla ma lha khang*; commonly known as the Lama Chapel (*Bla ma lha khang*). For its layout, see *Budala gong*, pp. 252–253.

²⁰ *rGya nag lha khang* (*Budala gong*, pp. 250–251).

²¹ *Li sku lha khang*; commonly known as *Li ma lha khang*.

²² Commonly known as the Kālacakra Chapel (*Dus 'khor lha khang*).

²³ See Ishihama 2001: 77–85.

²⁴ There are several views on how to count the seven chapels. In the *Gongcheng* (pp. 18–19), the *Lokeśvara Chapel* and *Dharma-king's Cave* have been added to the above five chapels to make seven chapels, while in the *Budala gong* (p. 5) the *Past Lives Chapel*, *Vidyādhara Chapel*, and *Lamrim Chapel* on the first floor have been added to the above five chapels to make seven chapels. However, when one considers that the *Lokeśvara Chapel* and *Dharma-king's Cave* had existed prior to the construction of the Red Palace and that the seven chapels were clearly located on the second floor and above, these two interpretations are problematic.

mentioned in the above passage with the plans of the Potala Palace given in the *Gongcheng* and *Budala gong*, the seven chapels still exist today, but among the twelve apartments that ought to have existed on the third and fourth floors only the three apartments called Kun bzang rjes 'gro khang, bDe ldan 'khyil ba, and Sa gsum rnam rgyal are to be found. Meanwhile, on the fourth floor there are several rooms dedicated to the remains of the 5th Dalai Lama's successors, and therefore it is to be surmised that the predecessors of these rooms were the remaining nine apartments that existed when the Red Palace was initially built.

It should be clear that in their contents the above rooms in the Red Palace were intended to honor the 5th Dalai Lama. First, the great stūpa "World's Unique Ornament" installed on the west side, which was open from the first to fourth floors, contained the 5th Dalai Lama's remains and the three chapels surrounding it on the first-floor honor the past lives of the 5th Dalai Lama and the transmission lineages of the exoteric and esoteric teachings down to the 5th Dalai Lama. The rooms on the second floor and above, which honor the traditions of medical and calendrical science, follow the *Gang+ga'i chu rgyun*, a transcript of the 5th Dalai Lama's lectures and so on,²⁵ in the arrangement of their deities and the contents of their wall paintings. In addition, on the four walls of the main hall Avalokiteśvara and especially famous figures among previous incarnations of the 5th Dalai Lama are painted on a grand scale, and they are surrounded by various scenes from the 5th Dalai Lama's life together with excerpts from his autobiography (DGC: 312, 404).

In maṇḍalas, the higher and closer to the center a deity is seated, the more noumenal it is, and the lower and further from the center a deity is seated, the more phenomenal it is. When this maṇḍala theory is applied to the Red Palace, Kālacakra, the main deity of the Kālacakra-maṇḍala, ought to be seated in the center of the fourth and highest floor, but the center of the fourth floor is open, and according to Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho the truth of Kālacakra, which can be experienced only by advanced practitioners, is to be found in this empty space (DGC: 305–306).

On the highest floor, that is, on the seats of the most noumenal or essential entities in the Red Palace, there is the Avalokiteśvara Chapel and the apartments of the current Dalai Lama, a manifestation of Avalokiteśvara. The 5th Dalai Lama frequently meditated in the Avaloki-

²⁵ The *Gang+ga'i chu rgyun* is found in vols. ka – nga of the 5th Dalai Lama's complete works. The fact that the deities were arranged on the basis of this work is clearly shown with regard to the Bhaiṣajyaguru Chapel in DGC: 395–396 and with regard to the Kālacakra Chapel in DGC: 398–400.

teśvara Chapel and had visions of Avalokiteśvara and Srong btsan sgam po. Considered in this light, it could be said that the overt main deities of the Red Palace as Mount Potalaka are the statue of Avalokiteśvara that had been passed down since ancient times and the current Dalai Lama, revered as a manifestation of Avalokiteśvara.

On the third floor there are various chapels such as the Dharmaking's Cave dedicated to Srong btsan sgam po, a manifestation of Avalokiteśvara who founded Tibet, and the Kālacakra-maṇḍala Chapel, and on the second floor, which is open to the first floor and thus the location of the most phenomenal entities, there are chapels and murals honoring the knowledge and life of the 5th Dalai Lama. It is evident that the tiered structure, with Avalokiteśvara on the fourth floor, his manifestation Srong btsan sgam po on the third floor, and his reincarnation the 5th Dalai Lama on the first and second floors, gives expression in temporal terms to the passage of time from the ancient past to the present day, and in terms of essence to the process whereby from the noumenal (Avalokiteśvara) there emanates the phenomenal, in this case historical figures such as Srong btsan sgam po and the 5th Dalai Lama.

(3) Murals and Chapels Honoring Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho

In this section, I discuss how the corridor on the second floor of the Red Palace honors and legitimizes the achievements of the regent Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho himself, who built the Red Palace.

In the fifteen years during which Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho concealed the 5th Dalai Lama's death and took over the reins of government Tibet's international relations grew progressively worse. In 1686 Galdan Boshugtu Khan of the Dzungars attacked the Khalkhas on the grounds that the 1st Jebtsundamba, an eminent Khalkha monk, had shown disrespect to an emissary of the Dalai Lama, whereupon the Khalkhas sought the protection of the Qing court. The Qing court accepted the Khalkhas' request for protection, whereupon Galdan opened hostilities with the Qing as well, and although the Kangxi 康熙 emperor called on the 5th Dalai Lama to mediate between the two parties, the Dalai Lama (in reality Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho) secretly supported Galdan. In 1697, when Galdan's defeat seemed certain, Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho publicly announced that the 5th Dalai Lama had passed away fifteen years earlier and that the 6th Dalai Lama, whom the regent had himself identified, had come of age, and he summoned the Mongol princes to attend a ceremony to celebrate the consecration of the "World's Unique Ornament." It goes without saying that the Kangxi emperor was incensed by the regent's announcement.

In the same year, Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho sent a book to the Kangxi emperor which described the circumstances of the 5th Dalai Lama's death and the birth of the 6th Dalai Lama.

Again, there is a book.²⁶ It records the essentials and nonessentials, life and death, will, and so on of the Dalai Lama, but because it is complicated and long and would take many days to have translated, and because it is beyond the ability of the lamas here and is also not important, I will wait for Cangkyia Khutukhtu. I shall send it after [the translation] has been completed. (*Kangxi chao zouzhe* 8: 863–883; Okada 258–267)

In addition, Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho compiled a work about his own past lives showing how the 5th Dalai Lama and himself had since previous lives been in a relationship of father and son or teacher and disciple and that he had been in a position to continue the Dalai Lama's work. These writings by Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho describe the 5th Dalai Lama's death and the events of the subsequent fifteen years and emphasize the fact that the transferral of the reins of government to him by the 5th Dalai Lama had been legitimate. Since the Red Palace was being constructed at the same time as these works were being written, it is to be surmised that it was intended to give concrete expression to their contents in the form of an actual palace. His assertions are prominently reflected especially in the murals along the corridor on the second floor and in three chapels. I next wish to describe these in some detail.

(a) *The Regent's Achievements Depicted on the Walls of the Corridor on the Second Floor*

Today, visitors to the Red Palace head directly from the first floor to the third floor. This is because the first and second floors are open and there is only a corridor on the second floor. But on the walls of this corridor, which tourists pass by, there are depicted scenes from Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho's life after the 5th Dalai Lama's death, and these provide valuable historical source material.²⁷

²⁶ The book mentioned here is presumably Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho's *Pad dkar 'dzin pa ngur smrig gar rol lnga pa sdom brtson rgyal po'i tshul 'chang pa drug par 'phos pa'i gtam rna ba'i bcud len yid kyi kun dga' bzhugs* (M. no. 4180). The original title in Manchu reads: *Jai emu ging suduri bi, dalai lama i da dube banjija akU oho delhentuhe babe arara jakade, largin golmin, ubaliyambure de inenggi baibumbime, mini ubai lamasa muterakU, baita inu oyonggo akU, janggiya kUtuktu be aliyambi. wajiha erinde jai unggiki* (*Kangxi chao zouzhe* 8: 880).

²⁷ Okuyama refers to these murals as "murals of the story of the Red Palace's

The 5th Dalai Lama and Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho figure prominently in the center of the corridor murals.²⁸ The 5th Dalai Lama is holding a lotus, showing that he is Avalokiteśvara, and a Dharma-wheel, showing that he is a *cakravartin*, while Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho is holding a sūtra and a sword, showing that he is Mañjuśrī, and a Dharma-wheel, showing that he too is a *cakravartin*.²⁹ It is to be surmised that this mural emphasizes the fact that Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho possessed the nature of a buddha equivalent to that of the Dalai Lama and seeks to show that he was qualified to be entrusted by the Dalai Lama with the reins of government which combined the religious and the secular (*chos srid*).³⁰

On the left-hand side of the hall for viewing the golden stūpa (World's Unique Ornament) above the great hall (Perfection of This World and Beyond), the chief [painter] bsTan 'dzin nor bu sketched ... the Lord Lama, the Buddha of the three ages and the totality of the wisdom, compassion, and power of the omniscient one whose very name one fears to mention (i.e., the 5th Dalai Lama)... As for those surrounding him, to the right [of the Dalai Lama] I (Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho) who has the name Sāra³¹ was painted, to whom the Lord Lama entrusted not only orally [but also in reality] all of the authority combining the religious and the secular, who among [a Buddhist scholar's] three tasks of lecturing, debate, and writing was unable to lecture because he was unable to receive the monastic code of discipline on account of the power of karma (and was therefore unable to become a monk), but possessed the wonderful resolve to place emphasis on debate and writing and atone for this. The deputy chief [painter] Rom pa bsod nams rgyal po sketched my present appearance in the form of a fox masquerading as a lion, holding a wheel symbolizing royal authority in my hand, alongside a sūtra, a sword,³² medicine, the seven treasures of a *cakravartin*, and jewelry, around whom people gather of their own accord from the four directions like bees gathering around a sweet-smelling flower. (DGC: 406)

construction" (Okuyama 1989: 108; *Bihua*, pp. 103–139).

²⁸ DGC: 406–407; for photographs, see *Mibao*, pp. 195, 203; *Bihua*, pp. 105–106. See also Okuyama 1989: 109–110.

²⁹ The Mongol Dalai Khan is depicted in the form of Vajrapāṇi to the lower left of Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, but he does not hold a Dharma-wheel symbolizing political power, nor are there any protective buddhas above his head.

³⁰ Ishihama 2011: 259–279.

³¹ Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho's name means literally "Buddha's ocean," and he used Sa ra, deriving from Sanskrit *sāgara* "ocean," to refer to himself.

³² *gha ndra*, a transliteration of Sanskrit *khaṅga* "sword."

Filling the rest of the walls of the corridor are depictions of the final years of the 5th Dalai Lama, his death and funeral, and events from the time after his death such as the erection of the stūpa for his remains and the construction of the Red Palace. Because the Dalai Lama's death was still being kept secret when the murals were being painted, Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho had the events of the fifteen years after the Dalai Lama's death depicted as if they were his own achievements.³³

On the surrounding walls of the corridor: In the great hall itself it was not possible to depict the final movements of the Lord Lama performing liberation in the secret realm until he entered the meditation of Kurukullā (Rig byed ma). Further, here (along the corridor of the second floor), too, because the time had not yet come to write the true facts, [instead] the [outer] ritual procedures for the [5th Dalai Lama's] funeral, memorial service, and so on were depicted in line with a policy of claiming to be about that person but in fact being about oneself (i.e., the rituals could not be explicitly described as having been performed for the 5th Dalai Lama, and so were depicted as Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho's achievements)... The performance of the funeral of [my] root teacher to whom I am indebted (i.e., the 5th Dalai Lama) and of all the memorial services, starting with those for purifying the karma accumulated while alive, and especially the fine construction of the unprecedented stūpa called "World's Unique Ornament" together with its receptacle and contents, the worshipping of it by monks in grand style, and everything until the stūpa and the palace for housing the stūpa were consecrated, on which occasion a great banquet was held at which the four kinds of offerings were made and monks and laymen of both high and low status all rejoiced, laughed, and were satisfied, were depicted in the form of the story of my life. (DGC: 406–407)

Since the contents of these murals tally with the contents of the aforementioned book that Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho sent to the Kangxi emperor by way of justification for his actions, it is to be surmised that his aim in having these murals painted was, as in the case of the book, to make public what had happened in the fifteen years during which he had concealed the Dalai Lama's death and to assert the legitimacy of his government.

In the scene depicting the ceremony celebrating the completion of the Red Palace, the highlight of the murals, two large thangkas are

³³ The fact that the murals on the walls of the corridor on the second floor (above the great hall) depict Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho's life is clearly indicated in DGC: 312, 406 (quoted below).

shown hanging down from the front of the Potala Palace (*Mibao*, pp. 196–197; *Bihua*, pp. 121–122). Two thangkas were unveiled to commemorate the completion of large-scale repairs to the Potala Palace in 1994, and when one compares them with the corresponding photographs of the murals, one can see that immediately below the central deity Amitābha there is depicted the figure of Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho holding a Dharma-wheel in his capacity as a *cakravartin* and a sūtra and a sword in his capacity as Mañjuśrī (*Mibao*, pp. 24–25, 214–215). The ceremony celebrating the completion of the Red Palace was another opportunity for Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho to strengthen his authority as regent.

(b) *Three Chapels Honoring the Regent's Achievements*

Next, I wish to show that the Bhaiṣajyaguru Chapel on the second floor and the Kālacakra Chapel and Chinese Chapel on the third floor also served to bolster Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho's authority. He was known as an authority on medicine and the calendar, having written both the *Baiḍūrya sngon po* (M. nos. 494–495), a commentary on the *rGyud bzhi*, the four basic texts of Tibetan medicine, and the *Baiḍūrya dkar po* (M. nos. 492–493), a work on calendrical science based on the *Kālacakra-tantra*, Chinese *yin-yang* thought, and so on.³⁴ He was also proud of having brought together the two main schools of Tibetan medicine, the Zur tradition (*zur lugs*) and the Northern tradition (*byang lugs*) (DGC: 397).

Meanwhile, Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho also points out in a roundabout way that the 5th Dalai Lama's knowledge of medicine was not particularly good.

My teacher the Great Fifth [Dalai Lama], the definitive omniscient one, had insight into all objects of knowledge as they are at the level of supreme truth as if they were an emblem myrobalan in the palm of his hand. But to the consciousness of an ordinary person, as is clear in the [5th Dalai Lama's] biography, with regard to this science [of medicine] he recited from memory the three [texts] *Root Tantra*, *Explanatory Tantra*, and *Concluding Tantra* [among the four tantras making up the *rGyud bzhi*] but had only briefly heard the *Explanatory Tantra*, geomancy (*sa bshad*), and the figurative explanation (*rdel 'grems*) [of the *Root Tantra*]³⁵ and

³⁴ Ishihama 2001: 265–272.

³⁵ Elsewhere in roughly the same context (SKB: 368) *sa bshad* is rephrased *bshad pa sa dpyad*, which could be interpreted as *Explanatory Tantra* (*bshad pa*) and geomancy (*sa dpyad*). The word *rdel 'grems* refers to the opening section of the *Root Tantra*, where various fields of medicine are explained by likening them to trees (*rtsa rgyud*

made a pretense of not knowing the arguments. (SKB: 381)

When one takes this into account, it should be assumed that the Bhaiṣajyaguru Chapel, Kālacakra Chapel, and Chinese Chapel in the Red Palace, dedicated to the traditions of medicine and calendrical science, are related to Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho rather than to the 5th Dalai Lama. Next, let us consider the relationship between these three chapels and Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho in a little more detail (DGC: 395–403).

The main object of worship in the Bhaiṣajyaguru Chapel is the Tathāgata Bhaiṣajyaguru, and, as mentioned earlier, various deities associated with medicine and those who have transmitted medical knowledge are arranged around a three-dimensional maṇḍala centered on Bhaiṣajyaguru. The teachings of Bhaiṣajyaguru were first transmitted to the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, then several generations later to Lha lung dpal gyi rdo rje, known for having assassinated the king Glang dar ma, and then about thirty generations later to the 5th Dalai Lama (DGC: 395). Among these transmitters, Mañjuśrī was, as mentioned in the previous section, the bodhisattva of whom Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho was said to be a manifestation, while Lha lung dpal gyi rdo rje was a previous incarnation of Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho.³⁶ This would suggest that the Bhaiṣajyaguru Chapel was better suited to honoring the achievements of Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho than those of the 5th Dalai Lama.

The same applies to the Kālacakra Chapel dedicated to Kālacakra (DGC: 399). The Kālacakra teachings were taught by the Buddha at the instigation of King Sucandra of Śambhala, and this king's commentary on these teachings corresponds to the current *Kālacakra-tantra* (bsTan 'dzin rgya mtsho 1995: 30–32). Many commentaries on the *Kālacakratantra* were composed in Tibet, and in the dGe lugs pa school that by mKhas grub Nor bzang rgya mtsho is especially famous. King Sucandra and Nor bzang rgya mtsho, who occupy important positions in the transmission of the Kālacakra teachings, were both previous incarnations of Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho.³⁷

Lastly, let us consider the Chinese Chapel. In the *Palace Inventory* this chapel is also called the Chapel of Chinese Divination (gTsuḡ lag spor thang) (DGC: 400, 414), and the main object of worship is Mañjuśrī (DGC: 400–401). Transmitters of *yin-yang* thought are depicted on the chapel's walls, with Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho appearing as the last of the transmitters (DGC: 415). These facts show that the

*rdel 'grem*s).

³⁶ Ishihama 2001: 263–265, 271, no. 46.

³⁷ Ishihama 2015: 270, no. 2; 271, no. 63.

Chinese Chapel, too, was meant to honor Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho.

To sum up, these three chapels honoring transmitters of medical and calendrical teachings all indirectly honor Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, who was a manifestation of Mañjuśrī and was known as an authority on medicine and calendrical science.

Conclusion

In the above, I have considered the circumstances surrounding the construction of the White and Red Palaces of the Potala Palace, the residence of the Dalai Lamas, and the intentions of those responsible for building them as reflected in their structure. In the mid-seventeenth century, when Tibet had been unified for the first time in many years with the help of Mongol military forces, on the basis of a legend the 5th Dalai Lama built the White Palace on a site sacred to Avalokiteśvara, the tutelary deity of Tibet, with a view to putting an end to warfare (the movements of a demoness) and ruled over Tibet as Avalokiteśvara. Eventually his renown as a manifestation of Avalokiteśvara spread and his authority solidified, and so when he died his regent Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho concealed his death, started building the Red Palace to house the 5th Dalai Lama's remains, and publicly announced the 5th Dalai Lama's death and the enthronement of the 6th Dalai Lama when the Red Palace was completed.

The Red Palace, built under these political circumstances, became a structure for honoring the achievements of both the 5th Dalai Lama and his regent Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho. The Red Palace represents a maṇḍala, the main deities of which were considered to be Avalokiteśvara in the Avalokiteśvara Chapel and the current Dalai Lama on the top floor, while the lower floors honored and lent authority to the career of the 5th Dalai Lama. Meanwhile, the actions of Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho after the Dalai Lama's death were depicted on the walls of the corridor on the second floor, and his achievements in medicine and calendrical science were honored in three chapels related to medicine and calendrical science. In this case, the aim was presumably to assert that the regent was someone suitable for having been entrusted with the reins of government by the Dalai Lama and that his fifteen-year rule had been legitimate.

Worth noting here is that Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho's aim in asserting the legitimacy of his rule was not so much self-protection but rather presenting to the world the 6th Dalai Lama, whom he himself had endorsed, as the legitimate Dalai Lama. The regent's selflessness is corroborated to a certain extent by the fact that no one knew that he possessed supreme authority during the fifteen years when he was wielding power and that when this became known to everyone the 6th

Dalai Lama had already reached the age of enthronement. Perhaps because these measures of his had been effective, in the period immediately after his announcement of the Dalai Lama's death no one openly denounced the regent or the 6th Dalai Lama.

But as it became clear that the 6th Dalai Lama was a libertine who did not observe the precepts, criticism of Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho and the 6th Dalai Lama grew, and eventually in 1705 lHa bzang Khan, the great-grandson of Gūshi Khan, put Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho to death, while the 6th Dalai Lama was dethroned and died in mysterious circumstances. Following Dzungar incursions into Tibet, in 1720 the 7th Dalai Lama ascended the throne in the Potala Palace, and the 6th Dalai Lama who had been installed by lHa bzang Khan was deposed. As a result, the 6th Dalai Lama recognized by Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho came to be recorded in history as a legitimate Dalai Lama.

Abbreviations and References

- D5N Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho, *Za hor gyi ban de ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho'i 'di snang 'khrul pa'i rol rtsegs rtogs brjod kyi tshul du bkod pa du ku la'i gos bzang* (n.d.). *The Collected Works of the 5th Dalai Lama*, vol. ca.
- D5Z Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho, *Gangs can yul gyi sa la spyod pa'i mtho ris kyi rgyal blo gtso bor brjod pa'i deb ther rdzogs ldan gzhon nu'i dga' ston dpyid kyi rgyal mo'i glu dbyangs*, 113 fols. (1643). *The Collected Works of the 5th Dalai Lama*, vol. dza.
- DGC Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, *mChod sdong 'dzam gling rgyan gcig rten gtsug lag khang dang bcas pa'i dkar chag thar gling rgya mtshor bgrod pa'i gru rdzings byin rlabs kyi bang mdzod* (1692–97) (Lhasa: Xizang renmin chubanshe, 1990).
- GCB Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, *dPal mnyam med ri bo dga' ldan pa'i bstan pa zhwa ser cod pan 'chang ba'i ring lugs chos thams cad kyi rtsa ba gsal bar byed pa bai d'u ra ser po'i me long*, 419 fols. (1692–98) (Beijing: Zhongguo zangxue chubanshe, 1989).
- GSM bSod nams rgyal mtshan, *rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long* (Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 1981).
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- MTK Rin spungs pa ngag dbang 'jig grags, *mNgon brjod kyi bstan bcos mkhas pa'i rna rgyan* (Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 1985).
- NMT bSod nams rgya mtsho, ed., *The Ngor Mandalas of Tibet: Listings of the Mandala Deities* (Tokyo: The Center for East Asian Cultural Studies, 1991).


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- SKB Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, *dPal ldan ldan gso ba rig pa'i khog 'bugs legs bshad bai D'urya'i me long drang srong dgyes pa'i dga' ston* (Lanzhou: Gansu minzu chubanshe, 1982).
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The Elusive American Tibetologist in Gendun Chöphel's Life: "The First White Lama" (Theos Bernard) and Their Dream of Tibetland, California*

David Jackson

or biographers of Gendun Chöphel, one still unanswered question has been to what extent he was influenced by the non-Tibetan scholars he met or collaborated with in northern India in the 1930s and 1940s. Along with his closest Indian associates—the scholar Rahula Sanskritayana ("Rahulji") and the missionary Khunu Tharchin Babu—his European foreign colleagues may well have shaped Gendun Chöphel's understandings not just of scholarly practices but also of many other modern ideas.¹ His relationships with foreign scholars were not always rosy; his famous Song of Despair laments the behavior of one such ungrateful collaborator, calling him an "evil friend," "dog," "fool," and "tyrant".² A related puzzle that until now has escaped solution by biographers is the identity of a certain elusive "American Tibetologist" to whom Gendun Chöphel's editor referred at the end of the poems he published in English from Calcutta in 1941 in the *Mahabodhi Journal*. This American scholar tried in vain to bring Gendun Chöphel to America. Who was that scholar, what were his plans, and whatever became of him?³

The following paper was originally submitted in 2005 for

* The editors note that, as acknowledged by its author, this essay was written many years ago, and in the interim presented by him on academia.edu. Moreover, it much predates the appearance of the monographic studies of Hackett 2012 and Veenhof 2011, both however dealt with by the author briefly near the end of this essay. In consultation with the editor of this journal, it was decided to include this paper for the additional information it brings forth.

¹ On Gendun Chöphel as the author of the first "modern" native Tibetan treatise, see Huber 2000, 19. But as Hubert Decler has noted in another context, the critical scholarly methods of Gendun Chöphel in his investigations of pilgrimage places are very close to those of Si tu Paṅ chen, who lived two centuries earlier. See Decler 2000, 42 and note 14.

² The ungrateful scholar in question now seems most likely to have been the Russian Tibetologist George Roerich (1902–1960), with whom Gendun Chöphel collaborated in Kulu when translating the huge history of Tibetan Buddhism, *The Blue Annals*. See Bogin and Decler 1997.

³ The answers presented here derive in part from sources in archival collections, kindly consulted for me by Moke Mokotoff, Mike Mahar, Burkhard Quessel, Valera Reynolds, Ralf Kramer, and several others.

publication in a now long-defunct Gendun Chöphel volume in the *Lungta* series, Dharamsala. In the present version, I consider at its very end, in Appendix C, three highly relevant books that appeared in subsequent years on the lives of Theo and his rascal uncle. (See below Appendix C, Further Notes on Hamati and Glen Bernard, which were added in September 2021.) I think that Dan (in whose honor the present volume is compiled) as a fellow ancient American Tibetologist will not have lost interest in the theme!

1. *American Tibetologists of the Late 1930s*

In 1935–1939, two decades after the death of the first American Tibetologist, William W. Rockhill (1854–1914), not many Americans would have qualified to be called “Tibetologists.” Only three would have: (1) W. Y. Evans-Wentz, (2) Robert Ekvall, and (3) Marion Duncan.

(1) *Walter Yeeling Evans-Wentz*

The American scholar of Tibetan Buddhism who sprang to my mind as his most likely collaborator was W. Y. Evans-Wentz (1878–1965), a Stanford- and Oxford-trained scholar of religions who in the late 1930s was at the peak of his fame.⁴ The fact that he did not read or speak Tibetan would exclude him from being counted as a true “Tibetologist” nowadays, but not then. Born in New Jersey, he had come out to California in the late 1890s. There he soon came under the influence of the Theosophical Society, which had its American Section at Point Loma, California, led in 1901 by the inspiring Katherine Tingley, a woman of unusual flair who was known as the “Purple Mother.” Evans-Wentz joined the society and at Tingley’s urging enrolled at Stanford University.

Though lacking formal qualifications for college (he had dropped out of high school and worked for newspapers), Evans-Wentz joined as a special student, graduating with the high honor of Phi Beta Kappa four years later. After graduate studies in England, he wandered in India for five years as a student (ca. 1916–22?), living as a novice monk in Sikkim between 1920 and 1922, though he never learned enough Tibetan to be able to read an original text. He could only edit the raw translations of others, especially those of his teacher Lama Kazi Dawa Samdup (d. 1922), who was introduced to him by Laden-la. This did not stop him from publishing from Oxford University Press a series of four translations of Tibetan Buddhist esoteric works, including: *Tibetan Book of the Dead* 1927, *Tibet’s Great Yogi Milarepa* 1928, and *Tibetan Yoga*

⁴ For a life of Evans-Wentz, see Winkler 1982.

and Secret Doctrines, or The Seven Books of Wisdom of the Great Path 1935.⁵ In 1931, Oxford University conveyed upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Science in Comparative Religion. He turned sixty years of age in 1938 and seems to have spent the mid-1930s still shuttling between San Diego, California, and his house in Almora, India.



Fig. 1. Evans-Wentz and Kazi Dawa Samdup, the Sikkimese savant who was his main source. Photo from online source.

Evans-Wentz was a gentleman scholar with property in San Diego, and he could certainly have afforded to sponsor Gendun Chöphel. He typically collaborated with Tibetans or Sikkimese who could provide him with raw translations. Had he been so inclined, he could also have invited Gendun Chöphel to his home in Almora. If Evans-Wentz had been the American Tibetologist, there would probably have survived some correspondence between the two from 1938 to 1942.⁶

⁵ Evans-Wentz received editorial or other help from W. L. Campbell and F. W. Thomas. His collaborators for his fourth book, *Evans-Wentz 1954* included S. W. Laden-la (1876–1936, b. Darjeeling) and the lamas Karma Sumdhon Paul and Lobzang Mingyur Dorje. Karma Sumdhon Paul (b. Ghoom, 1891) succeeded Kazi Dawa Samdup at the University of Calcutta in 1924–1934. Lobzang Mingyur Dorje was born in Ghoom in 1875). *Evans-Wentz 1954*, 86–92, gives brief biographical sketches of his three main later Tibetan collaborators, mentioning (p. 91) the great help given by one to S. C. Das in the compilation of the latter's dictionary.

⁶ My inquiries at Stanford and Oxford, where Evans-Wentz's papers are archived, have not turned up anything.

(2) *Robert B. Ekvall*

A second possibility as American Tibetologist who occurred to me was the American Protestant missionary and scholar Robert Brainerd Ekvall (1898–1983). Ekvall was born in Minhsien, Kansu, China, the son of two Protestant missionaries.⁷ As a child he learned to speak several Chinese dialects. After his father's death in 1912, he returned with his mother to the United States. He earned in 1920 a Bachelor of Arts degree from Wheaton College and attended the Nyack Missionary Institute in Nyack, New York, in 1921–1922. In 1922 he departed for China and from January 1923 on, he spent much of the 1920s and 1930s working as a teacher and “explorer” for the Christian and Missionary Alliance interdenominational group, investigating the possibilities for mission work in the Chinese-administrated borderlands of Northeastern Tibet (Amdo).⁸ He learned the local Tibetan nomad dialect fluently and from 1929 to 1935 he lived with his wife and son in the isolated village of Lhamo (Stag tshang lha mo).⁹



Fig. 2. Robert Ekvall and wife wearing Chinese dress. After Jackson 2003, fig. no 81.

⁷ For references to Robert Ekvall's father, David Ekvall, and the Christian and Missionary Alliance, see William S. Martin 1998, p. 14. See also R. Ekvall 1938, the history he wrote of this mission.

⁸ Ekvall's life during this period is to some extent recorded in his travel memoirs in Ekvall 1952 and 1955..

⁹ Ekvall 1952 is a fascinating, even if partly fictionalized account of his experiences during the years 1930–1935.

In 1936, Robert Ekvall returned to the U.S. for a three-year furlough, during which he wrote two histories for the mission society sponsoring him. He took a year off from missionary work to attend the University of Chicago for graduate study of anthropology and to write his book *Cultural Relations on the Kansu-Tibetan Border* (University of Chicago Press, 1940). He returned with his wife and son to Taktshang Lhamo in 1939. His wife died there in 1940, and he left in summer 1941 for French Indochina to visit his son, thus ending his missionary work. When Japan entered World War II in December 1941, Ekvall and his son were interned by the Japanese in Southeast Asia for about two years. He is not known to have come to India during the crucial period 1936–1940. In 1939–1941, he was living on the border of Gendun Chöphel's home province of Amdo, and not anywhere near America.¹⁰

(3) *Marion Duncan*

A third possibility who occurred to me was Marion Herbert Duncan (1896–1977), who served as a Protestant missionary for long enough at Bathang in Khams (1921–1935) to learn Tibetan fairly well. Marion Duncan gave up his missionary work and returned from Khams in 1935. He did pass through northern India to join and assist the Cutting-Vernay expedition to Lhasa in 1935, which collected many objects for the American Museum of National History in Philadelphia. Duncan later published several books and a few privately published articles and poems, including some of an autobiographical nature. Some publications on folk traditions were of lasting scholarly value, based as they were on his twelve years spent in Batang, though they are generally underrated by scholars.¹¹ But by 1939/1940 he was in North America and struggling to make a living before the USA declared war in December 1941. Financially he would not have been able to invite Gendun Chöphel, had he been interested.

¹⁰ For more details on the life of Ekvall, see Jackson 2004.

¹¹ For a bibliographical listing of Marion Duncan's publications, see Kuløy and Imaeda 1986, nos. 2539-2552 and 2631-2702.



Fig. 3. S. K. Jinorasa of Darjeeling and Gendun Chöphel (courtesy of Amnye Machen Institute Visual Archives, Collection Tashi Tsering) After Hackett 2012, fig 11.1.

Thus, each of the three most obvious candidates can be ruled out. Nor do the available biographies of Gendun Chöphel shed much light on the problem. Heather Stoddard's classic piece of Tibetological research, *Le mendiant de l'Amdo*, which remains one of the only serious, critical biographies of a modern Tibetan in any European language, duly noted the mention by the Mahabodhi editor of Gendun Chöphel's invitation "to New York" by an American Tibetologist. She added a reference from Rahula's memoirs of 1957 in Hindi ("To Whom I am Grateful") to a letter that Gendun Chöphel had written Rahula on December 29, 1943, informing him that the journey had to be called off. She also records and rejects a doubtful rumour that the Indian government had refused Gendun Chöphel an exit visa because a Sikkimese living in Calcutta had accused him of spying. Gendun Chöphel was greatly disappointed by the failed invitation, but Stoddard gives no clue about who his equally frustrated American host might have been. Finally, she raised the interesting question of how he would have traveled, had the invitation to the USA worked out. He was perhaps the

only Amdowa of his period to attempt a journey to the West. Would he have obtained a Chinese passport from the Chinese consulate in Calcutta? (Pandatsang and Geshe Sherab travelled on Chinese passports.)¹² It seems unlikely that he could have travelled on Tibetan documents, as some Central Tibetan nobles managed in 1947, as foreign emissaries of the Tibetan government.

So, the "American scholar" eludes an easy identification. Could there have been some mix-up about his nationality?¹³ One thing not in doubt is Gendun Chöphel's willingness to go abroad to the USA during this period. That was perfectly in character, and in North America he would have found far better chances to improve his life materially. His situation in India was increasingly precarious with the end of his work at the Bihar Research Society in the late 1930s, and things would soon become even more difficult for him during the war and Bengal-famine years. Gendun Chöphel was an inveterate traveller and one of his unfulfilled dreams was to roam still more of the world beyond, as his friend Rahulji had managed to do already.

2. *Theos Who?*

Who would have imagined that the "American Tibetologist" in Gendun Chöphel's life was the populariser of Indian yoga and Theosophical-style Tibetan Buddhism, Theos Bernard? Though in the late 1930s Bernard was one of the Americans with closest links to Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism, his name today is remembered only by the most devoted Tibet aficionado or bibliographical obscurantist.

Though largely forgotten by serious scholars now, Theos Bernard managed in the late 1930s to make himself into the most visible and active of American students of Tibetan Buddhism. He even can be counted among "Tibet explorers" of the period, as the second American to reach Lhasa, arriving there in summer, 1937, at the age of only twenty-seven. By 1939 his attempts to popularize yoga and Tibetan Buddhism in America through nationwide film and lecture tours had met with considerable success, and he was teaching yoga at "health studios" in New York City. He had become a minor celebrity guru, with his youthful, handsome face appearing on the cover of at least one national-circulation magazine.

But if Theos was then so famous and successful, why, seventy years

¹² Stoddard 1985, pp. 203-205.

¹³ Berthold Laufer (1874–1934) was the most versatile and highly accomplished German Tibetologist at the turn of the century and the best scholar of Tibetan living in North America during the first three decades of the 20th century. As he could not find a suitable academic position in Europe, he went in the late 1890s to the Field Museum in Chicago, where he worked for many years, dying in 1934.

later, has he fallen into scholarly obscurity and even disgrace? Most scholars of Tibet today would classify Theos not as a "Tibetologist," but as one of several poorly informed and extravagant American travellers who wrote sensationalised and even fictionalized travelogues in the 1930s. Beatrice D. Miller writing in the 1950s in her "Bibliographical Article, A Selective Survey of Literature on Tibet," listed two travelogues of disappointing quality that appeared in 1935, both by authors who possessed "an overdeveloped sense of the dramatic but an underdeveloped devotion to facts."¹⁴ These included one by a certain Gordon Bandy Enders, who published two such books and claimed to be a close confidant of the Panchen Lama. The other was by Harrison Forman, who published in 1935 the book *Through Forbidden Tibet: An Adventure into the Unknown* (New York, Longmans, Green and Co.). Forman spent his time not in "forbidden Tibet" but in the then highly accessible Amdo/Chinese borderland areas of Labrang and Hsining. Li An-che in his review of 1940 stated that Forman's work could only be classed as a novel.

Beatrice Miller would probably have classified Theos Bernard's travelogue of 1939 in the same group, had she taken notice of it. It does not belong among the few more factual and reliable travelogues of the period, such as the one written by the other American "Tibet explorer" of the period, Suydam Cutting. He led the Cutting-Vernay expedition to Lhasa in 1935, gathering many specimens for the American Museum of National History in Philadelphia, and he published in 1940 his travelogue, *Fire Ox and Other Years*.

3. Theos in the Popular Press

The treatment Theos received from the American press, including even the sometimes sceptical New York newspapers, was from the beginning positive. On November 6, 1937, a brief article appeared in the *New York World-Telegram*, p. 27, showing a letter Theos had mailed from Tibet. The article reported: "Bernard was granted special permission to enter the walled country by the Lamaist priests in conjunction with work he is doing for Columbia University's philosophy department. Because he adopted the Buddhist religion, he was permitted to partake in sacred rituals, the first white man to do so."

In late November Theos returned to New York on the ocean-liner *Queen Mary*. The day before he reached America, the *New York Times* carried an article announcing his impending arrival. The article began: "Buddhist Worship in Tibet Pictured: Young Explorer Is Returning Tomorrow with Results of Five-Month Study. He gathered Rare Data.

¹⁴ Miller 1953, p. 1143.

Treasures Include Complete Copies of the Kan-Gyur, Buddhist Scriptures."¹⁵

The first paragraph claimed that Theos, here described as an "American Buddhism scholar and Tibet explorer," was the first white man "to witness, photograph and participate in the religious rites of the lamaseries and monasteries of Tibet." He visited the three great monasteries, the Jokhang and Ramoche, and participated in the religious ceremonies there, taking photographs and motion pictures everywhere.

Back in America, Theos intended to continue his studies for a doctorate. "His research at Columbia had included an intensive study of Buddhist philosophy. Pursuing interests developed through work in philosophy and anthropology, he undertook a field trip to India, Eastern Russia [sic], and Tibet to find and study original material on Buddhist philosophy and customs."¹⁶

A few days after his arrival, one of the first of many articles appeared in the *New York World-Telegram* about Theos's trip, based on an interview he gave to staff writer Allan Keller. The article, published on December 4, described Theos as an immaculately dressed man about town, with a deep tan from sunlight reflected from glaciers. Theos was awaiting the arrival of his nearly five hundred rare books, before retiring to some rural retreat to write the doctoral dissertation for which he had made his seventeen-month journey to Asia.¹⁷

"To be perfectly honest," said the explorer-scholar, "I think I am a Buddhist. At least I believe implicitly in the teachings of that form of Buddhism which is held sacred in the monasteries of Lhasa and Sakya. The sincerity on my part finally opened the way for me when I asked permission to enter the country."

On December 26, yet another article appeared in the *New York Times* (II 1:5): "Describes customs of Tibetan Lamas."

The "retreat" that Theos resorted to for writing his dissertation was evidently Stepping Stones in Princeton, New Jersey. On December 13, 1937, Theos wrote Evans-Wentz from there, thanking him for his congratulations, stating that Evans-Wentz's books were the inspirations behind all his efforts.¹⁸

In November 1938, Theos scored a considerable publicity coup

¹⁵ *New York Times*, November 28, 1937, II 1:6.

¹⁶ *New York Times*, November 28, 1937, II 2.

¹⁷ *New York World-Telegram*, Saturday, December 4, 1937. Courtesy of V. Reynolds, Newark Museum.

¹⁸ Bodleian Library, Ms. Eng. lett. c. 577, fol. 8: Theos C. Bernard to Evans-Wentz (handwritten).

when his photo was published on the cover of *Family Circle Magazine* (November 18, 1938). The cover photo bore the caption, "Theos Bernard ... who became the first White lama of Tibet, continues the story of his adventures by telling Stewart Robertson about his year in India. Another F.C. scoop. Pg. 10."

In the coming months of early 1939, Theos also published a series of articles in the *Asia (and the Americas) Magazine* [New York], including one titled "I became a lama." This magazine was then a respectable venue for reports on Tibet exploration. It had published between 1926 and 1929 four articles of David Macdonald on life in Tibet and, in the 1930s, several articles by Robert Ekvall.

In the books he then published about his experiences in Tibet, Theos turned to still more energetic self-promotion, almost in the American frontier tradition of the covered-wagon medicine show. His Tibet travelogue of 1939 contained lofty claims about his mystic experiences in Tibet and his spiritual attainments.¹⁹ As before he claimed to have become through a ceremony "a full-fledged Buddhist monk, a Lama." But in his travelogue, he made public a story of his supposed telepathic initiation from the highest lama of the Gelukpa school, the Ganden Tripa of Ganden monastery.²⁰

This claim was considered an outright lie by the British diplomat-cadres in India, who denied later that he was ever seen attending special religious ceremonies. For a practicing Buddhist, this sort of lie would have been particularly grievous, entailing the loss of his fundamental vows, if he had claimed higher spiritual experiences than he as an ordinary person actually possessed.²¹ Genuine mystics always hide their inner experiences and never announce them to the world in the *Psychic News*, or did such basic rules not apply to Theos?

¹⁹ Bernard 1939a (repr. 1952), 13.

²⁰ If he met the Ganden abbot, it would have been Shar rtse Ye shes dbang ldan, 93rd abbot of Ganden, tenure 1933–1939.

²¹ Regarding these claims, the travel diaries of Theos should be carefully compared.

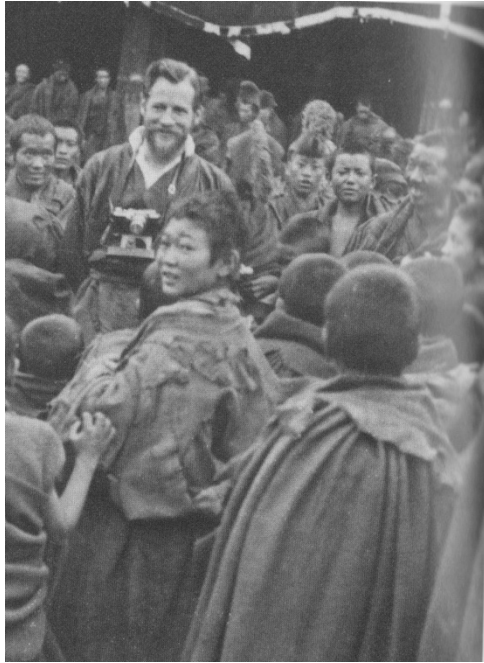


Fig. 4. Theos during his visit to Drepung in 1937. After Veenhof 2011, Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology, UC Berkeley.

Theos's claims to have been recognized as the reincarnation of a Buddhist saint were of a different order and may have been based on his misunderstanding of flattering remarks made by his Tibetan hosts in Lhasa. Lama Anagarika Govinda, a spiritually oriented scholar of German birth then studying Tibetan Buddhism in India, tended to discount Theos's achievements and claims, believing that he had only made it to Tibet by virtue of large and well-placed gifts (i.e. bribes), and that his claims of special spiritual recognition from the Tibetans were nothing more than a naive misunderstanding on his part. Lama Govinda, who was a friend and tenant of Evans-Wentz on his Almora estate, later reminisced:²²

...The young man [Theos] had bribed his way into Tibet with a mind to research scriptural work. While there he supposedly made a grand gesture of promising to bring the Tibetan canons back to the West and translating them. The Tibetans paid him the compliment that he was acting as Padmasambhava had when he brought Buddhism to Tibet. Bernard, so the story goes, thought this meant he was a reincarnation of the historical figure and so declared he

²² Winkler 1982, 69.

had been accepted as such.

In his travelogue, Theos made the assertion as a matter-of-fact aside: "Padmasambhava (whose reincarnation I am believed to be)."²³ He also reported such things as that the Ganden Tri Rinpoche explained to him later (telepathically?) that he "was one of their famous saints who had been reborn in the Western world, and that this was the reason that [he] had to come to Tibet and had been able to pass through all Tibetan ritualistic rites..."²⁴



Fig. 5. Theos Bernard with Reting Rinpoche Regent of Tibet in 1937. After Veenhof 2011, Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology, UC Berkeley

Theos had been fascinated by the life of Padmasambhava even before reaching Tibet. He considered that Indian adept his favorite teacher.²⁵ While in Kalimpong in 1937, he had begun a translation of Padmasambhava's life, and in Lhasa during the summer of that year he continued it, wanting to finish it.²⁶

²³ Bernard 1939a (repr. 1952), 102.

²⁴ Bernard 1939a (1952), 32.

²⁵ Bernard 1939a (1952), 96.

²⁶ Bernard 1939a (1952), 212.

4. *The British Reaction: Snub the Bounder*

While Theos's fame in the U.S.A. seemed to be in unstoppable ascent in 1939, his books and articles did not receive serious comment or reviews from contemporary scholars in learned journals. His books had the bad luck to appear just before or, in Europe, at the start of World War II, when many journals cut back or had other difficulties. Still, one would have expected at least some scholarly notice, unless they were deemed too popular for a review as serious scholarship. After all, the similarly sensationalist books of Alexandra David-Neel were listed in the *Bibliographie Bouddhique*.²⁷

In any case, whatever support Theos had enjoyed in British official circles of India and Tibet in summer, 1937, had completely evaporated by the time his flamboyant books appeared two years later.²⁸ Theos Bernard's poor later reputation as a Tibetologist derives in the first place from the behind-the-scenes rejection of his claims by the British Tibet diplomat-cadre of his day, who included some of the best Tibetologists of the English-speaking world. Those British civil servants manned the small British stations in the Himalayas and in Tibet itself. In their view, his books were filled with exaggerations and distortions. As the author of one later biographical sketch who consulted the British Tibet cadre official files on Bernard said:²⁹ "Bernard goes on and on about his many secret initiations by all of the great Tibetan masters. How much is true and how much in sensationalism to promote his book, is hard to tell."

²⁷ On the reliability of the Frenchwoman Alexandra David-Neel, see Braham Norwick 1976. According to Aaron Sussman, "It Is the Mind that Moves," introduction David-Neel 1965 and 1971. David-Neel's *Magic and Mystery and Tibet* first appeared in Britain under the title *With Magicians and Mystics in Tibet* in summer 1939, where it was treated politely but did not sell well. By contrast, the American edition, *Magic and Mystery in Tibet*, was a big success, going through six printings between 1932 and 1937.

²⁸ MacKay 1997, 173.

²⁹ Cooper 1986, 13.

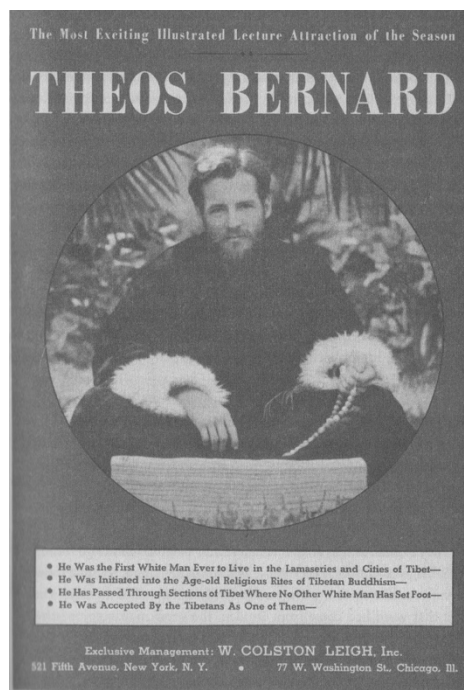


Fig. 6. Bernard's tour flyer of 1939/40: the art of misrepresentation (Helen Graham Park Foundation). After Hackett 2012, fig 9.2.

During his preparations and actual visit to Tibet, Theos had been helped by the British cadre every step of the way. But once he reached Lhasa in 1937, Theos decided not to stay at the residence of the British, preferring to live with the powerful nobleman and minister Tsarong. The Tibet cadre must have sensed something had gone wrong already when they read the first claims Theos made upon his return to the West, as reported by the *Daily Mail* in London:

SECRET RITES I SAW IN DARKEST TIBET

I Was a Lama

"The Daily Mail" publishes today the most remarkable adventure story of the year—the narrative of a young man who unveils mysteries of forbidden Tibet.

Mr. Theos Bernard, an American, has just returned from a six months' exploration of Tibet, for which he was granted special facilities by the British political authorities and had the cooperation inside Tibet of a high India Government official, with whom "The Daily Mail" has been in communication.

...

Bejewelled Oracle

By THEO BERNARD

I am the first white lama—the first Westerner ever to live as a priest in a Tibetan monastery, the first man from the outside world to be initiated into Buddhist's mysteries hidden even to many native lamas themselves.

The Tibetans told me they believe that I am the reincarnation of a great and saintly lama and that I was sent by fate to their country to gather knowledge to take back to the West. That was why they granted me special privileges....

The groan of the British cadre must have been audible all the way from Sikkim and Lhasa as they read the truth, that Theos “was granted special facilities by the British political authorities and had the cooperation inside Tibet of a high India Government official.” Even the identity of the “Daily Mail correspondent” Mr. F. W. R. Perry, hinted at official complicity in Theos's exploits: Perry was until recently a member of the British Tibet cadre and had served in Gyantse.

Theos's extravagant claims to be the “First White Lama” and so forth might have been bearable in small doses, since many of the cadre were not unsympathetic to Buddhism. But these and other inaccurate claims (regarding the plentitude of Tibetan gold, etc.) were published by the *Daily Mail* throughout Britain. This provoked queries about the bona fides of Theos, and this time the cadre would observe a noble silence in public, but be increasingly critical in private. Already in October 1937 Miss M. N. Kennedy, Secretary of the Royal Central Asian Society, wrote a letter asking Mr. Rumbold: “An American, Bernard, is splashed in the *Daily Mail* (date unknown) as having brought a number of manuscripts back from Tibet—is he another Illion? We had to send Illion's book back to the publisher.”

Theos was of course no “Illion”—i.e., no Lobsang Rampa who wrote pure fictions, never having set foot in Tibet. A more apt question would be: Was Theos another McGovern or Alexandra David-Neel? Both were non-British Western converts to Buddhism who had annoyed the British cadre a decade previously through their successful circumvention of British restrictions and travelling illegally to Lhasa in 1923 and 1924. Unlike them, Theos had travelled with British blessings. But like them, he shared a certain “eccentricity” from a British point of view. His similarities with the highly dramatic, sometimes sensationalising Alexandra in particular (whose writings had established her as a prime contender for the title of first White, though female, lama) should be examined by future biographers, comparing her

British file with that on Theos.³⁰

Three years after Theos's travels to Tibet, one of the Tibetan staff of the British in Lhasa would report that Theos was not observed attending any special religious ceremonies, and that he did not participate in any Buddhist ceremonies that were not also open to British staff.³¹ In October 1940 the British official Norbhu went so far as to claim:³² "At no time was [Bernard] seen associating with monks or carrying out religious Buddhist ceremonies."³³

Had Theos simply invented his many Buddhist activities in Lhasa monasteries? It was British policy to try to keep an eye on all Westerners visiting Tibet, even trusted ones. The Rev. Tharchin was reporting on Theos regularly to the chief of the Tibet cadre, Charles Bell, even during the Lhasa trip. Two brief letters from him survive in the India Office Library:³⁴

1/7/1937, Tsarong House, Lhasa:

I came up to Tibet for nine weeks leave from the mission and accompanied with an American gentleman named Mr Bernard. He got pass upto Gyantse for 6 weeks, but he applied to the Tibetan Govt. that he may be allowed to come to Lhasa + it was granted + he is now here. I came up two weeks head + he arrived here at the 24 June.

25/7/1937, no place:

The American gentleman Mr Bernard is still here, and he is a Buddhist and doing a lot of ceremonies in all the Monasteries. All the Tibetan Officers liked him very much and also, he is very good friend to our officers who are in Tibet. I am with him and found that he is only after Tibetan letterery and resurching the Buddhism in Tibet and he is thinking to write a book on Buddhism. Also, he is taking lot of photos with the permission of the Tibetan officers.

Thus, the eyewitness report submitted by Tharchin Babu records that Theos was most definitely active in Lhasa "doing a lot of ceremonies

³⁰ Aaron Sussman in David-Neel 1971, 11, calls her "the only European woman with the rank of a Lama." The first European to have trained as a Tibetan Buddhist monk (thus the "first white lama"—a title much aspired to by Theos), according to Batchelor 1994, 291, was the Latvian Kunigaikštis Gedyminas (Mahacharya Ratnavajra), who was ordained in the mid-nineteenth century and stayed for many years in a "lamaist" Buddhist monastery, about three generations prior to Theos. Snelling 1987, 199, considered him a Lithuanian.

³¹ Cooper 1986, 13.

³² Cooper 1986, nos 13-14 cites IQR L/P&S/12/4203. This is the file on "TIBET, Exploration of: by Mr. Theo Bernard."

³³ As quoted by Cooper 1986, 13.

³⁴ Mss Eur F80, #5a is missing from the box, #130 (folio f) contains 2 letters. Contents courtesy of Mr. Burkhard Quessel.

in all the monasteries."³⁵ Tharchin himself briefly reported on Theos's visit to Lhasa in his Tibetan newspaper *Me long* (in an early 1938 issue?), mentioning the kind hospitality he received from the Tsarongs.³⁶

In the early wartime years 1940–1941 with the near impossibility of ordinary international travel, members of the British Tibet cadre probably thought they were safe from further irritations from Theos Bernard. They were wrong. On May 11, 1940, Theos or his agent succeeded in flogging another sensational article "American becomes only White Lama in Tibet" to the London newspaper *Evening Standard*. One presumes it was meant to promote the British version of his travelogue, *Land of a Thousand Buddhas*. The newspaper editor may have considered the story an innocent diversion from the otherwise dreary news of war. On June 8, 1940, another similar article, "Secrets of Tibet were revealed to Author," appeared in the *Psychic News*.

In June 1940, Theos's travelogue came to the attention of E.W. Fletcher in the External Affairs Department. Fletcher wrote B. J. Gould that Theos seemed to be "another imposter like Gordon Enders," referring to the telegraphed permission their department had granted to Theos in summer, 1937. Fletcher was discrete enough not to mention explicitly Gould's role in the granting of travel approval.

On November 1, 1940, Miss Kennedy of the Royal Central Asian Society wrote Mr. G. E. Crombie to inquire about Theos, asking whether he was in Britain and whether he would be someone he would recommend to lecture to the society. Crombie replied in a confidential letter, stating that although he had not yet had the chance to read the travelogue, based on the other shorter pieces by Theos that he had read he expected Theos's book to be "somewhat sensational and not at all reliable. He is hardly a person I think whom we could recommend to you as a lecturer."

Just to make sure he had gotten his point across, Crombie in February 1941, wrote a follow-up letter, this time "strictly personal, confidential," to Miss Kennedy. In it he excerpted at length from an official letter written by Norbhu Dhondup on October 18, 1940, from the British Mission, Lhasa, to the Gould in Sikkim, who forwarded it to the External Affairs Department, New Delhi. Norbhu Dhondup had been acting British representative at the time of Theos's visit. This letter was the harshest and most cynical assessment of Theos's activities by any of the cadre.

³⁵ Mr. Burkhard Quessel kindly checked for me some of the other references in Alex McKay 1997, *Tibet and the British Raj*, p. 261, note 27. The Lhasa Mission Entries in L/P&S/12/4193 are disappointingly meagre, just mentioning Theos's name. Mr. Quessel could not find the reference in L/P&S/12/4202 and 6154, which are classified as "not for photocopy, by film order only."

³⁶ Don Lopez kindly informed me of this fact by email.

(Dear Sir),

Please refer to your demi-offical letter no. 10(22)-?/40 dated the 29th August 1940.

In fact, Bernard's claims have no foundation and are exaggerated to make the stories interesting. If his publications both in America and elsewhere are being accepted without criticism, such can only be attributed to widespread ignorance of the life conditions and religious customs prevailing in Tibet.

During his stay in Lhasa Bernard's behaviour was conventional and not unlike that of other visitors, except that he adopted the lay dress for visits to Tibetans, Tibetan theatrical dances, and the monasteries. At no time was he seen associating with monks or carrying out religious Buddhist ceremonies.

He made several visits to the 'Potala' to take photographs of different shrines, but not as he states to take part in the daily ceremonies, but to thoroughly survey the items of interest with his camera when lighting conditions were suitable. Considering the enormous size of the 'Potala' and its numerous contents, this obviously would take many days in uncertain and dull rainy weather.

Bernard arranged to have himself quartered with Tsarong Dzasa in preference to accepting the offer of Mr. Richardson to stay with the Mission. This is significant, because, in the light of what has transpired since his departure, he would naturally not be keen to have his actions and movements too closely watched or discussed by those in intelligent contact with the outside world.

His visits to the monasteries were arranged through the permission of the Tibetan Government and in the same manner adopted by any visitor, no matter whether he be a Tibetan or a foreign official of a neighbouring state. Bernard arrived in Tibet with plenty of money which he applied to good advantage in securing the services of monks.

The monasteries of course are institution dependent to a large extent upon charity, and if a visitor makes a lavish gift of money to any one of them, it is quite obvious, he will be given all the polite and carefully attention he desires for his purpose and exceptions would no doubt be made to show him every cheek and corner of the monastery if he so desired. In fact, this has been the experience of many visiting British officers long before Bernard's arrival in Lhasa.

Bernard has not seen or witnessed a ceremony of Buddhist worship which has not also been open to the British personnel.

When proceeding anywhere, Bernard always had a battery of cameras with him and was invariably accompanied by Tharchin, his interpreter and guide. His knowledge of the Tibetan [p. 2] language was very scanty indeed and he cannot even converse in simple sentences freely.

His 'modus operandi' was to prepare the way with a handsome cash gift and advise the monastery officials when they may expect him. At the appointed time, he would arrive complete with Tharchin and cameras and be received with pleasure by the monks who would offer him the usual

tea and sweetmeats, whereupon Tharchin would reel off as many films as possible from many angles. Normally the monks object to indiscriminate photography, but Bernard's clever generosity would, as he knew, override such scruples temporarily and in many instances, permission was readily given to photograph what he liked.

Another important part of his equipment was a complete monk official robe and the yellow hat, all of which he had made for himself in Lhasa. Attired in this, he would, by arrangement with monk officials, mingle with the monks while at prayer, and Tharchin from various points was busy creating the photographic proof of the 'only White Lama.'

It may be of interest to point out that Bernard avoided as far as possible any contact with the Cuttings, who left Lhasa just after his arrival.

Bernard was absent approximately a week from Lhasa visiting Yerpa and Ganden monasteries. Either on the way out or returning would hardly allow him the time for the programme so ably arranged in his book 'Penthouse of the Gods.'

It is quite apparent from the various articles appearing in the Press, periodicals, and book publications that he is drawing upon a decidedly distorted imagination and sparing no effort in his superlative descriptions of the poorness of the people, the filth of Lhasa and the wickedness of the cult generally, to bring ridicule upon the religion he professes.

For further criticism of Bernard's claim, I would refer you to Mr. Richardson's memorandum No.7(14)-L/37 dated the 12th July 1939 and demi-official letter No.7(22)-L/39 dated the 28th September 1939.

The enclosures to your demi-official letter under reference are returned herewith as desired.

(Yours sincerely),
Sd/- Norbhu Dhondup.

So, what had Theos really been up to in Tibet, in the considered British view? By 1940 Gould, at least, still thought that Theos was genuinely interested in Buddhism, yet he noted that Theos was apt to let his imagination run wild. "Mr. Bernard," he wrote in one letter, "was good at giving people what they want. He has apparently given the American public what he thought they would like—sensationalism, padded out with a good deal of obvious fact and Buddhist jargon."

But even though Gould and perhaps one or two others of the British Tibet cadre still conceded Theos's serious interest in Buddhism, the more they read his overweening exaggerations and inaccuracies, the more they were put off by the new Theos Bernard in his mode as a self-promoting American guru-showman. The strictest of the cadre, Norbhu Dhondrup, carried the critique one step further, implying that Theos had been a kind of confidence trickster, willfully engaging in deceptive behavior. In his letter, Norbhu Dhondup further alleged that some of Theos's offhand condemnations of "the filth of Lhasa and the wickedness of the cult," brought disrepute upon Tibetan Buddhism,

the very religion he professed to want to spread in the West. (Norbhu's letter would close the door on any chance of future approval of travel to Tibet by Theos, as long as the British remained in India.)

5. How Did Theos Finance His Journey?

Theos was born in the American West to parents who were both deeply fascinated by Asian traditions of spirituality. He was born at home on December 10, 1908, in Los Angeles,³⁷ and grew to adulthood in Arizona.

His mother, Aura Georgiana Crable Bernard, was step daughter of William Arthur Harwood, first mayor of Tombstone, Arizona, who arrived in the vicinity of Tombstone in 1878, three years before the great silver-mining boom began.³⁸ Aura was the first postmistress of Tombstone and at the time of her appointment, the youngest in America.³⁹ She was a member of the universalist Bahai faith since a teenager but also occasionally gave sermons at their local church when the usual teacher was absent. Aura divorced her first husband, Theos's father, Glen (who all his life continued to cultivate interests in yoga and hypnosis).⁴⁰



Fig. 7. The Gordon brothers in the Dragoon Mountains: Theos, Ian, Dugald and Marvene (Arizona Historical Society). After Hackett 2012, fig 1.1.

³⁷ His birthplace was confirmed by Paul Hackett.

³⁸ Aura had a sister Alice Anita Crable, who was born on 10 Jan. 1881 at Sacramento, California. She married district attorney Edward W. Land in 1898 at the age of 17 and died four years later at the birth of her son Lawrence Edward Crable Land.

³⁹ For some details on the ancestry and early years of Theos, I have referred to the unpublished article by Carol Lingham and J. Michael Mahar, "From Tombstone to Tibet: The Early Life of Theos Bernard," and other notes of Mike Mahar.

⁴⁰ According to received tradition (M. Mahar), Glen had abandoned Aura and their small child.

Afterwards she married a more staid assayer and mining engineer, Jonathan Gordon. Theos grew up with his mother, stepfather, and stepbrothers in adequate but not wealthy circumstances. He grew up in the mining town of Tombstone and was educated in Tucson, Arizona, studying and even practicing law for a short while in his home state, before coming to the East Coast in 1934.

Only in New York did Theos come into money through marriage to a Jewish heiress. With her wealth to support him, Theos could afford to be outlandish and behave in ways that might seem odd to ordinary mortals. Certain high Lhasa nobility are also said to have remembered Theos with a certain puzzlement twelve years after his visit to Tibet:⁴¹

The Tibetans told [Lowell Thomas and his son] that they were amazed and puzzled at the way Bernard kept changing his outfit when he was in Lhasa. One day he would wear a Tibetan nobleman's outfit, and the next day he would appear in the robes worn by the abbot of a monastery. But what puzzled them most was that when he returned to America, he called himself "a white lama."

During his stay in Lhasa, Theos did dress flamboyantly at times, but he was courteous and friendly enough not to offend either the Tibetan or the British. Still, his dress was for one modern critic another mark of his eccentricity. Theos in Tibet had displayed his wealth conspicuously, even making his own Tibetan robes of costly materials and wearing them "in a continual fashion show," while at the same time remarking on the glaring poverty of many Tibetans.⁴²

On the other hand, Theos was ahead of his time in taking a (relatively) sympathetic, participatory approach to the tradition and people he was visiting and studying, even making some attempt to learn their language and immerse himself in their culture. Not the approach of the adventurer and travel-film maker Lowell Thomas and his son.

While in Lhasa, Theos assiduously gathered the scriptures and religious articles he believed would be necessary for spreading Buddhism in the West. His success in bringing out of Tibet a large number of such books and images exposed him to the later charge of being an "exploiter" who in fact acquired these precious objects for himself under the guise of spreading the Buddhist Word.⁴³ This charge rings false, since Theos in the coming years did everything possible to carry out

⁴¹ Thomas Jr. 1950, 125.

⁴² Cooper 1986, 13. Cooper condemned Theos as "eccentric," using this as a euphemism for mad, saying: "It is oft stated that if you are rich, you are not mad but eccentric; to me Bernard along with Mr. W. M. McGovern and Alexandra David-Neel were eccentric in every way." I think the comparison with McGovern and David-Neel is apt, though for other reasons.

⁴³ Cooper 1986, 11.

the ambitious religious projects he had outlined to the Tibetan regent and others in Tibet. There is no evidence that he used the sacred objects other than respectfully, and he is not known to have enriched himself through their sale.

6. *Uncle Pierre, another American Padmasambhava?*

That Theos's main scholarly interest was tantric yoga would have been held against him by the next generation of Tibetologists. In fact, his main impact upon American religious culture was not academic, but as a populariser and teacher of yoga. Still, in the late 1930s not even every member of the American Eastern-religions and yoga scene would have rated Theos that highly, even as yoga instructor. At best he was then a still-unproven successor to his uncle Pierre Bernard, who was indisputably *the* established yoga master of his generation.

In New York City in 1939–1940, Theos was teaching yoga at the Pierre Health Studio at the Hotel Pierre, 5th Ave and 61st St. Claire Lea Stuart, noted dancer and disciple of uncle Pierre Bernard, was assistant director of this health studio, presumably named after uncle Pierre.⁴⁴

In spring, 1934, Theos had gone east at age twenty-six to New York City to find a wife and enroll at Columbia University.⁴⁵ In New York, he visited his uncle in Nyack, whom he had never met.⁴⁶ This uncle, "Dr." Pierre Arnold Bernard (1876–1955), was a colorful and successful guru to prominent New Yorker socialites of his time.⁴⁷ He was also controversial and was reviled for many years by New York newspaper journalists ever since his involvement in a "love-cult" scandal in 1910 involving two female students. Though he styled himself "Dr.," Uncle Pierre lacked both medical and academic degrees, and he was very elusive about the facts of his early life, often making up details as suited the occasion. Still, he was the greatest American expert of yoga practice and tantra of his generation.

As a teacher, Pierre Bernard attracted an impressive list of disciples from the highest strata of New York society to the country club he founded, and he also attracted scholars to his superb library. Later in life he integrated himself more and more into the local community of Nyack, becoming a landlord and president of a local bank. How could

⁴⁴ Boswell 1965. Another club in New York City that Theos was connected with was the Lotus Club, 110 W. 57th St., which he sometimes used as a mailing address when away from New York in the mid-1940s.

⁴⁵ Carlsen 1985, 28, wrongly asserts that Theos enrolled "in the anthropology department." Charles Boswell 1965 stated that uncle Dr. Pierre Arnold Bernard invited Theos "from California to Nyack, NY," but this is not confirmed by other sources.

⁴⁶ Carlsen 1985, 28.

⁴⁷ An excellent sketch of Pierre's life is given by Gordon 2000.

his nephew Theos have failed to be influenced by such a rascal-guru of an uncle? Presumably uncle Pierre's success helped Theos subsequently to choose the career he did: to earn a decent living as yoga guru to a well-heeled clientele.

Who was "Dr. Pierre Bernard," and how did he become America's first tantric guru? With outsiders and the press as well as with his students, uncle Pierre was exasperatingly secretive about his family background. The few details he begrudgingly gave out were confusing or false, but they allowed the press just enough to construct its own distorted pastiches of his life story. The following could be pieced together about his family and early life with the help of his newly accessible personal papers and from Nyack Library local history files.⁴⁸

Dr. Pierre Bernard was born "Peter" or "Perry" Baker, son of Catherine C. (Kittie) Givens (1854–1932), and her first husband, Erastus Warren Baker (1845–1917?). Pierre was the half-brother of Theos's father, Glen (or Glenn) Bernard (1884–1976), whose mother was also Catherine (Kittie) Givens. But Glen's father was her second husband, John C. Bernard (?–1932). (For what is known of Pierre Bernard's ancestry, see below, Appendix A.)

Perry's mother, Kittie, married second John C. Bernard, a barber in Leon, Iowa. They moved to "Harriston" (i.e. Humeston?), Iowa, when he was three and a half years old (ca. spring 1880 or 1881).⁴⁹ When he was sixteen years of age (ca. 1892 or 1893), Perry moved with his parents to Riverside, south of San Bernardino in southern California. In 1895 his parents returned to Iowa, leaving him in California.⁵⁰ At some point as a child or young man, Perry Baker took the family name "Bernard" of his stepfather, John C. Bernard.⁵¹ Later he changed his given name from Perry to Pierre.

As a young man first experiencing his freedom in California, Pierre supported himself as a fruit picker, salmon packer and barber. He took up with a certain Mortimer K. Hargis, with whom he shared an interest in hypnotism, yoga, and the occult. The two founded in San Francisco the "Bacchante Academy."⁵²

By his mid-twenties, Pierre had become proficient at various yoga exercises, becoming able to control his breath to the point of simulating death. He gave demonstrations of these skills to earn a living and

⁴⁸ I have benefited from the biographical sketch published by Gordon 2000.

⁴⁹ There is no town named Harriston in Iowa. The similar-sounding Humeston is located nearby in adjoining Wayne County. A town named Harris is in Osceola County.

⁵⁰ Court transcript of New York City, 1910, seen at the Rockland County historical museum.

⁵¹ Gordon 2000, 3f.

⁵² Boswell 1965.

recruit students, though at the same time hoping to advance medical knowledge. Pierre later recalled:

I gave exhibitions in phenomena, illustrating many points in self-control, in control of the respiration, circulation, sensation, the latter being an exemplification of what we might term self-induced anaesthesia. These exhibitions were given before medical men in every case; not theatrical exhibitions.

Pierre later claimed that he, as an adolescent in Lincoln, Nebraska, had learned yoga and other tantric lore from his master, a Syrian named Salvais Hamati. This would have been in the early 1890s. He asserted he studied with Hamati for six years and was associated with him on the West Coast for longer than that.⁵³ Certainly it would have been highly unusual to meet a tantrika in Nebraska in around 1890. Practicing tantrikas were exceedingly rare in North America but contact with Asian religious and spiritualist (for instance, Theosophical) ideas, at least, would have been easier in California, where Pierre first manifested his skills. The first Buddhist publication in America, *The Buddhist Ray*, was published by a man named Vetterling for seven years beginning in 1887 from his small farm in the hills above Santa Cruz.⁵⁴

Yet it would not have been wholly impossible for an Oriental sage to pass through the American Midwest in the mid 1890s. In September 1893 there had taken place in Chicago a great World Parliament of Religions in conjunction with the Columbian Exposition of the same year. It was attended by numerous delegates from Asia, including many Buddhists and Hindus. Prominent among the Hindus were Vivekananda—the disciple of Sri Ramakrishna—and B. B. Nagarkart of the Brahma-samaj. Banryu Yatsubuchi, a master of Tendai esoteric Buddhism, expounded to the assembled audience tantric doctrines! After the parliament closed, one American took the vows of Buddhist refuge, in a ceremony led by Dharmapala at the Chicago Theosophical Society.⁵⁵ Some Indian delegates afterward left to found centers of their religion in “ironclad” mainly Protestant North America.⁵⁶ (In Southern California at Point Loma, Pierre might easily have come in contact with the colorful American Theosophical guru of the day, Katherine Tingley, who influenced Evans-Wentz as a young man.)

Hamati reportedly returned to India when Pierre Bernard was about 26 years old (ca. 1902?), and they never saw each other again.

⁵³ Gordon 2000, 4. G. Gordon assumes, for lack of any disproof, the actual existence of this master.

⁵⁴ Fields 1992, 130ff.

⁵⁵ Fields 1992, 120ff.

⁵⁶ Keesing 1981, 67.

Pierre later claimed that they stayed in contact through many letters (sometimes as many as three a month) for several years.⁵⁷ Still, not a single letter from Hamati or any other trace of him has so far been found among Pierre's papers—which is surprising since a tantric disciple would normally have treasured and preserved photos and letters of his guru. Pierre later claimed many times to have lived and studied in India, though he never set foot there.

Pierre's later caginess makes me wonder whether Hamati was not at least in part an invention, like Blavatsky's master, the Mahatma K.H. (Khoote Hoomi). If Hamati were a fabrication, Pierre probably could have learned about yoga and tantra from books and in California through the Theosophical Society, which was established in California (especially at Point Loma) and had published N. C. Paul's treatise on yoga philosophy from Bombay in 1899. Yoga was well known to William James in 1902, who cited in his *Varieties of Religious Experience* the book *Raja Yoga* by Vivekananda published from London in 1896.⁵⁸ Furthermore, if Hamati was a real tantrika, he would have been more likely not a Syrian named Salvais but an Indian, coming from someplace where Tantrism was still alive.⁵⁹

The guru's name seems to have been known in a different form in family circles. In 1909 when a son was born to Pierre's half-brother Glen A. Bernard, the child was named at baptism "Theos Cassimir Harrati [i.e. Hamati] Bernard."⁶⁰ When one considers the two middle names of Theos, what could Theos's first middle name—"Cassimir"—be, if not a clue that Hamati had actually been a Kashmiri? (Or at least that Pierre Bernard's own brother believed that.)

Pierre taught in San Francisco for about three years in all, giving his first big yoga exhibition before forty physicians and surgeons in November 1900. He taught mental suggestion and its application in medicine to doctors who paid \$100 each. His pupils included Major Bulwer of London, Dr. Harry Tevis and nephew, Hugh Tevis, and Lansing Kellogg.

⁵⁷ One-page fragment of the memoirs of Pierre Bernard, marked "-3-" [no other pages survive] surviving in the local history files, Nyack Library. If Pierre studied under him for at least six years in Nebraska and more than six years in California, as he seems to have later claimed, they would have met in ca. 1890. Cf. Gordon 2000, 4.

⁵⁸ William James taught for a short while at Stanford University, influencing the young Evans-Wentz.

⁵⁹ But one of Blavatsky's mahatmas was supposedly a "Syrian" who had responsibility for all religions in the "Great White Brotherhood." See Washington 1995, 32.

⁶⁰ Theos's mother married Glen A. Bernard, and their son Theos Cassimir Harrati [or Hamati] Bernard was baptised June 20, 1909, at St. Paul's, according to the St. Paul parish book, Tombstone, Arizona (quoted in a letter of Carl Chafin, historian of early Tombstone).



Fig. 8. Pierre Arnold Bernard, Tantric yogi, ca. 1900. After Love 2010, 1.

Pierre also coached people in “Vedic philosophy and the physical training peculiar to that branch of work in India,” in other words, yoga. In San Francisco he also opened a free clinic for nervous disorders in which he collaborated with local physicians. He travelled to New York via Portland, Oregon (where he stayed one winter, teaching philosophy). His student Florin P. Jones was already teaching in Portland, having among his students a certain judge Webster and family. Pierre then returned to Seattle, Washington, and the Pacific Northwest (which had boomed thanks to the Yukon Gold Rush), where he taught for about two years.⁶¹ Wherever he taught, Pierre established schools or “temples of learning” in which he taught yoga. He called himself a medical doctor, “Dr. Pierre Bernard,” though he possessed no medical degrees.⁶²

⁶¹ One-page fragment of the memoirs of Pierre Bernard, marked “-3-” [no other pages are known to exist] surviving in the local history files, Nyack Library.

⁶² Gordon 2000, 4.



Fig. 9. Pierre Bernard in the vestments of a kaula rite preceptor. After Love 2010, 28.

During these years, moving frequently from place to place, Pierre tried to found a Tantrik Order in America. He is said to have officially registered it as a society (in Washington state?) in summer, 1906, and perhaps also in Canada. His Tantrik order had lodges on the West Coast, with himself as founder and main teacher. The order superseded Pierre's Bacchante Academy, which was disbanded after the San Francisco earthquake of spring, 1906.

Pierre's Tantrik Order in America published, supposedly by the Tantrik Press, New York, just one number of its journal: *International Journal, Tantric Order*, vol. V. no. 1, originating from St. Louis. This number was entitled "Vira Sadhana, American Edition," and it showed in one illustration "Dr. Pierre Bernard" simulating death before a gathering of physicians.⁶³ Among the principal "officer-initiates" of the order is listed Salvais Hamati.

⁶³ J. Gordon Melton ed. ca. 1989, *The Encyclopedia of American Religions*, lists the "Tantrik Order in America" as one of the first Hindu groups founded in the United States, "possibly the first created by a Western student of the Eastern teachings." The order died with its founder in 1955, and reports could not be confirmed that an offshoot, the "New York Sacred Tantrics" still functioned in the 1960s.

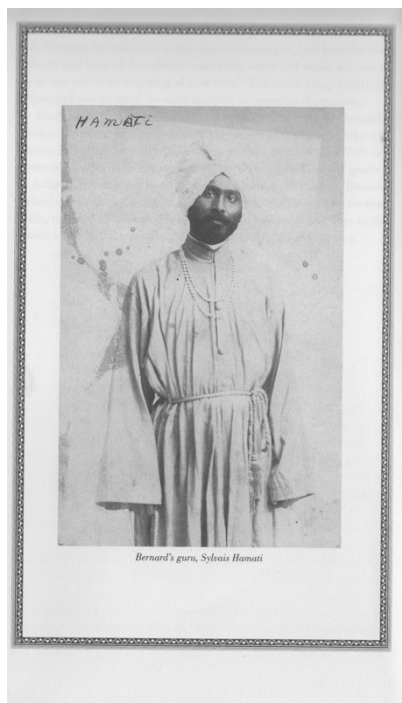


Fig. 10. Pierre Bernard's guru, Sylvais Hamati. After Love 2010, 69.

Though a yoga-exhibitionist, Pierre possessed considerable good sense. He veiled his tantric order in a blanket of impenetrable rigmarole, yet his teaching of ordinary students was usually simple and to the point. He early on saw the great potential of New York City as an inexhaustible pool of disciples and patrons. With several of his followers, he shifted his operations in about 1909 or 1910 from the West Coast to New York.

In 1910 Pierre was arrested in New York and spent four months in prison there awaiting trial, after two female disciples alleged that they had been held against their wills in his love cult. Later both young women failed to appear in court to testify against him, but the scandal tarnished his reputation for decades with the New York and San Francisco press.⁶⁴

Unfazed, Pierre continued his operations and allied himself with another colorful character, the singer Blanche Devries (1891–1984),

⁶⁴ See below, Appendix B.

whom he secretly married a few years later.⁶⁵ Blanche was born Dace Melbourne Shannon in Adrian, Michigan. She had come to New York to pursue a singing career, but after teaming up with Pierre she became his stage designer and manager. Ultimately, she, too, became a respected yoga instructor. Together, Pierre and Blanche formed an irresistible team, and they enjoyed a steady upward march through New York society. They attracted many students, some of whom later moved on to more serious practice under more doctrinaire teachers.⁶⁶

Pierre Bernard was a cigar-smoking autodidact with a love for baseball and other American sports. He was a big reader and collector of books, and also collected exotic animals, including elephants. He joined the American Oriental Society in 1914 and the name Pierre A. Bernard remained on the society's member's roster for over twenty years. From 1914 to 1920 his address was 662 West End Ave., New York City. From 1921 to 1926 he lived at Rossiter House, Braeburn Club, Nyack, New York. In later years his address became "Clarks-town Country Club, Nyack."

At his country club, Pierre presented the wisdom of the East to Americans through music, drama, and sports. In the early 1920s, Pierre and Blanche successfully tapped into the post-WW1 craze for self-improvement and plain living.⁶⁷ In many respects Pierre's theatrical approach was vintage Katherine Tingley-style Theosophy. Tingley had been the decisive figure for much of Theosophical spiritualism in America and California at the turn of the century and in the following two decades. At her seat in Point Loma, California, she had established a center to rival Adyar. Founded in April 1899, within a magnificent natural setting on a headland overlooking the Pacific, Point Loma opened with great pomp and ceremony through a vast congress that included religious rites, exhibitions, plays, lectures, and the laying of an Irish-style foundation stone. Tingley took to heart not only the spiritual welfare of her students, but also their cultural and aesthetic development. "Theater as sacrament was the focus of activities at Point Loma, with Katherine Tingley as director, celebrant and star

⁶⁵ When Pierre A. Bernard secretly married Blanche Devries on August 27, 1918, at Richmond, Virginia, he stated his parents to be "J. C. and Catherine C. Bernard," claiming he was born in Chicago, Illinois.

⁶⁶ The later populariser of Buddhism in America in the 1960s and 1970s, Alan Watts, benefitted indirectly from the interest in Orientalia encouraged by Pierre Bernard. His first wife was the daughter of wealthy Chicagoans whose mother had studied under Pierre, and who later became an important backer of Zen Buddhist masters. Alan Watts referred to Pierre as a "phenomenal rascal-master" who taught hatha yoga and "tantra," though wrongly calling him "Pierre Bonnard." See Fields 1992, 188.

⁶⁷ On the cultural developments in this period, see Washington 1995, 213.

performer.”⁶⁸

7. *Theos's First Wife, Viola Wertheim*

In the 1920s and 1930s, Dr. Pierre Bernard rode a rising wave of American fascination with Indian spirituality, doing what he could to stir that wave even higher.⁶⁹ When his nephew Theos Bernard arrived in New York in 1934, the wave was near its crest, and uncle Pierre was reigning potentate of the Clarkstown Country Club. No source records or implies that Theos studied under Pierre or was strongly influenced by him. Still, at a dinner party at his uncle Pierre's club, Theos met a woman who would change his life and open many horizons: the twenty-six-year-old Viola Wertheim (1907–1998).

⁶⁸ Washington 1995, 111. On the rise and fall of Katherine Tingley, see *ibid.*, p. 110ff. Though not a direct disciple of Blavatsky, Tingley claimed to have had her own direct contact with Khoot Hoomi in Darjeeling, as described in her autobiographic *The Gods Await*. At Point Loma she founded a successful school called “Raja Yoga,” and in 1919 chartered a less successful Theosophical University. On Tingley's life and the history of Point Loma, see also Greenwalt 1978.

⁶⁹ Tibet and Indian spirituality were romanticized by novelists of the period, for example in:
 Mundy, Talbot 1927. *OM. The Secret of the Abhor Valley*. Indianapolis, Bobbs-Merill and Co. / London, Hutchinson and Co. German translation: *OM, das Geheimnis des Abhortales*. Berlin, 1927 (Aschoff 1992, no. 2105). [An orphaned English girl is raised in a remote monastery in Western Tibet and then twenty years later fetched back to the West by her uncle Ommony. Mundy was a friend and admirer of the Theosophy guru Katherine Tingley.]
 Adams Beck, Lily Moresby [d. 1931] (1927 or 1928). *The House of Fulfillment: The Romance of a Soul*. (New York?) Cosmopolitan Book Corporation; London, Fischer and Unwin, 1927. Reprint: Los Angeles, Jeremy P. Tarcher, Inc., 1989. German translation: *Das diamantene Zepter*, 1954 (Aschoff 1992, no. 82). [The artist Hew Cardonald travels to India, where he falls in with spiritual seekers and then journeys to a monastery in the western Himalayas. A story of love, adventure, and spiritual growth.]
 James Hilton 1933. *Lost Horizon*. London and New York, McMillan, and Co. German translation: *Irgendwo in Tibet. Geschichte eines Abenteurers*. 1937 (Aschoff 1992, no. 885). [Four Westerners are abducted and taken by plane to a lamasery in Shangri-la, high in the uncharted mountains of Tibet.]



Fig. 11. Viola Wertheim, the future Viola Bernard, ca. 1930 (Viola Bernard papers, Columbia U Health Sciences). After Hackett 2012, fig. 2.2.

Viola, whose family had a weekend house in Nyack, studied yoga and Oriental philosophy under Pierre, and she was in 1933 enrolled at Cornell Medical College in New York City. They hit it off. Theos returned to Arizona to settle his affairs and quickly returned to NYC, where he wanted to attend graduate school.

Friendship very quickly led to an engagement. Theos and Viola were married on Wednesday, August 1, 1934, at the bride's home at 315 E. 68th Street. Dr. John L. Elliot, head of the New York Ethical Culture Society, officiated.⁷⁰

Viola Wertheim was the youngest child of Jacob Wertheim and Emma Stern.⁷¹ Her late father, Jacob Wertheim, had been a multi-millionaire merchant, and her mother's ex-husband was Henry Morgenthau, Sr.⁷² Viola's father had amassed a fortune as a dry-goods merchant and was one of the founders of the General Tobacco Company. He was an important philanthropist, co-founding the Federation for

⁷⁰ *Daily News* (New York City), August 3, 1934, clipping courtesy of Grace Gordon. Theos was then living at 400 E. 57th St. This would be their shared residence. According to Paul Hackett, they were actually married on 26 July.

⁷¹ Kelly 1998.

⁷² This information thanks to Paul Hackett. Boswell 1965 wrongly calls her Henry Morgenthau, Sr's niece.

the Support of Jewish Philanthropic Societies.⁷³

Viola's family had built and owned a home in South Nyack (which she later inherited). She became involved in Pierre Bernard's Country Club as a teenager.⁷⁴ Viola's sister, Dianna Hunt Wertheim, was a disciple of Pierre from at least 1927 and married Pierre Bernard's private secretary, Percival Wilcox Whittlesey, in May 1929.



Fig. 12. Theos Bernard, ca. 1930. After Love 2010, 260.

8. *The First Yoga Manual*

Theos's first yoga manual, *Heaven Lies Within Us*, was published by Charles Scribner's Sons from New York in 1939.⁷⁵ Theos dedicated the book to his father. He also personally inscribed a presentation copy for his father with the words: "May his spirit live forever."⁷⁶ (Whose

⁷³ Or: Federation for Jewish Philanthropies. Clipping, *Daily News* (New York City), August 3, 1934. Courtesy of Grace Gordon.

⁷⁴ Viola W. Bernard, M.D., letter to Richard Stringer-Hye, January 15, 1992, local history files, Nyack Library.

⁷⁵ Could it have been somehow related to his Ph.D. dissertation "Tantrik Yoga," which he had unsuccessfully submitted the year before?

⁷⁶ TB archives appraisal, box 495-1.

spirit? That of Hamati or another late Indian guru of the family?)

Theos completed the book in California, signing the foreword: "Theos Bernard. Beverly Hills, California. August 1, 1939." Some of Theos's statements in this book could be interpreted as a declaration of independence from Uncle Pierre. In his foreword (p. 10), for instance, one reads, "Guidance of a teacher ... meant a journey to India, the home of yoga. There was no place in America where one could go for such training nor was there any one whose knowledge was sufficient to guide one." And on p. 46: "I knew I was still travelling in the Shadow of Truth rather than in its light. This could only be attained by going to India and being initiated."

Theos made a somewhat dubious assertion in the same book: he claimed to have met an Indian guru in Arizona in ca. 1930.⁷⁷ The aged wise man showed up suddenly to instruct him just at the moment he was needed.⁷⁸ Was this story an instance of "skill in means" (stretching the truth a little) to help establish his spiritual pedigree, as Uncle Pierre had done? Who among the Indian gurus could have been just passing through southern Arizona in the early 1930s? (Tucson did lay on the major east-west rail route of the Southern Pacific railroad, which linked Texas with southern California.)

Vivekananda on his second journey to the United States in 1899 had founded a temple in Los Angeles. This had been taken over by the swami Prabhavananda. But though they followed the universalist teacher Ramakrishna (d. 1886), these swamis were more orthodox Vedantins and did not propagate a Theosophical-style synthesis of wisdom religion that combined the common elements and best of all faiths.⁷⁹ When the Sufi musician Inayat Khan visited San Francisco in 1911, he found there a functioning Hindu temple where he was greeted by Swami Trigunatita and Swami Paramananda, the resident teachers.⁸⁰ Since the 1920s a draconian immigration law with regional quotas strictly limited the number of yearly entrants from India to a mere handful.⁸¹ One Indian guru in America whose star was still on

⁷⁷ Theos had begun experimenting with yoga as a teenager or university student in Arizona. In 1930 Alan Watts had similarly cut his adolescent yoga teeth by reading Vivekananda's *Raja Yoga*. See the biography of Watts by Stuart 1983, 16.

⁷⁸ Among the Theosophists it was said that the Mahatmas would suddenly show up at a key moment in a seeker's life and bestow crucial advice or teachings. See Washington 1995, 58, for Olcott's critical brief contact with a (Himalayan) master—a contact now assumed to have been imaginary.

⁷⁹ See Washington 1995, 320.

⁸⁰ Keesing 1981, 67.

⁸¹ The Indian Sufi sage Inayat Khan was detained when trying to enter the USA and would probably have been sent back if a New York professor had not spoken up for him at his hearing, attesting to his previous visit. That master had not helped

the rise in 1930 was Krishnamurti, protegee of the Theosophical Society, who had by then cut his official links with the parent organization.

Though Theos's books were greeted by a universal silence from scholars on both sides of the Atlantic, the popular press did review Theos's books—and usually positively.⁸² The popular arena was where Theos's career could progress, and he remained a darling of the press despite his familial links with “Oom the Omnipotent”—as the papers disparagingly called Uncle Pierre. Nobody seems to have noticed then that the brand of yoga that Theos taught—always called “tantrik yoga”—and his method of teaching through public demonstrations both smacked strongly of Uncle Pierre. A lawsuit against Theos (“Donovan vs. Bernard [1942]”) for yogic malpractice seems also not to have dented his reputation in the least.

Still, with his growing academic qualifications including a B.A. from Arizona and M.A. from Columbia, Theos considered himself, among other things, a scholar. In 1936 before leaving for India, Theos joined the main learned association for Asian studies in the U.S.A. in those days, the American Oriental Society. (His wife, Viola, had by then been a member for eight years under the pseudonym “Viola White”, and Uncle Pierre, for twenty-two.) Mr. Theos Bernard appeared in the 1936 membership list as living at 400 E. 57th St., New York, the same address as his wife.

9. *Ganna Walska and the Birth of the Tibetland, California Dream (1941–1944)*

The young psychiatrist in training, Viola, and the ambitious young populariser of Buddhism and yoga found themselves unsuited for a long-term marriage. By 1938 they divorced, and Mr. Theos C. Bernard was living separately from Viola at 140 West 57th Street.⁸³ The next time he would marry, it would be to someone slightly more in tune with his spiritual aspirations.

his own case by answering the immigration inspector's questions ironically with inscrutable Sufi koans.

⁸² *New York Times*, April 2, 1939 (VII 9:1), review of *Penthouse of the Gods*. Many other clippings exist in the TB archives.

⁸³ By 1940, Mr. Theos C. Bernard at 795 5th Ave., New York, was the only Bernard still belonging to the A.O.S., a membership he continued the rest of his life. In 1945 he was “Dr. Theos C. Bernard” at the Lotus Club, 110 W. 57th St., New York. By 1947 he had changed his address to the West Coast: Dr. Theos C. Bernard, Box 187, Northridge, California.



Fig. 13. Ganna Walska (in 1940): free and wearing diamonds as big as pigeon eggs. Photo by Patrick A. Burns, New York Times. After Hackett 2012, fig 11.4.

One day in 1940 while giving a lecture and yoga demonstration in New York, Theos noticed a striking older woman in the audience who left a deep impression on him. The woman was Madame Ganna Walska.⁸⁴ Ganna had been invited by a friend to attend a yoga demonstration in Theos Bernard's studio suite at the Hotel Pierre. She read his book *Penthouse of the Gods* but was not impressed by him personally. Still, she signed up for daily lessons as a kind of exercise and weight control. Several weeks later he invited her to join his Wednesday evening seminar.⁸⁵

Walska, a wealthy woman with ambitions to become an opera diva that were never fully realized, was then married to but living apart from her fifth husband, Harry Grindell-Matthews, the inventor. A mature, intense Slavic beauty twenty years older than Theos, she was the Zsa Zsa Gabor of her day ("Don't take revenge, darling, take everything").⁸⁶

⁸⁴ The main source on the early life of Theos's second wife, Ganna Walska, is the memoirs she published while she was married to Theos in Walska 1943. Two recent monographs dedicated to her and her horticultural legacy, the Lotusland garden, are: (1) Gardner 1995. On her relationship with Theos, see Walska 1943, 118, "Husband #6." See also (2) Sharon Crawford 1996, "Ganna Walska Lotusland: The Garden and Its Creators." (California Companion Press.) 48 pages. The extensive archives of Ganna's papers at Lotusland include much correspondence with Theos.

⁸⁵ Crawford 1996, 17.

⁸⁶ It may be worth recalling that Uncle Pierre's wife with whom he collaborated so successfully, Blanche Devries, was (like Ganna) a singer with dramatic flair.

Ganna had returned to New York from Europe in October 1939, on the American Clipper, the last ordinary passenger ship to return to the USA after the start of war in Europe. She had known Theos's uncle and had learned some yoga at his Nyack club, but she had never been one of Pierre's intimate disciples. She later recalled:⁸⁷

During and immediately after the last war [World War One], such prominent and strikingly beautiful women as . . . were faithful followers of Dr. Pierre Bernard in his Westhampton colony. Dr. Bernard, or the "Nyack Omnipotent Om," as he was mockingly called by the press, advocated washing one's stomach three times a day as well as standing on one's head for protracted periods of time. I succeeded beautifully in standing on my head, although I did not continue it as a regular practice

Ganna Walska published her memoirs in 1943, the second year of her marriage to Theos. Entitled *Always Room at the Top*, the book is filled with rambling spiritual and philosophical reflections on the intense experiences of her life. The long account ends with the place and date: "New York, 1941."

Late in her narrative Ganna mentions meeting a young man "who taught me much about forgotten teachings—an old soul dwelling in a young Arizona boy, who already had time in the flower of his youth to gather much knowledge in India and Tibet. . . ." ⁸⁸ According to Ganna, Theos's romantic interests caught her completely by surprise.

In her memoirs she praised "the American boy" (Theos), as her master. ⁸⁹ The book has several other effusive mentions of Theos: "that same California-born prodigy..." ⁹⁰ and "Thanks to my youthful teacher..." ⁹¹ Theos had visited southern California in August, 1939, concluding his first yoga manual in fashionable Beverly Hills. ⁹² At his insistence, Ganna moved to California and bought two properties outside Santa Barbara: 1. Cuesta Linda ("Tibetland", later "Lotusland") in June, 1941; and 2. El Capitan ("Penthouse of the Gods") in September, 1941. ⁹³ Using Ganna's assets, Theos hoped finally to realize his goal of establishing an institution for the study of Tibetan Buddhist literature and culture: Tibetland. There Theos planned to provide accommodations for Tibetan lamas, who would translate their sacred writings into

⁸⁷ Walska 1943, 36.

⁸⁸ Walska 1943, 487.

⁸⁹ Walska 1943, 492.

⁹⁰ Walska 1943, 488.

⁹¹ Walska 1943, 494.

⁹² Bernard 1939b, foreword.

⁹³ Crawford 1996, 18.

English. The place would have room for a Tibetan temple, a library, and a museum in which to keep and display Ganna's considerable collection of art from Tibet.⁹⁴

The last pages of Ganna's memoirs are filled with notions of California as an important center of spirituality. She wondered whether California was destined to become "a spiritual capital of the future American empire—the Vatican of all Spiritual Truth seekers?"⁹⁵ She believed that America had become the birthplace of a future spiritual empire, etc.⁹⁶ Her memoirs end in effect with an advertisement for the Tibetland she was founding with Theos, "where the mystery of our being is to be unfolded to all truth seekers." The estate is even pictured in one illustration: "Tibetland in Santa Barbara."⁹⁷

10. *Gendun Chöphel, First Lama of Tibetland*

One of the lamas Theos hoped to invite to Tibetland was Gendun Chöphel (1903/5–1951). As a many-sided scholar, artist and writer who had collaborated extensively with Tharchin Babu and George Roerich in India, Gendun Chöphel had dreamed of such a journey to Europe and America. Theos Bernard, using Ganna's money, could promise to arrange that journey.

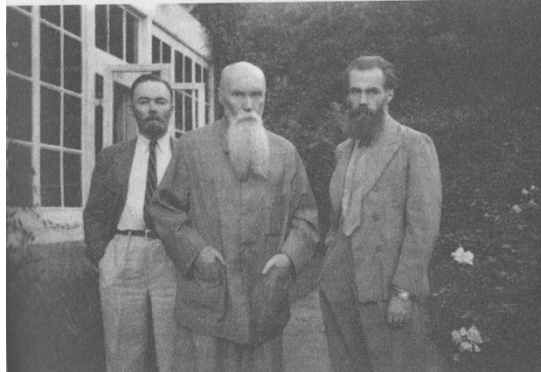


Fig. 14. The Roerichs in Kulu (father, Nicholas, in center; son George, to right; and son Svyatoslav Roerich (1904-1993), the artist, to left (courtesy of Nicholas Roerich Museum, New York). After Hackett 2012, fig 12.3.

⁹⁴ Crawford 1996, 18. Ganna was also trying to sponsor the immigration of her brother at this time.

⁹⁵ Walska 1943, 503.

⁹⁶ Ganna Walska 1943, p. 476.

⁹⁷ Ganna Walska 1943, black and white photo, between pp. 488 and 489.

But with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and the entry of the U.S.A. into the war, the American State Department blocked visas for people coming from Asia. This prevented the lamas from coming.⁹⁸ British India was already at war from September 1939, so the difficulties of wartime travel had begun in India two years earlier. Thus, the brief editorial note published with Gendun Chöphel's English-language poems in the *Mahabodhi Journal* [Calcutta], August, 1941, pp. 293-295, can now be understood. It stated that Gendun Chöphel had been invited to the USA by an "American Tibetologist," but that owing to the wartime conditions, this had to be called off.⁹⁹ Without a doubt, the "American Tibetologist" was the young man whom Tharchin Babu had accompanied to Tibet in 1937: Theos Bernard.

11. *Waiting for the Lamas: Tibetland on Hold (1941–1943)*

In fall and winter 1941, Theos pressured Ganna into marrying her, worried that he would be evicted from Tibetland after her death.¹⁰⁰ She had willed both properties to him, so she saw no need for the marriage. They received word from England that her fifth husband died in September 1941. Her attorneys arranged for a secret marriage at Las Vegas, Nevada, in July, 1942.¹⁰¹ She insisted that both sign a pre-nuptial agreement protecting her property in case of divorce.

One journalistic account asserted that Theos, in the manner of his uncle Pierre, fell "victim to a compulsion for the practice and teaching of yoga. A woman Theos taught reputedly went crazy, and her husband sued him for \$25,000."¹⁰² The legal case "Donovan vs. Bernard (1942)" relates to this.¹⁰³

At Santa Barbara, Theos wrote seven chapters of a work he never completed, "The True Nature of Things, by a Student." The surviving typescripts are dated "1942. Santa Barbara, Tibetan Text Society."¹⁰⁴ Another unpublished typescript from the period: "The Path of Purity by a Student, 1942."¹⁰⁵ Also perhaps from the early Tibetland period is a six-page typescript: "Establishing an Academy on Tibetan

⁹⁸ Crawford 1996, 19.

⁹⁹ Gendun Chöphel had published five other articles in the same journal, between August 1939 and January 1941. See Mengele 1999, 99, nos. 43-47.

¹⁰⁰ The following account of Theos and Ganna's marriage is told from the point of view of the available sources, i.e. primarily from Ganna's perspective.

¹⁰¹ Nevada marriage certificate no. 70809, dated July 27, 1942. According to the certificate, Theos Bernard married "Anna Trimbel [?]."

¹⁰² Charles Boswell 1965.

¹⁰³ TB archives appraisal, box 495-61,

¹⁰⁴ TB Archives appraisal, box 495-57.

¹⁰⁵ TB Archives appraisal, box 495-58.

Literature."¹⁰⁶

On sixteen Thursdays from October 8, 1942, to February 18, 1943, Theos held a series of down-to-earth lectures devoid of Asian arcane references.¹⁰⁷ Theos presented the wisdom of the East simply to war-preoccupied America, ending with a lecture about the desirability of vitality in old age.¹⁰⁸

13. *Scholarly Influences at Columbia University*

Though now based mainly in California, Theos and Ganna presumably lived part of every year on the East Coast. Theos decided to spend his time while waiting for "the lamas" by completing his Ph.D. in Philosophy at Columbia University in New York City. Ganna financed his education, including tutorials in Sanskrit and other languages.¹⁰⁹ This Ph.D. program continued the studies he had begun at Columbia in 1933, for which he had received his M.A. in 1938.

In 1943 Theos submitted his dissertation "T-A-N-T-R-I-C Yoga" to the Department of Philosophy at Columbia University.¹¹⁰ A carbon copy of the dissertation survives in TB archives appraisal, box 175-12, along with five pages of single-spaced typed comments of all dissertation committee members, including Schneider and Evans-Wentz. Five years before Evans-Wentz had helped evaluate an earlier version of this dissertation, and now in 1943 the reclusive scholar agreed to help again. Then sixty-five years old, living in California and blocked from visiting India by the war, he was the most venerable of Tibetan-Buddhism experts in the U.S.A., though (like Theos) he could not make direct use of Tibetan texts.

Theos mentions in the preface to his published dissertation, *Hatha Yoga*, p. 14, his indebtedness to "my teachers of India and Tibet, who, shunning public acclaim, must perforce remain anonymous." He also

¹⁰⁶ TB archives appraisal, box 495-59.

¹⁰⁷ Typescripts of these lectures survive in TB archives appraisal, box 495-59.

¹⁰⁸ In the early 1940s people in America were hunkering down for the war, even the more spiritually inclined. See Washington 1995, chapter 17, "Gurus in the War." At the same time Theos was trying to found Tibetland in 1942, another small experimental community was established by Heard at Trabuco, sixty miles south of Los Angeles. It was a small "club for mystics," intended to be non-dogmatic and non-sectarian. See Washington 1995, 323. Elsewhere the formerly successful country club-ashram of Uncle Pierre in Nyack was reduced by the war to a haven for refugees, a financial disaster from which it never recovered.

¹⁰⁹ Crawford 1996, 19.

¹¹⁰ The English translation of a similarly entitled book in French had in the meanwhile appeared in 1940 and was cited by Theos in his bibliography to *Hindu Philosophy* (the American reprint of *Philosophical Foundations of India?*) by J. Marques Riviere *Tantrik Yoga, Hindu and Tibetan* (London, Rider and Co., [1940]), translated from the French by H. E. Kennedy.

thanks Professor Herbert W. Schneider, "for his constant encouragement and helpful suggestions in the preparation of the manuscript," and Professor Henry Zimmer, "for his valuable guidance and technical assistance."

Columbia University was the fifth-oldest university in the United States and the oldest in New York State. Its department of philosophy in particular was an important center of the American Naturalism movement and—as academic home since 1905 to John Dewey—of Pragmatism. Since William James (1842–1910), pragmatic philosophers had taken a serious interest in religions, James being himself the son of a mystic. In his classic *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902), James mentioned Hindu yoga first among the various methods of methodically cultivating mystic consciousness:¹¹¹

In India, training in mystical insight has been known from time immemorial under the name of yoga. Yoga means the experimental union of the individual with the divine. It is based on persevering exercise.

John Dewey (1859-) and his pupils tended to exclude the supernatural and maintained that reality came within the laws of nature. Still, they were interested in religion.

14. Herbert Wallace Schneider

Theos acknowledged in two prefaces his indebtedness to his Columbia University professors, in both cases to Professor Herbert Wallace Schneider (1892–1984), eminent professor of religion and philosophy at Columbia from 1929 to 1957. Schneider, the son of theology professor F. W. Schneider, was a student of Dewey who took his Ph.D. at Columbia in 1917 (as a "classmate" of Will Durant) and afterwards joined the philosophy department at Columbia, first as Dewey's assistant. While still an assistant he helped Dewey organize a new curriculum in which he "developed unconventional perspectives and stimulated much active research."¹¹²

Schneider was a pragmatic naturalist and shared his teacher Dewey's concerns with social philosophy and ethical theory. His interest in social theory led him to his study of fascist Italy, including two stints of field work in 1928 and 1937. After serving as instructor and assistant professor, in 1929 he was appointed full professor of religion and philosophy, in the new program of religion in Columbia's philosophy department. He instituted a graduate seminar in the study of

¹¹¹ William James 1902 (repr. 1963), 307.

¹¹² Web site of the Selected Papers of Herbert W. Schneider, Collection 107, Special Collections, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale.

religious movements in American culture, which Theos presumably attended.

Schneider published numerous books on philosophy and religion, including histories such as his *History of American Philosophy* and a study of an early American utopian religious community founded by Thomas Lake Harris and Laurence Oliphant (1829–1888). Indeed, the book *A Prophet and a Pilgrim, being the incredible story of Thomas Lake Harris and Laurence Oliphant; their sexual mysticisms and Utopian communities. Amply documented to confound the skeptic, by Herbert W. Schneider and George Lawton* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1942) was completed by Schneider and Lawton while Schneider was still supervising Theos.¹¹³ The American prophet Thomas Lake Harris (1854–1942) led the utopian Brotherhood of the New Life in California—could Herbert Schneider have had an inkling Theos might be a latter-day Harris in the making?¹¹⁴ Herbert Schneider joined the American Oriental Society in 1936 and he remained active in the East-West Philosopher's Conference, but one of his few published ventures into a comparative study of Asian philosophy appeared in 1954: "Idealism—East and West," in *Philosophy East and West*, vol. 4, pp. 265-269.¹¹⁵

15. Heinrich Zimmer

The Professor "Henry" Zimmer whom Theos also thanked was Heinrich Robert Zimmer (1890–1943), the famed German Indologist and scholar of the symbolism of Indian art, whose *Philosophies of India* was posthumously published in 1951 and which was later translated into both German and French. He evidently anglicized his personal name from Heinrich to Henry after leaving Germany in 1938.

Born in Greifswald, Germany, Zimmer studied Sanskrit and linguistics at the University of Berlin, graduating in 1913. He taught at Greifswald from 1920 to 1924 when he was called to the Heidelberg chair of Indian philology, his largely nominal position for fourteen

¹¹³ On the colorful life of Harris's disciple and financial supporter L. Oliphant, see Margaret Oliphant 1892, *Memoir of the Life of Laurence Oliphant and of Alice Oliphant, His Wife* (Edinburgh and London).

¹¹⁴ Schneider and Evans-Wentz were on the Ph.D. examining committee, and their detailed comments survive in the TB archives. But correspondence relating to Theos Bernard could not be located among the Selected Papers of Herbert W. Schneider, Collection 107, Special Collections, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale.

¹¹⁵ For a bibliography of Herbert W. Schneider, see the Pragmatist web sight, Columbia school.

years until forbidden to teach by the Nazis in February, 1938.¹¹⁶ He was one of at least nine German Indologists to be victimized by the Nazis because of their Jewish parentage or spouses¹¹⁷—his second wife was Christiane, daughter of the famous Austrian writer Hugo von Hofmannsthal.¹¹⁸ Zimmer with wife and three children managed to emigrate to England, where he taught unpaid at Balliol College, Oxford in 1939–1940. They came to New York by dangerous sea passage in May 1940, and in 1942 he took up a paid visiting lectureship in philosophy at Columbia. A colleague of Carl Jung, his publications on mythology and symbolism helped popularize Indian art in the West.

Heinrich Zimmer was thus lecturing on Indian philosophy at Columbia University (where Theos was doing his second degree) in spring, 1943, when he was struck by a sudden lung infection, which caused his untimely death.¹¹⁹ Zimmer's work on art-symbolism and Yoga (e.g. his *Kunstform und Yoga im indischen Kultbild* [Berlin, 1926], translated as *Artistic Form and Yoga in the Sacred Images of India*, Princeton, 1984) and his knowledge of philosophical, puranic and tantric works made him a natural source of expertise and lore for Theos.

16. Final Years with Ganna and the End of Tibetland (1945–1946)

In the mid-1940s, Ganna supported both Theos and his father, Glen Bernard. She also reluctantly paid in 1944 for the publication of his dissertation, renamed *Hatha Yoga; the report of a personal experience* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1944), his revised Ph.D. dissertation.¹²⁰ He dedicated the book "to Ganna Walska." As he explained in the preface (p. 11), he had written the book as:

the report of a Westerner who has practiced yoga under a teacher in India. For this purpose, I went to India and Tibet. After the 'grand tour'.... I became the sincere disciple of a highly esteemed teacher and settled down at his retreat in the hills near Ranchi.
... In order to further my studies, it was suggested by my

¹¹⁶ My sketch of H. Zimmer's life derives in part from the Duke University art library online directory. See also Margaret H. Chase ed. 1994, *Heinrich Zimmer: Coming into His Own* (Princeton, Princeton University Press), and the *Dictionary of Art*.

¹¹⁷ Pollock 1993, 95.

¹¹⁸ For some details on Zimmer's wife and life, I have consulted the postscript to Maya Rauch and Gerhard Schuster eds. 1991, *Christiane von Hofmannsthal: Tagebücher 1918–1923 und Briefe des Vaters an die Tochter 1903–1929*, pp. 181–183. Franz-Karl Ehrhard kindly referred me to this source.

¹¹⁹ Joseph Campbell (1904–1987), editor's foreword to Zimmer's *Philosophies of India*, p. v.

¹²⁰ This study is listed as a Columbia dissertation in the UMI listings and the Columbia University on-line catalogue, kindly checked by Tom Yarnall.

teacher that I go to Tibet.

(p. 12) My travels culminated in a pilgrimage to the holy city, Lhasa, where I was accepted as an incarnation of a Tibetan saint.

In 1944 Theos also produced a typescript on Tibetan grammar, marked "NY 1944." A corrected 221-page typescript of *Hindu Philosophy* dated "NY 1944" also survives.¹²¹

Theos and Ganna's relationship deteriorated in 1945. Bernard went to California in the autumn without her. In 1945 he registered the Tibetan Text Society (in Santa Barbara?), with bylaws and surviving letters and minutes.¹²² Ganna stayed behind in New York and plagued by a series of minor illnesses, had plenty of time to reconsider their relationship.¹²³

In Santa Barbara he prepared this year a 400-page typescript of "Philosophical Foundations of India" (Santa Barbara, 1945), evidently a reworking of his "Hindu Philosophy."¹²⁴ In spring, 1946, Theos filed for divorce, having Ganna served with divorce papers when she flew to the Burbank airport on May 29, 1946.¹²⁵ At this time he compiled a 6-page typed document on his marriage to Ganna and its problems, which gives many details about his activities in the 1940s.¹²⁶

Ganna arrived back at Tibetland to find that Theos had moved out, taking with him numerous valuable books and art pieces.¹²⁷ Theos sued Ganna for separate maintenance, saying he had become dependent on the lifestyle she had provided him. It was revealed in court that he had divorced another wealthy wife who had supported his early education and two years in India and Tibet. According to Ganna, he was caught perjuring himself about his financial situation.¹²⁸

Ganna reimbursed his legal expenses and paid him to vacate their other residence, the "Penthouse of the Gods." Reports of their divorce reached the major newspapers in mid-July.¹²⁹ On July 9, the *New York World-Telegram* carried the U.P. dispatch: "Fed Up on Yogi: Mme Ganna Walska Wants to Quit 'White Lama.'" In the midst of their divorce wrangling, Ganna lashed out at Theos, charging that he had threatened her with the yogi "power of kundalini" and well-nigh choked and strangled her when she refused his demands for money.

¹²¹ TB archives appraisal, box 495-60.

¹²² TB archives appraisal, box 495-57.

¹²³ Crawford 1996, 20.

¹²⁴ TB archives appraisal, box 896-14.

¹²⁵ Crawford 1996, 20.

¹²⁶ TB archives appraisal, box 495-60.

¹²⁷ Crawford 1996, 20.

¹²⁸ Crawford 1996, 20.

¹²⁹ *New York Times*, July 14, 1946, 31: 5, Ganna Walska divorced [Theos Bernard].

In summer 1946, Theos finished and published (Santa Barbara) a 65-page handbook of literary Tibetan. Newly separated from Ganna and Tibetland, Theos completed the little book on August 15, 1946, at Santa Ynez Mountain Lodge, Santa Barbara, California. (Santa Ynez is a town northwest of Santa Barbara, and the "lodge" was presumably located near there, in the San Rafael Mountains.) The handbook's inception dates to the Tibetland phase, for it was published by the Tibetan Text Society of Santa Barbara, California. This book was a small fruit of Theos's decision in the early 1940s to devote himself more to Tibet and its literary heritage. In the preface he wrote (p. vi):

Today Tibet remains the last unlocked treasure chest of ancient wisdom, for all that has been lost in India (and much has been lost) can be found living in Tibet. Not everything is borrowed, for the Tibetan has a fertile and independent mind which has enabled him to shed much light on the subtle and profound philosophical teachings of the past. This knowledge is available to those who will master the language.

Theos was fond of simplified summaries (see also his *Hindu Philosophy*), and in this little manual he reduced Tibetan grammar to eighty-nine points summarized from the handbooks of Csoma de Körös, Jaeschke and Hannah. The book concludes with a brief reading exercise from the biography of Mila Repa, with text, translation, and glossary. The passage Theos selected is the episode in which Mila edifies his wicked, greedy aunt, succeeding in the end in teaching and gratifying her. Theos's choice of this passage can hardly have been a coincidence, coming as it did just a month after his divorce from Ganna.¹³⁰

Many sources document the six-year relationship of Ganna and Theos. In addition to numerous letters from both sides and Ganna's published memoirs (which ends in ca. 1942), Ganna Walska also wrote a detailed account of her years with Theos which survives as an unpublished typescript: *Life with Yogi*.¹³¹

17. *The Second Journey to the Himalayas* (1947)

In 1946, Theos became close to another lady, Helen Graham Park, whom one later account called his "secretary and travelling companion."¹³² He went with her in ca. late 1946 to India, where he schemed

¹³⁰ Cf. Evans-Wentz edition, 190f.

¹³¹ The typescript of this book is cited by Crawford 1996, 20, and by Gardner 1995 in their books on Lotusland.

¹³² Murray Sinclair, "The 'White Lama' Must Be Dead, Most Agree Now," *Arizona Daily Star*, Sunday, March 5, 1972, p. 3E. Clipping courtesy of Valrae Reynolds, Newark Museum.

to realize his cherished goal of reaching Tibet a second time. Ever the American optimist, he seems confident he could overcome any obstacle. In the first yoga manual published eight years earlier, he repeated twice an adage from his guru: "No harm could come to one ... as long as he is purified by a knowledge of the Truth."¹³³ Had he really gained that knowledge?



Fig. 15. Theos Bernard, Visa photo, August, 1946 (Helen Graham Park Foundation). After Hackett 2012, fig 12.1.



Fig. 16. Helen Park, visa photo, August, 1946 (Helen Graham Park Foundation). After Hackett 2012, fig 12.1.

¹³³ Bernard 1939, 25.

Both in Tibet and in India, Theos's timing could not have been worse. Among the Tibetan governing circles in Lhasa, a group hostile to Reting had ruled Tibet for five years. The previous regent, the relatively fun-loving and approachable Reting, who had befriended Bernard in 1937, resigned his post in 1941 and was about to die under mysterious circumstances. Within a few weeks, the Reting conspiracy and the rebellion of the Sera Che monks in spring, 1947, would take place, ending with Reting's death—most likely by assassination.¹³⁴ The Tibetan scholar Gendun Choephel, whom Theos had worked hard to bring to California, had been arrested in July 1946, for political reasons—his involvement in the Tibet Improvement Party—and he was languishing in a Lhasa prison.¹³⁵

Theos applied to the Tibetan Kashag ruling council in January 1947, for permission to visit Lhasa for the Tibetan New Year. In February 1947, the Kashag refused permission on the grounds that many people were applying, and if one were permitted, all would have to be.

The real reason, many later speculated, was the outrageous claims Theos had made in his travelogue of his previous trip.¹³⁶ But Theos's previous book is unlikely to have been read by Tibetan governing bureaucrats, unless it had been specifically criticized and brought to their attention by the British Tibet cadre. The British administrators in India and their Tibetan specialists had been neither impressed nor convinced by the claims of Theos (after going to great lengths to accommodate him in 1937), and they were determined to snub him this time. To be sure, they had more important things to worry about than a visit by Theos: Britain was about to hand over political rule to the Indians in half a year on August 15, 1947.

Most likely the Tibetan government—an increasingly hidebound regency with a child Dalai Lama—was distracted by too many other worries to want to entertain eccentric foreign guests. A little before the Reting conspiracy, rumours reached Lhasa that the Chinese were escorting a pretender Panchen Lama to Tibet, and the Tibetan government was unsure what changes the impending changes of government in India might bring, come August. By summer 1947, the government was also scheming to send a trade delegation abroad.¹³⁷

As Theos waited month after month, still no official permission was forthcoming. Meanwhile, things went from bad to worse in many parts of India. Partition troubles in summer 1947 racked the Punjab and Bengal with "religious" communal riots. Moreover, an experienced old British representative—Gould's protegee, Hugh Richardson, who had

¹³⁴ On the Reting conspiracy and the rebellion of Sera Che, see Goldstein 1989, 464ff.

¹³⁵ See Goldstein 1989, 462, and Stoddard 1985.

¹³⁶ Cooper 1986, 14.

¹³⁷ Richardson 1984, *Tibet and Its History* (Boston: Shambhala), p. 172f.

been in Lhasa during the first two weeks of Theos's previous trip—began in 1947 a three-year stint in Lhasa for the new Indian government. Theos could expect no help from him.

The Tibet cadre of the Government of India tried in the 1930s and 1940s to limit access to Tibet. Non-British were generally kept out. The first American to come (Suydam Cutting) was a wealthy man, and the British arranged to have a particular caravan leader accompany him so they could keep an eye on him.¹³⁸ Two examples of even religious seekers who the British found "acceptable" were Edwin Schary and Lama Govinda. Neither Schary nor Govinda commented on political matters.¹³⁹ The German-born Govinda, however, though a naturalized British citizen, was not "acceptable" enough to be spared internment for several years during the Second World War—possibly because of his personal links to the Nehru family.

Theos was by no means the only one refused permission. No less a person than Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark was consistently refused entry to Lhasa during his entire sojourn as anthropologist in northern India during this period. Prince Peter later learned that the Tibetans' policy was to refuse permission to Lhasa unless some benefit accrued to them.¹⁴⁰

18. Mysterious Disappearance in the Himalayas

The dynamic Theos Bernard had reached a dead end. After being denied permission and giving up hope that he would ever succeed through official channels, he visited the "lama" of German-Bolivian ancestry, Anagarika Govinda, presumably travelling to Evans-Wentz's house in Almora in the Kumaon hills of northern Uttar Pradesh.¹⁴¹ Though "guru stardom" was slowly but surely approaching even the reclusive Govinda, he was then still hard at work on the mystical books that would attract a stream of Tibetan-Buddhist seekers to him in the 1960s and 1970s.

Govinda was a friend and tenant of Evans-Wentz, so Theos might have hoped for a cordial reception here. But Govinda and his Almora expatriate Buddhist friends were skeptical of Theos and believed that Theos's "book on his experiences in Tibet did not gain him popularity

¹³⁸ McKay 1997, 174 and 261, note 31.

¹³⁹ McKay 1997, 261, note 28.

¹⁴⁰ On Prince Peter's career, see Jones 1996, 24-34.

¹⁴¹ Coincidentally, though Lama Govinda was a recluse and very self-effacing, he married the artist and photographer daughter of the wealthy Petit family, Farsi industrialists of Bombay.

among the Tibetans."¹⁴² Govinda and some other Buddhists in India in the 1940s viewed Theos Bernard as a wealthy socialite whose relationship with Tibet was self-centered (like that of Alexandra David-Neel).¹⁴³

Theos asked Govinda how best to sneak into Tibet. Govinda tried to discourage him from attempting to enter without authorization, stressing the importance of governmental protection. Theos decided to ignore Govinda's advice.¹⁴⁴

Theos wrote detailed letters from India to his father in summer and fall, 1947, describing partition struggles and one mentioning the "usual murders."¹⁴⁵ By early September he had reached his decision. Since neither the authorities in India nor the Tibetans would help him reach Tibet, he decided to ignore the unrest and communal riots, and he headed across northern India toward Kulu in the western Himalayas (present Himachal Pradesh), planning to begin a small expedition from there.

Theos travelled to the Kulu Valley in northern Punjab. He was accompanied that far by Helen Park, but from there he set out on foot, walking to a remote region of the western Himalayas. He left on August 20, leaving Helen behind. Accompanied by a group of Moslem (Gaddi?) porters, his official destination was Ki monastery. Six days later Hindu-Moslem rioting broke out in the valley.¹⁴⁶

Though in retrospect his decision proved foolhardy, Theos may have thought he could turn the fluidity of the new political situation to his own advantage. One can only assume that he planned to dash across one of the unguarded passes of the Tibetan border when he was close enough. Once on the Tibetan side of the border, he may have planned to bribe his way the rest of the way to central Tibet through an emissary bearing generous gifts. After all, a similar strategy, with Tharchin acting as his emissary, had worked well in 1937.

Whatever his plans, they came to naught. Theos and his porters were caught in sectarian violence, and he disappeared, presumed murdered.

Helen Park waited four weeks in the Kulu Valley, in vain. On September 16, a Gurkha company commanded by a captain Wilson arrived with trucks, offering to evacuate Europeans and Americans who wanted to leave. Shortly thereafter, heavy late-monsoon cloudbursts

¹⁴² Winkler 1990, 128f. Theos was occasionally discussed in Almora in the late 1940s by Govinda, who in personality was the opposite of the flamboyant American celebrity.

¹⁴³ According to Winkler, Govinda's approach was not self-centered.

¹⁴⁴ Winkler 1990, *ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ TB archives appraisal, box 495-42.

¹⁴⁶ *New York Times* (AP), Oct. 31, 1947, version A.

washed out roads and bridges, stranding the trucks. Captain Wilson offered to investigate the disappearance of Theos, but then satisfied himself that the people in the area where the attack was reported knew nothing about it. Helen Park was eventually forced to trek 126 miles on foot to Simla.¹⁴⁷ From Simla, Helen Park went via Delhi to Calcutta, where she planned to wait for any further word about Theos. She arrived in New Delhi on October 29 en route to Calcutta, and the next day reported her husband missing and feared dead. She estimated that sometime between September 12 and September 15, shepherds had seen Lahouli tribesmen attack her husband's party and kill his Moslem servants. She believed he was already short of food and feared he might have lost his cold-weather clothing during the raid.¹⁴⁸ He was, she believed, attempting to return to get back to the Kulu Valley at the time of the attack.¹⁴⁹ She thought there was still hope he might be alive.¹⁵⁰

Shepherds (Gaddi Moslems?) had witnessed and reported the attack. When a search party was sent, no trace of him was found, and Helen Park clung to the hope that Theos, who spoke some Tibetan and knew the terrain, might have made his way out through either Kashmir or Tibet. He was last seen by a group of shepherds, who said tribal raiders had killed his Moslem servants. They did not know whether he had escaped.¹⁵¹

On November 3, 1947, the *New York Times* published a dispatch from New Delhi (Nov. 2) that the American author and travel lecturer Nicol Smith, recently returned from a trip to Western Tibet, said he had heard repeated reports that Bernard, another American author, was killed in the Kulu Valley. Smith reported that "several groups of Lahoulis, Tibetan Buddhists, whom he had met on a road told him that a white man had been killed when a Hindu mob attacked a trekking party sometime during the first two weeks in September."¹⁵²

Then, on 17 November 1947, a conflicting report reached the West, and Theos was reported safe. As the *New York Times* reported, Helen Park wrote on November 5 in New Delhi a letter to one of Theos's publishers, Dagobert Runes of the Philosophical Library. "Marauding tribesmen had attacked her husband's expedition and slain most of the carriers, but ... he had escaped." Yet she did not know his

¹⁴⁷ *New York Times* (AP), Oct. 31, 1947, version B.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, version A.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, version B.

¹⁵⁰ Also published in the *New York Times*, October 31, 1947, was a sketch of his career and a portrait.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² *New York Times*, November 3, 1947, p. 10:7. Nicol Smith later published a book on his journey, *Golden Doorway to Tibet* (Indianapolis, 1949).

whereabouts.¹⁵³

Theos's companion, Helen Graham Park, used the name "Helen Graham Bernard" in letters dated 1947–1948 to U.S. and Indian officials.¹⁵⁴ One of her letters created uncertainty about his fate:¹⁵⁵ His present whereabouts were unknown, she said. That was the last word received in this country [USA] about the fate of Theos Bernard. Was he alive? Did he disappear into one of those Tibetan monasteries, which he described, where holy men shut themselves in cave-like grottos for the rest of their lives? It all seemed quite a mystery—a theme for a movie thriller. Yet Helen Park's doubts were mostly discounted as time went by and Theos never emerged from the mountains alive. When the American maker of travel films Lowell Thomas went to Tibet with his son Lowell Thomas Jr. two years later in 1949, they were told in Lhasa:¹⁵⁶ All of [our Tibetan friends] agreed that Bernard had been killed. The bodies of his servants were found. Although his body was never found, they said he had unquestionably been murdered, too.

Prince Peter of Greece later gave still more details in the *Explorer's Journal* about the attack. Theos was attacked in Kosar, a village about twenty kilometers north of Manali, on the way to Lahul and the Roh-tang Pass. Bernard spent his last night in Kosar, and the next morning he woke up to a lot of noise. He went outside to see what was causing the hubbub, and saw a band of excited, drunken Lahulis. They were marching down to Kulu to avenge a recent massacre by Moslems. Seeing Bernard's beard, they mistook him for a Moslem, and the leader of the Lahulis—an acquaintance of Prince Peter—shot him. They looted his caravan. When they learned he was an American, they got rid of his body and tried to hush things up.

After her return to the U.S.A., Helen Park kept contact with some of the main figures of the American Tibet scene.¹⁵⁷ On the East Coast, Helen was a friend of Eleanor Olson at the Newark Museum and lived for some years in New York. Some years later, Helen Park submitted an affidavit describing the circumstances of Theos' disappearance and almost certain death. Though it was no consolation to deceased Theos,

¹⁵³ *New York Times*, November 17, 1947, p. 5:2.

¹⁵⁴ Numerous letters from Helen Park to Glen Bernard in 1947 and various letters to her from Indian and U.S. agencies or embassies are found in the TB archives appraisal, box 495-42.

¹⁵⁵ Thomas Jr. 1950, 125.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ Winkler 1982, 81. "Mrs. Theos Bernard, whose husband had recently been murdered in India," visited Evans-Wentz in southern California. Winkler 1982, *ibid.*, mentions that Evans-Wentz was also visited at about the same time by "Gamma Walsha [sic], the art collector." "Gamma" was of course Theos's previous consort, Ganna.

he would probably have smiled to read a newspaper article in 1953, six years after his death, that he had “disappeared in Tibet”.¹⁵⁸

'White Lama' Declared Dead

Los Angeles, Nov. 27 (AP)— Theos Casimir Bernard, once called the only American ‘white lama,’ who disappeared in Tibet in 1947, was declared legally dead today. Mr. Bernard, who lived in Santa Barbara, Calif., and New York, was a son of Glen A. Bernard of suburban Northridge, Calif., who petitioned Superior Court to have his son declared legally dead to facilitate disposition of an estimated \$25,000 estate.

The judge accepted Miss Park’s statements and issued the requested order.¹⁵⁹

19. Concluding Thoughts

Though it is now clear that the unnamed “American Tibetologist” in Gendun Chöphel’s publication of 1941 was Theos Bernard, in the present paper I could only summarize the historical background of Theos and those others most involved with him on the American side. Several important questions could not be answered, such as whether Theos and Gendun Chöphel actually met face-to-face in 1937, and who connected them. One likely middleman in their relationship was, of course, their mutual friend Tharchin Babu in Kalimpong.¹⁶⁰ Tharchin seems to have been fond and supportive of both Theos and Gendun Chöphel.

The above sketch was pieced together in 2000 mainly from publications and not through direct access to the relevant archives. Now, five years later, it is possible to learn much more. Archives have been established for the papers of both of Theos Bernard’s long-lived and noteworthy wives—Viola and Ganna—and the papers of Uncle Pierre have also been preserved. The papers, books, and films of Theos, too, have finally found a safe home at the University of California, Berkeley, though they have not yet been made available to researchers.

¹⁵⁸ *New York Times*, Nov. 28, 1953, p. 9:6.

¹⁵⁹ Murray Sinclair, “The ‘White Lama’ Must Be Dead, Most Agree Now,” *Arizona Daily Star*, Sunday, March 5, 1972, p. 3E. Clipping courtesy of Valrae Reynolds, Newark Museum.

¹⁶⁰ A detailed biography of Tharchin Babu by Herbert Louis Fader has been recently announced: *The Life and Times of a True Son of Tibet: Gergan Dorje Tharchin*. Vol. 1 (of 3?), (Kalimpong?) Tibet Mirror Press, 2002. I have not yet been able to consult it for possible references to Theos and Gendun Chöphel. It also remains to be seen whether Tharchin Babu is mentioned in letters now surviving in the papers of Ganna Walska and Theos Bernard.

Several biographical projects have in the meantime begun, including book-length biographies of both Theos and his uncle Pierre.

It is not the task of a historian to wonder what might have happened had events taken a different turn. Still, one can hardly resist speculating how things might have gone had Gendun Chöphel managed to reach Santa Barbara by 1940. And how might the life of Theos Bernard have ended if he—with his Amdo lama-tutor safely in Tibetland—had not felt impelled in 1947 to make the fatal decision to enter Tibet at all costs? If the dream of Tibetland had only been realized, both men might well have lived longer and died less tragically in the healthier climes of California.

Addendum: Their Meeting in Calcutta

Previous to my earlier submission of this article for publication in 2005, Paul Hackett was kind enough to share one of his recent discoveries, answering for the first time definitively the question of how Theos first met Gendun Chöphel. His findings are based mainly on Theos's correspondence with Viola, and they form part of his book-length biography of Theos Bernard.

According to Hackett, Theos formally met Gendun Choephel for the first time in Calcutta at the World Parliament of Religions (February 28–March 6, 1937). In early February 1937, Theos had been staying in Kalimpong at the time of the Tibetan New Year, and he went to the Losar "Tea Party" hosted by his language instructor, Tharchin. Through Tharchin, Theos met the Kalmuk lama Geshe Wangyal (1901–1983, later active in New Jersey), who began teaching him about Tibetan religious literature and continued to do so until the lama left for London in May to work with Marco Pallis. Geshe Wangyal invited Theos to his own Losar dinner party, where Theos met several people, including Geshe Sherab Gyatso (Gendun Chöphel's ex-teacher), who was travelling with Ngagchen Rinpoche, both of whom were going to the international conference in Calcutta, en route to China.

When Theos heard that Younghusband would be attending the conference, he decided to attend without an invitation. Theos had previously met a retired general who had accompanied Younghusband on the 1904 expedition, and he now offered to cover the general's expenses if he would come with him to Calcutta and introduce him to Younghusband. The general accepted, and Theos got into the conference as a member of Ngagchen Rinpoche's party, with the general acting officially as Theos's interpreter. Younghusband had met Ngagchen Rinpoche in 1904, so Theos invited them both out to dinner as his guests. Through Ngagchen Rinpoche, both Younghusband and Theos were introduced to Gedun Choephel, who was also attending the

conference.

Theos quickly struck up a friendship with Gendun Choephel and began discussing in his letters to his wife the idea of inviting him to America to assist him as translator and informant for his research on tantra.¹⁶¹ But upon his return to America in late 1937, Viola rejected the idea of inviting Tibetan lamas and shortly thereafter, gave up on her marriage to Theos altogether.¹⁶²

Appendix A

The Family of Pierre Bernard

Pierre Bernard's parents Catherine C. (Kittie) Givens (b. ca. 1854, Iowa)¹⁶³ and Erastus Warren Baker (b. 1 June 1845, Buffalo, Scott County, Iowa) were married in Iowa in about 1877.¹⁶⁴ Pierre may have been born on 31 October 1876 at Leon, a township in Decatur County, in south-central Iowa near the border of Kansas.¹⁶⁵

His mother and Erastus Baker were divorced in ca. 1880, and he was the only child from that union.¹⁶⁶ Uncle Pierre later gained five half-siblings on his father's side, after Erastus W. Baker married his second wife, Alletta Margaret Hiatt (1859–1922).¹⁶⁷

1. Allie May Baker (b. July 1884, Kansas; d. 1961),¹⁶⁸

¹⁶¹ According to Hackett, a mere three weeks earlier, Theos had already invited Geshe Wangyal to come to America for the same purpose.

¹⁶² For more details, see Paul Hackett's 2012 biography of Theos Bernard.

¹⁶³ According to the "genealogy of Pierre A. Bernard," Local History files, Nyack library, Nyack), Catherine C. (Kittie) Givens (b. ca. 1854, Iowa) was daughter of Elizabeth Warner (1832–1911) and J. C. F. Givens (b. 1828). Her sister Ina Givens (b. 1860) married a Mr. Coons.

¹⁶⁴ International Genealogical Index, v4.02. A marriage in 1877 might necessitate moving Pierre's birth date to Dec. 1877, but this is not an exact date, and the marriage might have taken place one year earlier. Erastus Warren Baker was the son of George Washington Baker (1821–1909) and Eliza Maria(h) Clark(e) (b. 1829), whose other children included Dr. Clarence Baker (d. 1923) and Ida Baker (b. 1858). George Washington Baker's second wife was Susan Warner (1830–1913), whose sister Elizabeth Warner (1832–1911) was mother to Catherine C. Givens, mother of Pierre and paternal grandmother of Theos.

¹⁶⁵ In the transcript of his court hearing in New York City in 1910, Pierre refused to confirm his date of birth as 31 October 1877 at Leon, Iowa. Later he said it was 31 Oct. 1876, ("15 to 11 o'clock" =10:45 a.m.). Court transcript seen at the Rockland County historical museum.

¹⁶⁶ Gordon 2000, 3.

¹⁶⁷ Where not otherwise noted, this account follows the "genealogy of Pierre A. Bernard," Local History Collection, Nyack Library.

¹⁶⁸ She is also listed in the International Genealogical Index, v4.02.

2. Lula Fay Baker (b. 22 July 1886, Eureka, Kansas; d. 1935),¹⁶⁹
3. Ora Ray Baker (b. 8 May 1888, Albuquerque, New Mexico;¹⁷⁰ d. 1949). She married the Sufi master Hazrat Inayat Khan (1888–1949).¹⁷¹
4. Lela Murie Baker (1891–1967), and
5. Earl W. [Warren?] Baker (1893-).

Erastus Baker and Alletta thus left Iowa for Kansas by summer 1884, and by 1888 were in New Mexico.

Appendix B

Press Reports on Pierre Bernard, 1910–1931

The following references have been drawn from a Vanderbilt University website devoted to Pierre Bernard (<http://www.esoteric.msu.edu/VolumeIII/HTML/Oom.html>). The *San Francisco Chronicle* in particular was highly scandalized by his activities and kept an eye on “Oom” all the way from the West Coast.

May, 1910. “‘Omnipotent Oom’ Held As Kidnapper: Girls Give Startling Evidence Against Bernard’s ‘Sanitarium’ to District Attorney: Kept Like Prisoners: They Said Further He Excercised Something Like a Hypnotic Influence Over Them.” *New York Times* (New York), 4 May 1910, p. 7.

“Wild Orgies In the Temple of “Om”: Police Get New Light on the

¹⁶⁹ International Genealogical Index, v4.02. The U.S. Social Security Death Index lists (a different?) Lula Baker, b. May 1886, as dying in Yuma, Arizona, on 15 Sept. 1971. There are towns named Eureka in six different counties of Kansas!

¹⁷⁰ International Genealogical Index, v4.02.

¹⁷¹ *The Encyclopedia of American Religions* listed Theos Bernard, nephew, as the third of Pierre Bernard’s famous relatives. The other two were: (1) Mary Baker Eddy, a distant relative through marriage to a cousin of his, and (2) Hazrat Inayat Khan (1882–1927), Indian musician and Sufi master, who founded the first Sufi group in the West. Hazrat Inayat Khan married Pierre’s half-sister Ora Ray Baker (1888–1949) [in Paris, March, 1913?, when she took the name Amina Sharda Begum], of whom Pierre was the guardian. Hazrat Inayat Khan’s life is told in the biography by Sikar Van Stok and Daphne Dunlop 1967, *Memories of a Sufi Sage, Hazrat Inayat Khan* (The Hague). Another biography is by Elisabeth De Keesing 1981, *Hazrat Inayat Khan*. Yet more information is given by their son Pir Vilayat Khan in his book *The Message in Our Time* (New York, Harper and Row), p. 306f. According to the “genealogy of Pierre A. Bernard,” Local History files, Nyack library, Nyack, Hazrat and Amina’s children were: Noor Khan (1914–1944), Vilayat Khan (1916-), Hidayat Khan (1917-), and Khair (Claire) Khan (1919-). The first daughter, Noor Khan, was the Noor-un-Nisa Inayat Khan alias “Madeleine” who was sent as a wireless operator in 1943 to France, where she was betrayed to the Nazis and shot at Dachau. Jean Overton Fuller told her life story in the book *Madeleine (Noor-un-Nisa Inayat Khan)*.

Doings of Fakers of New York." *San Francisco Chronicle* (San Francisco), 5 May 1910.

"Women Kept In His 'Mystic Temple': Serious Charges Against a Young Native of India Arrested in New York." *San Francisco Chronicle*, 6 May 1910.

"Girl Throws Light On Tantrik Circle: Doings of Om Revealed in Court During Hearing." *San Francisco Chronicle*, 6 May 1910.

"Bernard Known to Local Police: Was Identified With the Mystic 'Order of Tantrik' and 'Bacchante Club,'" *San Francisco Chronicle*, 7 May 1910.

"Nautch Girl Tells of Oom's Philosophy: Gertrude Leo Says She Believed That He Had Supernatural Power: She Loved and Feared Him: Sister Interrupts Hearing and Berates His Lawyer. The Oom is Held for Trial." *New York Times*, 8 May 1910, p. 20.

June, 1910. "To Take Testimony in Portland On 'Om' Case." *San Francisco Chronicle*, 16 June 1910.

September, 1910. "Oom, the Omnipotent To Escape Prosecution." *San Francisco Chronicle*, 7 September 1910.

October, 1919. "N.Y. Society Joins New Cult: 'High Priest of the Yogis' Opens Colony at Nyack; Prominent Women Involved." *San Francisco Chronicle*, 20 October 1919.

October, 1922. "Country Club Specializes in Sex Worship: Initiates, Known As Tantrik Yoga, Hold Wild Orgies in Nyack New York: Dr. Bernard is Head: Mrs. W. K. Vanderbilt Spent \$200,000 Financing Oom the Omnipotent." *San Francisco Chronicle*, 1 October 1922.

February, 1923. "'Oom' Loses by One Vote: Head of 'Tantrik Cult' Nearly Defeats Candidate for Village Trustee." *New York Times*, 28 February 1923.

December, 1925. "Two Coffins Used at Wedding Fete: Weird Ceremony Said to Have Been Held at Club Operated by 'Oom the Omnipotent,'" *New York Times*, 21 December 1925, p. 14.

November, 1931. "Oom Named Bank Head." *New York Times*, 15 November 1931, p. 33.

*Appendix C**Further Notes on Hamati and Glen Bernard*

Though the main text was written in 2005, I am adding the following notes in September 2021.

*Main Published Sources**1. Two Published Biographies of Theos*

To begin with, I would like to mention the existence of two highly relevant detailed biographies that were published in 2011 and 2012. They include two detailed books on the early American Tibetologist, Theos Bernard:

Paul G. Hackett 2012. *Theos Bernard, the White Lama. Tibet, Yoga and American Religious Life*. (New York: Columbia University Press).

Douglas Veenhof 2011. *White Lama: The Life of Tantric Yogi Theos Bernard, Tibet's Lost Emissary to the New World*. (New York: Harmony Books).

The books of Hackett and Veenhof, though very helpful in many ways, complement the present article rather than completely replace it. For instance, regarding the important teacher of Theos at Columbia, Veenhof 2011, p. 41, skipped over the presence of the for Theo crucial figure, Prof. Schneider, who served as his professor for philosophy of religion (a Pragmatist standing in the tradition of William James). Even Hackett, who provides many useful details about him (p. 40), and who comes from Columbia, does not seem to realize that Schneider had written (during this very period) a highly noteworthy book on American mystics and California utopias.

It is also interesting that (though both Hackett and Veenhof give very accurate and detailed accounts) neither document in the same detail as here Theos's interactions with the crucial British Tibet cadre in the 1930s as I have documented from the intelligence files. I quote more original letters and news clippings.

The books of Hackett and Veenhof both document clearly the importance of Gendun Chöphel for Theos and his plans. Hackett does so in the most detail, mentioning his collaboration work with George Roerich in Kulu and also, in detail, his attempts to come to America to work with Theos. Hackett also deals with such varied things as Gendun Chöphel's arrest and imprisonment in Lhasa, early life in Amdo, current situation in India, high praise by Jinorasa, and past translation

work in India.

It is fascinating to also read that Gendun Chöphel first began his working on Ancient Tibetan (Dunhuang) historical texts (cf. his famous *Deb ther dkar po*) here, (p. 122.) helping Tharchin continue with the texts left in Kalimpong in 1931 by Jacques Bacot. (p. 119). To explain the background, he tells quite a lot about the connection with the Indian Buddhist Sanskrit manuscript seeker Rāhula Sankrityayana. The only gap I noticed in Hackett's magisterial sketch is that Gendun Chöphel did have a job at first for Rāhula, cataloging his Tibetan collection now in the Bihar Research Society, Patna.

Also worth mentioning as an important source on Theos Bernard is Julia M. White, "Tibet in the 1930s: Theos Bernard's Legacy at UC Berkeley," [Cross-Currents e-Journal \(No. 13\)](https://cross-currents.berkeley.edu/e-journal/issue-13/Bernard).

Jul <https://cross-currents.berkeley.edu/e-journal/issue-13/Bernard> ia M. White, UC Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive

As a source of rich materials about early American Tibetologists I should mention "Tibetology in the United States of America: A Brief History" by Donald S. Lopez, Jr.

2. *A Biography of Pierre Bernard*

The third biography is a very helpful book. Published after 2005, it is by Robert Love, and it tells much more about Theos Bernard's rascal uncle:

Robert Love 2010. *The Great Oom: The Improbable Birth of Yoga in America*, New York, Viking.

We should note that Love confirms in great detail the existence of Pierre's real-life Tantric guru, Hamati, who went back to India in 1908, after Pierre paid him \$5,370 in gold coin in Seattle. (Love 2010 records this on p. 45.) And he helpfully reproduces the sole surviving photo of Hamati! What is known about Hamati's origins? As Hackett (p. 431, note 11) explains:

How and why Hamati came to be in Lincoln, Nebraska in the 1890s is unclear. Some have speculated that he might have come to America to work in a circus act as part of a traveling carnival. Little information about his identity is known. He was self-described as the son of a French woman and Persian man, born in Palestine and raised in India in the tantric yoga traditions of Bengal. (Source: Love, *The Great Oom*.)

According to a long footnote in Love's book (p. 351, note 14), this is

known about Hamati's own guru, the yogi-adept Mahidhar, according to Pierre's own statement and legal deposition:

As for guru lineage, Perry Baker's own guru had a guru. A yogi-monk-ascetic named Mahidhar, who trained the young Hamati from the age of seven until he turned twenty-six, as Bernard recounts in PAB statement and PAB deposition. Hamati's guru is acknowledged by Swami Ram Tirath, a legitimate Hindu monk who said he knew of two great tantric masters in India, in "Mahidhar and Yogi Gyanananda," in an interview in the *IJTO (International Journal of the Tantric Order?)* conducted by D. J. Elliot.

Hackett, p. 102, also mentions a very old yogi then still alive in the 1920s, named Madhavadasī. (I think this was a more correct spelling for Hamati's guru) called "Mahidhar" in the single reference (based on memory). Glen had met that yogi in 1925. He was: Paramahansa Sri Madhavadasji Maharaj (1798–1921) was a great Master of Yoga from Bengal, who after 50 years of traveling India by foot and practicing yoga in the solitude of the Himalayas, had settled, at the age of 80, to begin teaching.

Further Remarks

Re: Hamati, Dan Martin by email confirmed that the name Hamati was Syrian.

On Theos's middle name, Casimir, it is a real name and not a misspelling of Kashmir, as I guessed above. In fact: Casimir is used predominantly in the English and German languages, and it is derived from Slavonic origins. The name's meaning is declaration of peace, destroyer of peace. The name is derived from the Polish Kazimierz. The first element is the Slavic 'kazic', but the second element is not known for sure. The Old Slavonic word 'meri' (meaning great, famous) was often re-interpreted as the medieval word 'mir,' Consequently, the name was interpreted as 'declaration of peace,' However, the name could also have the opposite meaning 'destroyer of peace,'

Notes on Glen Bernard and his Yogic Legacy

Hamati had at least one other American disciple (Pierre's half-brother Glen) who remained a quieter, sincere chela, and he was important for Theos in many ways and at many stages. (He hated the approach of and rejected the showmanship of his quasi-yogi con-man older half-brother.) According to Love 2010, 261 Glen left the tantric order by 1906. Over the years he sometimes worked as chemist and financed his travels and long periods of solitary yoga practice. Over the years he

never changed his bad opinion of Pierre. In Hackett 2012, 63, there is a beautiful quote where Uncle Pierre described Viola's future father-in-law, someone he had known well since childhood. (Viola's mother has asked what kind of family and people they are.) Pierre says, as Theos quotes him: "My father [Glen Bernard] was a man of excellent character—very studious, well read—and had an excellent mind. My mother was well educated and also of strong character." Theos was fully expecting Pierre to later change his tune and give a much more critical account of his old nemesis, and wanted to prepare Viola for that eventuality, too.

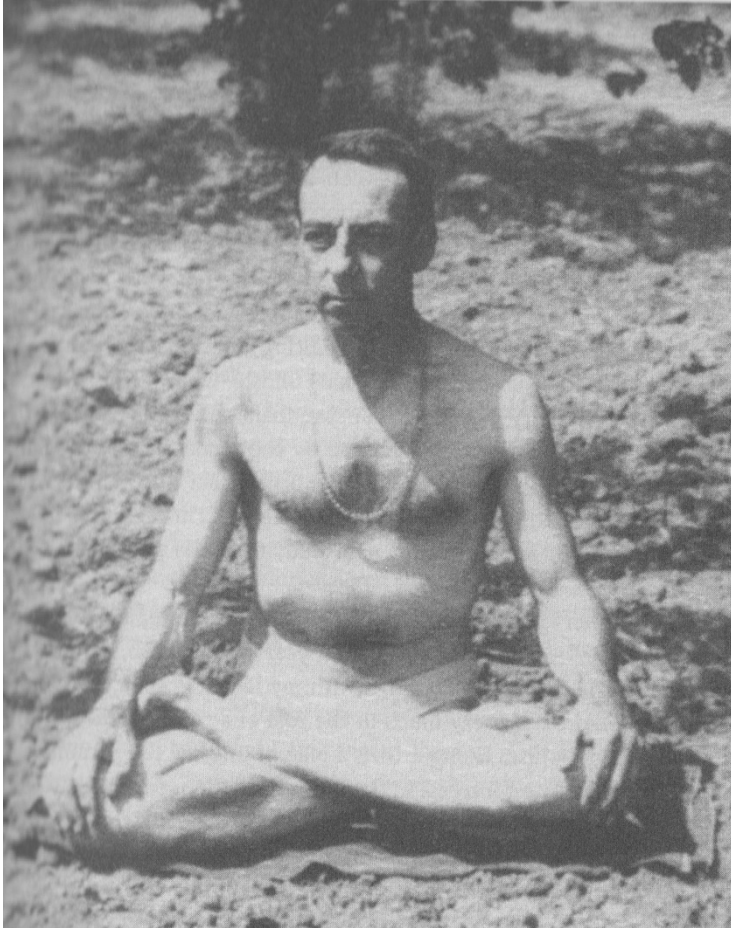


Fig. 17. Glen Bernard (Theos Bernard papers, Bancroft Library). After Hackett 2012, fig 4.2.

One of the people who is a bit strange in ways but consistently comes across as sincerely practicing yoga as a spiritual path is Glen Agassiz Bernard—Theo's father. (Glen Bernard was born on 23 January 1884, in Humeston, Wayne, Iowa, the first son of John C. Bernard (age 32) and Kittie Given Bernard (age 30).) She had previously had one child (Perry or Pierre) with her short-lasting Baker husband. According to Love 2011, 11, Glen was the first of five boys born to that couple in that town. According to searches on the FamilySearch.org website the five boys were:

1. Glen A. Bernard (1884–1976)
2. Clyde J. Bernard (1887–1970), married in 1917 to Edna Beck in LA
3. Ervin (Irvin) E. Bernard (1891–1962)
4. John Bernard (died young)
5. Ray D. Bernard (1899–), lived Maricopa, Arizona, with wife Kathryn.

Glen probably first became involved as a teenager with his yoga guru Hamati, whom older brother Pierre had first met in Lincoln, the capital of Nebraska, in 1889. The young Bernard family went to California in early 1890s, but in 1896, the parents move back permanently to Iowa, bringing Glen and the younger brothers. (According to Love, p. 15.) As adults, Glen and the two brothers closest to him in age lived most of their lives in Los Angeles. Glen is such an odd character—he is a would-be hermit who abandons his young son and wife because he wants to drop out of normal lay life. In 1908 he was a deadbeat dad, abandoning his son, but for a higher spiritual purpose. His main love in life was doing yoga retreats. (He died on 1 Oct. 1976, at the age of ninety-two, leaving a gigantic pile of Theos memorabilia with his former housekeeper, Ms. Gertrude Murray, who passed away herself in 1998, leaving the huge pile intact.) According to searches on the FamilySearch.org website, Glen A. Bernard shows up as a married lodger in the 1910 census in Fillmore, Ventura, Cal. In the 1920, 1930 and 1940 ones he is staying in Los Angeles city, and in 1940 he is divorced, living with his brothers Clyde (a widower) and Irven (Ervin) Bernard (who is single). He did have draft registration for WW1 and shows up in passenger lists for entering the USA in 1926 (in San Francisco, on the ship *Siberia Maru*) and in 1937, returning from India to New York City on the ship *Hamburg*. When Theo's claims in one of his 1930s yoga books he has been contacted by an "Indian guru," it was evidently his own yoga expert father he was referring to! Glen had made a long trip there in 1926, visiting India as part of his continuing spiritual quest, and warned his son about his coming American university studies:

"Don't study law anymore!" he said, "Take up a main subject more like philosophy!" According to Love's book (p. 34), Glen came from Iowa to the West Coast to live in 1904, was then aged twenty, staying very briefly with his older brother and guru Hamati. The occasion for coming was the death of his father in 1904. He was clothed and fed by the group (his brother) but was asked to work for the Tantric Press part their fledgling Tantric Order, helping organize its tiny publications department. According to Love (p. 44), Glen left the group very quickly, in 1904, when his half-sister Ora Rae came. The studious, well-meaning proto-hermit Glen must have been very sad when his authentic yoga guru (Hamati) left the USA in 1908, and the job of local guru was taken over by a big fraud (an early American fakir who was also a faker). (This is also the year of Theos' birth.)



Fig. 18. Glen Bernard (Theos Bernard papers, Bancroft Library). After Hackett 2012, fig 5.2.

Glen's First Trip to India in 1925/26

According to Hackett (pp. 54-64), Glen went for his first trip to India in late 1925, going by steamer to Calcutta (which was home of the Bengali yoga tradition and of one of his minor yoga teachers in San Francisco, Sukumar Chatterji, in the early 1920s). Hamati's guru was also from there. Calcutta was the capital city of British India and also home to seats of higher learning and publishing. According to Hackett 2012, 54 Glen in 1926 was close friends with (the true Arthur Avalon behind the books) Atal Behari Ghosh (disciple of Swami Vivekananda), who was also a close friend and helper of Evans-Wentz. As Hackett 2012, 57 also tells, Glen and was during that trip also close to Kalikacharan Roy Chaudhuri (the eldest son of the late Swami Vimalananda). Hackett 2012, 102 later has an interesting passage about the importance of religion for yoga according to Yogendra.

Glen's Second India Trip in 1935

After the 1926 visit, Glen kept in touch with his main Indian friends and contacts by letter. He had wanted to go back for many years but could not afford it (during the Great Depression). But then he was sent ahead to India in 1935 as a paid research assistant, mainly gathering sources and contacts for his son, who by then had become a Columbia grad-student (funded by his son's well-healed new wife, Viola). One interesting development then is that by the early 1930s Glen had started teaching a few students in California, but very privately. (See Hackett, p. 437, note 14.) Meanwhile, in a letter to Viola before leaving for India (February 1935), secretive Glen not just admitted that he was by then a well-trained yogi, but also described what it might mean to him to have his son as fellow yogi to share yoga with:

I don't believe there is a more lonely individual living than the well-trained yogi. Yet just as he is capable of the greatest loneliness, he is also capable of the greatest happiness. So, to put it in a few words, a companion in yoga is a blessing rare to be found.

On his second trip, Glen first arrived in Bombay in June 1935. In September he was looking in Calcutta for tantric yogis for Theos. (Hackett, p. 68.) Eventually in India Glen was very saddened by the low state in which Indian tantric yoga practice survived. He told Theos, "You can practice yoga better these days in the American Southwest and in California!"

For me Hackett's detailed account of Glen's second trip includes

memorable details such as that he was avidly using the opportunity to do retreats himself, though he kept corresponding with important contacts. It was very impressive to see Evans-Wentz at that point also very actively helping Glen locate in other parts of India rare and hard to trace tantric swamis. (See Hackett, p. 73.) This was obviously another field very close to Evans-Wentz's heart. For Theos in the early 1930s, Evans-Wentz was no less than the "most reliable researcher in Buddhist tantric studies." (See Hackett 2012, 44). But also for Glen's tantric yoga he was amazingly helpful! (It is astounding what Evans-Wentz accomplished, bit by bit, book by book, from 1927 on, even leading to an honorary doctorate at Oxford in 1931 for the first two books.) So, we should count his 2 or 3 years spent personally learning under his main lamas in Sikkim as making him a "genuine" Tibetologist. No wonder Theos was also sure to include him as a member of his thesis committee back in Columbia. (He would turn sixty years of age in 1938.)

Meanwhile in India, Glen, who was close to Evans-Wentz and a few others, was in 1936 crucial for Theos's deciding to go quickly to the Himalayas and seek out Tibetan teachers there. Though Theos's wife Viola was not at all pleased to depart from the tourist circuit, Glen insisted that they all travel to Darjeeling. (In the hope of meeting genuine highly realized masters). The tantric swamis that Glen was hanging out with in those days were not at all anti-Buddhist; they thought of it as a living Vedanta-like spiritual cousin of their tradition.

The trip to Darjeeling in September 1936 was crucial for Theos to establish his Tibetan connections. Theos and Glen met the important person Jinorasa (Young Men's Buddhist Association); Glen had in May 1936 contacted Jinorasa by letter. They also explored contacts through Laden-la, i.e., S. W. Laden-la (1876–1936, b. Darjeeling), one of Evans-Wentz's main collaborators, who would pass away at the end of that year. This crucial meeting also introduced Theos to none other than the noteworthy Tibetan scholar *Gendun Chöphel*! (This crucial trip to Darjeeling in 1936 is described by both Veenhof 2011, 58, and Hackett, 2012, 94.)

Glen was, in general, not in favor of Theos devoting a lot of time to learning Tibetan language. He was during that period facing illnesses and plagued with frequent angry outbursts. He was also completely burned out on India and having to stay there. Glen also faced a problem using his return ticket back to the States on a Dollar Line steamship, which only departed Calcutta once every four months! (Hackett 2012, 123.)

A Sufi Matrimonial Connection in the Family

A noteworthy romantic connection bloomed for one of the Baker sisters, the third one, who was living with Pierre in New York and New Jersey in 1910 to 1912. Named Ora Ray, she had joined Pierre's family in 1904 when Glenn left, and she eventually married a very prominent Sufi master (as mentioned above in Appendix A). Love (p. 86f.) says she was in 1912 assisting Pierre at the organization's home with teaching, bookkeeping, and housekeeping. She fell in love with the handsome visiting musician and finally, a year after he had left, had to elope to Belgium in 1913, though her older brother Pierre did everything he could to stop the match. (He started throwing away their letters and bad-mouthing his future brother-in-law.)

According to Wikipedia, her husband, Inayat Khan Rehmat Khan (5 July 1882–5 February 1927), was a professor of musicology, singer, exponent of the saraswati vina, poet, philosopher, and pioneer of the transmission of Sufism in the West. He toured the United States with his brother Maheboob Khan and cousin Mohammed Ali Khan between the years 1910 and 1912. In New York, he met the woman who would become his wife, Ora Ray Baker (henceforth known as Ameena Begum). On Inayat Khan's troubles entering the USA, see also above, note 81.

As mentioned above, note 171, the tragic compiler of a *Jātaka* collection, Noor Inayat Khan was their daughter, who was also the niece of both Glenn and Pierre! According to Wikipedia, Noor-un-Nisa Inayat Khan (1 January 1914–13 September 1944), also known as Nora Inayat-Khan and Nora Baker, was the eldest of four children, born on 1 January 1914, in Moscow. Her siblings were Vilayat (1916–2004), Hidayat (1917–2016), and Khair-un-Nisa (1919–2011).

As a young woman, Noor also began a career as a writer, publishing her poetry and children's stories in English and French and becoming a regular contributor to children's magazines and French radio. In 1939, her book *Twenty Jataka Tales*, inspired by the *Jātaka* tales of Buddhist tradition, was published in London by George G. Harrap and Co. (The American edition: Noor Inayat Khan and H. Willebeck le Mair; Philadelphia: D. McKay.) This was the retelling of Buddhist *Jātaka* tales by the daughter of an important modern Sufi master. She died as an Allied secret agent in France during World War 2.

Final Reflections about Glen

I have given Glen Bernard and his status as first secretive Los Angeles anchorite some thought. What was going on in his mind (as he abandoned his wife and son and tried to live as a *sannyasin*)? Finally, I

would like to share my ideas with you, Dan, as perhaps the last remaining long-suffering reader of this article.

Our question is also: What must have happened at some crucial stage between Glen and Hamati? The impressionable teenager Glen was so smitten by his saintly teacher, one of whose remarkable aspects was that he had renounced ordinary lay life and lived as a renunciate. In brief: Glen while still a beginner was trying to imitate him outwardly.

And I imagine that as a mystical teacher, Hamati must have waited for a perfect moment to spring his world-changing teachings upon the sincere and bright young American from the Midwest. I can imagine that Hamati took him aside and quietly whispered powerful *nyengyud* words of instruction like: "Turn your mind within, Glen! Keep watching it, quietly and clearly! Don't be distracted by the objects of desire! Keep watching, Glen, now try this posture!"

So, I imagine that under Hamati's brief tutelage, Glen basically became addicted to watching his own mind. This would have turned him into the first secret tantric hermit of Los Angeles. At least, that is my own *gongter*-style reconstruction in 2021.

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manuscripts. While on his way, rioting broke out among the Hindus and Moslems in that section of the hills; all Moslems including women and children in the little village from which Theos departed were killed. The Hindus then proceeded into the mountains in pursuit.... .

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Tibetan Legal Geography: Situating Legal Texts, Situating Sacred Tibet¹

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1. Introduction

ne would suspect, or at least hope, that pre-modern Tibetan legal texts explicitly specify the extent of their jurisdiction. While some texts in fact do mention that they are to be applied only to Tibet, upon further examination it appears that exact boundaries are hardly ever given. When examining the legal geography of Tibet, one is struck by how the law is less determined by *where* you are, than by *who* you are. At first glance, this appears to be in contradiction of the Tibetan adage: "You have to keep to the laws of the land where you drink the water."² This proverb very much points to the importance of "place" in Tibetan law and customs. Still, monks and nuns, foreigners, non-Buddhists, and some other groups were seen – to some extent – to be outside of the jurisdiction of the local or central Tibetan government, and were deemed to have their own legal systems.³ There

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² *lung pa de yi chu btung/ de yi khrims zungs*. Of course, *khrims* here (and elsewhere) can be interpreted in various ways and can also be understood not as law in the strict sense but as rules, 'mores', and the 'way things are done'.

³ For monastic jurisdiction see Berthe Jansen, *The Monastery Rules: Buddhist Monastic Organization in Pre-modern Tibet*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2018: 148–175. Another example of a group that occupied an alternative legal space were the Nepalese/ Newaris living in Central Tibet. This had always been common practice, but it was put into writing in the 1856 treaty between the Tibetan and the Gurkha governments, for which see Tsepon Wangchuck Deden Shakabpa and Derek Maher (transl.), *One Hundred Thousand Moons: An Advanced Political History of Tibet* (Leiden: Brill, 2010 [1967]), 597. The Tibetan army also had their own (limited) jurisdiction, on which see Alice Travers, "The Tibetan Army of the Ganden Phodrang in Various Legal Documents (17th-20th Centuries)." In *Secular Law and Order in the Tibetan Highland. Contributions to a workshop organized by the Tibet Institute in Andiastr (Switzerland) on the occasion of the 65th birthday of Christoph*

are many indications that in practice, however, these groups did in fact fall under the jurisdiction of the Tibetan "state" law, but only when it suited the government or the local ruler. As mentioned, the legal texts to which we have access do not necessarily indicate the prominence of locality. More generally speaking, most legal texts that have survived deal with the theoretical and the ideal, with the aspirational and the inspirational.

2. *Legal geography*

While this article consists mainly of a case study that deals with a semi-legal text on Tibetan geography, it seems necessary to introduce the topic of legal geography in the context of Tibetan studies. While studying various Tibetan law texts, I stumbled across a text nested within another text that specifically deals with Tibet as a physical space in great detail – the main work under discussion here. It occurred to me then that it only makes sense when one deals with legal issues to be aware of one's jurisdiction, in other words the legal space and its limitations. I thought to myself, naively of course, that this should be an interesting sub-field within Tibetan studies. I even came up with a name: legal geography. A quick internet search revealed, of course, that this field already existed – it is the cross-disciplinary field that studies "the co-constitutive relationship of people, place and law,"⁴ or phrased differently, it is the search for "the presence and absence of spatialities in legal practice and of law's traces and effects embedded within places."⁵ Some of the main questions asked in legal geography are the following:

- 1) What is the spatiality of law? i.e. How does space affect the development and implementation of law?
- 2) What is the role of law in creating or establishing space?
- 3) How do legal specialists and geographers work with ideas of jurisdiction and scale?⁶

While I clearly have not "invented" this sub-field, as far as I know, this area has not been explored when thinking about Tibetan law,⁷ while

Cüppers from the 8th of June to the 12th of June 2014, ed. Dieter Schuh, (Andiast: IITBS GmbH, 2015), 249–266.

⁴ Luke Bennett and Antonia Layard, "Legal Geography: Becoming Spatial Detectives." *Geography Compass* no. 9 (7) (2015), 404.

⁵ *ibid.*, 405.

⁶ *ibid.*, 410.

⁷ It has been mentioned in passing by Rebecca Redwood French, *The Golden Yoke: the Legal Cosmology of Buddhist Tibet*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995, 36.

sacred geography is of course something that has received a fair amount of attention by scholars of Tibetan cultural areas – and rightly so.⁸ As this article demonstrates, for the case of the broader Tibetan cultural area, even when one is studying legal geography, sacred geography is never far behind.

3. *Legal geography in Tibetan texts: a case study*

The relatively short text under consideration is found in a compilation of legal texts called *Sde pa gtsang pa'i khrims yig zhal lce 16 dang dga' ldan pho brang ba'i zhal lce 12 sogs nyer mkho sna tshogs* (*Various Necessities such as the 16 Pronouncements: the Legal Code of the Gtsang Governor and the the Dga' ldan Pho brang's 12 Pronouncements*). While written in “printed letters” (*dbu chen*), this compilation is very clearly a copy of a text written in cursive script (*dbu med*). The text notes when lines are missing (or skipped) and there are many scribal errors that can be attributed to misreading the cursive script. There are also other orthographical mistakes that cannot be simply misreadings – they are clearly mishearings. This suggests that these texts were not only copied by looking at the paper version but that they were also written down based on an oral reading. Many of the other legal documents that I have studied display similar features.⁹ The BDRC description notes that it is a copy of an ancient text from Sog tsan dan dgon near Nag chu kha (in Central Tibet) and that this version has been published in Dolanji (in India) by the Tibetan Bon po community.¹⁰ Perhaps on account of its title, the whole work has been misidentified as having been “authored” by Karma Bstan skyong dbang po.¹¹ In actuality, this work consists of many longer and shorter texts that have in some way or another to do with exercising the law. According to BDRC it is: “a collection of legal texts on the codes governing tibet [*sic*] during the 16th and 17th centuries.”

This work can be found perched between a text entitled *Mi bsad dge stong sprod 'jal skor bka' shag gi bsnes tho zar bcas pa'i ngo shus* (165a/325–

⁸ See for example Toni Huber, ed, *Sacred Spaces and Powerful Places in Tibetan Culture: a Collection of Essays* (Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1999), and Alex McKay, *Kailāś Histories: Renunciate Traditions and the Construction of Himalayan Sacred Geography* (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

⁹ Berthe Jansen, “The Origins of Tibetan Law: Some Notes on Intertextuality and the Reception History of Tibetan Legal Texts.” *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines* no. 55 (2020), 221–244.

¹⁰ I have attempted but not succeeded in seeing the original manuscript.

¹¹ John Powers and David Templeman. *Historical dictionary of Tibet* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2012), 789; John Powers, *The Buddha Party: How the People's Republic of China works to Define and Control Tibetan Buddhism* (New York City: Oxford University Press, 2017), 337.

167b/338), a direct copy regarding the giving and exchanging of *dge stong* fines in the case of manslaughter, including an additional list from the cabinet's "stewards"¹² and *Bza' pa rab 'bring mtha' dgu'i brten bsor pa*¹³ *thul dang bstun pa'i zhi drag gi sgrub 'then dgos lugs* (348–357), a short work that may have to do with taxes. The work under consideration has been recently given a title by BDRC's staff who index Tibetan texts: *Bod kyi sa bshad spyi dang sa skya pa'i skabs kyi dbus gtsang gi sa rtsis*, which has been roughly translated as "A general explanation of the land of Tibetan and a land ledger of Ütsang at the time of the Sa-kyapas." It has to be noted that this is an entirely contextual and very new title – the work itself does not suggest that it had any title whatsoever.

Nonetheless, the term *sa bshad* (description of the land) to describe (part of) the work is apt, in my view. While not necessarily a genre of written literature, *bshad pa* (descriptions) or *gtam bshad* (speeches) tend to be part of oral performances, in which items and places are described and praised in very ornamental ways. The oral genre of *sa bstod* (praise of place) still performed by Tibetans in Amdo, in fact, demonstrates some parallels to this work, while being more focused on the local.¹⁴ I will return to this issue below.

In addition to the title being absent, the work also does not bear a colophon, year, or author. The topics dealt with are the position of Tibet in relation to its neighboring countries, the political history of Tibet, the supine demoness, and the census of Tibetan areas. Upon closer inspection it becomes clear that this text is a composite, which mainly cites parts of the *Rgya bod yig tshang* – a compilation in its own right – written by Dpal 'byor bzang po (Śrībhūtibhadra) in 1434, to describe the world, with Tibet as its centre.¹⁵ There is, for example, also a section that corresponds to *Chos rgyal bod kyi rgyal rabs*, which can also be found in the former compilation.

Considering the originals that this text is based on, we find that all authors are Sa skya pa. The Mongols, including Genghis Khan, are favorably spoken of.¹⁶ While only Sa skya authors are cited (though not named), the text clearly demonstrates that the compiler edited or updated the contents. The cited and paraphrased texts can be found in

¹² Provisionally understanding *bsnes* to be *sne len* and emending *zar to zur*.

¹³ Should we emend to *bsod pa*?

¹⁴ See Timothy Thurston, "An Introduction to Tibetan *sa bstod* Speeches in Amdo." *Asian Ethnology* no. 71 (1), 2012: 49–73.

¹⁵ For an overview of this work and its dating see Ariane Macdonald, "Préambule à la lecture d'un Rgya Bod yig can." *Journal Asiatique* no. 251 (1963).

¹⁶ Several other texts that I have come across do make edits when the contents do not suit political sensibilities. Some later legal texts compare the Mongols unfavorably.

the *Sa skya chos 'byung gces bsdus*,¹⁷ which – in the way it is available to us now – is a modern six-volume compilation of various historiographical works related to the Sa skya lineage.¹⁸

4. The contents of the text

The text (henceforth *Bod kyi sa bshad*) starts off clearly positioning Tibet (*Bod gangs can*) at the center:

In this world, it is accepted that there are nine great regions. In the east, China and Khri stan (Khitan, 契丹; *Qidān*, in Manchuria), in the south India and Kashmir, in the west Stag sde and Gzig pan, and in the north Khrom and Ge sar. With Tibet, surrounded by snow, in the center, this makes nine. As for the assertion that snow-laden Tibet is the node of the borders of the world: because it is high ground with many mountains¹⁹ where snow is found, from where the rivers flow down to the outer edges, it is accepted to be the central node.²⁰

The section from the *Rgya bod yig tshang chen mo* to which this passage corresponds contains additional material, which starts off citing a section from a supposedly lost work on the life of the historical Buddha *Sdom pa* [sic?: *ston pa*] *rgyan gyi me tog* (*A flower ornament for the Teacher*)

¹⁷ *Sa skya'i chos 'byung gces bsdus*, BDRC W1PD90704, vol. 3 (Beijing: Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2009).

¹⁸ From recent email exchanges with Caumanns and Heimbels, scholars on Sa skya lineage and literature, it has become apparent to me that to this day there are (almost) no systematic studies on how these pre-modern religious histories were compiled and the extent to which they are based on earlier sources.

¹⁹ Emending *rim to ri mang*.

²⁰ *Bod kyi sa bshad* 167b/338: *bkra shis* § 'dzam gling 'di la yul chen po dgu yod par 'dod ste/ shar na rgya nag dang khri stan/ lho na rgya gar dang kha che/ nub na stag sde dang gzig pan/ byang na khrom dang ge sar/ dbus na bod yul gangs kyi ra ba dang dgu zer/ 'dzam bu gling gi sa tshad kyi lte ba bod gangs can yin par 'dod pa ni/ sa mtho rim gangs chags chu bo thams cad 'di nas phyi'i mtha' la 'bab pa'i phyir gyis dbus lte ba yin par 'dod do/ This roughly corresponds to Dpal 'byor bzang po, *Rgya bod yig tshang chen mo*, Si khron Mi rigs dpe skrun khang (Chengdu 1985), 9; 2007, 5: 'dzam bu gling 'di la / yul grangs chen po dgu yod par 'dod de / bcom ldan ral gris mdzad pa'i sdom pa brgyan gyi me tog [ston pa rgyan gyi me tog] las / yul dbus dang / mtha' 'khob kyi sa mtshams ni / shar du li kha ra shing 'phel dang / lhor dum bu'i chu rlung dang / nub tu bram ze'i grong ka ba dang / byang du shi ra'i ri mun pa can gyi bcad pa rnam so // shar na rgya nag dang / khri brtan / lho na rgya gar dang kha che gnyis / nub na stag sde dang gzig 'phan gnyis / byang na khrom dang ge sar gnyis / dbus na bod yul gangs kyi ra ba dgu zer te / 'dzam bu gling gi sa tshad kyi lte ba / bod gangs can 'di yin par 'dod pa ni / sa mtho / ri mang / gangs chags chu bo thams cad 'di nas phyi'i mtha' rnam la 'bab pa'i phyir gyi 'di nyid / sa'i dbus lte ba yin par 'dod do // Underlined are the parts that do not correspond with the text under consideration. Spelling variants are not noted.

written by Bcom ldan ral gri (fl. first half of the 13th CE).²¹ The text goes on to name and describe pillars, in China (shell-coloured), India (turquoise-coloured), Stag gzig (silver hued) and Khrom and Ge sar (gold coloured), and state that they function as border-markers.²²

As indicated earlier, there are a couple of occasions in which the text appears to have been clearly "updated" or changed. For example, in the section on the pillars, the description of their length and width are different. Our text states: "The stone pillars are about fifty *pho 'dom* in circumference, and they are each a hundred *pho 'dom* long."²³ By contrast, the "original" work says: "The height of the stone pillars are eighty *gzhu 'dom* and each are twenty *gzhu 'dom* wide. They have pinacles (*rgya phigs*) on top."²⁴ Further textual comparison reveals, however, that the version of the *Rgya bod yig tshang* contained within the *Sa skya chos 'byung gces bsdu*s is indeed based on a different manuscript, which corresponds exactly to our text.²⁵ When Macdonald studied this

²¹ Dan Martin, "Tibet at the Center: a Historical Study of Some Tibetan Geographical Conceptions Based on Two Types of Country-lists Found in Bon Histories." In *Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the 6th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies* (Fagernes 1992), ed. Per Kvaerne (Oslo: The Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture, 1994), 520. This passage and many other relevant fragments to do with Tibet's geographical position can be found at Dan Martin's <https://sites.google.com/site/tibetological/50-tibetan-geo-texts>

²² *Bod kyi sa bshad* 167b/ 339: *bod kha ba can gyi rgyal khams dang phyogs bzhi'i rgyal khams kyi mtshams na srid pas bskos pa'i rdo ring chen po bzhi yod de shar phyogs rgya nag dang bod kyi sa mtshams shar phu gangs dkar lha'i yul na* (168a/ 339) *'gron bu dung gi rdo ring btsugs pa yan chad lho phyogs rgya dkar po dang bod kyi so mtshams smyug ma bu khur srin gyi yul na mthing zhun g.yu'i rdo ring btsugs pa tshun chad nub stag gzig dang bod kyi so mtshams rkang ma rkang gcig klu'i yul na sha tse dngul gyi rdo ring btsugs pa pa [sic?] man chad byang phyogs khrom dang ge sar bod kyi so mtshams la sma'i lung rgyud sman gyi yul na rag gan [?] gser gyi rdo ring btsugs pa tshun chad bod kha ba can du gtogs pa'i sa tshad du byed cing/*

This corresponds to *Rgya bod yig tshang chen mo* 1985: 14/ 2007: 6: *bod kha ba can gyi rgyal khams dang / phyogs bzhi'i rgyal khams kyi sa mtshams na / srid pas bkod pa'i rdo rings chen po bzhi yod de / shar phyogs rgya nag po dang / bod kyi so mtshams na / sha phud gangs dkar lha'i yul du / 'dron bu dung gi rdo rings [15] gtsugs pa yan chad / lho phyogs rgya dkar po dang / bod kyi so mtshams / smug ma bu khur srin gyi yul du / mthing zhun g.yu'i rdo rings gtsugs pa tshun chad / nub phyogs stag gzig dang / bod kyi so mtshams / rkang ma rkang gcig klu'i yul du / sha rtse dngul gyi rdo rings gtsugs pa man chad / byang phyogs khrom ge sar dang / bod kyi so mtshams / ma [sic: la] rma'i lu rgyud sman gyi yul du / ra rgan gser gyi rdo rings gtsugs pa tshun chad / de rnam bod gangs can gyi rgyal khams su rtogs pa'i sa tshad yin cing /* Underlined text diverges significantly from *Bod kyi sa bshad*.

²³ *Bod kyi sa bshad*: 168a/339: *rdo ring bzhi po de la spom [sic: sbom] phra pho 'dom lnga bcus 'khor ba/ dpang la pho 'dom bgya re yod par byed do*

²⁴ *Rgya bod yig tshang* 1985: 14: *rdo rings kyi spangs [sic: dpang] la / gzhu 'dom bryad cu re dang zheng phyogs re la / gzhu 'dom nyi shu re / steng na rgya phigs dang bcas pa yod do zer ro/*

²⁵ *Rgya bod yig tshang* 2007: 6: *rdo ring bzhi po de la/ sbom phra pho 'dom lnga bcu'i 'khor dang / dpangs la pho 'dom gnyis bgya re yod par byed do/*

work (the *Rgya bod yig tshang* of Gangtok) she had only one version to her disposal,²⁶ and Martin, while listing the various versions available, notes that they all "go back to the Densapa manuscript" and that "it would be desirable to find some other manuscript version for comparison."²⁷ While not strictly speaking a manuscript, this rather significant difference indicates that the version of the *Sa skya chos 'byung gces bsdus* is distinct from the versions used by most academics.²⁸ What is more, we now know that it was the version that our editor(s) used.

The reason for the update seems clear: whoever edited it might have realized that the measurements had become obsolete and wanted their audience to understand the given measurements of the pillars. Unfortunately, even without knowing how exactly *pho 'dom* and *gzhu 'dom* compute, it is clear that it does not add up, since in the former work the ratio height and width is 2:1, while in the latter it is 4:1.²⁹ One does not need to be an engineer to understand that 4:1 is the more likely ratio. The variant version of the *Rgya bod yig tshang* found in the *Sa skya chos 'byung gces bsdus* has clearly introduced an error here and the compilers of *Bod kyi sa bshad* have replicated that error.

A second example of textual divergence occurs in a list naming the most important sacred places in Tibet, and again the reasons for the edit seem obvious. After naming the Jokhang and Ramoche, our unnamed compilation inserts the Potala, while the *Rgya bod yig tshang* obviously was composed long before the first stone of the Potala palace was even laid in 1645. While the hill that the palace was built on already bore the name Potala, it seems that the later addition by the compilers of *Bod kyi sa bshad* indicates the building and not the hill, seeing that the Potala is mentioned in a list of other notable buildings. This – admittedly rather minor – effort to update the text shows how the work under discussion was not just some text randomly inserted into a collection of legal texts for good measure, but that the editors considered and edited the contents, and that this was done to serve a certain

²⁶ Macdonald, "Préambule," 54.

²⁷ Dan Martin, *Tibetan Histories: A Bibliography of Tibetan-Language Historical Works*. Serindia Publications, 1997, 68.

²⁸ Doubtlessly there are other variants, the examination of which is beyond the scope of this article. It is unfortunate that to this day a more systematic study of the *Rgya bod yig tshang* has not been undertaken.

²⁹ A *gzhu 'dom* is literally a bow's length and is described as being equivalent to four cubits (*khru bzhi*). *Rgya bod tshig mdzod chen mo*: 2425. This is approximately 180 cm or 6 feet. The term *pho 'dom* does not occur in this dictionary, but is explained in *The New Tibetan English Dictionary* to be length of a man's outstretched arms: 684. This is confirmed by Martin: "from fingertip to fingertip of outstretched arms." (Martin: <https://sites.google.com/site/tiblical/> measurements-numbers). The English "fathom" is used to describe the same length, which is now standardized to indicate 183 cm or 6 feet. If this is correct, then *gzhu 'dom* and *pho 'dom* are indeed synonymous.

purpose.

Thirdly, where the text treats the positions of the "demoness suppressing temples," some of the names have been slightly altered.³⁰ The passage starts as follows: "This land of Tibet resembles a demoness laying on her back. The geomantics are bad, which included the 'O [thang] mtsho (Milky Lake) being the demoness' heart's blood, and so in order to suppress these bad things, the temples of the four horns were built during the time of the Dharmarāja Srong btsan sgam po." A scheme then follows, naming the temples and the demoness' body parts on which they were built.³¹ Aris has previously provided excellent tables showing how various different Tibetan texts identify these temples differently.³² From these tables, it is clear that the scheme presented here resembles that found in the *Rgya bod yig tshang*. There are a few notable dissimilarities, some of which can be explained as simple orthographical mistakes, while many of them, interestingly, appear to be "misspellings" not based on reading the text but on hearing it.³³

5. Concluding Remarks: Legal Space and the Placement of Legal Texts

This text may be easily dismissed as plagiarized or simply as non-original material and therefore not worthy of study. In my opinion this is mistaken. This text under consideration here is part of a bundle of legal texts that was probably once in the possession of someone who dealt with legal issues in some way or the other. All the other sections of the bundle deal with legal issues, fees, precedents, etc. It is of course unfortunate that we find this bundle out of context and we are therefore forced to conjecture. This particular text deals with the geography and

³⁰ On the myth-making of the supine demoness, see Janet Gyatso, "Down with the Demoness: Reflections on a Feminine Ground in Tibet." *The Tibet Journal* no. 12 (4)(1987): 38–53; Robert J. Miller, "'The Supine Demoness'(Srin mo) and The Consolidation of Empire." *The Tibet Journal* no. 23 (3) (1998), 3–22; Martin Mills, "Re-assessing the Supine Demoness: Royal Buddhist Geomancy in the Srong btsan sgam po Mythology." *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies* no. 3 (2007), 1–47; Woese, <https://highpeakspureearth.com/2016/the-senmo-map-or-the-resurrection-of-the-demoness-by-woeser/> (2016, viewed 10-03 2020)

³¹ *Bod kyi sa bshad* 168a: *bod yul 'di srin mo gan rkyal du nyal ba 'dra ba/ 'o thang mtsho srin mo'i snying khrag ru 'dug pa bcas kyi sa bkra ngan/ ngan pa mnon pa la ^ chos kyi rgyal po srong btsan sgam po'i sku dus thog mar bzhengs pa'i ru bzhi'i lha khang ni dpung mgo g.yas la ka tshal/ g.yon la khrag 'brug/ brla g.yas la gtsang 'gran/ g.yon la grom pa rgyang brtsigs so/ yang srin mo'i yan lag bzhi gnon pa'i phyir mtha' 'dul gyi gtsug lag khang bzhi nil gru mo g.yas la kong po bo chu/ g.yon la lho brag kho mthing/ dpus mo g.yas la ka brag/ g.yon la pra dum rtse brtsigs/ srin mo'i nying lag bzhi gnon pa'i phyir yang 'dul gyi*

³² Michael Aris. *Bhutan: the Early History of a Himalayan Kingdom* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1979), 26–31.

³³ See appendix I for the table.

the census of (Central) Tibet. It lists sacred places and their holy objects and recounts the myth of the supine demoness. I believe, however, that a case can be made that this text was some sort of manual for someone who was studying or practicing law. Unpractical as it may seem, it gives some sort of sense of the centrality, greatness, and limits of Tibet, the place where the law was practiced. I dare venture to suggest that this was a text for the apprentice of law to study and for the practitioner of law to consult, along with the more formal legal texts in the collection. Whereas it has been suggested that the legal geographer investigates "the manifestation of law upon space,"³⁴ here we are made to look at how space manifests upon law— in this case, a compilation used by a legal practitioner. This hypothesis forces us to look at the all too often overlooked *context* of the collections of legal texts.

As far as I am aware, no one so far has questioned why and how these texts have reached us in the way that they have.³⁵ They are written by different authors, presumably in different times, and deal with diverse subjects. All of them, in some way or another have to do with the practice of law. These collections have been organized in a certain way and have been given titles. It is clear that these titles were added later on, as we have the same legal texts with different titles in different "collections."

Due to well-known reasons, only very few identifiable collections are currently available in the public domain aside from the one discussed here. *Bod khrims yig gi skor* (On Tibet's Legal Texts) is another example of a copied work from the LTWA, that may well have been a (personal) collection of works once used by the owner.³⁶ The compilation of law texts published by Babu Tharchin in 1954 (and reprinted in 1956), entitled *sNgon byon chos rgyal srong btsan sgam pos mdzad pa'i khrims yig zhal lce bcu gsum dang khrims 'degs ang grangs bcas bzhuqs so* (The Thirteen Pronouncements, the Legal Texts Created by the Dharmarāja of Yore Srong btsan sgam po and Legal Measures and Numbers) could also have had a similar provenance.³⁷ Other available collections

³⁴ Bennett & Layard, "Legal geography," 414.

³⁵ But see Jansen, "The Origins of Tibetan Law."

³⁶ This is also argued in Jansen, "The Origins of Tibetan Law."

³⁷ Part of a work called: *Dpal ldan sa skyong mi dbang bshad sgra ba chen po mchog dang / mi rje bka' drung nor nang pa mchog nas brtams mdzad yig bskur rnam gzhaq rgyas pa khag gnyis dang / gzhan yang yig bskur thor bu sna tshogs/ bod kyi chos rgyal snga ba rnam dang gau shr khang gi gdung rabs/ rgyal dbang skur / phreng rim byon dang / srid skyong rim pa'i khri lo/shod drung las tshan yi rim pa dang / rdzong gzhis khag gi ming tho/ lha sa nas smar kham phyin gyi lam tho dang tham deb/ khrims yig zhal lce bcu gsum dang khrims 'degs ang grangs/ ma+nya+dzu gong ma'i khri rabs/ 'bras ljongs rgyal rabs bod sing gnyis dang gor bod gnyis kyi ching yig sogs mdor bsdu phyogs bsgrigs deb ther 'dod 'jo'i gter mdzod ces bya ba bzhuqs sol. Letter-Writers. Yig-bskur rnam gshag. By H.E. Kalon Shadra & Kadrunq Nornang, and Various other collections of modern letter-writers.*

of legal texts have been published in book-form in the PRC in the last few decades, but it is not clear in what form these publications reached the editors and where they originally came from.³⁸

There is just one bundle of legal materials to which we have access that has not been (entirely) decontextualized. It is from the personal collection of Rebecca French and was acquired in around 1986 during her fieldwork on Tibetan law in India. The man she purchased it from through an intermediary in McCleod Ganj was called "Rigpa," who mentioned that a relative of his took the text along with him whenever he had to travel on official business and was called upon to decide cases of law. French showed it to her main informant, Kungo-la Thupten Sangye, who confirmed that he had had one just like it when he traveled to Amdo and other places.³⁹ While it is identified in the library catalogue as the *Ganden Podrang Code of Thirteen Sections (dGa' lDan Pho Phrang [sic: brang])* it consists of several law texts, sewn into a bundle for ready use by a legal specialist.⁴⁰ I believe that the other legal collections, of which the originals are not available or extant, have come to us in the same way: they were once owned by specialists who consulted them when needed or studied them as part of their training. In other words, I am suggesting that these collections are in fact the "private" and portable libraries or reference works of a practitioner of the law. It may well be that where monks resorted to first consulting and then citing authoritative Buddhist works to make statements on correct conduct and so on when faced with (potential) monastic legal problems,⁴¹ legal specialists used their personal collections of legal texts for inspiration and authorization as they travelled to adjudicate cases, making them "vectors of law," carrying law "through space and time, performing both spatiality *and* legality."⁴² These works, badly

Short History of ancient kings, H.H. The Dalai Lamas & their Regents. The Thirteen Code laws by king Srongtsen Gampo, list of seals and their sizes as used by Dalai Lamas & Regents. Kalimpong, 1956: 217-34. On a 1643 edict found in this work, see Berthe Jansen, "A legal decree from 1643: a translation and critical edition." Proceedings of the TibStat workshop held in Bonn 2019. (forthcoming) CRCAO.

³⁸ For example, *Zhal lce phyogs bsdus* 1987; *Bod kyi snga rabs khrims srol yig cha bdams bsgrigs* 1989; *Snga rabs bod kyi srid khrims* 2004; *Gzhung dga' ldan pho brang skabs kyi khrims srol bca' chings bdams bsgrigs* 2008; *Snga rabs bod kyi srid khrims gsal ba'i me long* 2014; *Bod kyi khrims srol skor gyi lo rgyus yig tshags phyogs sgrig zhal lce phyogs sgrig* 2016.

³⁹ Personal communication Rebecca French, 2 March 2020.

⁴⁰ "Ganden Podrang Code of Thirteen Sections (dGa' lDan Pho Phrang)," *Digital Collections - University at Buffalo Libraries*, accessed August 28, 2019, <https://digital.lib.buffalo.edu/items/show/772>

⁴¹ Jansen, *The Monastery Rules*, 20.

⁴² Bennett & Layard, "Legal geography," 415. Another very interesting and similar compilation can be found in the repository of BDRC entitled *Deb ther long ba'i dmigs bu* (A Guide Leading [those who are] Blind [to] written works). According to the

spelled or poorly copied, written on low-quality paper are in sharp contrast with the way Rdo sbis Tshe ring rgyal described the official edicts issued by the Dalai Lamas, his replacements, and the regents. They were often written on superior quality Tibetan material such as silk (*gos chen*), Kongpo paper (*skyems shog*), and Nyemo paper (*snye shog*) in cursive lettering, without any mistakes.⁴³

To conclude, the Tibetan geographical text that is presented here – when viewed in context – is more than a cut and paste work on the supine demoness and Tibet's sacred geography. It is likely to have served to give the legal practitioner a sense of place, a sense of jurisdiction (but not in the strict sense of the word) and to remind him of the sacred place that was – and still is – Tibet. It needs to be noted that this particular legal-geographical text is *not* found among other legal bundles – for now, it stands as a *unicum* (despite itself being a product of "plagiarism"). This may attest to the relative unimportance of legal geography and place in Tibetan legal materials, but this would be an argument from absence. Nonetheless, if my hypothesis is correct and this particular collection of legal texts was indeed used by practitioners of the law, then, in terms of how people viewed "the spatiality of law," the kind of legal geography practiced was decidedly retroactive. In other words, it was the geographical worldview of the Sa skya pas of the 15th century that was used to "understand" – or to lend authority to – the legal landscape of Tibet, by people in the late 17th, 18th, 19th and possibly even the 20th centuries. While they are themselves socially produced, "law and space actively shape and constitute society."⁴⁴ In other words, although the exact ways in which these two factors have impacted Tibetan societies remain to be examined, this embedded text yet again confirms the remarkable continuity of the usage

description it is a manual for government officials written (but more likely compiled) by Bka' drung Nor rgyas nang pa dbang 'dus tshe ring (b. late 19th century). The text has a date written on it in ballpoint: 1932/33 (169). It contains short pragmatic works that were deemed needed to administer: a list of ranks, lists of fines and punishments, a list of the sixteen pure human Dharmas (*mi chos gtsang ma bcu drug* to name but a few. From the format it can be gleaned that this is another compilation designed for practical usage. It is dissimilar in the sense that it does not contain *Zhal Ice* or edicts. For more on the topic of the sixteen pure Dharmas, see Ulrike Roesler, "'16 Human Norms' (*mi chos bcu drug*)—Indian, Chinese, and Tibetan." In *The Illuminating Mirror: Tibetan Studies in Honour of Per K. Sørensen on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday*, ed. Olaf Czaja and Guntram Hazod (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 2015), 389–409.

⁴³ Rdo sbis Tshe ring rgyal, *Khrims gleng*: <http://trimleng.org/2017/11/12/documents-of-tibetan-legal-system/> (2017, viewed 25-02 2020): *de dag ni gos chen dang skyems shog snye shog la sogs pa'i bod shog spus dag steng 'bru tsha dang/ tshugs ma 'khyug 'khyug bris sogs gzhung bris 'khrul med du bris yod*

⁴⁴ Sarah Blandy and David Sibley, "Law, boundaries and the production of space." *Social & Legal Studies* no. 19 (3) (2010), 278.

of Tibetan historical materials in the wider Tibetan cultural sphere.

6. Appendix I

	Stag tshangs pa	Our text 168b-169a
right shoulder	Ka tshal	Ka tshal
left shoulder	Khrag 'brug	Khrag 'brug
right thigh	Gtsang 'gram	Gtsang 'gram
left thigh	Grom pa rgyang	Grom pa rgyang
right el- bow	Kong po bu chu	Kong po bo chu
left el- bow	Lho brag mkho mthing	Lho brag mkho mthing
right knee	Ka brag	Ka brag
left knee	Pra dum rtse	Pra dum rtse
right palm	byang mtshal gyi rlung gnon	byang mtsham gyi rlung <u>gnong</u>
left palm	khams klong thang sgrol ma	khams <u>kyi</u> 'dan <u>glong</u> thang sgrol ma
right foot	mang yul byams sprin	<u>byam</u> sprin
left foot	mon yul bum thang spa gro skyer chu	mon 'bum thang <u>sgyer</u> chu rnams
heart blood	'o thang mtsho	'o mtsho

7. Appendix II

An annotated edition and its textual antecedents on Tibet's geography and census from *Sde pa gtsang pa'i khrims yig zhal lce 16 dang dga' ldan pho brang ba'i zhal lce 12 sogs nyer mkho sna tshogs*: 338–347/ 167b–173a. All text that is underlined can be traced to the *Rgya bod yig tshang*.

Summary of the text:

The work starts off by mentioning Tibet being the centre of world and by describing its neighbours and how the borders are marked (167b–168b). It continues to liken Tibet to a supine demonness and names the temples that hold her down (168b–169b). The text goes on to name the temples built by Srong btsan sgam po's queens and subsequently names many sacred sites and statues in Tibet and outside of it (e.g., Rewalsar in India and the Boudhanath stūpa in Nepal) that are associated with his reign (169b–170b). While it is likely that our editors have copied this list from elsewhere, I have not been able to trace the origins of this long list. It is striking, however, that many of the sites named are affiliated to the Sa skya school.

The work then relates the reign of Srong btsan sgam po's great grandson 'Dus srong mang po rje rlung nam phrul gyi rgyal po and his seven "strong ministers".⁴⁵ The text jumps to a time 3290 years after Buddha Śākyamuni's birth to mention Genghis Khan, and five generations later the *cakravartin* Kublai Khan – the emanation of Mañjuśrī who invited 'Phags pa. The text then cites a passage from the *Rgya bod yig tshang* that is known to be a report of the Mongol census of 1268 – a likely Tibetan translation or reworking of part of a no longer extant Chinese text *Comprehensive Institutions of the Great Yuan* (*Da yuan tongzhi* 大元通制) (171b–173a).⁴⁶ The cited passage ends with "mang+ga+laM" but then immediately continues by giving an alternative way (*yang lugs gcig la*) to calculate the myriarchies (*khri skor*), which can also be found in the same text. This is where our short legal geographical work terminates (173a).

⁴⁵ For a very similar account see the *Rgyal rabs gsal ba'i me long* from the 14th century, translated by Per K. Sørensen, *The Mirror Illuminating the Royal Genealogies. Tibetan Buddhist Historiography*. (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1994), 348–49.

⁴⁶ Luciano Petech, "The Mongol Census in Tibet." In *Tibetan Studies in Honour of Hugh Richardson*, ed. Michael Aris and Aung San Suu kyi (Warminster: Aris and Philips, 1980), 233. A rough translation of this section can be found in Das (1886). Das does not mention the name of the source text. Tucci (1949 vol 1: 139; vol 2: 709) and Macdonald identified Das' article as being based on this text (Guisepppe Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls* (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1949), vol. 1, 139; vol. 2, 709; Macdonald, "Préambule," 54). For another paraphrasal translation see Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, vol. 1, 14.

The text:

(167b/338) bkra shis § 'dzam gling 'di la yul chen po dgu yod par 'dod ste/ shar na rgya nag dang khri stan/ lho na rgya gar dang kha che/ nub na stag sde dang gzig pan/ byang na khrom dang ge sar/ dbus na bod yul gangs kyi ra ba dang dgu zer/ 'dzam bu gling gi sa tshad kyi lte ba bod gangs can yin par 'dod pa ni/ sa mtho rim gangs chags [sic? char] chu bo thams cad 'di nas phyi'i mtha' la 'bab pa'i phyir gyis dbus lte ba yin par 'dod do/⁴⁷ bod kha ba can gyi rgyal khams dang phyogs bzhi'i rgyal khams kyi mtshams na srid pas bskos pa'i rdo ring chen po bzhi yod de shar phyogs rgya nag dang bod kyi sa mtshams shar phu gangs dkar lha'i yul na

(168a/ 339) 'gron bu dung gi rdo ring btsugs pa yan chad lho phyogs rgya dkar po dang bod kyi so mtshams smyug ma bu khur srin gyi yul na mthing zhun g.yu'i rdo ring btsugs pa tshun chad nub stag gzig dang bod kyi so mtshams rkang ma rkang gcig klu'i yul na sha tshe dngul gyi rdo ring btsugs pa pa [sic?] man chad byang phyogs khrom dang ge sar bod kyi so mtshams la sma'i lung rgyud sman gyi yul na rag gan [?] gser gyi rdo ring btsugs pa tshun chad bod kha ba can du gtogs pa'i sa tshad du byed cing⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Underlined roughly corresponds to Dpal 'byor bzang po, *Rgya bod yig tshang chen mo*, Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang (Chengdu 1985), 9: 'dzam bu gling 'di la / yul grangs chen po dgu yod par 'dod de / bcom ldan ral gris mdzad pa'i sdom pa brgyan gyi me tog [ston pa rgyan gyi me tog] las / yul dbus dang / mtha' 'khob kyi sa mtshams ni / shar du li kha ra shing 'phel dang / lhor dum bu'i chu rlung dang / nub tu bram ze'i grong ka ba dang / byang du shi ra'i ri mun pa can gyi bcad pa rnam so // shar na rgya nag dang / khri brtan / lho na rgya gar dang kha che gnyis / nub na stag sde dang gzig 'phan gnyis / byang na khrom dang ge sar gnyis / dbus na bod yul gangs kyi ra ba dgu zer te / 'dzam bu gling gi sa tshad kyi lte ba / bod gangs can 'di yin par 'dod pa ni / sa mtho / ri mang / gangs chags chu bo thams cad 'di nas phyi'i mtha' rnam la 'bab pa'i phyir gyi 'di nyid / sa'i dbus lte ba yin par 'dod do // See Dan Martin's "Tibet at the Center" (<https://sites.google.com/site/tibetological/50-tibetan-geo-texts>). This particular section is meant to cite a lost work on the life of the Buddha: *sdom pa brgyan gyi me tog*.

⁴⁸ *ibid.*, 14: bod kha ba can gyi rgyal khams dang / phyogs bzhi'i rgyal khams kyi sa mtshams na / srid pas bkod pa'i rdo rings chen po bzhi yod de / shar phyogs rgya nag po dang / bod kyi so mtshams na / sha phud gangs dkar lha'i yul du / 'dron bu dung gi rdo rings [15] gtsugs pa yan chad / lho phyogs rgya dkar po dang / bod kyi so mtshams / smug ma bu khur srin gyi yul du / mthing zhun g.yu'i rdo rings gtsugs pa tshun chad / nub phyogs stag gzig dang / bod kyi so mtshams / rkang ma rkang gcig klu'i yul du / sha rtse dngul gyi rdo rings gtsugs pa man chad / byang phyogs khrom ge sar dang / bod kyi so mtshams / ma rma'i lu rgyud sman gyi yul du / ra rgan gser gyi rdo rings gtsugs pa tshun chad / de rnam bod gangs can gyi rgyal khams su rtogs pa'i sa tshad yin cing /

rdo ring bzhi po de la spom phra pho 'dom lnga bcus 'khor ba/ dpang la pho 'dom bgya re yod par byed do⁴⁹/ bod la yul gru chen po gsum yod pa ni stod mnga' ris bskor gsum gangs dang g.ya' yi ra ba ljing 'dra ba/ sman lha ri chu drug

(168b/ 340) nags dang ne ljong zhing dang 'du ba/ bar dbus gtsang ru bzhi brag dang chu 'thab yur ba 'dra ba/⁵⁰ bod yul 'di srin mo gan rkyal du nyal ba 'dra ba/ 'o thang mtsho srin mo'i snying khrag ru 'dug pa bcas kyi sa bkra ngan/⁵¹ ngan pa mnon pa la ^ chos kyi rgyal po srong btsan sgam po'i sku dus thog mar bzhangs pa'i ru bzhi'i lha khang ni dpung mgo g.yas la ka tshal/ g.yon la khrag 'brug/ brla g.yas la gtsang 'gram/ g.yon la grom pa rgyang brtsigs so/ yang srin mo'i yan lag bzhi gnon pa'i phyir mtha' 'dul gyi gtsug lag khang bzhi ni/ gru mo g.yas la kong po bo chu/ g.yon la lho brag kho mthing/ dpus mo g.yas la ka brag/ g.yon la pra dum rtse brtsigs/ srin mo'i nying lag bzhi gnon pa'i phyir yang 'dul gyi

(169a/341) gtsug lag khang bzhi ni/⁵² lag mthil g.yas la byang mtsham gyi rlung gnong/ g.yon la khams klong thang sgron ma/ rkang mgo g.yas la byam sprin/ g.yon la mon 'bum thang sgyer chu rnam brtsigs/⁵³ de'i rjes su bal

⁴⁹ *ibid.*, 14: rdo rings kyi spangs la / gzhu 'dom brgyad cu re dang zheng phyogs re la / gzhu 'dom nyi shu re / steng na rgya phigs dang bcas pa yod do zer ro // bod la yul gru chen po gsum yod pa ni / stod mnga' ris bskor gsum / gangs dang g.ya' i ra ba rdzing dang 'dra ba la / yul gru chen po gcig smad lha re phyugs drug / nags dang na'i ljongs / zhing dang 'dra ba la yul gru chen po gcig / Note as the main difference gzhu 'dom instead of pho 'dom.

⁵⁰ See *ibid.*, 15. The contents and phrasing are similar, while the orthography is rather different.

⁵¹ Similarly phrased in *Bkra shis lhun po bca' yig* (new) 357: [...] rgyal po srong btsan sgam pos bod kyi sa bkra ngan pa bzlog byed mtha' 'dul dang yang 'dul ru gnon gyi gtsug lag khang rnam bzhangs/

⁵² Strong similarity to *Bu ston chos 'byung* vol. 3: 33.

⁵³ This is found in *Rgya bod yig tshang*, 97: lar bod yul kha ba can 'di srin mo gan rkyal du nyal ba dang 'dra/ 'o thang gi mtsho 'di srin mo'i snying khrag tu 'dug pa 'di gnon dgos/ de la 'ang / dang po ru bzhi'i lha khang brtsig dgos zer nas/ dpung mgo g.yas pa la ka tshal/ g.yon pa la khra 'brug brla g.yas pa la gtsang 'gram/ g.yon pa la grom pa rgyang brtsigs so/ yang srin mo'i yan lag bzhi gnon pa'i phyir/ mtha' 'dul gyi gtsug lag khang bzhi ni/ gru mo g.yas pa la kong po bu chu/ g.yon pa la lho brag mkho mthing / dpus mo g.yas pa la ka brag g.yon pa la pra dum rtse ba brtsigs/ srin mo'i nying lag bzhi gnon pa'i phyir yang 'dul gyi gtsug lag khang bzhi ni/ lag mthil g.yas pa la/ byang mtshal gyi rlung gnon/ g.yon pa la khams su klong thang sgron ma/ rkang 'go g.yas pa la byams sprin/ g.yon pa la mon bum thang sgyer chu rnam bzhangs/ cf. *Bu ston chos 'byung* (vol. 3): 33: bod kyi sa gzhi srin mo gan rkyal du 'gyel ba 'dra ba 'di mnan dgos par gzigs nas | dpung pa g.yas la ska tshal | g.yon la khra 'brug | rkang pa g.yas la gtsang 'gram | g.yon la grom pa

za khri btsun gyi ra sa 'phrul snang dang/ rgya za kong jos
rgya thabs ra mo che/ po ta la⁵⁴ zhang zhung za li tig sman
gyis khram phug lkog ma/ ru yod za rgyal mo btsun gyis
brag lha klu phug/ mon za khri 'jam gyis yer pa'i lha khang
rnams bzhengs/⁵⁵gzhan yang gnas chen byin chen bsam
 yas/ ching bu/ yang rdzong/ mkhar chu shel brag⁵⁶ 'on bu
 stag tshang⁵⁷/ zho stong gter sgrom⁵⁸/ yer pa⁵⁹ thag skas⁶⁰/
 phung po ri bo che/⁶¹zab phu lung⁶² ri bo bkra bzang⁶³/
 zangs zangs lha brag⁶⁴/ ches

(169b/342) ma shing gi lha khang⁶⁵/ nyang stong rtsis gnas
 gsar⁶⁶/ phur mo chos rdzong⁶⁷/ sog po zhong zhong lha
 khang⁶⁸/ sreg shing 'jam dbyangs gar gzigs⁶⁹/ dge ldan/⁷⁰

rgyang ste | ru bzhi'i gtsug lag khang bzhi | gru mo g.yas la kong po bu chu | g.yon la lho brag khom thing | pus mo g.yas la ska brag | g.yon la pra du ma rtse ste mtha' 'dul bzhi | lag mthil g.yas la byang tshal gyi rlung gnon | g.yon la khams kyi 'dan glong thang sgrol ma | rkang mthil g.yas la mang yul byams sprin | g.yon la mon yul bun thang spa gro skyer chu la sogs pa gtsug lag khang mang po bzhengs nas gdod 'o thang mtsho la rdo mkhar brtsigs shing gis phub Also see Aris' schema (Aris, *Bhutan*, 26–31).

⁵⁴ Not in *Rgya bod yig tshang*.

⁵⁵ end of cited passage.

⁵⁶ Mchims phu (near Samyé), Yang rdzong, Mkhar chu, and Shel brag are four of the so-called eight sacred places blessed by Padmasambhava for the practice of the Eight Herukas (Shabkar Tsogdruk Rangdrol and Matthieu Ricard (transl.), *The Life of Shabkar: The autobiography of a Tibetan yogin* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994), 272, n. 59).

⁵⁷ 'On phu stag tshang, one of the 'tiger dens' associated with Padmasambhava near Samyé.

⁵⁸ Gzho stod gter sgrom at 'Bri gung.

⁵⁹ Presumably Brag Yer pa.

⁶⁰ Thag skas is a cave in which Padmasambhava is said to have meditated; it is named so because one needs to climb a steep mountain cliff to get there, holding on to a rope (*Dga' ldan dgon pa dang brag yer pa'i lo rgyus*, 1994: 116).

⁶¹ A famous sacred site/ mountain associated with Padmasambhava in Gtsang.

⁶² Zab phu lung is a hidden land (*sbas yul*) in Gtsang associated with Padmasambhava.

⁶³ A sacred site and branch monastery of Rdo rje brag, in La stod associated with the Byang gter tradition and Rig 'dzin rgod ldem (1337-1408).

⁶⁴ Zang zang lha brag in Gtsang is most well-known as the birthplace of Rig 'dzin rgod ldem and site where he uncovered *gter ma*.

⁶⁵ *Chu ma shing gi lha khang* is a temple on the banks of the Gtsang po river (*Dbus gtsang gnas yig*, 336) It is possibly one of the *mtha' 'dul* or *yang 'dul* temples.

⁶⁶ Nyang stod rtsis gnas gsar between Lhasa and Gyantsé (Rgyal rtse), which is said to have been built by Srong btsan sgam po.

⁶⁷ A temporary (? lit. tent) Sa skya monastery (*sa skya'i gur dgon*, see Ngag dbang kun dga' bsod nams Gsung 'bum).

⁶⁸ This could refer to Zhong zhong monastery in eastern Gtsang, founded by Khyung po mal 'byor (Smith, 2001, 53).

⁶⁹ A famous painting at Sa skya created by *Sa skya Paṇḍita* (two images).

⁷⁰ Dga' ldan monastery.

'ol kha rdzing phyi/⁷¹ chos lung⁷² / mnye thang⁷³ / pha bong kha⁷⁴ / phur bu lcog⁷⁵ / chos lung⁷⁶ / zang ri⁷⁷ / ra sgren⁷⁸ / brag seng ge'i zhal⁷⁹ byang stag lung⁸⁰ / kong po rtsa ri⁸¹ / mtho lding gser gyi lha khang⁸² / gangs ti se / mtsho ma 'pham⁸³ dang chos sku / nyan ri chos sku⁸⁴ / chos 'khor rgyal⁸⁵ la phyi gangs ra⁸⁶ / la stod rgyal gyi shri⁸⁷ / skyid grong 'phags pa⁸⁸ / gnya' nang grod phug /⁸⁹ me tog mdangs chen⁹⁰ / mtsho pad+ma /⁹¹ tre ta pu ri /⁹² sa skya lha khang chen mo⁹³ / g.yu kham mtsho'i sgrol ma⁹⁴ / bal yul gyi mchod rten byang rung kha shor dang /⁹⁵ 'phags pa shing kun⁹⁶ / stag mo lus byin /⁹⁷

(170a/343) kho khom sgrol ma⁹⁸ / ye rang jo bo⁹⁹ / dben

⁷¹ This may also be one of the *mtha' 'dul* / *yang 'dul* temples. It was later affiliated to the *Dge lugs* school. Franz-Karl Ehrhard. "A 'Hidden Land' at the Border of 'Ol-kha and Dvags-po." *The Tibet Journal* no. 34/35 (3/2) (2009), 493–521.

⁷² A monastery in Gtsang.

⁷³ Also spelled Nye thang or Snye thang, where Atisha passed away.

⁷⁴ Pha bong kha hermitage affiliated to Sera monastery.

⁷⁵ Phur bu lcog hermitage affiliated to Sera monastery.

⁷⁶ Second time this name is mentioned.

⁷⁷ This could be Zangs ri mkhar dmar, the erstwhile residence of Ma gcig slab sgron.

⁷⁸ Ra sgren monastery, a significant Bka' gdams pa site.

⁷⁹ Brag seng ge'i zhol, a branch monastery of Ra sgren.

⁸⁰ Stag lung monastery, built on a site previously affiliated to the Bka' gdams pa. It is the main seat of the Stag lung bka' rgyud school.

⁸¹ A popular place of pilgrimage in South-West Tibet.

⁸² Mtho lding gser gyi lha khang (the golden temple of Tholing) built by Ye shes 'Od in Mnga' ris.

⁸³ Mount Kailash and Lake Manasarovar.

⁸⁴ A monastery close to Mount Kailash.

⁸⁵ A monastery in Dwags po.

⁸⁶ La phyi (Lapchi), a pilgrimage site on the Nepal-Tibet border associated with Milarepa.

⁸⁷ Also known as the important sacred site Rtsibs ri in South-West Tibet.

⁸⁸ The 'Phags pa lha khang in Skyid grong, meant to have been built in the 7th (!) century.

⁸⁹ One of Milarepa's caves in South-West Tibet.

⁹⁰ Me tog mdangs can monastery, a place initially linked to Thang stong rgyal po.

⁹¹ Rewalsar, North India.

⁹² Tirthapuri in Zhang chung, western Tibet.

⁹³ At Sa skya monastery.

⁹⁴ Unknown site associated with Tārā (or, alternatively, with the statue).

⁹⁵ Boudhanath stūpa, Nepal.

⁹⁶ Svayambhunath stūpa, Nepal.

⁹⁷ Namobuddha, near Kathmandu.

⁹⁸ A speaking Tārā statue in modern-day Bhaktapur.

⁹⁹ The Śākyamuni Buddha statue at Pathan

dgon¹⁰⁰ / brag skya¹⁰¹ / zla ri jo bo¹⁰² / phun gling thub dbang
 glang 'dul¹⁰³ / g.yu lo skabs gsum bde ldan lha Khang¹⁰⁴ / jo
 nang¹⁰⁵ / smon 'gro jo bo¹⁰⁶ / rgyang yon po lung¹⁰⁷ / gA ya
 rda ra¹⁰⁸ / ngam ring byams chen¹⁰⁹ dang / rdzong dus
 'khor¹¹⁰ / rgyud bshad lha Khang¹¹¹ / snar thang¹¹² / byang
 chen¹¹³ / gangs can¹¹⁴ / bkra rdzong zung 'jug phug / mgar
 mo chos rdzong¹¹⁵ / zhwa lu'i thugs rje chen po¹¹⁶ / rgyan
 gong¹¹⁷ / brag ram¹¹⁸ / rmu¹¹⁹ / dar lung gnyan gyi pho
 brang¹²⁰ / khro phu byams chen¹²¹ / rong byams chen¹²² /
 bkra shis lhun po'i brten gyi gtso bo..thub dbang gsum
 sgrigs / byams chen / sgrol ma lha Khang / mthong ba don
 ldan / dga' gdong byams pa / gting skyid sgrol ma /

(170b / 344) dur smrig sgrol ma byams pa rang byon /
 mchod Khang chen mo gsum /¹²³ § de nas rgyal thog bzhi
 la¹²⁴ / 'dus srong mang po rje rlung nam 'phrul gyi rgyal po'i
 dus rtsal po che mi bdun byung ba ni / ar po gdong btsan
 gylis seng ge dkar mo'i gnya' ba nas bzung byung mon khri

¹⁰⁰ A monastery possibly in the district (*rdzong*) of Shigatsé.

¹⁰¹ A Karma bka' brgyud pa monastery in Dge rgyas rdzong (mNga' ris).

¹⁰² Unknown.

¹⁰³ Unknown.

¹⁰⁴ Possibly referring to a chapel at Zha lu monastery.

¹⁰⁵ Jo nang monastery in Gtsang.

¹⁰⁶ A statue in Smon 'gro near Rgyal rtse.

¹⁰⁷ There is a cave associated to Padmasambhava in Rgyang yon po lung.

¹⁰⁸ This could refer to 11th century master Gayadhāra's meditation cave, near Sa skya.

¹⁰⁹ Ngam ring (dga' ldan) byams pa gling was a Sa skya monastery until it was converted to Dge lugs in the 17th century (see <https://treasuryoflives.org/en/institution/Ngamring-Chode->)

¹¹⁰ This may refer to Ngom ring rdzong dus 'khor lha Khang, as mentioned in the *Dbus gtsang gnas yig*, 420.

¹¹¹ Unknown temple.

¹¹² Snar thang monastery or printery in Gtsang.

¹¹³ Likely to be Byang chen hermitage in Gtsang.

¹¹⁴ This could be Gangs can monastery in Sa skya rdzong.

¹¹⁵ Mgar mo chos rdzong is in Bkra shis rdzong (to the west of Shigatsé), where there is a retreat place.

¹¹⁶ The great Avalokiteśvara statue (?) at Zha lu monastery.

¹¹⁷ Rgyan gong mgon Khang or lha Khang, not far from Zha lu monastery.

¹¹⁸ Brag ram mgon Khang, a place in Gtsang associated with the Bo dong lineage.

¹¹⁹ Possibly the Rnying ma monastery Rmu dgon dkar.

¹²⁰ A pilgrimage site in Dar lung (Mnga' ris).

¹²¹ The great Maitreya statue at Khro phu (Skyid grong).

¹²² Rong byams chen monastery (which housed a large Maitreya statue) in Gtsang. It was initially affiliated to Sa skya and was converted to Dge lugs in 1650.

¹²³ Here the main sites at Bkra shis lhun po are enumerated.

¹²⁴ This is added by the editor(s).

bzang gi stag dar ma gnyis lcags thag gi sbrel nas ngar sgras lung po bskangs te 'khrid byung skad/ lho don dam yang dag 'phags kyi seng ldan gi gdung chen po bcu gsum gyi steng du gong tsha la lcags dos gcig rgyab nas 'khur byung skad/ lcogs ro zangs dkar gyi lha sa'i rdo ring sked la btsug nas yo ga yog gin byung skad/ rngog ring nag pos bal yul nas glang po che'i phru gu gcig gson por 'khur byung skad/ bgos shag byung

(171a/345)gis sha ba yu mo'i rlin bu tshal rgyangs nas klad la dbyug gin byung skad/ rnon rgyal mtshan rnam grang kyi mig mthong gsum re mda' rgyangs res slebs shing/ gtsang po la phar mchong tshur mchong byed gyin byung skad/ ¹²⁵ §¹²⁶ lhar bcas 'gro ba'i skyabs gcig pu/ sang rgyas

¹²⁵ Underlined corresponds with *Chos rgyal bod kyi rgyal rabs* in Shes rab rin chen's (b. 1405, Sa skya scholar) *gSung 'bum*, Beijing: Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang: 2007 W2DB4577, but is also featured in the *Rgya bod yig tshang* 2007, 102, 3: '*dus srong mang po rje rlung nam 'phrul gyi rgyal po ni/ chu mo bya lo ba stel/ ma 'khrungs gong tsam du yab 'das/ 'khrungs 'phral nas dgung lo nyi shu rtsa dgu'i bar la srid bzung / 'di'i ring la bod du rol mo'i rnam grangs mang po 'byung ba'i snga ltas la/ rtsal po che mi bdun byung ba* (103) *ni/ ar po ldong btsan gyis seng ge dkar mo'i gnya' ba nas bzung byung skad/ mon khri bzang gi stag dar ma gnyis lcags thag gi sprel nas ngar sgras lung pa bkang ste khrid byung skad/ lho don dam yang dag 'phags kyi/ seng ldeng gi gdung chen po bcu gsum gyi steng du/ gong dza la lcags dos gcig rgyab nas khur byung skad/ lcog ro zangs dkar gyis/ lha sa'i rdo ring rked la btsugs nas yo ga yo gin khur byung skad/ rngog rings nag pos bal yul nas glang po che'i phrug gu zhig gson por / khur byung skad/ mgos shag byung gis/ sha ba yu mo'i blud bu tshwas rgyangs nas klad la dbyug gin byung skad/ smon rgyal mtshan rnam grangs kyi/ mig mthong gsum de mda' rgyang gang res sleb cing / gtsang po la phar mchongs tshur mchongs byed kyin leb byung skad do/* The underlined is what has been left out by the editor of our text.

¹²⁶ This is found verbatim in the *Rgya bod yig tshang* (2007), which has been given the header *Khri skor bcu gsum gyi dud kyi grangs dang 'ja' mo 'dzin lugs yod*, 156-7: *lhar bcas 'gro ba'i mun sel phyir/ sangs rgyas shAkya thub 'khrungs nas/ lo grangs sum stong nyis brgya dang/ dgu bcu 'das dus hor yul du/ bsod nams chen po'i chu gter las/ rgyal po jing gir gang zhes pa/ sa 'dzin rin chen 'khrungs par 'gyur/ mi dbang de nas rgyal rabs lngar/ stobs kyi 'khor lo bsgyur mdzad pa/ se chen gang zhes grags pa des/ 'jam dbyangs rnam 'phrul sa skya pa/ chos rgyal 'phags pa spyang drangs nas/ bcu phrag lo ni song ba'i dus/ sa pho 'brug lo shar ba dang/ gong nas mngags pa'i gser yig pa/ a kon ming gling gnyis yong nas/ mi sde sa cha dang bcas pa/ chen po hor gyis ming btags pa'i rtsa ba'i dud drangs rtsis pa na/ stod kyi mnga' ris skor gsum dang/ lha sde gzhung pa la sogs kyi. khri stong gseb tu mi the bas/ bod 'brog gang yod zur bzhang nas/ dbus gtsang khri skor so so yi/ dud grags bcas pa 'di ltar ro/ la stod lho pa'i dud kyi grangs/ stong dang dgu cu rtsa dgu yin/ la ltod byang pa nyis stong dang/ nyi brgya lnga cu tham par brtsil/ chu mig khri skor hor dud grags/ sum stong nyer gsum yod pa'i bar/ zha lu khri skor sum stong dang/ brgyad brgya dgu rtsa (157) gnyis yod/ byang 'brog khri skor rting la byung/ yar 'brog khri skor khyad chos la/ leb ni bcu drug zer ba de/ hor dud phyed dang brgyad brgya 'o/ dbus phyogs rtsa dud 'khyer lugs ni/ 'bri gung bod 'brog gnyis po la/ sum stong brgyad brgya sum cu yod/ tshal po sum stong bdun brgya yin/ phag mo gru pa nyis stong dang/ bzhi brgya sum cu rtsa brgyad yod/ g.ya' bzang pa la sum stong dbang/ rgya ma ba dang bya yul bal lnga*

shAka thub sku 'khrungs pa nas/ lo grangs gsum stong nyes
brgya dang/ dgu bcu 'das dus hor yul du/ bsod nams chen
po'i chu gter las/ rgyal po ji gir gan¹²⁷ zhes pa/ sa 'dzin rin
chen 'khrungs par gyur/ mi dbang de ni rgyal rab lngar
stobs kyi 'khor los bsgyur mdzad pa/ se chen gan¹²⁸ zhes
grags pa des/ 'jam dbyangs rnam sprul sa skya pa/

(171b/ 346) chos rgyal 'phags pa spyen drangs nas/ bcu
phrag lo ni song ba'i dus/ sa pho 'brug lo shar ba na/ gong
nas mngags pa'i gser yig pa/ a kon ming gling gnyis yong
nas/ mi sde sa cha dang bcas pa/ chen po hor gyi ming
btags pa'i / rtsa ba'i dus grangs rtsis pa ni/ stod kyi mnga'
ris skor gsum/ lha sde gzhung pa la sogs kyi/ khri stong
gseb tu ma the bas/ bod 'brog gang yod zur bzhag nas/
dbus gtsang khri skor so so yis/ dud grangs bcas pa 'di ltar
ro/ la stod lho pa'i dud kyi grangs/ stod dang dgu bcu rtsa
dgu yin/ la stod byang pa gnyis stong dang/ nyis brgya
lnga bcu tham par rtsi/ chu mig khri skor hor dud grangs/
sum stong nyag gsum yod par byed/

(172a/ 347) zhwa lu khri skor sum stong dang/ brgyad
brgya dgu rtsa gnyis yod/ byang 'brog khri skor rting ma
byung/ ya 'brog khri skor khyad chos la/ leb ni bcu drug
zar ba de/ hor dus phyed dang brgyad brgya yod/ dbus
phyogs rtsa dud 'khyer lugs ni/ 'bri gung bod 'brog gnyis
po la/ sum stong brgyad brgya sum bcu yod/ tshal pa sum
stong bdun brgya yin/ phag mo grub pa nyis stong dang/
bzhi brgya gsum cu rtsa brgyad yod/ g.ya' bzang pa la
gsum stong dbang/ rgya ma ba dang ja yul ba lnga stong
dgu brgya phyed 'khyer yin/ stag lung pa dang lnga brgya
dang/ de nas lho 'brug la sogs pa'i/ kha 'thor stong dang
bzhi brgya yod/ tshul 'dir hor dang sa skya pa/ mchod

(173a/ 348) yon 'brel nas dbus gtsang/ sa rtsis byas pa'i thog
mar 'dug/¹²⁹ mang+ga laM/¹³⁰ yang lugs gcig la/ mnga' ris

*stong dgu brgya phyed 'khyer yin/ stag lung pa la lnga brgya dang/ de steng lha 'brug la
sogs pas/ kha 'thor stong dang bzhi brgya yod/ tshul 'di hor dang sa skya pa/ yon mchod
'brel nas dbus gtsang du/ sa brtsis byas pa'i thog mar 'dug* This section deals with the
census of the thirteen myriarchies and tax collection. Also see Petech, "The Mongol
Census in Tibet."

¹²⁷ Elsewhere Jing gir gan: Genghis Khan.

¹²⁸ Setsen, the Khagan title for Kublai Khan.

¹²⁹ end of verbatim quote.

¹³⁰ It can be argued that this is the end of one text and that a new text starts here.

rdzong dga'i 'og gi ble dol rdzong gsum gyi khri skor gcig/
 la stod lho byang/ chu zhal rnams re rer bgrang ba'i khri
 skor bzhi/ bra ber khyung gsum khri skor gcig ya 'brog
 tshal pa khri skor gnyis/ rgya 'bri g.ya' phag khri skor bzhi
 zur nas bsdus pa'i gcig byung ba/ bya yul hor dud stong
 phrag gcig/ 'brug pa hor dus dgu brgyar byed/ stong dang
 dgu brgya phyed 'khyer du/ khri skor gcig gis bya ba
 bsgrub/¹³¹

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¹³¹ *Rgya bod yig tshang* 2007: 142: chu zhal rnams re re bgrangs pa khri skor bzhi/ sbra ber khyung gsum khri gcig /yar 'brog tshal pa khri skor gnyis/ /rgya 'bri g.ya' phag khri skor bzhi/ /zur nas bsdus pa'i gcig byung ba/ /bya yul hor dud stong phrag gcig /'brug pa hor dud dgu brgyar byed/ /stong dang dgu brgya phyed khyer du/ khri skor gcig gi bya ba bsgrubs/

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From Metaphor to Commentary and from Commentary to Catechism: The Formation of a Bon po Scriptural Corpus and Its Authentication

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In fêting Dan Martin's many contributions to Tibetan Studies with an essay on an aspect of Bon, I fear that I may be acting as the proverbial bearer of coals to Newcastle. Nevertheless, I hope that this may be seen as a small addendum to his many accomplishments in this area, and not merely a reduplication of effort.

Some years ago, I became interested in a 12th-century collection of Bon po treatises, the *Commentaries of the Four Clever Men* (*mkhas pa mi bzhi'i 'grel pa*), devoted to an earlier corpus of scriptures entitled *Byang sems gab pa dgu bskor* (BGGK), or the "Ninefold Cycle of the Secrets of the Enlightened Mind." What interested me above all about these works was how they exemplified the appropriation by the Bon po of many of the tools of Buddhist sâstric commentary, but in the service of a distinctive contemplative tradition, cognate to that of the Great Perfection, which seems to defy the bivalent reasoning on which sâstric modes of analysis are based. My initial findings about this were published in the journal *East and West* and form the background for the present essay.¹ Here, however, I am concerned with the "Ninefold Cycle" itself; I wish to begin to clarify some aspects of its composition, with particular reference to the rhetorical strategies it employs to establish its preeminence as an authentic revelation of the teachings of one of the highest Bon po divinities, the Omnibeneficent White-Light God of the Gshen (*Kun tu bzang po Gshen lha 'od dkar*).

According to Bon po traditions, the "Ninefold Cycle" was first discovered and its primary texts established by the great creative figure in the early second millennium development of Bon, Gshen chen Klu dga' (996–1035).² It seems, however, that the redaction of the texts was due in large part to his disciple Zhu yas Legs po (1002–1081), who in

¹ Kapstein 2009.

² I follow the dates proposed by Martin 2001, pp. 88-89. See also pp. 253-255 on the Ninefold Cycle itself.

his long life is credited with a cardinal role in giving enduring form to the prolific corpus attributed to his master. There are indications, too, that other successors also had a hand in the elaboration of parts of the “Ninefold Cycle.” To assign the production of the main works of which the cycle is composed to roughly the half-century spanning the second two quarters of the eleventh century would probably not be far wrong, and, as we shall see, is consistent with their literary features, though there is no reason to exclude the possibility that the collection was given its final form somewhat later, perhaps during the first half of the twelfth century. This coheres well with the mid-twelfth century dating that is, I believe, warranted in the case of the *Commentaries of the Four Clever Men*.³

A further consideration in favor of this periodization is found in the fact that much of the redaction of the parallel Rnying ma pa contemplative system, that of the Rdzogs chen Sems phyogs, was accomplished also during the eleventh and early twelfth century by the masters of the Zur lineage, whose connections with their Bon po contemporaries are very well known.⁴ In this context, this point must be stressed: both the Rnying ma pa and the Bon po were engaged, during the period under discussion, in promulgating as their supreme teachings closely similar “Great Perfection” systems of contemplation, which, whatever they may have owed to Indian or Chinese Buddhist antecedents, were not simple continuations of either. In some sense, then, we are dealing with a single contemplative tradition that has both Buddhist and Bon po iterations, that seem to emerge within both religious communities almost simultaneously, advanced by the interrelations and dissensions at once joining and dividing the communities in question.

The “Ninefold Cycle” does not, I must emphasize, actually speak of its teaching as “Great Perfection”; its preferred locution is simply “Enlightened Mind,” that is, *byang chub kyi sems*, or *bodhicitta* in Sanskrit (a

³ In the present essay, however, I am excluding from further consideration the later commentarial elaborations of the Ninefold Cycle, including the *Commentaries of the Four Clever Men* and those by the founder of Sman ri Monastery, Mnyam med Shes rab rgyal mtshan (1356–1415).

⁴ Cordial relations between the Zur lineage founder, Zur po che Shākya ’byung gnas, and the Bon po are mentioned in the former’s hagiography as given in the traditional Rnying ma pa histories, e.g., Dudjom 1991, pp. 632, 634–635. (Cf. the account of the Zur lineage in Roerich and Chopel 1976.) In the latter episode, following Zur po che’s death, a Bon po priest is related as having done homage to, and then melting into light and dissolving into, the great statue of Dpal chen Heruka that Zur po che had miraculously constructed. The affinities we find between the Bon and Buddhist versions of the teachings we are considering here suggest that these legends have their basis in actual relations that existed between the traditions concerned. On the Rdzogs chen traditions current within the early Zur lineage, refer to Kapstein 2008, 2018.

language that these Bon po texts, of course, do not employ). This is sometimes expanded as the “Enlightened Mind that is the Ground of All,” *kun gzhi byang chub kyi sems*. The teaching which discloses this principle is often referred to simply as the “Great Vehicle,” *theg pa chen po*, the standard Tibetan equivalent of Mahāyāna. This intentionally skewed use of the term, to refer not to the path of the bodhisattva in general but just to what is asserted to be its supreme teaching, finds parallels in contemporaneous Rnying ma pa works,⁵ and may have Chinese antecedents, as well. The famous “Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna,” the *Dasheng qi xin lun*, for example, though virtually unknown in Tibet, uses “Mahāyāna” in a manner that much resembles the diction of our present texts.⁶ Finally, *thig le nyag gcig*, the “sole seminal sphere,” is also very frequently employed here as a synonym of Enlightened Mind, as indeed it is elsewhere in both the Bon po and Rnying ma pa Great Perfection traditions.⁷

The corpus of the “Ninefold Cycle” that is attributed to Gshen chen klu dga’ comprises six major divisions:⁸

(1) a topical outline, *sa gcod kyi le’u* (3-18)⁹

⁵ For instance, in the eleventh-century *Theg pa chen po’i tshul la ’jug pa* of Rong zom Chos kyi bzang po, now translated in Sur 2017.

⁶ As Girard 2004, xliii, puts it, “Le travail même de la Talité [= *tathātā*] sur tous les êtres pour les mouvoir vers l’éveil suprême est ce que le *Traité* entend par Grand Véhicule.” Although the *Dasheng qi xin lun* is not known to have been translated into Tibetan in its entirety, that there was some knowledge of it in Tibetan Chan circles is established by quotations from it in the *Mdo sde brgyad bcu khungs* of Spug Ye shes dbyangs; see Tauscher 2021, p. 200. The surviving citations, however, do not directly concern the interpretation of the term *mahāyāna*.

⁷ See, for instance, Klein and Wangyal 2006, where “unbounded wholeness”—their translation of *thig le nyag gcig*—is the guiding theme of the work as a whole.

⁸ The text of the “Ninefold Cycle” that I follow here is a photocopied reproduction of an *dbu med* manuscript, perhaps from Dol po. Although there is no publication information in my copy, I believe that it is the text that was issued by the Tibetan Bonpo Monastic Community, Dolanji, H. P., in 1967. It appears to be identical to the version catalogued in Martin et al. 2003, no. 99, pp. 437-444, which should be consulted for further details of the colophons and authorship of the sections into which the Cycle is divided. (The six sections numbered (1)-(6) here are equivalent to 99.1-99.6 in that catalogue.) Two additional versions of the “Ninefold Cycle” are available in the BDRC archive: W1KG14500, *Gangs ti se bon gzhung rig mdzod dpe tshogs chen mo*, vol. 22 (Beijing 2009); and W21872, vols. 6312 and 6313, *G.yung drung bon gyi bka’ ’gyur*, vols. 172-173 (Chengdu 1999). The former includes the *Byang sems gab ’grel nyi ma’i dkyil ’khor* of Mnyam med Shes rab rgyal mtshan. I have not, however, consulted these versions of the Cycle in connection with the present essay.

⁹ The page numbers given here correspond to the Arabic numerals added to the folio sides, with the addition, when required, of a line number following a point.

(2) the primary text of the “Ninefold Cycle,” entitled *byang chub sems gab pa dgu bskor* (19-192)¹⁰ which, following the title page and introductory verses, includes:

[2.1] *lung gi yi ge dgu* “Nine Texts of the Transmission” (for this designation, see 64.2: *lung gi yi ge dgu rdzogs so*)

2.1a (22.4-27.3) *tha rams sngon po* “Blue Doorbolt”

2.1b (27.3-31.5) *phrul gyi lde mig* “Magical Pass-key”

2.1c (31.6-45.1) *bdud rtsi zil thigs* “Ambrosia Dewdrops”

2.1d (45.1-47.2) *gser gyi nya mo* “Golden Fish”

2.1e (47.2-50.1) *bde ba che* “Great Happiness”

2.1f (50.1-52.5) *mnyam pa nyid* “Equipoise”

2.1g (52.5-59.4) *rig pa dmar thag* “Sunbeam of Awareness”

2.1h (59.4-61.6) *mi nub rgyal mtshan* “Unvanquished Ensign”

2.1i (61.6-64.2) *thig le nyag gcig* “Sole Seminal Sphere”

[2.2] The various subsections of the second division, which is lacking a general title, are shown by the topical outline (8.5-13.1) to be coordinated with the first eight of the foregoing nine topics (thus 2.2a relates back to 2.1a, etc.):¹¹

2.2a (64.2-80.2) *bcing bkrol gyi skabs* the “section on the release of bonds”

2.2b (80.2-97.6) *gol sgribs sum cu rtsa gnyis kyi skabs* the “section on the 32 deviations and obscurations”

2.2c (97.6-100.6) *gzigs tshad kyi skabs* the “section on the measure of vision”

2.2d (100.6-109.4) *dem chen po bco brgyad kyi skabs* the “section on the 18 great containers”¹²

2.2e (109.4-113.6) *gzer bu nyi shu rtsa gcig gi skabs* the “section on the 21 nails”

2.2f (113.6-116.6) *tha snyad med pa'i skabs* the “section on the undesignated”

2.2g (116.6-120.5) *rtsol ba dang bral ba'i skabs* the “section on effortlessness”

¹⁰ My analysis of the main sections of this text, which is informed by the divisions listed in the topical outline (1), differs in part from that given in Martin et al. 2003, which was based primarily on the graphically marked divisions of the text.

¹¹ Most of these sections include several subsections, some of which have been entered into Martin et al. 2003 as separate chapters, because, once again, the graphic conventions used in the text are not quite clear in this respect. Here I include only the principal sections named in the *sa gcod* and ignore the subdivisions, whether marked or not.

¹² The word *dem*s appears to be unknown, but the text sometimes also uses *dem*, which occurs in the lexicons with two definitions: a type of vessel or container; or a small footbridge (*dem tse*). As the notion of containment well suits the context we find within the text, I have provisionally settled on “container” here.

2.2h (120.5-125.4) *bcos su med pa'i skabs* the "section on lack of artifice"

[2.3] (125.4-143.1) *mgo mjug tu khyab pa'i yan lag bcu* "ten topics that pervade [the Ninefold Cycle] from beginning to end"

[2.4] (143.1-157.4) *zur brdeg gi yan lag lnga* "five topics that strike at the edges"

[2.5] (157.4-164.3) *mde'u thung gi yan lag bzhi* "four brief pith declarations" Note that the topical outline concludes with this section.

[2.6] (164.3-192.4) *'di ni dkyus las gus* (sic! = *gud*) *du bkol ba | mde'u thung gi yan lag ces kyang bya | gal po blo brdeg ces kyang bya | the tshom yi ge yang khol zhes kyang bya'o | |*. This may have been composed subsequently as a sort of appendix to the preceding sections, as is suggested by the phrase *'di ni dkyus las gud du bkol ba* followed by a recapitulation of the titles of sections [2.4] and [2.5]. The final part of the title, the "rolling boil of texts on doubts" well accords with catechistic form of this section, on which see below.

Following this are two tantras elaborating the teaching of the "Ninefold Cycle":¹³

(3) *sdong po dgu 'dus lta ba'i rgyud chen* (1-100);¹⁴ and

(4) *gsas mkhar g.yung drung ye khyebs lta ba'i rgyud* (101-194).¹⁵

(5) is an enormous commentary, the "Great Explanatory Commentary on the Ninefold Cycle of Secrets, the Transmission of Mind," *sems lung gab pa dgu skor gyi 'grel pa rgya chen bshad pa* (195-517 [518 is blank]).¹⁶

(6) offers a closing collection of brief prayers and benedictions, *gshen rab rnam par rgyal ba'i yi bzhin nor bu'i smon lam sogs smon lam rnam gsum* (519-539).

These major divisions of the cycle, and in particular the primary text of the Ninefold Cycle itself, are not in all cases structured as single

¹³ The two tantras included here were in fact derived from the revelations of later *gter stons* and seem not to be integral to the original form of the Cycle.

¹⁴ The page numbers begin again at 1 at this point.

¹⁵ The Arabic page numbers here are defective; the texts run from 101 to 132 and then skips ahead to 193, though no content seems to be missing. The Tibetan foliation shows (4) to have 17 folios, with no folio numbers skipped.

¹⁶ Martin et al. 2003, p. 437, state that this commentary "properly belongs in the Tenjur." I believe, however, that because it was considered to have been included in Gshen chen Klu dga's original revelation of the Cycle it is treated as an integral part thereof and therefore does properly belong in the Kanjur.

works, but as rubrics each containing a number of titles.

In what follows, I wish to focus on three distinct rhetorical registers that are deployed in the elaboration of the primary text in this corpus, (2) containing the Ninefold Cycle.¹⁷ The three—metaphor, commentary, and catechism, as I characterize them—are not the only forms of expression found here, but I believe them to be crucial for our understanding of the growth of the fundamental revealed texts into an authoritative scriptural collection. In advancing my sketch of these registers as they are found in the Ninefold Cycle, I will pay some attention, too, to their Buddhist analogues, for elements of the interaction between Buddhism and Bon in the area of scriptural formation may be discerned clearly not just in relation to theme and content, but also in the use of particular genres and the elements of style associated with them.

Of the three rhetorical registers that I wish to emphasize here, metaphor is predominant in what is clearly the earliest layer of the Ninefold Cycle, namely, the first, and major, portion of its primary text ([2.1] in the outline above), in which it is precisely the deployment of nine metaphors that explains why the cycle is ninefold. The sections that follow, amplifying and complementing the nine metaphors, probably represent a somewhat later step in the evolution of these materials, which begins to integrate them into the scholastic frameworks that were coming to dominate Tibetan learned discourse in the eleventh century and thereafter. There is, indeed, a commentarial aspect to be found even in the earliest parts of the collection, written in what I am terming the “metaphorical register,” that consists primarily in discursive expansions of the metaphors themselves, sometimes engaging in folk etymology and similar wordplay, or in their elaboration in relations to lists of topics resembling those of the Abhidharma [2.2]. But this seems not yet controlled by methods of formalized analysis and argument that came to characterize later Tibetan scholasticism, including their presence in the developed commentaries belonging to the Ninefold Cycle itself, as represented first of all in the “Great Explanatory Commentary” (5). Finally, the third register, catechism, emerges in the later supplements to the primary work [2.3-2.6], the redaction of which perhaps closely followed the earlier parts of the text.

¹⁷ The tantras listed as (3) and (4), the “Great Explanatory Commentary” (5), and the prayers and benedictions of (6) will not be addressed in the present discussion. All of them, and above all (5) and (6), would have their parts to play in a more complete account of the system of the Ninefold Cycle.

Metaphor

Let us begin with metaphor. As mentioned above, the very designation of this corpus as the “Ninefold Cycle” refers to a series of nine metaphors, considered as nine titles of the primary text:

If [one enquires about] the enumeration of nine titles, [they are as follows]: (1) Enlightened Mind, the Ground of All, is the blue iron doorbolt; (2) Enlightened Mind, the Ground of All, is the magical pass-key that opens wide; (3) Enlightened Mind, the Ground of All, is the dewdrop of ambrosia; (4) Enlightened Mind, the Ground of All, is the golden fish of awareness, lying in the depths; (5) Enlightened Mind, the Ground of All, is great happiness; (6) Enlightened Mind, the Ground of All, is the equipoise of mind; (7) Enlightened Mind, the Ground of All, is the sunbeam of awareness; (8) Enlightened Mind, the Ground of All, is the unvanquished royal ensign; (9) Enlightened Mind, the Ground of All, is the seminal sphere of gnosis.¹⁸

The nine metaphors, once proclaimed, are then explored in detail in the main body of the text. The first three—the iron doorbolt, the magical pass key, and the dewdrop of ambrosia—are explained each in relation to 58 factors, reminiscent of the categories in the Buddhist Abhidharma.¹⁹ As the same factors are repeated for each of the three, let us consider here the treatment of just the first of the 58, *nyon mongs*, or *kleśa*, as a common pattern is maintained throughout the elaborations we find here. To understand the third in what follows, we must point out that ambrosia in Tibetan, *bdud rtsi*, used to translate Sanskrit *amṛta*, means literally “demon-spirits”:

¹⁸ 225.6-226.4: *mtshan gyi rnam grangs dgu na, kun gzhi byang chub kyi sems lcags kyi tha rams sngon po dang gcig. kun gzhi byang chub kyi sems 'phrul gyi lde mig yang 'byed dang gnyis. kun gzhi byang chub kyi sems bdud rtsi zil thigs dang gsum. kun gzhi byang chub kyi sems rig pa gser gyi nya mo bag la nyal ba dang bzhi. kun gzhi byang chub kyi sems bde ba chen po dang lnga. kun gzhi byang chub kyi sems mnyam pa nyid dang drug. kun gzhi byang chub kyi sems rig pa dmar thag dang bdun. kun gzhi byang chub kyi sems mi nub pa'i rgyal mtshan dang brgyad. kun gzhi byang chub kyi sems ye shes thig le dang dgu.*

¹⁹ It is important to recall that the transmission of the Abhidharma did survive in Tibet during the period following the collapse of the ruling dynasty after the mid ninth century; the celebrated Bon po convert to Buddhism, Bla chen Dgongs pa rab gsal (10th c.), for instance, is named as a recipient of Abhidharma instruction. That the Abhidharma, therefore, may have influenced the development of a sort of Tibetan scholasticism preceding the renewed *phyi dar* influx of state-of-the-art methods of debate and textual analysis from India cannot be ruled out. The continuing Vinaya transmission of the period, also associated with the Bla chen, no doubt also played a role in this regard.

- 1 The blue doorbolt of the *kleśas* is sealed fast, the magical key to open it lost.²⁰
2. It is the magical key of compassion that opens the blue doorbolt of the *kleśas*.²¹
3. The intellect [sullied by] *kleśas* is like a demon, to which one applies the compassionate mind, like spirits, and so this is called “demon-spirits.” In the primordially pure space that is the reality of Bon (*bon nyid*), the light of compassion [born from] the nature of mind emerges, and there appears the dew-like luster that is the equipoise of cause and effect. In the spatial expanse that is forever a capacious vessel, the watery dew of these demon-spirits [gathers in] drops, and hence this is called a “dew-drop.”²²

The first three metaphors, then, pertain respectively to aspects of our unrealized condition, its antidote, and the realization that emerges when the antidote is successfully applied. In the space of this brief essay, I will not explore the remaining six metaphors, those of the golden fish, etc., in detail, but these are related to the progression of practice, beginning with the emergence of a subtle disposition, like a fish beneath the water, that awakens to this teaching, and finally culminating in its fulfilment in the seminal sphere of gnosis.

Some remarks about the use of metaphor in the contemporaneous Buddhist literature of Tibet are perhaps in order. Metaphor and parable are, of course, very common rhetorical devices throughout the Buddhist sūtra literature. The *Tathāgatagarbhasūtra*, for instance, which was translated into Tibetan by the early ninth century, turns on a famous group of nine metaphors. There is indeed much that allies the “Ninefold Cycle” with *tathāgatagarbha*-thought, and we should recall, too, that *bodhicitta* itself was the subject of elaborate metaphorical description in some sūtras, notably the *Gaṇḍavyūha*. Moreover, in respect to two of the major Indian Buddhist śāstras studied in Tibet, the *Ratnagoṭravibhāga* and the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra*, we find that the points of departure for the canonical Mahāyāna commentaries in treating these works are, respectively, their use of the nine metaphors from the *Tathāgatagarbhasūtra* and of a series of twenty-two metaphors for

²⁰ 22.4-5: *nyon mongs tha rams sngon po dam | de 'byed 'phrul gyi lde mig stor |*

²¹ 27.3: *thugs rje 'phrul gyi lde mig gis | nyon mongs tha rams sngon po dbye |*

²² 31.6-32.2: *nyon mongs blo ni bdud 'dra la | thugs rje'i sems ni rtsi 'dra gtoṅ | bdud rtsi zhes kyang de la bya | bon nyid nam mkha' ye dag la | sems nyid thugs rje'i 'od byung bas | rgyu 'bras mnyam pa'i zil par chags | mkha' klong ye nas snod yangs su | bdud rtsi chu yi zil pa thigs | zil thig ces kyang de la bya |*

bodhicitta.²³

Nevertheless, it seems unlikely to me that these or similar materials played a direct role in the elaboration of the "Ninefold Cycle." There is little evidence in its diction that the authors were aware of the *tathāgatagarbha* literature, and the *Ratnagotravibhāga* in any case probably became available in Tibetan only after the cycle had been for the most part completed. Although the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra*, by contrast, certainly did have some influence in Tibetan Buddhist circles during the period of its compilation, *bodhicitta* is used here in a very different sense than it is in that work, for here *bodhicitta* is the ultimate principle disclosed in awakening, and its role as motive and orientation of the path is at best left in the background. In other words, here we are almost exclusively in the domain of what is sometimes termed "absolute *bodhicitta*" (*don dam byang chub sems*) over and against the "ostensive *bodhicitta*" (*kun rdzob byang chub sems*) that is a focus in much of the Mahāyāna path-literature.

Although some degree of influence from Indian sources should not be excluded, however, more pertinent in the present case is probably the use of metaphor in near contemporaneous Tibetan religious discourse. For several of the metaphors employed here appear to be distinctively Tibetan: the blue iron doorbolt, the golden fish lying beneath the surface of the waters, the magical passkey, and the sunbeam of awareness, for instance, are not prominent, if indeed they occur, in Indian sources. In the case of the "unvanquished royal ensign," the text is clearly aligned with the Rdzogs chen Sems phyogs materials of the same epoch, for this title also designates an important body of texts therein.²⁴

That we must look primarily to Tibetan developments is suggested, too, by the remarkable place of metaphor in the early literature of the Bka' gdams pa tradition that was forming during the same period as that with which we are concerned. The Indian works whose study was most encouraged by the early Bka' gdams pa – the so-called *Bka' gdams gzhung drug* – abound in metaphorical usage, and their impetus extended to the *blo sbyong* teachings of the first generations of the Bka' gdams pa masters themselves.²⁵ Among these latter, metaphors of Indian origin mixed easily with the proverbial sayings, *gtam dpe*, that seem forever to have been well-loved features of Tibetan rhetoric, as we know from their regular use in the *Old Tibetan Chronicle* of ca. 800. The finest example of this in the early Bka' gdams pa literature is no

²³ The bibliography on these topics has now grown quite large. For just the essentials, as concern us here, see Conze 1954 and Takasaki 1966.

²⁴ Wilkinson 2012.

²⁵ On the *Bka' gdams gzhung drug* and their impact, refer to Kapstein 2013.

doubt the *Dpe chos rin chen spungs pa*, the “Jewel Heap of Metaphor,” by the renowned teacher Po to ba Rin chen gsal (1027-1105), whose work is ordered according to the ascending stages of the Mahāyāna path and expounds its teachings through literally hundreds of metaphors presented in sequence. The root text, in fact, primarily consists in a very long list of metaphors, which, without the extensive commentaries that accompany it, would be all but impenetrable. *Bodhicitta* is the topic of over forty among the metaphors listed, but without any hint of “absolute *bodhicitta*” at all.²⁶

In short, it appears that whatever impetus may have been provided by the Indian and Tibetan literature of the Mahāyāna in respect to the practice of “teaching by metaphor,” this remains hidden in the background of our text. Though aspects of Buddhist categorial analysis seem indeed present, the metaphorical register deployed in our text accords with the demands of a distinctive tradition of teaching, shared by the Bon po and the Rnying ma pa alike, that was then emerging in Tibet.

Commentary

As is evident in the above, the commentarial voice is already present in the first part of the primary text [2.1], with its elaborations of 58 categories and etymological wordplay. The nine topics developed in section [2.2] continue to expand on topics introduced in the nine principal sections and in so doing serve as a further commentarial amplification of them. That this part of the text was meant to be taken in this way is underscored in the topical outline, which in fact interweaves these two parts of the text. For instance, following the introductory verses, which it treats as topic 1, the second topic is 2.1a “Blue Doorbolt,” but the third is not 2.1b “Magical Passkey,” which is instead the fourth, for the third is 2.2a the “section on the release of bonds,” whose thematic relation to the topic of the doorbolt is at once evident, although this is never made quite explicit. (In fact, not all the connections between [2.1] and [2.2] are quite so obvious as this one is, but nonetheless they mostly do come clear as one works one’s way through the text.)

The “section on the release of bonds,” moreover, is notably methodical in its exposition (reflecting a possible influence of the Abhidharma, again?). It is divided into a series of four subsections treating:

- how one is bound by the bonds (*bcings tshad gyis gang bcings pa*);
- the eight bonds by which one is bound in meditation (*sgom du song*)

²⁶ On Po to ba’s work, see Roesler 2011.

ba la bcings tshad brgyad kyis bcings pa);²⁷
 - how one is released through the 22 measures of release (*khrol tshad nyi shu rtsa gnyis gang gis khrol pa*);
 - the eight measures of release in the expanse during meditation (*sgom du song ba la klong du gyur ba'i khrol tshad brgyad*).

That there was an intention to attain a fair level of systematicity here, as we might expect in the development of a commentarial tradition, is apparent when we compare the first of the “eight bonds by which one is bound in meditation” with its counterpart in the list of “eight measures of release in the expanse”:

As failing to grasp the view of mind-as-such that is without a mote of conceptualization, is said to be a bond, this is called, in general, “bondage through conceptual grasping [that parts] from the view of Bon, [that of] Samantabhadra” (*sems nyid rnam par rtog pa rdul kyang med pa'i lta ba' ma zin te bcings zer na | spyi kun tu bzang po bon gyi lta ba las | rtog 'dzin gyis bcings zhes bya'o | | 73.4-5*).

When one engages in meditation that is free from drifting into marvelous fantasies and conceptual grasping, because the nonconceptual enlightened mind (*bodhicitta*) causes all objects to melt into the expanse, one is released (*cho 'phrul dang rtog 'dzin la g.yos pa med par bsgom du song na | rnam par mi rtog pa'i byang chub sems kyis don kun klong du gyur pas khrol ba'o | | 78.6-79.1*).

It will not be possible on this occasion to enter into an exploration of the “Great Expository Commentary” (5), in which the commentarial gesture of the Ninefold Cycle reaches fruition. But I believe that this extensive addition to the Cycle, elevating it as a discursive object believed worthy of sustained reflection and comment, and embodying a significance that may be approached and isolated by means of commentary, marks a distinct step in the process of the Cycle’s authentication. Its inclusion within the fundamental collection of the Ninefold Cycle, the portion that was later canonized within the Bon po Kanjur, therefore amounts to a remarkable coup, achieved in the first generations of its formation and quite possibly under the impetus of Gshen chen Klu dga’ himself.

²⁷ There is a serious scribal problem in this section of the text. The entire passage that includes these first two subsections was copied twice: 64.2-69.3 and 69.3-76.1. It appears that the second, slightly lengthier version corrects some errors in the first, but one nevertheless has the impression that what has occurred is in fact an extensive dittography.

Catechism

The exercise of catechism, as we find it exemplified in the Ninefold Cycle, merits consideration both in relation to its use within Tibetan Buddhist discourse and for its overall rhetorical impact. These two facets are by no means unrelated; a particular genre becomes historically favored within a given tradition in tandem with its perceived success as a rhetorical strategy. And, in connection with our present investigations, it is a strategy of particular interest precisely because, although catechism often adopts a quasi-dialogic form, it differs from dialogue proper in that, in relation to the question of authority, it is completely one-sided. A catechism never leaves us in doubt about who it is who has all the answers. In case one was wondering what permitted a collection of metaphors to become established as a sacred authority, we have here part of the answer: the tradition itself takes a step back from the fluidity of purely metaphorical expression and presents us with, as it were, a clear chain of command. Catechism-like passages occur throughout the later sections of the Ninefold Cycle [2.3-2.6], but above all in the final concluding section, which, as we have seen, was possibly a late addition. One of the authorities invoked in this case is the divinity Marvelous Gshen Illustrious ('Phrul gshen snang ldan), whose designation clearly aligns him with the Bon priesthood, the *gshen*, or *lha gshen*. In essence, the emerging Bon po order of the early second millennium was learning a trick we find in many other traditions that affirm an absolute that defies mundane dualities, namely, to place non-duality in the service of hierarchical order, paradoxical though this may sometimes seem:

To the father, the Marvelous Gshen Illustrious, the son, Deathless Crest, [requested] a quintessential point (*mdo*, *sūtra*) to resolve his doubts: "Oh Teacher! the enlightened mind, unprejudiced compassion, is [here] given the designation 'secret' (*gab pa*), but isn't there a contradiction in calling it hidden and concealed?"

The Marvelous Shen declared: "There is no contradiction. The example of the wish-granting gem [shows that the gem] must be wiped clean of dust, wrapped in silk, worshipped with the seven pure grains, attached to the pinnacle of the royal ensign and then given prayers, upon which all wishes are granted. But those who have not understood the mind are like those who obtain the wish-granting gem but hide it away in a foul container and then cast it into an unclean pit. By doing so, not even a single wished-for quality comes forth. Similarly, those who hear, reflect upon, and contemplate this profound transmission of the precepts of the enlightened

mind and thereby understand it, carry off the prize, as it were, in their hands. But those who do not do so obtain no prize at all. In one sense, in a cave in a cliff oriented to the north, the sun never shines; though the sun itself does not vary, it never shines on that cliff. Similarly, although the compassionate spirit [*thugs rje*, here equivalent to the enlightened mind] does not vary, for those who do not understand the mind and dwell in ignorance, it remains as colors shown to the blind. It remains secret for them because there is no basis for their understanding and comprehending it by methodically cutting through to what is self-concealed (*rang gsang*).²⁸

In speaking of enlightened mind as “secret,” therefore, one refers not to its proper nature, but to its circumstantial occlusion, when beings are blinded by ignorance. Deathless Crest then continues to raise doubts; the Marvelous Shen dispels each in turn.

What was the inspiration for presenting the teaching in the form of a catechistic dialogue? Catechism seems not very well developed as a literary device in Indian Buddhism. True, many sūtras and tantras take as their point of departure one or more questions posed by disciples, and some sūtras accentuate this by title, through their use of the term *paripṛcchā*, a “response to questions.” Nevertheless, the often-meandering course adopted in the Buddhist canonical literature, distinguished by frequently digressive monologues in response to brief queries, seems rarely to have the same pointed interest in rectifying doctrinal understanding by offering the “right answers” in neat formulas as we find characteristically in catechism. Leaving aside the Brahmanical traditions, where works like the *Praśnottarī* attributed to Śaṅkarācārya are manifestly catechistic, the closest precedents for these sections of the Ninefold Cycle appear to be found, once more, in

²⁸ 164.4-166.1: *yab 'phrul gshen snang ldan la, sras 'chi med gtsug phud kyis, the tshom gcod du byon pa'i mdo, ston pa lags byang chub kyi sems thugs rje bri bkol med pa la, mtshan gab par gsol nas gsang zhing sba bar gsungs pa mi 'gal lam? 'phrul gshen gyis bka' stsal ba, mi 'gal te dper na yi (sic!) bzhin gyi nor bu rin po che zhes bya ba yang, rdul (165) phyis bkru bshal dar gyi lding khug du bcug, nas dkar mo 'bru bdun gyis mchod, rgyal mtshan gyi rse mor btags nas smon lam btab na ci ltar 'dod pa bzhin 'byung ba yin te, sems ma rtogs pa la la zhig gis, yi bzhin gyi nor bu rnyed pa snod ngan pa'i nang du bcug nas, mi gtsang ba'i khung bur bskjur te btang ngo. de ltar btang na 'dod pa'i yon tan gcig kyang mi 'byung ste, dpe de dang 'dra bar na, byang chub sems man ngag zab mo'i lung 'di yang mnyan bsam bsgom pas rtogs par byas na, 'bras bu lag 'chang du thob pa yin pa las, de ltar ma byas na 'bras bu thob par kyang mi 'gyur ro. gnas (mchan: rnam pa) cig (mchan: tu na) brag phug kha byang du bltas pa la, nyi ma 'char ba'i dus med pa de, nyi ma la bri bkol med kyang, brag la mi 'char ba dang 'dra ste, thugs rje la bri bkol med kyang, sems ma rtogs pa gti mug gi rang bzhin du gnas pas, dmus long la mdog bstan pa ltar 'gyur te, rang gsang thabs kyi chod (166) chod nas rtogs shing go ba'i rgyu med pas kyang gab pa'o.*

early Rnying ma pa and Tibetan Chan materials.²⁹ The form is well known in other relatively early Bon po sources as well, notably in the *Gal mdo* collection, which, like the Ninefold Cycle, also demonstrates the growing impact of Buddhist scholastic practices on a contemplative tradition of the Great Perfection.³⁰

Conclusion

The passage traversed by our texts, from metaphor to commentary, in some respects mirrors a pattern well-known in Indian Buddhism, whereby the metaphorical/imagistic register of the sūtra-literature gives way to a more or less rigorous formalization of doctrinal content in the *śāstras*. The relationship between the *Tathāgatagarbhasūtra* and the *Ratnagotravibhāga*, to which I have referred earlier, is a case in point. It is striking, however, that in the Indian setting, as we have seen, more than rudimentary development of properly catechistic elaborations of doctrine seems to be wanting; the literary models for catechism, as this was elaborated in properly Tibetan traditions, both Buddhist and Bon, more likely were to be found in aspects of the Dunhuang Chan dossiers, and almost certainly became well known in tantric milieux through the *Vajrasattva Catechism*. With or without the emergence of catechism, however, the result is similar: a teaching that is in some sense fluid and poetic, escaping the rigid confines of propositional truth or falsehood, is objectified and codified, at least heuristically and tentatively, in clear-cut propositional terms. Whatever the utility of this reduction of the teaching to a body of established doctrine in terms of pedagogy, preservation of tradition, and such, it is clear that the process has much to do with the authority of the texts and teachings in question, and not merely edifying expedience. The primary text, in other words, becomes in some sense parasitic upon its commentaries for the authority it enjoys within the tradition. This is perhaps one of the reasons we see, in later Indian Buddhism, as well as other religions, and in both Buddhism and Bon in Tibet, for a turn to commentary as the major focus of study, the primary works often receding into the background, perhaps not ideologically, but in terms of their actual instructional roles. They become, as it were, caves facing north. That something of this sort occurred in the case of the “Ninefold Cycle of the Secrets of the Enlightened Mind” is in any case quite sure, for, indeed, the Cycle came to be studied and known for the most part not as much through the original sources that I have described briefly here,

²⁹ For an example of Tibetan Chan catechism, see van Schaik 2015, pp. 31-41; cf. Mala and Kimura 1988. An early and important Rnying ma pa work in this form, the *Vajrasattva Catechism* (*Rdo rje sems dpa'i zhu lan*) is studied in Takahashi 2001.

³⁰ Klein and Wangyal 2006.

but rather via their twelfth-century elaboration in the *Commentaries of the Four Clever Men* and the later works of Mnyam med Shes rab rgyal mtshan.

Of course, the commentaries in their turn derive their authority in part from the notion that that upon which they comment is authoritative, that is, as the Indian commentators like to say, they are not commenting upon treatises on “examining crow’s teeth” or on “seizing the nāga-king’s gem.” So, authority is constructed within a variety of the famed hermeneutic circle, wherein several types of text serve to buttress and authenticate one another within the framework of a given tradition, rather as in a closed aristocrat circle in which grand honors and titles are bestowed by revered figures on one another, while the benighted commonfolk outside gaze up in awe.

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**Studies in Btsun pa Ston gzhon's
Pramāṇavārttika Commentary of 1297 Part Two(a):**

'U yug pa Rigs pa'i seng ge (ca. 1195–after 1267)*

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Abstract

This essay is happily dedicated to Dan Martin whose scholarly originality, far-reaching and profound knowledge of all kinds of things Tibetan and then some, and boundless generosity have become a byword in Tibetan Studies. While *tshad ma* may not be high on the list of his scholarly priorities, I hope that he might find something in the pages that follow that causes a faint smile on his face.

The present essay is the first of two sections that comprises the second part of an open-ended series of essays devoted to Btsun pa Ston gzhon's study of the *Pramāṇavārttika*, Dharmakīrti's (ca. 550–610 or 600–660) seminal work on logic and epistemology.¹ This part, the second in a projected series, focuses on the life and works of 'U yug pa Rigs pa'i seng ge (13thc.), the first Tibetan commentator of the *Pramāṇavārttika*. Although Ston gzhon belonged to the same tradition, he so vehemently disagreed with him on so many issues that it has become quite important to situate 'U yug pa and his work in a proper context if we wish better to understand both Ston gzhon and 'U yug pa. Hence, in this first section, I outline what is known about 'U yug pa's life. The second section, which flows naturally from the first and is indeed presupposed by it on several counts, will discuss his writings on logic and epistemology. Parts One and Two of this series are designed to function as a prolegomenon to future studies of their different views on Dharmakīrti's work.

* For purposes of bibliographical economy, my references as a rule include only a single publication of a "work," or, better, an instantiation of a work, by a given author, even if different editions might be available. I do wish to stress that I have consulted other editions, xylographs, manuscripts, or typeset versions, whenever possible to ensure the greatest philological veracity. These are called upon when pertinent.

¹ First-rate introductions to Dharmakīrti's thought are V. Eltschinger, "*Dharmakīrti*", *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 64 (2010), 397-440, and T.J.F. Tillemans, "*Dharmakīrti*", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2021 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2021/entries/dharmakiirti/>>.

Introduction

In the first part of this open-ended series of studies that focuses on the thirteenth and early fourteenth century Tibetan scholar Btsun pa Ston gzhon and his commentary on Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇavārttika*, I attempted to situate him and his oeuvre in a historical context. Owing to the extreme paucity of information about him and his social and intellectual environment, my attempt admittedly resulted overall in a rather thin description.² The reason for this was that Ston gzhon seems to have been completely forgotten by the tradition and that, what is more, his work does not appear to have been read by anyone outside his immediate circle. The same would seem to hold for his earlier work on Dharmakīrti that he mentions but once in his commentary. Indeed, I have thus far not found either treatise referenced by any subsequent Tibetan intellectual. No printing blocks were ever carved for them so that they could never "fall out of print," and there was no public memory for them either. In Part One of this series, I also pointed out that, in addition to his two tracts on logic and epistemology (*tshad ma*), Ston gzhon had also apparently authored a study of the highly esoteric text of the *Lam 'bras rdo rje tshig rkang* that is attributed to [a] Virūpa. A manuscript of this work has now surfaced³ and it is hoped that it is but a question of time before it finds a publisher and that, if there were any other works by him, they will surface as well. In addition, a retyped 'edition' of a manuscript in which his name *appears* to occur was published in a collection of rare [and not so rare] Tibetan studies of Sanskrit and Tibetan grammar. The work in question is one in which the eight cases of Sanskrit nominal inflection are discussed.⁴ The slight colophon states that the original

² See my "Studies in Btsun pa Ston gzhon's *Pramāṇavārttika* Commentary of ?1297, Part One: Bibliographical and Biographical Preliminaries", *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines*, no. 30, Octobre 2014, pp. 111-198. It will be noted that I now omit the "?" before the date 1297, for I am increasingly convinced that the year that appears in the colophon of his work is indeed the equivalent of 1297.

³ The manuscript is listed in the *Si khron bod yig dpe rnying myur skyon 'tshol grig khang gi lo gsum gyi 'char gzhi'i dpe tshogs khag gi dkar chag*, Pod dang po [vol. 1], Chengdu, n.p., 2011, p. 14. For two surprisingly very different translations of one and the same text of the *Lam 'bras rdo rje tshig rkang*, see the references in my "Studies in Btsun pa Ston gzhon's *Pramāṇavārttika* Commentary of ?1297, Part One: Bibliographical and Biographical Preliminaries", p. 149, n. 89.

⁴ See the *Sgra rig pa'i gnas brgyad bstan pa, Brda sprod dpe rnying gces bsdu*, Sa skya'i dpe rnying bsdu sgrig khang, ed., Lhasa, Bod ljongs bod yig dpe rnying dpe skrun khang, 2015, pp. 37-56 – I should like to thank Ms. Li Xiaonan for drawing my attention to the volume in which this work was published. The colophon states that this little work is on either the eight cases (*gnas brgyad*) or ('am) the case-endings (*rnam par dbye ba*, **vibhakti*). P.C. Verhagen discussed this work and a copy of a different manuscript that I made available to him in his *A History of Sanskrit*

manuscript had belonged to a Dpyal Lo tsā ba—might he be Chos kyi bzang po (ca. 1170–1217/29)?—and that it was copied by Kāyastha Ston gzhon, where *kāyastha* has the sense of scribe or secretary.⁵ It is of course not certain that this Ston gzhon is to be identified with our Btsun pa Ston gzhon.

No doubt affiliated with the intellectual community of Sa skya monastery in a number of important ways, Ston gzhon was quite familiar with the interpretive contributions that had been made to Dharmakīrti's thought by the fourth patriarch of the Sa skya school, Sa skya Paṇḍita Kun dga' rgyal mtshan (1182–1251), and by at least one of his disciples, 'U yug pa Bsod nams seng ge, alias Rigs pa'i seng ge, reputedly, as stated, the very first Tibetan intellectual to comment on the *Pramāṇavārttika* [hereafter PV, but only when actual passages are cited] in its entirety. We saw in Part One that Ston gzhon took 'U yug pa in the crosshairs on an unusually large number of occasions. Clearly, he did not see eye to eye with his senior's interpretations of Dharmakīrti. This being the case, it will be useful to provide some pertinent details concerning 'U yug pa's life and his contributions to *tshad ma*, and this is precisely what I seek to accomplish in the first two sections of the present essay. In Part Three of these *Studies* that is now close to completion, I first shed light on the sources that Ston gzhon has overtly used as well as on his method of exegesis and contrast these with the sources and method 'U yug pa employed in his work on the *Pramāṇavārttika*. This is then followed by a discussion of Ston gzhon's explicit use of Sa skya Paṇḍita's *Tshad ma rigs pa'i gter* [hereafter *Rigs gter*]⁶ in his commentary which is something that is absent in 'U yug pa's work.

A note: As a rule, I translate only the Tibetan text even when a Sanskrit original is available. To be sure, I do try to keep an eye on whatever Sanskrit text lies below the Tibetan translation when pertinent. And I will, when necessary, draw attention to important differences that might contribute to a certain thinker having taken a path that would

Grammatical Literature in Tibet, Volume Two, Assimilation into Indigenous Scholarship, Leiden, Brill, 2001, pp. 15-18.

⁵ For this term, see M. Visvanathan, "From the *Lekhaka* to the *Kāyastha*: Scribes in Early Historic Court and Society (200BCE-200CE)", *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* [Platinum Jubilee] 75, 2014, pp. 34-70.

⁶ I use "*Rigs gter*" for the text comprising both the basic verse-text (*rtsa ba*) and what is ostensibly the auto-commentary (*rang gi 'grel pa*). When greater precision is called for, I write "*Rigs gter*-verse text" and "*Rigs gter*-auto-commentary" or something to this effect. For issues relating to the *Rigs gter*'s transmission, see my "On the Transmission of the Verse-text of Sa skya Paṇḍita's *Tshad ma rigs pa'i gter* and the *Rang 'grel*-Auto-commentary", *Hualin International Journal of Buddhist Studies* 3.1, 2020, pp. 126-169.

not be immediately explicable by just looking at the Sanskrit text. But I do not consider this essay, or the ones that follow in this series, to be a contribution to Indian Buddhist *pramāṇavāda per se*. Rather, it falls within the purview of the Tibetan reception of Indian Buddhist thought, especially that of Dignāga (6th c.), Dharmakīrti, and their Indic commentators. I am of course aware of the hermeneutic problems that are germane to this enterprise, problems that bear great similarity to, say, the philologico-philosophical problems that resulted in the Arabic reception of Greek [especially Aristotelian] thought and thence in the Latin reception of early Arabic translations of Aristotle and later, from the middle of the 12th to the middle of the 13th century, the Latin reception of newly discovered Greek texts of Aristotle. And I would be foolish to deny their importance. But I do think it would be premature, since the fields of especially Dharmakīrti and Tibetan Studies are, despite advances over the last fifty years or so, still in their infancy as compared to the study of medieval European logic and epistemology, and basic semasiological studies of key-terms in Sanskrit and Tibetan have yet to be made.

1. *Apropos of the Life of 'U yug pa Rigs pa'i seng ge*

We can call ourselves fortunate that, even if it is not as rewarding as one might have liked, the available literature is comparatively more informative about 'U yug pa than it is about the lives of most of Sa skya Paṇḍita's other students, with the obvious exception of his nephew 'Phags pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan (1235–1280). Firstly, located in Nyang yul, the toponym 'U yug refers to a valley that is located slightly west of the ferry crossing across the Gtsang po river when one travels from Lhasa to Shigatse along the "northern route." There are various spellings for the name of this valley: U yug, O yug, and 'O yug being the most common alternatives. Some texts indiscriminately use more than one of these to denote one and the same place. Thus 'U yug pa means "the person from or associated with 'U yug." The first half of the thirteenth century knows of at least four names in religion that are all prefixed by "'U yug pa," aside from the title of "All-knowing" (*thams cad mkhyen pa*), which we encounter on occasion; these are:

- a. Rig[s] pa'i seng ge
- b. Bsod noms seng ge
- c. Dpal gyi rgyal mtshan
- d. Kun dga' bsod noms

For my present purposes, I have assumed that at least the individual named "Bsod noms seng ge" and "Rigs pa'i seng ge" is one and the same

person.⁷ None of the texts used for this paper contradict this assumption, and some even implicitly support this equation since they attribute the earliest Tibetan *Pramāṇavārttika* commentary to either one. Nonetheless, this otherwise pleasant situation is offset by several problems of verification and authentication, for, as will be seen, several statements made about his activities in the literature often conflict with each other. It appears that the main reason for this is that there is a deficit of has been transmitted about him. For one, we do not even know the date of his birth or the year when he passed away. And Gser mdog Paṅ chen Shākya mchog ldan (1428–1507) suggests that some unidentified Tibetans had even considered 'U yug pa to have been one of Phya pa Chos kyi seng ge's (1109–1169) students while still young, a hypothesis that was understandably guided by the fact that the last portion of his name was "seng ge," as well as by the circumstance that they confused him with his namesake who hailed from 'Bru zha [Gilgit], who was in fact one of Phya pa's "eight great lion" (*seng chen brgyad*) disciples.⁸ In any event, he rightly discredits this assumption on the grounds of chronological impossibility (*dus mi 'grig*). Most sources affirm that Gnyal zhig 'Jam pa'i rdo rje was his only major teacher other than Sa skya Paṅḍita⁹ and, in this connection, they speak

⁷ The issue was also recently addressed in G.yu gra Bsod nams tshe ring, "'U yug pa Rig pa'i seng ge dang 'U yug pa Bsod nams seng ge gnyis skyes bu gcig yin min sogs kyi skor", *Bod ljongs zhib 'jug* 1, 2015, pp. 6-13, who has come to a similar conclusion. We find this equivalence already expressly stated in Mus srab pa Byams pa rdo rje rgyal mtshan's (1424–1498) marvelous 1475 study of Sa skya monastery, its ruling families, institutions, and religious treasures that includes a chronology of Yuan and Ming emperors, the *Sa skya mkhon (sic) gyi gdungs (sic) rab (sic) rin po che'i 'phreng ba*, incomplete ninety-folio *dbu can* manuscript, Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project, Reel L 591 / 4, fol. 66b [= In *Sa skya rdzong lugs kyi chos skor phyogs bsodus*, vol. 19, Rdzong pa'i dpe rnying 'tshol bsdu khang, ed., Lhasa, Bod ljongs bod yig dpe rnying dpe skrun khang, 2017, p. 95].

⁸ See his *Rngog lo tstsha ba chen pos bstan pa ji ltar bskyangs pa'i tshul mdo tsam du bya ba ngo mtshar gtam gyi rol mo*, *Collected Works*, vol. 16, Thimphu, Kunzang Tobgey, 1975, p. 451. This was recently repeated by Dung dkar Blo bzang 'phrin las in *Tshal pa Kun dga' rdo rje's (1309–1364) Deb ther dmar po*, Dung dkar Blo bzang 'phrin las, ed., Beijing, Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1981, p. 381, n. 359.

⁹ Frequent variants of "Gnyal" are the homophonous "Mnyal" and "Snyal"; we even on occasion find it completely disfigured as "Dmyag"! "Gnyal zhig" is of course a contraction of "Gnyal pa Zhig po", where "Gnyal" is the name of a valley in Lho brag of Lho kha prefecture which nowadays has Rtse dang [or: Rtse thang, Rtse thang] as its administrative center. For some notes on this locality, see T.V. Wylie, *The Geography of Tibet according to the 'Dzam gling rgyas bshad*, Serie Orientale Roma, vol. XXV, Rome, Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1962, p. 174, n. 546. The term *zhig po* can denote two things, a person accomplished in spiritual practice and one who is sexually promiscuous. It is no accident that Gser mdog Paṅ chen prefixes his name by "lord of spiritual realisation" (*grub pa'i dbang phyug*), so that we can be sure that he used *zhig po* in the former sense; see his *Tshad ma rigs pa'i gter gyi dgongs rgyan lung dang rigs pa'i 'khor los lugs ngan pham byed* [or: *Rtog*

of him as having been one of Gnyal zhig's "nine sons" (*bu dgu*). Tshal pa, so far known as the first to have listed these nine, divided these into three groups of three, whereby 'U yug pa belonged to the intermediate grouping.¹⁰ Now Gnyal zhig—his actual name (*mtshan dngos*), so Dpa' bo II informs us, was not 'Jam pa'i rdo rje but Shes rab blo gros¹¹—was one of the more famous scholars of his day. A student of Zhang E pa and Dan 'bag pa Smra ba'i seng ge, one of Phya pa's *seng chen brgyad* disciples, he spent some nine years in meditative retreat at the ancient royal monastery of 'On cang do,¹² after which he stayed for probably the remainder of his life at Gsang phu. Evidently not a very prolific author, he is best remembered for his influential commentary on the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra*, usually referred to as the *Gnyal tik*, a study which subsequent exegetes apparently could ill afford to ignore, since it is cited in many later studies of this Indian treatise.¹³ As a matter of

ge'i 'khrul 'joms chen mo], *Collected Works*, vol. 9, Thimphu, Kunzang Tobgey, 1975, p. 387. Dpa' bo II Gtsug lag phreng ba (1504–1566) even writes that "[He is] known to have attained spiritual realisation" (*grub pa thob par grags pa*); see his *Chos 'byung mkhas pa dga' ston*, Stod cha [vol. 1], Rdo rje rgyal po, ed., Beijing, Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1986, p. 731

¹⁰ See Tshal pa Kun dga' rdo rje, *Deb ther dmar po*, 69. Gser mdog Pañ chen, *Rngog lo tshsha ba chen pos bstan pa ji ltar bskyangs pa'i tshul mdo tsam du bya ba ngo mtshar gtam gyi rol mo*, p. 452, appears to indicate there existed another listing of Gnyal zhig's disciples under the heading of his "nine daughters" (*bu mo dgu*), where *mo* is probably a scribal error.

¹¹ *Chos 'byung mkhas pa dga' ston*, Stod cha [vol. 1], p. 731. It would seem that the name "'Jam pa'i rdo rje" [*Mañjuvāra] was a name that he was given during his initiations into the mysteries of the transmission of practices focusing on the *Guhyasamājatantra* that are associated with the so-called *Jñāna tradition that was begun by Buddhaśrījñāna (ca. 800).

¹² In connection with his ascent to the abbatial throne of Gsang phu [sne'u thog], not far from Lhasa, Tshal pa writes that he had been invited to Gsang phu from 'On cang do; see *Deb ther dmar po*, p. 71, which has 'U shang rdor... [read: *rdo nas...*]. I also read 'On cang do instead of its many variants, since it is this spelling that is authenticated in the ancient inscriptions at Zhwa temple and Mtshur phu monastery; see, for example, Li Fang Kuei and W.S. Coblin, *A Study of the Old Tibetan Inscriptions*, Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, Special Publications, no. 91, Taipei, Academia Sinica, 1987, index, p. 455. For further references, see Wylie, *The Geography of Tibet according to the 'Dzam gling rgyas bshad*, p. 147. 'On cang do was also the see of Zhang E pa.

¹³ The catalogue of titles, taken from books of Bkra shis 'khyil monastery's library holdings, the *Bod kyi bstan bcos khag cig gi mtshan byang*, Grags pa, ed., Xining, Mtsho sngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1985, p. 596, gives its title as *Mngon rtogs rgyan gyi 'grel pa theg pa chen po la 'jug pa*. This is also the title of the manuscript of this work that was published in the *Bka' gdams gsung 'bum phyogs bsgrigs*, vol. 12, Karma bde legs et al., eds., Chengdu, Si khron dpe skrun tshogs pa / Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2006; see G. Sparham, "A Note on Gnyal zhig 'Jam pa'i rdo rje, the Author of a Handwritten *Sher phyin* Commentary from about 1200", *The Tibet Journal* XXI (1996), pp. 19–29. This work is mentioned in one of Bu ston Rin chen grub's (1290–1364) biographies to the effect that he had made a close study of

course, this work is considered to fall in the illustrious line of such earlier Tibetan commentaries as those by Rngog Lo tsā ba Blo ldan shes rab (ca.1059–ca.1109), 'Bre Shes rab 'bar, and Ar Byang chub ye shes. The only other treatise of his was apparently a work on *tshad ma*, which, however, is only sporadically alluded to in the literature on the subject. No indigenous bibliographies list it, and it appears to have fallen into oblivion by the end of the thirteenth century at the latest. It was much less influential than his study of the *Abhisamayālamkāra*. It is of course not surprising that his disciples would have taught this work which, Bsam gtan bzang po, in his biography of Dar ma rgyal mtshan (1227–1305), alias Bcom ldan Rig[s] pa'i ral gri, characterizes as a *Tshad ma bsdu pa*.¹⁴ The disciple in question who taught Dar ma rgyal mtshan this work was a certain Skyogs Dar ma grags. Be this as it may, several *Pramāṇavinścaya* exegeses of his disciples [and their students], the commentarial literature on Sa skya Paṇḍita's *Rigs gter* and 'U yug pa's own study of the *Pramāṇavārttika* have preserved several paraphrases from what appears to have been some work on *tshad ma* by him. Indeed, the second of these unambiguously suggests that Sa skya Paṇḍita had argued against several of his propositions.¹⁵ These references certainly merit detailed study on some future occasion. When he was probably well advanced in years, Gnyal zhig became abbot of Gsang phu's Upper College, an event that possibly took place around the year 1199, and he occupied its abbatial throne for probably some twenty-eight years, meaning that he may very well have passed away in *circa* 1227.

it under his master Bsod nams mgon po (ca.1235–ca.1315), alias Tshad ma'i skyes bu, who himself belonged to Gnyal zhig's line of transmission that issued from Khro phu monastery; see D. Seyfort Ruegg, tr. *The Life of Bu ston Rin po che*, Serie Orientale Roma, vol. XXIV, Rome, Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1966, p. 94. Bu ston's record of his studies details the *Abhisamayālamkāra* lineages of transmission he had obtained from Bsod nams mgon po but, oddly, no mention is made of Gnyal zhig's work; see his *Bla ma dam pa rnams kyis rjes su bzung ba'i tshul bka' drin rjes su dran par byed pa*, *Collected Works*, Part 26, L. Chandra, ed. New Delhi, International Academy of Indian Culture, 1971, pp. 32 ff. However, on p. 86 of this work, we learn that he received teachings on Gnyal zhig's commentary from Slob dpon Bkra shis bzang po of Zhwa lu monastery.

¹⁴ See his *Bcom ldan rigs pa'i ral gri'i rnam thar dad pa'i ljon shing*, *Collected Works* [of Dar ma rgyal mtshan], vol. 1, Khams sprul Bsod nams don grub, ed., Lhasa, ?, 2006, p. 46.

¹⁵ See Gser mdog Paṇ chen, *Tshad ma rigs pa'i gter gyi dgongs rgyan lung dang rigs pa'i 'khor los lugs ngan pham byed*, pp. 277, 361 and 387, and his *Tshad ma rigs pa'i gter gyi dgongs rgyan lung dang rigs pa'i 'khor los lugs ngan pham byed*, *Collected Works*, vol. 10, Thimphu, Kunzang Tobgey, 1975, p. 458. See also Glo bo Mkhan chen Bsod nams lhun grub (1456–1532), *Sde bdun mdo dang bcas pa'i dgongs 'grel tshad ma rig[s] pa'i gter gyi 'grel pa'i rnam bshad rig[s] lam gsal ba'i nyi ma* [Sde dge xylograph], *Thub pa'i dgongs pa rab gsal dang tshad ma rig[s] gter skor*, vol. 2, Dehra Dun, Pal Evam Chodan Ngorpa Centre, 1985, pp. 66, 227 and 285. Particulars concerning Glo bo Mkhan chen's work are detailed in Part Two(b).

Gser mdog Paṅ chen reports that as a young budding scholar, Sa skya Paṅḍita had met Mnyal zhig [= Gnyal zhig] at Gsang phu and that, while he had lectured on the *Pramāṇaviniścaya* there, he had been unable to find a suitable master to continue his studies. He then left for Nyang stod, near Shigatse where he found what he was looking for; Gser mdog Paṅ chen states¹⁶:

*mnyal zhig gi dus su / sa skya paṅḍi ta jo sras gzhon nu mar
gyur pas / gsang phur byon nas rnam nges gsungs shing /
bshad tshar mdzad / bla mar 'os pa shig 'dug kyang bsten
dka' ba cig 'dug gsung / mnyal zhig la ma gsan / nyang stod
du brtsegs dbang phyug seng ge dang / rkyang dur ba gzhon
nu seng ge la / dbu tshad dang / bsdus pa gsan /*

Sa skya Paṅḍita, a young noble man at the time of Mnyal zhig's tenure as abbot, lectured on the *Pramāṇaviniścaya* after he had gone to Gsang phu and explained it in its entirety. It is said that, although Mnyal zhig was suited to be a master, he found some difficulty in attending on him. He did not study with Mnyal zhig. Instead, he studied *madhyamaka*, *tshad ma* and the *Summary* (*bsdus pa*)¹⁷ under Brtsegs Dbang phyug seng ge and Rkyang dur [= Mtshur ston Gzhon nu seng ge] in Nyang stod.

A similar passage is also found by way of interlinear note in Mang thos Klu sgrub rgya mtsho's (1523–1596) work on Buddhist chronology, but in spite of its initial similarity it ends of a slight different note, namely, that Gnyal zhig was pained (*thugs bze reg*) at the fact that young Sa skya Paṅḍita had not requested a spiritual connection (*chos 'brel ma zhus*) with him.¹⁸ Now it has been shown that Sa skya Paṅḍita had studied under Mtshur ston from about 1201 to 1203,¹⁹ so that these

¹⁶ Gser mdog Paṅ chen, *Rngog lo tstsha ba chen pos bstan pa ji ltar bskyangs pa'i tshul mdo tsam du bya ba ngo mtshar gtam gyi rol mo*, p. 453.

¹⁷ The "Summary" primarily refers to a genre of exegeses of the *Pramāṇaviniścaya* by members of the Gsang phu tradition and its affiliates.

¹⁸ *Bstan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed / Tha snyad rig gnas lnga'i byung tshul*, Nor brang O rgyan, ed., *Gangs can rig mdzod*, vol. 4, Lhasa, Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, 1987, pp. 125-126: *gnyal zhig gi dus sa paṅ jo sras gzhon nur gyur pas gsang phur byon / rnam nges la bshad pa mdzad / gnyal zhig de bla mar 'os pa shig 'dug na'ang [126] bsten dka' ba cig 'dug pas chos 'brel ma zhus gsungs pa yang snang bas thugs bze reg yod par snang* / The text in bold is not found in Gser mdog Paṅ chen's text.

¹⁹ D.P. Jackson, *The Entrance Gate for the Wise (Section III). Sa skya Paṅḍita on Indian and Tibetan Traditions of Pramāṇa and Philosophical Debate*, vol. I, Wiener Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde, Heft 17,1, Wien, Arbeitskreis für Tibetische

years coincide very well with Gnyal zhig's probable tenure as abbot of Gsang phu's Upper College. Thus, because of his own inclinations or behavior, or because of Gnyal zhig's misgivings, or because of some difficulties with Gnyal zhig's attendants, young Sa skya Paṇḍita was prevented from duplicating his uncle Master (*slob dpon*) Bsod nams rtse mo's (1142–1182) lengthy stay as a student at this monastery some four decades earlier.

As far as 'U yug pa's connection with Sa skya Paṇḍita is concerned, virtually all our sources simply have it that he had not initially come to Sa skya for the purpose of studying with him. While this is precisely what happened, the implied date for this would fall not earlier than the second decade of the thirteenth century. Dpa' bo II and A mes zhabs Ngag dbang kun dga' bsod nams (1597–1659) provide interesting accounts of what had motivated him to come to Sa skya in the first place, and what happened to him after his arrival.²⁰ Both observe that 'U yug pa had come to Sa skya in order to debate with Sa skya Paṇḍita, with A mes zhabs providing details of a kind that deserve our attention in as much as they reflect the perceptions of one of the Sa skya pa's most influential and important historians. His account is set against Gnyal zhig's alleged misgivings with Sa skya Paṇḍita's growing eminence and prestige. We can choose to agree or disagree with this assessment, but what lends some authenticity to this account of 'U yug pa's "conversion" is that A mes zhabs' collected writings contains an interesting piece on the circumstances surrounding their meeting that resulted in 'U yug pa throwing his lot in with Sa skya Paṇḍita and that he had thus turned his back on Gnyal zhig. Namely, it appears that a certain Mang thos bshes gnyen had asked A mes zhabs whether his source for this account in his *Sa skya gdung rabs chen mo* was based on an oral tradition or whether there existed some sort of documentation for it.²¹ It turned out that it was based on a written source. We thus learn that A mes zhabs' information came from a short document that he had retrieved from one of Sa skya monastery's libraries. It appears that the meeting between Sa skya Paṇḍita and 'U yug pa had been witnessed by a Bsod nams dpal, who

und Buddhistische Studien Universität Wien, 1987, pp. 105-107. Hugon came to the same conclusion in her consummate edition of Mtshur ston's work on *tshad ma* in her *Mtshur ston Gzhon nu seng ge, Tshad ma shes rab sgron ma*, Wiener Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde, Heft 60, Wien, Arbeitskreis für Tibetische und Buddhistische Studien Universität Wien, 2004, p. xii.

²⁰ See, respectively, the *Chos 'byung mkhas pa'i dga' ston*, Stod cha [vol. 1], pp. 731-732, and the *Sa skya gdung rabs chen mo*, Rdo rje rgyal po, ed., Beijing, Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1986, p. 115.

²¹ For what follows, see the *Jo gdan bla ma mang thos bshes gnyen pas dris lan yid kyi mun sel*, *Collected Works*, vol. 40, Si khron bod yig dpe rnying myur skyob 'tshol sgrig khang, ed., Lhasa, Bod ljongs dpe rnying dpe skrun khang, 2012, pp. 35-38.

apparently had taken notes of this meeting that ultimately resulted in 'U yug pa's "conversion," and that it was these notes that had formed the basis for A mes zhabs' narrative of the episode in question. In fact, he reproduced this narrative *in toto* in his formal reply to Mang thos bshes gnyen and then must have decided to include it in his oeuvre, no doubt for purposes of preservation. After all, one of the signature features of A mes zhabs' oeuvre as a whole is that it contains more than a handful of reproductions of entire texts that were not originally written by him. Presumably because of their relative rarity, his aim was to save them for posterity. To add insult to injury, 'U yug pa was probably not the only one of Gnyal zhig's "nine sons" to have shifted his social and intellectual allegiance to Sa skya. If Bo dong Rin po che who figures among these nine were identical to Bo dong Rin po che Brtson 'grus rdo rje (1200–1260), who with regularity figures in the listings of Sa skya Paṇḍita's students, then we must infer that he, too, left Gnyal zhig to join Sa skya Paṇḍita. And there seems to have been others as well.

When his younger brother, the layman Zangs tsha ba Bsod nams rgyal mtshan (b. 1184) died in 1239, Sa skya Paṇḍita suddenly found himself accountable for not only the spiritual affairs of Sa skya and her daughter institutions such as they were, but also for her secular and administrative business interests. Lest one forgets, Sa skya was "owned and operated" by one family and none of the other members of his immediate family were old enough to be able to assist him in shouldering these responsibilities. He thus stood alone. To add to his problems, in 1240, the year following Zangs tsha ba's passing, a Mongol army had invaded Central Tibet under the leadership of perhaps two commanders that Prince Köten had dispatched from Liangzhou [= present day Wuwei], in Gansu province.²² No doubt the prince had done so with the support and approval of his father Öködei Qan (r.1229–1241). For reasons that still need to be investigated in detail, once conquered, the governance of Central Tibet on behalf of Öködei's court first fell to the aged Spyan snga Grags pa 'byung gnas (1175–1255), 'Bri gung monastery's abbot and its Sgom pa-

²² For this event, see generally my "The Tibetan Expression 'bod wooden door' (*bod shing sgo*) and its probable Mongol Antecedent", *Xiyu lishi yuyan yanjiu jikan / Historical and Philological Studies of China's Western Regions* [Wang Yao Festschrift, Shen Weirong, ed.] 3, 2010, pp. 89-134. S.G. Haw's recent "The Mongol conquest of Tibet," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 24, 2014, pp. 37-49, is unfortunately misleading in several crucial instances that are largely owed to the sources he was able to access; much more rewarding is Ch.P. Atwood, "The First Mongol Contacts with the Tibetans", *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines* 31 [= *Papers for E. Sperling*, R. Vitali, ed.], 2015, pp. 21-45.

administrator Shākya rin chen.²³ The governing institutions were thus headquartered in 'Bri gung. In 1234, the Spyan snga had assumed the abbacy of 'Bri gung monastery, the mother monastery of the rather well to do 'Bri gung sect of the Bka' brgyud school of Tibetan Buddhism, then already a doctrinal if not an economic rival of the Sa skya school. And he remained her abbot until his passing. The fact that the Spyan snga's government was headquartered at 'Bri gung no doubt led to the circumstance that 'Bri gung's estates formed part of Öködei's imperial appanage. We should of course not underestimate the attraction held by the possibility of accumulating wealth and important relations of patronage that came with these imperial connections. Upon Öködei's death, the appanage of 'Bri gung was taken over by his eldest son Güyüg Qan (r. 1246–1248) after which his nephew Mönge Qaγan (r. 1251–1259) took over. The fact that 'Bri gung and her estates, and not any other Tibetan monastic establishment, enjoyed very close connections with the supreme rulers of the Mongols is clearly indicative of its highly privileged status during these years. This status lasted until 1260. The political fortunes of 'Bri gung ended abruptly with the election of Qubilai (r. 1260–1294) as Qaγan in 1260, at which time the governance of Central Tibet shifted from 'Bri gung to Sa skya monastery owing in large part to the connections Sa skya Paṇḍita's nephew 'Phags pa enjoyed with Qubilai and Qubilai's family. It is crucially important to bear in mind the politics of the time. Prince Köten, Öködei's son and Güyüg's younger brother, had sent a mission to Sa skya that apparently first went through the offices of 'Bri gung. The Spyan snga appears to have directed the mission to Sa skya Paṇḍita, for its purpose was evidently to invite the Sa skya pa hierarch to Köten's court in Liangzhou. In fact, Sa skya and her estates formed Köten's appanage.²⁴ On one hand, the

²³ For the Spyan snga and Rdo rje grags (1210–1278), his successor at 'Bri gung, and their era, see 'Bri gung Dkon mchog rgya mtsho, *'Bri gung chos 'byung*, Beijing, Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2004, pp. 351–358, 358–363. On the 'Bri gung administrators, see E. Sperling, "Some Notes on the Early 'Bri-gung Sgom-pa", *Silver on Lapis. Tibetan Literary Culture and History*, Chr.I. Beckwith, ed., Bloomington, The Tibet Society, 1987, pp. 33–53. Dpa' bo II, *Chos 'byung mkhas pa' dga' ston*, Smad cha [vol. 2], p. 894, notes the role played by the 'Bri gung myriarch (*khri dpon*) Rdo rje dpal, who lobbied against Qubilai's candidacy for Qaγan and fatefully supported Ariq Böke (d. 1266), Qubilai's younger brother. There is no doubt that if this "myriarch" were not the Sgom pa at the time, then he was at least his representative at the council to elect the successor of Mönge Qaγan.

²⁴ The undated letter by the Spyan snga to Sa skya Paṇḍita in *Chos kyi rje spyan snga rin po ches chos rje sa skya pan chen la phul ba'i chab shog*, *Collected Works*, H.H. Drikung Kyabgon Chetsang, ed., Delhi, Drikung Kagyu Publications, 2002, pp. 60–64, is of undoubted relevance here, even if he only speaks to Sa skya Paṇḍita of an unnamed Mongol Qan. This letter and the one that Sa skya Paṇḍita sent to the Bka' gdams pa scholar Nam mkha' 'bum should be studied in tandem. For the latter,

prince's invitation must have come at a fairly inopportune time for Sa skya Paṇḍita, while on the other, the potential for deepening the patronage relationship with the Mongol prince was fraught with opportunities for Sa skya's economic advancement that would be difficult to pass up. A refusal to respond to this invitation would therefore have been politically as well as economically the wrong thing to do. At the same time, it could also serve as a counterweight to the rival 'Bri gung pa sect. And we need to recall how critical he had been of a number of their key doctrinal entities in his famous *Sdom gsum rab tu dbye ba*, *Analysis of the Three Vows*,²⁵ and the critical response they had provoked from the Spyān snga as laid out in his *Grub mtha' chen mo*.²⁶ Much earlier, a younger Sa skya Paṇḍita had invited the Spyān snga to attend the funerary proceedings of his uncle and teacher Rje btsun Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1147–1216), so that their relations must have been quite good at that time.²⁷ It is not at all clear whether these had suffered because of the *Sdom gsum rab tu dbye ba*.

Before his departure Sa skya Paṇḍita was faced with setting up a governing body for the monastery that would protect its interests,

see his all too brief replies to queries two and three in his *Bka' gdams pa nam mkha' 'bum gyi zhus lan*, *Collected Writings (Gsung 'bum dpe sdur ma)*, vol. 1, Mes po'i shul bzahag, vol. 15, Dpal brtsegs bod yig dpe rnying zhib 'jug khang, ed., Beijing, Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2007, pp. 507-508. At the end of this little work, he writes that he wanted to meet with him, but was prevented to do so by his escort, the imperial envoys (*gser yig pa rnams*).

²⁵ He *may* have composed this work in the early 1230s, as was suggested by Sangs rgyas phun tshogs (1649–1705), who is cited in Jackson, *The Entrance Gate for the Wise (Section III)*. *Sa skya Paṇḍita on Indian and Tibetan Traditions of Pramaṇa and Philosophical Debate*, vol. I, pp. 64, 66. I have seen its "Mongol xylograph" (*hor par ma*) from printing blocks that were carved in the last decades of the thirteenth century in the Yuan-Mongol capital of Dadu, but I was unable to procure a photocopy.

²⁶ See the quotations of the latter in 'Brug chen Sangs rgyas rdo rje's (1569–1645) 1640 study of the three important pilgrimage sites Gangs can / Kailāsa, Lake Anavatapta, and Tsa ri, in *Gnas gsum gsal byed nor bu'i me long*, *Collected Works*, vol. V, Kathmandu, Acarya Shedup Tenzin, 1995, pp. 491-493, 505-506, and my forthcoming "U rgyan pa Rin chen dpal (1230–1309), Part Three: Once more on his *Garland of Tales about Rivers**".

²⁷ The text of the invitation is reproduced in *Sa skya paṇḍi tas / spyān snga rin po cher phul ba'i spyān 'dren zhu yig*, *Rlāngs kyi po ti bse ru rgyas pa*, Chab spel Tshē brtan phun tshogs and Nor brang O rgyan, eds., Gangs can rig mdzod 1 Lhasa, Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, 1986, pp. 440-442. It is also contained in Spyān snga Grags pa 'byung gnas, *Gsung 'thor bu phyogs bsdu*, 'Bri gung bka' brgyud chos mdzod chen mo, vol. 34, A mgon Rin po che, ed., Lhasa, np, 2004, pp. 401-404. For cordial and not so cordial relations between Sa skya and Phag mo gru Gdan sa mthil, see Jampa Samten and Dan Martin, "Letters to the Khans: Six Epistles of Tugdogpa Addressed to the Mongol Rulers Hulegu, Khubilai, as well as to the Tibetan Lama Pagpa", *Revue d'Études Tibétaines* 31 [= *Papers for Elliot Sperling*, R. Vitali, ed.] (2015), p. 318, n. 80.

which also required that this body was empowered to make administrative decisions in his absence. According to Stag tshang pa Dpal 'byor bzang po's 1434 compilation of a number of important documents, the result was that he established a triumvirate consisting of 'U yug pa, Shar pa Shes rab 'byung gnas (1198–1261), and Shākya bzang po (?–1275).²⁸ The newly acquired positions of 'U yug pa and Shar pa are described as "chiefs of religion" (*chos dpon*), whereas Shākya bzang po "shouldered the task of lustrous councilor of the see as a whole" (*gdan sa spyi'i kha ta brjid khur*). A mes zhabs, however, records two different triumvirates with 'U yug pa figuring in both.²⁹ In the first, 'U yug pa and Zhang btsun Mdo sde dpal, another one of Sa skya Paṇḍita's disciples, were given the responsibility for academic and spiritual studies at Sa skya; the title given to 'U yug pa was that of "assembly head for textual-philosophical studies" (*mtshan nyid tshogs dpon*) and the one given to Zhang btsun was that of "assembly head for tantric studies" (*sngags kyi tshogs dpon*). On the other hand, Shākya bzang po was appointed "general-chief chancellor" (*spyi dpon nye gnas*). In the fifth and last chapter of his work, A mes zhabs attempts to determine the exact sequence of Sa skya's abbatial succession on the basis of Ngor chen Dkon mchog lhun grub's (1497–1557) undated, versified history of this succession, the *Gdung rabs ya rabs kha rgyan*, a work of which his treatise is in fact a commentary. He cites an unidentified note (*mchan bu*) contained in his manuscript of Ngor chen's *gdung rabs* wherein is implied that it was not Shar pa Shes rab 'byung gnas who was part of the triumvirate, but rather Shar pa Ye shes 'byung gnas.³⁰ He passes over the different Shar pa-s in silence which, perhaps, points to the circumstance that he took both names to refer to one and the same individual, thereby assuming that his readers would do the same. Contrary to the similar passages in the chronicles of Tshal pa, Yar lung Jo bo Shākya rin chen sde, and Stag tshang pa,³¹ the latter is the earliest text in which, in a different context, for which see below, this variant of "Shar pa Yes [Ye shes] 'byung[gnas]" is

²⁸ See his *Rgya bod yig tshang chen mo*, Dung dkar Blo bzang 'phrin las, ed., Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1985, p. 323.

²⁹ A mes zhabs, *Sa skya gdung rabs chen mo*, pp. 145, 541.

³⁰ *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs ya rabs kyi kha rgyan*, *E vam bka' 'bum*, vol. 17/20, Mes po'i shul bzhag, vol. 148, Dpal brtsegs bod yig dpe rnying zhib 'jug khang, ed., Beijing, Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2010, p. 13. Truth be told, this gloss does not expressly state that Shar pa Sher [= Shes rab] 'byung [gnas] and 'U yug pa had held important posts, only that they did not pay their respects to Shākya bzang po. This latter piece of information is already met with in Tshal pa, *Deb ther dmar po*, p. 53.

³¹ Tshal pa, *Deb ther dmar po*, p. 53, Yar lung jo bo chos 'byung, Dbyangs can, ed., Chengdu, Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1988, p. 174, and Stag tshang pa, *Rgya bod yig tshang chen mo*, 357.

attested. The only Ye shes 'byung gnas belonging to this period that could fit the bill for this confusion is Master Ye shes 'byung gnas (1238–1273/74), the son of Zangs tsha ba and his fifth wife, Rdo rje gdan, herself an attendant (*nye gnas ma*) of Lady Lha gcig mdzes ma, a daughter of the Gung thang ruler who was Zangs tsha ba's fourth wife.³² It is reported that he had studied with the brothers Shar pa Shes rab 'byung gnas (1198–1262) and Shar pa Rdo rje 'od zer, and A mes zhabs observes that Grand-governor Shākya bzang po had built for him the Shar gling which was to be used as his residence. Since his main teachers had been the Shar pa brothers and because he lived for some time in Shar gling.

The fact that Sa skya Paṇḍita had chosen 'U yug pa as a member of the triumvirate clearly indicates either that he thought rather highly of him, and this may have something to do with the possibility that he had established an academy for the study of texts at Sa skya, or that, owing to the seniority he enjoyed among his disciples, he really did not have any choice. The appointment was probably not induced because of 'U yug pa's authorship of his two main *tshad ma* studies which, inasmuch as they contain propositions that on occasion appear to go counter to what his master had written, were likely completed, if not composed, after his departure in 1244. There can be little doubt, however, that 'U yug pa had already established himself in Sa skya's Western Residence (*nub pa bla brang*) prior to Sa skya Paṇḍita's voyage, and that he evidently enjoyed excellent relations with his teacher's younger brother. In fact, Tshal pa is our earliest source to note that³³:

de la slob dpon zangs tshas bzhi thog phog

The four-story building was presented to him [= 'U yug pa] by Master Zangs tsha ba.

However, Yar lung Jo bo [a] and Stag tshang pa [b] have preserved a different reading³⁴:

[a] *de la zangs tsha' i^a bla brang nyis thog phog*
 [b] *de la slob dpon zangs tshas / nyis thog phog*

³² A mes zhabs, *Sa skya gdung rabs chen mo*, p. 235; see also K.-H. Everding, *Das Königreich Mang yul Gung thang. Königtum und Herrschaftsgewalt im Tibet des 13.-17. Jahrhunderts, Teil 2: Studien zur Geschichte des Reiches*, Bonn, VGH Wissenschaftsverlag GmbH, 2000, pp. 371 ff.

³³ Tshal pa, *Deb ther dmar po*, p. 52. We find this in all available editions of the text.

³⁴ Yar lung Jo bo, *Yar lung jo bo chos 'byung*, p. 173, and Stag tshang pa, *Rgya bod yig tshang*, pp. 353-354.

The two-story building was presented to him [= 'U yug pa] by Master Zangs tsha ba.

What could be the origin for this variant reading? A mes zhabs records that the Lha khang, the Rin chen sgang as well as the Dus mchod Residences began to be constructed in 1268, just prior to 'Phags pa's departure for Qubilai's court; however, these were not completed until Kun dga' bzang po (?–1281) served as Grand-governor (*dpon chen*) starting in 1275 or 1276.³⁵ Of some importance here is that the famous Four-Story Residence (*bzhi thog bla brang*)—the name of this structure is doubtlessly the origin for our variant reading—is absent from this enumeration. And there is a good reason for this, for Tshal pa has it that³⁶:

*bla brang shar pa sher 'byung la gtaḍ nas bzhi thog btab /
rgyal bu go dan byang ngos pas gdan 'dren byung zhing /*

Sa skya Paṇḍita handed the Eastern Residence to Shar pa Shes rab 'byung gnas and built the Four-Story Residence. He was then invited by Prince Köten of Byang ngos [= Ganzhou].

This means that the Four-Story Residence was in existence before his departure in 1244 and that it was hardly Zangs tsha ba's to give. In addition, some Sa skya school texts, I think correctly, equate the Western Residence with the Two-Story Residence.

The Western Residence had thus been set up by Zangs tsha ba so that at least a portion of it must have existed before 1239. The earliest available account of the history of its leadership is given by Tshal pa as follows³⁷:

*de'i gcung po gcig gi sras bla ma kun smon yang chos rje pa
la thug de'i gcung po kun dga' mdzes sku mched gnyis /
phyis dpon chen kun dga' bzang po'i phyogs su chad nas /
bla ma 'phags pa dang thugs ma mthun pas / se chen gyi lung
gis spyugs nas / gcen po sman rtse'i yul du 'das / de'i dbon
po yon tan dpal / phyis dbon po sangs rgyas dpal zer ba gcig
gis gdan sa byas ['dug] /*

Bla ma Kun dga' smon lam, the son of his 'U yug pa's

³⁵ Yar lung Jo bo, *Yar lung jo bo chos 'byung*, p. 175, and A mes zhabs, *Sa skya gdung rabs chen mo*, p. 212.

³⁶ Tshal pa, *Deb ther dmar po*, p. 47.

³⁷ Tshal pa, *Deb ther dmar po*, p. 52.

younger brother, too, met the Chos rje pa [= Dharmasvāmin (= Sa skya Paṇḍita)]. Since both brothers, he and Kun dga' mdzes, his younger brother, had subsequently sided with Grand-governor Kun dga' bzang po, they were on disagreeable terms with Bla ma 'Phags pa, and hence were banished from the see by order of Se chen [< Mon. sečen (= Qubilai)]; the elder brother died in the land of Sman rtse [< Chin. *manzi* (= south of the Yangze river, in Hangzhou?)]. His nephew was Yon tan dpal. Subsequently, the see of the Western Residence seems to have been occupied by the elder's other nephew who is said to have been called Sangs rgyas dpal.

Of interest in this very meager passage is the allusion of the Western Residence's complicity with Grand-governor Kun dga' bzang po's sustained resistance to 'Phags pa and thus as the center of a rebellion against the Mongol occupation that ultimately led to Kun dga' bzang po's gruesome execution.³⁸

At first glance, the sources invariably mention the strained relations that existed between 'U yug pa and Shar pa Shes rab 'byung gnas, on one hand, and Shākya bzang po on the other. Sa skya Paṇḍita's decision to establish a triumvirate to administer the see's politico-economic and spiritual interests must undoubtedly be interpreted in part as a move calculated to prevent the consolidation of too much influence in the hands of a single individual. Sa skya monastery had yet to become the large and powerful institution it was to become after it had been the object of sustained Mongol imperial patronage during Qubilai's reign. Despite his earlier statement that Sa skya Paṇḍita had given Shar pa the Eastern Residence, Tshal pa—he is followed in this by all our sources—nonetheless makes it clear that Shar pa had purchased the Eastern Residence from Shākya bzang po whom, significantly, he already styles Grand-governor. This leads us to suspect that Shākya bzang po had usurped this one of Sa skya's oldest and most prestigious structures and that Shar pa was forced to buy it

³⁸ This episode is detailed in my "U rgyan pa Rin chen dpal (1230–1309) Part Two: For Emperor Qubilai? His *Garland of Tales about Rivers*", *The Relationship between Religion and State (chos srid zung 'brel) in Traditional Tibet*, ed. Ch. Cüppers (Lumbini: Lumbini International Research Institute 2004), 307 ff.; see also B.W.L. Li, *A Critical Study of the 13th Century Tibetan Monk U rgyan pa Rin chen dpal based on his biographies*, DPhil dissertation, Oxford, University of Oxford, pp. 265 ff., and R. Vitali, "Grub chen U rgyan pa and the Mongols in China", *Studies on the History and Literature of Tibet and the Himalaya*, R. Vitali, ed., Kathmandu, Vajra Publications, 2012, pp. 38-39, 41-42.

back from him. If this turns out to be the correct scenario, then it must assuredly postdate Sa skya Paṇḍita's death, which occurred on 28 November, 1251. Furthermore, given that the above dates for Shar pa's life are historically valid, we must also conclude that the series of events in question must have occurred prior to 1261 and this unfortunately leads us yet to another problem, namely, the date of Shākya bzang po's assumption of the title *dpon chen*, "Grand-governor."

We hear nothing of 'U yug pa until we arrive at the year 1253, the ox-year in which, according to Go rams pa Bsod nams seng ge (1429–1489) and Mus srad pa, so far our first sources to say so expressly, he allegedly breathed his last, and it is this dating of his passing, as later repeated by A mes zhabs, that was uncritically accepted in the secondary literature by, for example, D. Schuh in his deep study of Tibetan diplomatic documents from the Yuan period and by Chen Chingying in his remarkable and detailed biography of 'Phags pa.³⁹ To my knowledge, this notion has remained unchallenged until now. But it appears to have been mistaken. As far as the secondary literature is concerned, the main culprit who needs to be blamed for this may have been A mes zhabs who, in his narrative of 'Phags pa's ordination as a full-fledged monk, unwittingly allowed to enter in his discussion a thoroughly misleading chronology for the events that preceded it.⁴⁰ The scenario he proposes is the following: In 1255, 'Phags pa consecrated the enshrined relics (*sku 'bum*)⁴¹ of Sa skya Paṇḍita in

³⁹ See, respectively, *Sdom pa gsum gyi rab tu dbye ba'i rnam bshad rgyal ba'i gsung rab kyi dgongs pa gsal ba* [Sde dge xylograph], *Sa skya pa'i bka' 'bum*, vol. 14, Bsod nams rgya mtsho, ed., Tokyo, The Toyo Bunko, 1969, p. 124/4 [Ta, 12b], and *Sa skya mkhon (sic) gyi gdungs (sic) rab rin po che'i 'phreng ba*, fol. 27b [=Rdzong pa'i dpe rmying 'tshol bsdu khang, ed., p. 39]; see also A mes zhabs, *Sa skya gdung rabs chen mo*, 168, and D. Schuh, *Erlasse und Sendschreiben mongolischer Herrscher für tibetische Geistliche*, Monumenta Tibetica Historica, Abteilung III: Diplomata et Epistolae, St. Augustin, VGH Wissenschaftsverlag, 1977, p. 98, and Chen Qingying, *Yuanchao dishi basiba*, Beijing, Zhongguo zangxue chubanshe, 1992, p. 122 [= *Yon rgyal rabs kyi ti shri 'gro mgon 'phags pa'i mdzad rnam*, tr. Skal bzang dar rgyas Beijing, Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2006, pp. 107-108].

⁴⁰ The available secondary literature does not mention Go rams pa or Mus srad pa in this connection and has relied on A mes zhabs' account.

⁴¹ As is attested in A mes zhabs, *Sa skya gdung rabs chen mo*, p. 168, and Brag dgon Zhabs drung Dkon mchog bstan pa rab rgyas (1801–after 1867) study of Buddhism in Amdo, *Mdo smad chos 'byung*, Smon lam rgya mtsho, ed., Lanzhou Kan su'u mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1982, p. 144, 'Phags pa consecrated Sa skya Paṇḍita's reliquary (*sku 'bum*) in this monastery and not his uncle's collected works (*gsung 'bum*), as was apparently wrongly stated by the manuscript of A mes zhabs' text that Schuh used in his *Erlasse und Sendschreiben mongolischer Herrscher für tibetische Geistliche*, p. 98. For Sprul pa'i sde, see the valuable monograph of Fan Baoliang and Shui Tianchang, *Kuodan yu Saban liangzhou huitan*, Lanzhou, Gansu minzu chubanshe, 1997 [= Hphan ba'o leng and Hre then khrang, *Byang ngos sprul pa'i*

Byang ngos which, here, can only indicate Liangzhou/Wuwei and, more specifically, the temple of Sprul pa'i sde, located about twenty kilometers (*le bar bzhi bcu*) north of this town. He then went to Mdo Khams, intending to request his ordination as a monk from 'U yug pa. Having heard from a traveler that 'U yug pa had died in 1253, he returned to Liangzhou and, after going to China proper with Qubilai, he ended up receiving his ordination from Grags pa seng ge of Snye thang monastery on May 22, 1255 in The le, a mysterious place that was located on the shore of a river at the Sino-Mongol frontier. As far as I know, no one has thus far been able to identify this place or this river. Immediately after having said this much, A mes zhabs reproduces a letter that 'Phags pa had allegedly sent to Grags pa seng ge in which he had requested him to act as abbot for his intended ordination. The letter is dated February 14, 1252 (*chu pho byi ba'i dpyid zla 'bring po'i tshes gsum*) and was apparently dispatched from the monastery of lustrous Ling chu (< Ch. Liangzhou) rtsir khab.⁴² At this juncture, Szerb observed that the addressee of this letter in A mes zhabs' narrative does not tally with the version of the letter that is given in the 1736 Sde dge xylograph of 'Phags pa's collected works. The title of the letter reads there: *Slob dpon bsod nams seng ge'i spyan sngar phrin du zhu ba*, "Letter of Request to Master Bsod nams seng ge"⁴³

sder gros su btap pa mkhas pa mgu ba'i gnam, Rgya Ye chos 'phel, tr., Lanzhou, Kan su'u mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2009] and Brag dkar Zhabs drung, *Mdo smad chos 'byung*, pp. 143ff. A general study of the region is Chu skyes Dge 'dun bsam gtan, *Ling ju'i yul du nyar ba'i bod yig gna' dpe zhib 'jug*, Beijing, Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2006. The golden ossuary (*gser gdung*) of Sa skya Paṇḍita that was housed in Sa skya's Lha khang chen mo apparently contained only a minor portion of the relics he left behind. The majority were deposited at Sprul pa'i sde and a portion of it has survived the 'cultural revolution'.

⁴² *Sa skya gdung rabs chen mo*, pp. 168-172; see also Schuh, *Erlasse und Sendschreiben mongolischer Herrscher für tibetische Geistliche*, p. 101. The manuscript Schuh used is in several places different from the text in the Sde dge xylograph of 'Phags pa's collected writings. For Ling chu rtsir khab, see K.R. Schaeffer and L.W.J. van der Kuijp, *An Early Tibetan Survey of Buddhist Literature: The Bstan pa rgyas pa rgyan gyi nyi 'od of Bcom ldan ral gri*, Harvard Oriental Series, vol. 64, Cambridge, The Department of Sanskrit and Indian Studies, 2009, pp. 26-27, n. 54.

⁴³ See his "Glosses on the Oeuvre of Bla-ma 'Phags pa: II. Some Notes on the Events of the Years 1251-1254", *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* XXXIV 1980, p. 269, n. 21. For the Tibetan text, see now also the edition in 'Phags pa's *Collected Writings* (*Gsung 'bum dpe sdur ma*), vol. 4, Mes po'i shul bzahag, vol. 22, Dpal brtsegs bod yig dpe mnying zhib 'jug khang, ed., Beijing, Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2007, pp. 562-566. The title is the same in the witnesses of the text used for this edition, but the Zhwa lu monastery manuscript seems to have added that it was a "miscellaneous oral text of the precious 'Phags pa" (*'phags pa rin po che'i gsung sgras thor bu*). Finally, the text quoted in the *Sa skya gdung rabs chen mo* [see n. 38] shows several interesting variants. Another manuscript of the *Sa skya gdung rabs chen mo* also reads the addressee as Grags pa seng ge; see the text in the *Bod kyi lo rgyus rnam thar phyogs sgrigs*, vol. 64 [Ngu], Dpal brtsegs bod

and *not* something like **Slob dpon grags pa seng ge'i spyan sngar phrin du zhu ba*. Hence, the addressee was *not* Grags pa seng ge but Bsod nams seng ge! As we have seen above, 'U yug pa's original name in religion had been Bsod nams seng ge, which, Mus srād pa alleged, Sa skya Paṇḍita had at one point turned into Rigs pa'i seng ge, meaning "lion of reasoning." The impassioned letter in question bespeaks of 'Phags pa's deep desire as a novice-tantric practitioner (*shā kya'i dge tshul rdo rje 'dzin pa*) to receive ordination as a monk while bemoaning the recent passing of his uncle Sa skya Paṇḍita and how the latter had spoken so highly of 'U yug pa's intellectual accomplishments. As for the letter's context or purpose (*skabs don*), we read the following⁴⁴:

*da res rgyal pos thugs la btags nas bande dang / bon po la
sogs pa gnam mchod pa rnams la dmag khral med par sdod /
de'i mgo gnyer dang bande thams cad sa skya pa shes su chug
gsungs pa'i lung byon / de'i 'ja' sa bskyal nas mi rnams brtsi
ba dang / slob dpon spyan 'dren pa'i don la rdo rje 'brug
mngag pa yin / 'dir chos kyi rje bzhugs pa'i dus na'ang rgyal
bu'i : don du [Zhwa lu ms.: drung du yang yang] 'byon
dgos pa dang / 'phral gyi bsod nams kyis g.yengs pas / nged
rang gi yid tshims pa'i chos 'chad nyan gyi long ma byung
bas / khyed las chos kyi lung mang du len pa dang / bsnyen
rdzogs kyi mkhan slob ya gcig zhu ba'i don du spyan 'dren
pa'i gros byas pas / chos rje pas kyang 'thad gsungs nas / bka'
yig kyang bskur ba yin / nged kyis kyang zhu yig nan bskur
ba yin pa la 'byon du ma nyan / chos rje pa bzhugs pa'i tshe
byon na chos rje pa yang mnyes par yong bar 'dug gal te sku
gshogs na'ang khyed bzhugs na blo bde bsams nas spyan
drangs pa lags /^a ...
deng sang dbus gtsang khams gsum na slob dpon bsod nams
seng ge las mkhas btsun 'dzom pa med / khos^b shānti'i dod pa
yin gsungs /...*

^a The text has here a so-called *rin spungs shad* graph and not a simple *shad* " / ".

^b Read: *kho*.

yig dpe mnying zhīb 'jug khang, ed., Xining, Mtsho sngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2012, p. 204. And the text of his work in the recently published edition of his collected writings also has Grags pa seng ge as the addressee; see *Collected Works*, vol. 4, Si khron bod yig dpe mnying myur skyob 'tshol sgrig khang, ed., Lhasa, Bod ljongs dpe mnying dpe skrun khang, 2012, p. 137.

⁴⁴ The text of the manuscript of A mes zhabs' work that Schuh used, and thus his translation, as well as the text of its Sde dge xylograph, are on occasion rather misleading.

Now having been taken to heart by the emperor [= Mōngke], an order (*lung*) came which stated "The Buddhist clergy and the worshippers of Heaven (*gnam* = Mon. *tengri*) such as the Bon po, etc. will live without military tax (*dmaḡ khral*). All their administrative heads and clergy should be subordinated to the Sa skya pa." After his decree ('*ja' sa* < Mon. *jasag*) was promulgated, Rdo rje 'brug was dispatched for the purpose of doing a population count⁴⁵ and inviting the Master [= Bsod nams seng ge]. Because also when the Chos kyi rje [= Sa skya Paṇḍita] lived here, he needed to appear over and over again before the prince and was distracted by superficial merit, because there was little time for studying religion that satisfied my mind, and because I discussed with him to receive many reading authorizations of religious texts from you and to invite a pair, an initiating abbot and master, for the purpose of requesting a full ordination, the Chos kyi rje had said all right and on that basis he also sent you a letter (*bka' yig*). I also sent you an earnest letter of request (*zhu yig*), but you were unable to come. Had you come when the Chos rje pa [= Sa skya Paṇḍita] was alive, the Chos rje pa, too, would have been delighted; he said that even if he had passed away, if you are alive, I should invite you with a wholesome and good intention... He had said: "At present, there is in Dbus, Gtsang and Khams no one other than Master Bsod nams seng ge in whom scholarship and virtue converge. He is the equivalent of Shānti [= Ratnākaraśānti (ca. 1000)]."

Rdo rje 'brug, whom 'Phags pa mentioned as one to be dispatched to the Tibetan area, also occurs in a letter in which 'Phags pa allegedly notified Sa skya's clergy and Sa skya Paṇḍita's disciples in Central Tibet of his uncle's passing.⁴⁶ This is a little curious because it informs

⁴⁵ The term is *mi rnams brtsi ba*, that is, to do a census. It is not known if this census were ever conducted. However, the first fairly well documented census in Tibet is the one that took place in 1268 and it was dealt with in L. Petech, "The Mongol Census in Tibet", *Tibetan Studies in Honour of Hugh Richardson*, M. Aris and Aung San Suu Kyi, eds., Warminster, Aris and Phillips, 1980, pp. 233-238 [this article was reprinted in *The Tibetan History Reader*, G. Tuttle and K. Schaeffer, eds., New York, Columbia University Press, 2013, pp. 233-240; see also L. Petech, *Central Tibet and the Mongols. The Yüan-Sa-skya Period of Tibetan History*, Serie Orientale Roma, vol. LXV, Rome Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1990, pp. 46-48.

⁴⁶ See his *Chos rje pa bde bar gshegs dus dbus gtsang gi dge ba'i bshes gnyen la spring ba*, *Collected Writings (Gsung 'bum dpe sdur ma)*, vol. 4, Mes po'i shul bzhag, vol. 22,

the addressees that the master had passed away three months earlier on the fourteenth day of the first fortnight of the *smal po* [(= *mgo*, **mārgaṣīrśa*] month of the pig-year, that is, on November 11, 1251.⁴⁷ For this particular letter is dated two days after the one he had written to Bsod nams seng ge, that is, it was apparently written on February 16, 1252 (*chu pho byi ba'i dpyid zla 'bring po'i tshes lnga*). It was also sent from the monastery of lustrous Ling chu rtsir khab and it states in part that⁴⁸:

...*bdag nyid chen po sku gshegs pa'i rjes su yang / chos rje nyid kyi thugs rje'i mthus nged thams cad khams bde bar yod / rgyal bu mong go ta yang byon / thugs la 'dogs par yod / mong go gan rgyal por mnga' gsol phyogs thams cad du 'ja' sa bzang po bsgrags / rgyal khams thams cad kyang shin tu bde / bye brag tu bande la dmag khral sho dang / gan mdzod du nor 'dab mi dgos / bande'i khang pa dang lha khang du gser yig pa 'bab ra med / 'u lag sbyin ra med / so so'i chos lugs bzhin du gnam mchod / nged thams cad la smon lam thob / bande thams cad kyi ji ltar bya ba'i mgo lung de / sa skya pa shes su chug bya ba'i 'ja' sa bzang po gnang / de phyogs mtha' dag tu bsgrags pa dang / gser yig pa rnam kyi bod so so'i mi rtsi ba dang / rgyal khams gtan la 'bebs pa'i ched du / khyed kyi bande zhig kyang thong zer nas / de'i don du dge bshes rdo rje 'brug dang / dge bshes sum bu dpon g.yog rnam btang ba yin /*

Even in the wake of the great being's [= Sa skya Paṇḍita's] passing, we are all fine through the force of the compassion of the Chos rje himself. Prince Mongeta (< Möngetei?) also arrived.⁴⁹ He took us to heart. Mönge Qan was enthroned⁵⁰ and an authentic decree was proclaimed in all directions. The entire empire is quite fine. In particular, it is not necessary for the clergy to deliver ('*dab*) military tax (*dmag khral*), duty (*sho* < Ch.

Dpal brtsegs bod yig dpe nying zhib 'jug khang, ed., Beijing, Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2007, p. 445. To be noted is that the Zhwa lu monastery manuscript of 'Phags pa's oeuvre titles this work *Dbus gtsang du gser yig pa brdzangs pa'i yi ge*, *Document of Having Dispatched an Envoy to Dbus and Gtsang*.

⁴⁷ *Chos rje pa bde bar gshegs dus dbus gtsang gi dge ba'i bshes gnyen la spring ba*, p. 444.

⁴⁸ J. Szerb, "Glosses on the Oeuvre of Bla-ma 'Phags-pa: I. On the Activity of Sa-skya Paṇḍita", *Tibetan Studies in honour of Hugh Richardson*, ed. M. Aris and Aung San Suu Kyi, eds., Warminster, Aris & Phillips, 1980, pp. 291-292.

⁴⁹ For him, see Szerb, "Glosses on the Oeuvre of Bla-ma 'Phags pa: II. Some Notes on the Events of the Years 1251-1254", p. 274, n. 56.

⁵⁰ Mönge was enthroned on July 1, 1251.

shui)⁵¹ and wealth (*nor*) to the treasury (*gan mdzod*). There shall be no resting place for the imperial messengers (*gser yig pa*) in the homes and temples of the clergy. There shall be no giving of corvée labor (*'u lag* < Mon. *ulaqa*). Heaven is worshipped according to various religions. All of us received prayers. The directive's heading (*mgo lung*) of how all individuals of the cloth should act was given an authentic decree of the need for being subordinate to the Sa skya pa.⁵² It is proclaimed everywhere and having said that for the purpose of doing a census of the various Tibetan areas ...⁵³ and stabilizing the region, your men of the cloth need to be dispatched, Dge bshes Rdo rje 'brug and Dge bshes Sum bu, officials and servants, were dispatched for that purpose.

It will be noticed that the diction of these letters shows specific influences from contemporary Sino-Mongol diplomatic documents; these are, for example, expressions like *dmag khral*, *shes su chug*, *'ja' sa*, *sho*, *gser yig pa*, *'u lag*, etc. However, there are important indications that neither letter may be as authentic as Schuh, Szerb, Chen and others have taken them to be. For one, neither title occurs in such pre-Sde dge xylograph listings of the titles of 'Phags pa's oeuvre as the ones we find in the records of education of Ngor chen Kun dga' bzang po (1382–1456), Ngor chen Dkon mchog lhun grub (1497–1557), and Dalai Lama V Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617–1682).⁵⁴ On the other hand, a work with the title *Chos kyi rje sa skya paṇḍita bde ba can du gshegs*

⁵¹ My translation is uncertain.

⁵² In a different context and mistaking Möngke for Qubilai, A mes zhabs' messy narrative in his *Sa skya gdung rabs chen mo*, p. 160, has a very similar sentence: *gzhan yang rgyal po'i lung gis / nyi ma nub kyi bande rnams ji ltar bya ba'i mgo lung sa skya pa shes su chug bya ba'i lung gnang /*. The translation of this sentence is incomplete in the Chinese translation of A mes zhabs' work, for which see *Sajia shixi shi*, tr. Chen Qingying et al., tr., Beijing, Zhongguo zangxue chubanshe, 2004, p. 124. My rendition is also uncertain.

⁵³ The genitive *kyi* and thus the phrase *gser yig pa rnams kyi* cause me problems that I am unable to solve.

⁵⁴ See, respectively, *Thob yig rgya mtsho*, *E vam bka' 'bum*, vol. 1/20, Mes po'i shul bzhag, vol. 132, Dpal brtsegs bod yig dpe rnying zhib 'jug khang, ed., Beijing, Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2010, pp. 225-234, *Chos kyi rje dpal ldan bla ma dam pa rnams las dam pa'i chos thos pa'i tshul gsal bar bshad pa'i yi ge thub bstan rgyas pa'i nyin byed*, *E vam bka' 'bum*, vol. 16/20, Mes po'i shul bzhag, vol. 147, Dpal brtsegs bod yig dpe rnying zhib 'jug khang, ed., Beijing, Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2010, pp. 336-343, and *Gsan yig gangga'i chu rgyun*, *Collected Works*, vol. 2, Ser gtsug nang bstan dpe rnying 'tshol bsdu phyogs sgrig khang, ed., Beijing, Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2009, pp. 94-106.

pa'i tshe dbus gtsang gi grwa pa rnam la gnang ba'i bka' shog is found in the records of Rdzong pa [or: Gong dkar ba] Kun dga' rnam rgyal (1432–1496) and Gong dkar ba 'Phrin las rgya mtsho (17thc.).⁵⁵ But it is not obvious that these are two titles for one and the same work. A mes zhabs presents a category of his own since, while the title catalogues of 'Phags pa's oeuvre that are contained in his works do not appear to mention these,⁵⁶ it would seem that the title of a work for which he received the "reading authorization" (*lung*) from the Mkhan chen, namely, '*U yug pa'i zhu yig, A Request of 'U yug pa*, might be identified as the *Slob dpon bsod nams seng ge'i spyang sngar phrin du zhu ba*.⁵⁷ It probably should, since, after all, he does cite an entire version of it in his chronicle of the Sa skya school. Finally, it is hardly surprising that both are listed in Zhu chen Tshul khriims rin chen's (1697–1774) "record of teachings received," inasmuch as he was after all the editor-in-chief of this very Sde dge xylograph!⁵⁸ The variations in the titles and sequence and number of texts that we find in these records of course have to do with the different editions of 'Phags pa's oeuvre to which their authors had access, as Zhu chen painstakingly points out in the Sde dge catalogue of the writings of the five patriarchs of the Sa skya school.⁵⁹ The manuscripts that Zhu chen and his team used for the Sde dge edition of the entire *bka' 'bum*-collected works of the five Sa skya pa patriarchs (*sa skya gong ma lnga*) were⁶⁰:

⁵⁵ See *Rdzong pa kun dga' rnam rgyal gyi gsan yig* (Kathmandu: Rgyal yongs sa chen dpe skrun khang, [2005]), 23, and *Gong dkar bla ma 'phrin las rnam rgyal gyi gsan yig* [= *Thob yig bum pa bzang po*], Kathmandu, Rgyal yongs sa chen dpe skrun khang, 2008, p. 339.

⁵⁶ A mes zhabs, *Sa skya gdung rabs chen mo*, pp. 221–226, and his *Chos kyi rje dpal ldan bla ma dam pa rnam las dam pa'i chos ji ltar thob pa'i tshul legs par bshad pa zab rgyas chos kun gsal ba'i nyin byed*, *Collected Works*, vol. 3, Si khron bod yig dpe rnying myur skyob 'tshol sgrig khang, ed., Lhasa, Bod ljongs dpe rnying dpe skrun khang, 2012, pp. 153–159 and 177–183, which reflect the transmissions of 'Phags pa's writings he received from Mkhan chen Ngag dbang chos grags (1572–1641) and Mthu stobs dbang phyug (1588–1646).

⁵⁷ *Chos kyi rje dpal ldan bla ma dam pa rnam las dam pa'i chos ji ltar thob pa'i tshul legs par bshad pa zab rgyas chos kun gsal ba'i nyin byed*, p. 154. This title is not listed in his *Sa skya gdung rabs chen mo!*

⁵⁸ See the *Dpal ldan bla ma dam pa rnam las dam pa'i chos thos pa'i yi ge don gnyer gdengs can rol pa'i chu gter*, *Collected Works*, Sde dge xylograph, vol. Kha, p. 464 [fol. 232b], bdr.org, W1KG10853.

⁵⁹ *Dpal sa skya'i rje btsun gong ma lnga'i gsung rab rin po che'i par gyi sgo 'phar 'byed pa'i dkar chag 'phrul gyi lde mig* [Sde dge xylograph], *Sa skya'i bka' 'bum*, vol. 15, Dehra Dun, Sakya Center 1992–1993, pp. 926 ff., 937 ff. [fols. 464b ff., 469b ff.].

⁶⁰ *Dpal sa skya'i rje btsun gong ma lnga'i gsung rab rin po che'i par gyi sgo 'phar 'byed pa'i dkar chag 'phrul gyi lde mig* [Sde dge xylograph], p. 942 [fol. 472b]. For some observations on this edition, see Jackson, *The Entrance Gate for the Wise (Section III). Sa skya Paṇḍita on Indian and Tibetan Traditions of Pramāṇa and Philosophical Debate*, vol. I, p. 70, and his "Notes on Two Early Printed Editions of Sa-skyapa Works", *The Tibet Journal* VIII, no. 2, 1983, pp. 3–24.

1. One pristine exemplar of the *bka' 'bum* from Bsam gtan gling monastery in Skyor mda'.
2. The *bka' 'bum* of Sa skya Paṇḍita and 'Phags pa in golden and silver ink that was prepared by Sga A Gnyan dam pa Kun dga' grags (1230–1303).
3. Six large volumes of 'Phags pa's writings that were prepared by Sga A gnyan dam pa.
4. A set of reliable manuscripts (*dpe khungs thub cha gcig*) from Thar lam monastery in Yul shul that was prepared by Ā nanda dznyā na [Kun dga' ye shes] (1397–1470), a disciple of Rong ston Shākya rgyal mtshan (1367–1449) and Ngog chen.⁶¹
5. Two sets of manuscripts that were prepared by earlier rulers of Sde dge and by the present one Bstan pa tshe ring (1678–1738), the patron of the Sde dge xylograph edition.
6. One set from Lcags ra⁶² Bsam 'grub monastery.
7. One set from Gling.
8. Some actual manuscripts that belonged to 'Thor bul Mkhas grub Sangs rgyas phun tshogs.

The same problem of authenticity is also met with in the open letter that Sa skya Paṇḍita allegedly sent to the authorities of Central Tibet.⁶³ Long ago, D.P. Jackson advanced important arguments that challenged the "received" opinion of its authenticity, arguments that are similar to the ones that, I suggest, would undermine the authenticity of these two letters that were allegedly written by 'Phags

⁶¹ A native of Mdzo nyag in Upper Sga and recognized as a re-embodiment of the still too little appreciated Smṛtījñānakīrti (11thc.), he received the reading authority (*lung*) of the *bka' 'bum* of the five patriarchs at the age of five from Byang chub bzang po, a disciple of Sa bzang 'Phags pa Gzhon nu blo gros (1358–1412/24), and also had a manuscript edition of the *bka' 'bum* plus catalogue prepared by his nephew 'Jam dbyangs Kun dga' rnam rgyal in 1470; see his 1998 biography by 'Jam dbyangs shes rab, the *Bdag nyid chen po gzhung lugs rab 'byams pa kun dga' ye shes kyi rnam par thar pa ngo mtshar sprin dkar gzhon nu'i rol rtsed byin rlabs bdud rtsi'i char 'bebs*, *Collected Works*, vol. 1 ?Xining, np, ?2005), bdc.org, WOOEGS1016747, pp. 325, 371. Written under inspiration of the famous Sga Sde gzhung Rin po che (d. 1987), the edited version of the biography was completed by Bse mkhar Kun dga' tshe ring at the end of 2004. Kun dga' ye shes founded Śrī thar lam dga' ldan sa bzang rnam rgyal gling monastery in 1436.

⁶² An interesting capsule history of this monastery by Dam chos tshe ring and Kun dga' grol mchog is contained in *Sde dge rdzong dgon pa'i lo rgyus*, *Sde dge rdzong dgon pa'i lo rgyus u yon lhan tshogs and Srid srol sde dge rdzong u yon lhan khang*, ed., Beijing, Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2011, pp. 137-144.

⁶³ See his *Bu slob rnam la spring ba*, *Collected Works (Gsung 'bum dpe sdur ma)*, vol. 1 [13/25], *Mes po'i shul bzhag*, vol. 15, *Dpal brtsegs bod yig dpe mnying zhib 'jug khang*, ed., Beijing, Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2007, pp. 452-457.

pa.⁶⁴ Namely, their titles do not occur in the earliest catalogs of the collected oeuvre of their author and they falsely presume that Sa skya and not 'Bri gung stood at the center of the Mongol governance of Central Tibet in the 1250s. In addition, Schuh has shown that portions of the letter Köten had allegedly written to summon Sa skya Paṇḍita to his court, which is cited in varying ways in different sources, were most probably forged as well.⁶⁵ He did accept that A mes zhabs' version of the first even though the title of this letter in 'Phags pa's oeuvre indicates that the addressee was Bsod nams seng ge, that is, 'U yug pa, and *not* Grag pa seng ge.

In his article cited above, Szerb referred to a passage in Dpa' bo II's chronicle where Sa skya Paṇḍita is said to have compared 'U yug pa with Ratnākaraśānti and noted the presence of an almost identical phrasing in the first of the two letters that allegedly came from 'Phags pa's pen.⁶⁶ But this by itself constitutes insufficient proof for supposing that the original letter was addressed to 'U yug pa. As is almost to be expected, the version of the letter A mes zhabs paraphrases in its entirety reads at this juncture "Grag pa seng ge", and not "Bsod nams seng ge," let alone "'U yug pa".⁶⁷ Hence, all that we can infer from this is that versions of both letters probably existed by the middle of the sixteenth century at the latest. The comparison with Ratnākaraśānti also does not help us in identifying the addressee as there is no real reason why it should, or should not, do justice to either scholar.

That 'Phags pa was ordained by Grag pa seng ge, then abbot of Snye thang monastery, is a well-established historical fact, that is, it is something for which there apparently exists a consensus in our sources. And that this took place in 1255 is also something that is agreed upon. Working with the hypothesis that the letter did get to where it was supposed to go, it remains difficult to explain why, if Grag pa seng ge was indeed its addressee, it took him three years to make up his mind and why he was in no hurry to get to eastern Tibet

⁶⁴ "Sa skya Paṇḍita's Letter to the Tibetans, a Late and Dubious Addition to his Collected Works", *Journal of the Tibet Society* 6, 1986, pp. 17-23. This article was reprinted in *The Tibetan History Reader*, ed. G. Tuttle and K. Schaeffer, pp. 241-246. The letter itself was first translated in G. Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, vol. I, Roma, la Libreria Dello Stato, 1949, pp. 10-12; see also Chen Qingying, *Yuanchao dishi basiba*, p. 122 [= *Yon rgyal rabs kyi ti shri 'gro mgon 'phags pa'i mdzad rnam*, Skal bzang dar rgyas, tr., pp. 107-108] and the study in Li Decheng "Zong sajia banzhida 'zhifan ren shu' dao hubilie 'you li senaren zhaoshu' [From Sa skya Paṇḍita's Letter to Tibetans to Qubilai Qan's Imperial Edict regarding the Courteous Treatment of Monks]", *Zhongguo Zangxue* 4, 2017, pp. 15-20.

⁶⁵ Schuh, *Erlasse und Sendschreiben mongolischer Herrscher für tibetische Geistliche*, pp. 39-41.

⁶⁶ See his *Chos 'byung mkhas pa'i dga' ston*, p. 732.

⁶⁷ *Sa skya gdung rabs chen mo*, pp. 169-170.

or Liangzhou, let alone to The [Thig] le, that elusive place that was allegedly perched "on the shore of a river at the Sino-Mongolian frontier," where he ordained 'Phags pa in the capacity of acting as his abbot (*mkhan po*). This is what we learn in the chronicles of Yar lung Jo bo and Mus srad pa.⁶⁸ On the other hand, Stag tshang pa states that he was ordained in a place close to He ce'u [= Ch. Hezhou], which is located in Gansu Province.⁶⁹ It is equally hard to come up with a convincing reason for 'U yug pa not showing up at 'Phags pa's doorstep unless, as Go rams pa and Mus srad pa and others have done, he was declared deceased before arrival. The fundamental problem with this scenario is that other, earlier sources suggest that 'U yug pa was still very much alive when 'Phags pa first returned to Sa skya monastery in 1264. Some of our sources, both primary and secondary, are quite confused about the year in which 'Phags pa returned to Sa skya monastery for the first time after his departure from Sa skya for Liangzhou with his uncle. But this confusion can be safely laid to rest when we take the colophons of 'Phags pa's own writings at their face value. The colophon of his study of a reverential petition that was written much earlier by his uncle states that it was composed at Ra mo che, Lhasa, on December 24, 1264, and we can safely assume that he left the Mongols in the first half of 1264 and that he must have arrived at Sa skya not long after his arrival in Lhasa, in all events before Tibetan New Year.⁷⁰ Further, according to Mkhas grub Dge legs dpal bzang po's (1385–1438) record of teachings received, 'Phags pa transmitted to 'U yug pa the "explanatory tantras" of the *Hevajratantra* as he had originally received them from Sa skya Paṇḍita.⁷¹ This finds confirmation in Ngor chen's cognate record, which adds elsewhere

⁶⁸ See Yar lung Jo bo, *Yar lung jo bo chos 'byung*, p. 154—a note in the original manuscript of this work identifies Jo gdan Byang thang pa Bsod nams rgyal mtshan and a Yar lung pa [= Yar lung pa Byang chub rgyal mtshan] as those who functioned, respectively, as his ritual master and confessor during the ordination—and also Mus srad pa, *Sa skya mkhon (sic) gyi gdungs (sic) rab rin po che'i 'phreng ba*, fol. 27b [=Rdzong pa'i dpe rnying 'tshol bsdu khang, ed., p. 39].

⁶⁹ Stag tshang pa, *Rgya bod yig tshang*, p. 326; see also Chen Qingying, *Hanzang shiji*, tr., Beijing, Minzu chubanshe, 1986, p. 203.

⁷⁰ See the useful chronology of his writings and where they were written in Fukuda Yoichi and Ishihama Yumiko, *A Study of the Grub mthah of Tibetan Buddhism*, vol. 4, *On the chapter on the history of mongolian Buddhism of Thulu bkwan's Grub mthah*, *Studia Tibetica*, No. 11, Tokyo, The Toyo Bunko, 1986, p. 55, in connection with his *Bla ma la thun mong ma yin pa'i sgo nas gsol ba 'debs pa'i 'grel pa*, for which see his *Collected Writings (Gsung 'bum dpe sdur ma)*, vol. 1, Mes po'i shul bzhag, vol. 19, *Dpal brtsegs bod yig dpe rnying zhib 'jug khang*, ed., Beijing, Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2007, pp. 118-124.

⁷¹ *Mkhas grub thams cad mkhyen pa dge legs dpal bzang po'i gsan yig*, *Collected Works [Lhasa Zhol xylograph]*, vol. ka [1], New Delhi: Mongolian Lama Guru Deva, 1980-1982), p. 102.

that 'U yug pa had also obtained from him the transmission of the **Vajravidaranatantra*.⁷² 'Phags pa was a mere nine years old when he left Sa skya for Liangzhou making it unlikely in the extreme that, if these "records of teachings received" are accurate, a nine-year old would have been capable of going through the complex rituals of transmitting these difficult texts. 'Phags pa left Sa skya for the Mongol court in the autumn of 1267, so that it would appear that 'U yug pa may have received these transmissions sometime between 1265 and late 1267. 'Phags pa then returned to Sa skya in 1276, so that we can also not completely exclude the possibility that he transmitted these texts to 'U yug pa sometime between 1276 and 1280. Given all this plus the fact that A mes zhabs' account of this particular phase of 'Phags pa's life is historically rather messy, we have no choice but to admit that we know as little about the year of 'U yug pa's death as we do of the year of his birth. Thus, it seems reasonable to assert that *circa* 1195 to *circa* 1267 would be a fairly good guesstimate for both. What remains an unanswered question is that if 'Phags pa had indeed addressed his letter to 'U yug pa requesting that he ordain him, why did he not show up and why did Grags pa seng ge make the trip in his stead. The answer will probably never be forthcoming. In any event, 'U yug pa's remains appear to have been enshrined in a large stupa on the outskirts of Shigatse, as Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse'i dbang po (1820-1892) informs us.⁷³ But the stupa is no longer there.

'U yug pa had a number of students, the names of the most important of whom may be culled from several "records of teachings received" and a few other sources that were used for the above profile of his life; these students include:

1. Zhang Mdo sde dpal
2. Slob dpon Rin chen rgyal mtshan (1238-?)⁷⁴

⁷² Ngor chen, *Thob yig rgya mtsho*, pp. 315, 331.

⁷³ See A. Ferrari, *Mk'yen brtse's Guide to the Holy Places of Central Tibet*, ed. L. Petech with collaboration of H. Richardson, Serie Orientale Roma XXV, Rome, Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1958, pp. 20, 61.

⁷⁴ He was the only son of Zangs tsha ba and his second wife Ma gcig Jo 'bro [var. 'gro] and, hence, another one of Sa skya Paṇḍita's nephews. Stag tshang pa, *Rgya bod yig tshang*, p. 331, states that he built this residence after 'Phags pa had left for Central Tibet in 1276. Tshal pa, *Deb ther dmar po*, p. 48, Yar lung Jo bo, *Yar lung jo bo'i chos 'byung*, p. 157, and Stag tshang pa, *Rgya bod yig tshang*, p. 331, Dpa' bo II, *Chos 'byung mkhas pa'i 'byung gnas*, Stod cha [vol. 1], p. 590, all suggest that he died in the year 1282, in Shing kun monastery. On the other hand, A mes zhabs, *Sa skya gdung rabs chen mo*, p. 234, refers to unidentified sources that supposed that he probably died in 1279 at Me tog r[w]a ba, which was the residence of the Yuan dynasty's Imperial Preceptor in Fayuan monastery, in Dadu [= more or less present-day Beijing]. The *History of the Yuan* also states that he passed away in 1279

3. Bcom ldan Rig[s] pa'i ral gri⁷⁵
4. Sru lung pa Kun dga' smon lam
5. Rin phug pa Shākya seng ge
6. Sangs rgyas 'bum
7. Bla ma Grags chen
8. Kun dga' bsod noms
9. Lte ra ba Chos grags
10. Khang ston 'Od zer rgyal mtshan
11. ?Stag stog Gnyan⁷⁶

'U yug pa figures in Bcom ldan Rig[s] pa'i ral gri's undated biography that was written by his disciple Bsam gtan bzang po. As is to be expected, the latter mentions not only that he studied Dignāga and Dharmakīrti's works, and the *Rigs gter*, under 'U yug pa, but also a number of tantric texts.⁷⁷ As for Kun dga' bsod noms, Mkhas grub states in his "record of teachings heard" (*gsan yig*) that he was a disciple of Sa skya Paṇḍita and the teacher of Kun dga' smon lam of Sa skya monastery's Nyi thog Residence.⁷⁸

(To be continued)

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and has it that this took place at Wanan monastery, in Dadu; see *Yuanshi*, vol. 10, chapter 10, Beijing, Zhonghua shuju, 1976, 218.

⁷⁵ For him, see lastly L.W.J. van der Kuijp and A.P. McKeown, *Bcom ldan ral gri (1227-1305) on Indian Buddhist Logic and Epistemology: His Commentary on Dignāga's Pramāṇasamuccaya*, Wiener Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde, Heft 80, Wien, Arbeitskreis für Tibetische und Buddhistische Studien Universität Wien, 2013, pp. lxxxiv ff.

⁷⁶ His slight summary of the history of Indian Buddhist *pramāṇavāda*, the *Tshad ma'i lo rgyus*, was signaled in my "On Some Early Tibetan *Pramāṇavāda* Texts of the China Nationalities Library of the Cultural Palace of Nationalities in Beijing", *Journal of Tibetan and Buddhist Studies* 1, 1994, pp. 8-10. This journal has been long since defunct. The author was possibly a disciple of Sa skya Paṇḍita since he identifies him on fol. 6 as "our great scholar" (*bdag cag gi paṇḍi ta chen po*)—note the humilific *bdag!*

⁷⁷ *Bcom ldan rigs pa'i ral gri'i rnam thar dad pa'i ljon shing*, Collected Works, vol 1, Lhasa, Khams sprul bsod noms don grub, 2006, pp. 59-60. Earlier, on pp. 55-56, we learn that he studied the *Rigs gter* under Sa skya Paṇḍita!

⁷⁸ *Mkhas grub thams cad mkhyen pa dge legs dpal bzang po'i gsan yig*, 81.

skrun khang, 1986.

— *Ibid.*, *Bod kyi lo rgyus rnam thar phyogs sgrigs*, vol. 64 [Ngu], ed. Dpal brtsegs bod yig dpe rnying zhib 'jug khang, ed., Xining, Mtsho sngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2012.

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C.A. Holmboe (1796-1882): The First Norwegian Scholar of Buddhism

Per Kværne

Christopher Andreas Holmboe was professor at the University of Oslo (until 1939 called the Royal Fredrik University), the founder of numismatics in Norway, a gifted and prolific philologist, especially in what at the time was called 'Oriental languages', and a scholar having broad interests and active participation in the contemporary academic world of Europe. Among his many interests was the comparative study of Buddhism, arising from his belief that Buddhism was the source of certain key elements in ancient Nordic religion and culture. He was, in fact, someone who was not afraid of exploring completely new terrain, in this respect not unlike Dan Martin, in whose honour this article is affectionately and respectfully dedicated.

Before exploring Holmboe's studies regarding Buddhism, it may be well to provide some details concerning his life and career. His background was, as was the case with many Norwegian academics at the time, that of a clerical family. His father, Jens Holmboe (1746-1823), was a parish priest in the Norwegian Lutheran church (until the 1840's the only religious organisation officially permitted in Norway), in the same way as a considerable number of his paternal ancestors. His mother came from a distinguished family of civil servants, and his brother, Bernt Michael Holmboe (1795-1850), became professor of mathematics in 1834 at the Royal Fredrik University.

In 1818, C.A. Holmboe graduated in theology from the same university with the highest honours and received a scholarship from the government to study Persian and Arabic at the University of Paris from 1821 to 1822. In that year he was appointed Lecturer in Oriental languages in Christiania, as Oslo was then called, and in 1825 he became professor. He taught Sanskrit – certainly the first to do so in Norway – and contributed to the new translation of the Old Testament from Hebrew into Danish (which in his lifetime was still the literary and official language of Norway).

Holmboe was one of the founders of the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters in 1857, but above all he was an eminent

numismatist and was the director of the Numismatic Cabinet (founded in 1817) of the University for forty-six years – from 1830 until his retirement as professor in 1876. During his long tenure, a number of important caches were discovered, catalogued, and published, largely through Holmboe's efforts. The Cabinet became an important institution at the University, and, in a broader perspective, one of many building-stones in the process of nation-building which characterised cultural and political life in Norway in the nineteenth century. He kept in touch with colleagues abroad, and was a member of several learned societies, including The Asiatic Society in Calcutta. Holmboe's scholarly works were published in Latin (especially his numismatic works), German, French, and Danish (Norwegian).¹

His inclination was towards a comparative approach, encouraged by the prevalent focus on ancient Indo-European languages, and he published several works in which he compared Old Norse with Sanskrit. The first of these appeared in 1846; it was written in Danish (Norwegian) and entitled *Sanskrit og Oldnorsk. En sprogsammenlignende Afhandling* [Sanskrit and Old Norse. A Dissertation in Comparative Linguistics]. The work that will principally occupy us here, however, is a slim but fascinating volume entitled *Traces de buddhisme en Norvège avant l'introduction du christianisme*, published in Paris in 1857 by Imprimerie de Simon Raçon (71 pp.).² Holmboe was, at least to some extent, abreast of current studies of Indian religions. Although he admits in his 'Avant-propos' that he has hardly had time to do more than briefly dip into Eugène Burnouf's *Introduction au Bouddhisme indien* (1844) and translation of the *Lotus Sūtra, Lotus de la bonne loi* (1852), he makes greater use of Horace Hayman Wilson's translation of the *Viṣṇupurāṇa* (1840) and quotes it on several occasions (pp. 1-2). One has the impression that he did not regard the difference between Buddhism and Hinduism as a fundamental one.³

Although not an archaeologist, Holmboe had a keen interest in archaeological excavations, perhaps because of his work as a numismatist. He therefore introduces his work with a fairly long section (pp. 3-19) on a comparison between the Norse funerary mounds (which he refers to by the Old Norse word *haug*) and the Indian *stūpa*.

¹ This biographical sketch is largely based on the article "C.A. Holmboe", *Norsk biografisk leksikon*, https://nbl.snl.no/C_A_Holmboe. Accessed 04.08.2021.

² Simon Raçon (1810-1903) commenced his career as a printer and publisher in Paris in 1852 and was active until c. 1870. <https://www.idref.fr/149405103>. Accessed 04.08.2021.

³ In fact, on p. 34, Holmboe includes 'les buddhistes' as a sub-category of 'les Hindous', the latter used as a generic term for the inhabitants of the Indian sub-continent (with the exception, it may be assumed, of Muslims, Christians, Parsis, and Jews).

He quotes from the description of a miraculously appearing *stūpa* found in the *Lotus Sūtra*, contrasting it with Cunningham's description of surviving *stūpas* on the Indian sub-continent,⁴ and also refers to Francis Hamilton Buchanan's *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal* (1819).⁵

Turning to the Old Nordic sources, he quotes the statement by the Icelandic poet and historian Snorri Sturlason (1179-1241) in the latter's *Ynglinga Saga* [*The Saga of the House of the Ynglings*] to the effect that, 'in memory of great men a tumulus (*haug*) should be erected'.⁶ He also quotes *Halfdan the Black's Saga*, likewise by Sturlason, that following the death of King Halfdan the Black (ninth century C.E.), four kings in eastern Norway each wanted to bury him in a *haug* in their own territory, believing this would confer a blessing on the land; to avoid a war, his body was therefore divided into four parts, and each king erected a funerary tumulus in his own territory. This, Holmboe points out (p. 7), corresponds to the account in the *Lalitavistara* of the dividing of the Buddha's body into eight parts, each of which was buried in a *stūpa* in eight different cities respectively. The account in the *Lalitavistara* was available to Holmboe in several Western sources to which he refers, including *Indische Alterthumskunde*⁷ by his compatriot Christian Lassen, who from 1830 had been professor of Old Indian language and literature at the University of Bonn.

Holmboe argues that the Old Nordic *haugs* and the Indic *stūpas* had, at the outset, been built according to the same plan, but that the Indic *stūpas* had gradually evolved into more complex structures (p. 10). He does, however, point out the equally impressive dimensions of the two types of tumuli (pp. 13-16), and that both often contain a small quadrangular chamber (p. 17). Turning to the contents of the two kinds of tumuli, Holmboe is not able to point to any really significant common traits, resigning himself to record what was known at the time, namely the finds of small items of jewellery and other minor object made from gold and silver, as well as swords in

⁴ Holmboe does not give a precise reference, but his source is almost certainly Alexander Cunningham, *The Bhilsa Topes, or, Buddhist Monuments of Central India*, London, 1854.

⁵ Francis Hamilton Buchanan, *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal*, London, 1819. Holmboe gives the title of Buchanan's book as *Descriptive Account of Nepaul*, perhaps due to (a forgivable) confusion with the volume entitled *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepaul* by William Fitzpatrick, London, 1811, from which Buchanan drew.

⁶ The *Ynglinga Saga* is contained in Sturlason's *Heimskringla*, *The Chronicle of the Kings of Norway*.

⁷ *Indische Alterthumskunde* was published in four volumes, Bonn, 1844-1861. Holmboe's reference is to vol. 1, pp. 77-78.

the *haugs* (explained, according to Holmboe, by the warlike character of the Old Nordic society), and lamps in the *stūpas* (pp. 26-29).⁸

It is not surprising that the numismatist Holmboe devotes an entire chapter to coins found in the tumuli. In particular, he describes a number of coins, found in tumuli in Norway, as faithful copies of coins of Indo-Bactrian origin (pp. 30-31), and illustrates this by juxtaposing an Indo-Bactrian original (which he ascribes to the first century C.E.) with a coin, found in Norway, that had evidently been attached to a necklace.⁹ He also compares an Indo-Bactrian coin of a slightly later date, depicting the Indian god Śiva standing in front of his mount, the bull, with a bracteate, found on the west coast of Norway, likewise showing a deity and a bull (p. 32). Both the Indo-Bactrian coin and the Nordic bracteate also show a symbol of the kind generally referred to by its Sanskrit term, *svāstika*.¹⁰

Leaving the tumuli behind, Holmboe proceeds in the following chapter to discuss the symbolic meaning of the *svāstika*, which he rightly points out is of great importance in Buddhism, being found on images of the footprint of the Buddha. His exposition is mainly based on Burnouf's *Lotus de la bonne loi*. As Holmboe had already pointed out, the *svāstika* is found on bracteates from Norway, and he speculates that the two instances of this symbol may have a common origin (p. 37). In a subsequent chapter, he discusses the existence of stones, assumed to be sacred, found in Scandinavia and, in his opinion, similar in shape and size to examples of the Indian *liṅga*. He mentions Buddhism only in passing, but it may be assumed that he felt that this similarity strengthened his case for a general Indian, hence also Buddhist, influence in Norway. In chap. 13 (pp. 44-50), he turns to sacred trees, particularly, as would be expected, to the sacred Bodhi Tree of the Buddhists, providing a number of references to the cuttings of the original Bodhi Tree in Bodh Gaya brought to Sri Lanka and found growing as venerated replicas of the original outside temples throughout the island. Holmboe thereupon turns to Norway, where certain trees, especially birches growing on the top of ancient tumuli, were venerated by offerings of beer at Christmastime (p. 47) long after the introduction of Christianity. Several examples of depressions or platforms on the summit of tumuli are adduced as

⁸ It should be pointed out that systematic excavations of funerary tumuli, resulting in very rich finds not only of 'Viking ships', but also of a wide range of well-preserved artefacts, only began in Norway towards the end of the nineteenth century, so this material was unknown to Holmboe.

⁹ That the Old Nordic coins are copies, is revealed by the inscriptions, which are in Greek in the Indo-Bactrian coins, reproduced as meaningless signs in the Nordic ones, see Plate 1, ills. 2 and 3.

¹⁰ Plate 1, ills. 4 and 5.

proof of the former presence of sacred trees.

While Buddhist *vihāras*, or monasteries, are attested in abundance in Sri Lanka and many parts of India, it must be admitted that Holmboe's effort to connect them with possible remains of temples or dwellings for priests in the Nordic countries is tenuous. The same goes for his attempt to compare the cave dedicated to St. Sunniva on the island of Selja, off the west coast of Norway, with the famous rock temples of Dambulla on Sri Lanka, which is rather inconclusive, as is the case of certain paved enclosures and cemeteries found in Norway and India respectively. Of greater originality is the comparison between the so-called *mani* walls, known to Holmboe from descriptions by travellers to Ladakh (which he inaccurately refers to as a 'province of Tibet'),¹¹ and similar structures in Norway (pp. 60-62), generally found on the same sites as funerary mounds.

The last two chapters of *Traces de Bouddhisme en Norvège* attempt to show how Buddhism reached Norway. Holmboe constructs a historical scenario, once again based on Snorri Sturlason's *Ynglīga Saga*, which contains a euhemeristic account of the origin of the Norse kings. In the pre-Christian Nordic religion, *áss* was generally understood as 'god' and *Ásaland* as 'Land of the Gods'. In *Ynglīga Saga*, however, Sturlason (a devout Christian) maintained that the Nordic god Odin had been the king of the land of the *æsir* (sing. *áss*), the people of *Ásaland*, 'Land of the Æsir' or *Ásaheim*, 'Home of the Æsir'. Holmboe accepts the learned Icelander's explanation of *Ásaland* as a country located within the geographical perimeter of the 'known world'. Adducing Chinese texts as well as Greek and Latin sources (which need not be discussed here), Holmboe argues that 'le pays des Ases', located somewhere in Central Asia, adopted Buddhism. One of their kings was known as Odin, a modification of the name 'Buddha', and this monarch, he suggests, may have been venerated as a deity while still alive. This euhemeristic theory may seem far-fetched but setting aside the details of Holmboe's historical and linguistic arguments, it should be pointed out that similar theories were by no means unusual among his contemporaries – it is enough to point to Ernest Renan's hugely influential work *Vie de Jésus*, published in 1863, only six years after Holmboe's book. Moreover, it was an accepted truth among Norwegian historians at the time that 'Norse tribes' had wandered into Norway from the east. Holmboe's thesis was therefore by no means sensational.

Later in life Holmboe published two articles relevant to Buddhist studies: "En buddhistisk Legende, benyttet i et christeligt

¹¹ Holmboe refers to Thomson, *Western Himalaya and Tibet: A Narrative of a Journey Through the Mountains of Northern India, During the Years 1847-8*, London, 1852.

Opbyggelsesskrift" [A Buddhist legend, used in a Christian devotional scripture], published in *Christiania Videnskabs-Selskabs Forhandlinger* [Transactions of the Academy of Science and Letters in Christiania (Oslo)], 1870, and "Hexe og Dâkinî, en comparativ Fremstilling" [Witches and *ḍākinīs*, a comparative account], *ibid.*, 1873.¹²

The first, comprising thirteen pages, discusses the early Christian hagiographic story of the sage Barlaam and the prince Josaphat, a story that was popular in mediaeval Western Europe, being translated not only into Latin, but also into vernacular languages such as Old Norse in the 13th century. The latter translation was well known to Norwegian academics in the nineteenth century, including Holmboe, as it had been translated into modern Norwegian in 1851 by two of his colleagues at the Royal Fredrik University.¹³ By comparing the legend as found in a Greek version, attributed to St. John of Damascus, with the life of the Buddha – the latter account based on various secondary sources – Holmboe makes the parallel structure and the nature of the respective protagonists of the two narratives clear, concluding that the Greek version is based on the Buddhist biography of the Buddha, only reframing it in a Christian context. It would seem that Holmboe was among the very first (if not the first?) to see the link between the two legends (p. 350). In the context of Tibetan studies, it may be noted that he also refers to a Mongolian version, known to him from the work of P.S. Pallas on the Mongols,¹⁴ and that he points out that the legend was known to the Mongols from Tibetan sources (p. 347, n. 2).

The second article, a comparison between Western witches and Indo-Tibetan *ḍākinīs*, is certainly the first discussion of *ḍākinīs* by a Norwegian scholar, although it is not based on primary sources, but on the 17th-century Mongolian scholar Saghang Sečen's *Chronicles* in I.J. Schmidt's German translation.¹⁵ Holmboe is primarily interested in the account, found in this text, of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, who, after a series of permutations, becomes a prince who receives the supernatural advice to go to the land of 'Udiyana' in order to find a suitable spouse among the *ḍākinīs* who inhabit that land. He arrives, but the leader of the *ḍākinīs* tells him that his wish can only be fulfilled by bringing her the heart of a certain huge bull. On his quest for the bull, he encounters a series of beautiful maidens who

¹² Pp. 340-351 and pp. 401-421 respectively.

¹³ R. Keyser and C.R. Unger, *Barlaams ok Josaphats Saga, en religiøs romantisk Fortælling*, Christiania, 1851.

¹⁴ P.S. Pallas, *Sammlungen historischen Nachrichten über de Mongolischen Völkerschaften*, St. Petersburg, 1776.

¹⁵ I.J. Schmidt, *Geschichte der Ost-Mongolen und ihres Fürstenhauses, verfasst von Ssanang Ssetsen Ccungtaidschi der Ordus*, St. Petersburg, 1829.

attempt to entice him to abandon his quest. Finally, he kills the bull, and after further wanderings, punctuated by encounters with supernatural beings, some appearing as old hags, others as alluring young women, he finally reaches a temple where thousands of *ḍākinīs* gather. He is ordered, however, to go to Lankapuri and obtain sixteen red human hearts; only then may he be initiated into the secret wisdom of the *ḍākinīs*. Once again, he sets forth, and in Lankapuri he finally meets the *ḍākinī* of Wisdom in the form of an old beggar woman, surrounded by fifteen other *ḍākinīs* who prepare a feast for the prince and entertain him with their dance. After further adventures, the prince is reborn as a divine emanation in the land of Tibet, whose inhabitants live in ignorance and spiritual darkness.

Turning to the European concept of witches, Holmboe points out the important role in ancient Norse beliefs played by female magicians (p. 415 ff.), and likewise the frequent description of these personages as ugly hags. The *ḍākinīs* are in the habit of gathering for nocturnal feasts of unimaginable splendor, just as the Norse witches gather at certain places, in later folk belief often identified as mountains. In both cases the participants reach their meeting place by travelling through the air, although the witches ride on animals or certain objects. Once they have gathered, they entertain themselves by dancing. The obligation to provide sixteen human hearts for the *ḍākinīs* is compared with German and Serbian folk beliefs that witches are able to steal a human heart from the owner's body in order to devour it.

Holmboe admits that there is a radical difference between the European witches, who are evil and often regarded as being in league with Satan, and the *ḍākinīs*, whose task it is to confer spiritual wisdom on those who are worthy. He concludes his article, however, by explaining this difference by assuming that after the triumph of Christianity in Norway, what was once sacred (the *ḍākinīs*, a belief of ultimately Indian origin) became diabolical (witches). He also assumes that witches were a sociological reality in the sense that the old practices were secretly continued by their adherents for a long period of time, and that their diabolical character was construed by their Christian persecutors.

It would be an easy, but useless, task to point out the many unfounded assumptions and methodological inadequacies in the works discussed above. Holmboe was (as we all are) a child of his times, and euhemeristic and diffusionist theories were common among contemporary scholars. He applied these theories on real questions of cultural contact, and given the limited number of published sources, he should be given credit for reading widely and making good use of whatever research was available. It is true that as

far as relevant primary sources were concerned, he did not have the skills and scholarship of his compatriot Christian Lassen (1800-1876), professor at the University of Bonn and a prolific translator of Sanskrit texts, and, with Burnouf, the founder of Pāli studies in Europe.¹⁶ Nevertheless, he was the first Norwegian academic to introduce his compatriots to Buddhist studies, including the very first mention of Tibetan Buddhism. It was to be left to a later generation of scholars, in particular Sten Konow (1867-1948) and Georg Morgenstierne (1892-1978), who successively occupied the chair of Indian studies at the University of Oslo, to initiate serious philological study of Tibetan texts in Norway.¹⁷



¹⁶ Eugène Burnouf and Christian Lassen, *Essai sur le pali, ou langue sacrée de la presque île au-delà du Gange*, Paris, 1826.

¹⁷ On these scholars and the further development of Tibetology in Norway, see Per Kværne, "Tibetan Studies in Norway up to 1975", *Rocznik Orientalistyczny Oriental Studies*, vol. 62, 1 (2009), pp. 92-100.

The Transmission of Information and Knowledge in the Early Qing Dynasty and the Activation of the Tibet-Khams Channel

清初的涉藏信息知識輸送與康藏通道的啓用

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Abstract: In the early period of the Qing Dynasty, the Qing government lacked information and knowledge about the Tibetan and Mongol regions. As time passed, the information about these regions gradually improved. In this context, the Tibet-Khams channel played an increasingly important role for obtaining information about Tibet and Mongolia when the Qing government controlled the Tibetan areas. Especially in the two major operations to expel the Jungars and pacify the Lobzang danjin rebellion, the channel quickly became an essential element in the transmission of information between the Qing and the local Tibetan and Mongol governments. Previous research has focused on the opening, and the characteristics and functions, of the channel. However, its role in the communication and transmission of information between the central government and local governments has to date not been extensively researched. In this article, the author combines Chinese, Tibetan, and Manchu historical documents to discuss the channel's place in the transmission of information about the Mongol tribes and the local government of Tibet during the Qing.

摘要：在清朝初期，清政府缺乏关于西藏和蒙古地区的信息和知识。随着时间的推移，有关这些地区的信息和知识逐渐完善。在这种情况下，当清政府控制藏区时，康藏通道在获取有关西藏和蒙古的信息和知识方面发挥了越来越重要的作用。特别是在驱逐准噶尔和平定罗卜藏丹津叛乱的两次重大行动中，该通道迅速成为清朝与西藏地方和蒙古之间传递信息和知识的一个重要因素。以前的研究主要集中在这通道的开通，以及通道的特点和功能。但是，它在中央政府和地方政府之间的信息沟通和传递中的作用，至今没有得到广泛的研究。在这篇文章中，作者结合汉文、藏文和满文的历史文

献，讨论了该通道在清朝中央政府在获取蒙古和西藏地方信息和知识传递中的地位。

通道和驛站在輸送信息和地方性知識中起着十分關鍵的作用，中國古代社會尤其是如此。清初，清朝中央政府對藏地及蒙古諸部的信息知識匱乏而充滿渴求。在與二者接觸、往來過程中，清朝對二者的信息和知識傳輸處於不斷摸索和完善的過程中。康雍時期從成都和滇西，途徑康區入藏道路（下文簡稱康藏通道）即為一例。在清朝中央政府實現直接統治藏區過程中，這一通道在獲取西藏地方和蒙古諸部信息、知識方面的作用日益顯著。尤其是在驅準保藏和平定羅卜藏丹津叛亂兩大行動中，康藏通道逐漸成為了清朝中央政府與西藏地方政府及蒙古諸部傳輸信息和知識的重要孔道。石碩、王麗娜研究了打箭爐入藏道路的背景、啓用過程，以及該通道在清朝治理西藏乃至整個藏區中的戰略意義。¹趙心愚及鄒立波則詳細梳理了清前期在這一通道上汛塘和糧臺的設置情況，併強調這些設置對清朝傳遞軍情的重要作用²，但由於材料有限，對於康藏通道在溝通和傳遞中央與西藏地方信息方面的作用研究仍需要進一步的研究。筆者擬結合漢、藏、滿等多語種史料，探討康藏通道在清朝初輸送蒙古諸部和西藏地方政府信息、知識中發揮的作用及其啓用過程。

一、康雍時期的康藏通道

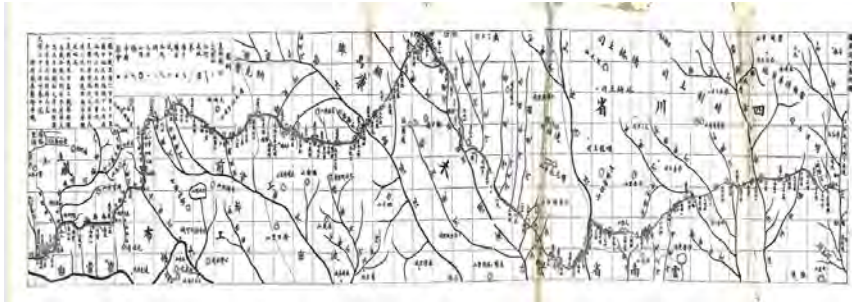
清朝入藏道路主要由青藏（青海-西藏）、川藏（四川-西藏）、滇藏（雲南-西藏）三道組成。其中，川藏和滇藏兩路均經康區入藏，二者啓用時間較為接近³，因此筆者將二者合併稱為「康藏通道」，以便下文討論。康藏通道的川藏道在康雍時期併沒有固定的稱謂，僅以道路上

¹ 石碩、王麗娜。清朝「驅準保藏」行動中對由打箭爐入藏道路的開拓。中山大學學報 2018（3）：136-46。

² 趙心愚。清康熙雍正時期川藏道汛塘與糧臺的設置及其特點。民族研究 2019（2）：117-24；鄒立波。清代前期康區塘汛的設置及其作用與影響。西藏研究 2003（3）：28-35。

³ 在這裏的啓用是指被納入清代官方通道使用的情況，而非民間使用情況。實際上，此二道在民間層面一直是商賈、僧侶往來的重要道路。未曾註明時間的《曼隆上師遊記》就曾提到過經打箭爐進入四川成都，從重慶沿江而上進入南京曾是明代僧人前往內地的路線之一。參看：*Rmi lam brdzun bshad sgyu ma'i sgra dbyangs chen mo*（抄本），BDRC: W1KG13947。《安多政教史》也曾描繪青藏道路受白利王等人的阻攔無法通行時，有志之士選擇從打箭爐入藏的情況，參看：智觀巴·貢卻乎丹巴繞吉著，吳均、毛繼祖、馬世林譯。安多政教史。蘭州：甘肅民族出版社，1989：39；王海兵。跨越大渡河：明至清初四川南路入藏茶道的市場變遷。中華文化論壇 2017（5）：108-14。

一些比較眾所周知的城市，如理塘（有時寫作裏塘）、打箭爐（今四川省康定）、豐爾格（德格）等來代表這這一線路。關於這一線的起點，有成都和打箭爐兩種說法⁴，這是清代地方志書寫傳統不一致所致。如光緒年間繪製的一些輿圖中就將起點定為打箭爐，取起點打箭爐之「爐」字與終點西藏拉薩之「藏」字，稱這一道路為「爐藏道」⁵，這與年羹堯（1680—1726）所定的起點是一致的。



光緒《爐藏道裏新考》中的「爐藏道」

總之，在康雍時期，由川入藏一線的康區部分為打箭爐至西藏拉薩一線，這一線又主要可分為南線和北線⁶。康熙五十八年（1719），年羹堯所記載的南線線路為：打箭爐（Dar rtse mdo）—裏塘（Li thang）—巴塘（Ba' thang）—乍丫（Brag g.yab）—察木多（Chab mdo）—擦瓦崗（Tsha ba sgang）⁷—書班多（碩般多，Sho pa mdo）—招地（拉薩）⁸。同一時期的滿文方誌《喀木地方一統誌》（wargi k'am ba-i i tong jy）、王師我的《藏爐總記》等均零星提及到南線中的幾個重要城市，如巴塘、理塘、打箭爐等，但並未完整記載南線的線路⁹。噶爾弼（?-1727）驅準保藏時進藏的路線與年羹堯所提及的一致¹⁰。但成書於雍正五年前

⁴ 趙心愚. 清康熙雍正時期川藏道汛塘與糧臺的設置及其特點. 民族研究 2019 (2): 117.

⁵ 張其勤. 爐藏道裏新考. 中國國家圖書館館藏, 1935.

⁶ 阿音娜通過道光年間的一副西藏彩繪地圖指出，川藏道實際上由南、北、中三線，因中路一線在康雍時期並未被官方大規模使用，故本文未予以討論。參看：阿音娜. 輿圖中的川藏交通—解讀清末彩繪地圖《西藏全圖》. 西藏研究 (2011 (1)): 48-55.

⁷ 關於這一地名的歷史沿革及其具體所指，見：貢布多加. 康區擦瓦龍歷史沿革及其地名稱謂考究—基與對口述史料的文獻分析. 西藏研究 2020 (1): 18-29. 大體而言，主要指的是在怒江和瀾滄江中間地帶，今之西藏左貢-八宿-然烏縣境內。

⁸ 季永海、李盤盛、謝誌寧等. 年羹堯滿漢奏折譯編. 天津：天津古籍出版社, 1995: 203.

⁹ 張開. 從滿文《喀木地方一統誌》看清廷對康區的地理認知. 中國藏學 2019 (3): 165-79.; 王我師. 藏爐總記. 小方壺齋輿地叢鈔第三帙.

¹⁰ 石碩、王麗娜. 清朝「驅準保藏」行動中對由打箭爐入藏道路的開拓. 中山大學學報 2018 (3): 136-46.

後的《藏紀概》在打箭爐和理塘之間加上了中渡（*Nyag chu*）一城，並更加詳細地記載了南線具體線路為：瀘定橋—打箭爐—折多—瓦吉山（瓦切關廟）—五龍石（臥龍石）—高日寺山—八角樓—中渡（雅江）—麻蓋中夾溝—鴨龍江—峩洛山—漢人橋—理塘—海子（幹海子）—喇嘛丫—立登三巴（三霸）—大所封（大朔山）—大所—小巴沖—巴塘—竹巴龍—猛裏山（沿金沙江）—漢人寺—普拉山—江卡至今昌都境內而入藏¹¹。大體而言，這一線主要經過打箭爐—中渡（今雅江）—理塘——巴塘—昌都—拉薩。該線雖道迂山險，但路程短，沿途口糧、牲畜補給較為充足，一直是由康入藏的主線，也是「蠻客」往來於東部藏區和西藏之間的主要路線，使用率較高。康熙以後，根據乾、嘉、道出版的一些相關道裏圖考來看，該線路雖在一些小的地方有所變化，但仍舊維持着以打箭爐——中渡（今雅江）——理塘——巴塘——昌都——拉薩等城市為主線¹²。

此外，年羹堯在其奏疏中還提及了與南線相對的北線：

自打箭爐由霍耳、由得爾革、由春料爾，由詔烏、由春科納魯、由索克贊丹袞廟、由那出而至招地，此北路也。路平，近有水草，少居民，雖雲無柴而皆言牛馬糞可燒。

¹³

大體而言北線為打箭爐—霍爾（*Hor*）—得爾革（德格，*Sde dge*）—春料爾—詔烏—由春科納魯—索克贊丹袞廟—那出（那曲，*Nag chu*）—招地（拉薩）。其中霍爾則包括清代五霍爾之地（一說七霍爾），即今道孚、爐霍、甘孜等主要地區¹⁴。但該線較南線而言，路途雖平坦，但裏程遙遠，沿途補給困難，且時有夾坝（*jag pa*，盜匪）出沒，清代官方使用率並不高。因而雍正五年的《藏紀概》並未記載這一線路。

在平定羅布藏丹津叛亂中和七世達賴喇嘛移駐噶達惠遠寺（*Mgar thar byams pa gling*, 1730-5）期間，北線使用較多，但仍舊不被作為首選路線。例如土爾扈特部使團於 1731-1732 年進藏熬茶期間，因要前往泰寧拜謁達賴喇嘛（*Bskal bzang rgya mtsho*, 1708-57），獻禮請汗號，故

¹¹ 李鳳彩《藏紀概》。北京：國藏學出版社，1995：23-28。原書並無頁碼，此頁碼為筆者註，從正文計算。

¹² 佚名。《乾隆西藏志》。北京：國家圖書館館藏，2010；西藏研究編輯部編。《西藏誌·衛藏通誌合輯》。拉薩：西藏人民出版社，1982 等。

¹³ 季永海、李盤盛、謝誌寧等。《年羹堯滿漢奏折譯編》。天津：天津古籍出版社，1995：203。

¹⁴ 趙爾巽撰。《清史稿·土司列傳》。北京：中華書局，1975，14224；[法]古純仁（F. Gore）著，李思純譯。《川滇之藏邊川邊霍爾地區與瞻對》。《康藏研究》1948（18）：21-8；甘孜藏族自治州概況編寫組編委。《甘孜藏族自治州概況》。北京：民族出版社，1999：185。

而清廷安排他們從打箭爐到泰寧，經北線入藏，亦計劃讓土爾扈特部使者沿此線返回，但因去程險象叢生，準噶爾使團返回時堅決不從此路返回¹⁵。康熙以後的許多方誌、道裏考著作中對這一線的描述也較南線簡略，因而北線的使用率遠不及南線。

關於滇藏一線，一些學者已根據《藏行紀程》指出，由滇入藏之路線主要包括：香格裏拉 (Rgyal thang) —德欽 (Bde chen) —左貢 (Mdzo sgang)—八宿 (Dpa' shod)—洛隆 (Lho rong)—拉薩¹⁶。這是根據康熙末年入藏杜昌丁入藏敘述而勾勒的主要線路。根據《藏紀概》所載，其詳細路線為：小中甸—菁口—大中甸—湯村—泥噶—橋頭—蔔自立（即奔子欄）—阿墩子—至察木多巴宿、洛隆宗一路入藏¹⁷。

這三線作為清初康藏通道的主要線路，因其啟用時間各不相同，使用程度也不盡相同，對於收集信息的重要程度也差異盛大，文章擬用分兩個部分進行討。

二、川藏南路及滇藏線的信息開拓與信息輸送

打箭爐入藏一線作為清朝獲取藏地知識和信息的通道，最初主要指南線，這一線在西爐之役後已略具雛形。1701-1702 年間，清朝中央政府通過西爐之役，牢牢控制了打箭爐這一交通、貿易要道，並與和碩特蒙古定界於中渡（今雅江）¹⁸，將其勢力推進至雅礱江一帶，並將內地驛站自瓊州延伸至打箭爐一帶¹⁹。在清廷控制打箭爐後，達木巴色爾濟、郎中舒圖、員外鐵圖被遣駐打箭爐，與西藏地方政府所遣之大喇嘛一同監管貿易²⁰。值得注意的是，所遣駐爐官員中的達木巴色爾濟（*damba serji*），是往來於清朝中央政府和藏地間一位重要的喇嘛，其作為副教習，精通藏文、滿文，在清朝中央政府處理西藏地方事務中扮演著極為重要的角色。根據滿文文獻記載，其為欽差，主要負責管理打箭爐事務及監管貿易（*da jiyān lu-i ba-i baita be icihiyara. tuwame*

¹⁵ 吳元豐，厲聲。清代新疆滿文檔案漢譯匯（滿文本）。桂林：廣西師範大學出版社，2020 (1): 297-306; 漢文譯文見：吳元豐，厲聲。清代新疆滿文檔案漢譯匯編（漢譯本。桂林：廣西師範大學出版社 (1): 125-8.

¹⁶ 張欽。《藏行紀程》所載滇藏交通研究。中國邊疆史地研究 2020 (1): 128-42.

¹⁷ 李鳳彩。藏紀概。北京：中國藏學出版社，1995: 23-8.

¹⁸ 西藏研究編輯部編。1982.西藏志·衛藏通志合輯。拉薩：西藏人民出版社，1982: 8; 任乃強。《西康圖經·境域篇》。載《任乃強藏學文集》。北京：中國藏學出版社，2009: 93.

¹⁹ 黃廷桂等修、張晉生等纂。雍正《四川通志》。欽定四庫全書影印，卷二十二。

²⁰ 中國第一歷史檔案館、內蒙古大學蒙古學院編。Daycing yüriin-ü dotuyadu yamun mongyul bičig-ün dangsa (清內閣蒙古堂檔)。呼和浩特。蒙古大學出版社 2005(16): 566-9.

hūdašabure lama damba serji)²¹。除監管貿易外，其還肩負著勘查打箭爐周邊地形，獲取藏地知識和信息之責。在他前往打箭爐上任期間，康熙帝叮囑其「至彼處，當熟諳地方情形」²²。自達木巴色爾濟始，凡駐打箭爐之喇嘛，皆被要求諳熟地方情形，獲取藏地知識和信息。

這一職責在雍正初年尤為明顯。雍正元年（1723），理藩院和時任川陝總督的年羹堯之間對駐爐喇嘛更替的討論，充分說明了駐爐喇嘛獲取藏地信息和知識方面的職責。理藩院認為當時駐爐喇嘛羅卜藏東羅布（*Lama Lobdzang dungrob < Blo bzang don grub*）「為人糊塗，不能成事，管理彼地事務和探聽消息為緊要，不能讓如此粗忽之喇嘛駐守」²³。在這裏，清廷將獲取藏地信息和知識作為駐爐喇嘛極為重要的職責，與管理地方事務放在同等重要的位置。年羹堯根據理藩院的要求撤回羅卜藏東羅布，以喇嘛粗勒齊木藏布拉木占巴（*Lama Ts'ulcim dzangbu ramjamb < Lama Tshul khrim bzang po rab 'byams pa*）替換了羅卜藏東羅布，他在奏文中道：

管理打箭爐事務、探聽消息尤為重要。喇嘛粗勒齊木藏布拉木占巴於五月初九日已從西安出發，稍作修整後即行前往打箭爐。只是廣仁寺（*guwang žen sy*）乃聖祖仁皇帝施恩敕建的大寺，只有粗勒齊木藏布拉木這樣的喇嘛駐守才適宜。²⁴

²¹ 中國第一歷史檔案館、內蒙古大學蒙古學院編。《*Daycing yūriin-ü dotuyadu yamun mongyul bičig-iin dangsa*（清內閣蒙古堂檔）》。呼和浩特：蒙古大學出版社，2005（16）/（17）：152-3。

²² 清實錄（第6冊）。北京：中華書局，1985：105。

²³ 滿文原文：*lama lobdzang dungrob. niyalma hūlhi. baita de urunakū. tubai baita icihiyara. mejige gairengge oyonggo. ere gese baita de foihori lama be tebuci ojurakū*。見：奏報駐打箭爐喇嘛消息折（滿文），雍正元年五月十一日。“國立故宮博物院”輯。《年羹堯奏折專輯》（清字折部分。臺北：“國立故宮博物院”印行，1971：81；季永海、李盤盛、謝誌寧等。《年羹堯滿漢奏折譯編》。天津：天津古籍出版社，1995：5；臺北國立故宮博物院藏。打箭爐地方任用喇嘛及捕授員外郎同知等官員事。雍正元年五月十一日，檔案編號：000631；臺灣“國立故宮博物院”編。《宮中檔雍正朝奏折》。臺北：國立故宮博物院，1997：208；中國第一歷史檔案館譯編。《雍正滿文朱批奏折》（上冊），合肥：黃山書社，1998：125。

²⁴ 同上。滿文原文為：*da jiyān lu de baita icihiyara. mejige gairengge umesi oyonggo. lama ts'ulcim dzangbu be unggihengge. ++ eduringge ejen umesi hafu sahabi. ts'ulcim dzangbu. sunja biyai ice uyun de si an de isinjiha be dahame. majige dasatabufi. uthai da jiyān lu de unggireci tulgiyen. damu guwang žen sy serengge. ++ šendzu gosin hūwangdi cohotoi hesei ilibuha ambakan miyoo. ts'ulcim dzangbu-i gese lama bahafi tebuci teni acambi*：81-82。

由此可知，理藩院和年羹堯共同力薦的喇嘛粗勒齊木藏布拉木占巴，藏文名為：Tshul khirms bzang po rab 'byams pa，漢文作芻爾齊木藏布拉木渣木巴²⁵、楚爾齊母藏布拉木占木巴²⁶等，時為駐廣仁寺喇嘛，是一位系統學習過歐洲數學知識，參與岡底斯山的測繪考察的格魯派喇嘛，曾以駐京喇嘛的身份參與《新洋新法曆書》的藏文文本《漢歷大全》(Rgya rtsis chen mo) 校勘工作等²⁷。其被重用顯然與其聲名和與康熙帝的熟稔關係有關，但其在傳遞西藏和清廷之間的信息方面作用也是其被重用的重要原因之一。早在 1717-1718 年間，他在參與岡底斯山測繪返回拉薩之際，就曾將齊其從拉藏漢處得知的有關準噶爾的消息上報拉清廷²⁸。此外，在其前往打箭爐上任期間，見到年羹堯後，年羹堯詢問他西藏地方動態。他向年羹堯報告因清廷給西藏達賴喇嘛所製的印章過小，而導致西藏僧俗不滿，不得不私自取用先前元朝賜給達賴喇嘛的大印的情況，清廷於是重新製作大印，以安撫西藏人眾²⁹。

為更好地在打箭爐獲取藏地信息和知識，年羹堯又授依特格爾 (Itegel) 員外郎銜，與拉木占巴一同處理打箭爐事務，獲取藏地信息與知識。依特格爾原為駐爐探聽消息之筆帖式，後任四川成都府理事同知，其理由為：「因為探聽打箭爐信息之事比同知之事更重要」³⁰。與此同時，他還令其衙門內八品筆帖式和敏 (Hemin) 與依特格爾一起前往打箭爐，另派章京 (janggin) 一名。如此，清朝中央政府在打箭爐形成了由駐爐喇嘛一、筆帖式二、章京一名組成的辦事人員³¹，這些辦事人員均肩負獲取藏地知識和信息的重要任務。

在雍正以前，清朝還新建瀘定橋，以保證要道暢通。成都前往中

²⁵ 清實錄·聖祖實錄 (第 6 冊) : 714-5.

²⁶ 中國第一歷史檔案館編：《康熙朝漢文硃批奏摺彙編》. 北京：檔案出版社，1984-1985 年，第 8 冊：167.

²⁷ 關於該人物的生平請參看：孔令偉：《欽差喇嘛楚爾沁藏布蘭木占巴、清代西藏地圖測繪與世界地理知識之傳播》，載：《中央研究院歷史語言研究所集刊》，第九十而本第三分，2021 年 9 月：603-48.

²⁸ 清實錄·聖祖實錄 (第 6 冊) : 714-5.

²⁹ 季永海、李盤盛、謝誌寧等. 年羹堯滿漢奏折譯編. 天津：天津古籍出版社，1995: 6-7.

³⁰ 滿文原文為：da jiyān lu-i baita. tungjy-i baita ci oyonggo be dahame. bahaci. itegel be aisilakū hafan-i jergi obufi.

³¹ 見：奏報駐打箭爐喇嘛消息折 (滿文)，雍正元年五月十一日. 臺北國立故宮博物院輯.《年羹堯奏折專輯》(清字折部分. 臺北：“國立故宮博物院”印行，1971: 83；季永海、李盤盛、謝誌寧等.《年羹堯滿漢奏折譯編》. 天津：天津古籍出版社，1995: 5；臺北國立故宮博物院藏.打箭爐地方任用喇嘛及捕授員外郎同知等官員事). 雍正元年五月十一日，檔案編號：000631；臺北國立故宮博物院編.《宮中檔雍正朝奏折》.臺北：國立故宮博物院，1997: 208；中國第一歷史檔案館譯編.《雍正滿文朱批奏折》(上冊)，合肥：黃山書社，1998: 125.

渡一線中，化林營所隸沈村、烹壩、子牛三大瀘舊渡口，乃為成都至打箭爐必經之要道，為保證要道之暢通，清朝於距化林營八十余裏處安樂地方仿鐵索橋規製建橋³²。康熙四十五年（1706），瀘定橋建成，康熙移化林營沈村防守千總一員、兵一百名鎮守瀘定橋³³，成都至中渡一道遂暢通。然而，在西瀘之役後至康熙五十七年（1718）間，清朝治理重心主要聚焦於西北地區，對於西藏和康區，則一直采取保守策略。因此，打箭爐入藏通道亦僅限在打箭爐至雅江一帶，並未向西推移，打箭爐南線形成完整的藏地信息和知識輸送通道則是在驅準保藏期間（1718-20）。

康熙五十六年（1717）十月月間，蒙古準噶爾軍隊攻占拉薩，清朝軍隊於次年（1718）五月從西寧出發，準備驅準保藏。但作為清朝在西北的勁敵，準噶爾並不好對付，尤其是喀喇烏蘇³⁴一役中清軍全軍覆沒，意味著領侍衛大臣金海等製定的駐紮在木魯烏蘇之庫庫塞、多倫鄂羅木等要塞，探聽準噶爾在藏地消息的計劃全面落空，準噶爾在玉樹、達木設置哨所，並在碩般多一帶把守盤詰入藏人眾，清廷從西寧一線入藏探聽消息計劃屢屢受挫³⁵，這使得清朝迫切需要開辟一條更為便捷的、安全的信息通道，探聽準噶爾在藏地之消息³⁶，以便掌握其動向，作進一步的戰略部署。彼時，經營四川之年羹堯及其派駐打箭爐之溫普經過實地探查，認識到打箭爐及其以外的巴塘、理塘在進藏中將會大有作為，並在打箭爐采取相應措施，以便呼應西寧一線。因此，已有一定經營基礎的打箭爐入藏通道遂被啟用，成為輔助西寧一線探聽準噶爾消息的信息通道。

此外，準噶爾人也注意到該通道的重要性，他們利用康區入藏一線暗中前往打箭爐、中甸等地探聽清朝方面的消息。拉藏汗所轄的理塘營宮喇嘛與策零敦多布暗通密信，企圖與準噶爾所遣之達哇朗章巴等

³² 載西藏研究編輯部編. 禦製瀘定橋碑記. 載：《西藏誌·衛藏通誌合輯》. 拉薩：西藏人民出版社，1982: 133-4.

³³ 清實錄·聖祖實錄(第6冊): 265.

³⁴ 滿文作 Kara usu 或 Hara usu，意為黑色的河，是那曲河（Nag chu）滿文音譯。

³⁵ 中國第一歷史檔案館編譯. 令侍衛內大臣金海等奏報進剿策旺喇坦布計劃折. 康熙朝滿文硃批奏折全譯. 北京：中國社會科學出版社 1996 (4): 1329.

³⁶ 此外，西藏西部的拉達克（La dwags）也是清朝探聽準噶爾消息的重要媒介。參看 L. Petech, *The Kingdom of Ladakh: C. 950-1842 A.D.* Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1977: 81-95; 齊光. 2014. 拉達克與 18 世紀前半期的清朝、準噶爾在西藏的角逐. 歷史地理 (2): 206-14; 齊光. 清朝的準噶爾情報收取與西藏王公頗羅鼎家族. 中國邊疆民族研究 2017 (1): 88-109; 孔令偉. 1724-1768 年間拉達克、西藏與清廷間的歐亞情報網—以清代中國對莫臥爾帝國的認識起源為核心. 清史研究 2018 (2): 27-48; 陳柱. 驅準保藏與清朝和拉達克的最初關係. 中國藏學 2019 (1):157-66.

會謀把持理塘³⁷，至 1718 年 5 月，準噶爾五百人已屯積於昌都境內，並與理塘察罕丹津所遣之寨桑暗自通謀³⁸。康熙五十七年（1718）閏八月年羹堯和法喇又探查發現：準噶爾策零敦多布讓心腹第巴大克咱派遣營官獨日結洛丁與義馬兩人，以管押「蠻客赴爐貿易」為由，前往打箭爐探聽消息。³⁹這使清廷意識到，採取準噶爾消息必須將打箭爐一線納入考慮之中。同時，通過年羹堯對獨日結洛丁等人審訊得到了不少準噶爾在藏之消息，也使清廷清楚地看到了在打箭爐一線探聽準噶爾消息的重要性。於是，年羹堯命護軍統領溫普、打箭爐稅差、理塘領兵官員等，在打箭爐一帶加強探訪準噶爾消息。但這僅是官方探查，規模並不大，且主要是針對來康區之準噶爾人。大規模啟用這一線的哨探始於康熙五十七年（1718）九月十九日。清廷在四川之打箭爐、雲南節達木、鹽達木（即今中甸）、叉木多等多地重金招募哨探，前往西藏採取準噶爾和西藏方面的消息：

咨行我等雲南、四川之打箭爐二路之所駐大臣、喇嘛、蒙古章京等，由彼處尋土伯特、阿木多（安多）、唐古特地方喇嘛數人，多給尹等盤費，由打箭爐，雲南之節達木、鹽達木（中甸）、叉木多（昌都）抵招地（拉薩），喇錫倫布（紮什倫布寺），叩拜廟、佛、班禪、喇嘛等，秘密攜書致佛克達班禪、第巴拉紮裏等，曉諭若送行文前來，充足賞賜等情。⁴⁰

從其探聽消息的路線安排來看，清朝意圖全面啟用川藏和滇藏二線，重金招募喇嘛⁴¹、章京，借拜佛朝聖名義前往後藏紮什倫布寺給班禪送信，一方面沿途獲取準噶爾和藏地信息。康熙五十八年（1719）正月初三胤祉奏疏提到：

四川松潘、打箭爐、雲南中甸等處探信喇嘛、章京等，

³⁷ 黃廷桂等修、張晉生等纂。雍正四川通誌。欽定四庫全書影印，卷二十一-西域。

³⁸ 清實錄·聖祖實錄(第 6 冊): 734.

³⁹ 季永海、李盤盛、謝誌寧等。奏陳獨日結洛丁供西藏情形折。熙五十七年閏八月二十四日。年羹堯滿漢奏折譯編。天津：天津古籍出版社，1994: 198. 中國藏學研究中心等編。元以來西藏地方與中央政府關係檔案史料編。北京：中國藏學出版社 1994 (2): 321.

⁴⁰ 中國第一歷史檔案館編譯。1996。為征繳準噶爾軍所發上諭一道。康熙五十七年九月十九日。康熙朝滿文硃批奏折全譯。北京。中國社會科學出版社 1996 (4): 1330.

⁴¹ 值得注意的是，這些喇嘛並非是族群意涵之下的藏族喇嘛，而是指崇信藏傳佛教的僧人，包括漢人和蒙古人等。參看：Hoong Teik Toh, *Tibetan Buddhism in Ming China*. PhD Dissertation, Harvard University, 2004: 202-18.

屢探西地消息，一面稟報各地辦理軍務大臣，一面奏聞。

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從中可以看出，清朝不但重金招募到了哨探，還使其多次前往拉薩探聽和收取消息。這些喇嘛章京將探聽到的消息除直接奏報給當地的軍務大臣，還可直接上奏康熙，可見情報探聽之重要。然而，雖然年羹堯、法喇、溫普等人在康熙五十七年已開始著手經營打箭爐、巴塘、理塘，但就打箭爐南線而言，巴塘、理塘仍控制在和碩特蒙古手中。在此背景下，年羹堯建議出兵招降這些地區，著手經略康南一路。於是清廷沿途招撫番民，籌措糧草，並妥善安排蛇蠟渣巴之嫡女桑結承襲明正之位，翟升年羹堯為四川總督，給予兵權，遣荊州之滿洲兵一千前往成都駐紮，預備來年進藏剿滅準噶爾事宜⁴³，並令化林守備羅雄募補兵缺⁴⁴。對南線之進駐要地——理塘、巴塘、察木多、巴爾喀木 (Bar khams)⁴⁵ 等處，遣人曉諭「堅守各自地方、勿降勿容準噶爾」，否則將出兵取其地而統之⁴⁶。

⁴² 中國第一歷史檔案館編譯。康熙朝滿文硃批奏折全譯。北京：中國社會科學出版社，1996: 1351.

⁴³ 清實錄·聖祖實錄(第6冊): 751.

⁴⁴ 季永海、李盤盛、謝誌寧等。年羹堯滿漢奏折譯編, 1995: 200.

⁴⁵ 關於「巴爾喀木」，年羹堯曾提到：在巴爾喀木地方的唐古特番子裏，有羅蔔藏丹津所屬繳納貢賦部落（滿文為：*bark'am-i bade bisire tanggūt fandzi-i dorgi de. lobdzang danjin-i harangga alban afabure aiman bi.*），其中的 *bark'am* 可能是藏語 བར་ཁམས 的音譯，即中部康區。據筆者目前看到的藏文材料，該地名最早出現在五世達賴喇嘛的著作中，其撰於 1643 年的《西藏王臣記》中首次提到了位於 Bar khams kyi rgyal po，其後《青海史》、《安多政教史》、《黃琉璃》、《土官宗派源流》等藏文教法史亦多次提到這一地名。參看：Sum pa Ye shes dpal 'byor, *Chos 'byung dpag bsam ljon bzang*, Lanzhou: Kan su'u mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1992: 659 ; Rgyal mo 'brug pa, "Bod kyi lo rgyus steng gi be ri dang be ri rgyal po'i skor la dpyad pa," *Krung go'i bod rig pa* 2012 (2): 47-65; Chab mdo Shes rab, *Mdo khams chu bzhi sgang drug la dpyad pa'i gtam stong thun chen mo*, In: *Stong thun chen mo in chab mdo'i yig tshang rin chen spungs pa*, Delhi: 'Phags yul chab mdo lo rgyus rtsom sgrig khang , 2006: 457 ; 趙心愚。清代早期方誌中的「康」及有關記載特點。藏學學刊 2015 (13): 123-37 ; 石碩。藏族三大傳統地理區域形成過程探討。中國藏學 2014(3): 51-9 ; 石碩。試論康區藏族的形成及其特點。西南民族學院學報 1993 (2): 22-8 ; 高琳。2013。藏族三大人文地理區劃之一：「康」(Khams) 之概念與區域形成演變研，四川大學博士論文；高琳。7 世紀中葉—19 世紀格魯派史籍中的康地。西藏大學學報 2013 (1) : 93-7 ; 黃維忠、王維強。藏文 Mdo gams 和 Mdo khams 考。民族研究 2004(1) : 87-91 ; E. Bretschneider, *Medieval Researches from Eastern Asiatic Sources: Fragments Towards the Knowledge of the Geography and History of Central and Western Asia From the 13. to the 17. Century, Volume 2*, London: Routledge, 2000: 21-4.

⁴⁶ 中國第一歷史檔案館編譯。康熙朝滿文硃批奏折全譯。北京：中國社會科學出版社

但僅這些修好和招撫措施還不足以讓清廷保證康區進藏路線的暢通，為籠絡和利用青海和碩特平定準噶爾之亂，康熙許諾青海和碩特進軍西藏成功後，將從固始汗子孫中冊封「持教法王」。二者達成協議後，當時居住於理塘、巴塘至叉木多(Chab mdo)和中甸(Rgyal thang)一線，受和碩特直接或間接支配的“番人”理所應當的成為了和碩特需要防禦和戍守之對象：

理塘、巴塘、柴達木、延達木、散達木、喀木等處，既然俱系青海臺吉所屬征賦諸申，行文駐西寧都統延信等，繕文宣諭青海臺吉，今準噶爾車凌敦多布等既然在招地，遣人往巴爾喀木等處，占有爾等所屬地方諸申，不可料定。爾等酌情各遣可靠之人戍駐，倘準噶爾人前來，即率爾等所轄諸申之兵丁剿殺，斷不允準噶爾奪取地方諸申。⁴⁷

理塘、巴塘、柴達木、延達木⁴⁸、散達木、喀木⁴⁹皆系康區進藏要道，亦為青海和碩特蒙古所屬。是否能獲得青海和碩特蒙古力量的支持，對清朝這些地方駐軍尤為關鍵。於是，清廷根據十四皇子允禩（1688-1755）的建議，先以一隊滿洲綠旗官兵前往駐守，料理拉藏汗及達賴喇嘛所屬之人，待軍務完竣後再議其歸屬問題。康熙五十八年（1719）四月十六日，其與察汗丹津商議後，由小靈童噶桑嘉措（Bskal bzang rgya mtsho, 1708-57）、察汗丹津分別派人前往理塘、巴塘曉諭其眾，接受清朝滿洲駐兵，以免滋生事端⁵⁰。

此舉與年羹堯在川省所做準備遙相呼應，為清廷駐軍巴塘、理塘奠定了基礎。實際上，法喇(?—1735)早在康熙五十七年（1718）五月已認識到了誕生於理塘的達賴喇嘛靈童對於招撫理塘至關重要的作用。

1996 (4): 1351.

⁴⁷ 中國第一歷史檔案館編譯. 北京：中國社會科學出版社, 1996 (4): 1330.

⁴⁸ 柴達木、延達木、散達木為「結打木、揚打木」，即中甸、德欽等地，見鄧銳齡. 結達木、楊達木二城考. 中國藏學 1998 (2): 32-41.

⁴⁹ 此處的喀木(Khams)並非是藏族傳統地理意義上的多康地區或邊地，而主要是指叉木多地區，即昌都地區。在《清史稿》中載：「康，一曰喀木。要塞曰察木多。在前藏東千二百五十裏，東界四川，南界珞瑜境及英屬阿薩密，西界衛地，北界青海，喀木今日昌都，亦稱前藏，本屬呼圖克圖」。見：《清史稿》卷八十，誌十五，地理二十五. 北京：中華書局，1996年，第二四七二頁；此外關於這一區域概念在清代的演變見：趙心愚. 清代早期西藏方誌中的「康」及有關記載特點. 藏學學刊 2015 (13): 123-37.

⁵⁰ 吳豐培編. 撫遠大將軍允禩奏稿. 北京. 全國圖書館文獻縮微複製中心，1991: 30.

在其建議下，清廷一面遣人前往理塘宣諭聖德，解釋清朝進駐的原因；另一方面，聯系達賴喇嘛之父，讓其遣人一同與清朝所遣之人前往理塘曉諭僧俗民眾。達賴喇嘛之父所遣之人於同年六月二十九日抵達理塘，此時法喇所遣之人已到理塘一月有余⁵¹。這些舉措無疑對清廷進入理塘地區奠定了很好的基礎。

此外，清廷還切斷一切通往西地的布匹、茶葉等物品供應和運出。其中包括切斷康區理塘、巴塘、中甸等地之茶葉等物品供應⁵²。在一番準備後，康熙五十八年三月，清廷決定於青草發時，讓法喇「領兵前往，招撫裏塘、巴塘」⁵³，年羹堯則駐牧打箭爐及松潘要地。

清軍在理塘大獲全勝後，巴塘隨之歸附⁵⁴。巴塘歸順寨堡三十三處，歸順頭人多達三十九名，屬民計六千九百二十戶，另有大小喇嘛二千一百余眾。隨後，鄰近理塘的乍丫、察木多、噶哇（Rdza yul,今察隅）等呼圖克圖相繼歸附，清廷給予重賞，頒賜印信⁵⁵。至同年四月，岳鐘琪（1686-1754）率兵四千已在昌都駐守，四月九日抵達洛龍宗，並抓獲準噶爾部寨桑，招撫部分洛龍宗土目及屬民⁵⁶。康熙五十九年（1720年）六月初六日，阿爾布巴攜碩般多、洛隆宗等地城官使者歸附，並繼續為大軍南下擔任向導⁵⁷，在當地首領的幫助下，清軍很快擊敗1719年前來此處攔截四川兵丁的寨桑托克托，控制了碩般多、洛隆宗、察木多三城，並進一步南下，於是打箭爐至拉薩南線隨之啓用。

在經略康區南線入藏要道的同時，滇藏通道亦被納入經略中。滇藏道路的開通主要是通過控制中甸地區完成的。康熙五十七年，康熙以雲南地方近蒙番，令其備兵⁵⁸，併著手經營中甸。由於中甸離巴塘、理塘距離較近，為策應剿撫理塘、巴塘一帶，康熙五十八年六月，都統武格（?-?）被遣至中甸，偵探準噶爾消息，並酌量帶兵接應理塘、巴塘之法喇⁵⁹。都統於同年十二月抵達中甸，沿途勘查進藏路線，在調查中發現「紮雜口乃通西之路，奔雜拉渡口乃通金沙江之渡口。此二

⁵¹ 同上: 62.

⁵² 和碩誠親王胤祉等奏為辦理軍務折。康熙五十八年正月初一日。載《康熙朝滿文朱批奏折匯編: 1351》；《胤禛奏辦理裏塘戶口茶等情折》，康熙五十八年七月二十六日，載《康熙朝滿文朱批奏折匯編》: 1424-15.

⁵³ 清實錄·聖祖實錄(第6冊), 768.

⁵⁴ 陳登龍編. 嘉慶十五年抄本. 裡塘誌略. 臺北: 臺北成文出版社有限公司, 1970: 9-10.

⁵⁵ 黃廷桂等修、張晉生等纂. 雍正. 四川通誌. 欽定四庫全書影印, 卷二十一. 西域; 清實錄·聖祖實錄(第6冊): 781-2.

⁵⁶ 吳豐培編. 撫遠大將軍允禔奏稿. 北京. 全國圖書館文獻縮微複製中心, 1991: 162-3.

⁵⁷ 同上: 142-4.

⁵⁸ 倪蛻輯, 李埏校點. 滇雲歷年傳. 昆明: 雲南大學出版社, 1992: 222.

⁵⁹ 清實錄·聖祖實錄(第6冊): 776.

口俱系通西最要之路」⁶⁰。其中，紮雜口一路由天竺寨至叉木多，奔雜拉渡口即奔子欄渡口，又稱「卜立」渡口，主要由阿墩子至昌都巴宿、洛隆宗一路入藏，武格在兩渡口分別各派兵二十加以防守。中甸原本在和碩特控制下，自 1710 年免派宗官後，地方權力一度旁落至松贊林寺 (Dga' ldan sum rtsen gling) 之手，致使該地和碩特統治較為松懈。隨著武格等人的到來，在中甸蒙古營官隨之選擇歸附清朝。康熙五十九年，都統五阿哥、副都統吳納哈等領兵出金沙江，中甸至藏通道正式啟用。同年二月，中甸、巴塘、理塘劃歸滇省管轄，四月又因為糧草供應問題，巴塘、理塘暫歸川省管轄⁶¹。至此，打箭爐至藏南線及中甸入藏通道基本啟用，清朝中央政府勢力由雅礱江以東進一步推進至西邊之理塘，直至金沙江之巴塘、叉木多及中甸一帶。康熙五十九年四月，清軍正式兵分兩路進藏平定準噶爾之亂，康區打箭爐至藏南路及滇藏一線正式開通。

三 打箭爐北線的信息輸送與開通

由打箭爐經霍爾、得爾革（即德格）⁶²一線入藏線路大體與今由康北入藏路線基本相同。康熙五十八年六月，年羹堯為防禦準噶爾，已在霍爾一線做出相應的防禦措施，並在《預備進藏兵數折》中，將該線路與南線並列列出，試圖作為率軍入藏路線加以考慮，但這一線並未在驅準保藏行動中得到啟用。其作為信息輸送渠道及進藏要道正式啟用始於平定羅卜藏丹津叛亂行動中。1723 年，羅卜藏丹津發動叛亂。清廷基於準噶爾叛亂中從康南一線及滇藏一線進兵的成功經驗，將打箭爐南北二線、滇藏一線，共計三線全部納入圍剿羅卜藏丹津的重要進軍路線中。

其中，打箭爐北線被納入信息輸送要道推動者岳鐘琪和周瑛。雍正元年四月初，雲貴總督高其倬（1676-1738）得到線報稱青海諸臺吉已在青海集結兵力，準備反叛⁶³。為進一步獲取羅卜藏丹津信息，雍正元年四月初五日，岳鐘琪在年羹堯的授意下，派遣外委千總冶大雄（?-1756）等持賞，前去德格，準備從德格入手，獲取羅蔔藏丹津及藏地的信息：

⁶⁰ 清實錄·聖祖實錄(第 6 冊): 790.

⁶¹ 清實錄·聖祖實錄(第 6 冊): 799.

⁶² 清代文獻中，德格一詞主要有疊爾格，得爾格幾種寫法。

⁶³ 雲貴總督高其倬奏陳籌備滇省防務情形折.雍正元年四月初五日. 臺北國立故宮博物院編.宮中檔雍正朝奏折(第 1 輯). 臺北: 國立故宮博物院, 1997: 164-8.

令該寨頭目遣親信之人前往羅卜藏丹盡所屬之霍耳一帶地方密行探聽,如西海果有蠢動,一面飛報裡塘等處駐防官弁,一面調集番兵堵截要路,果能實心恭順,自當題請授職。⁶⁴

北線獲取羅卜藏丹津信息首先在德格展開。五月,由打箭爐派往霍爾一線探聽信息的蠻頭人沙加,帶回了羅卜藏丹津將聯合霍爾與崗孜(甘孜, Dkar mdzes)周圍那雲並紮喇嘛一同攻打德格的信息。於是,羅卜藏丹津將攻打德格的信息不脛而走。為防止羅卜藏丹津攻破德格一線,進而騷擾理塘已招撫的熟番,岳鐘琪一面令化林協副將張成隆帶兵四百名,調黎雅、峨邊兵丁各二百,木坪土兵五百,駐於瀘定橋防探;一面飛咨周瑛暫住理塘獲取藏地和羅卜藏丹津的信息⁶⁵,北線遂被啟用。德格為防禦羅卜藏丹津的進攻,投誠清廷,成為輔助松潘一線收取羅蔔藏丹津信息的重鎮,六月德格土司給清廷的一封藏文信件中稱:

前日聞得西海眾王子要發兵到我地方來,我所以差人往西海去探聽信息。今差官到我地方的第三日,我差去西海的人也回來了,說西海眾王子議的事情,額爾得呢額爾克沒有來,竹浪兒子病了,竹浪也沒有來,又差人去請竹浪說黃臺吉怎麼吩咐就是了,也沒有來。竹浪又對請的人說我的事情在秋天哩說甚麼話的時候,你們自然聽著,為這個事我的兵馬來不來還不知道。羅不藏丹盡營盤原在阿鑾布勒地方,我的人來的時候,他移了兩天路,在鄂畢駐紮了。眾王子的兵馬都是便宜著的往那裏去,我的人也不知道。這是我盡衷心投的信子。⁶⁶

德格以為清廷採取羅蔔藏丹津在青海之信息為條件,投誠清廷,意圖得到印信號紙。岳鐘琪亦認為利用德格採取羅蔔藏丹津在青海的動態,結合青海西寧及松潘二線採取的信息可以很好的分析青海諸臺吉的意圖。於是,周瑛「領川兵兩千名,由打箭爐出口,自霍爾、甘孜一

⁶⁴ 四川提督岳鐘琪奏陳西海附近目前情勢折,雍正元年五月初九日,臺北國立故宮博物院編,宮中檔雍正朝奏折(第1輯),臺北:國立故宮博物院,1997: 237.

⁶⁵ 同上.

⁶⁶ 四川提督岳鐘琪奏陳的革情願歸誠效力折,雍正元年六月十六日,臺北國立故宮博物院編,宮中檔雍正朝奏折(第1輯),臺北:國立故宮博物院,1997: 343-4.遺憾的是筆者並沒有找到這封信件的藏文版本,不能一一還原漢文中的人名和地名.

帶招撫未順番夷」⁶⁷，北線隨之開通，成為了清朝獲取藏地信息的另一通道。

綜上所述，康藏通道及其相關網絡體系逐步得到完善，在清朝以後西藏善後行動中發揮了重要作用。1724年，在平定羅布藏丹津叛亂時，時為管理打箭爐稅課事務扎薩克喇嘛（*da jiyān lu-i ba-i baita cifu* *be kadalame icihiyara jāsak lama*）粗勒齊木藏布拉木占巴及副官依特格爾便向清廷報告了在巴爾喀木等地動員康區各大寺院、第巴準備與準格爾決一死戰的告示，這份告示由理塘堪布桑結羣培（*sanggiei cuimpil*）所遣的所南（*sonam*）、昂噶（*angg'a*）送至打箭爐處，由粗勒齊木藏布拉木占巴等翻譯後呈報清廷⁶⁸。由此可見，打箭爐一線啓用後在清廷獲取西藏地方及蒙古諸部的信息方面的重要作用。1727年，為探聽康濟肅被殺的確切情況。岳鐘琪因擔心內地與西藏「相隔甚遠，凡有緊要奏折，皆系唐古特之人賚送，恐伊等稽遲迨誤」，遴選四川提標中通曉藏語、熟諳「彝情」的千總吳鎮前往理塘、巴塘、乍丫、察木多駐防，傳遞奏報，并探聽西藏消息，時時奏報⁶⁹，這為清朝了解西藏地方情形，進一步採取行動提供了信息支持。

除去探聽信息外，康藏通道的啓用及相關機構的設置，對於清廷探索藏地知識大有裨益。雍正元年，粗勒齊木藏布拉木占巴依令調查嘉雪彭噶（*rgyal shod phan bkā*，在今那曲比如縣境內）喇嘛名號及寺廟名稱呈報清廷。這些準確的信息使清廷與那曲地區的彭噶朗嘉林（*Phan bkā rnam rgyal gling*）寺洛桑絳巴（*Blo bzang byams pa*）建立了聯繫，這一聯繫為清軍入藏和作戰提供了相應的烏拉支持⁷⁰。

結論

清朝初年，康雍二帝及邊疆大吏對藏地信息知識的興趣與獲取主要源於清中央政府用兵西藏，其交通驛站的經營主要是為入藏轉運糧餉兵丁、經營西藏地方政府而服務。在此背景下，康藏通道三條支線均啓用和建設於對西藏的重大軍事行動中——西爐之役、驅準保藏、平定羅卜藏丹津叛亂等。在這一過程中，康藏通道在輸送藏地信息知識方面的作用日益顯著。在此背景下，清朝首先通過西爐之戰直接統

⁶⁷ 西藏研究編輯部編，*西藏誌·衛藏通誌合輯*，拉薩：西藏人民出版社，1982：24。

⁶⁸ 臺北國立故宮博物院，*宮中檔雍正朝奏摺*（第28輯）：580-5。

⁶⁹ 中國藏學研究中心等編，岳鐘琪等奏康濟肅被殺即派兵在裏塘等處坐塘急遞西藏文報探聽消息折，元以來西藏地方與中央政府關係檔案史料編，北京：中國藏學出版社，1994：383-4。

⁷⁰ *Rdo rje tshe brtan, Bod gyi yig tshags phyogs bsgrigs* (1). 北京：中國藏學出版社，1997：479；《雍正朝滿文硃批奏摺》（中）：1006。


治打箭爐後，派遣喇嘛和官員常駐打箭爐管理實事務和探聽消息，這是康藏打箭爐至中渡一線形成之始。其次，在驅準保藏行動中，由於西寧一線探聽消息路線屢屢受挫，準噶爾不斷利用打箭爐一線收取清朝方面消息的背景下，打箭爐南線和滇藏一線作為重要的信息知識收取通道得以正式開辟；最後，在平羅不藏丹津叛亂行動中，清廷又巧妙利用德格等打箭爐北線之地收取羅蔔藏丹津在青海的動態，北線信息知識傳遞通道隨之開辟。同時，康藏通道的啓用和建設，又為清廷在整個青藏高原的信息知識信息網絡體系提供了重要的支撐。



Indian *nidhi*, Tibetan *gter ma*, Guru Chos dbang, and a *Kriyātantra* on Treasure Doors: Rethinking Treasure (part two)¹

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Introduction

umerous ethnographic studies have shown that cultures of treasure discovery exist all over the world: in island Greece (Stewart), Bulgaria (Valtchinova), Bolivia (Taussig), Mexico (Foster), Turkish Armenia (von Bieberstein), the pre-modern Islamic world (Cooperson), western esoteric traditions (Wheeler), 19th century USA (Bushman), contemporary Buryatia (Bernstein), historical Mongolia (Franke), Zanzibar (Walsh), West Africa (Sarro), the Philippines (Kelly), the many treasure phenomena in China (Seidel, ter Haar, Grebnev, et. al.), etc.

As with other widespread cultural phenomena (e.g. ancestor worship or animal sacrifice), while each of these treasure cultures have their own particular features, ethnography has nevertheless identified recurrent cross-cultural patterns: mythic narratives of fabulous hidden wealth, whether spiritual or material; national revival movements; inspirational historical narratives around treasure discoveries that nail

¹ This paper continues the series begun with Mayer, Robert, 2019. "Rethinking Treasure (part one)", *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines*, no. 52, Octobre 2019, pp. 120-185. As with 'part one', the research included here in 'part two' was financed by the German DFG for the research project Cathy Cantwell and I did with Carmen Meinert from 2017–2019 at the Center for Religious Studies (CERES) of the Ruhr-Universität Bochum, *Nyang ral's Codification of rNying ma Literature and Ritual* (ME 2006/3–1). Considerable intellectual stimulation to write this paper came out of the interdisciplinary seminar series on treasure discovery convened in Oxford by Anna Sehnalova, Yegor Grebnev, and myself, initially at Merton College, but continuing, after Hilary Term 2019 at Wolfson College. We are grateful to the Tibetan & Himalayan Studies Centre at Wolfson for financial support. I must also acknowledge the immense help of several persons, without whom I could never have written this paper: in alphabetical order, Aleksandra Wentz, Anna Sehnalova, Cathy Cantwell, Dan Martin, Dylan Esler, Joanna Bialek, Jonathan Silk, Natalie Gummer, Ophira Gamliel, P. Ogyan Tenzin Rinpoche, Reinier Langelaar, Ulrike Roesler. In particular, I have to thank my colleague Dylan Esler, and my *kalyāṇamitra* P. Ogyan Tenzin Rinpoche, whose help in producing this paper were exceptionally generous.

together the past with the present towards hopes for the future; the idea of holy books or icons buried long ago for recovery today; secret languages and scripts and other mysterious ancient objects; prophesied and destined treasure finders; a moral ambivalence adhering to improper treasure recovery; a cosmology encompassing territorial spirits who guard hidden treasures in the earth; the potentially dangerous nature of the treasure-guarding spirits; the economic need for material resources; an often shared vocabulary with minerology and mining; a cosmological understanding that encompasses both broader economic wellbeing and specific treasure discovery; and so forth. Each of the ethnographic studies referred to above encompasses at least one, and in most cases several, of these recurrent themes.

A major consideration for us in approaching these various treasure cultures, not least those of both India and Tibet, is classification: what we moderns might deem buried treasure need not conform at all with pre-modern classifications. Treasure seeking has had a venerable history. Perhaps from as early as the Chalcolithic, and certainly from the Bronze Age onwards, humans have depended economically on locating underground ores of minerals such as copper, tin, iron, gold, and silver, or deposits of valuable gemstones such as lapis lazuli, jade, or rubies; but these have never been the only valuable items recovered from the earth, and they do not even begin to sum up the entirety of the earth's bounty. For us moderns, minerology, water-divining, identifying fertile locations, archaeology, or revealing through visionary guidance long-buried religious texts and objects, might appear altogether different specializations, yet in pre-modern thinking, they could be (and often were) different aspects of the same or related skill sets.² Likewise, a surprisingly good harvest or the sudden booming of a local trade economy could be explained as the manifestation of a previously hidden treasure, through its guardian deity. Such occurrences could be understood through the same or closely related cosmological explications as the discovery in the ground of sacred books, precious gems, lucrative mineral deposits, mysterious buried antiquities, or underground waters. Even the entombment of one's ancestors could (and did in Tibet) implicate these same cosmologies.

India and early Tibet were no exceptions to global patterns. Both had their own highly complex understandings of treasure. I share with most Tibetologists the rather uncontroversial view that to achieve the

² In our familiar subject matter of Tibet, for example, there is a considerable convergence of the vocabulary of mineral hunting with the vocabulary of treasure hunting, going back to the *Mahāvīyūtpatti* and possibly even earlier. Hence, we have such terms as *gter kha*, *gter rāzas*, *gter khul*, and even the word *gter* itself, which belong simultaneously to the vocabularies of the mineralogist and the Rnying ma *gter ston*.

goal of understanding the emergence of the Tibetan and especially the Rnying ma *gter ma* traditions, we need first to understand something about each of these treasure cultures individually, and then look at their interactions.³ We need to approach the tasks through historical, anthropological, and textual lenses, to understand how the various treasure cultures and practices coalesced into what we now know as *gter ma*. Since we already have excellent data on some of the early Tibetan notions of treasure from scholars such as Davidson (2005, 2006) and Hazod (2009, 2010, 2016a, 2016b, 2018, 2019), and now too from some younger scholars such as Bialek (2015, 2018, 2019), Langelaar (2017, forthcoming), and Sehnalova (forthcoming), I feel the time is ripe to begin researching some of the Indian Buddhist ideas about treasure that we can be certain came to Tibet with Buddhism, because these are not so far known to Tibetology. I shall also necessarily look at the reception of these Indian ideas about treasure in Tibet. When I have made further progress in understanding the latter topics, I will return once again to a yet more concentrated study of indigenous Tibetan ideas (not least the funerary practices), and then try to see in more detail how the Tibetan and the Indian cultures interacted. It is in this spirit that I offer the imperfect translation on treasure-finding from the Indian *Āryavidyottamamahātantra* below, along with some more general Indian ideas about treasure, and an introduction to the early reception of these Indian ideas in Tibet.

In a recent publication, "Rethinking Treasure (part one)", originally published in *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines*, no. 52, Octobre 2019, I presented a preliminary roadmap outlining twelve so far underexplored research avenues that might contribute towards a deeper understanding of the historical origins of *gter ma*. In the present paper, I concentrate specifically on the seventh of the twelve, the early tantric Buddhist *Kriyātantras*, although space does not permit me to repeat some basic observations about treasure practices in *Kriyātantra* made previously (Mayer 2019: 161-167).⁴ However, *Kriyātantra* treasure practices themselves cannot possibly be understood without some contextualization within the wider field of Indian treasure beliefs. Thus, I include in this paper a brief introduction to the vast and diverse treasure-finding traditions of India, very little of which has so far been studied by Tibetologists. In addition, the significance of all of the above towards the formation

³ Perhaps to this already complex task, we might have to add a little historical consideration during the 13th to 14th centuries of the powerful ancestral treasure traditions of the Mongol emperors, which were quintessentially political in nature, but not simply adopted from the Chinese (Franke 1978).

⁴ As far as I am aware, the only other mention of these so far within a Tibetological context comes in some peripheral comments contained in my 2007 study of Asura caves and *pātālas*. The present paper deals with very different issues and sources.

of Tibet's *gter ma* traditions cannot be understood without at least some reference to their reception in Tibet, so that I also enrich my discussion with a study of the writings of Guru Chos dbang, himself an accomplished practitioner of the Vajrapāṇi tantras, through which deity so much of the Indian ideas about *nidhi* entered Tibet. Nevertheless, the reader should be aware that this paper purports only to address very specific strands contributing to the emergence of the complex and syncretic *gter ma* traditions of Tibet: it certainly does not purport to give a comprehensive account, which could only (in my opinion) be achieved once all the research avenues outlined in "Rethinking Treasure (part one)" (and more!) have been addressed.

In 1994, Janet Gyatso published an extremely valuable study of Guru Chos dbang's (1220-1270) *Gter 'byung chen mo*, the earliest known comprehensive presentation of *gter ma* preserved in Tibetan. As Gyatso points out, this substantial work, written by Myang ral's famous dharma heir, is the earliest treatise dedicated solely and specifically to the explication of what *gter ma* actually is (by contrast, previous mentions of *gter ma* from earlier sources such as the students of Gnubs, or Myang ral, discuss *gter ma* only in passing, or within particular contexts). I too had the great good fortune to enjoy many hours in Sarnath in 2017-18 studying the *Gter 'byung chen mo* with the learned P. Ogyan Tanzin Rinpoche.⁵

One of the most salient points mentioned by Gyatso in her groundbreaking study was the surprisingly wide breadth and scope of what could constitute *gter* in Chos dbang's understanding. As Gyatso remarked, for Chos dbang, *gter* could include the natural resources of the earth such as timber or bodies of water, building materials, geographical locations such as hidden valleys, Buddhist scriptures of all kinds, *stūpas* invisible to ordinary mortals, texts on calculation or astrology, medicine, arts, architecture, or magic, Bon texts, sundry ritual objects and objects of power, medicines, wish-fulfilling jewels, riches of gold and jewels, the Buddha Nature, and more. As Gyatso (1994: 276) writes, "We almost begin to suspect that Guru Chos dbang is going to argue that everything is a kind of Treasure", and "Guru Chos dbang's study is exceptional in the breadth of what he stakes out for inclusion under the rubric of Treasure: not only are virtually all Buddhist scriptures so categorised, but also a wide variety of worldly

⁵ The *Gter 'byung chen mo* does not come out of the Chos dbang materials preserved and redacted at Mindroling in the 17th century. Rather, it comes from a rare manuscript that was discovered in Bhutan in the library of one Khenpo Choedak, and reproduced by the late H. H. Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, who included it in Chapter 9 of his *Rin chen gter mdzod chen po'i rgyab chos*. For several reasons (of provenance, of internal contents, archaic language, etc.), I concur with Janet Gyatso's conclusions that it represents an authentic survival of Guru Chos dbang's actual work.

materials and techniques for achieving secular aims".⁶ My readings in this text with P. Ogyan Tanzin Rinpoche concur with Gyatso's conclusions. Furthermore, as Andreas Doctor (2005: 26) points out, the next major work of this genre, Ratna gling pa's (1403-78) *Gter 'byung chen mo gsal ba'i sgron me*, follows Guru Chos dbang in this respect.

What is less well known in Tibetological circles is that in casting such a remarkably inclusive net for his definitions of treasure, Chos dbang and his successors were very much in accord with well-established and widely prevalent Indian understandings of Treasure (*nidhi*) that had entered Tibet along with Buddhism. Gyatso (1993:26) has already very accurately remarked on the 'overarching Buddhist perspective from which Guru Chos-dbang presents the Treasure tradition': what we can now add to Gyatso's excellent account is that there is also clear textual evidence that Chos dbang was in some degree cognisant of Indian Buddhist understandings of treasure, and made some actual use of them in his attempt to construct his Buddhist account of *gter ma*. In the pages below, I shall therefore enrich my discussions of Indian treasure beliefs and texts with illustrations of their influences on the *Gter 'byung chen mo*, and show how its author combined Tibetan and Indian ideas to create that unique mélange which became Rnying ma *gter ma*.

The Indian term that Tibetans consistently translated into *gter* was *nidhi*. In her groundbreaking study of the *nidhivādins*, the typically tantric specialised treasure hunters of medieval India, the French philologist Nalini Balbir observes that consulting the standard dictionaries alone cannot offer us a sufficient account of the full life and extent of the relevant terminology, and that a survey of narrative literature is needed to demonstrate its true reality. Might their perhaps modest lexicographic representation be related to the low status that treasure finders and their art can sometimes have, even when their discoveries might be important?⁷ But even if not fully sufficient, the existing dictionaries do nevertheless have something to offer us, and are still worth consulting. The Sanskrit *nidhā* derives from the verbal root *ni+√*

⁶ Gyatso 1994: 279.

⁷ 'Les dictionnaires usuels rendent insuffisamment compte de leur vitalité, mais des sondages opérés dans la littérature narrative montrent qu'elle est réelle.' Balbir 1993: 19. Regarding their sometimes low status, Balbir cites a few examples, (pages 22-25) and Dagmar Wujastyk informs me (personal communication, 23rd January 2022) the *Rasārnava* (11th or 12th century) presents *khanya-* and *nidhivādins* as somewhat inferior to *rasavādins*. The sometimes low status of treasure finders, even when their discoveries might be important, is widely attested in the cross-cultural ethnographic record. A striking example is offered in Stewart 2012, where one of the most important pilgrimage sites of contemporary Greek Orthodoxy, Kóronos, issued from the miraculous religious treasure discoveries of low status free-lance emery miners, who still remain disparaged by the clerical hierarchy.

dhā, with a primary meaning of 'to put', or 'to place', or 'to set down', and has secondary meanings that include 'to give, impart to, deposit with', 'to bury, conceal, or hide (as under ground)', 'to lay up, treasure up'.⁸ Thus the noun *nidhi* has such meanings as 'receptacle', 'store-house', 'treasury', 'a treasure, store, hoard (for the nine treasures (*navanidhi*) of Kubera)', 'an epithet of Kubera (*nidhinātha*)', 'the art of finding treasure (*nidhivāda*)', etc.⁹

In contrast to the ancient and very widely attested usages of the Sanskrit term *nidhi*, it is interesting that there are no known occurrences of the Tibetan word *gter* in surviving Old Tibetan texts, outside of Buddhist usage.¹⁰ At my request, Joanna Bialek has very kindly tried to establish the possible early meanings of the word *gter*. Bialek informs me that the word-family is weakly preserved, and *gter* and *ster* are only seldom used in Old Tibetan texts, so it is very difficult to reconstruct their early history. She does however suggest that since *g-* is a nominalising prefix inherited from Proto-Trans-Himalayan, an original meaning of the verb root *√ter* might have been something like *"to accumulate; to heap, to pile"*. Her analysis, which still remains provisional, runs to two pages, too much to reproduce here, and includes a study of the entire word family, several cognate languages, etc. But she also writes: "Since we don't have any non-Buddhist attestation of *gter* in OT (as far as the sources at my disposal show) it could be that the term was deliberately coined to render Skr. *nidhi/nidhāna*".¹¹ To Bialek's

⁸ From Apte's dictionary s.v. निधा *nidhā* 3 U. 1 To place, put, put or set down; शिरसि निदधानोऽञ्जलिपुटम् *Bh.3.123; R.3.50,62;12.52; Si. 1.13.* -2 To confide, or entrust, commit to the care of; निदधे विजयाशंसां चापे सीतां च लक्ष्मणे *R.12.44;15.36.* -3 To give, impart to, deposit with; दिनान्ते निहितं तेजः सवित्रेव हुताशनः *R.4.1.* -4 To put down, lay, allay, restrain; सलिलैर्निहितं रजः क्षितौ *Ghaṭ.1.* -5 To bury, conceal or hide (as under ground); ऊनद्विवाषिकं प्रेतं निदध्युर्बान्धवा बहिः *Ms.5.68.* -6 To fix or direct the thoughts upon; cf. निध्मै. -7 To determine, resolve. -8 To direct one's labours, endeavour. -9 To appoint. -10 To remove, relinquish. -11 To lay up, treasure up. -12 To remember, keep or bear in mind. -13 To end, close.

⁹ From Apte's dictionary s.v. निधिः *nidhiḥ* [नि-धा-आधारे कि] 1 Abode, receptacle, reservoir; जल°, तोय°, तपोनिधि &c. -2 A store-house, treasury. -3 A treasure, store, hoard (for the nine treasures of Kubera, see नवनिधि). -4 The ocean. -5 An epithet of Viṣṇu. -6 A man endowed with many good qualities. -7 the science of chronology; *Ch. Up.7.2.1.* -Comp. -ईशः, नाथः an epithet of Kubera; *Bhāg.10.50.56.* -वाद्: the art of finding treasure. -वासः the town of *Newāsā* on the *Pravarā* river in the *Ahmednagar* District; Cf. निधिवासकर-परमा- नन्द-प्रकाशितायां... संहितायां1 Colophon of *Śiva. B.2.*

¹⁰ I am aware of it only in the *De ga g.yu tshal smon lam*, PT 16 31r2, and in the Buddhist compendium of magic, IOL Tib J 401, which has a *nidhi* finding rite.

¹¹ Personal communication, Joanna Bialek, 1st June 2021. As clarification to a further question of mine, Bialek explained that the mere fact that the word-family has only a few members need not in itself tell us very much about Tibetan social history.

speculation, I tentatively add one of my own: that the Tibetan term *gter* might have had a pre-Buddhist history in the terminology of mining (see note 2 above).

1. *Nidhi as a cultural category in Indian thinking*

The manifold cultural, economic, and religious, interpretations and performances regarding *nidhi* were certainly not obscure in 8th-13th century India, in the centuries in which Buddhism was transmitted from there to Tibet. They were well-known, then as now, and still remain widespread across a broad range of popular Indian literature, as well as in more recherché religious or learned texts. Perhaps the single best-known example of *nidhi* in Indian culture is the famous list of nine treasures (*navanidhi*) primarily and normally associated with the popular wealth deity, Kubera, who is king of the *yakṣas*, the guardians of wealth (but more rarely these nine treasures can also be attributed to several other figures, such as Hanuman, or *Cakravartin* monarchs, etc). As a boon from Brahmā, Kubera owns all the riches of the earth, including not only all the minerals and jewels that can be mined out of the ground, but also all the riches that humanity could possibly possess, whether manufactured, agricultural, or commercial. According to the influential traditions of Amarasimha's *Nāmaliṅgānuśāsana* lexicon, usually known as the *Amarakoṣa* or *Amarakośa*, (perhaps Buddhist in origin, probably dating from somewhere between the 5th to 7th centuries), these nine *nidhis* are named: *Padma* (Lotus), *Mahāpadma* (Great Lotus), *Śaṅkha* (Conch), *Makara* (Crocodile), *Kacchapa* (Tortoise), *Mukunda* (a gemstone?), *Kunda* (Jasmine), *Nīla* (Sapphire), and *Kharva* (Dwarf).

Discussions regarding what precisely each of these nine mysteriously named treasure categories might actually contain have been

Words going in and out of use over time is absolutely normal in any language. "Word-extinction" need have no social bearing (unless otherwise bound to social changes). Hence there is no need to infer from this that, for example, indigenous cosmologies of treasures, resources, or wealth linked to territorial deities did not exist before Buddhism. Yet here the change in terminology might also be linked to cultural and social change. With Buddhicisation, indigenous traditions of offering the territorial deities animals and items linked to *g.yang* such as bundles of wool, seem to have been augmented with and perhaps sometimes even replaced by Indian Buddhist traditions with a similar purport. In these Indian Buddhist traditions, treasure vases (*gter bum*) were buried to pacify and win over potentially dangerous spirits of the landscape (see note 78 below). This particular change to an important ritual practice might have been a driver of new vocabulary, ushering in increased usage of the translational word *gter*. On a different note, Bialek further observes that terminological questions remain about the implications of the suffix *-ma* and how meanings of *gter* and *gter ma* might have been differentiated (personal communication, 7 September 2021).

endless, and different sources have arrived at numerous and varied conclusions. Indeed, they are not always even counted as nine.¹² As Norman concluded (see below), *nidhi* had such a long history in so many diverse Indian traditions that its understandings became profuse and variegated with the passing of time. But the predominant interpretations very typically included not only specific riches such as gemstones and gold that we might commonly think of as treasures, but also the wider natural resources of the earth, techniques for achieving secular aims, personal qualities both mundane and sublime, sacred texts, magical techniques, and much, much, more.

To illustrate this point, it might be helpful to consider one example (out of a many) that we know were current and influential in India during the period when the Tibetan *gter ma* tradition emerged. As Norman (1992: 184-5) describes, a set of nine *nidhis* were described by the famous Jain author, Hemacandra (1088-1173), in his *Triṣaṣṭiśālākāpuruṣacaritra*, who explained that [1] the *nidhi Naiṣarpa* is the origin of the building of camps, cities, villages, mines, towns approached by land or sea, and isolated towns; [2] the *nidhi Pāṇḍuka* is the origin of all bulk, weight, and height, and of all numbers, and of grains and seeds; [3] the *nidhi Piṅgala* is the origin of the whole business of ornaments, for both humans and animals; [4] the *nidhi Sarvaratna* is the origin of the Cakravartin's jewels; [5] the *nidhi Mahāpadma* is the origin of all clothing; [6] the *nidhi Kāla* is the origin of knowledge of the past, present and future, also of labour such as agriculture, and the arts [7] the *nidhi Mahākāla* is the origin of coral, silver, gold, pearls, iron, etc. and their mines; [8] the *nidhi Māṇava* is the origin of soldiers, weapons, armour, the sciences of fighting, and the administration of justice; [9] and the *nidhi Śaṅkha* is the origin of poetry, concerts, dramatic arts, and musical instruments.¹³

In some accounts, the *nidhis* could appear to become personified as deities and worshiped, whilst keeping their essential meaning of riches or treasures, because Buddhist, brahmanical and Jain traditions alike gave the same names to the deities who protected the *nidhis*, as to the *nidhis* themselves.¹⁴ The *nidhis*, and/or their protecting deities, could signal particular qualities in persons connected with or marked by them, as described in Purāṇas such as the *Garuḍa* (Chapter 53) and the

¹² Although K.R. Norman (1992: 185, note 12) observes that the nine-fold structure was so widespread (even if the names and qualities of the nine were not standardised) that the word *nidhi* could be used in inscriptions simply to indicate the numeral '9'.

¹³ Hemacandra's list is based on a canonical Jain text, the *Ṭhānaṅga-sutta*, while his famous lexicon or dictionary of synonyms, the *Abhidhānacintāmaṇi*, also has an entry for *nidhi*. See Norman 1992: 184.

¹⁴ Norman 1992: 185, 187.

Mārkaṇḍeya (Chapter 68), both of which share a similar list of eight (rather than nine) *nidhis* belonging to Kubera. In later tantric cults, personified *nidhis* or *nidhi* protectors appeared within the entourage of Lakṣmī, the Goddess of Wealth.

In other accounts, the *nidhis* can take on more spiritual aspects in parallel to their original worldly aspects. As well as describing *nidhis* as inexhaustible sources of jewels, the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* also likens the Buddhas themselves to inexhaustible treasures;¹⁵ similar juxtapositions of comparatively inferior worldly with more superior spiritual versions of *nidhi* occur also in several other Buddhist texts, such as the *Āryasāgaramatipariṣcchāsūtra*¹⁶ and the *Avikalpapraveśadhāraṇī*.¹⁷ Likewise, in a contemporary Sikh teaching, meditation on the guru is said to attract parallel lists of the nine worldly *nidhis* and the nine spiritual *nidhis*, where the former are named according to the *Amarakoṣa* (see above) and interpreted here to mean (1) offspring, (2) jewels, (3) foods, (4) military prowess, (5) clothes and grains, (6) gold, (7) successful trade in gems, (8) arts, and (9) riches of all kinds; while the latter are (1) faith, (2) devotion, (3) contentment, (4) detachment, (5) acceptance, (6) equipoise, (7) delight, (8) joy, and (9) awakening.¹⁸

¹⁵ Chapter 6 describes "a house in which there are always four inexhaustible treasures, replete with all kinds of jewels, which never decrease, although all the poor and wretched may partake of them to their satisfaction" (translation from 84000) (*khyim 'di na rin po che thams cad kyis gang ba zad mi shes pa'i gter chen po bzhi yod de/ de'i mthus sems can dbul zhing phongs pa thams cad kyis khyer te dong yang zad mi shes te*) (Sde dge 176, Vol 60, 212b). Chapter Seven (217a-b) describes how the Buddhas can transform themselves into treasures, to enable impoverished beings to generate bodhicitta (*sems can dbul po rnam la ni/ zad mi shes pa'i gter du gyur/ gang la sbyin pa byin pa yang / de dag byang chub sems bskyed btsud*). In Chapter 11 (234b), we read that "Those living beings who understand correctly this teaching of the Dharma will obtain the precious treasure of the Dharma" (*chos kyi rnam grangs 'di gang dag gi sug par thob par gyur pa de dag kyang chos rin po che'i gter rnyed par gyur ro*).

¹⁶ See for example the sustained analogy between the treasure of Dharma (*chos rin po che'i gter chen po*) and a great worldly treasure (*gter chen po*), described in Chapter Eight of this text. Sde dge 152, Vol 58, 72a-73a.

¹⁷ In Part One of this text, an analogy is made between mining ever deeper into the earth to extract increasingly precious minerals (*gter chen po*), finally arriving at the wish-fulfilling gem (*yiḍ bzhin gyi nor bu rin po che'i gter chen po*), and 'digging' ever deeper within one's own mind, finally to arrive at the non-conceptual. Sde dge 142, Vol 57, folios 4a-4b.

¹⁸ 'Meditate on Guru Teg Bahadar and the Nine Treasures shall come running to you'. *Sikh Dharma International* website, accessed 28th June 2021: <https://www.sikhdharma.org/guru-teg-bahadar-nine-treasures/>. Although this is a contemporary text, it usefully captures traditional Sikh thinking on the nine *nidhis* (*nav nidh*), which seems to be a greatly favoured topic in Sikhism. There are more than a hundred references to the nine *nidhis* in the Sikh holy book, the *Guru Granth Sahib*, many attributed to the first of their ten gurus, Nānak (1469 -1539): for example, on page 149, line 13; 220 line 19; 352 line 19; 356 line 6; 438 line 11; 473 line 3; and more. As one would expect from a tradition so committed to the

Whilst following the same general ideas about *nidhi* as brahmanic and Jain texts, one should note that according to Norman (1992: 187), Indian Buddhist texts do not usually reflect the widespread nine-fold structure of the other Indian traditions. While resembling brahmanic and Jain sources in seldom agreeing very exactly on what the various *nidhis* are, Buddhist texts across a wide range of genres and periods do generally agree in preferring a four-fold structure. It seems that the four-fold enumeration became somewhat emblematic of being Buddhist. This could be because the fourfold *nidhi* structure has very ancient origins in Buddhism. Pāli texts speak of the four *nidhis*, describing them as having great size, and being contained in pots. In the Pāli tradition, as Norman (1992:188) points out, the four *nidhis* were also included among the seven co-natals (*saha-jāta*) that appeared spontaneously when a Buddha was born (others co-natals included his mount Kanthaka, his spouse Yaśodharā, his charioteer Chandaka, the Bodhi tree, etc.). Perhaps with this tradition as the point of departure, as Norman points out (1992:187), the *Divyāvadāna*, the *Mahāvastu*, and even the Khotanese *Book of Zambasta*, list where the four *nidhis* are located; the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* states that the four *nidhis* are filled with jewels and are inexhaustible (see note 15 above); and the Chinese version of the *Maitreyavyākaraṇa* has four *nidhis* that are filled with gold, silver, *maṇi*, and *vaiḍūrya*. Norman's list is not exhaustive: the *Karmaśataka* for example also describes a merchant as rich as Vaiśravaṇa, in front of whose house four great treasures appeared, brimming with jewels that never seemed to increase or decrease, even if hundreds or thousands of them were removed (Sde dge 340, volume 73, F.93.b). According to Norman, the *Divyāvadāna* names the four *nidhis* as *Pāṇḍuka*, *Piṅgala*, *Śaṅkha*, and *Elāpatra* and it should be noted that these are also the names of the four great *nāga* kings (*mahārāja*) who guard them, and who are famous in several texts of Indian Buddhism.¹⁹ The *Mahāvastu* names them similarly but with *Paduma* instead of *Pāṇḍuka*.

K. R. Norman's study of the nine *nidhis* was specifically focused on their important role within the mythology of the Cakravartin monarchs, but he also examined a range of related materials. One of his

religious lay life, both spiritual and worldly wealth are encompassed. Thus one finds in the Guru Granth Sahib: "The nine treasures of the Naam are within, O my soul; the Great Guru has made me see the unseen Lord" (Guru Ram Dass, page 539, line 9) and "Only then can the soul-bride obtain the nine treasures of her Beloved" (Guru Nānak, page 750 line 17); as well as "Wealth, the supernatural spiritual powers of the Siddhas, and the nine treasures come to those who meditate on the Lord" (Guru Arjan Dev, page 534, line 4) and "The nine treasures, riches and the miraculous spiritual powers of the Siddhas cling to the feet of the Lord's humble servant." (Guru Arjan Dev, page 679, line 10.) Regarding the above page references, note that every copy of the Guru Granth Sahib has 1,430 pages, and every copy is identical.

¹⁹ Vogel 1926: 107, 210-211.

conclusions is that since *nidhi* occurs from a very early date and in broadly parallel but rather differing forms across such a very wide range of Jain, Buddhist, Epic, Purāṇic, and sundry other materials,²⁰ *nidhi* was probably a very old category of Indian folk religion that had become differently transformed within these diverse traditions over very long periods of time.

For it is indeed the case that *nidhi* is very typically, and was from the earliest literature onwards, associated with *yakṣas* and *nāgas*, traditionally constructed as local deities of the landscape, whose worship was undoubtedly very ancient. Despite any specialised elaborations of their roles over time, one can see from numerous sources that *yakṣas* and *nāgas* remained nature spirits of the Indian landscape, who often owned and guarded the treasures buried in their soil, especially at the roots of their trees, in their fields or ant heaps, or in their waters. In this, it seems they approximately resembled their Tibetan counterparts, the many classes of Tibetan territorial deities or *yul lha*, who have innumerable names and a varying terminology (e.g. *gzhi bdag*, *sa bdag*, etc.), but whom in this paper, I am rather arbitrarily going to refer to as *yul lha* (for those, like *yakṣas*, mainly connected with land) and *klu* (for those, like *nāgas*, particularly connected with waters). In Tibetan thinking, such *yul lha* and *klu* owned and guarded the *gter* treasures buried in the territories that they patrolled. In Tibet, the very idea of *yul lha* and *klu* often doesn't fully make sense without the treasures that they guard within their territories, and it seems that a similar view pertained in India regarding *yakṣas* and *nāgas*: although, like Tibetan *yul lha* and *klu*, they had many other aspects too, guarding or controlling treasure was certainly of their essence.

I am not suggesting anything like uniformity between these Tibetan territorial deities and their Indian counterparts: on the contrary, they surely were and still remain endlessly differentiated both internally (within Tibet, and within India,) and cross-culturally (between the Tibetan and Indian cultural fields). Such territorial deities must surely have had innumerable and often quite different natures and meanings to their local populations. For example, one important Tibetan pattern (albeit of yet unascertained prevalence) was to revere and worship *yul lha* as ancestors, thus giving them a very specific type of reverence, honour and importance, and also intersectionality with human populations, that I am not so far aware of from Indian sources. Such ancestral Tibetan *yul lha* and *klu* could be guardians of treasure, either directly, or indirectly through a subordinate deity. By contrast, although *yakṣas* and *nāgas* were often revered, especially when

²⁰ It is regrettable that Norman was not able to include in his typically excellent and erudite study the considerable body of Indian tantric materials on *nidhi*.

converted to Dharma protectors or acting as benign territorial deities, Indian treasure-finding texts themselves can be quite dismissive of or even abusive towards the deities who guard the treasure, in a way that is probably not so typical of Tibetan treasure-finding practices.²¹ Such-like variations in the natures of the treasure-guarding deities seem to have contributed to differences between the various Indian and Tibetan treasure cults, a complex and largely anthropological theme that I hope to explore further in a subsequent paper in this multi-part series 'Rethinking Treasure'.²²

Yet despite any such differences, however great they might be, to the systematising eye of clerical Buddhism there was one important thing many of these various Indian and Tibetan territorial deities had in common: they could often be shoe-horned into a particular set of niches within the learned Buddhist cosmology, and thereby rendered controllable and even useful. It is noteworthy that within many Indian texts, not least Buddhist ones, the categories of *yakṣas* and *nāgas* are typically worldly (*laukika*), and thus susceptible to taming or conversion by more transcendent deities. That is not to say that the *yakṣas* and *nāgas* were restricted to 'popular religion' and ignored in the religion of the monks. As scholars such as DeCaroli (2004) have pointed out, when converted to Buddhism, such worldly deities quite clearly became just as important to monastic Buddhism as to the laity, and were

²¹ Respect for the treasure-protecting deities, and the need to offer them compensatory substitutes (*gter tshab*), seems less in evidence in the Indian *Kriyātantra* sources. Thus from the the *Vajrakumāra Tantra* in Chinese (probably citing translated Indic materials) (**Kaṅkrodha-vajrakumāra-bodhisattva-sādhana-vidhi*, *Sheng jiani fennu jin'gang tongzi pusa chengjiu yi gui jing*, T1222a [XXI] 102c10–12) "If the guardians of the treasure obstruct him, then they will be burnt in a mass of fire. They will come screaming to the mantrin and bow before him vanquished..." and also (T1222a [XXI] 107c1–3): "If you need to expel the gods who guard the treasure....take a slab of rock...or some mustard seeds...and cast it at the treasure. The obstructor on the treasure will withdraw..." (Hodge, unpublished). Or from the *Amoghapaśākalparāja* (Sde dge 686, Vol. 92-1-138a): "...as long as you live, the treasure protector will do work for you. Wherever you send it, whatever work you command it, all will be done." Likewise the translated excerpt from the *Ārya-vidyottamamahātantra* below mentions destroying those who obstruct the treasure seeker, piercing the [obstructing] hawks and making them faint, etc. Perhaps also illustrative of this attitude are the many Indian agricultural rituals described in the *Vajratuṇḍasamayakalparāja*, where *nāgas* are typically bullied and overpowered (Hidas 2019).

²² Another difference is that in the densely wooded terrain of ancient India, *yakṣas* were typically associated with the forested landscape and trees, whence the archaic Indian practices of worshipping and making offerings at tree shrines, and then the idea of a wish-fulfilling tree; whilst in Tibet, *yul lha* were typically connected with features within the mountainous landscape. The overlapping similarities between *klu* and *nāgas* are well known.

inscribed within the textual canons of Indian monastic Buddhism at every level, serving as dharma protectors.²³ No doubt, Tibetans would have recognised a parallel here with familiar local patterns, where the categories of *yul lha* and *klu* controlling the *gter* of the natural environment were increasingly seen as converted to Buddhism, and thus extremely useful as dharma protectors, and incorporated into Buddhist ritual. In short, just as the *nidhi* concepts of India were often connected to *yakṣas* and *nāgas* constructed as often localised and comparatively worldly spirits that were subject to Sanskritisation, conversion, and incorporation, by the greater transcendent deities, so also were the *gter* concepts of Tibetan popular belief (I am not here talking about Buddhist *gter ma*) envisaged to be connected with indigenous *yul lha* and *klu* that were subject to Buddhicisation.

In brahmanic myth, the Sanskritisation of the *yakṣas* was often mediated by the mythology of Kubera, a.k.a. *Nidhipati*, *Nidhinātha*, *Nidhīśvara* or *Nidhiguhyakādhipa*, the king of the *yakṣas* who won from Brahmā the boon of lordship over all the treasures of the earth (*nidhi*) and a flowery aerial chariot (*puṣpakavimāna*) drawn by *guhyakas*.²⁴ In Tibet, according to legend, the *yul lha* and *klu* were almost but not completely tamed by Padmasambhava, but enough that he could entrust to them guardianship of his tantric *gter*, which they then protected alongside their original environmental *gter*.

But especially in Indian Buddhist *Kriyātantras* and *Caryātantras*, building on earlier Buddhist mythology, it was often Vajrapāṇi, himself an actual *yakṣa* in so many Buddhist texts and commonly known (like Kubera) as *Guhyakādhipati*, who had mastery over all the *yakṣas*, *nāgas*, and *guhyakas*. This is why Vajrapāṇi became the presiding deity in so many Buddhist tantric rites relating to *nidhi*, one of which I will introduce below. The evolution of Vajrapāṇi in Buddhist thought over the ages has already earned the attention of scholars such as Lamotte and Snellgrove, but undoubtedly a very great deal more still remains to be said. In relation more specifically to those Buddhist texts received

²³ See Robert DeCaroli's *Haunting the Buddha: Indian Popular Religion and the Formation of Buddhism*. Or simply consider the prominent role and great devotion shown to *yakṣa* deities in numerous monastic rituals, such as those of the Medicine Buddha, Jambhala, etc., and their remarkable prevalence in Indian Buddhist sculpture from the earliest times onwards.

²⁴ Misra 1981: 5: 'The Guhyakas were the attendants of Kubera, the lord of concealment, and, as such, they possessed mysterious powers over hidden treasures. For instance, in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, Rāma is represented as capable of looking at what was hidden because Kubera, through a Guhyaka, had made available to him an eye-ointment. The *Mahābhāshya* of Patanjali mentions Kubera as Guhyakādhipati [Lord of Guhyakas]...There appears to be a complete identity between Yakshas and Guhyakas insofar as appearance, possession and concealment of riches, and offering service to Kubera are concerned.'

in Tibet, Vajrapāṇi himself is sometimes straightforwardly identified as a *yakṣa*.²⁵ At other times, for example in Sde dge 498, the *Bhagavan-nīlāmbāradhara-vajrapāṇitantra* (*The Tantra of the Blue-Clad Blessed Vajrapāṇi*), and some other scriptures related to it, Vajrapāṇi is invoked more because of his power to subdue the *nāgas* and *yakṣas*, to acquire the wealth they guard (which does not preclude his own *yakṣa* origins). As the translators of this text into English explain:

The text begins with the bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi requesting the Buddha Akṣobhya to teach a tantra that can tame all evil spirits that live beneath the ground. The notion that an underworld exists in which various forms of evil spirits flourish was well developed in Indian Buddhism since the very early days. Both of the two other *Caryātantra* tantras on Blue-Clad Vajrapāṇi (Toh 499 in seven chapters and Toh 501 in five chapters) share the same theme, unfolding as Vajrapāṇi requests the Buddha to teach the rituals that can tame the *nāgas* and *yakṣas* below the ground and, in the process, accomplish the wealth that they guard and repel the disease that they inflict on humans. These two other tantras thus appear to be slightly condensed (or perhaps earlier) versions of *The Tantra of the Blue-Clad Blessed Vajrapāṇi*.²⁶

²⁵ See e.g. the *Bhaiṣajya-vastu* section of the *Mūlasarvāstivādin vinaya*, 7.213-7.214, where we find the following discourse: "The Blessed One then said to the *yakṣa* Vajrapāṇi, "Vajrapāṇi, let us go to the northern region to convert the *nāga* Apalāla." "Certainly, O Honored One," replied the *yakṣa* Vajrapāṇi to the Blessed One. Thereupon, the Blessed One, along with the *yakṣa* Vajrapāṇi, flew from there across the sky by means of his magical powers. When the Blessed One saw a green forest rising in the distance, he asked the *yakṣa* Vajrapāṇi, "Vajrapāṇi, do you see that green forest rising?" "Yes, I do, O Honored One..." etc. (this translation by 84000). Vajrapāṇi was in fact defined as a *yakṣa* in most of Indian Buddhist history. He appears as such in diverse sources including the *Vinaya*, the *Jātakas*, the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*, the *Lalitavistara*, the *Mahāmāyūrī*, and many more. The *Mahāmāyūrī* is particularly important for identifying numerous *yakṣas* as local deities of specific places in India, and it describes Vajrapāṇi as the *yakṣa* protector of the important Buddhist location of Rājagṛha (Misra 1981: 167). For an easily accessible example, see page 205 of Conze's *Perfect Wisdom in 8,000 Lines*: "Furthermore, Vajrapāṇi, the great Yaksha, constantly and always follows behind the irreversible Bodhisattva."

²⁶ Introduction section i4, in the version produced by the Dharmachakra Translation Committee for 84000. I would elaborate slightly on the wording of this tantra by pointing out that in other sources, *yakṣas* dwell as much upon the ground as under it, and that elite *yakṣas* even inhabit a city in the sky, which has the same name as Vajrapāṇi's pure land. It is interesting to compare the *nidānas* of Sde dge 498, the *Bhagavan-nīlāmbāradhara-vajrapāṇitantra*, and Sde dge 499, the *Ārya-vajrapāṇi-nīlāmbāradhara-vajrapātāla-nāma-tantra*. In the former, the Buddha dwells in Alakāvati and addresses Vajrapāṇi and entourage (/ 'di skad bdag gis thos pa dus gcig na/ bcom ldan 'das mi bskyod pa rdo rje 'i rigs kyi sangs rgyas lchang lo can gyi pho brang na byang chub sems dpa' phyag na rdo rje [158b] dang / rdo rje sde dang / rdo rje kun tu 'dzin pa dang / rdo rje rab tu 'dul byed dang / rdo rje mi bzad 'joms dang / rdo rje gdug pa kun 'dul dang / rdo rje dbyings las rgyal ba dang / rdo rje dgyes gnas skyob la sogs pa 'i 'khor bye ba phrag snyed rnam dang thabs cig tu bzhugs so/ (Sde dge bka' 'gyur Vol 87, folios

Related themes pervade other tantras too, such as the *Bhūta-dāmaratantra*, in which Vajrapāṇi is invoked for his power over the *guhnyakas*, and the *Ārya-vaṅjra-pātāla-nāma-tantra-rāja* ('Phags pa rdo rje sa 'og gi rgyud kyi rgyal po)²⁷ which, as its name suggests, is concerned with attaining the subterranean worlds of *pātāla*, abodes of the *nāgas* and *asuras*, to acquire the desirables found therein. Above all, it should not be forgotten that the great bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi's pure land is called Alaka or Alakāvati (Lcang lo can), which in ancient Indian mythology is none other than the name of the abode of the *yakṣas* and their king, Kubera.²⁸

If Vajrapāṇi is thus so often the presiding deity in the numerous Buddhist *Kriyātantra* and *Caryātantra* systems for finding *nidhi* or subduing *yakṣas* and *nāgas* to control their treasures, in the wider scope of Indian Buddhist tantrism, his role seems to have evolved a step further. In most traditions, he also becomes the guardian of the entire treasury of secret tantric texts taught by the Buddha but concealed into the care of Vajrapāṇi for later dissemination. In this context, he thus becomes Lord of the Secrets (*Guhyapati*), more than Lord of *guhnyaka* spirits (*Guhyakādhipati*). Yet this new role is still consonant with his original *yakṣa* heritage, since the *yakṣas* are the guardians *par excellence* of *nidhi*, a category which in Mahāyāna literature can include scriptural texts (*dharmanidhi*).²⁹ There is even a major Indian tradition that describes the Mahāyāna scriptures too as guarded by Vajrapāṇi, as well as the tantric scriptures (see the citations from Haribhadra and Dorji Wangchuk below). Seen through this lens of Indian cosmology, it is hardly surprising that some later Tibetan exegetes with an enthusiasm for *gter ma* came to envisage so much of Buddhist literature as *nidhi*: for if so many of the tantras, and all the *Perfection of Wisdom* scriptures, and other Mahāyāna scriptures too, were for a while entrusted to the care of Vajrapāṇi or of the *nāgas*, this should, by definition, make

158a-b). In the latter, the Buddha dwells in *pātāla*, the land of the *nāgas*, and addresses an audience of *nāgas*: 'di skad bdag gis thos pa dus gcig na/ bcom ldan 'das sa 'og rim pa bdun klu'i rgyal po'i gnas na rin po che'i khri la bzhuḡs te/ klu'i rgyal po dga' bo dang nye dga' bo dang / rigs ldan la sogs te klu rnam dang / byang chub sems dpa' phyag na rdo rje la sogs pa rnam dang thabs cig ste/ [Sde dge bka' gyur Vol. 87, folio 167a]

²⁷ Sde dge 744, Stog 697, Peking 403, and Ulan Bator 767.

²⁸ Sutherland quotes citations of Alaka as the city of Kubera and his *yakṣas* from the *Kathāsaritsāgara* (page 147), and from Kālidāsa's *Meghadūta* (pages 150, 151). For a further identification of Alaka as the home of Kubera and the *yakṣas*, see also Stella Kramrisch's *The Presence of Śiva*, page 137.

²⁹ Hidden scriptural texts protected by landscape deities and described as *dharmanidhi* occur in Mahāyāna scriptures, and also in commentarial texts such as Śāntideva's *Śikṣāsamuccaya* (see Mayer 2019, p.156). *Dharmanidhi* can be protected by *nāgas* as well as by *yakṣas*.

them a kind of *nidhi*.

I mentioned above that the *Mahāvastu*, as well as the *Dīvyāvadāna*, give the four *nidhis* the same names as the great *nāga* kings who protect them: *Pāṇḍuka*, *Piṅgala*, *Śaṅkha*, and *Elāpatra* (who are known also in other Indian traditions both as *nidhis* and as *nāgas*).³⁰ This interrelatedness of *nāgas* and *nidhis* by their very names and intrinsic natures, found already in such comparatively early Indian Buddhist texts, underlines the long, profound, and integral nature of the connection between *nidhi* and *nāgas* in Indian Buddhism. Indeed, as Norman (1992: 190) observes, 'there cannot be any doubt that the origin of the *nidhis* is to be sought in the *nāga* cult'.³¹

The narrative arc of *nāgas* and their *nidhis* in Indian Buddhism is thus far too long and varied to describe here, appearing as it does in so many *jātakas* and *avadānas*, Mahāyāna texts, Tantric texts, and more. But one should mention that across this voluminous literature, the understandings of what kind of *nidhis* the *nāgas* might guard is every bit as long and varied as Guru Chos dbang's, which I will describe below. As we have seen, in some Pāli texts, the *nāgas* guard the great co-natal *nidhis* of the Bodhisattva; as Vogel describes at length (1926: Chapter III) in other *jātakas* and *avadānas*, such as the *Śaṅkha-pāla-jātaka*, *nāga* kings inhabit magnificent subterranean palaces full of incomparable gold, jewels, fruit trees and beautiful women, which were sometimes but rarely accessible to humans; in the *Bhūridatta-jātaka*, a *nāga* gives a wish-fulfilling gem as a gift; in the Buddhist foundation myth of the

³⁰ These *nāgas* are well known in other Indian traditions too. See Vogel 1926: 207-14; 215 ff; 205; 191.

³¹ By contrast, Coomaraswamy seems almost to privilege *yakṣas* in this respect (2001 part II: 14). My own impression is that the question might be a mistaken one. As Ophira Gamliel informs me (personal communication 4th September 2021), many contemporary temples in Kerala place *nāga* and *yakṣa* images close together, always near a banyan tree, and outside the main complex, where they receive turmeric powder offerings in exchange for worldly boons. Gamliel adds that this practice is believed by many local people to be Buddhist in its remote history. Some aspects of the iconography are described in Ambily, Kumar, and Pancharath 2015, who present several images of combined *nāgas* and *yakṣas* that are popularly worshipped in contemporary Kerala as nature spirits. Cosmologically, conceptually, and even ritually, *nāgas* and *yakṣas* thus inhabit the same universe, and have done so for a very long time. Both (but especially *yakṣa*) are broad and inclusive terms, and both are nature spirits, although *nāga* implies the specialised function of protecting water sources. For our purposes, they should no more be separated than their Tibetan equivalents *yul lha*, *bzhi bdag*, or *klu*. Hence I am not certain that we can too easily say that *nāgas* were the origins of *nidhis* rather than *yakṣas*. Similarly, in Tibet, despite their special characteristics and classifications, *klu* can act as *yul lha* or *bzhi bdag*, and the categories *yul lha* and *bzhi bdag* of course include many different types of deities. In short, treasure bestowing or guarding *yakṣas* and *nāgas* are closely related by occurring within the same cosmological understandings of wealth and treasure.

Oḍḍiyāna region (a story found also in the *Bhaiṣajya-vastu* section of the *Mūlasarvāstivādin vinaya*), Buddha and Vajrapāṇi subdued a *nāga* named Apalāla who controls the Swat [Suvāstu] river, and who continued after his subjugation to control the waters and hence all the agricultural wealth of the region;³² in the *Lalitavistara*, the *nāgas* of the Nairāñjanā River at Bodhgaya were denied by Indra the privilege of guarding the Buddha's golden bowl, but were able to retain custody of his throne;³³ as both Faxian and Xuanzang reported, *nāgas* guard *śarīra* relics of the Buddha in a *stūpa* known as Rāmagrāma,³⁴ while elsewhere, as Xuanzang reported, they guard a tooth relic of the Buddha;³⁵ in Mahāyāna mythology, the *nāgas* guarded the sacred scriptures of the *Perfection of Wisdom*, which were recovered by Nāgārjuna; in the *sūtra* of that name, the Buddha gives the teachings of the *Pratyutpanna-buddha-saṃmukhāvasthita-samādhi* to *nāgas* (among other deities) to guard as *nidhi* (*gter*) until their future recovery;³⁶ and many Buddhist *Kriyātantras* specify the subterranean or watery *nāga* worlds of *pātāla* as a prime location for procuring many kinds of *nidhis*, including wealth, beautiful women, longevity, magic, medicines, and much more.

2. *Guru Chos dbang, nidhi, and gter ma.*

Before proceeding to my translation from the *Āryavidyottamamahātanta*, I would like to make some brief comments on the reception in Tibet of the Indian conceptions of *nidhi*. In this instance, I will largely restrict my observations to Guru Chos dbang's *Gter 'byung chen mo*, for the reasons mentioned above.³⁷

First and foremost, we must be aware of what Chos dbang was trying to do: Chos dbang was attempting to construct a Buddhist framework for an existing Tibetan *gter ma* tradition that was to his own

³² Vogel 1926: 121. As far as I am aware, Tibetologists have not yet considered the potential significance of this Oḍḍiyāna myth, which is known to us via Xuanzang. The centrality of the myth for the Oḍḍiyāna region is further evidenced by its frequent representation in surviving artworks. Versions of the myth occur also in the *Divyāvadāna* and the *Mūlasarvāstivādin Vinaya*. The potential interest for Tibetologists lies in the light it might shed on passages from the *Dbā' bzhed*, where Padmasambhava engages in *nāga*-taming activities.

³³ Vogel 1926: 97.

³⁴ Vogel 1926: 127-29.

³⁵ Vogel 1926: 130.

³⁶ Harrison 1978 and 1990, 13 K v.9.

³⁷ I would like to thank one of the anonymous peer reviewers of this article, who made the excellent suggestion that I publish a separate full-length study of Guru Chos dbang's reception of Indian ideas about *nidhi*. This is an excellent idea, and no doubt I shall be returning to the topic in more detail in future publications, but in the meantime, I shall present just a few salient points here in somewhat preliminary fashion, to give readers some inkling of the issues.

perception, a fully Buddhist system based on Indian precedents, but incorporating Tibetan elements in suitably converted manner. Although it has occasionally been suggested over the last seventy years of Tibetological writing that *gter ma* might be a predominantly indigenous Tibetan notion deriving from the royal burial cults, it needs to be emphasised that any such derivations are not at all evident in Chos dbang's work. As I have already pointed out elsewhere, if we as modern scholars deduce, etically, that indigenous practices relating to grave goods and the storing of documents might have played a significant part in the subsequent affinity of Tibetans for treasure, and the morphology of the Tibetan *gter ma* traditions, this is despite the dearth of emic references to them in texts such as Chos dbang's, and not because of any such references. It is clear that Chos dbang preferred to evolve his categories out of Buddhist ideas, rather than out of indigenous Tibetan ones. For there is only one fleeting and uncertain reference to the past emperors, and references to burial practices are conspicuous by their absence. Nor is his complex edifice in any way derivable from the *gter* categories of the popular indigenous *yul lha* or *klu* cults, even though such ideas are indeed quite prominent in the narrative parts of his text, and in much the same way that they still persist today. Janet Gyatso (1993:26) has already highlighted the "overarching Buddhist perspective from which Guru Chos-dbang presents the Treasure tradition". The following paragraphs seek to complement Gyatso's accurate observation by identifying some of the specific Indic ideas (or ideas he saw as Indic) that Chos dbang adopted in attempting this. I shall approach this complex question under three headings: (i) lexical, (ii) classificatory, and (iii) cosmological.

(i) Lexical: I mentioned above Joanna Bialek's hypothesis that the Tibetan word *gter* looks like it might have been deliberately coined to render the Sanskrit *nidhi* / *nidhāna*. This still remains open to further investigation, but if it proves correct, it would certainly go a long way to make sense of Chos dbang's presentations of *gter*, because his own definitions would then ultimately have been based on the underlying Indian lexical ones, rather than on a long history of entirely separate indigenous Tibetan usage. For as we shall see, the otherwise inexplicably wide-ranging aspects of Chos dbang's ideas about treasure, which have puzzled several contemporary readers, find an easy explanation when understood as an attempt by him to remain true to the original Indian lexical definitions behind the translated Tibetan term.

As we have seen above, following Apte, the Sanskrit verbal root *ni+√ dhā* has the meanings 'to put', or 'to place', or 'to set down', with secondary meanings that include 'to deposit with', 'to bury, conceal, or hide (as under ground)', 'to lay up, treasure up'. Thus, the noun *nidhi*

has the meanings 'receptacle', 'store-house', 'treasury', 'a treasure, store, hoard (for the nine treasures of Kubera)', 'the art of finding treasure', etc. Throughout his work, Chos dbang defines as *gter ma* whatever can be described in the above terms. More specifically and most frequently, he focuses on one particular permitted Sanskrit lexical understanding of *nidhi*: items of value that were concealed (*sbas pa*) for a period but later made manifest. These above all else counted for Chos dbang as *gter ma*. Hence my suggestion is that Chos dbang might have had the original Sanskrit-derived lexical definitions in mind when composing his text. Let us look at some examples (many of which have already been mentioned by Gyatso):

(1) the treasures of special substances are the treasuries of all the kinds of precious things [hidden in the environment].³⁸

(2) For future generations of people who want to practice and live in isolated places, many [currently undiscovered] lands and small valleys exist hidden as treasure.³⁹

(3) To help countries in times of drought, [previously undiscovered] water sources exist hidden as treasure.⁴⁰

(4) For those times when an old temple is in need of repairs but there are concerns about a lack of available compressed earth, [previously unknown] lime deposits [for use as plaster] exist hidden as treasure.⁴¹

(5) To renovate temples at the time when forests will have been depleted, hidden treasures of wood exist.⁴²

(6) For temples anxious about running out of offerings, there are many great caches of hidden wealth, which have been taught as extremely numerous.⁴³

(7) All medicine and calculation have arisen as *gter ma*, because the compassionate Buddha manifested as Mañjuśrī, within whose heart all kinds of astrology and medicine were initially concealed, from which they were subsequently revealed.⁴⁴

³⁸ Page 81 line 7: *khyad par gyi rdzas gter ni rin po che'i rigs kyi gter thams cad.*

³⁹ Page 81 line 7-page 82 line 1: *ma 'ongs pa'i chos byed rnam dbyen [=dben] par 'tsho bar bya ba'i phyir yul dang lung 'phran mang por [sic] gter du sbas pa.*

⁴⁰ Page 82, line 1: *nam zhod bri ba'i tshe yul mi sdad par bya ba'i phyir chu gter du sbas pa.*

⁴¹ Page 82, lines 1-2: *gtsug lag rnying pa gso ba'i dus su sa zhag can smin pa zad kyi dogs pa'i ched du thigs pa bzhal [em. > zhal] ba'i gter sbas pa.* Thanks to Dan Martin for explaining the meaning of *zhal ba / gzhal ba / zha la.*

⁴² Page 82, line 2: *dus mthar nags zad dus su gtsug lag khang gso ba'i phyir shing gi gter sbas pa.*

⁴³ Page 82, lines 2-3: *gtsug lag khang gi skor [em. > dkor] zad kyi dogs pa la dgongs nas nor chen po mang po sbas pa la sogs pa shin tu mang par bshad do.*

⁴⁴ Page 84 lines 1-7: *don gnyis pa phyi'i 'byung pa gso byed rtsis kyi gter byung tshul ni....up torgya gar du gsungs pa'i rtsis dang/ rgya nag gi rtsis dang/ dus 'khor rtsis*

(8) In his great compassion and wisdom, the Buddha manifested as Viśvakarman [craftsman to the gods in Indian mythology], from the play of whose intelligence all the tantras of arts and crafts (*bzo rgyud*) arose as *gter ma*, namely the *Patraka chen po'i rtsa rgyud*, the *Caraka phyi ma bshad rgyud*, and various other texts; and also all the arts of sewing and using cloth, the arts of building temples and royal palaces, traditions of making relief figures of buddha forms, traditions of making murals, the correct measurements for buddha forms [*rten*], various measurements and methods for writing dharma lettering, the skills of making *stūpas*, vajras, bells, etc., the arts of making various shrine objects, measurements of various hearths and utensils [for *homa*], the arts of making seats, etc., the skills of making ornaments and clothing for horses and elephants, and ornaments for gods and humans: according to Chos dbang, the knowledge of all these (and more, I have abbreviated the list) arose as *gter ma*.⁴⁵ These arts and skills count as *gter ma* because they were once hidden in the mind of Viśvakarman, who subsequently revealed them to us.

(9) In his great compassion and wisdom, the Buddha manifested as Maudgalyāyana, within whose heart the Sugata had concealed as *gter ma* various treatises on magic, which had the power to transform peoples' fixations. There follows quite a long story about the re-concealment and rediscovery of these texts, involving Bhadrāpāla (*bzang skyong*) and the king *rgyal po bde spyod* (perhaps, Sadvāhana for Śātavāhana, or maybe Udayanabhadrā);⁴⁶ as well as further explanations of magic traditions as *gter mas*.⁴⁷

(10) The natural power of the Buddha's compassion arises within the perception of beings to be tamed in accordance with their faith, thus arising as the various Buddha forms to tame those beings, and then again disappearing as *gter ma*. Hence all naturally arising forms of the Buddha are *gter* hidden in the *dharmadhātu*.⁴⁸

(11) All *sambhogakāya* and even *nirmāṇakāya* forms, such as those of

dang/ zhang zhung rtsis dang/ urgyan rtsis dang/ za hor rtsis dang/ bru sha'i rtsis la sogs pa rnams gter nas phyung pa yin no/.

⁴⁵ Page 85 line 7- page 86 line 6: *ston pa bde gshegs thugs rje che la thabs mkhas pas/ bi sho karma sprul pa'i thugs la rigs pa'i rtsal / bzo rgyud la gab pa'i thugs gter bka' ru byon pa ni/ pa tra ka chen po'i rtsa rgyud dang / rtsa ra ka phyi ma bshad rgyud / rtsa ra ka phyi ma'i phyi ma man ngag gi rgyud dang /up to gos stan la sogs pa'i bzo dang / rta dang glang po chas rgyan dang / lha dang mi la sogs pa'i brgyan dang / bzo rig gi gter rnams byung ngo/.*

⁴⁶ Thanks to Ulrike Roesler for advice on the Sanskrit equivalent for Bde spyod (*bzang po*).

⁴⁷ *me'u gal gyi bur ...thugs la gab pa'i gter ..*For the full narrative, see page 86 line 6 - page 87 line 5.

⁴⁸ Page 87 line 7- page 88 line 1: *rang bzhin bde gshegs sku'i gter...up to.....chos kyi dbyings na gab pa'i gter/.*

Vairocana or the Eight Close Sons Bodhisattvas, and even the eight charnel grounds and the land of Uḍḍiyāna, and numerous places for accomplishment such as mountain caves and trees, and the many Rājagrhas, all exist as *gter*, because the occasion of their arising [out of emptiness] is only when needed to achieve the benefit of beings.⁴⁹

(12) All manufactured Buddha images, whether drawn, painted, engraved, cast, sculpted, or moulded, are *gter ma*, because prior to their revelation at the hands of an artisan (the condition of their arising, *rkyen*), they remained concealed within the materials such as silk, wood, metal, stone, or even earth and mud, from which they were made (the basis of their existence, *rgyu*).⁵⁰ After manufacture, Buddha images can again become *gter ma*: for example, the Lhasa Jowo was twice concealed as *gter ma*, once during a war in India, and again when the Dharma declined under Glang dar ma.⁵¹

(13) All dharma texts are *gter mas* of enlightened speech. Just as the hidden treasure (*gab gter*) of a drumbeat remains concealed until the condition arises (*rkyen*) of the drum being hit with a stick, so too the utterances of dharma remain hidden treasure (*gab gter*) in the Victor's heart, until invoked by the condition (*rkyen*) of the karmas of those to be tamed. Thus, the limitless dharma doors of all the vehicles which tame whoever is suitable, have all arisen as *gter ma*.⁵²

(14) Chos dbang devotes five entire pages⁵³ to explaining, one after another, how each of the nine *yānas* arose as *gter ma*. His explanations and historical narratives are too lengthy to reproduce here, and many have already been summarised by Janet Gyatso.⁵⁴ What one can chiefly observe is that Chos dbang defines as *gter ma* anything of substantial value that is first hidden and then revealed, and that this process of concealment and revelation can occur at both transcendent and mundane levels alike, and can also happen repeatedly. Thus the vinaya was first concealed in the mind of the Buddha; but after being taught and written down was buried in a stūpa by some arhats to avert a decline in the teachings; Śākyaprabhā, and Guṇaprabhā later recovered these texts to teach them, but then reconcealed them in Vikramaśīla;⁵⁵ after

⁴⁹ Page 88 lines 1-4: *rang byung sku'i gter ... up tosprul sku du ma byon pa phal kyang gter du bzhugs te / gnas skabs kyi 'gro don mādad pa'i phyir ro /*.

⁵⁰ Page 88 lines 4-6: *gang zag bzhengs pa'i sku'i gter kha du ma.... up to.... bzo bo mkhas pa'i phyag gis gter phyung...*

⁵¹ Page 88, lines 6-7: *lha sa'i jo bo shakya'i sku yang rgya nag gi dmad byung pa'i tshé dang / glang dar mas chos snubs dus gter du lan gnyis sbas te.*

⁵² Page 88 line 7 - page 89 line 5: *...gsung gter bka' yi ge bstan pa'i gter byung tshul... up to mtha' thug med du brdol te gter 'byung pa yin no / de'i lung yang rnan rol mdo lung sku'i skabs su bstan pas nges pa'ol /*

⁵³ Page 89 line 5 to page 94 line 7.

⁵⁴ See Gyatso 1994: 276-277.

⁵⁵ Page 90 line 2: *ka ma la shi la'i gtsug lag khang du sbas; em. ka ma la > vi kra ma la.*

which the learned Sendhaba opened that library⁵⁶ to teach the arhat discipline for the benefit of beings.

(15) Even human progeny are *gter mas*, because they were once hidden in their mother's wombs as foetuses. Thus, Chos dbang reprimands his learned critics: "If you really want *gter ma* to be abandoned, [bear in mind that] you yourself were hidden [as a *gter ma*] in your mother's womb before being evicted. So, what are you going to do about that? Commit suicide?"⁵⁷

There is plenty more that could be said, but it must wait for my future dedicated study of Chos dbang's work. Suffice it for now to say that Chos dbang's range of *gter ma* items is extremely diverse, ranging from plasterer's lime to the sublime *saṃbhogakāya* forms of the Buddhas; from simple treatises on sewing to the highest Buddhist teachings on the nature of mind; from humble timber beams for building to the spontaneously arisen symbols of Buddha mind in Akaniṣṭha, like cosmic diamond vajras with the white syllable 'a' at their centres.⁵⁸ Surely the only thing these hugely disparate items all share in common is a conformity to one of the main permitted Sanskrit lexical definitions of *nidhi*: all are items of utility or value that were concealed for a while, and then revealed. As Janet Gyatso has pointed out, Chos dbang's main concern in his *Chos 'byung chen mo* is to construct a Buddhist explanation of *gter ma*. One of the most effective ways he found to do so was to define it within terms of the Sanskrit lexicon.

(ii) Classificatory: A second way in which Chos dbang constructs his Buddhist explanation of *gter ma* is by conforming to Indian Buddhist classifications of *nidhi*. We have seen above how the Pāli tradition understood the four *nidhis* as one of the seven co-natals (*saha-jāta*) that appeared spontaneously when a Buddha was born, and that subsequent Indian Buddhist literature, whether Mahāyāna or Śrāvakayāna, continued this fourfold structure. Thus, a list of four *nidhis* appear in many famous texts. As K.R. Norman has observed, the nine-fold enumeration of *nidhi* was normative outside of Buddhism, in brahmanism and Jainism for example.⁵⁹ Hence, it would appear that the Buddhists' contrasting preference for their own distinctive four-fold enumeration of *nidhi* functioned as a marker of Buddhist identity. As I have pointed

⁵⁶ Page 90 line 2: *sen dha ba'i mkhan po.....dpe mdzod phye...* There has been some academic discussion of *Sen dha ba*, little of which I have yet read. I understand (via Dan Martin) that they are often seen as Buddhists hostile to Vajrayāna.

⁵⁷ Page 108, line 1: *'on te gter spang na khyod rang kyang ma'i mngal na gab sbas mngon du phyung pa dang lceb bam ci tshugs byed/.*

⁵⁸ Page 95, line 4- page 96 line 1: *'og min gsang pa yang gsang yan lag mchog gi gnas su....up tokhyab pa'i bzhin du gab pas gter rol/.*

⁵⁹ 1992: 185, note 12.

out above, over time, Buddhist texts varied the names, natures, and identities, of the four *nidhis*, but liked to keep the four-fold enumeration. Guru Chos dbang also subsumes all the many kinds of *gter* he recognised into four major named categories, thereby upholding this ubiquitous and venerable Buddhist tradition. In Chos dbang's classification, the four were called: [1] Ordinary material treasures (*phyi thun mongs rdzas kyi gter*); [2] inner treasures with particular qualities (*nang khyad par yon tan gyi gter*); [3] supreme secret treasures of enlightened body, speech and mind (*gsang ba mchog gyur sku gsung thugs kyi gter*); and [4] the definitive treasure of suchness (*yang dag snying po de kho na nyid nges pa'i gter*). As Andreas Doctor points out, Ratna Gling pa also maintained a fourfold structure, but changed their names, just as O rgyan Gling pa had done before him.⁶⁰ Adherence to the age-old Indian Buddhist tradition of a fourfold enumeration of *nidhi* might thus have been an easy way for Chos dbang (and his successors) to identify the Rnying ma *gter ma* tradition with Indian Buddhist precedents.

There is also a further way in which the *Chos 'byung chen mo* follows Indian classifications of *nidhi*: Chos dbang manages to include within his work most of the categories of *nidhis* listed within the often nine-fold enumerations common to general Indian thinking, which seem to have remained popular from the early middle ages until today. For example, if we are to follow the above Sikh interpretation of the nine *nidhis* deriving from the much earlier traditions of the *Amarakoṣa* (see note 18 above), Chos dbang includes certainly seven and quite possibly eight of them. Likewise, if we follow Hemacandra's 12th century interpretation of the nine *nidhis* of the canonical *Thāṇaṅga-sutta* that he presents in his *Triṣaṣṭīśalākāpuruṣacaritra*, we again find that Chos dbang includes certainly seven and quite possibly eight of them. In each case, where Chos dbang clearly differs from his non-Buddhist Indian counterparts is by conspicuously omitting anything connected

⁶⁰ Doctor 2005: 26: "Ratna Lingpa presents a Treasure category termed "outer variegated Treasures" (*phyi sna tshogs pa'i gter*) referring to the elements, valleys, wealth, etc. Next are the "inner Treasures bestowing eminence" (*nang mchog stsol ba'i gter*) comprising the specifically Buddhist Treasures of body, speech, and mind. Third are the "secret, naturally appearing, naturally concealed, and naturally realized Treasures" (*gsang ba rang byung rang gab rang rtogs pa'i gter*). This category is not further defined by Ratna Lingpa but we may reasonably assume that it refers to the realization of the buddhas classified by Chos dbang as "the definitive Treasure of suchness." Last in the group of four is the category of "indefinite variegated Treasures" (*ma nges sna tshogs pa'i gter*), which refers to the arts of medicine, astrology, magic, and handicrafts." As Doctor further points out (p.23), O rgyan gling pa in his *Padma bka' thang* likewise adheres to a four-fold classification: "The Chronicle of Padmasambhava presents four main Treasure categories: "ancestral Treasures" (*mes gter*), "filial Treasures" (*sras gter*), "magistral Treasures" (*dpon gter*), and "essential Treasures" (*yang gter*), each containing 18 different kinds of Treasure (each one again subdivided 18 times!)."

with warfare, the military, or weaponry (the fourth *nidhi* in the Sikh list and the eighth *nidhi* in Hemacandra's list).⁶¹ Instead, Chos dbang (n.d p.86-87) includes a substantial section on magic, which he specifies as purposed for taming heretics.⁶² It is also clear that both Hemacandra's list and the first Sikh list have lay communities in mind, while Chos dbang is predominantly focused on religious communities. Hence where the two Indian authors focus on foods and grains in general (Hemacandra's second *nidhi* and the Sikh list's third), Chos dbang focuses only on supplies of necessities for monastic communities (*dkor*).⁶³ Likewise, where Hemacandra is concerned with opening up new settlements suitable for commerce and trade (the first *nidhi* on his list), Chos dbang is more interested in finding new locations suitable for the practice of dharma.⁶⁴ So in these cases, it is debatable if Chos dbang is differing from his Indian counterparts or not. But taken as a whole, I concur with Janet Gyatso's observation that it is difficult to understand Chos dbang's list other than as an attempt to conform with Indian usages. Surely it is for this reason that he includes such unexpected items as the making of ornaments and clothing for horses, elephants, gods, and humans (cf. Hemacandra's *Piṅgala*), all the myriad worldly skills taught by Viśvakarman (cf. the Sikh list's interpretation of the Amarakoṣa's *Mukunda*), sewing and cloth work (cf. Hemacandra's *Mahāpadma*, also the Sikh list's interpretation of the Amarakoṣa's *Kacchapa*), and human progeny (cf. the Sikh list's interpretation of the Amarakoṣa's *Padma*). While we do not yet know which precise Indian sources Chos dbang was influenced by (perhaps the *Amarakoṣa* list is a reasonable place for initial investigation), it does look like he was influenced by them.

A third way in which Chos dbang associates his classificatory system with that of his Indian counterparts is by including both worldly and spiritual categories alike as *gter ma*. From the start, Indian Buddhist narrative had always associated the *yakṣas* and *nāgas* with the guardianship of both worldly and spiritual treasures. We have already seen above the *nāga* Apalāla who controlled the waters and thus agricultural wealth of the Oḍḍiyāna region,⁶⁵ and throughout Indian literature, both Buddhist and non-Buddhist, *yakṣas* and *nāgas* are by their very nature routinely and even primarily associated with worldly treasure, such as agricultural fertility, jewels, and minerals. At the

⁶¹ Yet Hirshberg mentions that Chos dbang's predecessor Myang ral did discover deadly weapons as *gter ma*: "...mechanized slingshots, long-range arrows..." (Hirshberg 2016: 117).

⁶² Page 87 line 2: *rtag rta'i mu stegs can mang po brtul nas..*

⁶³ Page 82, lines 2-3.

⁶⁴ Page 81 line 7-82 line 1.

⁶⁵ Vogel 1926: 121.

same time, Indian Buddhist narrative frequently describes them as guarding spiritual treasures: thus, as already mentioned above, in the *Lalitavistara*, the *nāgas* of the Nairāñjanā River at Bodhgaya were denied by Indra the privilege of guarding the Buddha's golden bowl as their treasure, but were able to retain custody of his throne; as both Faxian and Xuanzang reported, *nāgas* guarded *śarīra* relics of the Buddha in a *stūpa* known as Rāmagrāma (Vogel 1926: 127ff), while elsewhere, as Xuanzang reported, they guarded for a time a tooth relic of the Buddha (Vogel 1926: 130). Mahāyāna literature went on to develop the category of *dharmanidhi* or *dharmanidhāna*, which were Buddhist scriptures entrusted to the care of deities such as *nāgas* and *yakṣas*.⁶⁶ Thus the *nāgas* guarded the sacred scriptures of the *Perfection of Wisdom*, while in Tantric Buddhism, the *yakṣa* Vajrapāṇi, later known as Vajradhara, whose Buddhafield Alakāvatī (Lcang lo can) still has the same name as the abode of his associate the worldly-wealth conferring *yakṣa* king Kubera, guarded the innumerable tantric scriptures (and in some accounts, the Mahāyāna scriptures too). Various non-Buddhist sources too, such as the Sikh list given above, which is contemporary but based on much older traditions (see note 18 above), also understand *nidhi* as having both worldly and spiritual connotations, so that it presents parallel lists of nine of each. A parallel pattern can be found in many theological interpretations of the *Aṣṭalakṣmī*, the eight manifestations of Lakṣmī, who are sources of wealth both material and spiritual.

Thus, we can see Chos dbang associates himself certainly with the Indian Buddhist traditions, and also with the wider Indian non-Buddhist traditions, by doing likewise: his lists of *gter ma* include both gold, silver, jewels, and all worldly wealth, alongside Buddha statues, cosmic vajras, and Buddhist texts.

(iii) Cosmological: A third way in which Chos dbang associates his explanations of *gter ma* with Indian Buddhism is by reference to cosmologies. There are two arenas in which he approaches this: firstly, cosmological understandings in his general account of treasure in India and the wider Buddhist world,⁶⁷ and secondly, cosmological

⁶⁶ See for example the *Pratyutpanna-buddha-saṃmukhāvasthita-samādhi-sūtra*, Chapter 13 section K verse 9 in Harrison's edition and translation (Harrison 1978 and 1990), where the *sūtra* being hidden for a future recovery (*gter*) is sealed in a casket (*sgrom bu*) and buried in a *stūpa*, the earth, within rocks, or on a mountain, after being entrusted to the care of deities (*lha*) and *nāgas* (*klu*). See also note 29 above.

⁶⁷ Occasionally, Chos dbang reminds us that he envisages *gter ma* as a widespread Buddhist phenomenon. For example, see page 85 line 4, where he mentions medical *gter ma* recovered from Nepal (*bal yul shing kun...*) and China *rgya nag 'go'u de shan phug la...*

understandings in his specific accounts of his own *gter ma* revelations in Tibet. As a more general point encompassing both, it should be made clear that Chos dbang's understanding of *gter ma* did not in any way whatsoever require it to be intentionally hidden by someone, such as Padmasambhava or the Buddha. On the contrary, exactly like the *nidhi* in Indian thinking, it could just as easily be naturally concealed within a natural environment, be it terrestrial or divine. This is of course a quality that persists into later Rnying ma understandings.⁶⁸

It is clear that Indian Buddhism accorded with other Indian traditions in accepting the general Indian cosmological understandings of *nāgas* and *yakṣas* as guardians of *nidhis*, whether mundane or religious. In general, Chos dbang sought to associate these imported Indian Buddhist cosmologies with indigenous Tibetan cosmologies inhabited by *klu* and the many other types of *yul lha*, who performed equivalent functions in Tibetan cosmology. This was not necessarily very difficult to do, because many underlying ideas seemed already to be quite close. However, the clearest evidence of Chos dbang's attempts to realise this occur in the narratives of his own *gter ma* recoveries, so I will describe them in the section below.

Treasures of dharma scriptures in Indian Buddhism tended to be guarded or concealed in the worlds of the *nāgas*, by the Buddhist *yakṣa* Vajrapāṇi in his abode of Alakāvati (Lcang lo can), or in *stūpas*.

The most famous example of a dharma scriptural treasure guarded by *nāgas* is surely the *Perfection of Wisdom*; this narrative is so well known that it is not necessary to elaborate on it here.

It is also too well known to need any elaboration here that the Tantric Buddhist scriptures were frequently described by Indian Buddhists as being guarded by the *yakṣa*-bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi. As Dorji Wangchuk (2020:117) puts it, "Tantric sources for the idea that Vajrapāṇi is the *saṃgītikṛt* of Tantric teachings are abundant." It is perhaps less well known that Mahāyāna dharma treasures were also believed by Indian Buddhists to be guarded by the *yakṣa*-bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi. As Wangchuk (2020: 113) again writes, "Vajrapāṇi is believed to be the *saṃgītikṛt* of the teachings of the thousand *buddhas* (*sang rgyas stong gi bka'i bsdu ba po*) (of the fortunate aeon). Tibetan scholars often mention the *Tathāgatācīntyaḡuhyānirdeśasūtra* and *Vajrapāṇyabhiṣekatantra* as sources, not always directly but sometimes, it would seem,

⁶⁸ It is precisely because *gter ma* does not have to be intentionally hidden by anyone that a major function of the Rnying ma *gter ston* has always been to 'open' sacred sites (*gnas*) or hidden lands (*sbas yul*) that were concealed naturally in the landscape, but not yet known to humanity. There are also other duties of the *gter ston* that indicate the category of *gter ma* is not restricted to the idea of something having been intentionally concealed by someone in the past, such as finding water sources, or gold.

via Haribhadra's *Abhisamayālaṅkāra*, as Bu ston Rin chen grub, for example, clearly does". He continues (2020: 117), "it goes without saying that from the perspective of the general Mahāyāna, Vajrapāṇi is usually regarded as the *saṃgītikṛt* of the (Mahāyānic) *Sūtrapitaka*." Wangchuk goes on to summarise one of Haribhadra's sources, the *Tathāgatācintyaḡuhyānirdeśasūtra*, a third-turning Mahāyāna sūtra:

The principal interlocutor beseeches Vajrapāṇi to have the readiness-cum-confidence (*pratibhāna: spobs pa*), so to speak, to reveal "secrets of the *tathāgatas*" (*de bzhin gshegs pa'i gsang ba*) and "secrets of the *bodhisattvas*" (*byang chub sems dpa'i gsang ba*), for he has been a close attendant of the Buddha, and no one else, not even *śrāvakas* or *pratyekabuddhas*, let alone other ordinary sentient beings (*sems can tha mal pa*), possesses such secrets. Vajrapāṇi silently consents. Śāntimati then requests the Buddha to authorize Vajrapāṇi to do so. The Buddha does authorize Vajrapāṇi and Vajrapāṇi, in turn, expresses his willingness.⁶⁹

Here then we can see in an Indian Mahāyāna source a key passage that Chos dbang could take as support for his belief that all Mahāyāna teachings are treasures. For according to this *sūtra*, the Mahāyāna *Sūtrapitaka* was entrusted to Vajrapāṇi as secrets for him to guard, thus fulfilling Chos dbang's lexical definition of *gter ma* as something once secret that is later revealed, while simultaneously referencing the Indian tradition of the *yakṣa*-bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi guarding treasuries of dharma scriptures in the *yakṣa*-connected domain of Alaka or Alakāvatī.

A third place in which Buddhist cosmologies placed dharma treasures was in *stūpas*. Perhaps the best-known example of this is the myth of an Iron Stūpa in South India, from which Nāgārjuna was said to have extracted the *Yogatantras*. This narrative plays a particularly central role in the tantric Buddhism of Japan, and although largely associated with East Asian Buddhism, it is likely to reflect South Asian beliefs.⁷⁰ For a much earlier Mahāyāna example of *sūtra* scriptures hidden

⁶⁹ Dorji Wangchuk 2020: 113. As Lamotte earlier observed, the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* of Haribhadra described Vajrapāṇi as the compiler of Mahāyāna *sūtras*: "The adherents of the Mahāyāna make him [Vajrapāṇi] a bodhisattva and attribute the compilation of Mahāyānasūtras to him...". This is of interest because Haribhadra was a student of Śāntarakṣita, who shaped Rnying ma attitudes to the origins of Mahāyāna. See Lamotte 1988: 688, where he cites for this not only the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* itself, but also Bu ston and Tāranātha. Karl Brunholzl clarifies: "Haribhadra's *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* indeed says that the position that Vajrapāṇi was entrusted with the teachings of the Mahāyāna *sūtras*, passing them on to other bodhisattvas such as Maitreya, is 'the explanation of earlier masters.' Immediately following this, however, he says that others hold that the *sūtras* were entrusted to Ānanda." Personal communication, 14th August 2021.

⁷⁰ Gray 2009: 12.

as treasure in a *stūpa* for future recovery, see the reference to the *Pratyutpanna-buddha-saṃmukhāvasthita-samādhi-sūtra* in note 66 above.

All of these South Asian cosmological beliefs are reflected in Chos dbang's work. He mentions Nāgārjuna's recovery of the Perfection of Wisdom *sūtras*,⁷¹ and in addition has Nāgārjuna recover the *Kriyātantras*.⁷² He has Vajrapāṇi conceal the *Mahāyoga* tantras in Lcang lo can as *gter ma*.⁷³ He also cites *stūpas* as the sites for burials of dharma treasures, for example, he tells us that the *Ubhaya* and *Caryā* tantras were hidden as *gter ma* in Kaṇiṣka's *stūpa*.⁷⁴ There are also numerous other ways in which Chos dbang references Indian cosmologies: locations linked with revelation in Indian mythology such as Mt. Malaya, Uḍḍiyāna, Varanasi, the Cool Grove Charnel Ground, and so forth, and the Buddha fields of various enlightened beings. In these ways, Chos dbang refers repeatedly to Indian cosmologies when presenting his general theory of the revelation of dharma treasures in India.

Chos dbang's presentation of cosmological understandings in his specific accounts of his own *gter ma* revelations in Tibet is much more complex, because here he mixes the Indic with specifically Tibetan religious histories, and with the indigenous deities. In regard to Tibetan religious history, it is only at this juncture, where Chos dbang begins to enlarge on his own personal *gter ma* discoveries, that he introduces Padmasambhava as a major player. Previously, when expounding his general account of treasure in India and the wider Buddhist world, Padmasambhava was largely irrelevant, even in the section on the revelation of Buddhist scriptures and texts. As Janet Gyatso (1994:277-8) has pointed out: "Let us note, at this juncture, the striking fact that in Guru Chos dbang's entire discussion of Buddhist-materials-as-Treasure in section three, no mention whatsoever has been made of the burial of Treasures in Tibet by Padmasambhava."

Still, in relation to his own *gter ma* revelations Padmasambhava looms large, as one would expect from such a famous Padmasambhava devotee. Indeed, the presence of Padmasambhava in the accounts of Chos dbang's own *gter ma* revelations are so plentiful and rich, so full of visionary encounters and inspirational anecdotes, that they warrant a comprehensive study in their own right, which I cannot

⁷¹ Page 90 line 3 to page 91 line 1.

⁷² On page 92 line 4, Chos dbang has Nāgārjuna recover the *Kriyātantras*, but in the Far Eastern traditions, Nāgārjuna recovers the *Yogatantras*. See Orzech 1995 and Rambelli 2017.

⁷³ Page 93, line 4.

⁷⁴ Page 92 lines 5-6. For Far Eastern sources on the recovery of tantras from *stūpas*, see Orzech and Rambelli as cited above.

hope to offer here.⁷⁵

Regarding the indigenous Tibetan deities, his strategy here is to associate the world of Tibetan local deities with Indian categories, while not erasing Tibetan local identities. The outcome is a degree of multivalence, allowing simultaneous interpretation through both Indic and Tibetan lenses. Take for example an event during Chos dbang's description of his own first *gter ma* excavation: three girls approach him and say, "Are you taking out a *gter ma*? Anyway, you have filled the pathway with charcoal [through your excavations]. We are very afraid." The girls went on to tell some people from the local village, a group of whom then approached and told Chos dbang, "If you take out the *gter*, the essence will be lost from the soil [*sa'i bcud shor*], and [crop-withering] frosts [*sad*] and cold winds [*lhags*] will ensue [*sad lhags 'ong zer*]."⁷⁶ Later, the deity protecting the *gter ma* punished the villagers for their negative attitude, but not before punishing the naive young Chos dbang, who had omitted to leave them a suitable offering as compensation for the treasure he had removed (*gter tshab*).⁷⁷

On the one hand, this narrative comes straight out of popular

⁷⁵ The presence of Padmasambhava in the accounts of Chos dbang's own *gter ma* revelations are far too plentiful and rich to be described in this short article. As just a few examples, on page 120 line 7, describing the *kha byang* that sets him off on his career as a *gter ston*, the 13-year-old Chos dbang explains how he has 'met with Padmasambhava's own writing' (*u rgyan phyag ris nga dang 'phrad*). His first *gter ma* revelation included a 'Guru Padma thugs *gter* in three sections' (page 132 line 3: *guru pad ma'i thugs gter skor tsho gsum du bshugs tshul*). His father subsequently describes his young son's discoveries as 'the teachings of Ugyan [Rinpoche]' (page 135 line 5: *u rgyan gyis bka'*). To confirm the teachings he has found as *gter ma*, Chos dbang has several major visionary encounters with Padmasambhava (page 141 line 6 ff, page 143 line 7 ff), and his visit to *Zangs mdog dpal ri* to receive teachings on his *gter ma* was experienced as lasting for twenty-one days (page 142 line 3: *zhag nyer gig song pa'i snang pa shar*). Considerable weight is also given to Chos dbang's discovery of a *sku tshab* statue of Guru Rinpoche (page 146 line 5 ff). And so on.

⁷⁶ Page 126, lines 2-3. Citing a different part of the *Chos 'byung chen mo*, Gyatso (1994: 278) has already observed how Chos dbang believed that buried *gter mas* 'confer blessings on the localities where they are concealed'. This still remains one of the most important points of intersection between popular and indigenous Tibetan cosmologies, and those of the Buddhist *gter stons*. The fear that *gter ma* removal will diminish the earth's essences (*sa'i bcud*) has remained a persistent issue throughout the long history of *gter ma* in Tibet. See for example Dudjom Rinpoche's account (Dudjom 1991: 811) of the great *gter ston* 'Ja' tshon snying po (born 1585) having to overcome armed men trying to prevent his *gter ma* recovery for exactly that reason. Likewise Hirshberg (2016: 123-4) translates a passage from Myang ral's biography in which the ruler of Samye tries to prevent Myang ral from removing his *gter*: "don't open the gates! If he takes out the treasures, the vitality of the place will be lost."

⁷⁷ The narrative of the *gter bdag* punishing Chos dbang for failing to leave a *gter tshab* is long and dramatic (see especially pages 127-130) and serves to edify his readers on the importance of *gter tshab* throughout the work.

indigenous Tibetan beliefs about *gter*, in which all the *gter* in the land is owned or controlled by the local *yul lha*, so that its removal will both annoy the *yul lha* and deplete the fertility of the land. On the other hand, this can also to some extent be read through an Indic lens, in which Tibetan local deities become associated with Indian *yakṣa* lore. *Bcud*, to which the villagers above referred, is a central term in the indigenous Tibetan *yul lha* cosmology, but significantly, Tibetans also used it to translate the Sanskrit term *rasa*, which is an equally central and closely equivalent term in the Indian *yakṣa* cosmology. As A. K. Coomaraswamy pointed out, *Yakṣas* control agricultural and biological fertility precisely because they control *rasa*, which is 'not so much the waters as mere waters, but that essence in the waters which is one with the sap in the trees...and the seed in living beings'. As the life-giving essence that pervades whatever is fruitful, *rasa* is close in conception to *bcud*.⁷⁸

While there might be some Indian cosmological parallels to the popular Tibetan practice of offering *gter bum* to the *yul lha* to please the

⁷⁸ Coomaraswamy 2001, Part II, page 14. This multivalence already in evidence in Chos dbang has persisted into later Tibetan Buddhism. The popular offering of treasure vases (*gter bum*) can be read as partaking of an indigenous Tibetan cosmology of *g.yang*, *yul lha* and *klu*, and works fully within the idiom of indigenous cosmology. At the same time, it has clear Indic readings. So far, I have only looked at one such ritual, written by Karma Chags med in the 17th century, but what is striking is that five of its eight mantras are taken from Indian sources directly related to specifically *yakṣa* deities and the best-known *yakṣa* maṇḍalas. Buddhists can convincingly claim to derive the practice of *gter bum* from sources such as the prologue of the Indian Vajrapāṇi scripture, *Bhagavan-nīlāmbaraḍhara-vajrapāṇi-tantra* (Sde dge 498, Vol 87, 159b) which is dedicated to controlling *yakṣas* and *nāgas* to benefit from their wealth, and which teaches the offering of treasure vases to such deities of the landscape to pacify them: "Next, purify gold and so forth, the seven precious things, And place these in a jewelled vessel or clay pot. Recite 108 mantras. Resorting to the true utterance of the Three Jewels, Give an oblation to the *bhūtas*. Bury it in firm ground wherever they abide, And the *bhūtas* and evil *nāgas* will be pacified." (translation from 84000). I have not yet been able to research this fully, beyond noting that there are further occurrences of this type of ritual in other tantras. However, it does appear at first sight to be an Indian parallel to the Tibetan idea of having to place a *gter* into the ground to pacify the *yul lha* and thereby replenish the soil's fertility and vitality, because such fertility and vitality is in the gift of the Tibetan *yul lha* and the Indian landscape's *bhūtas*, *yakṣas*, or *nāgas* alike. Vasudeva (2012: 274) suggests, without giving any precise citation, that the fourth and final chapter of siddha Śrīkaṇṭhasambhu's *Nidhipradīpa* is devoted to the concealing of *nidhi*, but that reading has not been self-evident to some other scholars. What is certain is that the standard iconometric shape and form of *gter bum* used in contemporary Tibetan Buddhism derives from Indian sources (compare for example with the treasure vases depicted in images of Vasudhārā, in Indian sources associated with the earth, consort of the prominent *yakṣa* deity Jambhala, and herself a *yakṣiṇī*: see Misra 1981: 71, 72, 73, 79, 116). Nevertheless, such practices in many cases remain simultaneously readable as indigenous practices of making offerings to *yul lha* and are in many cases primarily understood that way.

yul lha and thus persuade them to increase the fertility of the landscape, I am not yet clear if this entailed *nidhivādins* in India offering some kind of equivalent to the Tibetan 'treasure substitute' or *gter tshab*, after removing a landscape deity's treasures. While their underlying cosmological understandings might have rendered this a possibility, an alternative might simply have been the total subjugation of the landscape deities, which seems to be hinted at in some Indian texts. Tibetan deities of the landscape had an importance in local and clan identity that does not seem to have been evidenced in the Indian landscape deities, hence my impression is that Tibetan landscape deities were considerably more highly respected than their Indian equivalents, except perhaps where the latter had become converted into Buddhistised or Sanskritised deities in their own right.

The deities who protected Chos dbang's *gter ma* (*gter bdag*) were sometimes mounted on bulls vaguely suggesting Indian deities such as Yamāntaka,⁷⁹ but other times appeared as yaks,⁸⁰ which might well (but need not) suggest indigenous Tibetan deities. By punishing both Chos dbang and the villagers for their various bad attitudes, the deities are both conforming to local expectations of *yul lha*, but also to Buddhist ideas about dharma protectors. Indeed, it is only when Chos dbang achieves a selfless mind (reminiscent of *gcod* practice) that the deities stop attacking him, implying that they could be seen as Buddhist dharma protectors all along (behaving here much like the *yakṣa* dharma protectors of India, as described by authors such as DeCaroli).⁸¹ When Chos dbang finds his first *gter ma*, he first encounters containers shaped like a fish and a frog,⁸² and the actual *gter ma* casket (*sgrom bu*) within which his treasure is contained is shaped like a nine-headed snake with vajra crests,⁸³ on the one hand, these are symbols associated with Indian *nāga* cults, yet these could equally be described as associated with Tibetan *klu*, and Chos dbang uses the term *klu bdud*. Like the *nidhis* of the Indian narratives, Chos dbang's treasure caskets

⁷⁹ Page 123 line 7 - page 124 line 1: *kho glang nag po la shon nas nub na phar...*

⁸⁰ Page 128 line 3: *g.yag tsho yid la ram ram ...*

⁸¹ Page 128 lines 4-7, and again on page 129. See DeCaroli 2004, especially Chapter 6, and page 125. The niche occupied by *yakṣas* in Indian Buddhism seems to have been close enough to the niche occupied by the deities of the landscape in Tibetan Buddhism that I believe authors like Chos dbang could probably have reconciled major differences when required. Undoubtedly Tibetan Buddhists had constructed the cosmological niches within which they confined their local indigenous deities, with these long-established Indian precedents as a template.

⁸² Page 122 line 2: *bse'i sbal pa chen po nya byung nas*, etc.

⁸³ Page 125 line 5: *gzugs klu bdud mgo dgur can rdo rjes gtsug rgyan*. *Gter ma* being contained in *nāga*-shaped containers has always been a standard trope in Rnying ma, and numerous other *gter ston* have similarly recovered their *gter ma* from *nāga*-themed containers. Rig 'dzin rgod ldem, for example, discovered the great *Byang gter* cache within a *nāga*-shaped container. See Boord 2013: 41.

were enveloped in charcoal;⁸⁴ yet I expect this was also a practice in Tibetan burials of valuables. To find his *gter ma*, Chos dbang had to be guided by location lists (*kha byang*), which in his cosmology were disclosed by the Three Roots, mediated by the often bewildering and unpredictable play of enlightened *ḍākinīs*, a factor which underlines that the *gter ma* only exists because of the Buddhas, and that the Buddhas are in ultimate control of the entire cosmological scene.⁸⁵ Yet while the

⁸⁴ Page 103 line 2, when describing how to bury *gter ma*: *...sol sgrom gyi phyi rdzes byas la sba'o/*; also page 125 line 4, when describing the discovery of his own *gter ma*: *sol ba shar de*. For mentions of charcoal protecting buried treasures in Indian texts, compare with Balbir (1993) page 44, where she cites a Jain text, the *Upamitibhava-prapañca Kathā* of Siddharṣi; for a Śaiva equivalent, see Śrīkaṇṭhasāmbhu's *Nidhipradīpa* (Chapter 4, verse 50). Note also that the numerous sūtra mounds that were buried in 11th-13th century Japan often used charcoal. As Li 2017: 286 describes, 'In order to prepare for the Final Dharma, Japanese devotees built sūtra mounds all over the country... In these mounds, they buried sūtras .. in the hope of preserving them through the Dark Age. They always placed the sūtras in sūtra containers, many of which had outer cases, to protect them. At some sites, they sealed the pit with stones and charcoal, which succeeded in keeping some texts intact for a thousand years.' It might prove interesting to contrast and compare more carefully Chos dbang's reasons for and instructions on burying *gter ma* texts with those of his Japanese contemporaries as described by scholars such as Max Moerman (2010, 2018) and Yiwen Li (2017). Also directly relevant here is Cécile Ducher's work on early Bka' brgyud treasure text concealments (Ducher 2016). Chos dbang advises that the dharma texts can be buried in monasteries, temples, or rocky crags, or rivers, or even in the inexhaustible mind; they should be written on fine silk, Chinese paper (*rgya shog*), birchbark (*gro ga*), or palm leaf (*ta la'i lo ma*); the calligraphy must be precise and clear; it should be written in Nāgarī script (*na ga ra pa'i yi ge*); one must make one's own ink, and the water for making the ink should be purified with a Ketaka jewel; to signal the profundity of the texts, *visargas* should be used; the manuscripts should be sealed with seals of authenticity and secrecy; then the manuscripts have to be enclosed in high quality watertight and bug-proof containers of valuable materials, which are embedded in charcoal, and then buried; and finally, prayers and aspirations must be made that the right person will rediscover the buried texts in the future. *Ḍākinīs* and *dharmapālas* and treasure protectors (*ḍa ki chos skyong gter bdag*) are ordered to protect the *gter ma* and give it only to the genuine destined person. See page 102 line 1 to page 103 line 3, the section of his work entitled *spyi don brgyad pa gter ji ltar sba thabs kyis gter chud mi gsan par bstan pa*.

⁸⁵ To be more precise, Chos dbang held that inferior kinds of *gter ma* can be found without prophetic *kha byang* issued by the Three Roots via the activity of the *ḍākinīs* (*bla ma yi dam mkha' 'gro lung bstan nas rnyed pa*) but not the transcendent Buddhist teachings of important *gter ma* such as his own. Less prestigious ways of finding *gter ma* without *kha byang* include such methods (page 115 lines 1-4) as divination (*mo ma'i mig mthong gis rnyed pa*), or by luck and fortune (*'khar rje stegs dbang*). It is impossible to exaggerate the centrality of *kha byang* to Chos dbang's understanding of *gter ma*, and the centrality of the spontaneous playfulness of the Buddhist *ḍākinīs* in the miraculous appearances and even disappearances of these *kha byang*. Certainly, in the case of superior tantric *gter ma* such as Chos dbang's, *kha byang* are never disclosed by the local deities who protect the *gter ma*, but only by Buddhist

idea of *dākinīs* guiding yogins to receive secret tantric teachings is quintessentially Indic, as far as I know, the institution of the written paper *kha byang*, which was so important to Chos dbang, has not been reported from Indian sources, so it might well be indigenous to Tibet, or a Tibetan adaptation of something that existed in a different way in India.⁸⁶ Finally, sometime after discovering his profound *gter ma* teachings buried in the ground, Chos dbang makes a visionary journey to Padmasambhava's paradise of the Copper Coloured Mountain (*Zangs mdog dpal ri*), where Padmasambhava gave Chos dbang instruction on the teachings he had discovered as *gter ma*, travelling some of his journey on a shield (*phub*).⁸⁷ On the one hand, this references Buddhist traditions such as Asaṅga's reception of teachings from Maitreya after his visionary journey to Tuṣita; on the other hand, it is highly reminiscent of indigenous Tibetan 'shamans' flying on their flat drums to the palaces of the *yul lha* atop ancestral or otherwise revered mountains. At other points, Chos dbang appears to accept indigenous local deity practices unchanged, except that these deities function as protectors of his Buddhist *gter ma*: for example, he makes offerings of yaks and pigs to a *gter ma* protector (*gter srung*) called *Mkha' ri gnyan phra*.⁸⁸

Finally, should we be surprised that Chos dbang was able to find Indic materials to use in his quest to show a Buddhist nature of *gter ma*? On the contrary, I believe it would seem most unlikely that someone of Chos dbang's learning, particular interests, and geographical location in 13th century Lho brag, could remain ignorant of the many references to *nidhi* in the Indian texts translated into Tibetan by his time. These will have included sundry *Kriyātantras* such as the *Amoghapāśa*,⁸⁹ the *Āryavidyottamamahātantra* (some of which I translate

dākinīs. Repeated references to such *kha byang* appear throughout the autobiographical sections of his text.

⁸⁶ The nearest equivalent I am so far aware of from India are the two 'index scrolls' among the Senior mss. reported by Salomon 2009: 25, but these are from an earlier period in Buddhist history, and their function is not yet understood. All we know is that they are contents lists or inventories of some collections of Buddhist scriptures that were buried in *stūpas*.

⁸⁷ Page 139 onwards.

⁸⁸ Page 147, line 1: *gter srung mkha' ri gnyan phra g.yag dang phag kyis mchod...* Is animal sacrifice being suggested?

⁸⁹ *Amoghapāśakalparāja* (IHan dkar ma 316), Tibetan: Sde dge bka' 'gyur 686, Vol. 92-1-138a, Sanskrit: Taisho University Mikkyō Seiten Kenkyūkai, codex unicus from China. This text has several *nidhi* rites, for example at folio 73a 5-6. "Then, if you wish to dig up some treasure, at the place where you suspect the treasure is, make a maṇḍala of cow dung; strew it with flowers, cense it with guggul incense, offer the three kinds of tormas, that is, offer pure tormas, meat and blood tormas, and dough, fruit and lotus tormas. Offer them to Ārya Avalokiteśvara. Do ten thousand recitations. When the ten thousand recitations are completed, there at the place which has the treasure, the treasure guardian will actually become present, and

below), the *Āryavajrapātāla*,⁹⁰ and the *Āryamañjuśrīmūlakalpa*,⁹¹ more esoteric tantras such as the *Āryatārākurukullākālpa*,⁹² the *Amarakoṣa* and

the treasure will be made to appear. Offer a torma and drinking water to the treasure protector, and as long as you live, the treasure protector will do work for you. Wherever you send it, whatever work you command it, all will be done." /*de nas gter brko bar 'dod pas gnas gang na gter yod par dogs pa'i gnas der ba'i lci bas maṅdal byas la/ me tog gtor zhing gu gul gyi bdug pas bdug cing / gtor ma gtsang ma dang / sha dang / khrag gi gtor ma dang / phyé zan dang 'bras bu dang / pad+ma'i gtor ma dang / gtor ma rnam pa gsum sbyin par bya'ol / 'phags pa spyan ras gzigs dbang phyug la mchod pa bya'ol / stong phrag bcu bzlas brjod bya'ol / stong phrag bcu tshang ba dang gnas gang na gter yod pa'i gnas der gter srung ba mngon du 'byung zhing gter 'byung bar 'gyur ro/ / gter srung ba la gtor ma dang / mchod yon sbyin par byas na gter srung ba de ji srid 'tsho'i bar du las byas pa por 'gyur ro/ / gang du mngags pa dang / gang bsgo ba'i las de thams cad byed par 'gyur ro/ / . atha nidhānam utpātayitukāmena yatra sthāne nidhisamkā bhavati / tatra sthāne gomayamaṅdalakam kṛtvā puṣpāvaktṛnam kṛtvā gugguladhūpan datvāt troidhibaliṃ dadyāt śuklabali māmsarudhirabaliḥ saktuphalapadmabalin dātavyaṃ / āryāvālokiteśvarapūjāṃ karttavyaḥ / daśasahasrāṇi japatāḥ samāpte daśasahasrāṇi yatra sthāne nidhir bhaviṣyati / tatra nidhipālam uttiṣṭhati / nidhānam utpatati / nidhipāla bali.arghaṃ nivedayitavyaṃ / sa ca nidhipāla yāvajjīva karmakārakā bhavati yatra preṣayasi yam āññāpayasi tat sarvākarmāṇi kariṣyati /*

⁹⁰ *rDo rje sa 'og gi rgyud kyi rgyal po*, Sde dge bka' 'gyur 744, rGyud 'bum Tsha (Vol. 94), folio 258a /*yang na gter 'don par 'dod pas lcags las byas pa'i phur bu bzhi la lan nyi shu rtsa gcig bzlas te/ phyogs bzhir btob la gsang sngags bzlas par bya'ol / de nas der gter 'byung bar 'gyur ro/*

⁹¹ *Mañjuśrīyamūlakalpa*, Sde dge bka' 'gyur 543, rGyud 'bum, Na (Vol. 88). This text has numerous *nidhi* rites, notably the fourteen *nidhi* rites in its final chapter, the *hemasādhana*, but apparently the *hemasādhana* was not translated into Tibetan. Nevertheless several other *nidhi* rites within this compendious tantra were translated into Tibetan, for example, at folio 231.a: "[With One Syllable,] one can also unveil a treasure trove. One should go to where the trove is, take a white jar, smear it with 'all fragrances,' fill it with water infused with white sandalwood, incant it with the mantra one thousand and eight times, and deposit it where the trove [is supposed to be]. If the trove is there, the earth will burst open. If it is at the depth of a human height, one should sprinkle the area with water—one will be able to grasp it after digging one cubit [*hasta*] deep." (Translation by 84000) /*de nas gter 'byin par 'dod na gang du gter yod pa der song la/ rtsa ba mi gnag pa'i bum pa blangs nas dri zhim po thams cad kyi lde gus byugs te/ tsan+dan dkar po dang chu'i nang du bcug ste/ stong rtsa brgyad mngon par bsngags pa byas nas gal te gter yod na sa de rang bye bar 'gyur ro/ / gal te gter de mi gang tsam na yod na chus gtor la khru gang tsam brkos la blang bar bya'ol*

⁹² *Āryatārākurukullākālpa*, Sde dge bka' 'gyur 437 rGyud 'bum, Ca (Vol. 81) folios 41a-b: "If, having recited the mantra fifty times, one places one's foot on the ground / In pursuit of treasure within it, / And the foot thus put down then vibrates, / It should be understood that a treasure is present there. / If the upper part of the foot twitches, it is nearby; / [F41.b] If it is the sole that twitches, it is far away. / Relying first on hearsay, / The knowledge holder should look downward every day." (translation by 84000) / *sngags 'di brgya phyed rkang pa sar bzhag nas/ / sa yi nang na yod pa'i nor btsal na/ / rkang pa gang du bzhag pa g.yo 'gyur ba/ / de na gter dag yod pa shes par bya/ / rkang pa'i bol 'gul na ni nye bar [081-41b] 'gyur/ / rkang mthil 'gul na ring na gnas pa yin/ / gang na gter yod zer bar mngon byas nas/ / rig pa 'dzin pas nyin bzhin 'og tu blta/*

its commentaries,⁹³ various Mahāyāna scriptures such as the *Pratyutpanna-buddha-saṃmukhāvasthita-samādhi*,⁹⁴ and the *Sarvapuṇya-samuccaya-samādhi*,⁹⁵ and Mahāyāna commentarial texts such as the *Śikṣāsamuccaya*.⁹⁶ More importantly perhaps, *nidhis* played prominent and even central roles in the mythologies of Indian figures popular in Tibet, such as the wealth gods Kubera, Jambhala, and Vaiśravaṇa, the bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi, and other mythologically important figures including *yakṣas*, *nāgas* and *Cakravartin* monarchs, so that anyone interested in Indian culture might hear of *nidhi* from many different sources of Indic knowledge. Chos dbang claims he himself revealed a *yakṣa* cycle,⁹⁷ and we know from the biographical literature that Chos dbang was an accomplished adept of Vajrapāṇi,⁹⁸ the deity who is most concerned with *nidhi* in the Buddhist tantras and whose scriptures focus

⁹³ Lists of the nine *nidhis* occur in virtually all Tibetan lexicons, generally as follows: *gter la pad ma can dang/ dung can/ pad ma chen po/ chu srin can/ rus sbal can/ rnga can/ dga' ba can/ sngon po/ 'dzin byed ces dgu yod pas grangs ka dgu mtshon/*. I have not yet ascertained the source for this list, but it might be linked to the *Amarakoṣa*. Dan Martin's *TibVocab* gives *sbyin byed* in place of *'dzin byed*.

⁹⁴ To do justice to this *sūtra*'s treatment of *nidhi* requires a reading of its entire 13th chapter, too long to reproduce here. It is excellently edited and translated in Harrison 1978 and 1990.

⁹⁵ Sde dge bga' gyur volume 56, F.96.a-b "Vimalatejā, you should understand through such accounts that for bodhisattva great beings who yearn for the Dharma, the thus-gone ones do not pass beyond suffering, nor does the sacred Dharma ever disappear. How is that? Vimalatejā, bodhisattva great beings who yearn for the Dharma with perfect motivation and devotion cause the blessed buddhas to manifest and teach the Dharma, even though they may dwell in a different world system. Vimalatejā, the Dharma treasures of bodhisattva great beings who yearn for the Dharma are found within mountains, mountain caverns, and trees. They contain *dhāranīs* and infinite gateways to the doctrine laid out in tomes yet to be discovered." (Translation by 84000, with my emendation) */dri ma med pa'i gzi brjid rnam grangs des kyang khyod kyis chos 'dod pa'i byang chub sems dpa' sems dpa' chen po rnam la ni nams kyang de bzhin gshegs pa mya ngan las 'da' bar [56-96b] mi 'gyur la/ dam pa'i chos kyang nub par mi 'gyur ba de ltar rig par bya'o/ /de ci'i phyir zhe na/ dri ma med pa'i gzi brjid chos 'dod pa'i byang chub sems dpa' sems dpa' chen po bsam pa phun sun tshogs pa gus pa dang bcas pa rnam ni 'jig rten gyi kham s gzhan na 'dug kyang sangs rgyas bcom ldan 'das rnam zhal ston par mdzad cing chos kyang thos par mdzad do/ /dri ma med pa'i gzi brjid chos 'dod pa'i byang chub sems dpa' sems dpa' chen po rnam kyi chos kyi gter ri dang / ri sul dang / shing dag gi nang du bcug pa dag yod del/ gzungs dang / chos kyi sgo mtha' yas pa glegs bam du byas pa dag kyang lag tu 'ong bar 'gyur ro/*

⁹⁶ The excerpt mainly reproduces the passage from the *Sarvapuṇya-samuccaya-samādhi* presented above.

⁹⁷ Page 115, line 7: *gter kha phye nas lta pas gnod sbyin zha 'on gyi skor...*

⁹⁸ Dudjom 1991: 762: 'In his tenth year, he studied six traditions of Vajrapāṇi according to the new translation schools, and when he propitiated that deity the water in his ritual vase began to boil'. According to his own account, Chos dbang's involvement with treasure discovery began three years later, in his thirteenth year, when he acquired his first *kha byang*: *bdag lo bcu gsum lon po'i tshe....* see page 115, lines 4-5.

precisely on controlling *yakṣas* and *nāgas* to procure their treasures (see for example the description of the *Bhagavan-nīlāambaradhara-vajrapāṇitantra* and other related Vajrapāṇi scriptures above, and also the translation from the *Āryavidyottamamahātantra* below). Indeed, when Chos dbang's household was attacked by the yak-horned treasure protector (*gter bdag*) for whom he had failed to leave a substitute offering (*gter tshab*, see above), Vajrapāṇi, who had been accomplished as a personal deity, was invoked in the initial attempt to control it.⁹⁹ As is known from art history and other sources, the outer tantras of *Kriyā*, *Caryā*, and *Yoga* remained popular in Tibet until around the 14th century, after which their popularity waned. But it is in the texts of these outer tantras, still popular in Chos dbang's time, that the practices of Vajrapāṇi and the rites concerned with *nidhi* are so prominent.

3. *The Āryavidyottamamahātantra, Kriyātantra, Nidhiśāstras, and Gter ma*

The Tibetan *gter ma* tradition was highly syncretic. It merged different elements from Indian religion—some related to *nidhi* and others quite unrelated—with various aspects of indigenous Tibetan beliefs.¹⁰⁰ The translation from the *Āryavidyottamamahātantra* below is therefore intended merely to illustrate one of the many strands in Indian and Tibetan thinking that contributed towards the evolution of *gter ma* in Tibet, albeit not an unimportant one. Moreover, although taken from perhaps the longest *Kriyātantra* description of *nidhi* that I have so far encountered, we should also bear in mind that the translation represents only one extract from one sample out of a very broad range of possible examples of its type, for there are innumerable rites for finding *nidhi* within early Buddhist tantric and especially *Kriyā* literature, and several more even within other chapters of the *Āryavidyottamamahātantra* itself. Almost none of these numerous further *Kriyā* sources on *nidhi* have been studied so far, and this is merely a partial translation of only one of them. Regrettably, there are very few previous studies around this topic.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Page 128, lines 2-3: *yi dam phyag rdor bum rtags thon par snyen pa skyol ba gcig yod pa bsgom pas kyang*, etc.

¹⁰⁰ For Indian beliefs unrelated to *nidhi* but synthesised into Tibetan *gter ma*, see note 105 below. For one of the best accounts so far of indigenous Tibetan elements synthesised into *gter ma*, see Jacoby 2014, pages 76ff. I hope to deal further with these issues in a future publication in this series, with Anna Sehnalova.

¹⁰¹ More than that, as should be obvious from my discussion above, the *Kriyā* and other early Buddhist tantras represent merely one aspect of Indian Buddhism's complex engagements with the category of *nidhi*. Other important aspects, only barely mentioned in my extremely brief summary above, include the well-known and prolific roles of *nāgas* and *yakṣas* as protector deities in Indian Buddhism.

It would be naïve to expect the translation below to illustrate an exact and complete Indian precursor to the mature Tibetan *gter ma* tradition, because the *Āryavidyottamamahātantra* does not pertain to the same historical period or genre as Tibetan *gter ma*. At the same time, it would be equally naïve to expect the translation from the *Āryavidyottamamahātantra* below to show no relation at all to the Tibetan *gter ma* traditions. It is instructive to enlarge on both these points.

The Rnying ma *gter ma* traditions largely pertain to the historically later non-dual inner tantras of *Mahāyoga*, *Anuyoga*, and *Atiyoga*, that emerged several centuries after *Kriyātantra*, which was the very earliest type of Buddhist tantra. Although evolving out of the earlier genres of *Kriyātantra*, *Caryātantra* and *Yogatantra*, and although carrying many of the categories of the earlier genres along with them, the non-dual inner tantras nevertheless developed into something different. More specifically, the non-dual inner tantras are predominantly soteriological in orientation, in particularly sharp contrast to the *Kriyātantras*, which were to a considerable degree this-worldly in orientation.

Nevertheless, perhaps because of their own preoccupation with higher soteriological themes, the non-dual inner tantras in many cases preferred to perpetuate and adapt some of their more worldly practical rituals from the existing *Kriyā* tantra heritage, rather than invent new ones of their own: for despite their soteriological orientation, they still needed the capacity to perform practical tantric activities for the benefit of beings.¹⁰² Nor did the evolution of the inner tantras entail that usage of the earlier tantric genres ceased immediately: on the contrary, the earlier types of tantra continue to exist in monastic and canonical collections, and continue to be consulted occasionally, despite having become increasingly eclipsed in Tibet by the inner tantras, a process which accelerated after the 14th century. Unsurprisingly then, while we find that the discovery and excavation of *nidhi* in the

Perhaps in due course it might also make sense to think about the so-far never analysed but in several cases seemingly close relationships of the *dharmabhāṅakas* (reciters or revealers of the *Mahāyāna sūtras*) with the deities of the landscape (*nāgas* and *yakṣas*) and the wealth they confer, for example as witnessed in one of the main extant sources on *dharmabhāṅakas*, the *Suvarṇaprabhāsottama-sūtra*: see for example Chapters 10, 11, and 14. See also Gummer 2012. It is sometimes suggested that the famous narrative of Nāgārjuna recovering the *Prajñāpāramitā* scriptures from the *nāgas* is historically quite late, yet already in the very early *Pratyutpanna-buddhasaṃmukhāvasthita-samādhi-sūtra*, the reincarnating *dharmabhāṅakas* are expected to recover the concealed *sūtras* specifically from the care of *nāgas* and suchlike deities, who guard them within the landscape (see sections 13 K v.9 of Harrison 1978 and 1990).

¹⁰² To give one example, the inner tantras routinely reused the fire offerings (*homa*) so typical of *Kriyātantra*, to effectuate the 'four enlightened activities' (*las bzhi*) of pacifying disturbances, increasing good qualities, magnetising the distracted, and destroying the irredeemable.

Āryavidyottamamahātantra is permeated and dominated by *Kriyātantra* themes, we also find that the discovery and excavation of *gter ma* in Rnying ma is permeated and dominated by inner tantras themes; yet some aspects or traces of the older genre remain visible in the later one, reflecting the general relationship of the inner tantras to *Kriyātantra*. This can perhaps be more easily understood through the following point-by-point comparison.

Thus, in the *Āryavidyottamamahātantra*, representing the historically earliest tantric genre of *Kriyātantra* which is to a substantial degree practical and this-worldly in orientation, we find that:

(i) *Nidhi* are largely practical and material, such as gold and worldly wealth (although a few mentions are also made of soteriological themes).¹⁰³

(ii) Since the *nidhi* are mundane and do not pertain to the Three Jewels of Buddha, Dharma and Saṅgha, they require no spiritual linkage with a predestined discoverer (thus differing from the Buddha's co-natal (*saha-jāta*) *nidhi* in Theravāda and the *dharmanidhi* scriptures of Mahāyāna with their prophesied discoverers).

(iii) *Nidhi* are mainly discovered within or through the natural world, rather than within or through the yogin's mind (since the non-dual philosophical doctrines underpinning the latter ideas were not really the main concern in much of *Kriyā*'s practical magic).

(iv) Guidance to find the treasure site largely derives from ordinary and subtle signs in the natural world, discernible to any suitably capable yogin applying correct methods, as taught by Vajrapāṇi in the *Āryavidyottamamahātantra* and other such generic *Kriyātantras* accessible to many yogins.

(v) The deity who helps the treasure seeker at the outset through dream indications is described merely as a 'treasure deity' (*gter gyi lha*), not a wisdom *ḍākinī* (since the inner tantric category of wisdom *ḍākinī* was not yet predominant).

(vi) The physical act of *nidhi* excavation requires intensive preparatory practice of the quintessential *Kriyā* rite of *homa*, which at this stage of tantric Buddhist history was a main practice in itself.

(vii) The frame narrative describes the *nidhi* in the earth being in the ultimate custody of a great this-worldly (*laukika*) god (*deva*), Brahmā.

(viii) The Indian landscape deities who guard such mundane *nidhi* were not previously inducted into the broader Buddhist community or appointed under oath to act as Dharma protectors.¹⁰⁴ Thus they need not resemble such respected beings as the protectors of the Buddha's

¹⁰³ See [D71a] below: "For people to.....perfect the *pāramitās*,"

¹⁰⁴ Although the current treasure finder might now make them his own personal servants, as an additional benefit of a successful treasure-hunt, see note 21 above.

co-natal (*saha-jāta*) *nidhi*, the *nāgas* who guarded the *Perfection of Wisdom* volumes, presumably also the *nāgas* and other landscape deities who guarded the *dharmanidhi* of the *Pratyutpanna-buddha-saṃmukhāvasthita-samādhi*, and Vajrapāṇi.

(ix) The Indian landscape deities who guard and have powerful proprietorial interests in the *nidhi* do not normally belong to a culturally respected pantheon of clan or *jati*-related patron deities playing a key role in ethnic or tribal identity and social structure.

(x) Thus little emphasis is normally placed on respectfully compensating them with substitutes for the *nidhi* removed.

(xi) *Nidhi* extracted from domesticated environments (statues, *lingams*, temples, etc.) can have simpler extraction processes than those taken from wild environments owned by deities (forests, rivers, etc.)

By contrast, in Rnying ma *gter ma*, which pertains to the inner tantras, in revisiting the same eleven topics, we find that:

(i) *Gter mas* are largely soteriological and esoteric, such as secret tantric texts and religious statues, (although some mentions are also made of this-worldly discoveries, like gold).

(ii) Since the various *gter ma* are supermundane and pertain to the Three Jewels of Buddha, Dharma and Saṅgha, each must have a specific spiritual link with a predestined discoverer (thus resembling the Buddha's co-natal (*saha-jāta*) *nidhi* in Theravāda and the *dharmanidhi* scriptures of Mahāyāna with their prophesied discoverers).

(iii) Many discoveries are made not in the earth, but in the discoverer's mind (*dgongs gter*), and even discoveries made in the earth have strong inner mental or spiritual aspects (not least the Mahāyāna-derived idea of *gtad* or *parindanā*, with all its ramifications).¹⁰⁵

(iv) Guidance to find the treasure site largely derives from an individual *gter ston* privately receiving signs in the natural world and in dream indications, and by receiving secret personalised *kha byang* containing practical instructions, unique to the excavation of each particular *gter ma*.

¹⁰⁵ As far as I currently understand it, the idea of revelation direct to the yogin's mind (*dgongs gter*) became classified as a kind of *nidhi* or *gter ma* only in Tibet. Where such ideas earlier became prominent, for example in Mahāyāna Buddhism, and in the non-dual tantric traditions of Kashmir, (Mayer 2019: 155-161 and 173-176, Sanderson 2007, Williams 2017, Nemeč 2020), they were not as far as I currently know considered part of the category of *nidhi*. Likewise, some Tibetans sometimes associate the related Mahāyāna idea of revelation by 'pure vision' (*dag snang*) with *nidhi*, which I do not think was necessarily the case in India, and indeed many other Tibetans do clearly differentiate 'pure vision' as a separate system. As for *gtad* or *parindanā* in Mahāyāna, see *Samādhirājasūtra* Chapter 18, *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* Chapter 27 and 22, and many more. For *gtad rgya* as a central concept in Rnying ma *gter ma*, see Thondup 1986: 64-66.

(v) All such guidance, in dreams, signs, and *kha byang*, are granted to the *gter ston* alone, by tantric wisdom *ḍākinīs*.

(vi) The physical act of *gter ma* excavation requires intensive preparatory practice of the quintessential inner tantric rites of *sādhana* with *gaṇacakra*¹⁰⁶ (but *sādhana* rites inherit and subsume the earlier rites of *homa* so favoured in *Kriyā*).

(vii) The frame narrative describes the *gter ma* being in the ultimate custody of a great transcendent (*lokottara*) being, the 'Second Buddha', Padmasambhava.

(viii) The Tibetan landscape deities who guard *gter ma* were already long ago inducted into the broader Buddhist community, having been tamed by Padmasambhava and appointed under oath to guard his treasures. Thus, they can resemble such respected beings as the protectors of the Buddha's co-natal (*saha-jāta*) *nidhi*, the *nāgas* who guarded the *Perfection of Wisdom* volumes, presumably also the *nāgas* and other landscape deities who guarded the *dharmanidhi* of the *Pratyutpanna-buddha-saṃmukhāvasthita-samādhi*, and Vajrapāṇi.

(ix) The Tibetan landscape deities who guard and have powerful proprietorial interests in *gter ma* can simultaneously belong to respected indigenous pantheons of clan-related gods with key roles in Tibetan tribal or clan identity, social structure, and economic welfare.

(x) Thus, great emphasis is placed on compensating them respectfully with substitutes for the *gter ma* removed (*gter tshab*).

(xi) *Gter ma* extracted from domesticated environments (statues, temples, etc.) can have simpler extraction processes than those taken from wild environments owned by deities (mountains, lakes, etc.)

From the above lists, it seems reasonable to hypothesise that whether directly or indirectly, at least some underlying structures and elements of the foundational Indian Buddhist tantric heritage of the earlier *Kriyā* system of *nidhi* can still be discerned within the Rnying ma inner tantra system of *gter ma*. However, much as one would expect in light of *Kriyā*'s historical relationship to the Rnying ma inner tantras, they have now been rendered suitably inward, esotericised, and where appropriate, Tibetanised.

A more detailed scrutiny can expose these relationships with increased granularity. Locating the site of hidden buried treasures, and then extracting them, requires much practical assistance. As mentioned above, in the esoteric Rnying ma system, where the most important discoveries are secret tantric texts, such assistance comes mainly through personalised documents called *kha byang*, miraculously delivered by wisdom *ḍākinīs*, unique to each occasion, and so secret that only the individual prophesied *gter ston* can read them at

¹⁰⁶ Thondup 1986: 76-7

all.¹⁰⁷ Nevertheless, much of the information contained in the *kha byang* is down to earth and practical, including the exact location of the 'treasure door' (*gter sgo*) and useful instructions on opening it. For example, Padma gling pa received the following *kha byang*:

...East of Tharling, at a place called Chatrag, there is a rocky mountain known as Dorje Trag. Before the rocky mountain there is a river, and on its bank an oak tree. Level with the top of the tree is a flat red rock like a mirror, with a vermilion *Āh* in the middle of it. At a distance of one *'dom* to the right, the door of the *gter ma* (*gter sgo*) will be found in the design of a swastika. In the centre of the swastika there is a hole the size of an egg, invisible from the outside. If you put a wooden dagger (*phur pa*) in the hole and push upwards the door will open. Inside is a bronze image of Vajrasattva one and a half feet high and a four inch scroll of the *sādhana* of Vajrasattva sealed by a letter *Āh*. You should discover them on the tenth day of the sheep month. (Thondup 1996:75)

Or, as Ratna Gling pa puts it more generally:

... a *gter ston* should identify the valley [of concealment] by relying on the general prophetic guide [*kha byang*]; he should find the spot [exact concealment place] by measurements according to the inner prophetic guide [*kha byang*]; and he should make offerings to the *gter ma* protectors and put in substitutes for the *gter ma* according to the innermost prophetic guide [*kha byang*]. (Thondup 1996: 75).

By contrast, in the more exoteric *Kriyā* system, where worldly wealth is usually the main discovery, practical assistance comes from generic tantras that any initiated yogins could read, describing subtle features of landscape and vegetation that any of them could potentially navigate, if suitably prepared. Even if the individualised dream guidance of a treasure deity is also mentioned, this plays a much lesser role than the wisdom *ḍākinī* messengers of the inner tantric Rnying ma system.

Nevertheless, it is quite noteworthy how the generic passage from the *Āryavidyottamamahātantra* translated below addresses so many of the very same practical concerns typical of *kha byang*: where to find, how to measure, how to make visible, and how to recognise hidden magic treasure doors or *gter sgo* (the same term is used in both traditions for this key notion), when or when not to open them, also what rituals to do before, while, or after opening them, how to manage their protectors or *gter srung* (the same term is used in both traditions), at

¹⁰⁷ *Kha byang* are often written in a symbolic *ḍākinī* script that only the prophesied *gter ston* can decipher and remain indecipherable to all other readers.

what depth behind the *gter sgo* the treasure will be found, how much will be found, how the *gter sgo* should be reclosed after the *gter* is extracted, and so on.

Continuities between the *Āryavidyottamamahātantra* and the Rnying ma system of *gter ma* become particularly evident if we focus on a single key concept crucial to both systems, the actual cavity from which the treasure is taken, known to both traditions as the *gter sgo*, and which I have translated here as 'treasure door'. Hence I have selected for translation below the particular section from the *Āryavidyottamamahātantra* which focuses on the *gter sgo*. I regret that because of the secrecy and dispersed nature of *kha byang*, I cannot mine them to compile a parallel systematic presentation from the Rnying ma system to compare with the *Āryavidyottamamahātantra*, and that I must rely instead on snippets of information scattered within Tibetan biographical sources. Nevertheless, significant parallels between the *gter sgo* of *Kriyā* and the *gter sgo* of Rnying ma do seem apparent.

The *gter sgo* of Indian *Kriyā* and Rnying ma *gter ma* alike is rarely a mere hole: more typically, it resembles a magical portal to another dimension.¹⁰⁸ Thus in the *Āryavidyottamamahātantra* (see [D75a] below), in a description resembling other early Buddhist tantric narratives, once the *gter sgo* is open, supernatural beings (in this case *gandharvīs* and *kinnarīs*) will appear from a supernatural realm (in this case Meru), which is just the other side of the *gter sgo*.¹⁰⁹ Similarly in Rnying ma, when Gter bdag gling pa enters a *gter sgo*, he finds himself inside a tent-like cavern with crystal walls and bright frescoes, inhabited by supernatural young men and women (Thondup 1986: 78). When Padma gling pa enters a *gter sgo*, he finds himself within a large space with thrones and supernatural inhabitants (Aris 1989: 38). Such accounts are highly prevalent, in *Kriyātantra* texts and in Rnying ma *gter ma* narratives alike.

Methods of opening and closing the *gter sgo* are also very similar in *Kriyā* and in Rnying ma: for example, as we can see in the *Āryavidyottamamahātantra* [D73a], *gter sgo* often open magically and spontaneously, but other times iron bars or chisels are needed to smash them open. Similarly, Rnying ma *gter sgo* often open magically and spontaneously, for example when Padma gling pa withdrew his famous lake treasure, but other times, hammers and chisels are needed, for example, when

¹⁰⁸ Because of its magic portal-like nature, Dan Martin has suggested that the translation of *gter gyi sgo* as 'treasure door' is somewhat conservative, and perhaps something like 'access point' might be more apposite.

¹⁰⁹ In several *Kriyā* sources, the discovery of *nidhi* can also be conflated with *pātālasiddhi*, the attainment of *pātāla* (Tibetan: *sa 'og*), the underground worlds of *nāgas* and *asuras* (see note 120 below), which are supernatural realms filled with wondrous inhabitants, treasures, longevity, and pleasures.

Padma gling pa withdrew his cliff treasure at Gedo (Aris 1989: 49). Likewise, a *gter sgo* opened spontaneously for Bdud 'joms gling pa at Bater, but he had to smash one open with a chisel in Ngala Tagtse; ditto Yongs dge mi 'gyur rdo rje (Thondup 1986: 78, 79).

The use of a magical lamp (often of *arka* wood) can help in finding the treasure: we see this in the *Āryavidyottamamahātantra* below, in the Chinese translation of the *Vajrakumāra* tantra (T1222, Hodge, unpublished) and in the actions of a treasure-finding Pāsupata brahmin described in the *Kathāsagitsāgara* (see note 127 below); and likewise in the famous narrative of Padma gling pa finding his lake treasure (Thondup 1986: 79).

A *kīla* or *phur pa* quite often features in both *Kriyātantra* and Rnying ma accounts of the *gter sgo*, and also in Śaiva *nidhiśāstra* texts, as a multi-purpose tool performing a variety of different functions: sometimes they are used for opening the *gter sgo*, and sometimes for keeping the *gter sgo* sealed. There are several references to *kīlas* in the *Āryavidyottamamahātantra* excerpt translated below, where they serve to keep the *gter sgo* closed. For Śaiva examples, so far we can conveniently consult only one *nidhiśāstra* (treasure finding treatise), since none of the other extant manuscripts have yet been edited. But the *Nidhipradīpa* of Śrīkaṇṭhaśambhu (Sastri 1930) also prescribes *kīlas*: 'Using eight *khādīra* woods, [the treasure seeker] should plant a *kīla* endowed with spells...' (Chapter 4, verse 17).¹¹⁰ The use of a *phur pas* is widespread in Rnying ma, where they are mainly used to open the *gter sgo*. Thus, one of Padma gling pa's *kha byang* instructed him to open a *gter sgo* using a wooden *phur pa* (Thondup 1986: 75). Ogyan P. Tanzin Rinpoche also told me about a *phur pa* he knew that was specifically kept for opening up *gter sgo*, and he explained that *phur pas* are often used to dig out *gter ma*.¹¹¹ The theme of having to close the *gter sgo* after use, and its often-magical re-sealing, is found in the *Āryavidyottamamahātantra*, and is ubiquitous in the Rnying ma tradition too.

The *Āryavidyottamamahātantra* has well organised lists describing the various shapes of treasure doors, and in passages sometimes difficult to understand with any great precision, also their drawing or tracing on the ground. Vasudeva (2012: 274) reports something very similar to these drawings or tracings from the *Nidhipradīpa*, although he too says he was not able fully to understand what the passages meant. These topics too are not absent in Tibetan *gter ma*, although such systematic information is harder to find, not only because *kha byang* are personalised, but also because *kha byang* are almost never available for

¹¹⁰ Thanks to Dylan Esler for this reference,

¹¹¹ Personal communication, 3rd January 2018. Ogyan P. Tanzin Rinpoche was referring to a special *phur pa* preserved in his father's house that was said to be particularly good for digging up *gter ma*.

public scrutiny. But we do have some snippets of information from biographical sources. In a set of procedures very similar indeed to those expounded in the *Āryavidyottamamahātantra* below, Urgyen Tulku describes Mchog gyur gling pa drawing a design on the surface of a rock, which then spontaneously opened 'like the anus of a cow', to reveal a magic *gter sgo* (Kunsang and Schmidt 2005: 30), which was finally resealed by miraculous methods after its treasure had been removed (Kunsang and Schmidt 2005: 31). The exact location of Padma gling pa's *gter sgo* at Chatrag was marked by a swastika (Thondup 1986: 75). Urgyen Tulku describes a 'terma sign' on the ground that marked where a *gter sgo* was situated (Kunsang and Schmidt 2005: 29). Perhaps not too different in principle, the precise location of one of Gter bdag gling pa's *gter sgo* was marked by a swastika of rainbow light illuminating the ground (Thondup 1986: 78).

The general typologies of locations where *gter sgo* will be found likewise show parallels between the *Kriyā* traditions, the Rnying ma, and the Śaiva traditions too: Thondup (1986: 77) mentions such locations as 'rocks, earth, lakes, temples, statues, trees, or sky', most of which we find also in the *Āryavidyottamamahātantra* (rocks, earth, lakes, shrines or temples, statues, trees). The *Nidhipradīpa*, which is close to the Buddhist *Kriyātantra* traditions in so many ways, mentions in general that treasures can occur in several locations (*nidhi-sthāna*), in an aquatic environment, in a terrestrial environment, or in an aerial environment (Balbir 1993: 27),¹¹² as well as in temples, statues, and trees.

The *Āryavidyottamamahātantra*, the Rnying ma tradition, and the *Nidhipradīpa*, all agree that temples and icons are extremely important sites for finding *nidhi* or *gter ma*. The *Āryavidyottamamahātantra* specifies that shrines, temples, and Śiva liṅgams, and also images of Buddhas, Śiva, and Parvati, can conceal or indicate *nidhi*. In Rnying ma, the early *gter ston* Myang ral finds important treasures in Samye temple (Hirshberg 2016: 123-4), and within a statue of Buddha Vairocana at Khomting (Hirshberg 2016: 128). Discovery in temples and statues remains a staple of subsequent Rnying ma *gter ma* discovery, for example, the late Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche received a major *phur pa gter ma* from a Mahākāla statue in the protector temple (*dgon khang*) at Benchen monastery. Thondup (1986: 80) dedicates an entire section of his work to 'Discovery in statues and temples.' Similarly, Vasudeva (2012: 275) mentions regarding Śrīkaṅṭhaśambhu "Locating treasure in deserted temples and inside icons is a major topic in the *Nidhipradīpa*".

The *Nidhipradīpa* resembles the *Āryavidyottamamahātantra* in many of its signs for *nidhi* in the natural world, for example, particular plants, unusual anomalies, and the like. Nevertheless, at such a specific level,

¹¹² It is not clearly explained exactly how treasures are extracted from the air.

the landscapes, the flora, and even the built environments, of India and Tibet are quite different, so that many of the more precise specification of the *Āryavidyottamamahātantra* or *Nidhipradīpa* could never apply to Tibet. These include specific trees or plants native to India but not Tibet, as well as artifacts such as Śiva liṅgams. Likewise, the inner tantric Rnying ma traditions that locate treasures fully or partly in the mind of the *gter ston* seem, as far as I currently know, unattested in either the Buddhist *Kriyā* traditions or the *Nidhipradīpa* (although they do occur in Mahāyāna).¹¹³

Treasure-guarding deities in the *Āryavidyottamamahātantra* and in Rnying ma certainly shared an identical classification—*gter srung*—but are interesting as much for their differences as for their similarities. Scholars such as DeCaroli (2004) and others have pointed out how Indian Buddhism exported the basic *structure* of its relationship with its native territorial deities to the other cultures it entered. Yet when Buddhism moved outside of India, many of the niches originally occupied by India's own territorial deities could instead become populated by the territorial deities of the host cultures: for example, *nats* in Southeast Asia, or *yul lha* and *klu* in Tibet. The Buddhist *saṃsāra-nirvāṇa* cosmology shaped this process: Buddhas beyond the cycle of rebirth are transcendent (*lokottara*), while deities still subject to rebirth, which includes most territorial deities, are worldly (*laukika*). However, some *laukika* deities become 'tamed' by the *lokottara* deities, to become protectors of Buddhism, and gradually ascend towards enlightenment. This structure helped Buddhist conversion in both India and abroad, by encouraging the Buddhist doctrinal vision to prevail, while still permitting an active but subservient role to indigenous religions. Thus cherished territorial deities need not be strenuously suppressed, but could retain their previous cults and characteristics, albeit at the cost of acknowledging a Buddhist ascendancy through accepting for themselves the Buddhist-defined niche of 'worldly deity'. Unsurprisingly then, despite both being classified under the same term *gter srung*, there are many striking differences between the *gter srung* of the *Āryavidyottamamahātantra* and those of Rnying ma, since each retained the unique characteristics deriving from their differing cultural origins. From the

¹¹³ *Dgongs gter* is a kind of *gter ma* found entirely in the *gter ston*'s mind which seems to have parallels in the non-dual Śaivism of Kashmir, and which will hopefully be the subject of a forthcoming paper in this series. *Dgongs gter* also has a probable antecedent in the Mahāyāna notion of *pratibhāna* or *spobs ba* (Mayer 2019: 155-161). By contrast, *gtad pa* or *parindanā* can be the 'entrustment' of the *gter ma* text concealed in the elements into the *gter ston*'s or *dharmabhāṅaka*'s mind during a previous incarnation, by Padmasambhava in Rnying ma, or by the Buddha in Mahāyāna. The treasure discoverer thus recovers again and again through successive reincarnations, a dharma text that has already been imprinted into his mind in previous lifetimes, by Padmasambhava or the Buddha (Mayer 2019: 155-161).

Buddhist point of view, they are functionally the same, and both occupy a similar niche in the Buddhist pantheon, hence both are legitimately deemed *gter srung*; and in recognition of this fact, Tibetan Buddhist scholars did sometimes even homologise their *yul lha* with Indian *yakṣas* and their *klu* with Indian *nāgas*. Yet nevertheless, the *gter srung* of Tibet can clearly differ considerably in character from the *gter srung* of the *Āryavidyottamamahātantra* and the wider *Kriyātantras*, perpetuating entirely different individual histories, inhabiting and embodying different kinds of landscapes, and reflecting very different social and cultural conditions.

While Rnying ma *gter ma* conforms to inner tantra soteriological concerns by being predominantly focused on such discoveries as texts and statues, it has not entirely lost its historical connection with the more practical discoveries of the earlier *Kriyātantra* texts such as the *Āryavidyottamamahātantra*. As Dudjom Rinpoche observes, the finding of material wealth remains an important if less prestigious aspect of the *gter ston*'s role (Dudjom 1992: 746-7). Thus, the great 14th century *gter ston* Sangs rgyas gling pa revealed a copper vase filled with gold (Dudjom 1992: 786), and the great 19th century *gter stons* Mchyen brtse dbang po and Mchog gyur gling pa together revealed a great quantity of gold from the *nāgas* in a lake (Gardner 2019: 250). Mchog gyur gling pa even revealed a herd of cattle as a wealth *gter ma* (Kunsang and Schmidt 2005: 30). Of course, the *Āryavidyottamamahātantra* and the *Nidhipradīpa* alike are mainly concerned with discovering mundane treasures, such as gold.

There are several other parallels between Rnying ma *gter ma*, non-Tibetan tantric Buddhist traditions, and the Indian *nidhivādin* traditions, which are not specifically mentioned in the *Āryavidyottamamahātantra* itself. One of these is the enveloping of the treasure cache within charcoal. This is truly ubiquitous in Rnying ma: see for example, bDud 'joms gling pa's discoveries at Bater rock mountain (Thondup 1986: 78), and at Ngala Tagtse (Thondup 1986: 79), or Zur Shakya 'od's discovery at Dorje Tsheten in gTsang (Dudjom 1992: 662). For Chos dbang's identical use of charcoal, and its wider use in Buddhist East Asia, see note 84 above, where I also mention that we find this in the Śaiva *Nidhipradīpa* (Chapter 4, verse 50) and in the Jain tradition, for example, in the *Upamitibhavaprapañca Kathā* of Siddharṣi (Balbir 1993: 44).

There are also themes in Śrīkaṇṭhaśambhu's *Nidhipradīpa* that are not found in the excerpts from the *Āryavidyottamamahātantra* I have so far read, but which do seem to be reflected in the Rnying ma *gter ma* tradition. For example, the *Nidhipradīpa* explains that treasure seeking should not be undertaken alone, but "to achieve this, the treasure hunter needs to begin by finding an ideal assistant (*sahāya*)" (Vasudeva

2012: 273). Balbir further comments that when excavating *nidhi*, the treasure seeker of the *Nidhipradīpa* must be in the company of special assistants with particular qualities (*sahāya lakṣaṇa*) and impeccable moral standing, whose behaviour must be perfect (Balbir 1993: 26-27). This resembles a trope in Rnying ma: while *gter ma* can sometimes be revealed individually, or before a large crowd (*khrom gter*), in many other cases only carefully chosen people can be present at the discovery (Thondup 1986: 77). This idea is already found in early sources such as Chos dbang, who discovered a *gter ma* statue of Guru Rinpoche (*sku tshab*) when accompanied by eleven suitable companions (page 146 ff), and Ogyan P Tenzin Rinpoche told me of occasions when *gter ma* could not be revealed because a member of the *gter ston*'s entourage was inappropriate. It might also be worth exploring if, in the Rnying ma inner tantric system where soteriological themes and the role of wisdom *dākinīs* are so pronounced, the *nidhiśāstra*'s specially chosen assistants with particular qualities might have morphed into the Rnying ma *gter ston*'s destined tantric consorts of suitable interdependence, without whom the *gter ston* cannot reveal the treasure at all, and without whom the *gter ston*'s very life might be in danger (Thondup 1986: 82-84; for a detailed account of this, see Jacoby 2014).

Balbir (1993: 22-23) observes that treasure-hunting specialists in India were often Śaivas, notably Pāśupata ascetics who drew their knowledge from the specialised *śāstras* dedicated to treasure hunting (*nidhiśāstras*). Typically, they could also be specialists in alchemy, because alchemy was often closely associated with the *khanyavādin* (mineralogist) and the *nidhivādin* (treasure seeker) (Balbir 1993: 22, 31, 48). Lopon P. Ogyan Tenzin similarly explained to me that in a time of famine, Nāgārjuna created much gold by alchemical methods. Finding gold ore in the ground as a *khanyavādin* or uncovering a hidden store of golden coins as a *nidhivādin*, or creating completely new gold as an alchemist, are thus different ways of achieving the same ends. Little wonder, as both Balbir (1993: 23-24) and Vasudeva (2012: 272) point out, such lucrative arts could be patronised by kings.

One of the specialised *śāstras* for finding *nidhi* still extant in Sanskrit is the first of two different texts both called *Nidhipradīpika*. According to Balbir (1993: 25), it was composed by bringing together two chapters from the *Kakṣapuṭa* or *Siddhanāgārjunatantra*, which is attributed to the complex and conflated Buddhist authorial name of Nāgārjuna.¹¹⁴ This

¹¹⁴ A version of the *Kakṣapuṭa* survives in the Tibetan Tengyur, and if it contains any of the same material as the extant *Nidhipradīpika*, a combined study of them might prove fruitful. *Mchan khung gi sbyor ba*: Peking No. 2480, *rgyud 'grel*, 'a, 89b2-91a4 (vol.57, p.204); Sde dge No. 1609, *rgyud, ya* 72b1-73b5; Narthang 'a 79b3-81a1; Kinsha 484, 'a 102b1, p.53-1-1. Chieko Yamano (2013, 2014, 2015) has published some excellent editions and translations of three chapters from the *Kakṣapuṭa*, but not yet

is of interest because throughout many centuries of Buddhist history, the name Nāgārjuna has been associated with the discovery of dharma *nidhis*, including the *Prajñāpāramitā sūtras*, the *Sarvatathāgata-tattovasaṅgraha*, and other early Buddhist tantras attribute to his discovery in East Asian tradition; and equally, with metallurgical and alchemical works. What all these different references share, as indeed the very name Nāgārjuna itself would so strongly suggest, is a clear association with the three overlapping identities of the *khanyavādin*, the *nidhivādin*, and the alchemist. It would seem, the very name Nāgārjuna was understood to refer to such a figure *par excellence*.

Indian medicine is another body of knowledge with which the name Nāgārjuna is associated. As Balbir points out, it is immediately obvious that much of the *Nidhipradīpa* (and as we can see, the *Āryavidyottamamahātāntra* alike) reflect considerable knowledge shared with the Indian healing arts (*āyurveda*) and its related pharmacology (*rasaśāstra*). In her erudite study of treasure hunting specialists in ancient and medieval India, which draws on so many Sanskrit and Prakrit sources, Nalini Balbir (1993) has shown how the occurrence of certain plants above ground was an important indicator of *nidhi* below ground, so that the specialised or professional treasure-hunter (*nidhivādin*) or mineralogist (*khanya-vādin*) needed among other skills to be learned in plant lore and botany. In addition, the treasure-seeker required expertise in the preparation of complex magical potions, since these were utilised in various ways to find the treasure. The *Nidhipradīpa* indeed resembles many aspects of the *Āryavidyottamamahātāntra* in prescribing various complex pastes based on oil or on grease and using various roots, and sprinkling concoctions on the ground to make the treasure doors become visible. Likewise, various eyedrops and ointments must be made from minerals such as orpiment and realgar, expertly mixed with many other highly specific substances. I see little of this in the Rnying ma *gter ma* tradition, even though miraculous medicines, nectars (*bdud rtsi*), and suchlike substances remain amongst the most commonly found treasures.¹¹⁵ There

of the relevant chapters for our purposes, viz. Chapter Fifteen on the *āñjana* (eye ointment) that makes buried treasures visible, and Chapter Sixteen on *nidhigrahana* (finding treasures).

¹¹⁵ For example, Myang ral found 'life-saving medicines' among his *gter ma* cache from Drak Sinmo Barje, and, as Hirshberg describes, "a veritable pharmacopeia ...with many items pertaining to the healing arts." (Hirshberg 2016: 117). Thondup (1986: 152-3) translates an entire section on the discovery of beneficial 'Terma Nectars' (*bdud rtsi*), which are described as "the best among the Terma substances" and confer both healing and liberation upon tasting. Dudjom (1991: 662-3) describes Zur Shakya 'od successfully recovering a flask containing the 'water of life' from a charcoal-filled *gter sgo*. It was sent to Emperor Qubilai Qan, who drank it, and lived for a hundred years as a consequence.

are two likely reasons for this difference: firstly, the natural environments assumed by such instructions are clearly Indian, and the plants mentioned are not native to Tibet, so the techniques were not easily transferable. Secondly, as mentioned above, followers of the Rnying ma inner tantras preferred to focus on directly soteriological themes, and also to locate their dharmic *gter mas* through the interventions of wisdom *ḍākinīs*, rather than mundane plant signs.

The *Nidhipradīpa* also resembles the *Āryavidyottamamahātantra* in various ritual particulars, such as prescribing numerous mantras that must be recited, in prescribing that at the moment of seizing the treasure, it is essential to make suitable *bali* (Tib: *gtor ma*) offerings to the various hostile deities who will oppose the treasure-seeker's enterprise, and so on with other ritual acts. From the point of view of Tantric Buddhist scholarship, it is regrettable that no monographic studies of the *Nidhipradīpa* and the other extant *nidhiśāstras* have yet been made, so that despite the obvious fact that there is much in common, it remains too early to arrive at comprehensive and definitive conclusions about their precise relation to the Buddhist tantric texts on *nidhi*.¹¹⁶

While the *Āryavidyottamamahātantra* passage I have translated has a great deal to say regarding the location and opening of treasure doors, it is not very forthcoming on the precise nature of the treasures to be found. Gold is mentioned once, but certainly does not seem to be the only treasure. Were the treasure hunters of the *Āryavidyottamamahātantra* seeking fabulous troves of gems and miraculous wonders? Or more prosaic (but equally valuable) mineral ores? Or something of both? Conforming to a widespread pattern across the world, both Tibet and India showed considerable overlap in their vocabularies, cosmologies, rituals, and arts and sciences, of locating underground sources of minerals and precious gems, and those of finding quite other kinds of buried treasures, including long forgotten humanly buried hoards, or more mythic or religious treasures. As mentioned above, given that locating underground minerals has been a major human concern since the Bronze Age, that smelting ore is an apparently magical process, and that precious gems traditionally endowed with magical properties are similarly found underground, it is hardly surprising that such convergences were widespread in pre-modern cultures. The close relationship between minerology and other kinds of treasure finding (especially religious) is amongst the most salient topics of Charles Stewart

¹¹⁶ Balbir does devote a few pages to Śrīkaṅṭhasambhu's *Nidhipradīpa*, although a major part of her excellent analysis of the world of the *nidhiḍvādin* is understandably focused on other (especially Jain) narrative sources. Vasudeva deals with the *nidhiḍvādin* only in brief, in the context of a much broader and excellent study of Śaiva magic in general, but he does make some useful references to Śrīkaṅṭhasambhu's *Nidhipradīpa*.

(2012) and is also discussed by other anthropologists. Balbir too (1993 passim, especially 19-24) finds such a convergence among the stand-out features of her many Indian texts in both Prakrit and Sanskrit, observing that the *nidhivādin* (specialised treasure hunter) was probably a specialisation within the broader Indian profession of *khanyavādin* (mineral hunter), and that even water-divining was part of this same general skill set.¹¹⁷ Chos dbang (page 82) likewise places precious minerals of all kinds, and sources of water, side by side among his category of 'ordinary material treasures' (*thun mongs kyi rdzas gter*).

Putting aside the question of what treasures were being sought, it is clear that the basic cosmology underpinning treasure-finding in Balbir's non-Buddhist Indian texts reflects a similar pattern to the *Āryavidyottamamahātantra* and *Rnying ma gter ma* alike. As the English summary appended to Balbir's work (1993: 51) puts it, "underground riches are the possession of various gods (e.g. Kubera) or supernatural beings (*yakṣas* and *nāgas*). A human attempt to take possession of them is therefore a kind of theft which as such requires precautions (recitation of prayers, offerings, etc.). In many cases these appear to be insufficient and the contact between human beings and underground powers may end in failure".

4. *The Translation from the Āryavidyottamamahātantra*

The eight folios (sixteen sides) of text I present in this translation are taken from a very long Buddhist Kriyātantra, the *Āryavidyottamamahātantra* or '*Phags pa rig pa mchog* (D746, filling folios 1a to 237b of the *Sde dge bka'* 'gyur's Volume 95). Unfortunately, this text is now extant only in Tibetan translation, hence we have to guess at how some of the terminology existed in Sanskrit. This tantra was translated into Tibetan in the Imperial period, as we can tell not only from its colophons (the translators are listed as *Vidyākara*prabha and *Dpal rtsegs*), but also because it is included in both translational catalogues that survive from that period.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ Balbir 1993: 21. See note 2 above, where I mention the considerable convergence of the Tibetan vocabulary of mineral hunting with their vocabulary of treasure hunting. Vasudeva (2012) also mentions the *khanyavādin*, but his perspective is slightly different to Balbir's. While her entire study is devoted to the finding of treasures underground, Vasudeva mentions this topic only in passing, as part of a more general review of Śaiva magic. Hence Vasudeva's analytic horizons exclude the economic, social, and cosmological, contexts of the *khanyavādin*'s and *nidhivādin*'s arts that Balbir discusses alongside her descriptions of their magic. Vasudeva makes no mention of Balbir's earlier work, although she too made a study of the *Nidhipradīpa*.

¹¹⁸ It is the second text within the *Gsang sngags kyi rgyud* section of the *Lhan dkar ma* (317 in Hermann-Pfandt's enumeration), and the 14th text in the *Sngags sgo*

Rolf Giebel and now also Joie Chen inform me that the *Āryavidyottamamahātantra* is unknown to the Chinese tradition. Moreover, it is self-evident from the contents and the language that the Tibetan version was translated from an Indian original, not from Chinese. The text is full of Indian idioms, and details from Indian flora, fauna, landscape, architecture, and village life, that a Chinese composition could not easily replicate. Furthermore, where no convenient Tibetan equivalents were available, several specialised items of vocabulary were left in transliterated Sanskrit, and a few perhaps even in an Indic vernacular (e.g. *bring ga ra* for Sanskrit *bhṛṅgaraja*, or *la tu* for a possibly vernacular *laḍḍū* or *lāḍḍū*). There is only one single term, *pen tse*, that might represent the phonetic rendering of a Chinese word (see note 140), but it is well known that Indian magical texts liked to employ exotic plants and substances imported from further east.

The passage I have chosen is just one amongst the very great number of *nidhi*-related passages that can be found within many different Buddhist *Kriyātantra* scriptures, and only one among several others within the *Āryavidyottamamahātantra*. It is, however, the longest of them. It occurs within a section of the *Āryavidyottamamahātantra* entitled *nye ba'i snying po'i las*,¹¹⁹ which one might tentatively translate as 'Subsidiary quintessential rituals.' This section begins on folio 63b of the Sde dge text and ends on folio 82a. Much of it, from beginning to end, deals with *nidhi* related materials, for example, right near the beginning, on folio 64b, there is a discussion of *nidhi* within Asura caves (*gter dang lha ma yin gyi phug gang na yod..*),¹²⁰ and right at the end, the section ends on folio 82a with a reference to 'all the *nidhi* rites' (*gter gyi las thams cad ni*).

However, for reasons of time and brevity, I have not been able to translate all of this material. Rather, I have chosen some representative pages from the middle of it, starting on folio 70b and ending on folio

gsum section of the 'Phang thang ma, corresponding to No. 900 in Halkias's enumeration (Halkias 2004: 69-70).

¹¹⁹ The Sde dge E-edition omits *las*, but it is present in Lhasa and Stog.

¹²⁰ Vasudeva (2012: 275) makes the important point that in the particular Śaiva texts he has studied, visiting the underworlds (*pātāla*, Tib. *sa 'og*) of Asuras and Nāgas (*pātālasiddhi*, *bilāsiddhi*, *bilāsādhana*, etc.) should be disambiguated from finding treasures (*nidhi*) underground. In those particular texts, visiting the underworlds is primarily about seeking sexual gratification with Asura and such like females, or to achieve longevity. However, while these goals are typically also mentioned in Buddhist *pātālasiddhi* sources, the distinction can be more blurred in Buddhist tantras such as the *Āryavidyottamamahātantra*, where the underworlds (*pātāla*, *sa 'og*) are more than once mentioned solely in the context of seeking treasures (*nidhi*, *gter*). Given that *nāgas* are archetypical guardians of *nidhi*, and that they live in *pātāla*, such an overlap is to be expected. Vasudeva himself (2012: 276) mentions similar overlaps, for example one from the *Mahābhārata*, where Kṛṣṇa recovers a diamond from *pātāla*.

78b, that deal with 'treasure doors', (*gter sgo* in the Tibetan translation, perhaps **nidhidoāra* in the Sanskrit original), and how to break them open (*gcog pa*). Thus, this selection inevitably offers only a partial snapshot of one aspect of Indian Buddhist tantric beliefs and rituals regarding *nidhi*, but one which might well have exerted some influence on the Rnying ma *gter ma* tradition.

In preparing this translation, no attempt has been made at critically editing the text. For convenience, and because it is perfectly adequate for present purposes, I have simply relied on the searchable Sde dge Kangyur e-text prepared by Esukhia (D746) as a base text, only occasionally or when it seemed necessary referring to the similarly searchable Lhasa Kangyur e-text prepared by ACIP (H691), and to the scans of the Stog Kangyur (Stog 696) made by BDRC. All these versions are instantly available on the excellent Vienna *rKTs* website.

Since I am not aware of any previous studies of texts resembling this passage from the *Āryavidyottamamahātantra*, I found few academic precedents to refer to. Nor are the rituals described here part of the regular practice of most Tibetan lamas, so that I was equally unable to find a lama experienced in them. To make matters worse, the text is full of references to plants and substances that are probably known only to a handful of specialists in early Indian ethnopharmacology, so that an ignoramus such as myself could not identify several of them. Hence the translation should be considered provisional, intended as a merely pioneering introduction to the subject, rather than as anything approaching a polished work of reference.

A special note should be made regarding my rendering of the mantras: I have avoided any attempt to 'correct' them. Rather, I have aimed to reproduce them just as the redactors of the Sde dge Kangyur imagined them. Where I deemed it useful, I have put the Tibetan term in square brackets after its translation, e.g. 'treasure door [*gter sgo*]'.

Sde dge bka' 'gyur 746, Volume 95 (rgyud 'bum Dza), folios 70b-79b (from searchable e-text produced by ESUKHIA).

[Stog 366] [D70b] If he wishes for treasure [*gter*], the *vidyādhara* should go to the place where the treasure [*gter*] is located. Without any need for auspicious days and dates, nor any need for fasting, if he offers white mustard and lotus leaves into a fire of *bilva*¹²¹ while reciting the subsidiary essence [*nye ba'i snying po*] mantra 100,000 times during the *homa*, then the treasure deity

¹²¹ *bil ba* for Sans. *bilva*, Hindi *bel*, Wood apple or Bengal quince.

[*gter gyi lha*] will give him indications in a dream. Then, [Stog 367] performing obstacle fire offerings with the *Vidyottama* [mantra?], he can get the [treasure].

Protect the site with *Dga' byed gdong* (**Nandīmukha*?).¹²² Using the subsidiary mantra to make a flammable torch, wrap an ox horn in *arka* wood¹²³ fibre, and with the torch flames blazing with the ghee of a yellow cow, [D71a] when you arrive at where the treasure [*gter*] is, the sound '*tshig tshig*' will arise. Another way: Wrap [the ox horn] in *srin phyas arka*¹²⁴ wood fibre, using the mantra of the vajra wrathful one, and make the torch burn with the fat of *go ta* creatures.¹²⁵ The signs will be the same, [a '*tshig tshig*' sound]. [Alternatively:] covering [the ox horn] in *nāgaphala*¹²⁶ *arka* tree fibre, wrapping it in lotus sinews, and using human fat to make the fire blaze up, is also acceptable.¹²⁷ The signs will be the same, [a '*tshig tshig*' sound], which is called the Great Essence [*snying po chen po zhes bya'o*].

Having seen the various gods, I can teach the rites of the subsidiary essence mantra: The essence of accomplishment is to have strength. So that they can perfect the *pāramitās* [*pha rol phyin pa*], on behalf of those who lack courage and whose merit is small, I should explain the attributes of the treasure doors [*gter gyi sgo*]. Bhagavān Vajrapāṇi then spoke these words: "For those

¹²² The meaning of *Dga' byed gdong* here is not clear. Elsewhere in the text (f.136b, 136b), it is the name of a female deity, perhaps **Nandīmukhā*, who is associated with *Bdud rtsi thab sbyor* (*Amṛtakundāl?*) and *Gos dkar can* (*Pandāravāsini*). But at other junctures, *Dga' byed gdong* mudrās are indicated (177a, 177b, 179a, 181a). Presumably, a *Dga' byed gdong* mantra could also be intended.

¹²³ *arka* for Sans. *arka*, Hindi *āk* or *arka*, widely used in rituals, often identified with Crown Flower or Giant Milkweed.

¹²⁴ *srin phyas* not identified; perhaps some kind of insect powder?

¹²⁵ *srog chags go ta'i tshil*: meaning unclear; *go ta* might refer to Sans. *gotā*, cow.

¹²⁶ *nā ga pa la* for Sans. *nāgaphala*.

¹²⁷ Compare the making of a torch here with one of the treasure (*nidhi*) rites in the **Kaṇikrodha-vajrakumāra-bodhisattva-sādhana-vidhi*, *Sheng jiani fennu jin'gang tongzi pusa chengjiu yi gui jing*, 聖迦尼忿怒金剛童子菩薩成就儀軌經, T1222(a); K1355: "There is another rite if you wish to locate hidden treasure. Get some yogurt from a yellow cow, a snake's skin and shark oil, as well as some *arka* wood and cotton. Make a lamp with these things. Recite mantras to empower it, and then light it at night near the place where there is treasure. You will know the amount of the treasure that is there by the size of the flame." (T.1222a [XXI]107b27-c3; unpublished translation by Steven Hodge). Likewise, Somadeva's *Kathāsaritsāgara* (Kashmir, 11th century, a Śaiva retelling of ancient stories) has a narrative about a brahmin Pāsupata who similarly uncovered *nidhis* using a lamp of human fat (see Balbir 1993: 23, citing Somadeva 1970: 6.8.69sq.).

treasure doors [*gter sgo*] to be engaged with through Brahmā and secret mantras, the ritual stages are set out definitively. People who don't have the ritual, or the strength and magical powers, will never be victorious. For people to easily attain enjoyment, and perfect the *pāramitās*, [Stog 368] and likewise so that wealth might be excellently established, this is taught by me". Bhagavān Vajrapāni also spoke these words: "Treasure doors [*gter gyi sgo*] have been excellently explained: At the edge of the earth, where it touches the ocean,¹²⁸ where there is a *pātāla* [*sa yi 'og gnas*],¹²⁹ I explained them excellently—gods, pay heed. I shall teach their: [A] colours and characteristics, [B] the secret mantras by which they can be broken into [*gzhom pa*], [C] the rites and rituals, and the [D] compounded medicines for easy attainment.

[A] Regarding their characteristics, I will further explain each one of their shapes [see below for the further explanation]: (1) triangular; (2) semicircular; (3) circular; (4) square; (5) lotus; (6) plantain [*tala*] leaf, and also (7) fan shaped;¹³⁰ (8) [one of the eight is omitted]; these are taught as the eight treasure doors. Now pay careful heed to their colours: [D71b] (1) There are treasure doors [*gter sgo*] the colour of yellowish ochre; (2) similar in colour to *karavīra*¹³¹ flowers; (3) ?like the moist reeds that grow in water; (4) the colour of liquid red lac;¹³² (5) treasure doors with a green colour; (6) with a colour like yellow orpiment;¹³³ (7) with a colour resembling bezoar;¹³⁴ (8) likewise some similar to *bhṛṅgaraja*.¹³⁵

[B] Accordingly, to clear away the obstacles for

¹²⁸ See T.1222a [XXI] 106b24-c6,, where a ritual that includes treasure discovery as one of its major results is to be performed at the seashore "If you desire to accomplish the most excellent result, you should go to the seashore during the waxing phase of a lunar [first, fifth or ninth] month..." (Hodge, unpublished)

¹²⁹ Many *kriyā* rites prescribe *pātālas*, the subterranean or underwater abodes of *nāgas* and *asuras*, as ideal places for treasure (*nidhi* / *gter*) recovery.

¹³⁰ *bsil yab 'dra* = *bsil g.yab 'dra*.

¹³¹ *ka ra bī ra* for Sans. *karavīra*, Hindi *karuvīrā* or *kaner*, oleander. Its flowers are various shades of red.

¹³² *rgya skyegs khu ba*.

¹³³ *ba bla*; orange-yellow in colour.

¹³⁴ *gi wang*; an auspicious yellow pigment is derived from bezoar.

¹³⁵ *'bring ga ra* for Sans. *bhṛṅgaraja* or *bhṛṅgarāja*, Hindi *bhāṅgrā*, false daisy; its flowers are white.

the treasure doors [*gter sgo*] whose colours have been explained thus, there are *homa* ritual procedures to destroy the obstacles dwelling above ground and below ground. Listen well to my excellent explanation, [Stog 369] the opening¹³⁶ of treasure doors by secret mantras is explained here in order:¹³⁷

namo vajrapāṇaye / namo rutrāye / namo mahābidyarājāya / birudrine svāhā / raranāra svāhā / aṅganāya svāhā / birūpini svāhā / tibhari svāhā / muktini svāhā / bimuktini svāhā / pretahe svāhā / bidariṇi svāhā / ?haurgagkho svāhā / gagane svāhā / biriṇi svāhā / aṅgarīṇi svāhā / birgaṇi svāhā / mahābarate svāhā / ruṅibani svāhā / karaparabikara svāhā / birūpi svāhā / maripa svāhā / brjajani svāhā / garjajani svāhā / mārmaṇi svāhā / kunipatina svāhā /

[C] Onto a square maṇḍala of earth, smear watery cow dung [*skyong nul*]. Strewing *kuśa*¹³⁸ grass for your seat, face east. Cleanse yourself, observe purity, and control your senses. For sustenance, drink cold water. To begin the ritual activities, follow this procedure: having set out all the deities, offer '*khur ba*¹³⁹ with auspicious [verses?] and *pen tse*¹⁴⁰ and a sandalwood fragrance to the deities of the cardinal and intermediate directions. Offering¹⁴¹ up curds and red barley meal [*dmar bag*], with the above mantras dip the *śamī*¹⁴² wood fire offering sticks into butter and offer into the fire 100,000 times.

The mantra called the cutter that causes all obstacles to be destroyed is taught thus:

namo vajrapāṇisya kuti kuti citi citi miti miti riṇi riṇi motini pramotini svāhā

Reciting this mantra over white mustard seven times, [D72a] [Stog 370] cast it in the four directions, and you will become protected:

¹³⁶ *dgod*, laughing, poetic for opening (P. Ogyan Tanzin Rinpoche).

¹³⁷ For the present purposes, we are presenting a simple transcription of how the redactors of the Sde dge edition envisaged the Sanskrit spelling of the mantras, with no attempt to correct them further.

¹³⁸ *ku sha* for Sans. *kuśa* a.k.a. *darbha*, Hindi *dab*, *Desmostachya bipinnata*.

¹³⁹ A pastry made with wheat; P. Ogyan Tanzin Rinpoche: resembling a deep-fried pancake.

¹⁴⁰ *pen tse* not identified; perhaps related to *big pan*, a medical salt, or *spen ma*, tamarisk, or perhaps *piñja*, turmeric or camphor. Dan Martin has suggested this might possibly be a Chinese term.

¹⁴¹ em. *sbangs* > *spangs*.

¹⁴² *sha mya* for Sans. *śamī*, a wood often used in *homa*.

*namo vajrapāṇisya amara amara marikatini talati
svāhā*

Reciting this mantra over white mustard, and throwing it over one's head, obstacles won't be able to do any mischief:

namo vajrapāṇisya kuti kuti tuti tuti hara hara svāhā

If one recites this mantra over water and pours it on the ground, fear of fire does not arise.

The obstacles for all treasure doors [*gter sgo kun gyi bgegs rnams*] are taught as eightfold:

[1] human corpses;¹⁴³ [2] dwarf spirits;¹⁴⁴ [3] sudden fearful events; [4] elephants; [5] buffalos; [6] extremely frightening *rākṣasas*; [7] tigers; and [8] birds as big as a shed:¹⁴⁵ the obstacles are taught as eightfold. To destroy them, use this mantra:

*namo vajrapāṇisya ari bari tiri miri ciri miri para pana
rati kiri kiri kali kali miri miri śiri śiri nāśani nāśani
stambhani stambhani mohani svāhā*

Reciting this king of mantras over white mustard, casting it in the four directions, all obstacles will disappear.

*namo ratna trayāya namo bhagabate prahāya kharibi
bikiri nāribanari mohanani hari hari phośāni svāhā*

If one recites this mantra over water, [**Stog 371**] and casts it in the four directions, all obstacles will be overcome, and disappear.

*namo vajrapāṇisya namo miri miri candrī candrī manti
svāhā/*

If one recites this secret mantra over water, and casts it in the four cardinal and four intermediate directions, the directions will become secured; those raven¹⁴⁶ forms as big as a shed will disappear, which fly in the sky, appearing huge in three ways. The directions will all become pacified.

Regarding the pattern of the treasure door [*gter gyi sgo yi ri mo ni*]:¹⁴⁷ it is understood to be like an excellent

¹⁴³ em. *mi ra* > *mi ro*; alternatively, *ku mi ra* (crocodile) might be intended.

¹⁴⁴ *mi'u thung*.

¹⁴⁵ P. Ogyan Tanzin Rinpoche: Large bird spirits that make sounds like a bird are found in various *dhāraṇī* texts. Note also that they occur as fierce guardians of buried treasures in Śrīkanṭhaśambhu's *Nidhipradīpa* (Chapter 4, verses 33, 39, 40, 47). Thanks to Dylan Esler for this information.

¹⁴⁶ Also possibly one might em. *khwa* > *khra*, 'hawk'.

¹⁴⁷ P. Ogyan Tanzin Rinpoche suggests, the pattern is already on the *gter sgo*.

skull. A *kīla* [*phur bu*] will appear nailed to it, with light like a curved rainbow. [D72b] As for the *kīla*: it has a glorious form. It should not be touched with the hands. When the body has been smeared with ointment [*lus ni sbyar sman bskus nas*],¹⁴⁸ then the *kīla* can be removed.

The things by which it [the *kīla*] can be made to fall to the ground: the air-born chaff of rushes,¹⁴⁹ mustard,¹⁵⁰ *nimba*¹⁵¹ leaves, realgar,¹⁵² white garlic, barley, and asafoetida,¹⁵³ should be mixed with human blood, and smeared on as ointment. Then it can fall to the ground. If this is not done, its force will remain unchanged.

*Śirīṣā*¹⁵⁴ flowers with their roots and bark, *ru rta*,¹⁵⁵ valerian,¹⁵⁶ *bruhati*,¹⁵⁷ and white mustard, in equal proportions, should be ground up with goat's urine. This ointment for smearing on the body is the best subjugator of the hawks [*khra*].¹⁵⁸

Costus and valerian, malachite¹⁵⁹ and realgar,¹⁶⁰ made with frog's grease, and nicely mixed with collyrium,¹⁶¹ [Stog 372] is the king of eye paints. It is the cleaving open of treasure doors [*gter gyi sgo rnam gcod pa yin*].

Taking *nya ri*¹⁶² and jasmine¹⁶³ bark, with *sindura*¹⁶⁴ and cow's bezoar, well fumigated with *bhringaraj*¹⁶⁵ smoke; this is the supreme ointment. Smear this ointment on the body, then the *kīla* can be removed.

However, if it appears not to work, engage with the following wisdom mantra that immobilises all the

¹⁴⁸ Perhaps implying the hand in particular?

¹⁴⁹ *nam mkha'i phub ma shu dag*: meaning unfamiliar, the translation partially a guess.

¹⁵⁰ em. *yung* > *yungs*?

¹⁵¹ *nim pa* for Sans. *nimba*, Hindi *nīm* or *nimb*, the Neem tree, Indian lilac.

¹⁵² *ldong ros*, arsenic sulphide.

¹⁵³ *shing kun*.

¹⁵⁴ *shri ri sha* for Sans. *śirīṣā*, Hindi *śirīs*, Siris tree.

¹⁵⁵ *ru rta* is complicated. According to *Bod lugs gso rig tshig mdzod chen mo* p.852, there are two types: *sha pho ru rta dangl ma nu ru rta*.

¹⁵⁶ *rgya spos*.

¹⁵⁷ *'bri ha ti*, probably for Sans. *brhatī*, Hindi *barhaṅṅā* or *birhaṅṅā*, Poison berry.

¹⁵⁸ em. *khrag* > *khra*.

¹⁵⁹ *lig bu mig*.

¹⁶⁰ *ldong ros*.

¹⁶¹ *dud pa'i mig rtsi* = *anjana*.

¹⁶² *nya ri* is unidentified.

¹⁶³ *kun da*.

¹⁶⁴ *sindu* for Sans. *sindura*.

¹⁶⁵ *bring ga*, possibly for Sans. *bhrīṅgaraja* or *bhrīṅgarāja*, as previously.

contrivances of the hawks [*khra*],¹⁶⁶ and destroys all obstacles:

*karuṅgā karuṅgi dībya/ rūpina/ kanne tumpa kagātra/
sambha bebi duluni/ kumini/ hīhīni/ hūhūhūni/ kirikiri/
kālakaraṇi/ mahābidyāde/ hara hara hara/ cala cala cala/ ra-
rara /thathatha/ śāśāśa/ stambhaya/ nāsaya nāsaya/ hiri hiri/
gini gini/ hunada hunada/ghṛnamuya/ hana brahmaṇi/
patani/ mohani/ biciri/ mabana/ thara thara/ miti miti/ siti
siti/ miri miri/ biri biri/ hiri hiri/ demyani demyani/ bitti bati/
patani patani/ haha hani svāhā/*

When you have drawn the *kīla* out, measuring [a diameter of] three arm-spans [around it], [cast] water [D73a] and mustard; any hawks [*khra*] will be pierced, and faint. Moreover, making them fall from a great distance, with this wisdom mantra, all obstacles will be conquered.

*namo badzrapāṇaye / namo rudrāya*¹⁶⁷ *namo brahmāya/
gara śiri śiriri*¹⁶⁸ *sisi riri / miri /babapa svāhā*

You can tie up your topknot with this wisdom mantra, [Stog 373] or also with the Paṇḍaravāsini mantra.

[The doors] by which riches can be taken:

[1 triangular] Breaking down the triangular one is as follows. Purify the perimeter, concentrate intensely, and carry out an inspection. At the centre, within the boundaries, should be a dark triangular pattern. If it [the treasure door] doesn't become visible like that, then sprinkle milk. The learned will scatter *apāmārga*¹⁶⁹ ash medicine and wipe it with conch shell powder. If they scatter this on the perimeter, and sweep it clean, when signs become visible,¹⁷⁰ they can anoint [their body] with mixed herbs. If you strike [the treasure door] with an iron rod, it will fracture, and not otherwise.

¹⁶⁶ The focus on *khra* in this text is notable. Provisionally I am understanding *khra* as a translation of Sans. *śyenah*, or less likely, *padekah*. *Syenah* has had a long and rich background in Vedic sacrificial ritual and mythology as a divine hawk identified with Agni, therefore also in subsequent Indian ritual and mythology, but I do not yet understand its significance here in specific regard to treasure discovery.

¹⁶⁷ Following Lhasa, em: *rudrwaya* > *rudrāya*.

¹⁶⁸ Following Lhasa, em. *garśa rīsi riri* > *gara śiri śiriri*.

¹⁶⁹ *a pa marga* for Sans. *apāmārga*, Hindi *circitā*, Bengali *āpāṅg*, Prickly chaff-flower.

¹⁷⁰ For a very similar procedure in the *Nidhipradīpa* of siddha Śrīkaṅṭhasāmbhu, see Vasudeva p.274: "various concoctions are smeared on the ground and a subsequent reaction, such as discoloration, reveals the precise spot where the treasure is concealed."

[2 semicircular] In the centre of a pure semicircle, an auspicious form should appear. If it does not appear, apply ash medicine [*bhasma*]. Elsholtzia leaves¹⁷¹ resembling the letter *e* should be squeezed evenly, then mixed with cow urine. Infusing it, scatter it [on the ground], and the auspicious [form] should then appear, regarding which the wise have no doubts. Then, after smearing [your body] with compounded medicine, strike [the door] with an iron rod, upon which it will fall to the ground, there can be no other outcome.

[3 circular] The ritual for breaking the circular [door] should be employed as excellently taught. Purifying the perimeter, with intense concentration, carry out an inspection. With a colour like lotus root, the pattern of an expanded snake's head should appear. But if it does **[Stog 374]** not appear, smear ash medicine [*bhasma*] [on the ground]. Compounding *ka li sha*¹⁷² seeds and red dye with cow's urine, spread this everywhere. **[D73b]** Then, when signs appear, anoint your body with the compounded medicine [*sbyar sman gyis ni lus bskus nas*], strike [the door] with an iron rod, and it will disintegrate, there can be no other outcome.

[4 square] Then the square pattern, with its four corners, is explained. If it does not appear, mix this ash medicine [*bhasma*]. Take a branch of *snuhā*,¹⁷³ squeeze evenly, and mix with cow's urine, smart people will use this to pour with. After pouring it, when signs appear [on the ground], apply the medicine to the body. If you strike with an iron staff, [the door] will fracture, there can be no other outcome.

[5 lotus] Also, in the middle of a lotus [pattern], a pure core is visible. Having smeared medicine on your body, strike [the core] with a rock. The core will be destroyed. There is no doubt about that. It is taught by me [Vajrapāṇi], thus it is particularly to be accepted.

[6 plantain leaf] The method of compounding [medicines] for [a door] shaped like a plantain leaf should be heeded. The sign that appears will be a bezoar resembling a seed. There can be two patterns, or

¹⁷¹ em. *bye'u rug* > *byi rug*.

¹⁷² *ka li sha* unidentified; perhaps an error for *ka li ka*, which is another word for *tsam pa ka*, the seeds of which are used in a great many rituals. Alternatively, em. *ka li sha* > *pha li sha*, for Sans. *phaliśa*, the Indian tulip tree.

¹⁷³ *snu ha* for Sans. *snuhī* a.k.a *sehuṇḍa*, Hindi *sehuṇḍ*, Common milk hedge.

three, even four or five; such signs can appear. But if they don't appear, [Stog 375] compound the following ash medicine [*bhasma*]: *aśvattha*¹⁷⁴ and *pa ta pa*¹⁷⁵ leaf, *apāmārga*,¹⁷⁶ and goat's urine should be mixed, and poured around the perimeter. As soon as it has been poured [on the ground], also anoint [your body] with the compounded medicine. If you then strike with an iron rod, [the treasure door] will be broken, there can be no other outcome.

[7 fan] As for a [door] resembling a fan, it will appear with a handle. ?Measuring it carefully,¹⁷⁷ look for the signs. If they don't appear, use this ash compound: mixing *indra*¹⁷⁸ tree leaf and *nirgundī*¹⁷⁹ leaf, together with horse urine, pour it around the perimeter; then signs [D74a] will arise [on the ground]. Anointing also [one's body] with compounded medicine, strike [the door] with an iron rod; it will be broken, there can be no other outcome.

Those of [the treasure doors] shaped like plantain leaves that resemble tortoise shells or vajras, cannot be broken into.

On all treasure doors [*gter gyi sgo*], one finds four kinds of *kīla*, those of Indra, Yama, Vaiśravaṇa, and Viṣṇu: these are the four kinds of *kīla*.

All treasure doors [*gter gyi sgo*] should be offered *balis* [*gtor ma*], along with this mantra. Yama should receive burnt offerings; Viṣṇu various things with fruits; Kubera soup mixtures; the Glorious One [Indra], milky rice pudding.

namo vajrapāṇisya nante sunante ghobinte riti riti miti miti [Stog 376] *moriti svāhā*

With this mantra, offer whatever *balis* [*gtor ma*] you want, and then begin the ritual activity.

The ?[preliminary] scattering mantra¹⁸⁰ is like this:

namo vajrapāṇisya/ tiśaya bitīśaya/ namo mahāśayāya svāhā/

¹⁷⁴ *a shvattha* for Sans. *aśvattha* a.k.a. *pippala*, Hindi *pīppal*, Peepal tree (Bodhi tree).

¹⁷⁵ *pa ta pa* not identified; perhaps em. > *pa da pa*, for Sans. *pādapa*, tree.

¹⁷⁶ *a pa marga*, as above for Sans. *apāmārga*.

¹⁷⁷ *gshor gyis legs par sbyang byas la/*: meaning not clear to me.

¹⁷⁸ *indra shing*; unidentified, perhaps the *pārijāta* or Coral tree, which flowers in Indra's garden.

¹⁷⁹ *nir rgun* for Sans. *nirgundī*, Hindi *nirgaṇḍī*, Chaste tree.

¹⁸⁰ *gzhor gyi sngags*, not understood. Perhaps em. *gzhor* > *gcor*?

Reciting these mantras over water to make purifying water, then begin the ritual activity.

[D] Next, for the supreme cracking open of the treasure doors [gter sgo gcog pa'i mchog], the vajras and the compounded medicines for destroying the types of hawks [khra], should be taught. *Kanaka*¹⁸¹ root and *a sha nag ta*¹⁸² bezoar and hair roots, these, plus *arka* and *dar-bha* [grass] husks, should be made into pills the size of a bean, and dried in a shady place. These breakers of all treasure doors [gter sgo thams cad gcog pa 'di] are said to be the best of ?spirits ['byung po]. Cut meadowsweets,¹⁸³ bezoar with realgar, *karavīra* roots with white *arka* bark, and *śoṇaka* bark:¹⁸⁴ mix these in equal proportions and grind them up with cow's urine. All treasure doors will be smashed [gter sgo thams cad gcog pa]. This pure compounded medicine is the best, Vajrapāṇi has taught it. *Agnimantha*¹⁸⁵ leaf and *eraṇḍa*¹⁸⁶ [D74b] root, *snuhā* milk,¹⁸⁷ white garlic, ground up with pure cow's urine: this compounded medicine for breaking treasure doors [gter sgo gcog pa'i sbyar sman] is said to be a vajra. *Karavīra* root with plantain seed, and barberry, with mustard and black *tamāla*¹⁸⁸ tree, [Stog 377] white *girikarṇika*,¹⁸⁹ ground up with pure cow's urine: this king of compounded medicines is the greatest cleaver of treasure doors [gter sgo gcog pa'i mchog]. *Vidyujjihvā*,¹⁹⁰ *moraṭā*,¹⁹¹ or similarly solomon's seal,¹⁹² or white mustard, well mixed with cow's urine, is the best cleaver of treasure doors [gter sgo gcog pa dam pa]. *Ba lung gi ni*¹⁹³ flower, with *sha la ka* seed,¹⁹⁴ and meadowsweet, milk of *snuhā*,¹⁹⁵ together with pure bezoar, ground up with

¹⁸¹ *ka na ka* for Sans. *kanaka*, a.k.a *dhattūra*, Thorn apple or Jimson weed.

¹⁸² *a sha nag ta* not identified.

¹⁸³ 'bam po.

¹⁸⁴ *sho na ka* for Sans. *śoṇaka* a.k.a *śyonāka*, Hindi *śyonā*, Indian trumpet tree.

¹⁸⁵ *agni manta* for Sans. *agnimantha*, Hindi *arnī*, used extensively in Ayurveda.

¹⁸⁶ *e ranta* for Sans. *eraṇḍa*, Hindi *eraṇḍī*, Castor oil-plant.

¹⁸⁷ *snu ha ga shi ri*, as above for Sans. *snuhī* + *kṣira* (the milky juice of Milk hedge is used medicinally).

¹⁸⁸ *ta ma la* for Sans. *tamāla* or *tamālapattra*, Hindi *tejpat*; Indian cassia.

¹⁸⁹ *gi ri kar ni* for Sans. *girikarṇikā* a.k.a *aparājita*, Hindi *aparājīt*; Clitoria, Butterfly pea.

¹⁹⁰ *bidyud dzi hwa* perhaps for Sans. *vidyujjvālā*, flame lily plant.

¹⁹¹ *mo ra ti* for Sans. *moraṭā* a.k.a *mūrvā*, Hindi *garbhedarō*, perhaps Frangipani?

¹⁹² *ra mnye' u* perhaps Solomon's Seal?

¹⁹³ *ba lung gi ni* not identified; maybe moringa?

¹⁹⁴ *sha la ka* uncertain; A. Wenta suggests for Sans. *śālāka*, myna tree.

¹⁹⁵ *snu ha ga shi ri* as above for Sans. *snuhī* + *kṣira*.

pure goat's urine: this is the supreme vajra conqueror. *Kośātaka*¹⁹⁶ seeds and *ko bi ra*¹⁹⁷ fruits, and *du ru ska*¹⁹⁸ leaves, ground up with pure cow's urine, left to lie for forty-nine days, is the best of vajra conquerors. *Pārijāta*¹⁹⁹ root and *suvarṇā*,²⁰⁰ and *ta ka*²⁰¹ and tamarisk leaf;²⁰² honey with black pepper²⁰³ compounded with a pure bezoar: this is the best of treasure door breakers [*gter sgo gcog pa'i dam pa*]. These the best of compounded medicines are said to be vajra conquerors.

Now listen to me about hand ointments for those wishing to acquire gold [*gser rnams*]: Costus and valerian, *lac*²⁰⁴ and *moraṭā*, are the supreme hand ointment; it is a fearsome blazing vajra. Geranium seed,²⁰⁵ and black *tamāla* fruits,²⁰⁶ mixed with pure cow's urine, is a hand ointment that causes bliss. Lotus root with valerian, [**Stog 378**] *sa rakṣi*²⁰⁷ with hair, well mixed with goat's urine, is a hand ointment that causes bliss. *Ka gan 'dzi* seed,²⁰⁸ *karnikara*²⁰⁹ flower, *priyaṅgu*,²¹⁰ and valerian, *surabhi*²¹¹ [= any sweet-smelling scent] and white sandalwood, with pure bezoar, is a hand ointment that causes bliss. When touching the door panel [*sgo glegs*]²¹² with your hands, [**D75a**] the [door's entire] outline will become separated.²¹³ To keep it fixedly [separated like

¹⁹⁶ *ko sha ta ka* perhaps for Sans. *kośātaka*, perhaps some kind of gourd?

¹⁹⁷ *ko bi ra* not identified, perhaps for Sans. *kovidāra*, orchid tree.

¹⁹⁸ *du ru ska* perhaps for Sans. *turuṣka*, olibanum; alternatively, the same as *du ru ka*, nowadays identified with Sans. *agaru*, Hindi *agar*.

¹⁹⁹ *pa ri dzā ti* for Sans. *pārijāta*, Hindi *pārijāt*, Indian Coral tree.

²⁰⁰ *su barṇa*; possibly another name for *indravāruṇī* (colocynth), but A.Wenta points out that *suvarṇā* can be many things, including resin of guggul tree, indian hemp, bitter cucumber, mallow plant, etc.

²⁰¹ perhaps for *haritaka*, a form of myrobalan?

²⁰² *spen ma*.

²⁰³ em. *shing kru* > *shi kru*.

²⁰⁴ *a li ta* for Sans. *ālita*.

²⁰⁵ *zhim thig le*.

²⁰⁶ *ta ma le* for Sans. *tamāla*, Hindi *tamāla*. The juice of the *tamāla* fruit is often used to make sectarian marks on the forehead.

²⁰⁷ *sa rakṣi* not identified.

²⁰⁸ *ka gan 'dzi* unidentified, perhaps a type of millet.

²⁰⁹ *kar ṇi ka ra* for Sans. *karnikara*, unidentified, perhaps Golden shower tree?

²¹⁰ *pri yang ku* for Sans. *priyaṅgu*, Hindi *priyaṅgu*.

²¹¹ *su ra bi* for Sans. *surabhi*.

²¹² *sgo glegs*; P. Ogyan Tanzin Rinpoche suggests door handle; alternatively, something akin to panel or face might be intended.

²¹³ P. Ogyan Tanzin Rinpoche suggests that initially the door was mainly invisible, with only the handle visible, but now the whole outline comes into view.

that], use this wisdom mantra:

namo vajrapāṇisya tiri tiri miri svāhā

Recite this wisdom mantra seven times over water, and if you throw it onto the surface of the door panel, it [the door's entire outline] will become stabilized [in visibility], and easy to grasp. This wisdom mantra can be applied to all treasure doors. Having the virtue of immobilising and stupefying, it [the following mantra] controls all obstacles; Brahmā himself created it. To confuse [the treasure seeker] at the [treasure] door threshold, *gandharva* goddesses and *kinnaras* will come through from Meru, and make him excellent offerings. To subdue and overawe them, the great intelligent one endowed with divine form [Brahmā], taught this wisdom mantra.

*kili kili piṅga lākṣi ha ha bhi maṅgi/ ha na ha na/ śū le na
bi dā ra ya badzra ṅa/ ki li ki li/ śāpde ṅa/ stambha ya ru tre
na/ de na ha na ha na/ śakti na/ ki ri ki ri/ tsi ri tsi ri/ mi ri
mi ri/ na ru ti na ru ti/ tha ra tha ra/ tha tha/ ra ra²¹⁴ pa ta
ya pa ta ya/ stambha ya stambha ya/ pa ta ya pa ta ya/ garja
garja/ marja [Stog 379] marja/ tarja tarja/ kiṅki ni kiṅki
ni/ dundu bhi dundu bhi/ śukla daṃṣṭraka rā lā na ne/ ka na
ne dīpya rūpe/ ca ma bi dus saṃ ma dā/ dī pya bra be/ ba śa
ne/ ka ha ka ha/ khaḍga ha ste/ tri ne tre/ ru drā ya neśma śā
ne/ ya dā kri da se/ glo pa gle bā ga gleṃ ba yurpa ra ṅi/ andha
kā re swa yaṃ ke śa ki mu ku ṭa/ canhrām ka/ śiṣṣhe/ de ba
gandharba/ yakṣa bidyā/ da ṛee acite/ supūjite/ drembā
drembā/ thi thi/ ma ba pa spaṣa ma ba/ ha ha ma pa/ ka kam
pa/ cittre/ hana hana/ stambhaya stambhaya/ mahābidyā ca-
turmukha/ ājñāpayati svā hā/*

Through this wisdom mantra—when used with white mustard, water, ash, and whatever is suitable, being cast in the four directions along with its recitation—all obstacles will be paralysed, and even hawks [*khra*]²¹⁵ will be conquered. Use it to kill, [D75b] put to sleep, or blind; to force to dance, sing, and play music, etc. Whatever invisible sentient beings there might be, whatever visible sentient beings there might be, whatever obstacles or misleaders there might be, even if they come from a royal palace, or are harm doers from a cemetery,

²¹⁴ The E-version gives *ra Ra*. (= *ra ṛa*), but the TBRC scan of the Sde dge print (and Lhasa) has simply *ra ra*.

²¹⁵ Alternatively, following Stog and Lhasa, one could em. *khra* > *dgra*, enemies.

or are in bondage to serpents; or whatever other harmful beings there might be: all of these will be conquered and blinded."

Thus were these words spoken by Bhagavān Vajrapāṇi.

If you want gold [*gser*], Vajrapāṇi taught this supreme wisdom mantra as good for *homa*: **[Stog 380]**

namo vajrapāṇisya bibetāya svāhā / tistem sukha la hāya svāhā / kumbaṣṭenayā baranti asta nāya svāhā / nidrādhipātaye svāhā / śaye yurbāyu svāhā / libigraretāya svāhā / bahuyakṣāya svāhā / ya svāhā / gaṇāya svāhā / gaṇapatāya svāhā / kāmarūpāya svāhā / kanglini svāhā / byāghrāya svāhā / byāghrādhipātaye svāhā / rākṣasāya svāhā / rākṣasādhipātaye svāhā / khadgāya svāhā /

khadgādhipātaye svāhā / rudrāya svāhā / yamāya svāhā / baruṇāya svāhā / kuberāya svāhā / prithibiyai svāhā / matribiyai svāhā / brahmāya svāhā

Whoever with these secret mantras offers *śamī*²¹⁶ wood fire sticks into the *homa* eight hundred times, will conquer all obstacles. This is taught by Vajrapāṇi. Also, do the *homa* with the subsidiary mantra that destroys all *yantras* [*'khrul 'khor*].²¹⁷ Otherwise, do the subsidiary mantra alone. If you don't do it, you will be destroyed.

Then Indra asked Bhagavān Vajrapāṇi: "Lord of great power, who overcomes others: for the benefit of humans, I want to hear, please tell me, explain how many types of hawks [*khra*] there are, how great is their magical power and energy? **[D76a]** Address these uncertainties of mine!" In accordance with these statements, the great Vajra-holding lord, having heard Indra's words, [replied]:

[Stog 381] "Great resplendent Indra, these hawks [*khra*] are explained by Brahmā. In the past, there were always many treasures [*gter rnam mang po*] upon the surface of the earth. To protect these treasures [*gter*], Brahmā himself brought the hawks [*khra*] into existence. The hawks [*khra*] are taught as eightfold; their zeal and power is great. According to Vajrapāṇi's supreme speech, they are classified as eightfold.²¹⁸ Their *bali* (*gtor*

²¹⁶ *sha ma* for Sans. *śamī*, as above.

²¹⁷ *'khrul 'khor* = Sans. *yantra*. This term can refer to various contrivances, machinations, and black magic.

²¹⁸ em. *brgyar* > *brgyad*.

ma) offering mantras, exactly as they are, will be explained.

They are well known as: [i] black ones; [ii] white ones; also [iii] red ones; and the [iv] blue-throated; as the [v] *kapiñjara*;²¹⁹ as [vi] red-eyed; as having [vii] variegated feathers; and having [viii] crystal eyes.

[i] The black ones amongst these are held to be Yama deities.

[ii] The white ones are held to be Brahmā deities.

[iii] [red missing in Sde dge, Lhasa, and Stog]

[iv] Similarly, the blue throated ones are held to be Kārtikeyya deities.

[v] The *kapiñjara* are held to be Viṣṇu deities.

[vi] The red eyed are held to be Kubera deities.

[vii] Similarly, the variegated feathered ones are held to be Indra deities.

[viii] Those with crystal eyes are held to be ?Bhūmi / ?Pṛthvī [*sa' i lha*] deities.

These hawks' colours and characteristics are taught by me; their colours and physical appearance will be explained in order.

[i] The ones with black forms, aptly described as powerful, are very dark in colour. Their bulk is large and frightening. Even at a *yojana*'s distance, they can be heard making sounds like a bell. [Stog 382] Hoping to receive *bali* offerings, again and again, even continuously, they make this sound. Now, to explain by which foods they can be pacified: cooked meat and fried food should be offered to this lord of birds. Immediately add the mantra, and also offer the *bali*. [D76b] *namo vajrapānisya kṛṣṇa yakṣaya kṛṣṇa adhipataye svāhā* Consecrate the *bali* with this mantra, and then offer it.

[ii] The ones which have white forms, aptly described as powerful, circle in the sky. With the colour of waterfowl, they arrive by the power of their plumage. Continuously circling around, the powerful sound of their feathered wings makes a thunderous noise. As they circulate the place where you are, once, twice or

²¹⁹ *ka piñdza ra* for Sans. *kapiñjara*, a type of bird. According to Dhammika 2015: "Grey Francolin, sometimes *kapiñjara*, also *vattaka*, *Francolinus pondicerianus* (Ja.I,212; VI,538; Vin.III,48). About half the size of the domestic chicken, this bird has a blotched-chestnut back, wings and tail, a lighter-coloured breast and a rufous throat circumscribed by a black line." A. Wenta suggests a black-and-white Jacobin cuckoo.

three times, up until the evil forces have completed a third turn, for as long as that, offer them *bali*. *Balis* of nutmeg,²²⁰ parched rice, and pure ghee, should be offered. The mantra: *namo vajrapāṇisya śodhaya śodhaya pataya śopadhi pataye svāhā*

[iii] The ones which have red forms, aptly described as powerful, make cries like swans, excellently uttering deep sounds. By their fifth honk, they will have swiftly arrived; as long as they are still making their fifth honk, for that time, offer them their *balis*. They should be made from red perfumes and red flowers, [Stog 383] *pūpalikā*,²²¹ edible food and *laḍḍū*²²² and sesame paste. The mantra: *namo vajrapāṇisya rakte raktakṣe raktādhipataye svāhā*

[iv] The ones which have blue throats,²²³ aptly described as powerful, rip with their talons. They utter sounds like a raven. By the time they have made their seventh call, they will have arrived swiftly. Offer them *bali* immediately, also remembering the mantra well. Offer unsalted meat along with the *homa* fire sticks. By means of these *bali* rites, they will swiftly be made to fall. The mantra: *namo vajrapāṇisya nīla gaśo nīla tejo nīlādhipataye svāhā*

[v] The ones with *kapiñjara* forms, aptly described as powerful, [D77a] repeatedly make great cries like an owl. Swiftly, swiftly, they will make their cries, and by the time they have repeated their call three times, they will have arrived nearby. At that moment, they must be offered food, while doing the secret mantras. They should be given offerings that are literally full of blood, like fish and raw meat. The mantra: *namo vajrapāṇisya karāli pīkarāli karālādhipataye svāhā*

[vi] The ones which have red-eyed forms, aptly described as powerful, make calls like a horse. They repeatedly make sounds like a gong,²²⁴ in that way making a great noise. [Stog 384] They issue blazing flames from their mouth. Without hesitation and swiftly, they

²²⁰ *sna ma*: *Bod lugs gso rig tshig mdzod chen mo* p.440 confirms *dzā ti* or *dzā ti'i me tog* for *sna ma*.

²²¹ *pu pa li ka* for Sans. *pūpalikā*, a sweet cake fried in ghee.

²²² *la tu*, probably for Indic *laḍḍū* or *lāḍḍū*, a spherical sweet made from flour, fat, and sugar.

²²³ *mgrin pa mthon ka* = *nīlagrīva*, blue-necked.

²²⁴ Following Lhasa, em. *khar* > 'khar.

should be offered *balis*. Offer them raw meat, and also a vessel filled with alcoholic drinks. The mantra: *namo vajrapāṇisya raktakanetro raktaniba raktādhipataye svāhā*

[vii] The ones with variegated feathers, aptly described as powerful, make a sound like thunder, and also, when they approach, from their bodies, and their feathers as well, the resemblance of streams of lightning become visible. In the manner of camels [in line in a caravan], or ducks [flying in formation], again and again, giving their call eight times, they will swiftly arrive. Then offer them the *bali* and do the secret mantra. Give them as food, molasses mixed with curd. The mantra: *namo vajrapāṇisya citra citrakṣo vicitra adhibataye svāhā*

[viii] The ones which have crystal-eyed forms, aptly described as powerful, cover the sky. They arrive slowly. They make sounds like elephants and stir the air with their feathers. The wind from the feathers create coolness. When they have given calls two times, they slowly arrive.²²⁵ [D77b] At that moment, offer them a *bali*, and also do the secret mantra. In this way, they should be offered ghee mixed with barley as their food. They should be satiated with cow's ghee, and meat as well, [Stog 385] and sweetened beer. The mantra: *namo vajrapāṇisya kekarakṣa kakara dṛṣṭi kekarādhipataye svāhā*

Regarding these hawks [*khra*]: For those to whom the rituals have each been clearly explained, who rely on the mantra rituals for the black hawks [*khra*] at the beginning of their activity, for them, not even the slightest fear whatsoever will arise. Thus, mix honey with milk. Those who do the rites otherwise, will themselves be destroyed. But if a great being makes offerings to these hawks [*khra*], they will be repulsed, Vajrapāṇi has said so. The secret mantras for all of the hawks [*khra*] should be combined with the special [divine] sight and the king of awareness mantra. The hawk-conquering wisdom mantra [*khra gzhom pa'i rig sngags*] was spoken by Brahmā. It has been taught by me, so you should engage in it and do the rites. To pulverise all the hawks [*khra*], I have also taught an unbearably fierce wisdom mantra, which sounds like the fall of a thunderbolt onto

²²⁵ em. 'od > 'ong.

the top²²⁶ of a rock that will smash it into a hundred pieces: *namo vajrapāṇisya mahā cande cande cinta namna camane stambhani jambhani mohani hi hi gakare bareye svāhā*

Repelling all the hawks [*khra*], use white mustard.

Then, if you wish to destroy the *vajra* adhesive [*rdo rje 'byar byed*],²²⁷ what you must do is offer praises to the Vajra Wrathful One himself, while staring at the *vajra* adhesive. These medicines are to be scattered: horsegram juice,²²⁸ *śrūṣā* root,²²⁹ burnable neem oil,²³⁰ *soma*,²³¹ [**Stog 386**] *taba-soma*,²³² and *jātī-soma*.²³³ These should be mixed, and water poured over them, then left to bake in the sunlight. Where sun is not available, a jewel fire-stone [lens] should be used.

Then, if you want to break down the constructed *vajra* adhesive,²³⁴ take ?*svarṇamākṣika* ash,²³⁵ and ?cal-trops,²³⁶ and *gandhaka*,²³⁷ [**D78a**] and *ab yag*²³⁸ and *dunti ka* ash,²³⁹ and mixing these together, it will break up and vanish.

Then, if you want to [re-]make the constructed *vajra* adhesive,²⁴⁰ take two *tulā*²⁴¹ of mica,²⁴² one *tulā* of

²²⁶ em. *thog thog* > *thog tog*.

²²⁷ *rdo rje 'byar byed* This unfamiliar term seems to refer to an adhesive which keeps the treasure door closed.

²²⁸ *rgya sran gyi khu ba*. *Bod lugs gso rig tshig mdzod chen mo* p.151 gives long description of *rgya sran*, how it differs from *sran ma*, and its medicinal potencies, etc. Dan Martin identifies it with Sans. *kulattha*, horsegram.

²²⁹ *sru sru* for Sans. *śrūṣā*, according to Monier Williams the Kasunda tree, *Cassia esculenta*.

²³⁰ *'om bu bsregs pa'i khu ba*; preparations of neem oil are widely burned as insect repellants.

²³¹ *so ma*, for Sans. *soma*, precise meaning here unknown, can often refer to alcohol.

²³² *ta ba so ma* for Indic *taba-soma*, perhaps similar to (Hindi) *tabasheer*, = (Sans.) *tvakṣīra*, a milky liquid derived from bamboo widely used in Ayurveda.

²³³ *so ma dza tī* for Sans. *somajātī*, nutmeg *soma*.

²³⁴ *bcos ma'i rdo rje 'byar byed*: I am not entirely sure what this implies.

²³⁵ *swa ri ka thal ba*, perhaps for Sans. *Svarṇamākṣikabhasma*. *Svarṇamākṣika* (chalcopryrite) *bhasma* (ash) is widely used in Ayurvedic *rasaśāstra*.

²³⁶ *gze ma*, sometimes identified with the medicinal plant *Tribulus terrestris*, yet in this context, perhaps some other substance known to Ayurvedic *rasaśāstra* is intended.

²³⁷ *kanta ga* for Sans. *gandhaka*, sulphur, widely used in Ayurvedic *rasaśāstra*.

²³⁸ *ab yag*: unidentified; Lhasa reads *ang yag*.

²³⁹ *dunti ka*: unidentified. Stog reads *kunti ka*.

²⁴⁰ Perhaps to close the treasure door (*gter sgo*) again?

²⁴¹ *srang*.

²⁴² *lang tsher*, Sans. *abhraka*, a sheet silicate mineral used in *rasaśāstra*, probably mica.

somarāji seeds,²⁴³ half a *tulā* of orpiment,²⁴⁴ two *tulā* of *māṣa* powder,²⁴⁵ two dram²⁴⁶ of sand, two drams of *sa ma dza ti*,²⁴⁷ two drams of *kuṭaja*,²⁴⁸ two drams of *ka la pa ta* seeds,²⁴⁹ and mixing these all together, make them into a fine powder. Also, grind some mica; mix it together with burned *ka tsa pa la*²⁵⁰ water, neem, and burned *indravr̥kṣa*²⁵¹ water. Put it into a vessel smeared with *ma thang*,²⁵² and leave it for one month. Strike it with *kra kanti*²⁵³ and sulfur powder; then these *vajra* adhesives will become pure. Smear it on the door panel or side of wall or whatever you want to coat,²⁵⁴ and the *vajra* adhesive will turn red, like an *aśoka* flower.²⁵⁵ All rituals should also be done with the approach mantra.

At these treasure doors [*gter sgo*] explained by me, [Stog 387] treasures [*gter rnam*s] exist, it is taught. To definitively understand their true signs, please listen. The measure and quantity of the [treasure] materials I shall explain in every case.

[1] At treeless places with crevices, ?like a *sa la tha* tree,²⁵⁶ of white and perfumed appearance: there, at

²⁴³ *so ma ra tsa*, possibly for Sans. *somarāji*, a plant used in Ayurveda; sometimes identified with musk okra, sometimes with cannabis sativa.

²⁴⁴ *ba bla* = Sans. *haritāla*, yellow orpiment or arsenic, widely used in Ayurvedic *rasaśāstra*.

²⁴⁵ *mon sran gre'u*, possibly black gram, widely used in Ayurveda.

²⁴⁶ *zho*.

²⁴⁷ *sa ma dza ti* is unidentified; Lhasa has *sa ma dzā ti*, resembling Sans. *samajāti*, equal in kind; possibly a building material; or possibly em. *sa ma dza ti* > *so ma dza ti*, nutmeg, as above.

²⁴⁸ *ku ta dzi* for Sans. *kuṭaja*, Hindi *kuḍā*, Kurchi, Tellicherry bark, or Conessi tree, used both in Ayurveda and as a wall additive in construction. Omitted in Sde dge, but present in Lhasa.

²⁴⁹ *ka la pa ta* unidentified; A. Wenta suggests possibly from Sans. *kāla* (black) and *paṭṭa*, the tossa jute plant.

²⁵⁰ *ka tsa pa la* uncertain; there are various botanic terms *kaccha* and *kakṣa*, while *kaccha* can also mean, land contiguous to water.

²⁵¹ *indra brikṣa* for Sans. *indravr̥kṣa*; According to Monier-Williams, *indravr̥kṣa* = *indradrū* = the trees *Terminalia Arjuna* (Arjun tree) and *Wrightia Antidysenterica*.

²⁵² *ma thang* is unidentified. *Bod lugs gso rig tshig mdzod chen mo* p.611 gives *zangs rtsi dkar po'i 'bru*; D. Esler suggests, perhaps goosegrass (Lat. *galium aparine*).

²⁵³ *kra kanti* unidentified, A. Wenta suggests possibly for Sans. *kākāṅgī*, a medicinal plant with dark and bitter leaves.

²⁵⁴ em. *btun* > *gtum* cf. 'thum.

²⁵⁵ *a sho ka* for Sans. *aśoka*, Hindi *aśok*; Ashoka tree.

²⁵⁶ *sa la tha yi shing 'dra ba*, also occurring in following lines as *sa la tha la'i 'bru 'dra ba*, *sa la ta la'i shing 'dra ba*, *sa la ta yi mig 'dra ba*, and *sa la'i khri 'dra ba*. The translation remains uncertain. In the equivalent passages of the *Nidhipradīpa* as described in Balbir (1993: 26-28), it is tree suckers that play the key role in indicating the depths

twice the depth of a standing man, are 60,000 riches. Such a place has *nāgas*.

[2] In various wooded places, resembling a lotus petal and having the fragrance of a great lotus, at twice the depth of a standing man, there are 65,000 riches. Such a place has *rākṣasas*.

[3] Unwooded places, ?like a *sa la tha la* fruit,²⁵⁷ with the fragrance of *tāla* [coconut?], at a depth of twice a man's height, have over 100,000 riches. They have *yakṣas*. [D78b]

[4] Treeless places, ?like a *sa la ta la* tree, with a single fragrance, at a depth of three standing men, have as much as ten million riches; they are also the dwelling places of Vaiśravaṇa.

[5] In unwooded places, ?like a *sa la ta* eye,²⁵⁸ which are white and fragrant, at a depth of three standing men, are 46,000 riches. Indra is in such places.

[6] In unwooded places, ?like a *sa la* throne,²⁵⁹ measuring four feet, with the fragrance of *ketakī*²⁶⁰ flowers, [Stog 388] are ten million [riches]. Such places have *nāgas*."

The text continues with many more signs above ground that indicate the presence of *nidhis* below ground. Several of them resemble the treasure signs in the *Nidhipradīpa* described by Balbir and Vasudeva. There are incongruities, e.g. where natural enemies such as snakes and mongooses stay together. There are trees with specific shapes, e.g. with roots like an umbrella, or a trunk like a vase. There are trees with plentiful tree suckers. There are trees with anomalies, such as fruits out of season, milk-less trees that give milk, thorned trees that lose their

and quantities of treasures (tree suckers are shoots sent up from tree roots which, if left alone, will turn into another plant). Yet here, the locations are specifically described as treeless. At the moment, I can only make vague guesses as to the meaning. Might the first syllables, *sa la*, simply mean 'upon the ground'? In which case *tha la* or *ta la* might be for *sthala*, a mound or hillock on the ground. Alternatively, it might mean a treeless spot but with a single palm tree, thus for Sans. *tāla*, or *tāladrūma*, the Palmyra, or coconut, palm. Buddhist scriptures often mention the *tāla* tree as a measure of height, with phrases like "as high as eight *tāla* trees," etc. Here however, height is measured in the lengths of a man (*mi 'greng tsam*). It could also intend the Sans. *sāla*, the sal tree.

²⁵⁷ *sa la tha la*'i 'bru 'dra ba.

²⁵⁸ *sa la ta yi mig 'dra ba*, perhaps a knot in a tree?

²⁵⁹ *sa la*'i *khri 'dra ba*.

²⁶⁰ *ke ta ka ti* for Sans. *ketakī*, pandanus.

thorns, or magnificent fruit trees without fruit, etc. Ant heaps are another sign. Images of Buddhas, Śiva, Parvati, or Śiva liṅgams, also shrines to these deities, can also conceal or indicate hidden treasures. Lakes, ponds, rivers, and wells are also mentioned. And so on and on, for a great many pages. A further investigation, perhaps especially one that systematically compares the many *nidhi* rites contained in various Buddhist *Kriyātantras*, with the surviving *nidhiśāstras* such as the *Nidhipradīpa*, and the Rnying ma *gter ma* systems, would be of great interest, but is well beyond the scope of this limited study.

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The Long Arm of an Eighteenth-Century Bonpo Patron: Gyalrong and Dolpo between the Jinchuan Wars

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Finding an appropriate subject for a contribution to a volume such as this is a remarkably easy matter. Dan Martin's list of publications covers such an extraordinary range of subjects within and beyond the field of Tibetan Studies that one does not have to search far or for long to find a topic that corresponds to something within one's own more limited fund of competences. Tibetology owes an immense debt to Dan for his prolific and wide-ranging work on the subject of the Bon religion in general, and this contribution is intended to add a small brick to a particular edifice that he has helped to build within this domain: the role of Gyalrong (Rgyal rong) in the promulgation of Bon. His "Bonpo Canons and Jesuit Cannons" (1990), a study of the two Jinchuan Wars waged by the Qing government against Gyalrong in the eighteenth century, offers a startling perspective on the sectarian interpretation of the events recorded in Thu'u bkwan's biography of the Gelugpa hierarch Lcang skya Rol pa'i rdo rje. The two wars (1747-1749 and 1771-1776), and the second in particular, resulted in the destruction of the political strength of Gyalrong and considerably diminished it as a stronghold of the Bon religion. The present article deals with an altogether happier time, a moment in the two decades of interbellum peace when good relations prevailed between Gyalrong and Beijing, and when the rulers of the former were still in a position to extend their patronage to the geographically most remote institutions of the Bon religion.

Relations between Bonpos across the plateau and even beyond it are many and intricate, and much work remains to be done to clarify the dynamics of these networks over the course of time. In addition to the biographies of relatively well-known authors, the colophons of minor texts composed by lesser figures, contained in private collections in the Himalayas, can help us to form a clearer picture of these complex connections. The importance of Bonpos from Gyalrong in the development of the religion in Central Tibet is well known: Mnyam med Shes rab rgyal mtshan (1356-1416), the founder of Menri (Sman ri), the main Bonpo monastery in Central Tibet, was from Gyalrong, as were the great majority of its subsequent abbots. Gyal-

rong's western connections with Bonpo communities did not stop at Menri, but extended westwards as far as Dolpo (Dol po), in modern-day Nepal. One of the disciples of Shar rdza Bkra shis rgyal mtshan (1859-1935) was a certain Bstan 'dzin rgyal mtshan, a member of the Ya ngal clan from Dolpo (Gorvine 2019: 238), a portrait of whom even appears in a mural in a monastery of Geshitsa (Dge shes tsa, among other spellings).¹

But the connection between Gyalrong and Dolpo goes back much further than the time of Shar rdza. The document that forms the focus of this article is a testimony to Gyalrong's patronage of Himalayan lamas a century and a half earlier. Before discussing this document, however, a few words should be said by way of introduction to the two places with which we are principally concerned: Samling in Dolpo (Nepal), and Gyalrong in present-day Sichuan, as well as the political context in which the document was composed.

1. *The priest...*

Samling is a cluster of small clan-based gonpas situated at around 4300 metres above sea level in Dolpo, Nepal. The oldest of the gonpas belongs to the Ya ngal clan, a priestly lineage that the *Dbā' bzhed* records as being in Central Tibet in the eighth century (Wangdu and Diemberger 2000: 94-95), but that established itself in Mustang, and subsequently Dolpo, in the 12th and 13th centuries. The oldest surviving Bonpo settlement in Nepal is Lubrak (Klu brag), in southern Mustang. Originally a settlement of non-Tibetan troglodytes, Lubrak became an important centre of Bon following the arrival of Bkra shis rgyal mtshan (1131-1215) of the Ya ngal clan in the late twelfth century. One of Bkra shis rgyal mtshan's sons, Bla ma sngags pa, is credited with having travelled to Dolpo and founded the settlement of Bicher. The same Bla ma sngags pa was also instrumental in founding Samling, some two hours' walk from Bicher. According to his biography,

his son Ya ngal Bha su died at the age of twenty-one, and he therefore brought Yang ston² Rgyal mtshan rin chen, the eight-year-old son of Ya ngal Phur pa skyabs from Tagtse Jiri (Stag rtse Byi ri), the village in Upper Tsang to which his ancestors had travelled. It is said that afterwards all the Yang ston fathers and sons of Stag rtse abruptly left and went to Ngari (Mnga' ris). Together with [Rgyal mtshan rin chen, b. 1278], he [Bla ma sngags pa] established a gonpa at Samling (Bsam gtan gling). (Yang

¹ Naljor Tsering, personal communication 8 November 2021.

² Yang ston, the usual title of eminent lamas from this lineage, is a contraction of *ya ngal gyi ston pa*, "teacher from the Ya ngal [clan]".

sgom fol. 41r)

The Ya ngal lineage died out in Mustang in the late nineteenth century, but continued to flourish in Samling and other parts of Dolpo, where its prestige ensured it the support of a number of patrons, including the kings of Mustang and, as we shall see, of Gyalrong. The present scion of the family in Samling is Lama Shes rab bstan 'dzin, a direct descendant of Rgyal mtshan rin chen.

2. ...and the patron

European language works on the history of Gyalrong in the 18th century are rather sparse, but we are fortunate that the few publications that are available are highly informative. While there are passing mentions in several studies, the main sources, apart from the article by Dan Martin cited above, are a study by Roger Greatrex of the causes of the first Jinchuan war of 1747 to 1749 (Greatrex 1994), and a more general survey of the two conflicts by Patrick Mansier (1990). Other works that deal tangentially with the conflict include Karmay 1998 and 2005, while a helpful overview of the area and its history is given by Gray Tuttle.³

Gyalrong refers to the region northeast of Dartsedo that is bounded by four rivers: on the west by the Dadu, on the south by the Xiao Jinchuan, on the east by the Lixian and on the north by the Suomo, a northern tributary of the Dadu (Mansier 1990: 125). While Chinese sources refer to ten principalities, Tibetan works conventionally speak of eighteen kingdoms. The most important of these were Great Jinchuan or Rabten (Rab brtan), and Little Jinchuan or Tsenla (Btsan la), though several others are also of significance. The most important of these for the purposes of the present study is Trokyab (Khro skyabs),⁴ which actually lies to the northwest of the territorial heartland delineated above.

The following outline of the causes of the Jinchuan Wars is based primarily on the accounts given by Mansier and Greatrex. The ostensible reason for the Qing government's declaration of war was the intransigence of Slob dpon, the ruler of Rabten. In 1745, Slob dpon

³ Tuttle 2017. For a study of the logistical, strategic and financial aspects of the two Jinchuan Wars see Theobald 2013; for a study of cultural and social identity in modern Gyalrong, see Jinba 2013.

⁴ The name of Khro skyabs also appears in both Tibetan and secondary sources as Khro bcu and Khro chen. According to Karmay, "While Khro-skyabs designates a large area, Khro-chen is applied specifically to the place where the palace of the Khro-chen kings, Drug-zur rnam-rgyal-rdzong, was situated and is particularly used as the name of the royal house" (Karmay 1998: 46).

married his daughter to the king of Tsenla. However, because he considered the young king, Tshe dbang, to be an unsuitable ruler, he placed Tshe dbang's brother on the throne instead. This incensed the Qing authorities, who insisted that the order of succession be restored. The following year, Slob dpon went on to invade a neighbouring kingdom, Geshitsa, and annexed some of its territory. While these two acts are generally cited as the causes of the war, the real reason was in fact more complex than this. These two acts of provocation by Slob dpon were the culmination of a series of disturbances in the borderlands: first, an uprising by the Goloks and then, in 1744, an attack on a detachment of Qing soldiers by bandits from the Gyalrong kingdom of Drandul (Dgra 'dul), whose ruler was named Dpal mgon. The two-year campaign, that had left a significant dent in the Qing treasury, caused major casualties on both sides and resulted in the execution or forced suicide of several Qing generals for their perceived failings, ended in an extraordinary anticlimax, with the pardon of Slob dpon and Dpal mgon, whose actions had led to the outbreak of hostilities in the first place.

Twenty years after the end of the first war, Slob dpon's nephew and successor, Nam mkha', combined forces with the rulers of Tsenla and of Trokyab to oppose the Qing dominance. Nam mkha' died and was succeeded by his son, Bsod noms, who attacked the neighbouring kingdoms of Geshitsa and Azhi ('A gzhi). The Qing forces who were dispatched to pacify the Gyalrong aggressors were badly beaten. Qianlong resolved to put an end to the insurgency irrespective of what the cost might be, and the result was an even more protracted, bloody and expensive conflict than the first war. The king of Trochen was killed in the fighting in 1773 (Martin 1990, 21, fn. 34), and Bsod noms, ruler of Rabten, was one of several to be executed in Beijing after their eventual surrender.

3. *The document*

The document discussed here is a cloth-backed paper scroll containing nineteen lines of text written in an ornate but rather untidy *tshugs ring* script. It is kept in a tube of wood and metal. There is a square red seal at the end of the text, extending over the last four lines. A series of concentric squares may frame one or more Chinese characters, but this is not at all certain. The Samling archive also contains a copy of the document, in cursive *'khyug* script, that was presumably made for the purpose of consulting the content without risking unnecessary wear to the original. The latter is indeed damaged in places, and the fact that the copy is doubtful at some of these points suggests that it was made after the damage had already occurred. For the

sake of convenience the original and the copy will be referred to simply as Doc. 1 and Doc. 2 respectively.

The penultimate line states that the document has been issued to Samling gonpa by “the Mighty Ruler Kun dga’ ra dz[a]”. The date, which appears twice, is given as the Fire Ox year “during the reign of the Qianlong emperor”. The only Fire Ox year that fell during this emperor’s reign corresponds to 1757, and this enables us to identify the author of the document. The last volume of a recently-published ten-volume bilingual Chinese and Tibetan compilation of documents and articles relating to Gyalrong⁵ gives extensive genealogies of most of the eighteen kingdoms, and the only king with the name of Kun dga’ at that time was the ruler of Trokyab, Kun dga’ nor bu. Trokyab itself is not named in our document, and there are indications in the text that the patronage it announces is not unilateral but is being offered by a consortium of kingdoms.

The document claims to speak for “the eighteen kingdoms” of Gyalrong, but it is highly unlikely that all eighteen were actually implicated. Kun dga’ nor bu and his forebears were devout supporters of Bon institutions: among other things, in 1751, he and the king of Rabten, both patrons of the Bonpo master Kun grol grags pa (b. 1700), had sponsored the production of a woodblock version of the Bon canon; and in 1766, Kun dga’ nor bu and his queen, Tshe dbang lha mo, financed the carving of wood blocks of the sixteen-volume *Khams chen*.⁶ However, skirmishing between the various kingdoms seems to have been the usual state of affairs (except when these campaigns were suspended during the monsoon), and the document does even suggest that Trokyab had taken the side of the Qing in pacifying a number of recalcitrant enclaves that included principalities of Gyalrong. The *narratio* section of the document advertises Gyalrong’s loyalty to the Qing in its participation in earlier campaigns to subdue the Goloks and other hostile powers. There is an apparent reference to Dpal mgon, the ruler of the kingdom of Drandul who had provoked Qianlong’s fury, as well as other groups in Sichuan that had resisted the authority of the Qing.

The document is intended to accompany a number of gifts of ritual objects and money for the lama of Samling and the religious community in his care. Some of these gifts, such as the pair of cymbals – bearing an inscription by the donor – are still in the possession of the family. Since the document was issued more than four decades before the Gorkha unification of Nepal, when Dolpo was brought under the rule of Kathmandu, the author’s assurance that any act of aggres-

⁵ Rnga ba khul 2017.

⁶ Karmay 1998: 42. For a more general study of the production of Bonpo wood blocks in Gyalrong see Karmay 2005.

sion against Samling will be pursued with the full weight of Qing legal authority clearly cannot be seen as implying any interference in the affairs of a sovereign state.

While Trokyab had joined Rabten and Tsenla in patronising Bonpo masters, it seems not to have supported their opposition to the Qing during the first campaign; however, the fact that Rabten is not named as an antagonist in the document suggests that the Trokyab ruler preferred to overlook the differences between them. That the author of the document, the ruler of Trokyab, should emphasise his support for the Qing is both ironic and tragic, since it was precisely his later alliance with Rabten against the Manchus that led to his death.

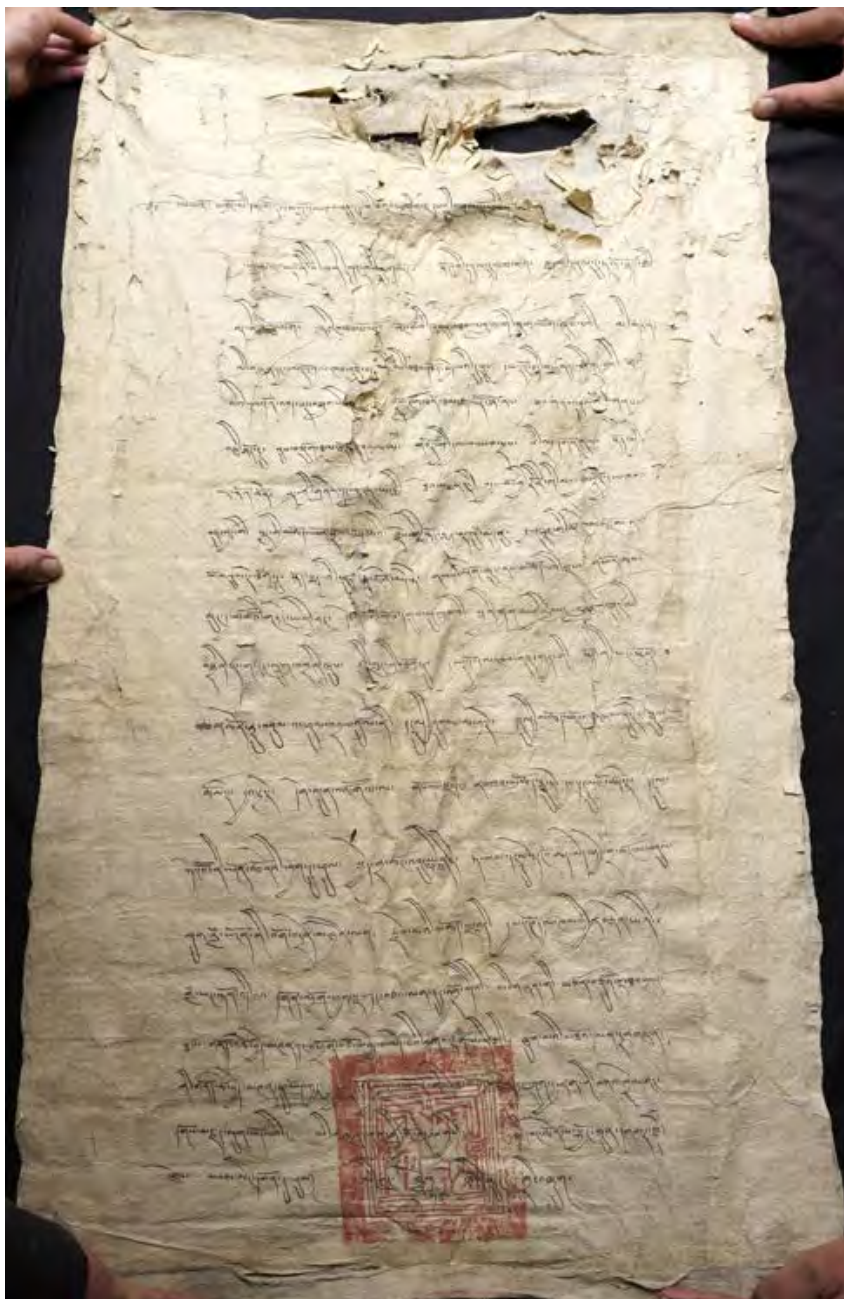


Fig. 1 — Doc. 1: The original document issued by the king of Trokyab, Kun dga' nor bu, to the lama of Samling, in Dolpo, in 1757. Photo: Kemi Tsewang.

4. *Transliteration of the document**Transliteration conventions*

- = Letter or stack unreadable due to physical damage
 [±2S] Approximately the given number of syllables is missing due to damage
 [abc] Letters missing due to damage but guessable with reasonable certainty from the context
 {abcd} Intentional deletion in the text
abcd Text intercalated below the line
 +abcd specified text is present in Doc. 2 but not in Doc. 1
 -abcd specified text is absent from Doc. 1
 Contracted forms (*bskungs yig*) are presented roughly as they appear, followed by the expanded version in brackets. Contracted forms in Doc. 2 are not reproduced.

The line numbering follows that of Doc. 1, the original document. Line numbers of Doc. 2 are given in italics. Variants found in Doc. 2 are given in italics immediately after the syllable concerned. Where variants entail several consecutive syllables, the syllables that appear in Doc. 1 are underlined.

Transliteration

1. § e ma ho / sa skyong mi dbang +*'od zer* chen po rgyal rong rgyal khab bcu rgyad kyi bka' yig *yi mdzad* pa'i bkul +*ba'i* ngor gyis *kyis don la* /

2. 2. rgya nag kong *gong* ma rin po che'i khyin *khrin* lung khri bzhugs lor / stod kyi yul du pal mag / smad *rmad* kyi yul du ta tro nye rtsi /

3. 3. bar gyi gho log / zhing khams so sor / kong ma'i zhabs su 'thab 'khrug gi thug log zhus pa'i / {~~mi gzhan~~}

4. mi gzhan dang rgyal rong 4. rgyal khab bcu brgyad [ky]i mi 'thab rtsod byed pa'i dus / rgyal rong 'di gzhan dang mi ma'i 'dra ba'i / kong

5. ma'i las don 5. 'bad par bsgrub pa'i [±2S] *don la* / 'gro drug sems can thams cad soor (so sor) sgo nas / skyabs gnas yulmog (yul mchog) gnas

6. bzhi gnas 6. bzhi sgor du sgo ru / bus *pus* btsug thal sbyor 'bul ba la / gtsor gyi rgyal ba yab sras / si 'bra se 'bras dgon sum / 7. stod kyi

7. yang ston cheno (chen po) / bar kyi gshen dang bru zhu spa rmi

sme / thob gya *brgya* sman ri / sangs rgyas chos kyī rinoe (rin po che)
8. 'di la / rgyal rong rgyal khab

8. bcu rgyad gi / sngar gyi mchod yon srol yod pa'i rjes kyī stod
smad bar suṃ mdunu (mdun du) / 9. rgyal =ung gi =e ma rgyal tung
gi lo gsum 'dzom nas

9. lo gsum re thog tu / stod smad kyī 'phul 'bul rgyu cheno (chen
po) med te / g.yas mteog (me 10. tog) chung nas mchod pa'i rdzas /
g.yon chab

10. chung rgya mtsho'i gteng *gting* yin kyang / rtse =g *cig* mos
dgus *gus* 11. phul ba'i / sbyin bdag la byin rlabs bsrung skud mi

11. {chung} +*chung* bsgrin par gnang lug *lugs* bkrin (bka drin) zhus
/ 12. =i *me* glang gyi thog du / rgyal rong rgyal khab bcu brgyad gi /
stod kyī yang ston

12. {13} cheno (chen po) ru 'bul ba *na* phul 'bras -'bras 13. tshul ni /
dngulyi (dngul gyi) buṃ pa cha gcig 1 re / dngulyi (dngul gyi)
mchod phor zhal bu re / sbug *sbug*

13. chol re / rgya' *rgyal* rnga re / 14. dge 'dun tshogs pa la / gsol
ja dang / nabza' (na bza') mchod rgyu te / rgya' *rgya* dngul rdo
tshad re / 15. dngul

14. te ngo'o *ngo bo* ni yngon (yang ston) chen po'i phyag tu phul /
skyed grwa tshang 'bul ba yinte (yin te) / 16. ta *da* lam dngul te ngo'o
ngo bo chad med skye *skyed* grwa tshang la 'bul 15. lug blaṃ (bla ma)
yngon (yang ston) gi 'go 'dren mkhyeen (mkhyen mkhyen) -*mkhyen*
lag *lags* / 17. rjes ma'i mchod rdzaṣ 'di / rgyal rong rgyal khab kyī
zhab rten *zhabs brten* yin /

16. blaṃ (bla ma) yang ston 'di la / dgon 'brog 18. phyag rdzas
dang bca' lag dud *tud* 'gro 'di'i / mi gzhan gi mtsa *brtsan* btsug ha ja
thab spar *yar*

17. thab gnod 'tshe byed -*byed* 19. mkhan dang / 'phrog bcom
byed sa med pa'i bka' rtag *brtag* yin cing / zhug ma'i mtho' *mtho*
dman dran *dran* gzhan

18. 20. gi gnod tshe byed byed mkhan su yod kyang / rgyal rong
rgygal 'khab so sor gi / rtsa chod rgyab rten rgyab shug *shag* 21. rgya
nag gi bka' khrems *khirms* gang

19. dgos mdzad lug *lugs* yod pa'i / mi gzhan kun gyi *gyis* ko go
bar bgyis / 22. mi dbang cheno (chen po) sa skyong kun dga' ra dza
[g?] *dzi*

20. zhes / msam *bsam* gling dgon du phul / 23. mi *me* glang zla 8
tshes 13 / khyin lung khri bzhug //

5. *Translation*

The following concerns the request to the Mighty Ruler to issue an official document of the Eighteen Kingdoms of Gyalrong. In a year when the Qianlong Emperor of China was on the throne, when the people of the Eighteen Kingdoms of Gyalrong went to war with others: the army of Dpal mgon above, the Dazhou rebels below and the Goloks in the middle,¹ who had risen against the Emperor, by reason of the earnest effort that Gyalrong made to further the emperor's aims, all the six classes of living beings knelt down with joined palms before the four places of refuge: foremost, the Enlightened Victor [the Dalai Lama] and his disciples, the Three Seats of Sera, Drepung [and Ganden], the great teacher of the Ya ngal clan in the West, and the [scions of the] Gshen, Bru, Zhu, Spa and Rme² families as well as Sman ri in Thob rgya³ in the middle – to these, the Eighteen Kingdoms of Gyalrong having traditionally in the past been in a relationship of patron and preceptor... every three years... since had not met for three years...

(The exact meaning of the entire sentence remains unclear because of damage to the text at this point; Doc. 2, which is likely to have been written after the damage occurred, is clearly inaccurate since it does not reproduce the 'grent bu in the fourth or fifth syllable of line 9 in Doc. 1.)

We do not have much either in our highland or our lowland area that we can offer. However, even if, on the one hand, a flower is something small it is nevertheless an item of offering, and on the other, if water is something small it does come from the depths of the ocean; we beg you to grant us, your patrons who make these offerings with single-pointed devotion, a protective cord as your blessing, though not for the sake of matching [our offering].⁴ In this Fire Ox year (1757), we make the following offerings to the Great Ya ngal Teacher:

- A pair of silver vases
- A silver bowl
- A pair of cymbals
- A bronze gong

For the community of monks: the cost of tea and robes for the monks, and one Chinese silver *dotse* coin for each.⁵ We are giving [additional] money (or silver) to the Great Yang ston lama himself as capital. The interest is to be offered to the monastic community; how the interest should be given to the monks' community without the principal being reduced is a matter that we request the Great Ya ngal Teacher to take charge of.⁶ These later items of offering are for the

performance of ceremonies on behalf of the kingdoms of Gyalrong.

This document is an order to the effect that no one may forcefully misuse the temple pasturelands,⁷ personal items and property or the livestock of the Great Ya ngal Teacher, or cause any harm or perpetrate theft. Should there be anyone in the future, whether high or low, mighty or humble, who does cause any harm, the individual kingdoms of Gyalrong shall apply whatever procedures are necessary within the law of China to undertake an investigation and to provide assistance and support – this is something that all should take heed of.

This document has been issued to Samling gonpa by the one known as the Mighty Ruler Kunga Raja. The 13th day of the 8th month in a Fire Ox year when Qianlong is seated on the throne.

Notes to the translation

1. Line 2, *pal mag...bar gyi gho log*: *pal mag* may stand for *dpal mgon gyi dmag*, “the army of dPal mgon”. The first Jinchuan War was largely a punitive expedition intended to apprehend Dpal mgon, the ruler of Drandul, whose subjects had perpetrated an act of banditry against a detachment of Qing soldiers (see above). Tsering Naljor has convincingly suggested to me that *Ta tro nye rtsi* refers to rebels (Ch. *nizei*) from Dazhou, in Sichuan, where resistance to the Qing would later culminate in the White Lotus uprising. The fact that the names are preceded by *smad*, “below”, does suggest they are located east of the Goloks, who had been the troublemakers “in the middle” (*bar*).

2. Line 7, *gshen dang bru zhu spa rme...*: these names refer to the five main Bonpo clans of Central Tibet. For a study of these clans, see Lhagyal 2000.

3. Line 7, *thob rgya*: a reference to Stobs rgyal, the name of the main village near the Bonpo monastery of Menri (founded in 1405).

4. Line 11, *bsgrin*: among its several meanings, the verb *sgrin pa* may signify to compare or to compete. Here it has been understood to mean that the lama should not consider the blessing that the petitioner is requesting as being a reciprocal gesture. Whatever the strategic reality of such *mchod yon* relationships may be, it is of course always essential to uphold the principle that teachings and blessings from one side and material benefits from the other are freely given, not exchanged.

5. Line 13, *rdo tshad*: the *dotse* is a bar of silver equal in weight and value to 50 *srang*. Although it is described in the document as being a “Chinese silver *dotse*”, it seems to have been a Tibetan, rather than Chinese, unit. In his account of a journey he made to Tibet in 1899,

Gombozhab Tsybikov comments on the coinage that was in use in Lhasa at the time:

There are no special coins for greater amounts [than the *dam-kha*], but the larger units of account in use are the *san* (*liang* in Chinese) which is made up of six and two-thirds coins (so that twenty coins equal approximately three *sans*), and the *dotse* or *yambu* which contains fifty *sans* or $333\frac{1}{3}$. (Tsybikov 2017: 96)

6. Line 15, *ngo'o chad med skye...zhab rten yin*: this passage apparently refers to the practice of establishing endowments, known as *sbyor 'jag*, for the performance of rituals (*zhabs brtan*) on behalf of patrons. According to this system, donations received from patrons are distributed among members of the religious community, who use the money as capital in trading ventures. Ten per cent of the interest must be used to sponsor annual performances of a designated ritual in perpetuity, with the corresponding merit being transferred to the patron. Any profit in excess of the ten per cent may be kept by the lamas. In this passage, the author of the document is effectively asking the lama to manage the endowment as he considers appropriate.

7. Line 16, *dgon 'brog*: this has been understood here as a compound rather than a reference to two distinct entities, though the meaning remains uncertain. It may refer to grasslands owned by the temple on which unauthorised herders may not graze their animals, or livestock belonging to the *gonpa* that are kept with the herds of pastoralists. This is a well-known practice whereby villagers who owned one or more female yaks might entrust them to pastoralists to take care of in an arrangement known as *skyes med 'chi med*, "irrespective of birth or death". The pastoralist would provide the owner with an agreed amount of dairy produce each year whether the animal lived or died; any calves it bore would become the property of the pastoralist.

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Yang sgom Mi 'gyur rgyal mtshan (16th century)

Kun kyis nang nas dbang po'i dangs ma mig ltar sngon du byung ya ngal bka' rgyud kyis gdung rabs un chen tshangs pa'i sgra dbyangs zhes bya ba bzhugs so. Manuscript of 54 folios kept in the village of Lubrak, Mustang District, Nepal.



What did the Chinese Warlord Liu Wenhui want from Pha bong kha

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oday, the Dge lugs pa scholar Pha bong kha Bde chen snying po alias Byams pa bstan 'dzin 'phrin las rgya mtsho (1878–1941) is in particular known for two things: First, for his public teaching on the Stages of the Path (*lam rim*) in 1921, the transcripts of which were later edited by his disciple, the Third *khri byang rin po che* Blo bzang ye shes bstan 'dzin rgya mtsho (1901–1981), the younger tutor of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama. Second, for his promotion of the cult of Rdo rje Shugs ldan, a deity especially charged with protecting the purity of the Dge lugs teachings and nowadays associated with a dispute and schism within the Dge lugs order.

A few years ago, Joona Repo plausibly argued, based on Pha bong kha's collected works, that while Pha bong kha indeed propagated the cult of Rdo rje Shugs ldan during his lifetime, other cults apparently are more prominent in his *Collected Works* and the Rdo rje Shugs ldan one actually became popular only after his death, promoted in no small part by the efforts of his disciple *khri byang rin po che*.¹ However, that does not mean that Pha bong kha did not actively spread the cult of Rdo rje Shugs ldan, especially during his stay in East Tibet. In fact, he was not the first who introduced the worship of Rdo rje Shugs ldan in that area. The Sa skyia scholar and Khang gсар abbot Ngag dbang mkhyen rab 'jam dpal snying po (1868–1949) had already in the 1890s, together with his uncle *mkhan chen* Ngag dbang blo gros snying po, established the cult in many East Tibetan monasteries, without, however, combining it with any sectarian activities.² This further step was left to Pha bong kha and his disciples. During his stay in East Tibet, Pha bong kha was deeply engaged in the issue nowadays generally associated with Rdo rje Shugs ldan, i.e., fighting against other Buddhist schools, including the Bon and the non-sectarian movement (*ris med*) in East Tibet, whose offer of religious practices across school boundaries was seen as a threat to the purity, supremacy

¹ Reepo 2015: 6–7, 38–41.

² Jackson 2001: 93.

and hegemony of the Dge lugs school.³ Pha bong kha's writings as well as his biography, composed by Ldan ma Blo bzang rdo rje (1908–1975),⁴ offer sufficient evidence that this was of great concern to him. Interesting documents in this regard are also Pha bong kha's letters sent to the Chinese warlord Liu Wenhui (劉文輝, 1895–1976) and his wife, which are preserved in Pha bong kha's *Collected Works* (*gsung 'bum*). Therefore, they have already occasionally aroused the interest of some scholars. However, the perspective and interests of the letters' recipient were always completely overlooked.

The Communication between Pha bong kha and Liu Wenhui

Pha bong kha and Liu Wenhui were in contact with each other from 1935 to 1940. Whether they ever met face to face as stated by Sam van Schaik,⁵ I am not able to verify. At least Liu had sent Pha bong kha an insistent invitation already in 1935 when the latter was staying in Chab mdo in East Tibet, followed by another invitation in 1936.⁶

To my knowledge, the first scholar mentioning one of Pha bong kha's letters was Gdong thog *sprul sku* Bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan, followed by David Jackson.⁷ Both only vaguely describe the recipient as "Lui Chuntrang, an illegal Chinese-governor in Kham province of Tibet" or simply as "a Kuomintang governor ("Lu'u Cun-krang")." Later, Sam van Schaik identified Lu'u Cun-krang with Liu Wenhui.⁸ He characterizes the letters as sermons to the warlord and his wife. Altogether he speaks of three such letters to be found in Pha bong kha's *Collected Works*,⁹ apparently missing a fourth one, contained in the same section.¹⁰ A few years ago, another scholar translated an excerpt from Pha bong kha's letters to Liu Wenhui.¹¹ However, he notes that he was unable to identify the recipient. Therefore, the figure appears in his study merely as some Chinese official and Buddhist disciple, thus concealing the political dimension.

According to van Schaik, it was Pha bong kha who "struck up a relationship" with Liu.¹² Consequently, the central question that rose for van Schaik in view of the letters was: "What did Pabongka want from the warlord?" And he immediately offers a plausible answer to

³ Dreyfus 1998: 252–253, 267.

⁴ Ldan ma Blo bzang rdo rje 1981.

⁵ van Schaik 2011: 202.

⁶ Ldan ma Blo bzang rdo rje 1981: vol. II, 462, 297–298.

⁷ Gdong thog 1979: 116–117; Dhongthog 1996: 20; Jackson 2001: 97.

⁸ van Schaik 2011: 202.

⁹ *Ibid.*: 286n48.

¹⁰ *dris lan*, 35a–38b.

¹¹ Pearcey 2018: 172–173.

¹² *Ibid.*

this question:

It seems that, unlike the Dalai Lama, but like many other Tibetan monks, he was still basing his activities on the old patron-priest model. He hoped that this Chinese warlord would be a patron for the Gelug school, finally ensuring its success in Kham. The idea of a Tibetan nation state with clearly defined borders was of little interest to him.¹³

However, believing the biography, the initiative to establish this contact came from the warlord's side. He was the one, who sent his messengers to Pha bong kha. Therefore, another question should arise first: What did Liu Wenhui want from Pha bong kha?

To answer the question of Liu's motives for contacting Pha bong kha, we need to briefly recall some basics of his career and agenda, especially during the period under consideration. Towards the end of the third decade of the 20th century Liu, at that time commander of the 24th Nationalist Army, was the most powerful agent in the border area of Sichuan Province and East Tibet. Early on, he pursued an ambitious plan to merge this borderland into a new province that would be more than just an administrative unit.¹⁴ Thus, already in 1929, he established in Dar rtse mdo, that is, Kangding (康定), a preparation committee. Especially, after Liu's power and influence in Sichuan had been restricted by his nephew Liu Xiang (劉湘, 1890–1938), he enforced his efforts to construct a new province as his personal power base. It was to take another four years before this plan was finally implemented. During these years Liu had to subdue Tibetan resistance with his military force, in particular various movements striving for a self-rule of the Khams pa. The last one had started still in 1939 by the late Panchen Lama's retinue—in the same year that the new Xikang (西康) Province had been formally established by the Kuo min tang government. Kangding was its administrative center and Liu Wenhui the chairman of its government. The province would exist until 1955.¹⁵

Influenced by the ideas of the Chinese ethnologist Ren Naiqiang (任乃强, 1894–1989), Liu advocated in the territory under his control a policy of assimilation called *tonghua* 同化.¹⁶ It seems that the term did not reflect a consistent theory. What exactly was meant by *tonghua* was nowhere precisely defined. At that time, it apparently did not imply a complete destruction of Tibetan culture in East Tibet and a total Han-

¹³ van Schaik 2011: 202.

¹⁴ Lawson 2011: 3–4.

¹⁵ Gros 2019: 29–31; Lawson 2011: 22, 157–159; Coleman 2014: 445; Frank 2020: 48–52.

¹⁶ Tsomo 2013: 328–337; Mortensen 2019: 425.

ization of its population.¹⁷ Instead, Liu had in mind to reconcile Tibetan and Han culture. Therefore, he tried to win over the people of Khams by integrating Tibetan Buddhism and prominent Buddhist clerics into his political and educational agenda. A personal sympathy for Tibetan Buddhism may well have played a role. The visible result of these efforts was the establishment of the so-called “Five Sciences Buddhist Institutes” (*Wuming Foxueyuan* 五明佛學院). Starting from 1938, several of these schools were established in Xikang Province, the largest in Kangding. Monks from Tibetan monasteries in Khams were given grants to study in these schools. Chinese and Tibetan Buddhist masters functioned as teachers.¹⁸ The founding of these schools has been described as an act of specifically patronizing the Dge lugs pa in East Tibet.¹⁹ In doing so, Liu opposed other ideas that explicitly advocated the destruction of Tibetan Buddhist culture in Est Tibet and thereby particularly focused on the Dge lugs pa as the cause of insufficient population growth and as a source for the spread of superstition.²⁰

The term *wuming* is known as the Chinese translation of Sanskrit *pañcavidyā* or Tibetan *rig gnas lnga*, denoting the classical Indian five domains of knowledge: grammar, medicine, arts and crafts, logic, and inner knowledge or spirituality. Thus, the name given to the newly founded Buddhist schools in Xikang emphasizes the intention to provide them with a rather broad curriculum, which would not be limited to higher Buddhist studies.

Liu apparently had been pursuing the idea of founding such schools already since 1928.²¹ During the years of preparation, he was also in contact with lamas in Chab mdo.²² After Pha bong kha had come to Chab mdo in 1935, he was apparently among those to whom Liu had sent his messengers. Shortly before, Liu had signed the contract with the Dga' ldan pho brang government for the demilitarization of the Dge lugs pa monastery Dar rgyas located in Dkar mdzes area.²³ As far as I can see, the biography of Pha bong kha mentions the reception of Liu's messengers for the years 1935, 1936,

¹⁷ But by 1948, the prevailing view in the administration of Xikang appears to have been otherwise. That year, the Assistant Pacification Commander of Xikang told the American journalist A. Doak Barnett (1921–1999): “In fifteen or twenty years we will have educated them so that people will even forget the names of the minority groups” (Barnett 1948, 11).

¹⁸ Lawson 2011: 124, 243–248; Tuttle 2005: 213; Ning Zhang, Yinghui Yang 2020: 324–327.

¹⁹ Frank 2020: 172.

²⁰ Ibid.: 92–93.

²¹ Ning Zhang, Yinghui Yang 2020: 326.

²² Ibid.: 327.

²³ Kobayashi 2018: 164.

1939 and 1940. Pha bong kha's preserved letters sent to Liu Wenhui are dated 1938, 1939 and 1940. The one sent to Liu's wife is undated.

For the time being, we are not in the possession of any letters sent by Liu to Pha bong kha or his wife. We must therefore mainly rely on Pha bong kha's letters to find out more about Liu's motivation for contacting him. Another limitation is that Pha bong kha's letters have not come down to us either in the original or in a complete transcript. Missing are the heading, the usual formula of respect, and the entire introductory part, as well as the ending part and the place and precise date of issue.²⁴ This makes it clear that when the collected works were compiled, the context in which the letters originated was no longer of particular interest. The actual content of the letters remains within the traditional thought patterns of a Dge lugs pa scholar. Especially, they neither reveal any interest in or more detailed knowledge of the political ambitions that the recipient of the letters was pursuing at the time, nor do they even hint at the struggle for control of Dge lugs pa monasteries in Khams between the Dga' ldan pho brang and Liu.²⁵ However, considering Pha bong kha's long stay in East Tibet and his role in Reting's efforts to enable the Panchen Lama's return to Central Tibet,²⁶ Pha bong kha must have been fully aware of the tense political situation and Liu's military actions in the East Tibetan border region. But the letters do not even touch on all this. What shapes their content instead is the polemic with which the positions of other Buddhist schools are attacked as an inferior choice and the Dge lugs teachings are praised as the only pure Buddhist tradition. This polemic is—as Adam Scott Pearcey comments when translating two relevant excerpts from the letters²⁷—unusually harsh and direct, even by Tibetan Buddhist standards. Pha bong kha did not leave it at blanket denigrations of competing Buddhist schools. As his last letter reveals, he also directly criticized the teaching, editing and printing activities of the Sa skya pa scholars in Derge (Sde dge), which at that time was a place belonging to Liu's new province Xikang. But Pha bong kha's criticism is not limited to competing Buddhist schools. It also explicitly opposes Hinduism and Jainism, Christianity, Islam, Confucianism and Bon since they would not offer a path to liberation. In 1938 he wrote to Liu:

On this earth many traditions flourish, such as the non-Buddhist Indian traditions (Skt. *tīrthika*), Christianity, Islam, Confucianism and Bon. They each tout their own tradition as

²⁴ See Schneider 2003: 122.

²⁵ See Kobayashi 2018.

²⁶ Goldstein 1989: 288–298.

²⁷ Pearcey 2018: 172–174.

the most outstanding. Nevertheless, apart from the doctrine of the Buddha alone, all others have no path to liberation. They do not have the capacity to eliminate even a single affliction. Even if one practices (them) by enduring severe hardship over a long time, one will not be able to achieve any good result beside opening the door to the lower realms (of rebirth). (They) are just words of deception, which display something which is not a path as a path.²⁸

The following year Pha bong kha repeated his criticism in harsher terms in another letter sent to Liu:

In general, there are many different religions in this world and all of them believe themselves to be the best. However, if you examine them honestly and thoroughly, Christianity and Islam are the very worst religions of the barbarians. There is no worse religion than these (two). Systems such as (the Sāṃkhya-system) of the non-Buddhist Kapila (in India) are slightly better than those, but they do not have a path to liberation. Even if they do great ascetic practices like burning the body in fire or jumping on the trident, they do not have a path to liberation. They (merely) open the door to the lower rebirths. As far as the so-called Bon po are concerned, there is no difference between them and the systems of the non-Buddhists (in India). How could there be liberation? They (merely) open the door to lower rebirths. Also, Confucianism is no Buddhism. Therefore, they only have means for attaining temporary happiness; there is no liberation.²⁹

With his letters, Pha bong kha clearly intended to discriminate against all other religions and Buddhist schools in the eyes of the recipient, to secure the recipient's sole support for the Dge lugs pa, and to incite

²⁸ *Dris lan*, 31b.5–32a.1: *sa steng 'di na mu stegs/ ye shu/ mu sul man/ kong tse/ bon sogs lugs mang po dar ba rang rang gi lugs de mchog tu brloms kyang/ sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa kho na ma gtogs gzhan tshang mar thar pa'i lam med/ nyon mongs sna gcig kyang spong ba'i nus pa med/ dus yun ring por dka' thub drag pos [32r] nyams su blangs kyang ngan song gi sgo 'byed pa las 'bras bu bzang po ci yang thob mi nus/ lam ma yin pa lam du ston pa'i bslu ba'i tshig kho na yin/*

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 32b.3–33a.2: *'dzam gling phyi nang gi grub mtha' spyi'i gnas tshul drang por brjod pa bzhugs/ spyir 'dzam bu'i gling 'dir rang rang chos lugs mi 'dra ba mang zhing/ rang rang gi lugs de mchog yin snyam pa thams cad la yod kyang/ blo drang pos legs par brtag na/ ye shu dang mu sul man gyi lugs ni kla klo zhes lugs shin tu tha chad red/ chos lugs 'di las r[d]lugs pa med/ phyi rol pa mu stegs ser skya sogs kyi lugs ni de las cung bzang yang thar pa'i lam med/ lus me la bsreg pa dang/ mdung rtse gsum gyi steng du mchong ba sogs dka' las chen po byed kyang thar pa'i lam med/ ngan song gyi sgo [33r] 'byed pa red/ bon po zhes pa 'di yang phyi rol mu stegs pa'i lugs dang khyad med/ thar pa ga la yod de ngan song gi sgo 'byed pa yin/ kong tse'i lugs kyang sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa ma yin pas gnas skabs kyi bde thabs tsam las thar pa med/*

him to an intolerant attitude toward all other religions and Buddhist schools within his sphere of influence. Moreover, Pha bong kha's fierce polemics seem to reflect the general combative mood he developed during his time in East Tibet, where he had to realize that not only the other Buddhist schools were very active and popular, but from China representatives of other religions increasingly tried to gain followers.

If we leave aside the acrimonious polemics of Pha bong kha's letters, another statement is remarkable: Liu and his wife are not only addressed as devout Buddhists, but explicitly as followers of Tsong kha pa's (1357–1419) teachings, the dGe lugs version of Tibetan Buddhism. In 1938, Pha bong kha wrote to him:

In this time, you, the great lord, venerate through the strong power of your former aspiration and your merits exclusively the heart of the Buddha's doctrine, the system of the great 'Jam mgon Tsong kha pa, as the crown of your head. Holding it in the center of your heart, (you) take care to spread it throughout in numerous large areas like your own country. Therefore, by establishing through the stainless doctrine the seed of liberation in the (mind) stream of yourself and many tens of thousands of other living beings, (you) have widened the path to complete liberation. By thinking again and again about this excellent deed, I receive happiness and immeasurable joy like waves of the ocean swelling to the sky. For this I am very grateful.³⁰

And in the undated letter which Pha bong kha had sent to Liu's wife he wrote:

Our great lord Liu Wenhui became a Buddhist. And he even has entered the heart of the Buddhist doctrine, the teaching of 'Jam dpal dbyangs (Mañjuśrīghoṣa) Tsong kha pa. Therefore, also (you), the great mistress, have met with the teaching of 'Jam mgon Tsong kha pa.³¹

³⁰ Ibid., 31b.3–5: *dus 'dir/ dpon po chen po khyod nyid ni sngon gyi smon lam dang bsod nams kyi mthu dpung btsan pos sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa'i snying po 'jam mgon tsong kha pa chen po'i ring lugs kho na spyi bo'i gtsug tu bkur/ thugs kyi mthil du bzung ste rang gi yul sogs zhing chen du mar khyab gdal du dar bar mdzad pas rang gzhan skye 'gro khri phrag nas khri phrag mang po'i rgyud la bstan pa dri ma med pas thar pa'i sa bon bskrun te rnam grol gyi lam yangs por mdzad pa'i mdzad pa bzang po 'di la kho bos bsam bzhin bsam bzhin d[ga]' spro dang yi rang dpag tu med pa rgya mtsho'i rba rlabs mkha' la 'phyur ba ltar thob pa bka' drin shin tu che/*

³¹ Ibid., 31a.2f: *rang re'i dpon po chen po li'u cun krang 'di nyid chos lugs nang pa sangs rgyas pa la zhugs/ de'i nang nas kyang bstan pa'i snying po 'jam dpal dbyangs tsong kha pa'i bstan pa la zhugs par mdzad bas/ dpon mo chen mo nyid kyang 'jam mgon tsong kha pa'i bstan pa dang mjal/*

Whether this impression conveyed by Pha bong kha's letters corresponded to the recipient's inner conviction at the time or was merely part of his strategic considerations is difficult to say. On the surface, it suggests nothing more than Liu's desire for a spiritual teacher-disciple relationship as a motive for his contact with Pha bong kha. However, this impression becomes more differentiated when we include Pha bong kha's last letter in our analysis.

Pha bong kha's last letter to Liu Wenhui

Among all the preserved letters sent by Pha bong kha to Liu Wenhui the last one written in 1940 is by far the most informative, because it is more than one of his usual sermons. Explicitly, it refers to a specific question posed by Liu beforehand. Without giving an exact date, Pha bong kha's biography mentions for the period between the second and the sixth month of that year that "he had answered many petitions, which had been delivered to him by various travelers who had come from China. Especially, Liu had orally conveyed a few important questions about religion, which he then answered in detail."³² Pha bong kha's reply letter reveals that Liu's questions concerned the establishment of the so-called "Five Sciences Buddhist Institutes" and that Pha bong kha had told him rather bluntly that he considered such a broad undertaking pointless in view of the actual goal of Buddhist practice. However, in answering Liu's question, he again gave the most space to his polemics against all other Tibetan Buddhist schools. Much of this is consistent with the content of his previous letter sent to Liu in 1939. Obviously, this was his greatest concern. To show how he linked the answer to the question with his personal struggle against the other Buddhist schools, here is a complete translation of the letter:

That which was granted to the governor-general of Xikang,
the great lord Liu Wenhui, in the Iron Dragon year (1940):

Thinking of your loving mind and your kindness out of faith
and veneration, (here) the essence of my brief answer to your
sincere questions about the new foundation of a teaching
monastery:

I am very grateful that you are going to newly establish a
school of knowledge there as a basis for the (Buddhist)
doctrine. In general the so-called five greater fields of
knowledge are grammar, medicine, handicrafts, logic, and

³² Ldan ma Blo bzang rdo rje 1981: vol. II, 407: *rgya yul nas 'ongs pa sogs phyogs 'grul khag nas zhu yig mang du phul ba'i gsung lan dang/ lhag par lu'u cun krang gis chos lugs skor gyi dri ba gal can 'ga' ngag 'phrin gyi thog nas zhus pa sogs kyi dris lan zhib rgyas dang/*

spirituality (inner development). The five smaller fields of knowledge are poetics, prosody, drama, synonymics, and astrology. Among these ten fields of knowledge, apart from spirituality, all others are outer or inner ordinary fields of knowledge. Therefore, no matter how widespread grammar and poetry, for example, are, they are only word constructions: they are not able to pull living beings out of the bad existences and lead them to the door of liberation and omniscience. They do not have the slightest benefit for the doctrine of the Buddha. Spirituality is that which emerged from the words of the *jina* and the commentaries of their intended meaning, (i.e.) the standard major philosophical texts of the Indian *paṇḍitas* and *siddhas*. Concerning the way the intended meaning of these (words) was adopted, there exist in India and Tibet, in both (countries), different ways of understanding: those that arrive at the key point and those that do not. In India, there are the followers of the four tenet systems: Vaibhāṣika, Sautrāntika, Cittamātra, and Madhyamaka. They are known as the four exponents of tenets. For the Cittamātrin, there are the Cittamātrin following the scriptures and the Cittamātrin following reasoning. For the Madhyamika, there are the Svatantrika and the Prasaṅgika. Of these, only the good system of the Prasaṅgika Madhyamaka of the good tradition of the glorious protector Nāgārjuna, as it was excellently elucidated by the glorious Candrakīrti, are the stainless thoughts of the *jina*, in which there is not even the slightest mistake concerning *sūtra* and *mantra*, view and meditation, whatever.

Although here in Tibet, the land of snow, individual designations for four similar tenet systems have not spread, various other ways of upholding one's own tradition of the philosophical view, meditation and actions have spread, like the distinct tenet systems of the old school of secret mantra (Rnying ma) and of the new schools Sa skya, Bka' brgyud, Shangs pa bka' brgyud, Bo dong, Jo nang, Zhwa lu and Dge ldan pa (Dge lugs pa). They all arrogantly pretend to be the good tradition of the Indian Prasaṅgika Madhyamaka. Solely the sources of the river of the (Buddhist) teaching, like the master of the early translations Padmasambhava together with his disciples, the great Sa kya (*bla ma*) Kun dga' snying po (1092–1158), Mar pa (1012–1097) and Mi la ras pa (1140–1123) of the Bka brgyud, teacher and student, and Jo bo rje (Atīśa, 982–1054), found the correct view of the Prasaṅgika. Thereafter, all lineages of disciples were wrong about the philosophical view. They state many different ways of determining (the correct view), but when they practice the essence (of their teaching), they (only) rest without being preoccupied with anything in the mind. They only give

thought to the bad views of Hwashang Mahāyana (Heshang Moheyan 和尚摩訶衍, the antagonist of the Indian monk Kamalaśīla in the so-called bSam yas debate of the eighth century). Because in that way the understanding of the philosophical view does not get to the key point, they confuse in their own schools the hardly bearable nihilistic view, which claims there is no such thing as *karma* and fruit, *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, bondage and liberation at all, with emptiness. It has been said in (Nāgārjuna's) *Ratnāvalī*: "Some other fools who think themselves to be wise do not understand it properly, and therefore fall head down into the hell of Avīci, being ruined by their criticism against the perfect doctrine."³³ Accordingly, they practice for their whole life, confusing the bad view, which opens the door to the hell of Avīci, with the path. Without understanding even a little of the emptiness of ultimate reality, some (other) people confuse conventional phenomena with ultimate (reality) and cultivate their whole life the view of eternalism. Thus (both kind of people) confuse the abyss of eternalism or nihilism with the profound path. That which in this situation does not have in the least the stains of error regarding philosophical view, meditation and actions is solely the tradition of 'Jam mgon Tsong kha pa.

What has to be said about the so-called thirteen major scriptures of Sde dge: These are (indeed) indisputable Indian scriptures such as the (five) books of Maitreya, the (five) collections of Madhyamaka reasoning (of Nāgārjuna) and (Śāntideva's) *Bodhicaryāvatāra*. But as for the explanation, the meaning of those great scriptures is explained incorrectly. As their own tradition (the scholars in Sde dge) hold on to the previous Tibetan view, (i.e.) the bad view of Hwashang Mahāyana, which has been refuted by the great 'Jam mgon Tsong kha pa through many statements and reasonings in his *Lam rim chen mo* as an overly broad (identification of the) object to be negated³⁴ and which is the unbearable view of nihilism as I have just explicated above. Accordingly, earlier Go bo rab 'byams pa (Bsod nams seng ge alias Go rams pa, 1429–1489)—intoxicated by the poisonous waters of jealousy of the great 'Jam mgon Tsong kha pa's biography—rejected the great 'Jam mgon Tsong kha pa and spoke much ill of him. Thereafter, the two excellent scholars *rje btsun* Chos kyi rgyal mtshan (1469–1544) in *Se ra* and 'Jam dbyangs dga' ba'i blo gros (1429–1503) in 'Bras spungs completed replies (to Go rams pa's) criticism as books and thus put an end (to the

³³ See Hahn 1982: vol. I, 46,17-20 and 47,17-20; Tucci 1934, 307-325; Tucci 1936, 243,6-9.

³⁴ The full term is *dgag bya ngos 'dzin ha cang khyab ches pa*. See Tsong-kha-pa 2002: vol. III, 127-134.

criticism) as without reference.³⁵ Their replies of the criticism were carved in wood-blocks. (Nowadays the prints) are popular in Se ra, 'Bras spungs, Dga' ldan, etc. The compositions of Go rams pa, his heap of faulty explanations, his thirteen or so books, were all collected by the Great Fifth Supreme Victorious One (Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho, 1617–1682) and sealed to the point of invisibility. Although their distribution was not allowed thereafter, later (Sga ba) *bla ma* 'Jam dbyangs rgyal mtshan (alias 'Jam rgyal rin po che, 1870–1940) from Sde dge has assiduously collected the original manuscripts and carved them into woodblocks.³⁶ Without there being a continuous reading transmission, he gave a reading transmission. Without there being a continuous teaching transmission, he gave a teaching transmission. Carrying Go rams pa's faulty explanations on the back, he does as much as he can to spread distrust, wrong ideas and slander regarding 'Jam mgon Tsong kha pa. To such a bad custom he holds as the principle. Once something like this is established, the only result will be that the stream of bad views will flourish and the door to the lower rebirths will be opened. Therefore, it is a hundred times better that such customs are not established than that they are established. This being so, the meaning of the great Indian scriptures has (already) been correctly elucidated. Especially, the view of profound Madhyamaka, (which is) the final intent of the Buddha Bhagavat, (i.e) the stainless system of the Prasaṅgika Madhyamaka of the good tradition of the glorious protector Nāgārjuna as it was excellently elucidated by the glorious Candrakīrti, was really revealed to the great *rje btsun* Tsong kha pa by the protector Mañjuśrīghoṣa. Acting as his spiritual teacher, he instructed him on all the difficult points of the *sūtra* and *tantra*, like a father instructs his son. He granted him the oral transmission together with the (magically) emanated books.³⁷ This good tradition alone unifies the eighty-four thousand *dharma* teachings into one single gradual path without the slightest mistake from the point of view of *sūtra* and *tantra*. It is the only entirely complete essence of the doctrine that can be put into practice. Therefore, concerning (your question about) a school for the fields of knowledge: If you would be able to establish a school for debating Buddhist dialectics for example regarding the *Commentary on Valid Cognition (Pramāṇavārttika of Dharmakīrti)*, the *Perfection (of Wisdom) (Prajñāpāramitā)*, and the Middle Way (Madhyamaka), similar to the continuity of teaching in the three great monastic centers Se

³⁵ See Cabézon and Dargyay 2007, 30; Viehbeck, 17n115, 22f.

³⁶ See Percey 2018: 36–38; Jackson 2003: 58.

³⁷ See Reepo 2015: 36–37.

ra, 'Bras spungs and Dga' ldan, it will definitely be the cause for immense teaching activities as long as the teachings of the *jina* exist, for the highest status and the definite goodness of many living beings, for their liberation and omniscience. There is therefore no doubt that also for the founder (of such a school) the great ultimate goal will be achieved.

I have not formulated this (letter) with a bias for the Dge ldan pa (i.e. Dge lugs pa), but I have formulated it solely from an honest heart out of overwhelming compassion for the many living beings who have lost their way on wrong paths. For this, not only the buddhas of the ten directions are willing to act as witnesses. I can also offer authentic sources, which support the scriptures and arguments, and which are completed as books. Here, however, I do not have the time to write it (all). Therefore, it is important to ask *dge shes rin po che* for the details.

Please rest in the profound mind of the gods!

This *dge bshes rin po che* seems to be *dge bshes rin po che* Ngag dbang rnam rgyal who is mentioned in an undated letter of Pha bong kha sent to a lay follower (*dge bsnyen*) in China named Nya'u tshal mo krang. There, Pha bong kha writes about the *dge bshes* that he has established Tsong kha pa's tradition in the area of that disciple.³⁸ As the above letter reveals, he was also in contact with Liu. Incidentally, his letter to the Chinese lay follower is also characterized by the same bitter polemic as the other letters.

Conclusion

Apparently, Liu Wenhui hoped to enlist Pha bong kha as an advisor and supporter for his efforts to establish a center of scholarship far from Central Tibet that would exist independent of the traditional institutions of monastic education near Lhasa. Without the need for long-term studies in Central Tibet, the traditional ties of East Tibet to Lhasa would be weakened and the prospects for Xikang province as an independent cultural and political entity on the border between Tibet and China would be strengthened. However, this seems to have been only one aspect of his plan. He also envisioned a much broader and less elitist monastic education than that provided by the traditional Dge lugs pa curriculum of the great monastic institutions near Lhasa. Even though Liu seemed to have much sympathy for the Dge lugs teachings, he wanted a curriculum that included socially

³⁸ *Dris lan*, 30a.3–30b.5: de khul du dge bshes rin po che ngag dbang rnam rgyal nas 'jam mgon ring lugs dri ma med pa'i srol bzang btsugs pa/

relevant areas of knowledge and not just higher Buddhist philosophical studies. Moreover, as a politician with a precarious power base in a multi-religious and multi-ethnic area he was ill-advised to follow Pha bong kha in his rigorous opposition to all other religions and Buddhist schools, should his province building project have any chance of success.

Liu's correspondent Pha bong kha, however, was indeed "still basing his activities on the old patron-priest model." Such an attitude had primarily in view the old competition of the various Tibetan Buddhist schools to win powerful patrons. Moreover, his forthright rejection of all the various traditional fields of knowledge except one as ultimately useless, shows that he obviously not only lacked any understanding for Liu's motivation and the difficult political challenge he had to master. In its strict focus on the extra-societal goal of supreme enlightenment, he likewise ignores and devalues all the late Thirteenth Dalai Lama's approaches to establish Tibet as a modern state with precisely marked boundaries.

Because at that time Tibetan Buddhist society was already on the eve of its destruction and Liu himself would nine years later completely switch sides to Mao Zedong's communist ideology, the blind zeal with which Pha bong kha fought the old intra-Buddhist battles seems bizarre and anachronistic. Reading his letters from this perspective, they appear as just another example for the blindness with which at that time still "many environmental events were ignored as presumably irrelevant to the system "Tibetan Buddhist society," and which contributed to the downfall of the Dga' ldan pho brang rule in Tibet.³⁹

Appendix: Pha bong kha's letter from 1940

Dris lan, 35b.1: yang lcags 'brug lor shi khang spyi khyab dpon chen lu'u cun krang la 'bul gnang mdzad pa/ gang nyid kyi thugs pa rtse dang dad gus kyi bka' drin dran pas bstan pa dgon pa gsar 'dzugs kyi skor la lhag bsam zol med kyi zhu lan mdo tsam 'bul snying/ der rig pa'i slob grwa gsar 'dzugs mdzad rgyu bstan pa'i gzhi mar shin tu bka' drin chen mod/ spyir rig gnas che ba lnga zhes sgra rig pa/ gso ba rig pa/ bzo ba rig pa/ gtan tshigs rig pa/ nang don gyi rig pa bcas lnga yin/ rig pa'i chung ba lnga snyan ngag/ sdeb sbyor/ zlos gar/ mngon brjod/ dkar rtsis bcas lnga yin/ rig pa'i bcu po 'di las nang don gyi rig pa ma gtogs gzhan rnam phyi nang thun mong ba'i rig gnas yin pas/ sgra dang snyan ngag sogs ji tsam dar yang tshig gi spros pa tsam las 'gro ba rnam ngan song las drangs te thar pa dang thams cad mkhyen pa'i sgor bkri bar mi nus shing/ sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa la'ang phan pa cung zad kyang mi 'byung/ nang don gyi rig pa ni rgyal ba'i bka' dang de'i

³⁹ Schwieger 2021, 237–238.

dgongs 'grel 'phags yul paN grub kyi gzhung chen tshad ldan dag las byung
 ba rnam yin zhing/ de dag gi dgongs pa len lugs 'phags bod gnyis kar go ba
 gnad du song ma song ci rigs yod pa las/ rgya gar 'phags yul du grub mtha'
 bye brag smra ba/ mdo sde pa/ sems [36a] tsam pa/ dbu ma pa dang bzhi la
 grub mtha' smra ba bzhir grags/ sems tsam pa la'ang lung gi rjes 'brang gyi
 sems tsam pa dang/ rigs pa'i rjes 'brang gi sems tsam pa gnyis/ dbu ma pa
 la'ang rang rgyud pa dang thal 'gyur ba gnyis bcas yod pa las/ mdo sngags/
 lta sgom gang gi thad la'ang 'khrul pa cung zad kyang med pa'i rgyal ba'i
 dgongs pa dri ma med pa ni dpal mgon klu sgrub kyi lugs bzang dpal ldan zla
 ba grags pa'i legs par srol phyas pa'i dbu ma thal 'gyur ba'i lugs bzang kho
 na yin la/ bod gangs can gyi ljongs 'dir yang de 'dra'i grub mtha' smra ba
 bzhi'i so so'i tha snyad ma dar kyang grub mtha' tha dad pa gsang sngags
 rnying ma/ gsar ma sa skya/ bka' brgyud/ shangs pa bka' brgyud/ bo dong/ jo
 nang/ zhwa lu/ dge ldan pa sogs lta sgom spyod gsum gyi rang lugs 'dzin
 tshul mi 'dra ba sna tshogs shig dar zhing/ de dag kun kyang 'phags yul dbu
 ma thal 'gyur ba'i lugs bzang yin khul du rlom zhing khas 'che yang/ snga
 'gyur slob dpon chen po padma 'byung gnas dngos slob dang bcas pa dang/
 sa chen kun dga' snying po/ bka' brgyud kyi mar mi yab sras/ bka' gdams kyi
 jo bo rje yab sras sogs bstan pa'i chu 'go rnam thal 'gyur ba'i lta ba 'khrul ba
 med pa rnyed pa sha stag yin kyang/ rjes su slob brgyud mtha' dag lta ba nor
 te gtan la 'bebs lugs mi 'dra ba sna tshogs smra yang/ snying po bsgom pa na
 ci yang yid la mi [36b] byed par 'jog pa hwa shang mahā yana[i] lta ngan
 nyid rtse gcig tu sems par byed la/ de ltar lta ba'i go ba gnad du ma song bas
 rang lugs la las 'bras dang/ 'khor 'das bcings grol sogs gang yang med par
 smra ba'i chad lta mi bzad pa la stong pa nyid du 'khrul te/ ji skad du dbu ma
 rin chen phreng ba las/ gzhan yang 'di ni log bzung nal/ blun po mkhas pa'i
 nga rgyal can/ spong bas ma rungs bdag nyid can/ mnar med par ni spyi'u
 tshugs 'gro/ zhes gsungs pa ltar dnyal ba mnar med gyi sgo 'byed pa'i lta
 ngan lam du 'khrul nas mi tshe hril por sgom par byed cing/ 'ga' zhig don
 dam stong nyid kyi phyogs tsam yang ma go bar kun rdzob kyi dmigs rnam
 la don dam du 'khrul nas mi tshe hril por rtag lta sgom par byed pa sogs rtag
 chad kyi g.yang sa kho na zab lam du 'khrul ba 'di lta'i skabs 'dir/ lta sgom
 spyod gsum gang gi thad la'ang 'khrul pa'i dri ma cung zad tsam yang med
 pa ni 'jam mgon tsong kha pa'i ring lugs 'di kho na yin la/ sde dge'i gzhung
 chen bcu gsum zhes pa'i bshad pa 'di yang bshad rgyu byams chos dang/ dbu
 ma rigs tshogs/ spyod 'jug sogs rgya gzhung rtsod med rnam yin kyang/
 bshad lugs gzhung chen de dag gi dgongs pa phyin [ci] log tu bkral nas bod
 snga rabs pa'i lta ba/ 'jam mgon tsong kha pa chen pos lam rim chen mor dgag
 bya khyab ches pa zhes lung rigs du mas dgag par mdzad pa'i hwa shang gi
 lta ngan chad lta mi bzad pa gong du smras pa ma thag pa de [37a] bzhin
 rang lugs su 'dzin/ phyogs mtshungs sngar go bo rab 'byams pa zhes 'jam
 mgon tsong kha pa chen po'i mdzad pa rnam thar la phrag dog gi dug chus
 myos te 'jam mgon tsong kha pa chen por dgag pa dang ngan smras mang du
 byas pa/ de rjes se rar je btsun chos kyi rgyal mtshan dang/ 'bras spungs 'jam

dbyangs dga' ba'i blo gros zhes pa'i mkhas mchog rnam gnyis kyis dgag lan po tir longs pa mdzad de dmigs med du tshar bcad/ dgag lan rnam spar du brkos te se 'bras dga' gsum sogs su dar zhing rgyas par yod mus dang/ go rams pa'i ngag rtsom nyes bshad kyis phung po po ti bcu gsum tsam longs pa rnam rgyal mchog lnga pa chen pos gang yod bsdu te dmigs med du rgyas btabs mdzad cing/ phyin chad dar mi chog pa mdzad kyang/ phyis su sde dge'i bla ma 'jam dbyangs rgyal mtshan zhes pas ma dpe rtsol bas bsdu te spar du brkos/ lung rgyun med bzhin du lung byas/ khrid rgyun med bzhin du khrid byas/ go rams pa'i nyes bshad rgyab tu khyer te 'jam mgon tsong kha pa la ma dad/ log rtog/ skur 'debs spel gang thub byed pa de 'dra'i lugs ngan gtso bor 'dzin pa bcas 'di dag btsugs na lta ngan gyi rgyun 'phel te ngan song gi sgo 'byed pa kho nar 'gyur bas de dag gi srol ka btsugs pa las ma btsugs pa brgya 'gyur gyis legs/ des na rgya gzhung chen mo rnam kyis dgongs pa phyin ci ma log par bkral zhing/ lhag par zab mo dbu ma'i lta ba sangs rgyas [37b] bcom ldan 'das kyis dgongs pa mthar thug/ mgon po klu sgrub kyis lugs bzang dpal ldan zla bas legs par srol phyed bar mdzad pa'i dbu ma thal 'gyur ba'i lugs dri ma med pa rje btsun tsong kha pa chen por mgon po 'jam dpal dbyangs kyis dngos su zhal bstan/ bla ma mdzad nas mdo snags kyis dka' gnad mtha' dag pha yis bur bzhin 'doms par mdzad/ snyan brgyud sprul pa'i glegs bam dang bcas pa stsal ba'i lugs bzang 'di kho na mdo snags gang gi thad nas kyang 'khrul pa'i dri ma cung zad kyang med par chos phung brgyad khri bzhi stong lam gyi rim pa gcig tu bsdu te nyams len du 'khyer shes pa'i bstan pa yongs rdzogs kyis snying po gcig pu yin pas/ des na de dag rig gnas slob grwa yang grwa sa chen po se 'bras dga' gsum gyi slob rgyun ltar gyi tshad ma rnam 'grel/ phar phyin/ dbu ma sogs mtshan nyid kyis rtsod grwa zhid 'dzugs gnang mdzad thub na bstan pa'i bya ba rlabs po che ji srid rgyal bstan nam gnas bar skye 'gro mang po'i mngon mtho dang/ nges legs thar pa dang thams cad mkhyen pa'i rgyur 'gro nges kyis 'dzugs pa po la'ang gtan gyi 'dun ma rlabs po che 'grub par gdon mi za/ di dag ngos kyis dge ldan pa'i phyogs lung phyogs zhen byas te smras pa min par 'gro ba mang po lam log lam gol du shor ba la snying brtse bzod med kyis rang bzhin drang po kho nar smras pa phyogs bcu'i sangs rgyas rnam dpang por bzhugs chog pa ma zad/ lung rigs kyis rgyab rten gyi khungs pu tir longs pa zhu rgyu yod kyang [38a] 'dir 'brir ma lang pas/ zhib par dge shes rin po cher bka' 'dri mdzad gnang gnad che ba bcas de lugs lha dgongs zab mor bsti ba mkhyen//

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The History of the Mountain Teachings: 13th century Practice Lineages at rTsib ri*

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During the 13th century, the sacred mountain of rTsib ri and its adjacent areas, such as Ding ri, were home to a lively religious community. Indeed, solitary hermits chose the mountain's caves for prolonged retreats, local masters of fame attracted disciples from afar, and new monasteries and hermitages were constructed in the surroundings. Dan Martin has labelled Ding ri “in the decades around the year 1100 as something like what would nowadays be termed a ‘culture contact zone’”, and it seems that a century later it was still a place of exchange with South Asia, where a composite religious environment thrived.¹

Among the most famous locally born masters was Yang dgon pa rGyal mtshan dpal bzang po (1213–1258), a native of the village of lHa gdong, located west of rTsib ri, and leader of this village's temple at age eleven. Also called lHa gdong pa, this teacher was well-known among the local faithful already as a youth, and became one of the most revered and influential masters of his time. In particular, he is credited with compiling a comprehensive set of practice instructions for his pupils who engaged in extended mountain retreats on the rTsib ri massif, called the *Mountain Teachings* (*Ri chos*). The text studied here, the *History of How the Mountain Teachings Were Transmitted* (*Ri chos brgyud tshul gyi lo rgyus*), hereafter *History of the Mountain Teachings*,

* It is with gratitude and friendship that I dedicate the following to Dan. Our exchanges since the early years of my academic studies have not only been extremely informative and helpful in many ways, but also a source of enjoyment. Thank you for sharing with me and all of us so much of your research and ideas!

¹ See Martin 2008. Later than Pha dam pa Sangs rgyas, masters still travelled to Ding ri from South Asia to teach to their Tibetan pupils. For example, at the beginning of the 13th c. the *mahāpaṇḍita* Vibhūticandra reached the area via sKyid grong to teach the Kālacakra at the invitation of Ko brag pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan (1170–1249); according to Tibetan tradition, the Indian master also eventually requested teachings from Ko brag pa; see Stearns 1996: 141–145. I heartily thank Cyrus Stearns and Jörg Heimbel for their comments on an earlier version of this paper.

provides the background from which these teachings emerged, detailing the lineages and textual transmissions received by Yang dgon pa. It shows how he was trained in all the main practice traditions of his time, out of which he modeled his unique approach.



Fig. 1 — Ding ri seen from rTsi ri mountain (photo M. Sernesi, 2016).

Yang dgon pa's legacy was later claimed by 'Ba' ra ba rGyal mtshan dpal bzang po (1310–1391), who was recognized as his rebirth.² This master transmitted the teachings of Yang dgon pa, who was then retrospectively considered a 'Brug pa bKa' brgyud, belonging to the transmission lineage set forth by 'Ba' ra ba.³ However, the local landscape during the 13th century was eclectic, and individual masters trained in a number of distinct practices, without necessarily identifying with a given school affiliation. This is true for Yang dgon

² He was a native of 'Ba' ra brag in the Shangs valley, where he later established the monastery of Don grub sdings, which became the home monastery of the lineage and the seat of the 'Ba' ra ba *sprul skus*. Trained at Sa skya, he took his novice vows at Bo dong E, and counted among his teachers the 3rd Karma pa Rang 'byung rdo rje (1284–1339), Bu ston Rin chen grub (1290–1364), and Sa skya Bla ma dam pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan (1312–1375). He travelled to rTsi ri to receive teachings from Zur phug pa gZhon nu rin chen dpal bzang po, a later holder of Yang dgon pa's teachings (see below) and took full ordination from him. For this master and his lineage, see Erschbamer 2017.

³ See *'Ba' ra ba gser phreng*, in which Yang dgon pa follows rGod tshang pa mGon po rdo rje (1189–1258). For this collection, see Ehrhard 2009.

pa as well, who had a dozen teachers of different traditions. Four were his most important masters, both for the teachings that they transmitted, as recorded in the *History of the Mountain Teachings*, and for the role that they are granted in Yang dgon pa's life story the *Great Mirror*.⁴ These are Ko brag pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan (1170–1249) and rGod tshang pa mGon po rdo rje (1189–1258), who were his two main masters, and 'Bri gung sPyan snga Grags pa 'byung gnas (1175–1255) and Sa skya Paṇḍita Kun dga' rgyal mtshan (1182–1251), who were renowned religious leaders of the time, and who instructed thoroughly Yang dgon pa. These four teachers transmitted to him the core of the practice transmissions that were integrated into the *Mountain Teachings*. Moreover, according to the *Great Mirror*: “It is said that Bla ma Zhang Rin po che and sPyan snga ba (i.e., Yang dgon pa) were master and pupil for many lifetimes, and in this [lifetime] as well [Yang dgon pa] had the same devotion for him than that for a root-teacher, and thus also performed regularly the [prescribed] memorial services for him.”⁵ Indeed, the teaching transmissions of the Tshal pa bKa' brgyud, as well as a visionary transmission received in a dream directly from Bla ma Zhang g.Yu brag pa (1123–1193) are recorded in the *History of the Mountain Teachings*.

Therefore, Yang dgon pa received bKa' brgyud and Sa skya esoteric instructions, in both their most common “mainstream” formulations, and as transmitted in some lesser-known lineages. The master was also trained in several other teaching traditions and received instructions from local teachers. By detailing all the distinct textual traditions and related practice transmissions that Yang dgon pa combined in his creative synthesis, the *History of the Mountain Teachings* provides a precious insight into the religious life of rTsig ri hermits in the 13th century.

2. Mountain Teachings

“Mountain teachings” (*ri chos*) is a general term to indicate teachings dedicated to *ri pa*, or mountain dwellers, individuals who engage in extended retreats on the mountains. The most famous teachings of this kind are ascribed to Karma chags med (1613–1678), but the tradition is much older. In fact, the source translated below provides evidence that Yang dgon pa received and integrated into his teaching system instructions for mountain retreats attributed to Phag mo gru pa rDo rje rgyal po (1110–1170) and 'Bri gung 'Jig rten mgon po (1143–1217), called

⁴ See Rin chen ldan, *Me long chen mo*, trans. Guarisco 2015, and below.

⁵ Rin chen ldan, *Me long chen mo*, p. 85: *bla ma zhang rin po che dang spyan snga ba nyid skye ba mang po'i dpon slob yin gsung/ da lta'ang rtsa ba'i bla ma dang mos gus mnyam par yod pas/ dus mchod kyang ma chag pa mdzad/*.

Large and Small Vases of Nectar of the Mountain Teachings (*Ri chos bdud rtsi bum pa che chung*) and *Golden Pouch of the Mountain Teachings* (*Ri chos gser khug ma*).⁶ The cycle of teachings compiled by Yang dgon pa, however, is much wider in scope, comprising preliminary practices, guidance on choosing the right place for retreat, how to perform daily rituals, step-by-step meditation instructions of the tantric generation and completion stages, teachings on how to manipulate the inner energies of the body through bodily postures, breath control, and the visualization of mantra syllables, as well as clarifications on how to recognize signs of progress and how to overcome the most common obstacles during the retreat.

The extant literature on the *Mountain Teachings* of Yang dgon pa consists mainly of two manuscript collections preserved in Bhutan.⁷ The teaching cycle is centred on the main practice manual, called *Gleaming Jewel, The Source of Qualities of the Mountain Teachings* (*Ri chos yon tan kun 'byung ba rin po che 'bar ba*), which was composed by Yang dgon pa himself, and which covers all the main topics.⁸ The *Gleaming Jewel* summarizes not only the path, but also the practical instructions for conducting a solitary retreat. Its seven sections deal with:

- (1) the characteristics of the practitioners (*gang gis nyams su blangs pa gang zag gi mtshan nyid*);
- (2) the characteristics of the places where to practice (*gang du nyams su blangs pa gnas kyi mtshan nyid*);
- (3) the stages of the path, [or] how to practice (*ji ltar nyams su blangs pa lam gyi rin pa*);
- (4) teachings on the impediments to the path, [or how] to dispel hindrances to meditative absorption (*lam de la bar chad kyi chos bsam gtan gyi gegs gsal ba*);
- (5) enhancing the practice, [or how] to quickly generate the qualities of the path (*lam de la yon tan myur du skye ba bogs dbyungs pa*);
- (6) teachings on the demarcations of the path and on how to generate heat and signs (*lam gyi sa mtshams dang drod rtags skye tshul bstan pa*);
- (7) teachings on the fruit at the end of the path (*lam de mthar phyin pa'i 'bras bu bstan pa*).

⁶ See rDo rje rgyal po, *gSung 'bum*, vol. 7, 599–611; 'Jig rten gsum mgon, *bKa' 'bum*, vol. 7, pp. 36–158. The text also states that Yang dgon pa received *ri chos* teachings from one unidentified Bar 'brog Me lung pa.

⁷ See *Yang dgon pa'i gsung 'bum I* (manuscript from Pha jo ldings monastery), and *Yang dgon pa'i gsung 'bum II* (manuscript from rTa mgo monastery). An incomplete cursive manuscript has been published as *The Collected Works (gSun-'bum) of Yang-dgon-pa rGyal-mtshan-dpal*, Kargyud Sungrab Nyamso Khang, Darjeeling, 1973 (TBRC W23790). This collection includes only a few works and is missing the *History of the Mountain Teachings*. Also, *Yang dgon pa'i gsung 'bum III* does not include this text.

⁸ See *Yang dgon pa'i gsung 'bum I*, vol. 1, pp. 447–570; *Yang dgon pa'i gsung 'bum II*, vol. 1, pp. 443–548.

At the beginning, the text stresses the importance of renunciation and of receiving the initiations (section 1), and then instructs on how to choose a fitting place in the wilderness for a retreat, which has the appropriate geomantic characteristics (section 2). The third section constitutes the main body of the text, and deals with the preliminaries, the generation stage, and the completion stage: the latter is differentiated into practice with signs—i.e., the generation of the inner heat (*gtum mo*), the practice of radiance (*'od gsal*), illusion (*sgyu ma*), dream (*rmi lam*), transference (*'pho ba*), and *guruyoga*—and practice without signs, namely the *Great Seal* (*phyag rgya chen po*). These teachings are followed by instructions on the “practice” (*spyod pa, cārya*) and on the vows. Moreover, teachings on dispelling hindrances (*gegs sel*) were a specialty of Ko brag pa and are integrated into the system (section 4), paired with the instructions on how to enhance the practice (*bogs dbyung*), that is to say, how to improve several specific aspects of it, such as visualization, recitation, concentration, etc. (section 5). Finally, there are overviews of the stages of the path (section 6) and of the final attainments (section 7).

The *Mountain Teachings* textual collections comprise a number of explanatory works on the *Gleaming Jewel*, codified teachings on specific topics, as well as more informal and punctual instructions and songs. Some of these were composed by Yang dgon pa, but many were in fact written down by his pupils, who also in turn composed explanations, indexes, and further training texts. Yang dgon pa's attendant and principal pupil was called Rin chen ldan, and he may be regarded as the individual responsible for the first compilation of the *Mountain Teachings* textual corpus. Born in Ding ri, according to the *Blue Annals* he was eleven years senior to his teacher (b. 1202), whom he encountered for the first time as a five-year old child. He attended on the master for thirty-five years (that is 1223–1258, from Yang dgon pa's eleventh to his forty-sixth year, when he died) and in this capacity he accompanied him and received the same teaching transmissions as did Yang dgon pa.⁹ He is credited with writing the main extant hagiography of his teacher, the *Great Mirror* (*Me long chen mo*), which is a long verse eulogy with a prose commentary. This source is organized

⁹ The only extant life story of Rin chen ldan is brief and lacks detail. See *Thugs sras spyan mnga'* [=snga] *rin chen ldan gyi rnam par thar pa rin chen mgul brgyan*, in *'Ba' ra ba gser phreng*, vol. 1. It doesn't provide the dates nor the life span of the master, and states that he received teachings from Yang dgon pa and from the latter's four main teachers, namely Ko brag pa, rGod tshang pa, Sa skya Paṇḍita, and 'Bri gung sPyan snga ba [Grag pa 'byung gnas] (*ibid.*, p. 8). This hagiography is attributed to one La stod pa, whom I believe to be Shes rab mgon (see below). The *Blue Annals* merely summarize this source, but provide a birth date of *chu pho kyi*, i.e., 1202; see Roerich 1949: 691–692. See also Dan Martin's biographical sketch of this master in *The Treasury of Lives*.

topically around the verses of praise, and thus groups together related information, instead of offering a chronologically arranged account of the life of the master.¹⁰

Rin chen Idan also recorded, edited, and collected the teachings received. In particular, he wrote a register (*dkar chag*) in which he organized Yang dgon pa's teachings into four cycles and their respective ornaments, and listed for each the relevant texts:¹¹

- I. *The Three Cycles of Mountain Teachings ornamented by the Oral Instructions (ri chos bskor gsum zhal gdams kyis brgyan pa)*
- II. *The Practical Guidance on the Path ornamented by Dispelling Hindrances (lam dmar khrid gegs sel gyis brgyan pa)*
- III. *The Miscellanea, ornamented by the Fragments (sna tshogs kyis sde tshan sil bus brgyan pa)*
- IV. *The Collected Songs ornamented by their Register ('gur [=mgur] 'bum dkar chag gis brgyan)*

The first, which are the *Mountain Teachings* proper, are in turn constituted into three cycles of teachings, for each of which there is a practice manual:

- I.1. *Gleaming Jewel, The Source of Qualities of the Mountain Teachings (Ri chos yon tan kun 'byung ba rin po che 'bar ba)*. This is expanded ("ornamented") by four sets of instructions. These are the supplements (*lhan thabs*), the religious practices (*chos spyod*), the so-called *Six Mothers (Ma drug)*, as well as the profound instructions (*zab khrid*).¹² The latter, also called the "three instructions" (*khrid gsum*), in fact comprise more than three sets of teachings, including the *Six Teachings of Nāropa (Nā ro chos drug)*, instructions on the *Co-emergent Yoga of the Great Seal (Phyag rgya chen po lhan cig skyes sbyor)*, the *Four Yogas of the Great Seal (rNal 'byor bzhi'i rim pa)*, the *Secret Practice (gSang spyod)* and *Dispelling Obstacles (Gegs sel)*.
- I.2. *Hidden Explanation of the Vajra Body (rDo rje lus kyis sbas bshad)*.
- I.3. *Deliverance from the Perilous Straits of the Bardo (Bar do gnad kyis 'phrang sgrol)*.

Hence, these "three cycles of instructions" (*zhal gdams skor gsum*) or "three cycles of mountain teachings" (*ri chos skor gsum*) include the three most important texts of instruction and supplementary explana-

¹⁰ See Rin chen Idan, *Me long chen mo*, trans. Guarisco 2015.

¹¹ Rin chen Idan, *Ri chos kyis dkar chag*. For a study of this text, an overview of the *Mountain Teachings* textual materials, and the compositional profiles of the principal texts of instruction, see Sernesi 2019.

¹² The *Six Mothers* are visionary teachings written down by Rin chen Idan; see *Yang dgon pa'i gsung 'bum I*, vol. 2, pp. 231–285, and below.

tions taught by Yang dgon pa: *Gleaming Jewel*, the actual “manual” for hermitic practice, *Hidden Explanation of the Vajra Body*, a lengthy exposition of the inner bodily energies (“channels, winds and drops”, *rtsa lung byang chub sems*), and *Deliverance from the Perilous Straits of the Bardo* (*Bar do 'phrang sgröl*), a complete practice tradition for the intermediate state.¹³ All three of these compilations constitute original syntheses that harmonize and organize for teaching purposes the distinct strands of teachings received by Yang dgon pa.

The *Hidden Explanation of the Vajra Body* (*rDo rje lus kyi sbas bshad*) sets out the explanation of the inner bodily energies and pathways, with the goal of reconciling different systems as expounded in the *tantras* and related commentaries and practice instructions. Yang dgon pa claims to rely on personal experience (having “seen” the *vajra* body while practicing the path of means), and quotes selectively the scriptures to support the treatise’s overview. In the colophon of the text Yang dgon pa praises the teachings received from 'Bri gung rin chen, INga rig pañ chen (i.e., Sa skya Pañḍita), the Lord of the Yogins named [rGod tshang pa mGon po] rdo rje, and the “unwavering Victory Banner who perfected Merit” (Ko brag pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan, i.e., Merit Victory Banner).¹⁴ In fact, it has been noted that two bKa' brgyud works that foreshadow Yang dgon pa’s are *rDo rje lus kyi gnas lugs* by Phag mo gru pa and *Tshangs par spyod pa thig le'i khrid* by 'Jig rten mgon po, but that the title echoes instructions on the same topic by Sa skya Pañḍita named *Hidden Explanation of the Path* (*Lam sbas bshad*).¹⁵ Not only were Yang dgon pa’s sources eclectic, but his treatise influenced both bKa' brgyud and Sa skya later treatments of the *vajra* body. Indeed, while its influence on Rang 'byung rdo rje’s *Profound Inner Principles* (*Zab mo nang gi don*) is noticeable, the *Hidden Explanation of the Vajra Body* is quoted profusely in Tshar chen Blo gsal rgya mtsho (1502–1566)’s *Explanation of the Profound Body Mañḍala* (*Zab mo lus dkyil gyi rnam par bshad pa*), which remained a Sa skya reference work on the topic. This master’s disciple 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse'i dbang phyug (1524–1568) recognized the role of Yang dgon pa in the transmission lineage of the *Path and Fruit* (*Lam 'bras*) teachings, listing him among the disciples of Sa skya Pañḍita (as the disciple “who

¹³ *Hidden Explanation of the Vajra Body* is studied in Blythe Miller 2013 and translated in Guarisco 2015. For *Deliverance from the Perilous Straits of the Bardo*, see Cuevas 2003: 56–57.

¹⁴ See text and translation of the passage in Blythe Miller 2013: 52–53. She notes that in an interlinear note from a modern edition of the text (Beijing, Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1991), 'Bri gung rin po che is identified as 'Bri gung gCung rDo rje grags pa (1210–1278), the 5th abbot of 'Bri gung.

¹⁵ Blythe Miller 2013: 97–99, 142–145. Sa skya Pañḍita is quoted three times in the work; see trans. Guarisco 2015: 247, 257, 276. Yang dgon pa received the teachings of the *Hidden Explanation of the Path* from Sa skya Pañḍita; see below.

upheld the transmission of practice”) in his history of the tradition titled *Expansion of the Great Secret Doctrine* (*gSang chen bstan pa rgyas byed*).¹⁶

Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse'i dbang phyug, following his teacher Tshar chen Blo gsal rgya mtsho, also relied on Yang dgon pa's *Deliverance from the Perilous Straits of the Bardo* (*Bar do 'phrang sgrol*) in the presentation of the intermediate state in the context of the *Path and Fruit's* Explication for Disciples (*slob bshad*).¹⁷ According to the *History of the Deliverance from the Perilous Straits of the Bardo* (*Bar do 'phrang sgrol gyi lo rgyus*) of the *Mountain Teachings*, these instructions summarize various strands of presentation of the intermediate state. The core of the teachings is the *Response to the Sisters of Long Life* (*Tshe ring ma'i zhus len*), the famous exchange between the goddesses and Mi la ras pa; the Five Sisters of Long Life also appeared directly to Yang dgon pa (see *History of the Mountain Teachings*, paragraph 13 in the translation below). But the *History of the Deliverance from the Perilous Straits of the Bardo* also mentions other traditions, such as those of Bla ma Zhang g.Yu brag pa, of the Shangs pa bKa' brgyud lineage, and of mNga' bdag N[/M]yang ral [Nyi ma 'od zer (1124–1192)]. Among these:

Within the instructions of the Path with the Fruit of the Lord of Yogins Virūpa there are also many points instructing on the very profound instructions on the intermediate state. [In particular,] there are also the profound points called *Bar do snyan brgyud*, *Bar do mkha' spyod*, and *Bar do mngon sum* by Jo mo lha rje ma [i.e. Ma gcig Zh[w]a ma (1062–1149)].¹⁸

¹⁶ For Rang byung rdo rje's *Profound Inner Principles*, see Callahan 2014. For Tshar chen's *Explanation of the Profound Body Maṇḍala that Makes the Lotus Hearts of the Fortunate Blossom* (*Zab mo lus dkyil gyi rnam par bshad pa skal bzang snying gi pad mo bzhad pa*) “the definitive exposition for the Sakya tradition” which “incorporated large sections of Yangönpa's text into his own,” see Stearns 2000: 25, n. 36. For the reference from the *Expansion of the Great Secret Doctrine*, see the translation of the text in Stearns 2006: 239.

¹⁷ See *Notes on the Outer Creation Stage* (*Phyi bskyed rim gyi zin bris*), trans. Stearns 2006: 523. The other authoritative source mentioned in the text is a treatise by g.Yar sbu ba ma that is lost; see *ibid.*: 682, n. 851.

¹⁸ See *Bar do 'phrang sgrol gyi lo rgyus tshe rings ma'i zhus len*, in *Yang dgon pa'i gsung 'bum I*, vol. 2, pp. 531–549: *rnal 'byor gyi dbang phyug bir ba pa'i lam 'bras bu dang bcas pa'i gdams ngag nas / bar do'i gdams ngag shin tu zab par gsungs pa'i gnad kyang mang du yod / jo mo lha rje ma'i bar do snyan brgyud bar do mkha' spyod dang / bar do mngon sum ma zhes bya ba / gnad zab pa rnams kyang yod de /* (p. 548). See also Stearns 2001: 241–242, n. 159, who states that Ma gcig Zh[w]a ma's texts on the intermediate state do not seem to have survived. The *History of the Deliverance from the Perilous Straits of the Bardo* (p. 548) also mentions three other teaching traditions, ascribed to one paṇḍita mNgon shes can, one b'Tsun mo can, and one dByar ston dBu ma pa respectively (unidentified). For the Shangs pa bKa' brgyud tradition, see Kapstein

These are no doubt the instructions on the intermediate state by Ma gcig Zh[w]a ma that Yang dgon pa received from Ko brag pa, which are mentioned in the *History of the Mountain Teachings* (paragraph 3 in the translation below). Hence, Yang dgon pa's synthesis drew from all the main teaching traditions on the *bar do* known at the time, and remained an important reference text at least until the 16th century.

This overview shows how all three of Yang dgon pa's main treatises that, according to Rin chen Idan, constitute the core of the *Mountain Teachings* draw from disparate teaching traditions that Yang dgon pa had received, and combine them to present comprehensive and structured expositions which had long lasting renown. It may be noted that Yang dgon pa's contemporary O[/U] rgyan pa Rin chen dpal (1230–1309), who was also a prominent pupil of rGod tshang pa mGon po rdo rje, promulgated his own teaching tradition, which, according to his hagiographies, he had received directly from Vajrayoginī. These tantric instructions, known as *Service and Attainment of the Three Vajras* (*rDo rje gsum gyi bsnyen sgrub*), were also popular among rTsit ri hermits in the 14th century, and were later considered one of the “eight great charriots” or “practice lineages” (*sgrub brgyud shing rta chen po brgyad*).¹⁹ Therefore, it seems that, at that time, syntheses of eclectic materials that offered complete sets of teachings for advanced tantric practice received good reception and spread rapidly among the religious communities of Western Tibet.

3. The History of the Mountain Teachings

The *History of the Mountain Teachings* is a brief text detailing the early transmission of Yang dgon pa's teachings for hermits.²⁰ The text does not have a narrative character and does not provide any sketch of the life of the teachers of the lineage, nor does it provide any date or other

1980, and for the so-called *Six Yogas of Niguma*, including the *Intermediate State*, see Harding 2010. The instructions of Mi la ras pa to the Five Sisters of Long Life are recorded in chapter 30 of the *Collected Songs* (*mGur 'bum*) of Mi la ras pa in the redaction by gTsang smyon Heruka (1452–1507) and are lifted from the previous hagiographic tradition; see Stagg (trans.) 2016: 349–375; see also van Tuyl 1975, Tiso 2019.

¹⁹ For the life of O rgyan pa, see Li 2011. Note that both bSod nams 'od zer and Zla ba seng ge, two important disciples of O rgyan pa, also figure among Zur phug pa Rin chen dpal bzang's disciples; see Sernesi forthcoming. The “eight great charriots” were formulated by 'Phreng bo gter ston Shes rab 'od zer (Prajñāraśmi) (1517–1584) and then also treated in detail by 'Jam mgon Kong sprul Blo gros mtha' yas (1813–1899) in his *Treasury of Knowledge* (*Shes bya mdzod*). They also constitute the organizational principle of the *Treasury of Instructions* (*gDams ngag mdzod*). See Kapstein 1996; 2007; Deroche 2009; Ngawang Zangpo (trans.) 2010: 321–375; Harding (trans.) 2007; Barron (trans.) 2013.

²⁰ The work is listed as entry no. 73 in Martin 2020: 87.

chronological data. Instead, it accounts for multiple transmission lineages, recorded from their alleged origin to the text's compiler, and thereby it reads as an early example of a "record of teachings received" (*gsan yig*). In fact, in the colophon it is characterized as a "short writing on the way the *Mountain Teachings* were transmitted and on the way the instructions were collected," pointing at the process of formation of the textual corpus of the *Mountain Teachings*.

The work is divided in two distinct sections: the first part details the teaching lineages received by Yang dgon pa that were combined into the *Mountain Teachings*.²¹ The list of masters provided therein closely mirrors the information about Yang dgon pa's religious training that is related in his biography *Great Mirror* compiled by the attendant Rin chen Idan. However, in inventoring and tracing back the teaching lineages that Yang dgon pa received from each master, the *History of the Mountain Teachings* greatly enriches the picture, providing an overview of the "practice lineages" (*sgrub brgyud*) diffused in the rTsi ri region during the early 13th century. These include esoteric teachings of the 'Bri gung pa, 'Brug pa bKa' brgyud pa, and Sa skya pa, major cycles of instructions such as the *Path and Fruit* (*Lam 'bras*) in the tradition of Ma gcig Zh[w]a ma, prominent local practice traditions, some rDzogs chen teachings, and other lesser-known cycles of instruction. According to this account, Yang dgon pa "relied on eleven teachers" (*bla ma bcu gcig brten pa'o*) in all, although the text mentions in fact thirteen names. Moreover, Yang dgon pa received direct instructions in dreams and visions from deities (*yi dam*), *dākinīs*, and from Bla ma Zhang g.Yu brag pa (1122–1193). Topics (*gnad*) from all the teachings received and practiced were then skillfully combined in the instructions for mountain hermits.

The second section of the *History of the Mountain Teachings* is titled "how [the teachings] were transmitted from the venerable teacher to me" (*chos rje nas bdag la brgyud tshul ni*), and recounts the transmission lineages of the *Mountain Teachings* during three generations after Yang dgon pa. Indeed, the author of this text is Shes rab mgon, a later holder of the teachings who, according to his own account, received the instructions from the wider community of rTsi ri hermits, made of disciples of disciples of Yang dgon pa. Therefore, this section of the *History of the Mountain Teachings* provides a picture of the religious community on the sacred mountain at the end of the 13th/beginning of

²¹ Note that this first part may have been lifted from a lost source known as *Ri chos 'byung khungs* attributed to sPyan snga Rin chen Idan; see Martin 2020: 88, entry no. 74. According to a later register of the *Collected Works* of Yang dgon pa, it also existed a "record of teachings received" (*gsan yig*) of the master, now lost as an independent text. See *Chos rje yang dgon pa'i bka' bum gyi dkar chag*, in *Yang dgon pa'i gsung 'bum III*, vol. 2, p. 556.

the 14th century.²² 'Gos lo tsā ba gZhon nu dpal (1392–1481), in the *Blue Annals*, includes a short biographical note of Shes rab mgon in which he is said to be a native of lHa gdong, that is the same location west of rTsib ri in which Yang dgon pa was born. He studied at first in his birthplace with a local disciple of Yang dgon pa and of O rgyan pa Rin chen dpal called rGyal mtshan 'bum. At age nineteen he took full ordination in the presence of the master Zur phug pa Rin chen dpal bzang (1263–1330)—who was a disciple of Yang dgon pa and of his attendant Rin chen ldan—who is best known as the teacher of 'Ba' ra ba rGyal mtshan dpal bzang po. After training with masters of the hermitic community residing on rTsib ri mountain, he spent there seven years of solitary retreat. Afterwards, he travelled to Central Tibet (dBus) where he received teachings from the 3rd Karma pa Rang 'byung rdo rje (1284–1339) and from Rig 'dzin gZhon nu rgyal po (Kumārārāja) (1266–1343), that is to say the main teacher of Klong chen Rab 'byams pa (1308–1364).²³

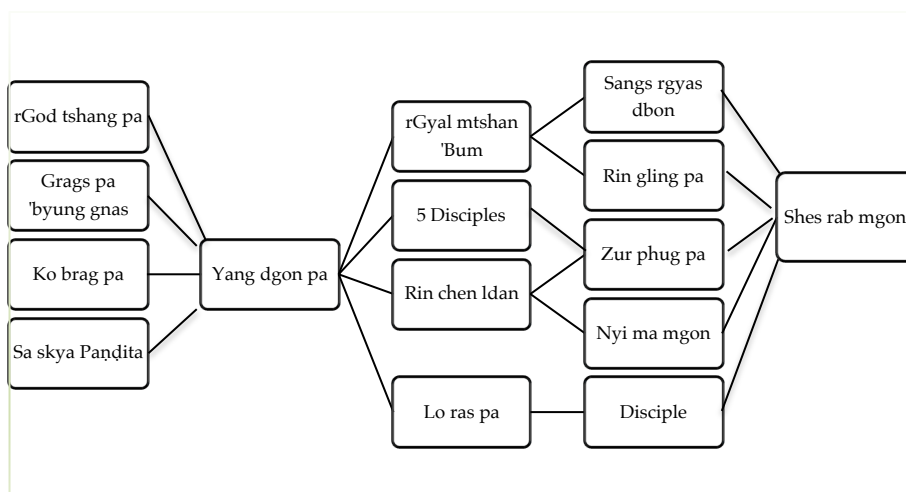


Fig. 2 — Simplified Transmission Lineage of the Mountain Teachings to Shes rab mgon

The *Blue Annals* mention that he composed biographies of bKa' brgyud teachers, and in fact he is the compiler of the only extant hagiography of the master Ko brag pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan (1170–1249), which he signed as La stod pa Shes rab mgon.²⁴ It is likely that he was also the

²² The hermitic community described in this second section of the text is studied more in detail in Sernesi forthcoming.

²³ See Roerich 1949: 695–696. 'Gos lo tsā ba mentions a full-fledged life story of Shes rab mgon which has not yet surfaced.

²⁴ See van der Kuyp 1994: 185–186; Stearns 2000: 23, n. 16.

compiler of a brief life story of Rin chen ldan included in the *'Ba' ra ba gser phreng*, set in writing by one La stod pa, on the basis of extant written narratives and of the oral accounts by Zur phug pa and Grub thob Nyi ma mgon (both pupils of Rin chen ldan and teachers of Shes rab mgon) (see fig. 2).²⁵

According to the account of the *History of the Mountain Teachings*, Shes rab mgon sought out the numerous masters who held the *Mountain Teachings*. They resided at monasteries and hermitages on and around rTsis ri mountain, and most of them had studied with direct disciples of Yang dgon pa. Among those who can be located in the area, are Bla ma lHa sdings pa (lHa [g/]sding[s] being an hermitage on rTsis ri established by Yang dgon pa), the lead chanter (*dbu mdzad*) of lHa gdong pa called Slob dpon Shes rab dar, and Bla ma Dar ma bzang po and Bla ma Rin chen mgon po residents of Zur phug: they are both listed as respectively the second and third Zur phug pa (i.e., head of the homonymous hermitage) among the disciples of the "first" Zur phug pa Rin chen dpal bzang in the latter's biography.²⁶ Therefore, Shes rab mgon presents himself as an authorized and reliable source for the history of the teachings, having purposefully gathered information from the living tradition. The work was written down for students and a few mountain dwellers (*ri pa*) at Sham po gang: if this were the Yar lha Sham po mountain in Yar lungs, this would attest to an early diffusion of Yang dgon pa's instructions in Central Tibet (dBus), among new, far away communities of mountain hermits.

4. Main Practice Lineages

The *History of the Mountain Teachings* is edited and translated below and divided in distinct numbered paragraphs for convenience. In the following remarks I refer to the text employing these paragraphs' numbers in square brackets.

The first master mentioned in the text is 'Bri gung spyān snga Grags pa 'byung gnas, from whom Yang dgon pa received "all the instructions of the Dwags po bKa' brgyud, starting from the *Six Teachings of Nāropa* and so forth" [2]. The *Great Mirror* maintains that the teaching transmission occurred over a year and entailed the complete 'Bri gung instructions, without mentioning any specific topic except for physical yogic exercises (*'khrul 'khor, yantra*).²⁷ In a further

²⁵ *Thugs sras spyān mnga' [=snga] rin chen ldan gyi rnam par thar pa rin chen mgul brgyan*, in *'Ba' ra ba gser phreng*, vol. 1, p. 12: /lo rgyus 'ga' re yi ge la 'dug pa dang/ dpal zur phug pa dang/ grub thob nyi ma mgon gyi zhal nas byon pa la sogs kyang dgrigs [= 'grigs] nas/ la stod pas zur tsam 'di yi ger bkod pa lags so/.

²⁶ For these hermitages and these masters, see Sernesi forthcoming.

²⁷ See Rin chen ldan, *Me long chen mo*, pp. 93–101; trans. Guarisco 2015: 185–191.

paragraph of the *History of the Mountain Teachings* [21] the teachings received from Grags pa 'byung gnas are listed in greater detail. Emphasized are the “profound teachings” (*zab chos*) or “profound instructions” (*zab khrid*) of 'Jig rten mgon po (1143–1217), alongside the *Fivefold [Teachings on the Great Seal] (lNga ldan)* and the *Golden Pouch of the Mountain Teachings (Ri chos gser khug ma)*: as mentioned above, the latter is a short composition providing instructions to hermits, which is a direct precursor of Yang dgon pa's manual.²⁸

Also detailed is the information about the instructions that Yang dgon pa received from rGod tshang pa mGon po rdo rje, with whom he developed a deep and long-lasting relationship. According to the *Great Mirror*, Yang dgon pa met this teacher young, before his ordination at age twenty-two, while rGod tshang pa was practising at rGod tshang (“The Vulture Nest”), the hermitage on rTsib ri mountain from which the teacher eventually took his name.²⁹ The main teaching transmission occurred some time later at sTeng gro, a monastery founded by mGon po rdo rje in the rGyal nor area north of rTsib ri. According to the *Great Mirror*, on that occasion Yang dgon pa received instructions on the *Path of Means* and on the *Five Rivets for Clearing Obstacles (Gegs sel gzer lnga)*.³⁰ In the *History of the Mountain Teachings*, the *Five Rivets* are listed among the instructions that Yang dgon pa received before his ordination [18], while the teachings received from rGod tshang pa are thoroughly listed separately [5, 9, 19]. These include the most representative instructions of rGod tshang pa's teacher gTsang pa rGya ras Ye shes rdo rje (1161–1211), namely the *Six Cycles [of Teachings on] Equal Taste (Ro snyoms skor drug)*. The transmission lineage provided for these teachings [5] reflects the fact that they are considered “treasure texts” (*gter ma*) ascribed to Ras chung pa (who had received them from the Indian *siddha* Tipupa) and recovered by gTsang pa rGya ras during a retreat in mKhar chu.³¹ Moreover, the text specifies that the teaching transmission included the instructions of Phag mo gru pa, and those that Gling ras pas Pad

²⁸ For these “profound teachings” see 'Jig rten mgon po, *'Bri gung thel chos bdud rtsi'i thigs pa*; for the *Ri chos gser khug ma* see *ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 299–322.

²⁹ Rin chen ldan, *Me long chen mo*, p. 44: *sku dge bsnyen du bzhuvs pa'i dus su sku 'khor lnga yis sprang po'i chas su mdzad/ shri'i dgon pa rnams gzigs su byon pa'i dus su/ chos rje rgod tshang na sgrub pa mdzad pa dang mjal*. For the whole episode of the life story summarizing the main meetings between the two, see *ibid.* pp. 44–48, trans. Guarisco 2015: 147–150. For rGod tshang, see Akester 2016: 665–668, Sernesi forthcoming.

³⁰ Rin chen ldan, *Me long chen mo*, p. 46. A text on this set of practices ascribed to Nāropa is included in *gDams ngag mdzod*, vol. 9 (Ta), pp. 256–276; see Barron (trans.) 2013: 98.

³¹ For the concealment and discovery of the *Ro snyoms skor drug*, see Roerich 1949: 438, 668; Tshe dbang rgyal, *lHo rong chos 'byung*, pp. 649–651.

ma rdo rje (1128–1188) had received directly from Ras chung pa's disciples Sum pa ras pa and rGyal ba lo, and passed on to gTsang pa rGya ras [5, 9].³²

Ko brag pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan (1170–1249) [3, 4, 15, 20] was one of the most prominent masters of his time. This figure was not claimed by any major school narrative of later date, and thus relatively little is known about him despite his fame during his lifetime.³³ According to the *Great Mirror*, Yang dgon pa was eleven when he met his teacher, and relied on him until the latter's death, hence for over twenty-five years. Together with rGod tshang pa mGon po rdo rje, this was the most influential figure in Yang dgon pa's life. Ko brag pa was the holder of four main teaching transmissions, three of which he passed on to his pupil, namely the practices of Vajravārāhī, which was Yang dgon pa's chosen deity (*yid dam*) [4], the *Path and Fruit* (*Lam 'bras*) in the tradition of Ma gcig Zh[w]a ma (1062–1149) [3], and the *Pacification* (*Zhi byed*) of Pha dam pa Sangs rgyas [15].³⁴ The *Pacification* tradition is mentioned only in passing—together with the *Great Perfection* (*rDzogs chen*) teachings—and does not seem to have had a great impact on the formulation of the *Mountain Teachings*. This is quite surprising, given that Pha dam pa sangs rgyas had taught it while residing in Ding ri Glang 'khor, and thus his teaching tradition must have been popular in the area.³⁵ The transmission lineage of the practice of the goddess provided in the *History of the Mountain Teachings* [4] is that of the famous corpus of *Six Vajravārāhī Scriptures* (*Phag mo gzhung drug*) originating with Lakṣmīnkarā and one Virūpa, and passing through the elusive Nepalese teacher Hang du dkar po,

³² For gTsang pa rGya ras and his teacher Gling ras pa, see Blythe Miller 2005. For Gling ras pa, see also Martin 1979, Walther 2017. Short biographies of both teachers and of rGod tshang ras pa were written by Dan Martin for *The Treasury of Lives*. For the training of Gling ras pa with disciples of Ras chung pa, see also Roerich 1949: 660–661; Tshedbang rgyal, *lHo rong chos 'byung*, p. 632, which states that the master spent altogether ca. fifteen years in gNyal Lo ro (i.e., where Ras chung pa's community had settled). For a survey of the 'Brug pa teaching cycles, see Kun dga' dpal 'byor, *Tshig gi me tog*; Schiller 2014: 239–244; Walther 2017: 68–72. For an early history of the 'Brug pa bKa' brgyud pa, see Blythe Miller 2006.

³³ For Ko brag pa's life and religious songs, see Stearns 2000. See also the master's brief life sketch by Dan Martin in *The Treasury of Lives*.

³⁴ The fourth is the *ṣaḍaṅgayoga* practice of the Kālacakra tantra taught by Vibhūticandra; see Stearns 1996; 2000: 4–5. The *History of the Mountain Teachings* mentions that the *Mountain Teachings* include points from the “path of means” of Ko brag pa (*rje ko brag pa'i thabs lam*) [20], but it is unlikely that this refers to the *ṣaḍaṅgayoga*. Note also that together with the *Path and Fruit*, the text mentions the transmission of instructions on the intermediate state by Ma gcig Zh[w]a ma [3], for which see above.

³⁵ For Pha dam pa Sangs rgyas and his *Pacification* teachings, see Martin 2006, 2008, and a number of unpublished papers and of blogposts on *Tibeto-logic*. Yang dgon pa also received the *Zhi byed rmang lam ma*, see below.

that greatly spread in Tibet.³⁶ The *History of the Mountain Teachings* [3] doesn't specify the lineage of transmission of the *Path and Fruit* to Ko brag pa, but according to the master's biography (that, as mentioned above, was also compiled by Shes rab mgon), he received these teachings from his two main teachers, namely Zhang ston Se mig pa and gNyos Chos kyi gzi brjid (1164–1224). This important teacher of the gNyos clan, also known as Kha rag pa or lHa nang pa gZi brjid dpal, was the son of gNyos Grags pa dpal (1106–1165/1182?), who controlled the lHa sa area and instructed, among others, Phag mo gru pa.³⁷ Chos kyi gzi brjid is best known as a prominent pupil of 'Jig rten mgon po, but he also received the transmission of the *Path and Fruit* from sMon d[/m]khar ba Nyang rgyal po grags. According to Ngor chen Kun dga' bzang po (1382–1456), Nyang rgyal po grags received the transmission from a direct pupil of Ma gcig Zh[w]a ma named simply “the great meditator from Nyang” (Nyang sgom chen po), and in turn also taught one Shes rab tshul khrims qualified as the son of sMon mkhar ba's lord or as Zh[w]a ma's nephew. According to this account, this individual was also a teacher of Ko brag pa. Zhang ston Se mig pa, on the other hand, received the *Path and Fruit* from a disciple of Nyang sgom chen po named sTon g.yung (see fig. 3).³⁸

³⁶ For this transmission, see Roerich 390–397. For the master named Virūpa of this lineage, also known as Eastern Virūpa (Shar phyogs Bir wa pa), and different from the better-known Virūpa of the *Path and Fruit*, see Stearns 2016: 133, 639 n. 123. For Hang du dkar po, who is sometimes identified as one of the Pham 'thing brothers (i.e., the teachers residing in Pham [/]thing in the Kathmandu valley, nowadays Pharping), see Stearns 2001: 206–207, n. 15 and references provided therein. The following teacher in the lineage of the *History of the Mountain Teachings* [4] is one lCal (!) ston lo tsā ba, which must be corrected to dPyal lo tsā ba, i.e., Se bSod nams rgyal mtshan alias Kun dga' rdo rje; indeed, one of the lineages of transmission mentioned in the *Blue Annals* passes through dPyal Kun rdor and mNga' ris kyi ston, matching that of the *History of the Mountain Teachings*; see Roerich 1949: 397. This teacher of the dPyal family was also at the origin of the so-called dPyal system of Hevajra, that he had received “from the elder one of the Pham thing brothers, i.e. 'Jigs med grags pa”; see Sobisch 2008: 48, n. 125.

³⁷ For gNyos Chos kyi gzi brjid, see Jñānavajra (Ye shes rdo rje), *lHa nang pa'i rnam thar*. For the gNyos clan, including Chos kyi gzi brjid's influential father and his nephew lHa rin chen rgyal po (1201–1270), who founded the Gye re lha khang in 1231, see An., *Kha rag gnyos gdung rabs*, esp. pp. 31–41 for Chos kyi gzi brjid; Sørensen and Hazod 2007: 385–391, 413–448. See also Vitali 2004: 133–143; Roerich 1949: 372–373; Tshe dbang rgyal, *lHo rong chos 'byung*, pp. 425–426.

³⁸ See Ngor chen Kun dga' bzang po, *Lam 'bras*, p. 466: *de lta bu'i rje btsun ma de la bla ma nyang sgom chen pos lo bcu gnyis bsten nas zhus/ de la bla ma smon mkhar ba nyang rgyal po grags/ des kha rag gi gnyos chos kyi gzi brjid/ des bla ma ko brag pa/ des bla ma lha srung pa tro la brgyud do/ /yang nyang sgom la ston g.yung gis zhus/ de la zhang ston se mig pas/ de la ko brag pas so/ /yang bla ma smon mkhar bas/ smon mkhar jo sras sam zhwa ma'i dbon po shes rab tshul khrims su grags pa la bshad/ de la ko brag pas so/*. This is summarized in fig. 3. See also Stearn 2000: 24, n. 26. For the life of Ma gcig Zh[w]a

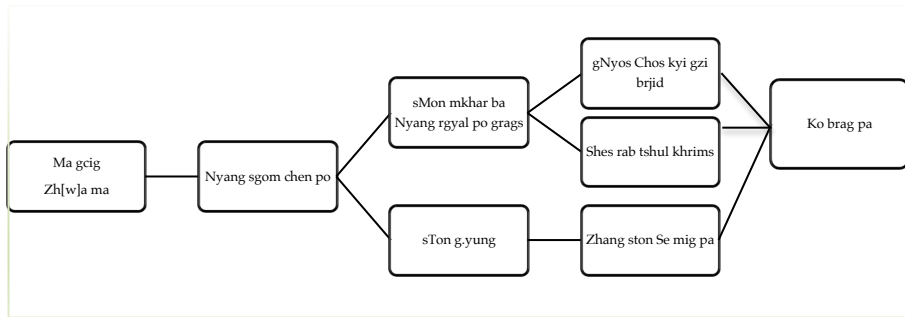


Fig. 3 — Transmission Lineage of the Path and Fruit of Ma gcig Zh[w]a ma according to Ngor chen

Ko brag pa is credited with the compilation of texts of instruction on the *Path and Fruit*, and in particular on the techniques for “dispelling hindrances” (*gegs sel*).³⁹ These teachings, as mentioned above, were incorporated in the *Mountain Teachings*, and form a specific section of the *Gleaming Jewel*, followed by instructions on “enhancing the practice” (*bogs dbyung*).

While this tradition of the *Path and Fruit* is called the “middling” (*'bring*) tradition, Yang dgon pa also received what in the *History of the Mountain Teachings* [6.1] is called the “extensive” (*rgyas*) tradition of practice, which was transmitted within the Sa skya pa. Indeed, the work accounts for the main transmission lineage from Se ston Kun rig (1025–1122) to the elder of the Zhang ston brothers, namely Chos 'bar (1053–1135), and from him to Sa chen Kun dga' snying po (1092–1158) and the early Sa skya hierarchs. It was Sa skya Paṇḍita Kun dga' rgyal mtshan (1182–1251) who passed it on to Yang dgon pa.⁴⁰ According to the *Great Mirror*, after an initial meeting between them that occurred on the road, Yang dgon pa travelled to Sa skya monastery, where he received from the paṇḍita tantric initiations of Cakrasaṃvara [6.2] and Hevajra, the textual transmission of sūtra and tantra scriptures, as well as several special instructions. Explicitly mentioned is the *Hidden Explanation of the Path* (*Lam sbas bshad*) that was bestowed directly from Virūpa to Sa chen Kun dga' snying po, and “was unknown to others”

ma and his brother, see Roerich 1949: 218–229; Stearns 2001: 125–131; 2006: 208–212.

³⁹ For the writings of Ko brag pa on the topic, see Ngor chen Kun dga' bzung po, *Lam 'bras*, p. 467; Stearns 2000: 4, 22 nn. 11–12, 25 n. 34 and references quoted therein. The most famous work by the master on “dispelling hindrances” was titled *Gegs sel ha dmigs rgya mtsho* and is not extant; see also Stearns 2006: 248.

⁴⁰ This is the main transmission lineage of the *Path and Fruit*; see Stearns 2001; 2006: 163–251.

[6.3].⁴¹ The transmission lineage of the Cakrasaṃvara practice provided in the *History of the Mountain Teachings* [6.2] is that of the tradition of Ghaṇṭapāda, that Sa chen Kun dga' snying po had received from Mal lo tsā ba Blo gros grags.⁴²

5. Other Transmission Lineages

The *History of the Mountain Teachings* also records that Yang dgon pa received teachings of the Tshal pa bKa' brgyud [7, 8]. In the transmission lineages provided in the text, Bla ma Zhang is followed by rJe Ro skam pa and Sangs rgyas ras pa (or Sangs rgyas ras chen). rJe Ro skam pa is Nyi ma shes rab (1139–1208), the founder of the monastery of Ro skam. He had a nephew called Sangs rgyas rdo rje (1169–1226) who studied with 'Jig rten mgon po and sPyan snga Grags pa 'byung gnas and succeeded his uncle as the second abbot of Ro skam monastery. However, the Sangs rgyas ras chen of the *History of the Mountain Teachings* is more likely the homonymous (seventh) throne holder of Tshal Yang dgon. Indeed, Yang dgon pa travelled there to pay homage to Bla ma Zhang's statue, so he might have received instructions at the time.⁴³ The teachings that Yang dgon pa

⁴¹ See Rin chen ldan, *Me long chen mo*, p. 89: *de'i dus phyis dpal sa skyar byon/ bcom ldan 'das 'khor lo bde mchog dang/ dgyes pa rdo rje la sog pa'i dbang ka mang po dang/ mdo rgyud mang po'i lung dang/ gdams pa khyad par 'phags pa mang po dang/ rje sa skya pa chen po la dpal bir ba pas dngos su gnang ba'i lam sbas bshad kyi zhal gdams gzhan la ma grags pa mang po dang/ gzhan yang chos rnam par dag pa'i rnam dbye mang po gsungs/*. For the whole episode, see *ibid.* pp. 88–91, trans. Guarisco 2015: 181–183. For the *Lam sbas bshad*, see Stearns 2001: 152, 251 n. 220 (referring to an instruction manual on the subject by Sa skya Paṇḍita), 255 n. 235; Sobisch 2008: 108–109.

⁴² The lineage is provided in Ngor chen Kun dga' bzang po, *Thob yig rgya mtsho*, p. 206 as follows: */yang bde mchog dril bu pa'i brgyud pa'i bka' babs gnyis dang ldan pa'i dbang thob pa'i brgyud pa la/ sa lugs kyi brgyud pa ni/ rdo rje 'chang/ rdo rje rnal 'byor ma/ rdo rje dril bu pa/ rus sbal zhabs/ 'bar ba 'dzin/ gu hya pa/ tai lo pa/ nā ro pa/ pham mthing ba/ klog skya shes rab brtsegs/ mal dzo lo tstsha ba/ rje sa chen yab sras gsum/ chos rje sa skya paṇḍi ta/ (...)*. Here 'Bar ba 'dzin (*Jālandhara) instead of Karṇapa is inserted between Rus sbal zhabs (*Kūrmapāda) and Guhyapa. See also Luczanits 2011: 190 table 2, where both *Jālandhara and Karṇapa are listed: the lineage is depicted on a thangka of the deity reproduced in *ibid.*: 187 fig. 6.9 (private collection, originally acquired by Tucci). See also Roerich 1949: 382: in this account the Pham mthing pa who taught Klog skya Shes rab brtsegs seems to be the younger of the brothers from Pham [*/m]thing in the Kathmandu valley. For a summary of the information about these brothers that can be gleaned from the *Blue Annals*, see Lo Bue 1997: 643–652. For the transmission from Mal lo tsā ba to Sa chen, see Stearns 2001: 141, 247 n. 192.

⁴³ For Ro skam pa and his nephew, see Tshal pa Kun dga' rdo rje, *Deb ther dmar po* pp. 135–136; Grags pa 'byung gnas and rGyal ba blo bzang, *Ming mdzod*, pp. 1621, 1740–1741; Sørensen and Hazod 2007: 117–118. See also the biographical sketch of Ro skam pa by Dan Martin in *The Treasury of Lives*. For Yang dgon pa's trip to Tshal

held are the *Seven Days Inner Heat* (*gTum mo zhag bdun ma*), that Bla ma Zhang received from rG[w]a lo tsā ba gZhon nu dpal (1105/1110–1198/1202) [8], and the *Four Secrets* (*sBas bzhi*) [7], that the master received from Mal yer pa, who was a pupil of Ras chung pa and Gling kha ba, themselves disciples of Mi la ras pa. In the *Mountain Teachings* collection there are texts devoted to both these practices. The “notes” (*zin bris*) on the *Four Secrets*, which teach the manipulation of the inner winds and drops, were compiled by Shes rab mgon at the request of some spiritual friends at mTshur phu, while the *Inner Heat* instructions are ascribed to Yang dgon pa. In both cases, it is stated that Yang dgon pa transmitted the teachings to sPyan snga Rin chen ldan, who instructed Zur phug pa, who in turn taught Shes rab mgon; the *Inner Heat* instructions also provide the alternative lineage Yang dgon pa, Bla ma [rGyal mtshan] 'Bum, Sangs rgyas dbon, Shes rab mgon. These are the two main transmission lineages of the *Mountain Teachings* recorded in the second part of the *History of the Mountain Teachings* [27, 28, fig. 2]. Moreover, this text specifies that Shes rab mgon received the *Four Secrets* from another pupil of Rin chen ldan, namely Nyi ma mgon [32, fig. 2].⁴⁴

Yang dgon pa also encountered Bla ma Zhang in dreams and visions. In particular, he received from him instructions on how to take gods and demons as the path (*lha dre lam du khyer ba*) called *Dream Secret Practice* (*gSang spyod rmang lam ma*) [11]. This is one of the so-called *Six Mothers* (*Ma drug*), visionary teachings recorded and compiled after the death of his teacher by the attendant Rin chen ldan.⁴⁵

Yang dgon, see Rin chen ldan, *Me long chen mo*, pp. 86–87; trans. Guarisco 2015: 180; Tshed dbang rgyal, *lHo rong chos 'byung*, p. 707. For the tenure of Sangs rgyas ras pa, or Sangs rgyas gzhon nu (d. 1260), see Grags pa 'byung gnas and rGyal ba blo bzang, *Ming mdzod*, p. 1742; Sørensen and Hazod 2007: 104. Note, however, that Sangs rgyas ras pa is also mentioned in the *History of the Mountain Teachings* [18] as one of the early masters of Yang dgon pa, so he might also be a homonymous local teacher.

⁴⁴ For Bla ma Zhang's two teachers, see Yamamoto 2012: 57–62. For the *Zab mo sba bzhi'i khrid dang 'khrul 'khor gyi zin bris*, see *Yang dgon pa'i gsung 'bum I*, vol. 3, pp. 143–156; note that in the transmission lineage provided therein, instead of Sangs rgyas ras pa one finds a teacher indicated only with the epithet *Bya bral ba chen po* (“Great Ascetic”). For the *gTum mo zhag bdun ma*, see *Yang dgon pa'i gsung 'bum II*, vol. 1, pp. 355–367; in the transmission lineage therein a dGe ba'i bshes gnyen Ro snyoms pa substitutes Ro skam pa.

⁴⁵ The six teachings of the *Ma drug* are: *Drag rlung gnad lnga ma*, *gSang spyod rmang lam ma*, *sTong nyid tshig drug ma*, *'Pho ba hūṃ dmar ma*, *Nad 'don hūṃ chos ma*, *'Dzag bsrung bka' rgya ma*. See Rin chen ldan, *Ri chos kyi dkar chag*, p. 158; *gDam ngag gnad kyi ma drug*, in *Yang dgon pa'i gsung 'bum I*, vol. 2, pp. 231–286 (esp. pp. 261–280 for the visions of Bla ma Zhang and the *gSang spyod rmang lam ma*). For the visions of Bla ma Zhang in Yang dgon pa's life story, see Rin chen ldan, *Me long chen mo*, pp. 85–88, trans. Guarisco 2015: 179–180.

Other visionary teachings received by Yang dgon pa are those of the syllable Hūṃ transmitted by the *dākinīs* [10].⁴⁶

The other teachers of Yang dgon pa are little-known, and some could not be identified.⁴⁷ His early teachers were one Phul dmar ba [15], who was the teacher of Yang dgon pa's father and also instructed him as an infant, and one rDzing phu pa: the latter transmitted to his pupil bKa' gdams pa teachings, but also the *Cutting (gCod)*, and the *Great Perfection* teachings in the tradition of A ro Ye shes 'byung gnas [16].⁴⁸ Another important teacher of Yang dgon pa was Drod chung pa: a disciple of gNyo Chos kyi gzi brjid, he transmitted to Yang dgon pa the *Large and Small Vases of Nectar of the Mountain Teachings*, and the *Pacification Received in Dream (Zhi byed rmang lam ma)*, which are instructions that Phag mo gru pa received in a dream from Pha dam pa Sangs rgyas [22].⁴⁹ One Bla ma Go lung pa is also mentioned in passing in the *History of the Mountain Teachings* [25]: Go lung is a locality in Zur tsho (an area west of La stod lHo, near the dPal khud mtsho) where the family lineage of O rgyan pa had settled in the 11th/12th century. Hence, this teacher could be the latter's uncle (and early teacher) Go lung Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan.⁵⁰ Finally, one Mi bskyod rdo rje transmitted to Yang dgon pa the "teaching cycles of the guru [Padmasambhava]" [17]: the name is common, but this may refer to one La stod pa Mi bskyod rdo rje who was a disciple of N[/M]yang ral Nyi ma 'od zer (1124–1192) and transmitted the *Maṇi bka' 'bum*.⁵¹

⁴⁶ See *Rigs bzhi dā ki'i hūṃ chos gnung tshul dang bcas pa*, in *Yang dgon pa'i gsung 'bum I*, vol. 2, pp. 287–294. For the visionary transmission from the *dākinīs*, see Rin chen ldan, *Me long chen mo*, pp. 59–60, trans. Guarisco 2015: 159. Two more direct transmissions are recorded in the *History of the Mountain Teachings*, namely the 'Khrul 'khor bka' rgya ma received from bDag med ma [12], and intermediate state teachings received from mkha' 'gro Tshe dbang ma, probably Tshe ring ma [13].

⁴⁷ These include his uncle named Grub thob Dar ma [23], one Bar 'brog Me lung pa [24], and lHa btsun Swo kha ba [25]. Bar 'brog is an area in La stod, where rGod tshang pa mGon po rdo rje founded the monastery of rDo rje gling, which was the place where he last met with Yang dgon pa and then passed away; see Blythe Miller 2006: 28; Guarisco (trans.) 2015: 202; Li 2011: 134; Roerich 1949: 686. There is also a transmission lineage of the *Great Seal* in the tradition of Maitrīpa passing through one rTsang shod pa [14], whom I could not identify. Compare a similar *Great Seal* transmission lineage in a text from XiXia; see Zhang 2019: 7, 9 table 1 (#3.3).

⁴⁸ For A ro Ye shes 'byung gnas, see Roerich 1949: 999–1000; Ostensen 2018.

⁴⁹ For the *Pacification Received in Dream (Zhi byed rmang lam ma)*, see Schiller 2014: 603 (PHAG 95). Drod chung pa transmitted to Yang dgon pa teachings of the 'Bri gung pa and the sNyo (!) kyi bdun chos, which I take to be a sevenfold set of teachings of the gNyo lineage [22].

⁵⁰ See Li 2011: 111 fig. 33, 112.

⁵¹ The transmission lineage of the *Maṇi bka' 'bum* passing from Nyang ral Nyi ma 'od zer to La stod pa Mi bskyod rdo rje, and from the latter to the treasure discoverer rje btsun Śākya bzang po, is provided in the opening "supplicatory prayers" (*gsol 'debs*) of the work; see Ehrhard 2014: 144, 147 n. 8. See also Martin 2020: 50 no. 13.

The *History of the Mountain Teachings* details the diversity of instructions and texts received by Yang dgon pa from his many teachers. As shown above, these include the most prominent and famous masters of his time active in the western regions: fervent and gifted practitioners like Yang dgon pa would seek them out to request their particular teaching systems, especially those of the highest tantric practices. The source attests to a religious landscape where these different traditions of practice—eventually considered specialties of distinct Buddhist “schools”—co-existed and intersected. Yang dgon pa was thoroughly trained in the *Six Yogas of Nāropa*, the *Great Seal*, the *Equal Taste*, and the *Path and Fruit* of two different lineage transmissions, and he also received instructions on the *Great Perfection*, the *Pacification*, the *Secret Practice*, and so on, as well as different styles of teaching on the intermediate state, the dispelling of obstacles, and the physical yogic exercises. He combined and elaborated this lore in his own system of teachings for hermits, a comprehensive presentation of specialized esoteric knowledge.



Tibetan Text of the History of the Mountain Teachings

Witnesses:

A: *Yang dgon pa'i gsung 'bum I*, Pha jo ldings, Thimpu 1976 (W1KG17449), vol. 1, pp. 1–9.

B: *Yang dgon pa'i gsung 'bum II*, Rta mgo, Thimpu 1982 (W23654), vol. 1, pp. 5–12.

C: EAP 570/6/3/6, fols. 1–5.

The manuscript from which the earliest publication (A) was prepared has now been photographed and made available online by the British Library Endangered Archives Programme (EAP). It was documented within Programme 570 in the collection of the Pha jo lding 'Og min lHa khang (EAP570/6). It consists of two volumes: the first, labelled *Ka* in the initial *dkar chag*, and catalogued as EAP 570/6/3/6 (*Ri chos brgyud tshul*), corresponds to *Yang dgon pa'i gsung 'bum I*, vol. 1 and vol. 2, pp. 1–293. The second volume, labeled *Kha*, and photographed as EAP 570/6/3/22 (*Ri chos gleng gzhi*), corresponds to *Yang dgon pa'i gsung 'bum I*, vol. 2, pp. 295–643, and vol. 3. See <https://eap.bl.uk/project/EAP570> (accessed October 2021).

Abbreviations employed:

em. : emendation; *add.* : addition; *om.* : omission

Note: Punctuation follows A, C; variants in B have not been marked.

(A1, B5, C1a) Ri chos brgyud tshul gyi lo rgyus bzhugs so //
 (A2, B6, C1b) [1] / bla ma dam pa rnam la phyag btsal te // slob mas
 skul phyir lo rgyus bsdus pa bri // ri chos skor gsum gyi brgyud tshul
 dang rnam bzhag ni / spyir sde snod gsum dang rgyud sde bzhi'i
 snying phyung pa yin la / khyad par du gdam ngag zab dgu'i bcud
 bsdus pa yin te /

[2] nā ro⁵² chos drug la sogs pa dags po bka' brgyud kyī gdam ngag
 thams cad / rdo rje 'chang / te lo pa / nā ro pa / mar pa / mi la / sgam
 po pa / mtha' rtsa pa / 'bri khung pa / spyān snga rin po che nas dpal
 yang dgon pa la brgyud /

[3] lam 'bras 'bring po dang / zha ma'i bar do'i gdam ngag la sogs
 pa / se ston kun rig / ma gcig zha ma / chos rje ko brag pa nas / dpal
 yang dgon pa la'o /

[4] / chos rje'i⁵³ zhal gzigs kyī lha rdo rje phag mo yin cing / ri chos
 skor du bskyed rims skabs su rdo rje phag mo nges par sgom par bshad
 cing / zab chos (A3, C2a) thams cad kyī dbu na yang / na mo shri ba
 dzra yo gi ni ces pa yod / de'i brgyud pa ni rdo rje phag mo / lcam
 legs smin ka ra / bir⁵⁴ ba pa / a wa⁵⁵ dhū ti pa / bsod snyoms pa che
 chung / rje btsun ldong ngar ba / hang du dkar po / dpyal⁵⁶ ston lo
 tstsha ba / mnga' ris kyī ston / lha rje ston pa / zhang se mig pa / chos
 rje ko brag pa / dpal (B7) yang dgon pa la'o // 'di zhal⁵⁷ gzigs kyī
 brgyud pa ma chad pa yin no /

[5] / ro snyoms bskor drug gi gnad thams cad ri chos na yod de /
 de'i brgyud pa ni / rdo rje 'chang / te lo pa / nā ro pa / ti pu⁵⁸ pa / ras
 chung pa / gtsang pa rgya ras / chos rje rgod tshang pa / dpal yang
 dgon pa la'o // gzhan yang rje phag mo gru pas grub thob gling la
 brgyud pa dang / rje sum pa⁵⁹ ba / rgyal ba lo la sogs pa mang po nas
 grub thob gling la brgyud / des gtsang pa rgya⁶⁰ la brgyud pa'i bsre
 'pho la sogs pa'i gnad rnam s yod do /

[6] / lam 'bras⁶¹ rgyas pa dang / (A4 C2b) bde mchog dgyes rdor /
 lam sbas⁶² bshad la sogs pa / sa skyā pa'i gdam ngag thams cad yod
 de /

[6.1] lam 'bras brgyud pa ni / rdo rje 'chang / bdag med ma / bir
 ba pa / ḍa ma ru pa / nag po pa / ga ya dha ra / 'brog mi lo tstsha ba

52 ro] ro'i AC

53 rje'i] rje B

54 bir] 'bir B

55 wa] *em.* ba ABC

56 dpyal] *em.* lcal ABC

57 zhal] *em.* gzhal ABC

58 pu] phu B

59 pa] *em.* bha ABC

60 rgya] *add.* ras B

61 lam 'bras] *em.* lam ABC

62 sbas] *em.* rbas ABC

/ se 'khar chung ba / zhang dgon pa ba / sa chen kun dga' snying po
/ grags pa rgyal mtshan / bsod nams rtse mo / pan chen lo tstsha /
dpal yang dgon pa la'o /

[6.2] / bde mchog brgyud pa ni / bde mchog / phag mo / gha dha
pa / rus sba⁶³ zhabs / karna pa / gurna pa / rnam rgyal zhabs / te lo
pa / nā ro pa / pham mthing pa nas / sa skya lo tstsha nas / dpal yang
dgon pa la'o /

[6.3] / lam sbas⁶⁴ bshad bir ba pa dngos kyis⁶⁵ / sa chen la gnang
nas / (B8) chos rje la'o /

[7] / sba⁶⁶ bzhi'i brgyud pa ni / rdo rje 'chang / te lo pa / nā ro pa
/ ra khang ras pa / 'bri sgom gling kha ba / mal yer pa ba / bla ma
zhang / rje ro skam pa / sangs rgyas ras pa / dpal yang dgon pa la'o /

[8] / gtum mo zhag bdun ma'i brgyud pa ni / ye shes kyi mkha'
'gro shri tsa mun tri / dpal rga lo / bla ma zhang / rje ro skam pa /
sangs rgyas ras chen / dpal yang dgon pa la'o /

[9] / gsang khrid brgyud pa ni / gong tsho ro snyoms dang 'dra /
ras chung pa sku mched gsum / sna phu pa⁶⁷ / gtsang pa rgya / ras
pa (A5 C3a) rdo rje ye shes / dpal yang dgon pa la'o /

[10] / hūm chos skor ni / mkha' 'gro sde bzhis dpal yang dgon pa
la dngos su gnang ngo /

[11] / gsang spyod rmang lam ma ni / bla ma zhang gis dpal yang
dgon pa la rmang lam du gnang ngo /

[12] / 'khrul 'khor bka' rgya ma ni / bdag med mas⁶⁸ chos rje la
dngos su gnang ba'o⁶⁹ /

[13] / bar do'i gnad zab mo la sogs gdam ngag mang pa cig / mkha'
'gro⁷⁰ tshe dbang mas chos rje la dngos su gsungs so / / de bzhin du /
bla ma dang / yi dam dang / ye shes kyi mkha' 'gro⁷¹ mas dngos sam
rmi lam du gsungs pa'i gnad mang po yod /

[14] phyag rgya chen po'i skor tsho / sangs rgyas bde chen mgon
po⁷² / byang chub sems dpa' blo gros rin chen / ri khrod pa lcam sring
/ mi tri pa / rgya gar phyag na / rtsang shod pa nas brgyud nas / dpal
yang dgon pa la'o /

[15] / rdzogs chen gyi gdams pa ye shes gsang rdzogs la sogs pa'i
gnad mang po dang / gzhan yang zhi byed kyi gdam ngag / 'jam dpal
smra seng nas / pha dam pa nas / chos rje ko brag pa dang / bla ma

⁶³ sba] *em.* rbal ABC

⁶⁴ sbas] *em.* rbas ABC

⁶⁵ kyis] ni B

⁶⁶ sba] *em.* rba ABC

⁶⁷ sna phu pa] rna phu ba AC

⁶⁸ mas] ma'i B

⁶⁹ ba'o] pa'o AC

⁷⁰ mkha' 'gro] mkha' <'>gro AC

⁷¹ mkha' 'gro] mkha' <'>gro AC

⁷² mgon po] dgon po B

phul dmar ba sku mched dang / sangs rgyas mi bskyod⁷³ rdo rje nas
brgyud pa'i (B9) gnad kyang bag re yod de /

[16] sgyu 'phrul sems 'jog a ro'i gdam ngag / theg chen blo sbyong
la sogs dang / lam sgron la swo bka' gdams kyi skor / spyod 'jug / ma
gcig gi (A6 C3b) bdud kyi spyod la swo pa yang / bla ma rdzing⁷⁴ phu
pa la gsan nas yod do /

[17] / gu ru'i⁷⁵ skor⁷⁶ kyang rna po ba nas mi bskyod rdo rje nas
brgyud nas yod do /

[18] / gzer lnga / gnad lnga / dpal rga lo nas kyi lhan skyes kyi
skor / ting nge 'dzin gyi dbang / bla ma'i gsang sgrub / snying rje blo
rdeg ma la sogs pa gdam ngag mang po cig / sku dge bsnyen du
bzhugs dus / sangs rgyas ras pa la sogs pa la gsan nas / ri chos na
gnad rnams yod do /

[19] / rtsang pa rgya'i rten 'brel gyi bskor / bla ma sgrub pa'i skor
la sogs pa⁷⁷ rnams dang / rje rgod tshang pa'i khrid chen brgyad la
sogs pa'i gnad rnams kyang yod do /

[20] / rje ko brag pa'i thabs lam gyi gnad / thugs kyi gdams pa'i
gnad bsam gyis mi khyab pa bzhugs so /

[21] / chos rje 'bri khung pa'i zab chos / bcu chos sum chos / tshe
dpag med kyi khrid / chos drug so ma / byams khrid / snying rje'i⁷⁸
khrid / thig le'i khrid / lnga ldan gyi khrid / ri chos gser khug ma /
gro lung ma / gnad brgyad ma la sogs bsam gyis mi khyab pa'i gnad
rnams / spyan snga⁷⁹ rin po che la gsan nas yod do /

[22] / sbyor drug / gnyos⁸⁰ kyi bdun chos / ri chos bdud rtsi bum
pa che chung / zhi byed rmang lam ma⁸¹ la sogs pa mang po cig bla
ma drod chung pa la gsan pa'i gnad tsho yod do /

[23] / khu bo grub thob dar ma la chos mang po cig gsan pa'i gnad
tsho yang yod do /

[24] / bar 'brog me lung pa la ri chos la sogs chos mang du gsan pa'i
gnad tsho yod do /

[25] (B 10) / gzhan yang bla ma go lung pa dang / lha btsun swo
kha ba yang bla ma yin te / bla ma bcu gcig brten pa'o /

[26] / chos rje nyid rdo rje 'chang dngos 'jig rten du byon pa yin
zhing / lung dang rtogs pa'i chos ma lus pa thugs su chud pa'i thugs
nyams kyi gnad zab mo bsam gyis mi khyab pa rnams bzhugs so⁸² //

⁷³ bskyod] skyod AC

⁷⁴ rdzing] rjing C

⁷⁵ gu ru'i] gu ru B

⁷⁶ skor] bskor AC

⁷⁷ add. sgrub skor AC

⁷⁸ rje'i] rje B

⁷⁹ snga] lnga AC

⁸⁰ gnyos] *em.* snyos ABC

⁸¹ ma] *om.* B

⁸² bzhugs so] bzhugs<s>o C

II. (A7 C4a) / chos rje nas bdag la brgyud tshul ni /

[27] dpal yang dgon pa nas / slob dpon 'bum rin po che / sangs rgyas dbon la brgyud / yang gzhan nas kyang brgyud de / sangs rgyas dbon la ri chos skor thams cad bdag gis rdzogs par zhus⁸³ so /

[28] / yang dpal yang dgon pas chos rje rin chen ldan la gnang / de la dpal zur phug pas lo bcu gnyis brten cing / chos thams cad rdzogs par zhus / gzhan yang dpal yang dgon pa'i bu chen shag rdor ma dang / bla ma sgom ye / mkhan chen tshul khrim snying po / yon sgom rgyal mtshan bzang dang lnga la dpal zur phur pas gtugs⁸⁴ shing / mkhas grub chen por grags cing / ri chos kyi bdag por bzhugs pa de la / bka' lung khrid lag len ma lus pa rdzogs par zhus so /

[29] / dpal yang dgon pa la bslobs⁸⁵ pa'i dngos slob slob dpon 'bum la / bla ma rin gling pa ri chos tsho'i bka' lung gsan dus / brgyud pa nye ba la phan gsung nas / nged lo bcu gcig lon pa cig khrid nas chos thun ma chag par zhus so /

[30] / yang slob dpon gzhan tshul zer ba bzang po cig yod pa la / dpal yang dgon pa la yang sleb nas chos 'ga' re gsan 'dug

[31] / chos rje'i slob ma bzang shos gdan sa mdzad pa'i chos rje lo ras la chos thams cad rdzogs par gsan lo mang du brten / de la bdag gis⁸⁶ ri chos phal cher zhus so /

[32] / yang chos rje rin ldan gyi slob ma / grub thob nyi ma mgon la / sba⁸⁷ bzhi'i dmar khrid dang / gsang khrid kyi lag len dmar khrid du zhus so / / ri chos kyi gzhan yang mang du zhus so /

[33] / yang dpal zur phug pa'i gdan sar bzhugs pa'i / bla ma dar bzangs pas / dpal yang dgon pa'i dngos slob bu rgan nyi shu rtsa lnga la (A8 C4b) gtugs⁸⁸ (B 11) shing / ri chos la shin tu mkhas par bzhugs pa de la gtugs⁸⁹ / 'khrul 'khor lag len / zhal shes / khrid dang / sug dang gnad mang du zhus so /

[34] / dpal zur phug pa'i dbu mdzad bla ma rin mgon la yang ri chos skor gyi ma bde ba zhu btug dang / lag len gyi gsal 'debs la sogs yang yang du zhus so /

[35] / lha⁹⁰ gdong pa'i dbu mdzad slob dpon shes rab dar la yang ri chos skor mang du zhus so /

[36] / bla ma lha sdings⁹¹ pa la 'phrang sgrol gyi 'khrul 'khor rnam dang / 'gag dang ma bde ba 'ga' re zhus so /

⁸³ zhus] bzhugs B

⁸⁴ gtugs] btugs AC

⁸⁵ bslobs] *em.* sleb AC, slobs B

⁸⁶ gis] gi B

⁸⁷ sba] *em.* rba ABC

⁸⁸ gtugs] *em.* btugs ABC

⁸⁹ gtugs] *em.* bstugs ABC

⁹⁰ lha] lhag B

⁹¹ sdings] bsdings AC

[37] / slob dpon chos kyi dpal la khrid chen gsum kyi lag khrid tsho dang / gzhan yang ri chos 'ga' re zhus so /

[38] / rtogs ldan khro rgyal la 'phrang sgröl gyi⁹² ma bde ba rnam dang / lam 'bras kyi lus sbyongs la sogs zhus so /

[39] / slob dpon dkon mchog bzang po la / ri chos skor dang bka' 'phrang mang du zhus so /

[40] / slob dpon gzhan nu snying po la sba⁹³ bzhi'i lag khrid dang / ri chos kyi ma bde ba mang du zhus so /

[41] / gzhan yang lha⁹⁴ gdong gyi bu⁹⁵ rgan slob dpon brtson 'grus mgon / dge slong grub rgyal la sogs bzang bzang mang po nas zhu btug byas so /

[42] / bla ma bsam bsdings pa dang rdzong kha ba nas brgyud pa dang / zhu ston nas brgyud pa la sogs nas kyang gnad 'ga' re byung pa yod do /

[43] / ri chos 'di la dpe thob lung thob kyi mi chog par 'dug pas / lag len mchod⁹⁶ pa re mdzad pa zhu / bla med kyi dbang ma thob pa la khrid chen gsum mi 'debs / khrid chen gsum ma rdzogs pa la ri chos skor mi ston / skor gsum ma rdzogs par zab khrid tsho mi ston / khrid tsho la nyams khrid ma rtogs pa klag lung mi bya / chos la sre slad dang bcos kha mi bya / sbas bshad / sba⁹⁷ bzhi / gsang khrid la sogs shin tu gnyan pas gzab pa gal che (A9 5a) brtse bas bris pa'i yig chung 'di / / 'gro ba kun la phan par shog

[44] / ri chos brgyud tshul dang / gdam ngag 'dus tshul gyi yig chung 'di / slob ma dge ba'i bshes gnyen dang / ri pa bzang po 'ga' res bskul nas / ldom bu pa shes rab mgon gyis sham po⁹⁸ gang su bris pa'o / / 'gro ba rnam la phan thogs par gyur cig / /

Translation of the History of the Mountain Teachings

“History of How the *Mountain Teachings* Were Transmitted”

[1] I pay homage to the holy masters! At the request of the disciples, I will write this short history. This is the means of transmission and the arrangement of the three cycles of *Mountain Teachings*: in general, they are the essence of the three baskets [of the scriptures] and the four classes of tantric scriptures; in particular, they are the condensed quintessence of the nine profound instructions.

⁹² gyi] *om.* B

⁹³ sba] *em.* rba ABC

⁹⁴ lha] lhag B

⁹⁵ bu] *em.* bur ABC

⁹⁶ mchod] *em.* chod ABC

⁹⁷ sba] *em.* rba ABC

⁹⁸ po] pa A

[2] All the instructions of the Dwags po bKa' brgyud, starting from the *Six Teachings of Nāropa* and so forth, were transmitted [as follows]: rDo rje 'chang (Vajradhara), Tilopa, Nāropa, Mar pa, Mi la [ras pa], sGam po pa (1079–1153), mTha' rtsa pa [i.e., Phag mo gru pa (1110–1170)], 'Bri khung pa ['Jig rten mgon po (1143–1217)], [and] from sPyan snga Rin po che [Grags pa 'byung gnas (1175–1255)] to dPal Yang dgon pa (1213–1258).

[3] The “intermediate [transmission]” of the *Path and Fruit*, the instructions on the intermediate state by [Ma gcig] Zh[w]a ma, etc., [were transmitted as follows]: Se ston Kun rig (1025–1122), Ma gcig Zh[w]a ma (1062–1149), [and] from Chos rje Ko brag pa (1170–1249) to dPal Yang dgon pa.

[4] Since rDo rje phag mo (Vajravārāhī) is the Venerable [Yang dgon pa]'s [chosen] visualization deity, the time of the generation stage in the cycles of *Mountain Teachings* is certainly explained as the meditation on rDo rje phag mo. Moreover, at the beginning of all the profound teachings, one finds [the verse of homage] *namo śrī vajrayoginī*. Its lineage of transmission is: rDo rje phag mo, Lakṣmīnkara, Virūpa, Avadhūti, bSod snyoms pa (*Paiṇḍapātika) the older and the younger, rJe btsun lDong ngar ba, Hang du dkar po, dPyal ston lo tsā ba, mNga' ris kyi ston, lHa rje ston pa, Zhang Se mig pa, Chos rje Ko brag pa, and dPal Yang dgon pa. This is an uninterrupted lineage [of masters who] had visions [of the deity].

[5] In the *Mountain Teachings* there are all the main points of the *Six Cycles of Equal Taste*. Their transmission lineage is: rDo rje 'chang (Vajradhara), Tilopa, Nāropa, Tipupa, Ras chung pa, gTsang pa rGya ras [Ye shes rdo rje (1161–1211)], Chos rje rGod tshang pa [mGon po rdo rje (1189–1258)], dPal Yang dgon pa. Moreover, Grub thob Gling [ras pa Pad ma rdo rje (1128–1188)] had received the transmission from Phag mo gru pa, and he had received the transmission from many [masters] such as the Venerable Sum pa ras pa and rGyal ba lo. [In the *Mountain Teachings*] there are many points [of instruction] such as those on *Mixing and Ejecting* transmitted from him to gTsang pa rGya ras.

[6] [In the *Mountain Teachings*] there are all the Sa skya instructions, including the extensive *Path and Fruit*, the Cakrasaṃvara and Hevajra, and the *Hidden Explanation of the Path*.

[6.1] The transmission lineage of the *Path and Fruit* is: rDo rje 'chang (Vajradhara), bDag med ma (Nairātmyā), Virūpa, Ḍamarupa, Kāṇha, Gayadhara (d. 1103), 'Broḡ mi lo tsā ba [Sākya ye shes (993–1077)], Se '['/m]khar chung ba [Se ston Kun rig (1025–1122)], Zhang dGon pa [Zhang ston Chos 'bar (1053–1135)], Sa chen Kun dga' snying po (1092–1158), Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1147–1216), bSod nams rtse mo (1142–

1182), Paṅ chen lo tsā ba [Sa skya Paṅḍita Kun dga' rgyal mtshan (1182–1251)], Yang dgon pa.

[6.2] The transmission lineage of Cakrasaṃvara: bDe mchog (Cakrasaṃvara), [rDo rje] phag mo (Vajravārahī), Ghaṅṅapāda, Rus sbal zhabs (*Kūrmapāda), Karṇapa, Guhyapa, rNam rgyal zhabs (*Vijayapāda), Tilopa, Nāropa, and from Pham mthing pa [in a transmission lineage to] Sa skya lo tsā ba [Paṅḍita Kun dga' rgyal mtshan] and from him to Yang dgon pa.

[6.3] Virūpa himself gave the *Hidden Explanation of the Path* to Sa chen [Kun dga' snying po], and from him [the teachings were transmitted via Sa skya Paṅḍita Kun dga' rgyal mtshan] to Chos rje [Yang dgon pa].

[7] The lineage of transmission of the *Four Secrets*: rDo rje 'chang (Vajradhara), Tilopa, Nāropa, Ra khang ras pa, 'Bri sgom Gling kha ba, Mal yer pa, Bla ma Zhang [g.Yu brag pa brTson 'grus grags pa (1123–1193)], rJe Ro skam pa [Nyi ma shes rab (1139–1208)], Sangs rgyas ras pa, dPal Yang dgon pa.

[8] The lineage of transmission of the *Seven Days Inner Heat*: Wisdom Dākinī Tsamuntri (= Cāmuṅḍī?), rG[w]a lo tsā ba [gZhon nu dpal (1105/1110–1198/1202)], Bla ma Zhang, rJe Ro skam pa [Nyi ma shes rab], Sangs rgyas ras chen, Yang dgon pa.

[9] The transmission lineage of the *Secret Guidance* is like that given above for the *Equal Taste*: from the three “brothers” [disciples of] Ras chung pa to sNa phu pa [i.e., Gling ras pa], gTsang pa rGya [ras Ye shes rdo rje], and to Yang dgon pa [via rGod tshang pa mGon po rdo rje].

[Direct transmissions 10–13:]

[10] The cycle of Hūṃ teachings was given directly from the four classes of *dākinīs* to Yang dgon pa.

[11] The *Dream Secret Practice* was given to dPal Yang dgon pa by Bla ma Zhang in a dream.

[12] The *Seal of Yantra* was given directly to Chos rje [Yang dgon pa] by bDag me ma (Nairātmyā).

[13] Many instructions such as the profound points of the *Intermediate State* were given directly to the venerable teacher by the *dākinī* Tshe dbang ma (= Tshe ring ma?). In the same way, [in the *Mountain Teachings*] there are many points spoken directly or in a dream by the chosen deities (*yi dam*) and wisdom *dākinīs*.

[14] The cycles [of teachings] on the *Great Seal* were transmitted by the buddha bDe chen mgon po (*Mahāsukhanātha), the bodhisattva Blo gros rin chen (*Matiratna), the sisters Ri khrod pa (Śavaripa), Maitrīpa, the Indian Phyag na (= [Vajra]pāṇi?), rTsang shod pa, and to the venerable Yang dgon pa.

[15] [In the *Mountain Teachings*] there are many topics such as instructions on the *Great Perfection* [called] *Ye shes gsang rdzogs*, and, moreover, instructions on *Pacification* transmitted from 'Jam dpal smra ba'i seng ge and from Pha dam pa Sangs rgyas through Ko brag pa, and also some little topics transmitted from Bla ma Phul dmar ba and his brother, and from Sangs rgyas Mi bskyod rdo rje.

[16] [In the *Mountain Teachings*] there are [also the teachings that Yang dgon pa] received from Bla ma rDzing phu pa: the instructions of A ro [Ye shes byung gnas called] *Illusion Entering the Mind*, the cycles [of teachings] of the bKa' gdams pa such as the *Mind Purification of the Great Vehicle* and the *Illuminating Lamp* (*Byang chub lam sgron; Bodhipathapradīpa*) and so forth, the *Bodhisattvacāryāvātāra*, the practice with demons of Ma gcig (i.e., the *Cutting [gCod]*), etc.

[17] [In the *Mountain Teachings*] there are [also] the cycles of [teaching of] Guru [Padmasambhava] transmitted from rNa po ba and from Mi bskyod rdo rje.

[18] In the *Mountain Teachings* there are topics that [Yang dgon pa] received while he was living as a layman (*upāsaka*) from [teachers] such as Sangs rgyas ras pa. These are many instructions like: the *Five Rivets*, the *Five Points*, the cycle on *Co-emergent* [*Yoga of the Great Seal* transmitted] from the Venerable rG[w]a lo [tsā ba], the *Empowerment of Samādhi*, the *Secret Sādhanā of the Teacher*, the *Mind Blowing* [*Teachings on*] *Compassion*, etc.

[19] [In the *Mountain Teachings*] there are also topics like the cycles on *Co-dependent Arising* by gTsang pa rGya [ras], the cycles on the *Masters' Accomplishments*, and the *Eight Great Transmissions* of the Venerable rGod tshang pa.

[20] [In the *Mountain Teachings*] there are also the points on the *Path of Means* by the Venerable Ko brag pa and inconceivable topics of mind instruction.

[21] [Yang dgon pa] received inconceivable topics [of instruction] from sPyan snga Rin po che [Grags pa 'byung gnas]: the “profound teachings” of Chos rje 'Bri gung pa [Jig rten mgon po], the *Ten Teachings*, the *Transmission of Tshe dpag med* (*Amitāyus*), the *Six Teachings*, *Guidance on Love*, *Guidance on Compassion*, *Guidance on Drops*, *Guidance on the Fivefold* [*Great Seal*], the *Golden Pouch of the Mountain Teachings*, the *Gro lung ma* (i.e., the *bsTan rim chen mo* by Gro lung pa Blo gros 'byung gnas?), the *Eight Topics*, etc.

[22] [In the *Mountain Teachings*,] there are also topics from the many [teachings] that he received from Bla ma Drod chung pa, namely the *Six Unions*, the *Seven Teachings of gNyos*, *Large and Small Vases of Nectar of the Mountain Teachings*, *Pacification* [*Received in*] *Dream*, etc.

[23] [In the *Mountain Teachings*,] there are also topics from the many teachings that he received from his uncle Grub thob Dar ma.

[24] [In the *Mountain Teachings*,] there are topics from the many teachings, such as the *Mountain Teachings*, that he received from Bar 'brog Me lung pa.

[25] Moreover, Bla ma Go lung pa and lHa btsun Swo kha ba were also teachers [of Yang dgon pa]. He relied on eleven teachers [in all].

[26] The Venerable teacher is really rDo rje 'chang who came into this world. He took at heart all the teachings of scriptures and realizations without exception and holds inconceivable profound points of inner experience.

II. How [the teachings] were transmitted from the venerable teacher to me.

[27] They were transmitted from dPal Yang dgon pa to Slob dpon 'Bum rin po che, [and from him to] Sangs rgyas dbon. Sangs rgyas dbon also received the transmission from others, and I completely received from Sang rgyas dbon all the cycles of *Mountain Teachings*.

[28] Moreover, dPal Yang dgon pa entrusted [the teachings] to Chos rje Rin chen ldan. Having dPal Zur phug pa trained with the latter for twelve years, he completely received all the teachings. Moreover, dPal Zur phug pa encountered the five major disciples of dPal Yang dgon pa, namely Shag rdor ma, Bla ma sGom ye, mKhan chen Tshul khrim snying po, Yon sgom, [and] rGyal mtshan bzang. Thus, he was known as the great learned and accomplished one and as the Lord of the *Mountain Teachings*. From him I completely received the textual transmission, the explanations, and the practice instructions without exception.

[29] Bla ma Rin gling pa received the textual transmission of the *Mountain Teachings* from Slob dpon 'Bum, who had come and been a direct disciple of dPal Yang dgon pa. At that time, he said that it was beneficial to the close transmission. When I was ten years old, I received [from him] all the explanatory teaching sessions without interruption.

[30] Also there is one good [fellow] called Slob dpon gZhon tshul who also had come [to learn at the feet of] dPal Yang dgon pa, from whom I received some teachings.

[31] The venerable teacher's best pupil, who founded the seat [of Lo paṅ] was Chos rje Lo ras pa. [His student] trained with him for many years and received completely all the teachings: from him I received most of the *Mountain Teachings*.

[32] Moreover, I received direct guidance on the *Four Hidden Teachings* (sBa bzhi) and direct guidance for the practice of the *Secret Guidance* (gSang khrid) from Grub thob Nyi ma mgon, who is a disciple of Chos rje Rin [chen] ldan. I also received many *Mountain Teachings* [from him].

[33] Moreover, Bla ma Dar [ma] bzang [po] who took the seat of dPal Zur phug pa, met at age twenty-four an old direct pupil of Yang dgon pa. He thus became very knowledgeable in the *Mountain Teachings*: having met him, I received [instructions on how to] practice the yogic exercises, the oral instructions, and the explanations, and [instructions] on many topics.

[34] I also went again and again to request [clarifications] on [overcoming] difficulties [in the practice] of the *Mountain Teachings*, advice on practice, etc., from the lead chanter of dPal Zur phug pa, Bla ma Rin [chen] mgon [po].

[35] I also received many cycles of *Mountain Teachings* from the lead chanter of lHa gdong pa, Slob dpon Shes rab dar.

[36] I received the yogic exercises [for the practice of] *Deliverance from the Perilous Straits [of the Bardo]* and some [guidance on overcoming] obstructions and difficulties [of the practice] from Bla ma lHa sdings pa.

[37] I received practice guidance on the *Three Great Instructions (Khrid chen gsum)* and also some *Mountain Teachings* from Slob dpon Chos kyi dpal.

[38] I received from rTogs ldan Khro rgyal [guidance on overcoming] the difficulties of the [practice of] *Deliverance from the Perilous Straits [of the Bardo]*, the body training of the *Path and Fruit*, etc.

[39] I received from Slob dpon dKon mchog bzang po the cycles of *Mountain Teachings* and many instructions on *bKa' 'phrang(?)*.

[40] I received from Slob dpon gZhon nu snying po practice guidance on the *Four Hidden [Teachings]* and many [instructions on overcoming] the difficulties of the [practice of the] *Mountain Teachings*.

[41] Moreover, I went to request [instructions] from many very good [teachers] such as the old disciples of lHa gdong, Slob spon brTson 'grus mgon and dGe slong grub rgyal.

[42] I also received some topics of the lineage transmissions [descending] from Bla ma bSam [b]sding[s] pa and rDzong kha ba, as well as the lineage transmission of Zhu ston.

[43] Since I wasn't satisfied with obtaining the books and textual transmission of these *Mountain Teachings*, I received the practice and liturgical [instructions] of each one. Someone who did not obtain the supreme empowerments doesn't ask for the *Three Great Instructions*. Without the complete *Three Great Instructions*, one does not teach the *Three Mountain Teachings*. Without the complete *Three Cycles [of Mountain Teachings]* one does not teach the profound instructions. Without understanding the experiential guidance of those instructions, refrain from the [mere] reading transmission. Refrain from adulterating and fabricating the teachings. The *Hidden Explanation*, the *Four Hidden [Teachings]*, the *Secret Guidance*, and so forth are extremely

fierce, so it is of uttermost importance to be careful. May this short writing, written out of love, be helpful to all beings!

[44] This short writing on the way the Mountain Teachings were transmitted and on the way the instructions were collected was written in Sham po gang by the beggar Shes rab mgon, at the request of a few students, friends, and good mountain dwellers. May it be helpful to sentient beings!

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A Dunhuang Tibetan Poem Praising Amitābha and Its Rebirth Among the *Gter ma*

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כְּאִשֶׁר הָעֵבֶר מְבִיט הַשְּׁמַיִמָה
זוֹ הִרְמַת הַסַּיִים בְּלֵם,
גַּם חַי עֵבֶר רְחוּק עַד מְאֹד.

When the past looks up at the heavens
this is the raising up of life itself,
all of it, even the life of the very faraway past.

Zelda, בְּאוֹתוֹ עֵרַב מוֹנֵר, trans. David Shulman

he literary treasures of the Roof of the World may give the impression of being almost inexhaustible.¹ Strictly speaking, this obviously cannot be true, but one could easily be forgiven a feeling of immensity in the face of seemingly endless printed collections and individual works, not to mention those surviving only

¹ I am grateful for the help of many friends whose advice greatly improved this paper. Péter-Dániel Szántó first offered corrections to my translation of the *Praise Poem*. Later Cathy Cantwell kindly offered several remarks, which I quote in notes where relevant. Leonard van der Kuijp went above and beyond in reading with me line by line through all the texts, for which my gratitude is unlimited. Since I am not very familiar with native Tibetan literature, especially in regard to the translations from the non-Dunhuang texts I have largely followed his advice, also for translation equivalents. Charles Ramble generously (and even via Skype from a train!) offered very helpful corrections. Finally, Berthe Jansen carefully read through a nearly final version of the paper, solved a number of remaining cruxes, and greatly improved my understanding at several points. My debt to all of these friends is profound. Needless to say, none of them, however, is responsible for my errors! I must further emphasize my debt to the Bibliothèque nationale de France and the British Library, which hold the relevant Dunhuang documents, and vitally to the Buddhist Digital Resource Center (BDRC), without whose freely available scans of essential materials this paper would not have been possible. One manuscript in the British Library otherwise unavailable was very kindly photographed for me by Sam van Schaik, to whom my thanks are again due. This work was supported by the European Research Council (ERC) under the Horizon 2020 program (Advanced Grant agreement No 741884).

in manuscript, uniquely or in multiple copies. Given the vastness of this literary ocean, connections between works when not recognized within the tradition itself may long rest undetected. This *terra incognita*—if we may mix our environmental metaphors—is only rendered more intractable by the fact that some pieces of Tibetan literature lay quite literally out of reach until modern times, the relevant case here being those uniquely preserved in the caves of Dunhuang. Many of these (though certainly not all) have been catalogued, and thus we do have a growing, if still quite incomplete, picture of the scope of these compositions.² Among these manuscripts not a few, dating to the period of the 9th–11th centuries, contain texts apparently otherwise unknown, either because they were later lost or because they were—it has usually been thought—not ever transmitted outside the Dunhuang region, where they were likely composed.

We may juxtapose this situation with another: one of the most important genres of Tibetan Buddhist literature is that generally termed *gter ma*, treasure texts, works which, the tradition tells us, were concealed, often by Padmasambhava or an incarnation of his, later to be “discovered” or “revealed” by *gter ston*. Much modern scholarship has been very critical if not cynical about such claims, with one obvious hypothesis being that the *gter ston* manufactured the texts they claimed to discover, transparently in order to give authority to their content.³ It is gradually becoming clear, however, that while this was no doubt sometimes the case, there are also instances in which it is now demonstrable that a “revealed treasure” was in fact a genuine older text. The present paper, combining the investigation of a hitherto unknown Dunhuang text with a likewise (nearly) unexamined piece of *gter ma* literature, treats precisely one such example.

The first text edited, translated and studied below is a poem in praise of the buddha Amitābha and his land, known in Sanskrit as *Sukhāvātī*, the Realm of Bliss, or as it is commonly referred to under

² In addition to the well-known collections in London and Paris, as well as a number of smaller collections, listings of which have been published in one fashion or another, there are unrecorded (or at least unpublished) Tibetan manuscripts whose provenance is likely to be Dunhuang held in private (and even some public) collections. Many years ago I came across two Dunhuang Tibetan manuscripts in the Oriental Library at UCLA, and others in the library of the Faculty of Letters at Kyoto University, and this is only to mention, essentially at random, collections I personally was able to explore. A concerted effort to take stock of such materials would constitute a solid contribution to the field, all the more so as the International Dunhuang Project appears at the moment to be in stasis. While it is true that these manuscripts (that is, those in Tibetan) are probably for the most part copies of the *Aparimitāyurjñāna*, as were those I located, and thus not very exciting, save perhaps for their colophons, one never knows. Regional museums in China, for instance, may well hold a few items of greater interest.

³ See the measured review of Hirshberg 2016: 85–139.

East Asian influence, the Pure Land. I will call this work the *Praise Poem*. This poem belongs, from one thematic and typological perspective, to the group of texts composed in Dunhuang in Tibetan, probably under considerable Chinese influence (though this need not necessarily mean that the composition took place strictly within the limited span of time during which Dunhuang was under direct Tibetan political and military control). The poem shares a close affinity with two others I published earlier, all three being Tibetan language poems praising Amitābha and his land, and all three, if I am correct, composed in Dunhuang or its environs. The first of these (Silk 1993, 2019) I will call the *Praise of His Mighty Name*, and the second (Silk 2020) the *Aspirational Prayer*. When I earlier examined these two poems, I attempted to trace their connections with, and influences from, other literature, and was able to identify several Chinese textual sources which may well have inspired the poets, or which at any rate contain materials similar to those which stimulated them. The same type of catalyst is likely to have also informed the author responsible for the poem presented below.

But in the present case, something different has also happened. As far as is known, the other poems I studied were born and, if one may put it this way, died in Dunhuang; there is no known trace of these works elsewhere in Tibetan literature. However, with this third *Praise Poem*, a textual link to later tradition presents itself. In the course of preparing my edition and study, I suddenly became aware of its later reproduction or recasting in two extremely influential *gter ma* collections, the *Ma ṅi bka' 'bum* and the *Padma bka' thang* (perhaps better known as the *Padma thang yig*),⁴ and subsequently in another work

⁴ On the title of the second text, see Dorji Wangchuk <http://philologia-tibetica.blogspot.com/2012/04/on-bkai-thang-yig-or-bka-thang.html>, who refers to the titles as *Padma bka'i thang yig* or *Padma dka' thang* [sic]. It is sometimes called the *Bka' thang Shel brag ma*. The influence of the *Ma ṅi bka' 'bum* on the *Padma bka' thang* has long been known, and this influence is certainly operative in the present case as well. I first became aware of the presence of the *Praise Poem* in these *gter ma* by noticing a comment in Sørensen 1994: 98n252. His interest in this source lay in the context of his study and translation of the 14th c. *Rgyal rabs gsal ba'i me long*, and he translates that text's version of the poem on pp. 98–99, and see pp. 510–511. (For what it is worth—and according to Sørensen 1994: 36n102, overall that is not much—an edition is found in Kuznetsov 1966: 24.12–25.9. Despite Sørensen's scathing appraisal, at least for these verses the edited text appears to me generally fine.) One of the first in the West to notice this portion of the text was Pallas 1801: 396, who wrote, “Die Einleitung enthält einen Begriff von dem Seelen-Paradiese des Abida Burchan, Sukawadi-Orron genannt, und lehret wie es bestehe in unbeschreiblicher Glück- und Ruhseligkeit der selig gesprochenen, und nun unsterblichen Seelen, die aus diesem Leben geschieden sind. Alle irdische Herrlichkeiten seyen gegen diese Seligkeit nicht zu vergleichen und können nur etwan als Gleichnisse im Ausdruck gebraucht werden.” Note that despite the publication date the work was finished at least 25 years earlier (the first volume appeared in 1777); no

closely related to the latter, the *Bka' thang gser phreng*, and it is doubtless to be found in other collections as well.⁵

Despite their evident influence, since the verses studied below have themselves remained unknown, their relationship to these *gter ma* has also, naturally, hitherto not been noted. Given this, despite the fact that I would certainly not dare to call myself a Tibetologist, I hope that the present paper might constitute a small contribution to our knowledge of Buddhist traditions not only in 9th~10th century Dunhuang, and to Amitābha and Sukhāvātī traditions in Tibet, but also to *gter ma* studies and to some aspects of the general situation of Buddhist traditions in Central Tibet in the 12th century and after, a topic of central interest to our honorand.

Part I

The Praise Poem

The first work addressed here consists of 206 lines of verse. Its title is not entirely clear (see below), but it constitutes a praise of the good qualities of the buddha most commonly known as Amitābha and his land, Sukhāvātī, though the latter is never named as such in the text.

reason is known for the delay in its publication. According to Vostrikov 1970: 52, the credit for the summary goes to “the translator Erig.” I see now that this same passage was already noted by Kara 1973: 23n9 (who incorrectly hypercorrects etwan to etwas). I owe to Alexander Zorin the observation that “Erig” (in Russian Иериг; the form must go back to Vostrikov’s English translator) was the much studied Johannes Jähriq (1747–1795), on whom see Zorin 2020: 28–30. Zorin notes (28n49) that Isaak Jacob Schmidt (1779–1847) had none too high a regard for Jähriq’s German translations: “Jähriq replaced almost all the places in Buddhist books that he could not understand (and there were quite a few of them) with high-flown, meaningless phrases of his invention, and Pallas, without correcting anything essential, just clothed this nonsense in more understandable expressions” (Zorin’s translation from Russian), though as Zorin comments, these translations remain “an extraordinary achievement for the 18th century.”

⁵ I think in particular of the texts related to the *Padma bka' thang*, discussed by Doney 2016. I have not attempted to further trace the basic material, although it is very likely that it found a place in the literature Doney has discussed, texts such as *gter chen Rig 'dzin Rdo rje gling pa's* (1346–1405) *O rgyan padma 'byung gnas kyi skyes rabs lo tsha'i 'gyur byang rnam thar rgyas par bkod pa* (W23642), and *gter rgyal Rin 'dzin O rgyan Padma gling pa's* (1450–1521) *Sangs rgyas bstan pa'i chos 'byung mun sel sgron me*. Blondeau 1980: 49 wrote: “The *gSer-phreng* discovered by Sangs-rgyas gling-pa (1340-1396) often seems to be an interpretative gloss on the *Shel-brag-ma*, from which it nevertheless differs on a number of points. The links between these two texts remain to be elucidated.... At the beginning of the sixteenth century, in 1513 at bSam-yas according to the colophon, Padma gling-pa discovered his *bka'-thang* which also sticks closely to the *Shel-brag-ma*.” Doney 2016 sets the stage for the required future, more detailed comparison.

There are a number of indications that the work was probably composed in Dunhuang or nearby, in an environment influenced by Chinese Buddhism. It seems to me quite unlikely, however, that it represents a translation from Chinese, although such translations have been identified.⁶

As was also the case with the other two poems I studied earlier, this work was first noticed by Akamatsu Kōshō 赤松孝章 (1986), who presented it in paraphrase; although he seemed to promise a complete translation, it never appeared.⁷ Akamatsu's study remains, to the best of my knowledge and aside from the catalogue entries cited below, the only to even notice the existence of the text, which is attested in six manuscripts in the Paris and London collections. Whether, as the title of Akamatsu's paper suggests, the text should be seen as reflecting a "Tibetan reception of Pure Land Thought" is, however, debatable. I doubt that, for the period in question, it is legitimate to identify or speak of "Pure Land" as a specific tradition (anywhere, much less in Tibet), and would rather suggest that it should better be understood as yet another strand of the vast Mahāyāna tapestry. In this regard I would here simply repeat what I have said elsewhere, namely that it is important to consciously work to free ourselves of the teleological lenses through which traditions chronologically preceding the development of Pure Land Buddhism in medieval Japan—something which came about under the influence of Hōnen and Shinran in the 12th and 13th centuries—are classified as belonging to or associated with this tradition. In this light, while I believe that the notion of "proto" traditions makes sense only retrospectively and teleologically, and therefore from a historical perspective it is inappropriate to classify our text even as "proto-Pure Land," nevertheless phenomenologically and synchronically it is certainly true that its themes are of a piece with those centrally focused on by some later, more properly "Pure Land," traditions. In this latter sense, it may indeed be helpful to consider our text and those like it as associated—again, phenomenologically and synchronically only—with Pure Land Buddhism.

In addition to his assumption of its Pure Land identity, based on some of its content Akamatsu wondered whether our text was

⁶ See for instance Silk 2017, and the very interesting example of other praise poems in Gong 2021, who draws attention, *inter alia*, to bilingual manuscripts. If Gong's study were to be translated into English it would surely provoke serious attention.

⁷ Akamatsu 1986: 61: 全体の訳文とあわせて、別の機会に報告したいと思う。Akamatsu also identified all extant manuscripts, save for Pelliot tibétain 226, which somehow escaped his eagle eye.

composed “from a Madhyamaka-Yogācāra standpoint.”⁸ While certainly some notions normally associated with these doctrinal positions do appear in the poem, I do not see that reading the work as a whole from such a perspective would appreciably improve our understanding. I would also point out that in this respect too, as in others, there are close parallels with the related poems. In the *Praise of His Mighty Name* we also find references to doctrinally developed concepts. In the context of my study of that text, I wrote (Silk 2019: 501) that “the last portion of the poem concerns the correct understanding of rather abstruse philosophical doctrines, including abandoning being and nonbeing (52), the Buddha’s *dharmatā* (53), non-apprehension of the two extremes (54), the lack of self-nature even in illusions (56), the not-one-not-many (57), and even some ideas reminiscent of the Rdzogs chen, such as the use of the deeply resonant term *gzhi*. The doctrinal content, then, is vastly inclusive, if anything tending toward the philosophical and monastic or renunciant, rather than the devotional.” The same may be said, *mutatis mutandis*, about the *Praise Poem*. Especially if one were to begin with the idea that this work is a “Pure Land” poem, with the accompanying expectations that this expression may imply of a world of medieval Japanese (largely lay) devotion, this doctrinal content would certainly raise questions about the intended audience of the text, and about who its author may have been.

Manuscripts

Before going further, we must introduce our sources. As far as I know, the work is witnessed only by six Dunhuang manuscripts, one of which is very partial, another less so but still missing a great deal of the text. Five of the manuscripts are now preserved in Paris, one in London. I have been able to examine these only through photographs. They are listed in their respective catalogues as follows:

A: Pelliot tibétain 67

Lalou 1939 says of it “23 f. (9.6 x 31) paravent; 5 sont écrits d’un seul côté. Le papier, épais, est gaufré comme pour imiter la peau.” Of the second section, that which contains our text, she says: “Début: *snang ba mtha’ yas kyi yon tan la | rnal ’byor pas bstod pa ... Fin: snang ba mtha’ yas kyi zhing gi yon tan rdzogs s+ho* ‘Les qualités (*guṇa*) du *kṣetra* d’Amitābha’.” The first text in the manuscript is identified as “*Suvarṇaprabhāṃṛdaṅga*,”⁹ while Lalou could not identify the third, and I have done no better. Our text begins on the the first line of the ninth folio, or what is numbered on the

⁸ Akamatsu 1986: 61: 今まで述べてきたように内容的にも中観・唯識の思想的影響の強いことを考え合わせると、本文獻が「瑜伽行中観派」的立場から著述されたのではなからうかと想像されるのである。

⁹ See Pelliot tib. 63, 64, 66, 523, 525, 526.

folios in pencil as 7, ending on 34 l. 2.

B: Pelliot tibétain 99

Again a manuscript of three texts, of which ours is this time the third, starting on folio 51a1. The first is the *Vajracchedikā prajñāpāramitā*, and the second the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṅgīti*. Lalou 1939 describes the manuscript as follows: "55 f. (8.2 x 50) pag. en rouge ka 1 – ka 55; 5 l., marges et cercle rouges, trou central. Très bon état." The manuscript is carefully written with five lines of writing per side. It is a very good manuscript, though not always correct, as one can see in comparison with the other witnesses.

C: Pelliot tibétain 158

Only the fragmentary beginning of the text is preserved on this leaf, inscribed on only one side. After citing the line *snang ba mtha' yas kyi yon tan*, Lalou 1939 says seven lines are "sur un morceau déchiré (24 x 16)." The longest preserved line, the last and seventh line, has space for 33 letters; large amounts of text even from the extant portion are lost.

D: Pelliot tibétain 759

Noting that the text is complete, Lalou 1939 says: "4 f. (5.5 x 50) pag. au verso ka, kha, ga nga; 3 l.; écrits sur des morceaux de grands feuillets." There are three lines of writing per folio side, except for the last folio which adds a fourth, obviously to finish the text economically.

E: Pelliot tibétain 226

This is a single sheet, which ends at l. 82. Lalou 1939 says: "Texte dont la fin manque. Début: *phyogs bcu mtha' yas 'jig rten na* || *chos sbyings mnyam ba'i sangs rgyas zhing* || ... s'arrête: ... *'jig rten rlung gi mying yang myed* || *chos kyi dkyil 'khor 'od 'phro bas* || *nyi ma zla ba'i mying yang myed* || *'phags pa'i shes rab 'od gsal bas* || *nyin dang mtshan gyi mying yang myed* || *chos rgyal snang ba nyid* — En haut: *ston sla rab la* (lire: *ston zla ra ba* "du milieu d'Août au milieu de Septembre" ?). 1 rouleau (29 x 49.5); marges bien tracées. La fin manque." I have not so far located the remaining portion of this manuscript, but it is not impossible that it is extant in some Dunhuang collection.

F: IOL Tib J 452

A concertina, 9 x 30.5cm, and as with A, above, the manuscript begins with the *Suvarṇaprabhāṃṭaṅga*, followed by the *Dgyod sangs gyi smon lam*, our text then comprising the third section. The manuscript is described by Dalton and van Schaik 2005: 194–195 as follows: "Prayer to Amitābha and the aspiration to be reborn in his pure land (*zhing mchog*). The prayer states (v15.3–4) that rebirth in the pure land will be attained by renouncing the four wrong views (*phyin ci log bzhi*) and meditating on the path of non-duality (*gnyis su myed pa'i lam*). The theme of non-duality permeates the prayer, which in this respect is similar to the Dunhuang Amitābha prayers transcribed in Silk 1993. Apart from this, the prayers are different. They are also not related to the Amitābha mindfulness

prayer found in the Bka' 'gyur (Q.154a)."¹⁰

Title

Our manuscripts offer variations of the title, both in their incipits and explicits. Manuscript A has as incipit *snang ba mtha+ yas kyi yon tan la rnal +byor pas bstod pa*; C, partly damaged, has *snang mtha+ yas kyi yon tan (r)na(l) [X X] bstod pa+* (since only the beginning survives, there is no explicit); D has (as explicit, there being no incipit) *snang ba mtha+ yas kyi yon tan rnal 'byord pa la bstod pa*; and F has, obviously to some extent corrupt, as incipit *snang ba mtha yas gyi yon tan 'byor pa stan pa'* (and in the explicit *sung snang pa tha yas*).¹¹ None of these versions mention any (buddha) field or land. However, in contrast Manuscript B has as its title instead *snang ba mtha+ yas kyi zhing gyi yon tan la rnal +byor pas bstod pa*, which in regard to the mention of field matches what A has in its explicit, namely *snang ba mtha+ yas kyi zhing gi yon tan*. These differing versions raise a number of questions. To what does the *la* apply, indicating the grammatical patient of the verb *bstod*? It seems most likely, indeed almost certain, that it is the good qualities (*yon tan*) which are being praised, though D (doctrinally incoherently) makes the yogin the patient of the praise. Second, should we consider the term for field (*zhing*), which we had best assume to be that of Amitābha, namely Sukhāvati, as an integral part of the title? Another way to understand this question is: Is the text praising the good qualities of the (buddha) field of the buddha 'Endless Radiance,' a rendering of Amitābha, or is the praise rather directed at the good qualities of that buddha himself? The content of the text could support either interpretation, with l. 22, for instance, directly stating that it is the good qualities of the field which will be discussed. Moreover, manuscript B is generally carefully written and accurate, which might be an argument that its wording is not to be easily dismissed. Finally, and perhaps most challengingly, who is this yogin who is apparently offering this praise? The text itself gives no overt hint toward a resolution of this problem. In fact, there is nothing whatsoever in the poem itself which evokes, much less refers to explicitly, any yogin, and thus the mention in the title remains mysterious.

¹⁰ I am in debt to Sam van Schaik for his great kindness in providing me very clear photos of this manuscript. All others were obtained from the French Gallica website, equally available (ideally) via the International Dunhuang Project. I am happy to be able to acknowledge with gratitude my appreciation for these resources.

¹¹ E, having no title at the beginning and missing its end, cannot contribute to this discussion.

Text and Translation

In presenting the main text, while I have not regularized the orthography overall, retaining archaic spellings, I have not marked differences between *i* and *ī* (*gi gu log*), nor do I note in the main text the use of the *'a-rten* with a flag on its right shoulder ༔. But in the apparatus reporting variant readings I transcribe the sources exactly, rendering the common Dunhuang *'a-rten* with +; in this I may have been overly scrupulous, since as far as I know neither of these orthographic features indicates anything significant. Concerning the establishment of the text, in any number of cases, there are disagreements among our sources over wording, and it is hard to know upon what bases one should select the main reading. The notes are separated into those reporting readings which might have an impact on the meaning of the text, which I print directly below the text, and those I consider to be either purely orthographic variants, or simply mistakes. This division is doubtless to some degree subjective.¹²

I have not indicated the folio or line breaks of the individual manuscripts, since the text is so short. However, I have numbered the lines of verse, to allow standard reference and coordination between text, apparatus and comments, and the references to the reuses of the text we will consider below.

*

Incipit

A: *snang ba mtha+ yas kyi yon tan la | rnal +byor pas bstod pa*, and see explicit.

B: *snang ba mtha+ yas kyi zhing gyi yon tan la | rnal +byor pas bstod pa | |*.

C: *snang ba mtha+ yas kyi yon tan (r)na(l) [X X] bstod pa+*.

D: See explicit.

E: Lacks an incipit, and does not contain the end of the text.

F: *snang ba mtha yas gyi yon tan rnal 'byor pa stan pa' | |*.

The yogin's praise of the good qualities of the land of [the buddha]
Endless Radiance

¹² Especially in the texts published later in the paper, I print the possessive *'i* separately from the word it follows when metrically indicated to obtain the proper number of syllables in a line.

<p> རྩོགས་བརྩམས་མཐའ་ཡས་འཇིག་རྟེན་ན །། ཚོས་དབྱིངས་མཉམ་བ་སངས་རྒྱས་ ཞིང །། རླུ་གསུམ་དབྱེར་མེད་ནམ་ཀ་བཞིན །། མཚན་མ་ཀུན་དང་ཡོངས་བྲལ་ཡང །། ཡོན་ཏན་ཚེན་པོ་བསམ་གྱི་བྱབ །།^[5] མ་རིག་ཐུན་ནག་སེལ་པར་མཛད །། ཡིད་བཞིན་ནོར་བུ་རྒྱལ་པོ་འདྲ །། བདུད་ཅི་ཚར་ནི་རབ་དུ་འབེབས །། བྱང་རྒྱབ་སེམས་ཀྱི་ལྷ་བྱ་སྦྱིད །། རྣམ་ཐར་འབྲས་བུ་སྦྱིན་བར་མཛད །།^[10] དེ་འདྲའི་མགོན་པོ་ཇི་སྟེད་ལ །། དག་པའི་སེམས་ཀྱིས་གུས་ཕྱག་འཚལ །། </p>	<p> In the endless worlds of the ten directions, In a buddha field equal to the <i>dharmadhātu</i>, [Is a buddha whose] triple body is indivisible, like the sky; Even though entirely free of all marks whatsoever, His enormous good qualities are inconceivable. ^[5] He clears away the darkness of ignorance; Like the king of wish-fulfilling gems, He rains down a shower of nectar on all.¹³ Growing the sprout of the aspira- tion to awakening, He brings to maturity the fruit of liberation [for everyone]—^[10] With a pure mind, folding my hands I offer homage To such a great Protector as that! </p>
<p> 2: chos dbyings, A, B] D: chos bying; E: chos sbyings; F: chos bzhin; C is missing here. mnyam ba] A: mnyam bas 4: bral yang] B: bral ba; C is not preserved. 12: dag pa'i] A: dang bzhi; F: bdag gä </p>	
<p> དེ་རྩོགས་པ་མེད་པས་རྟག་དུ་མཚོད །། </p>	<p> Always worshipping without reification,¹⁴ </p>

¹³ That is, his action is spontaneous and effortless, just as wishes are fulfilled by the wish-fulfilling gem.

¹⁴ We might understand also something like "Without any actual object in mind, without the idea that there is something real toward which one directs one's thoughts, still constantly worshipping" But I am not certain what theological background should be assumed here.

<p>མཉམ་བ་ཉིད་གྱིས་སྒྲིག་ཀྱང་བཤགས། ། རེ་བ་བྱེད་པའི་སློན་ལམ་འདེབས། །^[15] ཐོབ་བ་བྱེད་པའི་འབྲས་བུར་ཤོག། །</p>	<p>As well as confessing transgressions with equanimity,¹⁵ Offering an aspirational prayer without expectation [of reward],^[15] May [this seed] bear the fruit which is non-attainment!</p>
<p>14: nyid gyis] A, B: nyid kyi; C is not preserved.</p>	
<p>བདེར་གཤེགས་ཡོན་ཏན་མཉམ་བས་ན། ། ཞིང་ནམས་ཐའ་དད་དབྱེར་བྱེད་ཀྱང། ། སེམས་ཅན་བག་ཆགས་བྱི་མཐུན་བས། ། ཞིང་གི་ཡོན་ཏན་ཐ་དད་སྣང། །^[20]</p>	<p>Although, because the good qualities of [all] Sugatas are equal [to each other], Their [buddha] fields are undifferentiated and indistinguishable, still Because the inclinations of beings are different, The good qualities of [this particular buddha] field appear in a differentiated fashion.^[20]</p>
<p>དེ་བས་སྣང་བ་མཐའ་ཡས་ཀྱི། ། ཞིང་གི་ཡོན་ཏན་མདོ་ཙམ་སློབ། ། ཞིབ་དུ་སློབ་ན་བརྗོད་མེད། །</p>	<p>Therefore, I will speak only briefly of the good qualities of the [buddha] field Of [the buddha] Endless Radiance— [For] if I were to speak of them in detail, I could never finish describing them.</p>
<p>23: lang] C, D, E, F: langs</p>	
<p>བུབ་ཕྱོགས་སྤྱིད་པའི་ཞིང་རབ་ན། ། དཔལ་གྱི་འོད་འབར་སྣང་བ་བཞུགས། །^[25] དེ་འི་ཡོན་ཏན་བསམ་བྱི་བྱབ། །</p>	<p>In the west, in the best [buddha] field of joy, Dwells [the buddha] Splendid Bright Radiance.^[25] Although his good qualities,</p>

¹⁵ Generally I would reserve the English term “equanimity” for *upekṣā*, *btang snyoms*, but here rather than “equality” this seems to be the sense of *mnyam ba nyid* (for which we would perhaps expect *mnyam pa nyid*, but I follow the reading of all sources, which is also found not uncommonly in Dunhuang documents).

<p>བརྗོད་དང་བཤད་ཀྱིས་ཕྱི་ལངས་ཀྱང །། སེམས་ཅན་རྣམས་ནི་དྲང་བའི་ཕྱིར །། ཡོན་ཏན་ཆ་ལུགས་བཞུགས་ཚུལ་སྟོན །།</p>	<p>being inconceivable, Are inexpressible and indescribable, I will speak of the good qualities, adornments and bearing, Which he displays in order to lead beings [there].</p>
<p>25: C: ends here with bzhug ///. E: skips this line and resumes only with l. 30 (eye skip). 27: bshad kyis] A: bsam gñis; D: bshad gyis; F: bshags gyis 29: cha lugs, D, F] A: cha las; B: che la</p>	
<p>དཔལ་གྱི་སྣང་བ་བཞུགས་པའི་ཚུལ །། ^[30] ཉིང་འཛིན་གྱི་གཡོ་རྒྱ་མཚོ་ལས །། རྣམ་ཤེས་མ་ཆགས་པད་མོ་འཁྲུངས །།</p>	<p>As for the bearing of [the buddha] Splendid Radiance, ^[30] From the ocean of his immovable contemplation Emerges the lotus of his aware- ness and non-attachment.</p>
<p>ཆགས་པ་ཕྱེད་པའི་པད་མོ་ལ །། ཚད་ཕྱེད་བཞི་འེག་དན་ཁྲི་བཉིང །། སྤུགས་རྗེ་སྟོན་པའི་རྒྱན་གྱིས་བརྒྱན །། ^[35] དཔལ་གྱི་སྣང་བ་ཕྱི་གཡོ་བཞུགས །།</p>	<p>Having spread the seat of the four immeasurables¹⁶ On the lotus of non-attachment, and Ornamented it with the orna- ments of compassion and equanimity,¹⁷ ^[35] The [buddha] Splendid Radiance rests [there] immovable.</p>
<p>36: E omits</p>	
<p>སྟོང་པ་ཉིད་ཀྱི་གཞུང་ཕྱེད་ཁང །། ལྷ་དང་མཐའ་ཡང་དཔག་དུ་ཕྱེད །།</p>	<p>His incomparable palace of emptiness, Its borders and its limits immea- surable,</p>

¹⁶ More usually *gdan khri* means something like “throne,” and perhaps *bting* here should be understood not as “spread out,” then, but as “set up”?

¹⁷ Or perhaps “equal compassion”?

<p>མངོན་ཤེས་དྲུག་གི་སྐར་ཁུང་གསལ །། མྱི་མཁྱེན་མྱི་གཟིགས་ཡོངས་ཡེ་མྱེད །།^[40] ཐེག་ཚེན་ཚོས་ནི་གདུགས་སུ་སྦྱབ །། བྱང་ཚུབ་ཡན་ལག་པན་དང་རྒྱན །། བདུད་བཞི་འཛོམས་པའི་རྒྱལ་མཚན་ བསྐྱེད །། མཉམ་བཞིན་གྱི་དགྲིལ་འཁོར་བྱས །། ཚགས་པ་མྱེད་པའི་པད་མོ་བགྲམ །།^[45] རྣམ་དག་ཚུལ་བྲིམས་སློས་ཀྱང་འབྱུལ །། སུས་ཀྱང་མ་བྱས་ལྷན་གྱིས་གྲུབ །།</p>	<p>Its clear windows the six higher knowledges, [Through which] there is nothing [that buddha] does not fath- om, nothing he does not observe;^[40] Its parasol, the teaching of the Great Vehicle, raised; Ornamented with the silk hang- ings of the [seven] factors of awakening;¹⁸ Its victory banner of subduing the four Māras elevated; Constructed with the maṇḍala of equality,¹⁹ Laid out with the lotuses of non- attachment,^[45] Scented with the perfumes of pure morality, Unconstructed by anyone, it is self-arisen.</p>
<p>43: 'joms pa'i] A, D: bcom ba'i; F: 'jom ba+i 46: 'thul] D, F: gtul</p>	
<p>སྟོབས་བརྩ་མྱི་འཇིགས་སྐྱའི་རྒྱན །། དཔེའ་བྱད་མཚན་བཟངས་བསྟར་མྱི་ བཟོད །།</p>	<p>The ten powers and the [four] fearlessnesses ornament [that buddha's] body. One never tires of looking upon his [thirty-two] major and [eighty] minor auspicious bodily marks.²⁰</p>

¹⁸ The spelling *pan* may be understood as *phan*, a suggestion for which I thank Charles Ramble. The term also appears as *ka* [']*phan*, and refers to temple hangings, or hanging fringes, tassels or ribbons. For an illustration see Lange 2020: 118, in the middle of the lower row. Berthe Jansen, on the other hand, suggests that *pan* may be an abbreviation of *ba dan*, which we find in l. 48 of the *Bka' thang gser phreng*, below. This term, she further points out, is a translation of Sanskrit *patākā* (variously spelt, perhaps more correctly with *ṭ*), a sort of banner.

¹⁹ In l. 122, the equality is stated to be between good and evil. Otherwise we might expect something like *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, as implied below in l. 142.

²⁰ Although I have understood *bzangs* here as equivalent to *bzang*, as Berthe Jansen points out to me, the word *bzangs* means a storeyed house (cp. *khang bzangs*, palace), and it is possible that the author intended this allusion also.

<p>འོད་གཟེར་དག་ནི་གཞལ་བཞིན་འཁོར་།། <small>[50]</small> འོད་གཟེར་དག་ནི་ཕྱོགས་བརྒྱུད་འཕྲོ་།། འཁོར་མང་དག་ནི་རྒྱན་བཞིན་འདུ་།། འཁོར་ནི་སྐྱེས་བུ་མཐུ་ལྡན་བ་།། ཞལ་དུ་ལྷ་བ་དང་བའི་ཡིད་།།</p>	<p>Rays of radiance encircle him like a rainbow;²¹ <small>[50]</small> [Those] rays of radiance spread through the ten directions. His multitudinous retinue gathers like clouds.²² This retinue of his consists of powerful beings, Who gaze upon him [to serve him], pure in heart.²³</p>
<p>50: 'od gzer, B] A: +od bzangs; D: 'od bzang; E: 'od bzangs; F: +od zer 51: 'od gzer, B, D] A, F: +od zer E omits 54: dang ba'i yid] A: dang ba yin; D: dang ba nyid; F: dang ma yid</p>	
<p>དེ་ལྟར་མཐུ་ཆེ་དཔལ་འབར་བ་།། <small>[55]</small> ཕྱི་གསུང་ཕྱི་གཡོ་མཉམ་བཞག་ཀྱང་།། སྡོན་གྱི་སྡོན་ལམ་ཐུགས་དམ་གསུང་།། འོད་ཟེར་མང་པོ་ཕྱོགས་བརྒྱུད་འཕྲོ་།། འོད་ཟེར་དག་ནི་རེ་རེ་ལས་།། སྐྱུ་ལ་བ་དག་ནི་གངས་ལྗོད་འགྲེང་།། <small>[60]</small> དཔག་དུ་ལྗོད་པའི་སེམས་ཅན་སྐྱོལ་།། འདུ་ཞིང་འགྲེང་བ་གངས་ལྗོད་ཀྱང་།། ཚོས་ཉིད་ལ་ནི་སྐྱེ་འགྲིབ་ལྗོད་།།</p>	<p>Although he, being as described, of great strength and radiant in glory, <small>[55]</small> Is unspeaking, unmoving, and in meditative equipoise, still, By virtue of his previous vows and pledges, His many rays of radiance diffuse in the ten directions, and From each of those rays of radi- ance Are emitted innumerable mani- festations,²⁴ <small>[60]</small> Which save limitless beings, and Although [the rays with their manifestations] are retracted and emitted over and over</p>

²¹ My thanks to Berthe Jansen for pointing out to me that *gzha'* is an Old Tibetan equivalent of 'ja', rainbow. See *Ma ni bka' 'bum* I l. 60, below.

²² While *sprin* is perhaps properly "rain cloud," here I think the image does not suffer from the simple use of "cloud," although certainly the idea that they are heavy, dark clouds is not inapposite.

²³ The sense here is that the beings gaze upon him expecting to serve.

²⁴ What I translate here as "manifestation" is *sprul pa*, which in l. 148, below, is more fittingly "magical creation."

	<p>again, In his essence there is no increase or decrease.</p>
<p>57: sngon gyi A: sngon gi; D, E, F: sngun gyi 58: 'od zer B: +od gser, D: 'od gzer 59: 'od zer B: +od gser; D: 'od 'phro re re las A, E, F: re re la (E has sa added slightly above la in later, much bigger hand) 62: F has for the entire line: bdud bzhī skyel ba'i rgyal mtshan skreng 63: ni skye 'grib myed D: ni skye +bri/+gri? myed; E: ni skye 'brī myed; F: yang ni skyeb +grī myed</p>	
<p>དཔལ་གྱི་འོད་འབར་ཞིང་རབ་ན །། འཕགས་པ་མ་ཡིན་གྱི་གནས་པས །། [65] རྒྱད་དུག་འཁོར་བའི་བྱིང་ཡང་བྱེད །།</p>	<p>Since none who dwell in that best land of [the buddha] Splen- did Radiance Are any other than Nobles, [65] Even the words 'the six destinies which constitute saṃsāra' do not exist there.²⁵</p>
<p>65: 'phags pa D: sems can; F: sems shan 66: rgyud B, E, F: rgyu</p>	
<p>རིན་ཅེན་སྣ་ཚོགས་བརྒྱན་པས་ན །། ས་དང་རྩི་འཁོར་བྱིང་ཡང་བྱེད །།</p>	<p>Since [that buddha field is] adorned with all sorts of precious things, Even the words 'earth and stones' do not exist there.</p>
<p>བྱང་ཚུབ་ཤིང་ནི་རབ་བརྒྱན་པས །། ཅི་ཤིང་སྣ་ཚོགས་བྱིང་ཡང་བྱེད །། [70]</p>	<p>Since it is ornamented by Bodhi trees, Even the words 'various trees' do not exist there. [70]</p>

²⁵ I owe to Charles Ramble the indication that the sense of *rgyud* here is something like "environs," and indeed we find this in Franke et al. 2011: 454b, s.v. *rgyud 7* "Gebiet, Daseinsberich," also quoting dictionaries which define for instance *rgyud lnga'i lam* as 'khor ba.

<p>69: brgyan pas] D, E: rgyas pas; A: brgyan pas na; F: rgyan bas</p>	
<p>ཉིང་འཛིན་བརྒྱན་ལྷན་ཚུ་འབབ་པས །། སྣ་ཚོགས་ཚུ་འི་ཕྱིང་ཡང་ཕྱེད །།</p>	<p>Since the river flowing [in that buddha field] is that of the eight contemplations, Even the words ‘various types of rivers’ do not exist there.</p>
<p>71: F: omits the line 72: F: omits the line</p>	
<p>ཡེ་ཤེས་དཔལ་གྱི་ཕྱེ་འབར་བས །། འཇིག་རྟེན་ཕྱེ་འི་ཕྱིང་ཡང་ཕྱེད །།</p>	<p>Since the splendid flame of wisdom burns [in that buddha field], Even the words ‘ordinary flames’ do not exist there.</p>
<p>73: ye shes dpal] B: shes rab dpal; F: ye shes ‘bal</p>	
<p>རྣམ་གྲོལ་སློལ་གྱི་དྲི་ལྷང་བས །། [75] འཇིག་རྟེན་སྲུང་གི་ཕྱིང་ཡང་ཕྱེད །།</p>	<p>Since the fragrance of the perfumes of liberation rises [in that buddha field], [75] Even the words ‘ordinary wind’ do not exist there.</p>
<p>75: dri ldang bas] A: dri ltang bas; D: dri hard to read: da on top of da? (in any event, no vowel and not dri); F: dri ldan pas</p>	
<p>ཚོས་གྱི་དགྱིལ་འཁོར་འོད་འཕྲོ་བས །། ཉི་མ་ཟླ་བའི་ཕྱིང་ཡང་ཕྱེད །།</p>	<p>Since the orb of the Dharma shines through [that buddha field], Even the words ‘sun and moon’ do not exist there.</p>
<p>འཕགས་པའི་ཤེས་རབ་འོད་གསལ་བས །། ཉིན་དང་མཚན་གྱི་ཕྱིང་ཡང་ཕྱེད །། [80]</p>	<p>Since [that buddha field] is brightly illuminated with the wisdom of the Noble One, Even the words ‘day and night’ do not exist there. [80]</p>

<p>79–80: F omits the lines.</p>	
<p>ཚོས་རྒྱལ་སྣང་བ་ཉིད་བཞུགས་པས །། རྒྱལ་པོ་སློན་པོ་འདི་མེད་ཡང་ཟེད །།</p>	<p>Since the Dharma king Luminosity resides [in that buddha field],²⁶ Even the words ‘[ordinary] king and ministers’ do not exist there.</p>
<p>82: E ends with r(gya)l (p)o (bl)o(n).</p>	
<p>བྱང་ཚུབ་སྦྱིད་པའི་ལམ་སྦྱོང་པས །། འདིག་རྟེན་ལམ་གྱི་མེད་ཡང་ཟེད །།</p>	<p>Since one practices the happy path toward awakening [in that buddha field], Even the words ‘ordinary path’ do not exist there.</p>
<p>བདག་དང་བདག་གིར་མེད་ལྟ་བུས །།^[85] འཐབ་ཅིང་ཚྱད་པའི་མེད་ཡང་ཟེད །།</p>	<p>Since one does not see I or mine [in that buddha field],^[85] Even the words ‘conflict and quarrel’ do not exist there.</p>
<p>85: bdag gir] F: gzhan du</p>	
<p>ཉིང་ངེ་འཛིན་གྱི་ཟས་ཟ་བས །། ཟས་ཤེས་བྱ་བའི་མེད་ཡང་ཟེད །།</p>	<p>Since one eats the food of meditative contemplation [in that buddha field], Even the words ‘[ordinary] food’ do not exist there.</p>
<p>88: zas shes] A: zas kyï; D: zas gyï; F: zas zhes. The reading in A, D would parallel l. 90, but it is not necessary.</p>	
<p>རྒྱལ་ཁྲིམས་གཙང་མའི་གོས་སྟོན་བས །། གོས་གྱི་བྱ་བའི་མེད་ཡང་ཟེད །།^[90]</p>	<p>Since [in that buddha field] one is clad in garments of pure morality,²⁷ Even the words ‘[ordinary]</p>

²⁶ The reference here is of course to Amitābha.

²⁷ Or equally, the pure robes of morality; in the end, the meaning probably does not change.

	garments' do not exist there. [90]
90: gos kyi] B: gos kyis; F: gos zhes	
པད་མོའི་སྣང་དུ་རྩུས་སྐྱེ་པས །། སྐྱེ་བ་གནས་བཞི་སྐྱེང་ཡང་སྐྱེད །།	Since [in that buddha field] one is spontaneously born atop a lotus, Even the words 'four kinds of birth' do not exist there. ²⁸
91: steng du] A: steng na; D: nang nas rdzus skye pas] A: brdzus skye bas; B: rdzus skyed pa; D: rdzu skyes pas; F: rdzu 'khrungs pas 92: gnas bzhi] A: gnas bzhi +i ; D, F: rnam bzhi'i	
སྐྱེ་གི་སྐྱེད་པའི་ལམ་བརྒྱུ་མས་པས །། སྐྱེ་ཞིང་འཆི་བའི་སྐྱེང་ཡང་སྐྱེད །།	Since one cultivates the path free from birth and death [in that buddha field], Even the words 'being born and dying' do not exist there.
དཔལ་གྱི་ཞིང་རབ་དེ་ན་ནི །། [95] ཐམས་ཅད་བྱང་ཆུབ་སྐྱིད་སྣོད་པས །། སྐྱེ་བདེ་གཞོན་པའི་སྐྱེང་ཡང་སྐྱེད །།	In that best splendid [buddha] field, ²⁹ [95] Since all happily practice toward awakening, Even the words 'displeasure and harm' do not exist there.
བདེ་འོ་བྱང་ཆུབ་སངས་རྒྱས་ཞིང །།	Wonderful! ³⁰ To that field of bodhisattvas and buddhas

²⁸ What is odd here is that spontaneous birth is itself one of the four kinds of birth: *mngal* (womb) *sgong* (egg), *drod* [g]sher (moisture) and [b]rdzus (spontaneous).

²⁹ Although it would be possible to understand "field of the Splendid One," in a work of the 17th c. Karma chags med (1613–1678), *Bde smon phyogs bsgrigs*, we find precisely the expression *dpal gyi zhing rab bde ba can de na* (bdr:11PD83979, p. 158–159).

³⁰ It does not appear that this usage of *bde* 'o is attested elsewhere, but I follow the suggestion of Leonard van der Kuijp, *faute de mieux*. While simply reading **bde* 'i, though perhaps not entirely unthinkable (I find not a single example in the online Old Tibetan text corpus), would be difficult, it would perhaps be possible to follow the reading of the parallel line in the *Ma ñi bka'* 'bum l. 39 (see below), and read

<p>ཐམས་ཅད་ཀུན་ནི་དེར་འདོང་རིགས་ །། དེར་འགོ་འདོད་པའི་བྱི་མཚོག་རྣམས་ །། [100] བྱང་ཚུབ་སྐྱིད་པའི་ལམ་སྐྱོད་དོ །།</p>	<p>All had best go. Those best of persons who aspire to go there [100] Should practice the happy path to awakening.³¹</p>
<p>101: skyid pa'i lam] A: spyad pa skyid; D: kyī ni lam; F: gyī na lam</p>	
<p>བྱང་ཚུབ་ལམ་ནི་གང་ཞེན་ །། འདོད་པ་ལྡན་པའི་རབ་སྐྱེད་ལ་ །། བྱིས་ནས་བྱིས་ཟུང་རབ་བྱུང་སྟེ །། དགེ་བའི་བཤེས་ཉེན་བཙལ་བར་བྱ །། [105]</p>	<p>What is the path to awakening? One must reject the five sense objects, Renounce the home for the home- less life, and Seek out spiritual good friends. [105]</p>
<p>105: bar bya] A: bar gyis; D: bar gyis</p>	
<p>དགེ་བའི་བཤེས་གཉེན་གང་ཞེན་ །། སངས་རྒྱལ་བྱང་ཚུབ་སེམས་དཔའ་དང་ །། ངེས་པར་གསུངས་པའི་གསུང་རབས་དང་ །། གང་ཟག་ཚོས་ཀྱི་དབྱིག་ཅན་རྣམས་ །། དགེ་བའི་བཤེས་ཉེན་སངས་རྒྱལ་གསུངས་ །། [110] དེ་དག་རྣམས་ལ་བསྟོན་ཅིང་མཚོད་ །།</p>	<p>Who are the spiritual good friends? Buddhas, bodhisattvas, Texts which speak with certain- ty,³² and People who possess the Dharma eye— These the Buddha called spiritual good friends; [110] One should revere and honor them!</p>

here instead *bde ba'i*, then construing the entire line as "To that buddha field of happy awakening," or some such thing.

³¹ I am uncertain here whether we should not understand "path to happy awakening." In any event, *skyid pa* should probably be associated with what is elsewhere *bde ba (can)*, the normal term for *Sukhāvati*.

³² I am uncertain here; it might be more convincing if this line would refer to scholars who have mastery over texts, for instance, but here the text seems to be saying that the texts themselves are the good friends. I do not know that there are other examples of inanimate objects being considered good friends, but I have not made a thorough search.

<p>ཡང་ནས་ཡང་དུ་བསྐྱེན་བྱས་ན །། བྱང་ཚུབ་ལམ་ནི་གོམས་པར་འགྱུར །། བྱང་ཚུབ་དམ་པ་གོམས་བྱས་ནས །། རིང་མཚོག་དེར་ནི་སྐྱེ་བར་འགྱུར །། [115]</p>	<p>Having repeatedly revered them, One will cultivate the path to awakening, And having cultivated the highest awakening, One will be reborn in that excellent [buddha] field. [115]</p>
<p>114: byas nas] A, F: byas na</p>	
<p>ཚུལ་ཁྲིམས་གཙང་མའི་སྣོད་བྱས་ལ །། ཉིང་འཛིན་དག་པའི་ཚུ་ལྷུགས་ན །། ཤེས་རབ་དག་པའི་འོད་བྱུང་བས །། རིང་མཚོག་དེར་ནི་སྐྱེ་བར་འགྱུར །།</p>	<p>When one, having made oneself into a vessel of stainless morality, Has poured out the water of pure contemplation and Emitted the radiance of pure wisdom,³³ One will be reborn in that excellent [buddha] field.</p>
<p>118: dag pa'i] A: kyis ni; D: gyi; F: gyi na</p>	
<p>ཕྱི་དགེ་བཅུ་ནི་སྤངས་བཏང་ནས །། [120] དགེ་བ་བཅུ་ལ་སྦྱོར་བྱེད་ཅིང །། དགེ་སྤྱིག་མཉམ་བའི་ལམ་བསྐྱོམས་ན །། རིང་མཚོག་དེར་ནི་སྐྱེ་བར་འགྱུར །།</p>	<p>When one, having rejected the ten unvirtuous actions, and [120] Having applied oneself to the ten virtuous actions, Has cultivated the path which levels good and evil,³⁴ One will be reborn in that excellent [buddha] field.</p>
<p>འདོད་ཆགས་ཞེ་སྤང་གཉི་སྤྱུག་གི །། དུག་ཚེན་དེ་དག་རབ་སྤངས་ཉི །། [125] འདོད་ཆགས་མཉམ་བའི་ལམ་བསྐྱོམས་ན །།</p>	<p>When one, having rid oneself of the [three] great poisons of Lust, hatred and delusion, [125] Has cultivated the path which</p>

³³ I think “water of pure contemplation” is probably best seen in parallel with other usages in the text, but note that “pure water” would here make equally good if not better sense. Note that in the three lines here we have the well-known category grouping of *śīla*, *samādhi* and *prajñā*, the *triśikṣā*.

³⁴ See ll. 44, above, and 126, immediately below.

<p>ཞིང་མཚོག་དེར་ནི་སྐྱེ་བར་འགྱུར །།</p>	<p>levels rejection and lust,³⁵ One will be reborn in that excellent [buddha] field.</p>
<p>124: sdang gti mug gi] A: stang gti mug gi; F: stang gti mugs gyis 126: 'dor chags] conj. for 'dod chags of all witnesses</p>	
<p>ཕྱིན་ཅི་ལོག་ནི་བཞི་སྣང་ས་ནས །། བདེན་བ་བཞི་ལ་སྦྱོར་བྱེད་ཅིང །། གཉིས་སུ་བྱེད་པའི་ལམ་བསྐོས་ན །། [130] ཞིང་མཚོག་དེར་ནི་སྐྱེ་བར་འགྱུར །།</p>	<p>When one, having rejected the four perverted views,³⁶ and Having applied oneself to the four truths, Has cultivated the path of non- duality, [130] One will be reborn in that excel- lent [buddha] field.</p>
<p>128: Whole line in F: phyin cu ga, o over ca cancelled, then log bzhi rab spangs nas</p>	
<p>མ་རིག་ལུགས་བཞིན་འབྱུང་བ་ཡི །། སྐྱེ་བའི་བར་ནི་རབ་སྣང་ས་ཏེ །། མ་རིག་ཚོས་དབྱིངས་ཉིད་བསྐོས་ན །། ཞིང་མཚོག་དེར་ནི་སྐྱེ་བར་འགྱུར །། [135]</p>	<p>When one, having rejected birth, death and the intermediate state That arise following on ignorance, Has cultivated ignorance as the very <i>dharmadhātu</i>,³⁷ One will be reborn in that excel- lent [buddha] field. [135]</p>

³⁵ The text is evidently faulty, all manuscripts reading 'dod chags. We need a binary opposition here, and in view of the term *dge sdig* immediately above, we would expect that 'dod is wrong. I follow the suggestion of Charles Ramble, which graphically speaking is almost beyond doubt, and emend to 'dor. In order to bring out the contrast better we might translate "rejection and attraction," for instance, but then we would lose the literal connection to the three poisons.

³⁶ Namely, the *caturvoparyāsa*: taking the impermanent to be permanent, the painful to be delightful, the impure to be pure, the selfless to be a self (*mi rtag pa rtag pa, dka' ba sla ba, mi sdug pa sdug pa, bdag med pa bdag pa*).

³⁷ I follow the suggestion of Berthe Jansen, who notes that this paradoxical formulation is characteristic of some forms of Tibetan thought.

<p> བོར་པར་མཐོང་བའི་སྤང་པོ་ལྟེ །། རྒྱུ་མ་ཉིད་དུ་ཤེས་བྱས་སྟེ །། རྒྱུ་འགག་བྱེད་པའི་ལམ་བསྐྱོམས་ན །། ཞིང་མཚོག་དེར་ནི་སྐྱེ་བར་འགྱུར །། </p>	<p> When one, having understood the falsely perceived Five aggregates as nothing but illusory, Has cultivated the path [toward understanding] the absence of [real] creation and destruc- tion, One will be reborn in that excel- lent [buddha] field. </p>
<p> སེམས་དང་ཡིད་དང་རྣམ་ཤེས་གསུམ །། <small>[140]</small> སྤྱུག་བསྐྱེད་འཁོར་བའི་རྒྱ་ཡིན་བས །། རྒྱ་རྟོག་མཉམ་བའི་ལམ་བསྐྱོམས་ན །། ཞིང་མཚོག་དེར་ནི་སྐྱེ་བར་འགྱུར །། </p>	<p> Since the triad of mind, thought and cognition³⁸ <small>[140]</small> Is the cause of transmigration [which is inherently] suffering, When one has cultivated the path of the nonconceptual leveling [of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa], One will be reborn in that excel- lent [buddha] field. </p>
<p> 142: A: omits ll. 142–144 </p>	
<p> ཁམས་གསུམ་སྣང་བ་སེམས་ཡིན་བས །། མཁས་པ་གང་གིས་ཤེས་འགྱུར་ན །། <small>[145]</small> ཞིང་མཚོག་དེར་ནི་སྐྱེ་བར་འགྱུར །། </p>	<p> Since the appearance of the triple world is [only] mental, Whichever wise one will come to know this³⁹ <small>[145]</small> Will be reborn in that excellent [buddha] field. </p>
<p> ཚོས་རྣམས་ཐམས་ཅད་རི་སྟེད་པ །། རྒྱུ་ལམ་དང་ནི་སྤྱུལ་པ་དང །། རྒྱུག་རྒྱུ་འདྲ་བར་རབ་ཤེས་ན །། </p>	<p> When one truly understands that all things Are just like a dream, a magical </p>

³⁸ I understand these three to be synonymous. This is precisely stated in the *Vinśīkāvytti* I(c): *sems dang yid dang | rnam par shes pa dang | rnam par rig pa zhes bya ba ni rnam grangs su gtogs pa'o*, “Mind, thought, cognition and manifestation are synonyms.”

³⁹ More literally, “When any wise one will come to know this, then s/he will be”

<p>ཞིང་མཚོག་དེར་ནི་སྐྱེ་བར་འགྱུར །། [150]</p>	<p>creation,⁴⁰ And a mirage, One will be reborn in that excellent [buddha] field. [150]</p>
<p>149: smyug rgyu] B: smrigs rgyu; F: smyugs rgyur rab shes na] A: kun shes na; F: shes +gyur na</p>	
<p>དམྱེགས་པ་ཕྱེད་པར་རྒྱགས་བཏང་ལ །། ཚུལ་ཁྲིམས་གཙང་མའི་སྣོད་བྱས་ན །། ཞིང་མཚོག་དེར་ནི་སྐྱེ་བར་འགྱུར །།</p>	<p>When one has given away possessions in a manner free of referential objectification,⁴¹ and Made oneself a vessel of pure morality, One will be reborn in that excellent [buddha] field.</p>
<p>151: myed par, A] B, D, F: myed pa+i rgyags btang la] A: rgyags btags te; D: brgyags btags te; F: rgyags btags nas</p>	
<p>བཟོད་པ་མཚོག་གི་ཡ་ལང་དང །། བཙོན་འགྱུར་གྱི་ནི་ཉ་ཞོན་ན །། [155] ཞིང་མཚོག་དེར་ནི་སྐྱེ་བར་འགྱུར །།</p>	<p>When one [has put on] the armour of the supreme patience and Has mounted the horse of energy, ^[155] One will be reborn in that excellent [buddha] field.</p>
<p>བསམ་བརྟན་གྱི་ནི་གཞུ་བརྟུངས་ནས །། ཤེས་རབ་མགྲོགས་པའི་མདའ་འཕངས་ཏེ །། རྣམ་ཤེས་བརྒྱུད་གྱི་དགྲ་བསད་ན །།</p>	<p>When one has drawn the bow of meditative concentration, Loosed the speedy arrow of wisdom, and Killed the enemies which are the eight consciousnesses,⁴²</p>

⁴⁰ Here *sprul pa* is “magical creation,” but elsewhere I have translated “manifestation.” In this verse of course the word is negative, while elsewhere in this poem it is used to refer to a projection of the Buddha Amitābha.

⁴¹ Here begins a sequence of the perfections: *dāna śīla, kṣānti, vīrya, dhyāna* and *prajñā*.

⁴² This category, in Sanskrit *aṣṭavijñāna*, also termed *rnam shes tshogs brgyad*, adds to the normal six *vijñānas* the *ālayavijñāna* (*kun gzhi rnam par shes pa*) and (*kliṣṭa-*)*manas*. It is probably reasonable to see here a Yogācāra influence.

<p>ཞིང་མཚོག་དེར་ནི་སྐྱེ་བར་འགྱུར །། [160]</p>	<p>One will be reborn in that excellent [buddha] field. [160]</p>
<p>157: gzhu btungs nas, D] A: gzhu brdungs nas; B: gzhung btungs la; F: gzhu rtungs nas</p>	
<p>བྱང་ཚུབ་ཚྱོགས་གྱི་བསྐྱེན་བྱས་ཏེ །། མཉམ་བ་ཉིད་ཀྱི་ལམ་བསྐོས་ན །། ཞིང་མཚོག་དེར་ནི་སྐྱེ་བར་འགྱུར །།</p>	<p>When one has relied on the [thirty-seven] factors of awakening and Cultivated the path of equality, One will be reborn in that excellent [buddha] field.</p>
<p>161: phyogs gyi, D] A: mchog gi; B: phyogs ni; F: phyogs gyi sa [for: gyis] bsten byas te, B] A: sems bskyed de; D: bsel byas te; F: sel byas ste 162: Whole line in F: nyam ba nyid gyi lam bskoms na</p>	
<p>གནས་པ་ཕྱེད་པའི་དགོན་པ་དང །། ཚགས་པ་ཕྱེད་པའི་ཕྱག་དར་དང །། [165] མྱང་དོར་ཕྱེད་པའི་བཟོད་སྦྱང་ན །། ཞིང་མཚོག་དེར་ནི་སྐྱེ་བར་འགྱུར །།</p>	<p>When one has engaged in the isolation free from [the bondage of] the house,⁴³ The sweeping up free from attachment,⁴⁴ and [165] The patient acceptance free from preference, One will be reborn in that excellent [buddha] field.</p>
<p>སེམས་ཅན་རང་བཞིན་གྱི་དབྱིགས་ཀྱང །། འཇུག་པའི་སེམས་ཀྱིས་འཁོར་བ་ལ །།</p>	<p>When, although one does not apprehend any real intrinsic nature in beings, One has developed deeply felt</p>

⁴³ I suspect that *gnas pa med pa* here is used in the sense of the Sanskrit technical term *aniketa*, which refers to freedom from attachment, e.g. to a home. It would perhaps be possible to translate “homelessness” save for the meaning this has acquired in contemporary English, and that I have tried to show the parallelism of the three instances of *myed pa*. The overall meaning of this set of three expressions, however, remains obscure to me.

⁴⁴ Charles Ramble has suggested that the image may be that one sweeps but does not let the dust settle. In this sense, we could understand “sweeping up without [dust] which settles down [anywhere],” but I feel that this does not make things dramatically more clear.

<p>སློང་རྗེ་ཆེན་པོ་རབ་བསྐྱེད་ན། ། [170] འིང་མཚོག་དེར་ནི་སྐྱེ་བར་འགྱུར། །</p>	<p>great compassion toward those who Transmigrate on account of their deluded minds, [170] One will be reborn in that excel- lent [buddha] field.</p>
<p>168: Whole line in F: sems dang sems bzhan myigs kyang</p>	
<p>ཚོས་ཀྱི་རང་བཞིན་རྣམ་དག་པས། ། འིང་མཚོག་དེ་ཡང་དག་པ་ཡིན། །</p>	<p>Because the nature of reality itself is pure,⁴⁵ That excellent [buddha] field too is pure.</p>
<p>རྟོག་པའི་སེམས་ཀྱིས་དེར་སྐྱེ་འགོ། ། འཁམས་གསུམ་ལ་ཡང་སྐྱེ་རྟོག་ཅིང། ། [175] འི་བ་ལ་ཡང་སྐྱེ་གནས་ན། ། འིང་གི་རང་བཞིན་དེ་ཡིན་ནོ། །</p>	<p>One does not go there with a con- ceptualizing state of mind and, When one does not either con- ceptualize oneself as in the triple realm, [175] Or dwell in [ultimate] peace—⁴⁶ <i>That</i> is the intrinsic nature of the [buddha] field.</p>
<p>སྐྱེ་རྟོག་བཞིན་དུ་མཚན་བརྗོད་ན། ། བསྐྱེད་པ་གྲངས་ལྗེད་སྤྲིག་ཀྱང་འབྱུང། ། བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་ཀྱི་མཚན་བརྗོད་ན། ། [180] མཚན་དང་བྱང་ཆུབ་གཉིས་སུ་སྐྱེད། །</p>	<p>When one offers praise free of conceptualization, This purifies even the evil deeds of innumerable aeons. When one offers praise of the aspiration to awakening, [180] Praise and awakening are non- dual.</p>
<p>གཉིས་སུ་སྐྱེད་པའི་སེམས་རྟོགས་ན། ། བྱང་ཆུབ་ཡོན་ཏན་ཐམས་ཅད་རྫོགས། ། མ་ལུས་སེམས་ཅན་སྐྱོལ་བར་འགྱུར། །</p>	<p>When one understands the mind to be non-dual, and Perfects all the virtues of awaken- ing, One will save all beings without exception.</p>

⁴⁵ See the *Praise of His Mighty Name*, 57d, and below.

⁴⁶ That is, one is neither in saṃsāra nor nirvāṇa. Sukhāvātī is located neither in saṃsāra nor in nirvāṇa.

<p>182: myed pa'i, B, E, F] A: rgyu ba+i; D: rgyu ba'i sems] B: don rtogs na, B] A: myed na; D: byed na; E, F: rgyu nas 184: sgrol bar 'gyur] B: sgrog bar +gyur; F: skrol par +gyur</p>	
<p>ཞིང་རྣམས་ནམ་ཀའི་རང་བཞིན་ཤེས །། [185] ཞིང་གི་རྣོ་མ་སེམས་སྱི་འབྱུང་ན །། སྱི་མཚོག་དེ་ནི་ཞིང་དེར་འགོ །། དེ་བས་བྱང་ཚུབ་སེམས་ལྡན་བྱ །།</p>	<p>When, understanding [buddha] fields to have the intrinsic nature of sky, [185] One is not arrogant about [one's future rebirth in] that field, Just that excellent person will go to that [buddha] field. Thus one should possess the aspiration to awakening.</p>
<p>185 shes] <i>ex. conj.</i> for zhes. བྱང་ཚུབ་སེམས་ཤེས་བྱ་བ་ནི །། དུས་གསུམ་དུ་ཡང་སྱི་དཔྱིགས་ཏེ །། [190] དཔྱིགས་པའི་སེམས་ཉིད་མཉམ་བ་ཡིན །། རྟོག་པ་ཅན་གྱིས་སྱི་རྟོགས་ཏེ །། རྟོག་ཟེད་འཕགས་པའི་སྟོད་ཡུལ་ལོ །།</p>	<p>The “aspiration to awakening,” Unperceived in any of the three times, [190] Is equal to the nature of the perceiving mind.⁴⁷ Those with conceptions do not comprehend this, for The nonconceptual is the domain of [only] the Noble One.⁴⁸</p>
<p>191: Whole line in F: dmyiḡs myed mnyam ba nyid gyi chos</p>	
<p>དཔྱིགས་པས་སྐྱ་རན་སྱི་འདའ་སྟེ །།</p>	<p>One does not attain nirvāṇa by reifying thought,</p>

⁴⁷ I follow here the suggestion of Cathy Cantwell concerning how to understand *nyid*. An alternative is “equal to the perceiving mind itself.”
⁴⁸ I have not found a way to convey in English the word play in the Tibetan, which rests on the repetition of etymologically identical words in somewhat different senses. The assertion that only the Buddha can really understand ultimate reality is fairly common. Noble One might be plural and thus a more general claim about the domain of knowledge of all buddhas, though the point does not appreciably change.

<p>ཕྱི་དབྱིགས་པས་ཀྱང་མ་ཡིན་ལོ།། ^[195] དབྱིགས་དང་ཕྱི་དབྱིགས་མཉམ་བ་སྟེ།། དེ་ནི་ཚོས་དབྱིངས་ཉིད་ཡིན་ལོ།།</p>	<p>Nor does one obtain it by the absence of reifying thought. ^[195] Reification and non-reification are equal— That is the nature of the <i>dharmadhātu</i>.</p>
<p>196–197: F omits these lines</p>	
<p>དེ་འདྲའི་ཚོས་ལ་རབ་མོས་ན།། བྱང་ཚུབ་ལམ་ཡང་ཕྱི་རིང་ངོ།།</p>	<p>If one has faith in such teachings, The path to awakening too is not far off.</p>
<p>དམ་ཚོས་འདི་བརྗོད་བསོད་ནམས་ཀྱིས།། ^[200] དགེ་བཤེས་ཚོས་རྒྱལ་ལོན་པོ་དང།། ཡོན་བདག་པ་མ་གཉེན་བཤེས་དང།། མཐའ་ཡས་སེམས་ཅན་རི་སྟེང་པ།། ཉེས་པའི་སྦྱོན་རྣམས་ཀྱན་བྱང་ནས།། བྱང་ཚུབ་སེམས་དང་ལྡན་བཞིན་དུ།། ^[205] ཞིང་མཚོག་དེར་ནི་སྦྱེ་བར་ཤོག།།</p>	<p>Through the merit [produced by my] praise of this Holy Teaching ^[200] May as many spiritual good friends, religious kings, ministers, Patrons, parents, relatives and friends and Beings without end as there are [in the world], Being [through this] cleansed of all transgressive faults, Come to possess the aspiration to awakening, and thus ^[205] Be born in that excellent [buddha] field!</p>
<p>202: gnyen bshes dang] B: sloba dpon dang 205: ldan bzhin du, A, D] B: ldan +gyur te; F: ldan bar smon</p>	

Explicit:

A: *snang ba mtha+ yas kyī zhing gī yon tan rdzogs s.ho* | |

B: *rdzogs s.ho* | | | |

D: *snang ba mtha+ yas kyī yon tan rnal 'byord pa la bstod pa rdzogs so* | |

F: *sung snang pa tha yas rdzogs so* | |⁴⁹

Structure

In some places the overall structure to these verses, that is to say, of the poem as a unit, is very clear, in others somewhat less so, and it is not always easy to discern the transition from one idea to another. Below I offer one possible scheme (all numbers refer to lines).⁵⁰

Homage to the Buddha [Amitābha]: 1~12
 Aspiration: 13~16
 Qualities of the buddha: 17~20
 Intention of the author: 21~29
 The land, its buddha and its beings: 30~63
 Qualifications of the land: 64~97
 The path to the land and those who assist: 98~111
 Conditions of certain rebirth there: 112~171
 The nature of the land: 172~184
 The aspiration: 185~193
 The *dharmadhātu*: 194~197
 Faith and its results: 198~199
 Dedication of merit: 200~206

After offering homage to a buddha, as yet unnamed and unindicated, in the first 12 lines, using terminology and ideas which could apply to any buddha, the author speaks of himself and his own offering. He then explains that although actually no such distinctions genuinely exist, in order to conform to the desires of beings the buddha manifests a particular configuration to his land. The expression in *ll.* 17~20 bears some similarity to that in the *Aspirational Prayer*, *ll.* 7~9:

sems can mtha' dang thugs rjer mnyam +dren pa dmyal ba yan cad de spyod pa rdzu 'phrul thabs kyis mdzad	Equal in their compassion toward all living beings, The guides, making use of their magical skillful means, Carry out their activities [all the way] down to the hells.
--	--

Furthermore *ll.* 30~34 of the *Aspirational Prayer* read:

⁴⁹ I have no good idea what *sung* could mean here. I do not know even whether it is Tibetan (could it be a Chinese word?).

⁵⁰ Note that this significantly differs from the brief analysis offered by Akamatsu 1986: 57–58.

sangs rgyas yon tan mtshungs
 mnyam ste ||
 che chung khyad bar bye brag
 myed ||
 sems can dad pa myi mthun
 phyir ||
 sangs rgyas so sor mtshan re
 bstan ||
 'gro ba rang dbang smon bzhin
 skye ||

The good qualities of the
 buddhas being equal,
 There are no distinctions of
 importance among them.
 But because living beings have
 different propensities of
 faith,
 The buddhas taught them
 under different names,
 And creatures generate
 [different pieties] according
 to their own abilities and
 wishes.

It is not surprising to see this sort of commonality among texts which even on the surface seem to be closely related.

Our author continues that although the good qualities of the field are infinite, here he praises them only selectively. He then, in *l.* 24, for the first time indicates that he is speaking of the Western Paradise, and in *l.* 25 for the first time uses one of his several variant forms of the name of the buddha of this land, here 'Od 'bar snang ba (see below for the variety of forms of the name as they appear in the poem). There then follow a number of expressions which I have not been able to trace, at least in this form, elsewhere, though it is possible that some are to be found in, or at least inspired by, Chinese sources. Aspects of the land of the buddha are framed in doctrinal terms, as in *ll.* 37–40, and following. The buddha's radiance becomes the subject from *l.* 49. In *l.* 56, the buddha is said to be, while immensely strong, silent, unmoving and composed. There follows (*ll.* 58–63) the assertion that from his rays of radiance appear manifestations (*sprul pa*) which work to save beings, an image closely corresponding to that in the 10th of the 16 contemplations in the so-called *Pure Land Contemplation sūtra* (*Guan Wuliangshoufo jing*):⁵¹

From the *ūrṇā* between the eyebrows [of Avalokiteśvara bodhisattva], the color of the seven jewels, emerge 84,000 rays of light, and each ray of light has limitless and uncountable thousands of transformation buddhas, and each transformation buddha has uncountable transformation bodhisattvas as attendants, freely altering their appearance

⁵¹ 觀無量壽佛經, T. 365 (XII) 343c20–23: 眉間毫相備七寶色, 流出八萬四千種光明, 一一光明有無量無數百千化佛。一一化佛, 無數化菩薩以為侍者, 變現自在滿十方世界。This and several other connections were already noted by Akamatsu. Here as elsewhere, the translations are mine unless otherwise credited.

and filling the worlds of the ten directions.

Slightly different but in tenor similar is a passage in the Larger *Sukhāvotīyūha* sūtra, in which the rays of light radiate from lotus flowers in the Pure Land, save that here no explicit mention is made of transformation bodies:⁵²

And from [each] jeweled lotus emerge in all directions thirty-six billion rays of light, and from each ray of light emerge all around thirty-six billion buddhas, with golden-colored bodies equipped with the thirty-two characteristic marks of the great man (that is, of a buddha), and each one of them goes to limitless incalculable world realms in the eastern direction, and teaches the Teaching to beings. In the same fashion, they go to the world realms in the south, west, north, to the zenith and the nadir and to the worlds in the intermediate compass points, and teach the Teaching to beings there.

What follows in our verses is a series of expressions, sixteen in number, all but the final one (95–97) of two lines, and all ending in *mying yang myed*. That is, the first line expresses some quality of the land, the second states that for that reason some words are not even known there: the expression is a rhetorical emphasis punctuating the unique and otherworldly nature of the land, which is so pure that ordinary worldly states are completely unknown. The first asserts that since all born there in that land are Nobles (Ārya, that is, they are advanced on the path of bodhisattvas, and thus no longer *prthagjanas*, ordinary beings not yet entered into the *bhūmis*), even the words *rgyud drug 'khor ba* do not exist there. It is not clear from this particular expression whether we should take the first two terms and the second two as belonging to the same expression, but the parallels that follow suggest that perhaps two things are meant, the “the six destinies” and “saṃsāra,” although the definition of the latter is of course none other than the former. The expression “six destinies” as *rgyud drug* is paralleled in the *Aspirational Prayer* (ll. 151–152), also referring to the same sequence of spiritual advancement with the words *ngan song rgyud drug lam bcad cing* | | *theg pa'i skas la rim 'dzeg ste*, “Cutting off the six paths, [beginning with] unfortunate destinies, / One ascends in stages the ladder of the Vehicles.” The point in the *Praise Poem* here is that since all beings born in the land are highly advanced on the path

⁵² Fujita 2011: 38.14–21: *sarvataś ca ratnapadmāt śaṭtriṃśadbrahmicōṭṣahasrāṇi niścaranti* | *sarvataś ca raśmimukhāt śaṭtriṃśadbuddhakoṭṣahasrāṇi niścaranti* | *suvarṇavarṇanīḥ kāyair dvātriṃśannmahāpuruṣalakṣaṇadharair yāni pūrvasyāni diśy aprameyāsankhyeyāsu lokadhātūṣu gatvā sattvobhyo dharmāni deśayanti* | *evāṃ dakṣiṇapaścimottarāsu dikṣv adha ūrdhvam anuvidikṣv aprameyāsankhyeyāṇi lokadhātūn gatvā sattvobhyo dharmāni deśayanti.*

toward awakening, even the very words which refer to the tumult of transmigration are entirely unknown, much less the reality of such mundane things. We have to do here more with poetic expression than with rational theological argument, though in fact these two modes are inseparable: poetry is theology.

Further lines list other cases in which even simple words are not known, much less the actual (comparatively negative) thing, including reference to ordinary land with its earth and stones, ordinary trees, rivers, fires, wind, sun, moon, day and night, kings and ministers, conflicts and quarrels, ordinary food or garments, the usual forms of birth (the Indian Buddhist list of four is birth from an egg, womb, moisture and by transformation), likewise birth and death and suffering itself are unknown there. This idea in general certainly echoes, and may well have been directly inspired by, that presented in the Smaller *Sukhāvātīvyūha*, which states in regard to the birds in the land,⁵³ and the absolute distance of Sukhāvātī from the realms of saṃsāra, “Were those beings born in animal wombs? You certainly should not imagine that! Why? In that buddha-field even the very words ‘hell,’ ‘animal destiny,’ and ‘world of the king of the dead’ do not exist.” Furthermore, in the same sūtra the land itself is described as of golden sands, and therefore not ordinary soil, with jeweled (rather than ordinary) trees, and so on. We see a close reflex of this also in the *Aspirational Prayer*:

snang ba mtha' yas de zhiṅ na sa gzhī gser gyī bye ma bdal [70]	In the land of that [buddha] Endless Radiance, The surface of the ground is spread over with golden sands. [70]
rīn cen dra ba bla re bres +phreng ba sna tshogs lda ldi bkye phyogs mtshams ma lus rgyan gyis spud	Jeweled nets and canopies are spread out, and A multitude of garlands shoot out tassels, Which adorn everything in all directions.
mun pa mtshan mo gnag pa dang gnyī zla mye'i 'od kyang	There is no darkness or black night, No radiant light of sun, moon

⁵³ Fujita 2011: 87.2–5: *tat kiṃ manyase śāriputra tiryagyonigatās te sattoāḥ | na punar evaṃ draṣṭavyaṃ | tat kasmād dhetoh | nāmāpi śāriputra tatra buddhakṣetre nirayāṇāṃ nāsti tiryagyonīnāṃ yamalokasya nāsti.*

<p>myed ^[75] mtshan ma dmyiḡs pa+i gzugs rnams dang sbu ba sgyu ma log 'gro myed de bzhin gshegs pa+i byin rlabs kyis ston pa mdzad pa ma gtogso </p>	<p>or fire; ^[75] There are no characteristic marks, no apprehensible forms, No bubbles of foam, no illusions, no erroneous destinies, Except for those created, in order to teach, By the Tathāgata's magical power.</p>
<p>snang ba mtha' yas de zhing na ^[80] sems can skye ba thams cad kyang rin cen pad mo'i nang nas skye </p>	<p>In the land of that [buddha] Endless Radiance, ^[80] Every one of the living beings born there Is born from within a jeweled lotus.</p>

The next section of the text introduces ideas of how one might gain rebirth in this wonderful place, which are unambiguous in advocating the monastic life (ll. 103–104). Persons who wish for this rebirth need a spiritual good friend, a *kalyāṇamitra*, and this figure is described.

Next follows a section (ll. 112–171) in which we have four line verses, the final line of which is invariably *zhing mchog der ni skye bar 'gyur*, “One will be reborn in that excellent [buddha] field.” In a number of cases this is preceded by “When one has cultivated ...,” ~*bsgoms na*. Here the practices necessary to obtain rebirth are mentioned, including reverencing the *kalyāṇamitra*; upholding morality, concentration and wisdom; acting virtuously, rejecting lust, hatred and delusion; concentrating on the four truths and nonduality; having mental attitudes free of concepts such as being and nonbeing; cultivating nonconceptualization; recognizing that the world is only mind, that things in ordinary perception are illusory, and on and on in a similar manner. In this recounting we meet ideas that at least elsewhere may be identified with the Madhyamaka and Yogācāra traditions, something we also saw in the *Praise of His Mighty Name*, which speaks (vs. 52–59) of similar ideas such as the *dharmadhātu*, nonduality, non-conceptual mental cultivation (55c, *rtog pa med par bsgoms*), natural purity (57d, *rang bzhin rnam dag*), and so on. The portion of our text in ll. 174–184 has especially strong similarities to the closing portion of the *Praise of His Mighty Name*.

The final portions of the *Praise Poem* are harder to classify, although in my division of lines into units I have attempted to meaningfully

identify separate components. What one comes away with, perhaps importantly for its possible conceptual contrast with some later Pure Land traditions, is that the path advocated by this text is not a simple one of faith in the Buddha Amitābha as sufficient for rebirth in his land; indeed, it is very far from it. Rather, the author of the text demands of practitioners doctrinally sophisticated understandings as the key to such rebirth. The text ends with a dedication of the merit produced by the process of composition of the *Praise Poem* itself, and the wish that this assist all beings in obtaining birth in Sukhāvātī.

In addition to the parallels and similarities noted above, and many others that could be identified proximately or more distantly in the Larger *Sukhāvātīvyūha sūtra* in particular, our verses show other similarities to the *Praise of His Mighty Name* and the *Aspirational Prayer*. The former, written entirely in lines of seven syllables and in four line units, has verses 3~11 linked by their common fourth line, *de bas spyi btud phyag kyang 'thal*, "Thus folding my hands together I pay homage." Verses 20~25 share their third and fourth lines, *sangs rgyas yon tan de dag dang | rnam dag zhing der yongs su grub*, "Those buddha virtues and that pure field are completely perfected." Finally, verses 32~59 have as their final line *rnam dag zhing der skye bar 'gyur*, "One will be born in that pure field," in verses which each list certain conditions, practices and attitudes, which lead to that result. This is remarkably similar to the above-mentioned section of our text, ll. 112–171, in which four line verses share the final line *zhing mchog der ni skye bar 'gyur*, "One will be reborn in that excellent [buddha] field."

There is every reason to believe that the three poems, *Praise of His Mighty Name*, *Aspirational Prayer* and *Praise Poem*, belong to very much the same circle, and we are probably not too far off the mark to consider it one of Buddhist adherents in the Dunhuang area in around the 10th century or so, inspired by Chinese Amitābha worship and aspiration for rebirth in Sukhāvātī, but who functioned in what was, at least as far as the evidence of the poems is concerned, a primarily Tibetan language environment. What is more, the manuscript tradition of the *Praise of His Mighty Name* evidences a Sinitic ritual context of the recitation of that poem, some manuscripts having after every line of verse the invocation *A mi ta pur* (and variants thereof), that is in Tibetan script but Chinese language *Amitufo* 阿彌陀佛, (Homage to) Amita Buddha. That poem was, I believe, as I think were all three, composed in the Tibetan language, in an environment strongly sharing Chinese elements, this influence evident in terms of the composition and likely also decisive for the ritual deployment of the poems in recitation.

This Sinitic influence extends to the very name of the Buddha.⁵⁴ The *Praise Poem* offers various forms of the name of the buddha Amitābha (no forms equivalent to Amitāyus appear):

Snang ba mtha' yas (l. 21)
 Dpal gyi 'od 'bar snang ba (l. 25)
 Dpal gyi snang ba (ll. 30, 36)
 Dpal gyi 'od 'ba (l. 64)
 Chos rgyal snang ba (l. 81)

Although the use of *dpal*, an honorific prefix used in translations from Sanskrit to render Śrī, appears among the three texts only here, and the variation exhibited here is also unique in this small corpus, all the forms are easily recognizable as renditions of the name of Amitābha and its related forms.

Genre

We know, at least in one sense, into what genre the *Praise Poem* should fall, because it tells us in its title: it is a *bstod pa*. But what does this mean? This term may be adequately translated as 'hymn,'⁵⁵ and though *bstod pa* commonly renders Sanskrit terms including *stuti*, *stava*, and *stotra*, it is questionable whether the genre(s) associated with such Sanskrit terminology are helpful in understanding what must be seen as an indigenous Tibetan composition. The title of the text which I called *Praise of His Mighty Name* is actually not known, but one of its manuscripts, P. tib. 112, seems to call it a *brjod pa*, something like an exposition. The *Aspirational Prayer* calls itself a *smon lam*, an aspirational vow / prayer text, hence my English title. We thus have three works which appear to us conceptually related, not only in terms of their doctrinal content but also in sharing a significant amount of imagery and poetic compositional patterns, but if we are to judge by apparent titles alone, they were seen by their authors or tradents as belonging to different genres. At least this is so as far as we can judge from the scanty evidence; but of course, a more parsimonious hypothesis is that such titles are not, after all, to be interpreted as genre labels at all.

One thing that these works have in common is their metre,

⁵⁴ Blondeau 1977: 80 already noted the likelihood that the form Snang ba mtha' yas was created under Chinese influence. Although I had in my earlier publications overlooked her observations, she had also remarked on the just mentioned Chinese transcription forms such as *A myi da phur* and *A mye da phur*, referring in that context to modern Korean Amidapul, which she cites on the information of Jean-Noël Robert. Cp. also Coblin 2009.

⁵⁵ In Tibet there are a great many indigenous texts styled *bstod pa* which have little in common with our text. See for instance, Nemoto 2016 on Tsong kha pa's *Rten 'brel bstod pa*, although to me Nemoto's main argument seems somewhat circular.

consisting in lines of seven syllables. This is, however, by far the most common metrical pattern in Tibetan, and thus not particularly characteristic. While all three works are clearly poems, they do not fit into the typologies usually offered for Tibetan poetry. Certainly they are not *kāvya*, a genre developed in Tibet based on Indian models, but evidently not as early as the period to which these verses belong; this genre is well discussed by Martin 2014. They are likewise not classifiable as *mgur*, *glu* or any of the other denominations under which songs and the like may be understood. They do conform to the common expectation of a seven syllable verse, consisting of units of 2 + 2 + 3 or 2 + 2 + 1, with stress áb éđ éf ġ.⁵⁶ They have, as discussed above, repeated verse-final lines which serve to punctuate the poem, and which would have provided a rhythm for recitation. I am not able to offer any further theorization on this point, but it seems to me an area which has, so far as I know, not been sufficiently addressed by scholars.⁵⁷

Part II

A Miraculous Rebirth

The *Ma ñi bka' 'bum*

The history of the *Ma ñi bka' 'bum*, a work belonging to the genre of *gter ma* or 'Treasure text,' has been a topic of some discussion.⁵⁸ Among the results of earlier researches is a clear conclusion that, like most similar texts, it is a pastiche, and thus it is mere tautology to say that its sources are various. Dan Martin (2020: 58, §25) dates the work to the mid- or late 1100s, although it was surely compiled into the form(s) in which we know it significantly later. While the compilation is attributed in "authorship" to the Imperial period Srong btsan sgam po,

⁵⁶ Discussed in Vekerdi 1952: 223–224.

⁵⁷ To my knowledge Sujata 2005 offers the most detailed examination of Tibetan poetry in any language I read, but little relevant to our case appears there. To my regret Zorin 2010, the title of which promises so much, remains a closed book to me. However, thanks to the kindness of the author, I was able to read its English summary, which shows that most of the book deals with translations from Sanskrit. One section of the summary (p. 356) touches on "The early original Tibetan hymns," although its claim that "the first hymns written by Tibetans could have appeared by the 11th century" seems, especially in light of current studies, to place this development too late.

⁵⁸ The text is said to have been heavily influenced at the very least in some portions by the *Bka' chems Ka khol ma*, attributed to *Atiśa (better perhaps Adhīśa), but at least as far as I have noticed, the passage of interest to us here does not appear in that text (or rather, text corpus).

the operative identification is of the *gter ston* who revealed it, stated by the tradition to have been chiefly *grub thob* Dngos grub (12th c.),⁵⁹ Myang/Nyang ral Nyi ma/ma'i 'od zer (1124–1192)⁶⁰ and *rje btsun* Shākya bzang po (d.u.). Of these, Dngos grub is credited with the first section, and Nyi ma 'od zer is held to be responsible for the third cycle (*Zhal gdams skor*, on which see below). However, according to Ehrhard (2013: 147) the initial setting, the *Lo rgyus chen mo*, the first text of the *Mdo skor* or “Cycle of Sūtras,” and the section which contains the first passage cited below, is “regarded now as a treasure find of rJe-btsun Sākya bzang-po.”⁶¹ Setting aside such large and important questions of the overall composition of the collection, we must allow ourselves to focus below instead on the question how the *Praise Poem* made its way into the *Ma ṅi bka' 'bum*.

The basic claim of *gter ma* is that some previously hidden treasure was, at an appropriate time and by an appropriate *gter ston*, “discovered” or “revealed.” In the present case, these diverse sources were then compiled into the form we know as the *Ma ṅi bka' 'bum*. What historicity could there be to such a picture? We need not guess at an answer. While we may not have as yet such clear evidence for Dngos grub or Shākya bzang po, Cathy Cantwell (Mayer and Cantwell 2010) already found that “a substantial component text from one of the most important early terma collections,” the *Bde gshegs 'dus pa* of Myang ral Nyi ma 'od zer, “corresponds exactly to the Dunhuang manuscript IOL TibJ 331.III.” While, as Mayer and Cantwell state, the relevant text is also found in “a historically transmitted Nyingma tantra called the ‘Perfection of Activities Tantra’ (*Phrin las phun sum tshogs pa'i rgyud*),” they doubt that this is the proximate source of the *gter ma*, and suggest instead that “the most likely hypothesis is that Nyang ral found an old stand-alone manuscript corresponding to IOL TibJ 331.III, perhaps one that had been lost for some time, and put it back into circulation.”⁶² Cantwell has recently argued that Myang ral Nyi ma 'od zer drew on earlier materials, stating (2020: 75), “In Myang ral’s time, before the rNying ma system of Treasure revelations had been fully developed, it seems likely that some Treasure revelations literally consisted of old re-discovered manuscripts, which may have been hidden away following the collapse of institutionalised support for Buddhism in the

⁵⁹ On this figure in particular, see Blondeau 1984.

⁶⁰ He is called the “most famous redactor” of the *Ma ṅi bka' 'bum* by Phillips 2004: 21.

⁶¹ On these attributions see Sørensen 1994: 642–643, and 17n39. Sørensen states the three cycles of Avalokiteśvara are attributed to Dngos grub, which does not agree with Ehrhard’s more recent information.

⁶² In a comment to the blog post dated 21 September 2010, Cathy Cantwell wrote that “there is no doubt that the text, start to finish, is the same. ... the only possibility is that Nyang ral found the text intact.” Hirshberg’s citation of this (2016: 135) does not clearly credit this conclusion to Cantwell.

Imperial period. ... Alongside visionary encounters and tantric realisations, Myang ral, then, may have been concerned as much with gathering together, editing and systematising textual materials inherited and recovered from previous generations—in much the same way as scholarly monastics compiling doctrinal treatises for the early »New Transmission« (*gsar ma*) schools.” Hirshberg’s characterization (2016: 136–137) of the same figure parallels Cantwell’s:

Nyangrel was not exclusively a fabricator of apocryphal scriptures and an artisan of fake relics but an excavator and editor of old manuscripts who incorporated excerpts if not whole texts into new collections.... Always sensitive to a critique of fabrication, treasure revealers consistently describe their quarry as found whole, but I suspect that while the early treasures signify material items extracted from hidden caches as a basis, this never precluded significant editorial work and compilation on the part of the revealer. A process of redaction and reformulation was a necessary step not in the initial excavation of the treasure but in its full revelation, which culminated in its reintroduction to the general populace. ... At least some early treasures do not warrant the general accusation of falsification leveled by many indigenous and academic critics.

The fundamental logic proposed here as lying behind such treasure discoveries is clearly captured by Robert Mayer (2015: 232): “Treasure revelation ... is primarily an exercise in continuity of lineage and tradition. ... Treasure Revealers ... offer, in communion with their spiritual companions of the past and present, their contributions as tradents, that is to say, as transmitters of the ancient traditions within lineage communities deemed authentic.” There seems no good *a priori* reason not to accept, as implicitly suggested by Hirshberg, that whichever *gter ston* was actually responsible for the opening section of the *Ma ñi bka’ ’bum*, he acted in precisely the same way, finding a genuine old text, repurposing it and presenting it as a portion of his revelation.

Given this, in answer to the question how we are to account for the identity we will see below between the *Praise Poem* and its reflex in the *Ma ñi bka’ ’bum*, it is not far-fetched to imagine that some old copy of our poem lay mouldering in a temple archive, only to be rediscovered before or when the *Ma ñi bka’ ’bum* was being assembled. In fact, this seems to be virtually the only possible explanation. As we will further see, if we accept that the source drawn upon was similar to the poem edited above, a process of reorganization—of editing—also evidently took place. It should not be forgotten that this scenario also requires the *Praise Poem*, which as above I hypothesize to have been composed in Dunhuang, to have been transported to the Lhasa area at some point after its composition, probably earlier rather than later, for reasons

discussed below.

Our text in the *Ma ṅi bka' 'bum*, setting the stage for the introduction of Avalokiteśvara, describes the buddha field of Amitābha. This raises another question: why would a setting dedicated to Amitābha be repurposed to refer to Avalokiteśvara? How would this have been possible? The answer is simple: for the *Ma ṅi bka' 'bum*, according to its three body (*trikāya*, *sku gsum*) theory, Amitābha is a/the Dharmakāya, and Avalokiteśvara a/the Saṃbhogakāya, and thus they are in this sense identical.⁶³ The broader question of the relation between Amitābha and Avalokiteśvara has been discussed by scholars to some extent, but to my knowledge remains to be explored in sufficient detail.

We should turn now to the text itself, which presents the material quoted below in what it calls the *sangs rgyas snang ba mtha' yas kyi zhing khams kyi phan yon bstan pa'i le'u*, “Chapter on the teaching of the virtues of the field of the buddha Amitābha.” The full integration of this material into the *Ma ṅi bka' 'bum* is signified by its denomination as “chapter,” *le'u*, though whether this division and nomenclature is the work of the compilers or of later editors is not clear.⁶⁴

Ma ṅi bka' 'bum I

ཨོཾ་མ་ཤིབ་པའི་ལྷོ་ལྷོ།	<i>Om maṅipadme hūm!</i> With folded hands I do obeisance to the Noble Avalokiteśvara,
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⁶³ Sørensen 1994: 8. At least for some the corresponding *nirmāṅakāya* is Srong bstan sgam po, from whom the *gter ma* was transmitted to Padmasambhava, or the latter was himself the *nirmāṅakāya*. See Appendix I.

⁶⁴ My edition here relies on:

A: Samten 1975: 12a2–13a2. purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW19225.

B: purl.bdrc.io/resource/W4CZ78; purl.bdrc.io/resource/W3CN22331 is another print of the same blocks.

C: Derge block print of the *Ma ṅi bka' 'bum*, BDRC. purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW1KG10871: 1b1~2b4.

The passage has been translated by Trizin Tsering Rinpoche at <https://sites.google.com/site/manikabumenglish/Home/chapter-1>. Perhaps its ambiguous relation to the source may be explained by the discussion of the translation process at <https://sites.google.com/site/manikabumenglish/Home/chp-1>. I have not been able to see the complete translation in two volumes, Trizin Tsering 2007, but I expect that it corresponds to the online version.

For the textual history of the *Ma ṅi bka' 'bum* see Ehrhard 2000, and especially 2013. For all editions below from the *Ma ṅi bka' 'bum*, *Padma bka' thang* and *Bka thang gser phreng*, I do not note abbreviated spellings in the manuscripts and xylographs. Further, I adopted the punctuation of the first witness I collated, though on reflection this may not always be the most meaningful. To have adjusted it later, however, would have caused chaos with the line numbering, and so I have kept it, but it certainly does not represent that of all witnesses.

<p>ལྷགས་རྗེ་ཚེན་པོ་འཕགས་པ་སྤྱན་རས་གཟིགས་དབང་ཕྱག་ལ་ཕྱག་འཚལ་ལོ།།</p>	<p>the greatly compassionate one.</p>
<p>རྒྱབ་ཕྱོགས་བདེ་བ་ཅན་གྱི་ཞིང་ཁམས་བརྒྱ་ཅན་ཞེས་བྱ་བ།</p>	<p>In the west there is a blissful [buddha] field called 'Lotus-filled.'⁶⁵</p>
<p>རིན་པོ་ཆེ་སྣ་ཚོགས་ཀྱི་ས་གཞི་ལ་མིག་མངས་རིས་སུ་བྲིས་པ་ལས། ས་དང་རྗོངས་མིང་ཡང་མེད། ^[5]</p>	<p>Since a checkerboard pattern is painted on the surface of [that field's] variously bejeweled ground, Even the words '[ordinary] earth and stones' do not exist there.</p>
<p>བྱང་ལྷག་གྱི་ཤིང་གིས་རབ་ཏུ་བརྒྱན་པ་ལས། ཚེ་ཤིང་དང་ནགས་ཚལ་གྱི་མིང་ཡང་མེད།</p>	<p>Since [that field] is ornamented by Bodhi trees, Even the words '[ordinary] trees and forests' do not exist there.</p>
<p>ཉིང་ངེ་འཛིན་བརྒྱད་ལྡན་གྱི་ཚུ་འབབ་པ་ལས། སྣ་ཚོགས་ཚུའི་མིང་ཡང་མེད།</p>	<p>Since the rivers descend [in that field] with the water of the eight kinds of [virtuous qualities of] contemplation,⁶⁶ Even the words 'various [ordinary] rivers' do not exist</p>

⁶⁵ My translation is slightly interpretive. The name *padma can* is perhaps equivalent to something like Sanskrit *Padmavati, though I do not know that this is attested in the required sense. The attributive expression *bde ba can gyi zhing khams* contains the term generally used for Sukhāvati.

⁶⁶ I know of no category of eight kinds of contemplation, *samādhi*. What is likely is that there is a connection with the water of eight virtuous qualities filling the ponds in the Pure Land, as mentioned in the Smaller *Sukhāvāṭīvyūha*, and thus I have interpreted the text. The sūtra (Fujita 2011: 85.3) describes the ponds in the Pure Land as *aṣṭāṅgopetavāriparipūrṇāḥ*, but it does not clarify what the eight are. The *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* offers a list as follows (Pradhan 1975: 160.14–15): *pāṇṭyaṃ śītaḥ ca svādu ca laghu ca mṛdu cācchari ca niṣpratikaḥ ca pibataś ca kaṅṭham na kṣiṇoti pītam ca kukṣim na vyābādhat*, cool, sweet, light, soft, clear, free from odor, when drunk not harming the throat, when sipped not damaging the stomach. It seems most likely that the only version of the Smaller *Sukhāvāṭīvyūha* to contain a list, that of Xuanzang, actually borrowed it from this passage in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, a text likewise translated by Xuanzang. For a detailed discussion of the category see Unebe 2004.

	there.
ཡེ་ཤེས་དཔལ་གྱི་མེ་འབར་བ་ལས། [10] འདིག་རྟེན་སྲིག་པའི་མེད་མིང་ཡང་མེད།	Since the splendid flame of wisdom is ablaze [in that field], ⁶⁷ Even the words 'ordinary burning flames' do not exist there.
རྣམ་གྲོལ་སྲོལ་གྱི་དང་ལྡང་བ་ལས། འདིག་རྟེན་སྲུང་གི་མིང་ཡང་མེད།	Since there is a wafting up of the aromatic aroma of liberation [in that field], Even the words 'ordinary wind' do not exist there.
ཚོས་གྱི་དབྱིངས་ཀྱིས་གཞི་བརྒྱལ་བ་ལས། འབྲུང་བ་སའི་མིང་ཡང་མེད། [15]	Since the foundation of [that field] is covered by the <i>dharmadhātu</i> , Even the words 'earth element' do not exist there.
ཡེ་ཤེས་གསལ་བའི་གདུགས་གསལ་བ་ལས། ཉི་མ་དང་ཟླ་བའི་མིང་ཡང་མེད།	Since [that field] is illuminated by the canopy of luminous wisdom, Even the words 'sun and moon' do not exist there.
འཕགས་པའི་ཤེས་རབ་འོད་གསལ་བ་ལས། ཉིན་མོ་དང་མཚན་མོའི་མིང་ཡང་མེད།	Since [that field] is brightly illuminated by the insight of the Noble One, ⁶⁸ Even the words 'day and night' do not exist there.
ཚོས་གྱི་རྒྱལ་སྲིད་རང་ཤར་བ་ལས། [20] རྒྱལ་པོ་དང་སློན་པོའི་མིང་ཡང་མེད།	Since [that field] is spontaneously regulated by the reign of the Dharma, Even the words 'king and ministers' do not exist there.
བདག་དང་བདག་གིར་མི་འདྲིན་པ་ལས། འཐབ་ཅིང་རྩོད་པའི་མིང་ཡང་མེད།	Since one does not grasp I or mine [in that field], Even the words 'conflict and

⁶⁷ As in the case with many such expressions, it is not clear whether *dpal gyi* is better connected with *ye shes* or, as I have taken it, with *me*, but in this case at least, it does not seem to make much difference.

⁶⁸ It is not clear to me whether we had best understand noble insight, insight of the Noble One = the Buddha, or of the Noble Ones = multiple buddhas.

	quarrel' do not exist there.
<p>ཉིང་ངེ་འཇིན་གྱི་ཟས་ཀྱིས་འཚོ་བ་ལས། ཟས་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་འི་མིང་ཡང་མེད། [25]</p>	<p>Since one lives on the nourishment of meditative contemplation [in that field],⁶⁹ Even the word 'food' does not exist there.</p>
<p>ཡིད་བཞིན་བདུད་ཅིའི་ཚུ་གསོལ་བ་ལས། རློམ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་འི་མིང་ཡང་མེད།</p>	<p>Since one drinks the nectar-like water [of the teachings] to one's heart's content [in that field], Even the word 'thirst' does not exist there.</p>
<p>ཚུལ་ཁྲིམས་གཙང་མའི་གོས་གྲོན་བ་ལས། གོས་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་འི་མིང་ཡང་མེད།</p>	<p>Since one is clad in the garments of pure morality [in that field], Even the words '[ordinary] garments' do not exist there.</p>
<p>བརྗེ་འཕྲེང་དུ་རྩུམ་ཏེ་སྐྱེ་བ་ལས། [30] སྐྱེ་བ་རྣམ་བཞི་འི་མིང་ཡང་མེད།</p>	<p>Since one is spontaneously born atop a lotus [in that field], Even the words 'four kinds of birth' do not exist there.</p>
<p>གཡུང་དྲུང་ཚོལ་མངའ་བརྟེན་བ་ལས། རྣམ་གཤིང་རྒྱད་པ་འི་མིང་ཡང་མེད།</p>	<p>Since one obtains power over eternal life [in that field], Even the words 'aging and decrepitude' do not exist there.</p>
<p>སྐྱེ་གི་མེད་པ་འི་ལམ་བསྐྱོད་ལས། སྐྱེ་གིང་གི་བ་འི་མིང་ཡང་མེད། [35]</p>	<p>Since one cultivates the path free from birth and death [in that field], Even the words 'being born and dying' do not exist there.</p>
<p>སངས་རྒྱས་ཀྱི་ཞིང་ཁམས་དེ་ན་ཐམས་ཅད་ བྱང་ཚུབ་ཀྱི་ལམ་ལ་སྦྱོད་པ་ལས།</p>	<p>Since in that buddha field all will practice the path to awakening, Even the words 'unhappiness and</p>

⁶⁹ This is a reference to what is known as *dhyānāhāra* (*bsam gtan gyi zas*), although here we would rather imagine a Sanskrit equivalent as **samādhyāhāra* (though of course our text is not a translation from Sanskrit at all). The term *dhyānāhāra*, attested in Buddhist sources such as the *Karuṇāpūṇḍarīka* (Yamada 1968: II.16.15–16), is also used in the non-Buddhist *Yogasūtrabhāṣya* III.26.

མི་བདེ་གཞོན་པ་འི་མིང་ཡང་མེད།	harm' do not exist there. ⁷⁰
36 spyod pa las] C: spyod cing skyid pa las, probably more meaningful but metrically less likely.	
བདེ་བའི་བྱང་ཚུབ་སངས་རྒྱས་ཀྱི་ཞིང་དེ་ ན། སྟོང་པ་ཉིད་ཀྱི་གཞུལ་ཡས་ཁང། [40] རྒྱ་དང་མཐའ་ནི་དཔག་ཏུ་མེད། ཕྱི་ནང་མེད་པར་ཚོས་ཀྱི་དབྱིངས། མངོན་ཤེས་དྲུག་གི་སྐར་ཁུང་གསལ། མི་མཁྱེན་མི་གཟེགས་ཅི་ཡང་མེད།	In that buddha field of happy awakening, ⁷¹ [Is the buddha's] immense palace of emptiness, Its extent and its borders unlimit- ed, The <i>dharmadhātu</i> free of outside or in. Its clear windows are the six high- er knowledges, [Through which] there is nothing [that buddha] does not fathom, nothing he does not observe.
ཐེག་པ་ཆེན་པོའི་ཚོས་ཀྱི་གདུགས་སུབ་པ། [45] བྱང་ཚུབ་ཡན་ལག་གི་འཕན་དར་ཕྱར་པ། བདུད་བཞི་འཛོམས་པ་འི་རྒྱལ་མཚན་ བསྐྱེད་བ།	Its parasol, the teaching of the Great Vehicle, is raised; Its pennant of the limbs of awak- ening is elevated; Its victory banner of subduing the four Māras is elevated.
མཉམ་པ་ཉིད་ཀྱི་དཀྱིལ་འཁོར་བྱས་པ། ཆགས་པ་མེད་པ་འི་བསྐྱེད་བཀྲམ་པ།	It is constructed out of the maṇḍala of equality. It is laid out with the lotuses of non-attachment.
རྣམ་དག་ཚུལ་ཁྲིམས་སྟོན་གྱང་འབྲུལ། [50]	It is scented with the perfumes of pure morality.

⁷⁰ The parallel here is not clear. Note that the metrical regularity of lines of 8 syllables found above is utterly ignored here, which may be significant as well.

⁷¹ It is difficult to understand this line. Another possibility, quite a bit less likely I should think, may be "in that field of the buddha who possesses happy awakening." See the *Praise Poem* l. 98, and compare also its l. 24: *nub phyogs skyid pa'i zhing rab na*, which I translated "In the west, in the best [buddha] field of joy." See the *Padma bka' thang*, l. 37.

སྤྱི་མཉམ་མ་བྱས་ལྷན་གྱིས་བྱུང་།།	Unconstructed by anyone, it is spontaneous.
ཉིང་འཛིན་མི་གཡོ་རྒྱ་མཚོ་ལས།། རྣམ་ཤེས་མ་ཆགས་པད་མ་འཁྲུངས།།	[In it] from the ocean of immovable contemplation Emerges the lotus of awareness and non-attachment.
ཆགས་མེད་པད་མའི་འོད་ལྷན་ལས།། ཚད་མེད་བཞི་ཡི་གདན་ཁྲི་བཅིགས།། ^[55]	It has built up the throne of the four immeasurables From the radiant lotus of non-attachment.
ཐུགས་རྗེ་སྣོམས་པའི་རྒྱན་གྱིས་བརྒྱན།། དེ་ན་སྣང་བ་མཐའ་ཡས་བཞུགས།།	It is ornamented with the adornments of compassion and equanimity. On it dwells the [buddha] Splendid Radiance.
སྣོབས་བཅུ་མི་འཇིགས་སྐྱེ་ཡིས་བརྒྱན།། མཚན་བཟང་དཔེ་བྱད་ལྷ་མི་ངོམས།། འོད་བཟང་སྣ་ཚོགས་འཇའ་བཞིན་འཁོར།། ^[60] ཐུགས་རྗེའི་འོད་ཟེར་ཕྱོགས་བཅུ་འཕྲོ།།	His body is ornamented by the ten powers and the [four] fearlessnesses. ⁷² One cannot be sated in gazing upon [that body, which is adorned with the thirty-two] major marks and [eighty] minor marks. ⁷³ Variegated rays of excellent light encircle him like a rainbow, and Those radiant beams of compassion spread through the ten directions.
དབལ་གྱི་སྐྱེས་བུ་མཐུ་ལྷན་བ།།	Splendid powerful beings Are never content with gazing at

⁷² Taking seriously the grammar of *sku yis*, it is possible that we should understand here rather something like “[The *dharmakāya* buddha Amitābha] is ornamented by a body possessing the ten powers and [four] fearlessnesses,” that is, it possesses a *rūpakāya* as well, or something along those lines. However, note *Padma bka' thang l.* 54 which has *sku yi rgyan rab mdzes*.

⁷³ Although the text is of course not Indic, the idea here is that expressed in Sanskrit by the term *lakṣaṇavyaṅjanārahkṛtaśarīra*.

<p>སྐྱུ་ལ་ལྟ་བུ་སྐྱེ་བའི་མི་ཤེས །། འཁོར་མང་དག་ནི་སྐྱོན་ལྟར་གཉིབས །།</p>	<p>his body.⁷⁴ They, his multitudinous retinue, gather around him like clouds.</p>
<p>མིག་ནི་མི་གཡོ་མཉམ་གཞག་ཀྱང །། [65] སྐྱོན་གྱི་སྐྱོན་ལམ་སྤྲུགས་རྗེ་ཡིས །། འོད་ཟེར་མང་པོ་སྐྱོགས་བརྒྱར་འཕྲོས །།</p>	<p>Although he is in meditative equipoise, eyes unmoving, Through his earlier vows and compassion His many radiant beams spread throughout the ten directions.</p>
<p>འོད་ཟེར་རེ་རེའི་ཚེ་མོ་ལས །། སངས་རྒྱལ་སྐྱུ་ལ་པ་གྲངས་མེད་བཏང །། དཔག་ཏུ་མེད་པའི་འགྲོ་དོན་མཛད །། [70]</p>	<p>From the tip of each of those rays of radiance⁷⁵ Are emitted innumerable buddha manifestations, Which promote the welfare of limitless beings.</p>
<p>སྐྱུ་ལ་བའི་འཕྲོ་འདུ་གྲངས་མེད་ཀྱང །། ཚོས་གྱི་དབྱིངས་ལ་འཕེལ་འགྲིབ་མེད །།</p>	<p>Although the uncountable mani- festations spread and return, The <i>dharmadhātu</i> knows no increase or decrease.</p>
<p>སངས་རྒྱལ་ཞིང་ཁམས་དེ་ན་ནི །། འཕགས་པ་མིན་པ་གཞན་མི་གནས །། རྒྱུད་རྒྱག་འཁོར་བའི་མིང་མེད་དོ །། [75]</p>	<p>Since all who dwell in that buddha field Are none other than Nobles, [Even] the words ‘six destinies which constitute saṃsāra’ do not exist there.</p>
<p>སངས་རྒྱལ་སྣང་བ་མཐའ་ཡས་གྱི་ཞིང་</p>	<p>The first chapter, teaching the benefits of the field of the</p>

⁷⁴ I am not certain of the reference. Perhaps it means “even all the bodhisattvas are never content”

⁷⁵ For our sensibility, rays of light do not have tips, as Leonard van der Kuijp reminds me, but I suppose here that the author may have been inspired by visual depictions, in which indeed such rays do have ends. Note that in the *Karuṇāpūṇḍarīka* (Yamada 1968: II.15.9), the rays are *yojanaprabhā*, that is, they have length. Note that slightly later in the *Ma ṅi bka’ ’bum*, in a section called *zhing khams sprul pa dang ’gro ba sems can gyi don mdzad pa* (Samten 1975: 15a2–b6, in the reprint pages 29–30), a much more cosmic vision of such rays of manifestations is presented. The material is partially translated in Kapstein 1992: 89, which covers 15a6–b6.

འཇམས་ཀྱི་པན་ཡོན་བསྟན་པའི་ལུ་སྟེ་དང་ པོའོ།། [76]	buddha Amitābha.
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This reworking of a portion of the *Praise Poem* is remarkably close to its source. The wording is often very similar if not identical, and structurally speaking, the manner in which the source text has been rearranged can be easily illustrated, as shown in the table below. The numbers on the left refer to the line numbers of the *Ma ṅi bka' 'bum* text, and those on the right to the line numbers of the edition of the *Praise Poem*, as edited in the first part of this paper:

4–13	67–76
14–15	∅
16–21	77–82
22–25	85–88
26–27	∅
28–31	89–92
32–33	∅
34–38	93–97
39–51	37–47
52–57	31–36
58–64	48–52
65–75	55–66

Lines in the *Ma ṅi bka' 'bum* (left) corresponding to those in the *Praise Poem* (right)

We see that with only a few exceptions, namely six lines in addition to the incipit and explicit, everything in the *Ma ṅi bka' 'bum* I is drawn from the *Praise Poem*; although there are elements of the latter which have been omitted, and only a portion was adopted, since nothing

after *l.* 97 finds a place in *Ma ñi bka' 'bum* I.⁷⁶ In regard to the ordering of verses, we cannot reject out of hand the possibility that the *gter ston* responsible for the revision discovered a version somewhat different from that known to us from Dunhuang. Regarding the verses in the *Ma ñi bka' 'bum* not now to be found in the Dunhuang poem, these could have been found in the version which provided the direct source for the treasure compiler, so close are they in tone and language to the rest of the *Praise Poem*, although they could also easily have been added as well. Indeed, much of the wording, as one easily sees, is precisely copied from the *Praise Poem* as we have it, or nearly so. Given that we should not assume that the form of the poem available in Central Tibet corresponded precisely to that which circulated in Dunhuang, we can hardly conclude otherwise than that the *gter ston* responsible for this subsection of the *Ma ñi bka' 'bum* did indeed discover an old work, identical to the *Praise Poem* as discovered in Dunhuang, or very nearly so, and “revealed” it to a new age, in precisely the manner the tradition claims for the process of treasure revelation.⁷⁷

One thing that must be noted here is the metrical inconsistency of the text. Now, of course this may be due to the way I have edited, based on only a few witnesses. However, at least as we have it now, from the beginning through *l.* 9 it is hard to recognize the text as metrical at all. From line 10 it seems to settle down to an eight syllable line, until *l.* 36, when this breaks down completely. Line 38 has 8 syllables, but I can find no pattern in *l.* 39. In *ll.* 40–44 we get seven syllable lines, in *ll.* 45–47 lines of nine syllables, in *ll.* 48–49 back to eight, and in *ll.* 50–75 back to seven syllable lines. Such variety at the very least calls for some notice, all the more so since I see no correspondence between this pattern and the obvious source of the reworking.

Ma ñi bka' 'bum II

As mentioned above, the *Ma ñi bka' 'bum* is a sort of anthology, and its editing clearly took place over a period of time. This may in part account for the presence later in the work, in its third cycle, the *Zhal gdams kyi skor*, Cycle of Precepts, of another text also clearly inspired by the *Praise Poem*, what I call *Ma ñi bka' 'bum* II. On the one hand, it gives the strong impression of being a revision of what is found in the

⁷⁶ Thus, what I considered above (page 541) the last seven divisions of the *Praise Poem* were not reused here, but see below in *Ma ñi bka' 'bum* II, vs. 11, and the note there.

⁷⁷ I do not enter here into a discussion of the relevance of this discovery for the recently much discussed idea of “text reuse,” although certainly it would be apropos to do so.

opening of the *Ma ṅi bka' 'bum* I itself, the text we have just read above. However, there are also decisive reasons to see its author's/compiler's direct familiarity with the *Praise Poem*. For instance, nothing of the *Praise Poem*'s image in ll. 154–156 of the horse of energy is found in *Ma ṅi bka' 'bum* I, but in *Ma ṅi bka' 'bum* II it appears in vs. 11, from which, however, the imagery has been much modified. What in the *Praise Poem* is an image of the necessity of *kṣānti* and *vīrya*, the latter of which is compared to mounting a horse, is here made into a feature of *Sukhāvātī*, in which there are no ordinary horses! It is difficult to imagine what the author was thinking here.⁷⁸

This second *Ma ṅi bka' 'bum* text, credited to Nyang/Myang ral Nyi ma 'od zer, is reported to have also been separately transmitted under the title *Ri po ta lar skye'i smon lam*, “Aspirational Prayer for Birth on Mount Potala.”⁷⁹ Here we immediately notice that the location and ownership, as it were, of the wonderful land in question have shifted from *Sukhāvātī* and *Amitābha* to *Potalaka* and its resident *bodhi-sattva*, *Avalokiteśvara*.⁸⁰ While the imagery and even wording demonstrate their debt to the depictions of *Sukhāvātī* and *Amitābha*, these are now applied to new objects.⁸¹

⁷⁸ The martial image in *Praise Poem* ll. 157–160 which immediately follows this, leading one to imagine a mounted archer, is absent from *Ma ṅi bka' 'bum* II.

⁷⁹ Phillips 2004: 273.

⁸⁰ Surprisingly little work has been done on *Potalaka*. See however Läänemets 2006, and with less relevance here Döll 2012.

⁸¹ Edition (folio numbers include the verses cited in the next note):

A. Samten 1975: II.97–100 = *wain* 49a3–50b1.

B. Modern typeset edition: *Ma ṅi bka' 'bum* (glog klad par ma). Par gzhi dang po par thengs dang po. (Zi ling: Mtsho sngon mi rigs dpe bskrun khang, 1991). Chinese title: *Mani quanji* 嘛呢全集 (Xining: Qinghai minzu chubanshe 青海民族出版社). <http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW4CZ46031>. *wain* 43a3–44b4

C. Derge edition: *Ma ṅi bka' 'bum* (sde dge par ma). (Sde dge: Sde dge par khang, 2000). <http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW1KG10871>. *wain* 36a1–36b5.

D. Newark folio in Doney 2020b: 101–102. This does not contain the interjections *om ma ṅi padme hūm*, nor the additional verses.

My translation differs rather appreciably from that of Phillips 2004, to whom I am nevertheless much indebted, since I learned of the passage from his work. Since this text is clearly divided into stanzas, I number these instead of the lines. The text is preceded by other verses which, although considered part of the same unit in the arrangement of the *Ma ṅi bka' 'bum*, do not correspond otherwise. I transcribe them in Appendix II.

Ma ni bka' 'bum II

<p>ཨོཾ་མ་ཎི་པ་རྣམ་འདྲེ་འུམྱེ། ལྷུན་རས་གཟིགས་ལ་ཕྱག་འཚལ་ལོ།། ལྷུན་རས་གཟིགས་ལ་སྐྱབས་སུ་མཆི།།</p>	<p><i>Oṃ maṇipadme hūm.</i> With folded hands I do obeisance to Avalokiteśvara.⁸² I take refuge in Avalokiteśvara.</p>
<p>བདེ་བ་ཅན་གྱི་གནས་མཚོག་ཏུ།། ལྷུན་རས་གཟིགས་ཀྱི་ཞིང་ཁམས་སུ།། ཕྱི་ནང་མེད་པའི་གཞལ་ཡས་ཁང།། འདིག་རྟེན་ཁང་བྱིམ་མིང་ཡང་མེད།། རི་པོ་ཏུ་ལར་སྐྱེ་བར་ཤོག། ཨོཾ་མ་ཎི་པ་རྣམ་འདྲེ་འུམྱེ། [1]</p>	<p>[Since] in the supreme location, Sukhāvati, In the field of Avalokiteśvara, Is his immense palace, without outside or in, Even the words ‘ordinary dwelling’ do not exist there. May I be reborn on Mount Potalaka!⁸³ <i>Oṃ maṇipadme hūm.</i></p>
<p>གཟུགས་ཀྱི་བྱེ་བྲག་དེ་སྟོན་པ།། ལྷུན་རས་གཟིགས་ཀྱི་སྐྱར་སྣང་བས།། ཡུང་བོ་ཤ་ཁྲག་མིང་ཡང་མེད།། རི་པོ་ཏུ་ལར་སྐྱེ་བར་ཤོག། ཨོཾ་མ་ཎི་པ་རྣམ་འདྲེ་འུམྱེ། [2]</p>	<p>As many kinds of forms as there are, Since [all] appear [in that land] as the body of Avalokiteśvara, Even the words “[body made of] aggregates, flesh and blood’ do not exist there.⁸⁴ May I be reborn on Mount Potalaka! <i>Oṃ maṇipadme hūm.</i></p>
<p>སྐྱེ་བུ་གྲག་པ་དེ་སྟོན་པ།།</p>	<p>As many kinds of voices as there are,</p>

⁸² The Tibetan here has, perhaps for metrical reasons, the very common *spyān ras gzigs*, therefore strictly speaking Avalokita. This form is well attested also in Sanskrit, as in Śāntideva’s *Bodhicaryāvatāra* II.51a, where the signification is made clear by the commentator Prajñākaramati, who glosses the word with *āryāvalokiteśvara*. See Staël-Holstein 1936. For ease of understanding, I continue to use the more common English full form of the name.

⁸³ This certainly seems to suggest a doctrinally difficult (or at least innovative) cosmology, in which Potalaka is located in Sukhāvati, or in fact is identical with it, as we will note below seems sometimes to indeed be the case.

⁸⁴ This translation may be slightly too Indic; as Berthe Jansen reminds me, *phung po* may rather refer primarily to the physical body in a less technical sense than *skandha*. In any event, these three verses refer to the body, speech and mind, and given that, although *sgra* is broader than “voice” *per se*, I have kept it in preference to “sound.”

<p>ཡི་གེ་དྲུག་པ་རྫོ་རྗེའི་རྒྱུ ॥ འོ་ཚིག་ང་རོ་འི་མིང་ཡང་མེད ॥ རི་པོ་ཉ་ལར་སྐྱེ་བར་ཤོག ། ཨོ་མ་ཁེ་བ་རྗེ་རྩྱུ་ །^[3]</p>	<p>Since [all in that land] have the adamantine voice of the six syllables, Even the words 'censure and wailing' do not exist there. May I be reborn on Mount Potalaka! <i>Oṃ maṇipadme hūṃ.</i></p>
<p>སེམས་ཀྱི་དྲན་རྟོག་རི་སྟེང་བ ॥ རང་རིག་ཡེ་ཤེས་འོད་གསལ་བས ॥ དུག་ལྷ་རྣམ་རྟོག་མིང་ཡང་མེད ॥ རི་པོ་ཉ་ལར་སྐྱེ་བར་ཤོག ། ཨོ་མ་ཁེ་བ་རྗེ་རྩྱུ་ །^[4]</p>	<p>As many kinds of thought as there are, Since [all in that land possess] the radiant light of self-cognizant wisdom, Even the words 'the five poisons and conceptual thinking' do not exist there.⁸⁵ May I be reborn on Mount Potalaka! <i>Oṃ maṇipadme hūṃ.</i></p>
<p>འོད་ཀྱི་སྣང་བ་རི་སྟེང་བ ॥ ཚོས་ཀྱི་སྣང་བ་རྒྱུན་མི་འཆད ॥ ཉིན་དང་མཚན་མོའི་མིང་ཡང་མེད ॥ རི་པོ་ཉ་ལར་སྐྱེ་བར་ཤོག ། ཨོ་མ་ཁེ་བ་རྗེ་རྩྱུ་ །^[5]</p>	<p>As many kinds of appearances of radiant light as there are, Since [in that land] the light of the Dharma is uninterrupted, Even the words 'day and night' do not exist there. May I be reborn on Mount Potalaka! <i>Oṃ maṇipadme hūṃ.</i></p>
<p>འབྲུང་བའི་བྱེ་བྲག་རི་སྟེང་བ ॥ ཡེ་ཤེས་ལྷ་ཡི་འོད་ཟེར་ལས ॥ འབྲུང་བ་ལྷ་ཡི་མིང་ཡང་མེད ॥</p>	<p>As many kinds of elements as there are, Since [all in that land] have the radiant light of the five wisdoms,⁸⁶ Even the words 'five elements' do</p>

⁸⁵ The five poisons are pride, desire, anger, envy and delusion, *nga rgyal*, 'dod chags, zhe sdang, phrag dog, gti mug.

Note that these three verses 2–4 refer to body, speech and mind.

⁸⁶ The five wisdoms are the *dharmadhātu*, mirror-like, equality, discriminating and all-accomplishing wisdoms, *chos dbyings*, *me long*, *mnyam nyid*, *sor rtog*, *bya grub*. The image in this verse is not very clear to me, if it refers to anything other than the coincidence of categories of fives.

<p>རི་པོ་ཏ་ལར་སྐྱེ་བར་ཤོག ། ཨོ་མ་ཁེ་བརྗེ་རྩྭ་། [6]</p>	<p>not exist there. May I be reborn on Mount Potalaka! <i>Oṃ maṇipadme hūṃ.</i></p>
<p>སྐྱེ་ཤིང་བྱེ་བྲག་རི་སྟེང་པ །། པརྗེ་ལྷོང་དུ་རྒྱས་སྐྱེས་པས །། སྐྱེ་བ་རྣམ་བཞིའི་མིང་ཡང་མེད །། རི་པོ་ཏ་ལར་སྐྱེ་བར་ཤོག ། ཨོ་མ་ཁེ་བརྗེ་རྩྭ་། [7]</p>	<p>As many kinds of birth and death as there are, Since [all in that land] are born through spontaneous birth atop a lotus, Even the words ‘four types of birth’ do not exist there. May I be reborn on Mount Potalaka! <i>Oṃ maṇipadme hūṃ.</i></p>
<p>ཟས་ཀྱི་བྱེ་བྲག་རི་སྟེང་པ །། འཆི་མེད་བདུད་ཚིའི་ཟས་ཟ་བས །། ཡུང་པོ་ཁམ་ཟས་མིང་ཡང་མེད །། རི་པོ་ཏ་ལར་སྐྱེ་བར་ཤོག ། ཨོ་མ་ཁེ་བརྗེ་རྩྭ་། [8]</p>	<p>As many kinds of food as there are, Since all [in that land] eat the ambrosial food of immortality, Even the words ‘items of food’ do not exist there.⁸⁷ May I be reborn on Mount Potalaka! <i>Oṃ maṇipadme hūṃ.</i></p>
<p>སྐྱོམ་ཀྱི་བྱེ་བྲག་རི་སྟེང་པ །། བདེ་ཆེན་རྒྱན་གྱི་རྒྱ་འཕུངས་པས །། འདིག་རྟེན་སྐྱོམ་གྱི་མིང་ཡང་མེད །། རི་པོ་ཏ་ལར་སྐྱེ་བར་ཤོག ། ཨོ་མ་ཁེ་བརྗེ་རྩྭ་། [9]</p>	<p>As many kinds of thirst as there are, Since [all in that land] are quenched by the flowing water of great bliss, Even the words ‘ordinary thirst’ do not exist there. May I be reborn on Mount Potalaka! <i>Oṃ maṇipadme hūṃ.</i></p>
<p>གོས་ཀྱི་བྱེ་བྲག་རི་སྟེང་པ །། མཉམ་པ་རིས་མེད་གོས་ཉེན་པས །། འདིག་རྟེན་གོས་གྱི་མིང་ཡང་མེད །།</p>	<p>As many kinds of garments as there are, Since [all in that land] wear the garments of equality and impartiality,</p>

⁸⁷ The word *kham zas* implies food of the desire realm, the course food of our world, here in obvious contrast to divine food.

<p>རི་པོ་ཏ་ལར་སྐྱེ་བར་ཤོག ། ཨོ་མ་ཁི་པ་རྗེ་རྒྱུྃ ། [10]</p>	<p>Even the words 'ordinary garments' do not exist there. May I be reborn on Mount Potalaka! <i>Oṃ maṇipadme hūm.</i></p>
<p>བཞོན་པའི་བྱེ་བྲག་རི་སྟེང་པ ། བཞོན་འགྲུག་རྒྱར་བའི་རྟ་ཞོན་པས ། འདིག་རྟེན་རྟ་ཡི་མིང་ཡང་མེད ། རི་པོ་ཏ་ལར་སྐྱེ་བར་ཤོག ། ཨོ་མ་ཁི་པ་རྗེ་རྒྱུྃ ། [11]</p>	<p>As many kinds of mounts as there are, Since [all in that land] mount the swift horse of energy, Even the words 'ordinary horses' do not exist there.⁸⁸ May I be reborn on Mount Potalaka! <i>Oṃ maṇipadme hūm.</i></p>
<p>ཕྱོགས་ཀྱི་བྱེ་བྲག་རི་སྟེང་པ ། ཐབས་དང་ཤེས་རབ་གཉིས་མེད་པས ། སྐྱེས་པ་བྱུང་མེད་མིང་ཡང་མེད ། རི་པོ་ཏ་ལར་སྐྱེ་བར་ཤོག ། ཨོ་མ་ཁི་པ་རྗེ་རྒྱུྃ ། [12]</p>	<p>As many kinds of companions as there are, Since [in that land] means and insight are nondual, Even the words 'male and female' do not exist there. May I be reborn on Mount Potalaka! <i>Oṃ maṇipadme hūm.</i></p>
<p>འཁོར་གྱི་བྱེ་བྲག་རི་སྟེང་པ ། རང་རིག་རང་ཤར་རང་ཕྱོལ་བས ། རྒྱལ་པོ་སྟོན་པོའི་མིང་ཡང་མེད ། རི་པོ་ཏ་ལར་སྐྱེ་བར་ཤོག ། ཨོ་མ་ཁི་པ་རྗེ་རྒྱུྃ ། [13]</p>	<p>As many kinds of retinues as there are, Since [all in that land] are self-aware, self-emergent and self-liberated, Even the words 'king and ministers' do not exist there. May I be reborn on Mount Potalaka! <i>Oṃ maṇipadme hūm.</i></p>
<p>འོ་ར་རྩལ་བྱེ་བྲག་རི་སྟེང་པ ། ཉིང་འདྲིན་ལོངས་སྟོན་འཛད་མེད་པས ། འདིག་རྟེན་འདོད་ཡོན་མིང་ཡང་མེད །</p>	<p>As many kinds of wealth as there are, Since [all in that land] take pleasure in the unceasing enjoy-</p>

⁸⁸ See *Praise Poem ll.* 154–156, and the remarks here above, p. 336.

<p>རི་པོ་ཏ་ལར་སྐྱེ་བར་ཤོག ། ཨོ་མ་ཁི་བརྟེ་ཏུ། [14]</p>	<p>ment of meditative contemplation, Even the words 'ordinary pleasures' do not exist there. May I be reborn on Mount Potalaka! <i>Oṃ maṇipadme hūm.</i></p>
<p>མགོན་པོ་སྐྱུན་རས་གཟིགས་དབང་ཚུད། ། དང་པོ་བྱང་ཚུབ་ཐུགས་བསྐྱེད་ནས ། ལམ་ལྔ་ས་བརྒྱ་བཤོད་བྱས་ཤིང ། པ་རོལ་ཕྱིན་པ་བརྒྱ་རྗེས་ཏེ ། འགྲོ་བའི་དོན་དུ་སྐྱེ་བཞུགས་པ ། བདག་ནི་འཆི་བའི་དུས་ཀྱི་ཚེ ། རི་པོ་ཏ་ལར་སྐྱེ་བར་ཤོག ། ཨོ་མ་ཁི་བརྟེ་ཏུ། [15]</p>	<p>You, Protector Avalokiteśvara, Having first produced the aspiration to awakening, Traveled through the five paths and ten stages [of the bodhisattva],⁸⁹ and Consummated the ten perfections, Are embodied for the sake of beings. When I reach the time of my own death, May I be reborn on Mount Potalaka! <i>Oṃ maṇipadme hūm.</i></p>
<p>རི་པོ་ཏ་ལར་སྐྱེས་ནས་ཀྱང ། སྐྱུན་རས་གཟིགས་ཀྱི་འབས་བྱང་དུ ། སྐྱེ་ཤི་མེད་པའི་སྐྱེ་བརྟེས་ནས ། ཚོས་ཀྱི་བདུད་ཚི་འཕྲང་བར་ཤོག ། ཨོ་མ་ཁི་བརྟེ་ཏུ། [16]</p>	<p>And once being born on Mount Potalaka, In the presence of Avalokiteśvara, Having obtained a body free of birth or death, May I drink the nectar of the Dharma! <i>Oṃ maṇipadme hūm.</i></p>
<p>བདག་གིས་སྒྲོན་ལམ་འདི་བཏབ་པས ། འགྲོ་བ་རིགས་ཏུག་སེམས་ཅན་རྣམས ། སོ་སོའི་ཕྱིན་སྐྱིབ་ཀྱུན་བྱང་ནས ། སྐྱུག་བསྐྱེད་མ་ལུས་ཞི་གུར་ཏེ །</p>	<p>Through my pronouncing this aspirational prayer, May all the evil deeds and hindrances of each and every Being in the six transmigrational states of beings be purified,</p>

⁸⁹ The *pañcamārga* are the *saṃbhāra-*, *prayoga-*, *darśana-*, *bhāvanā-* and *āśaikṣā-mārgas*. The ten *bhūmi* are of course well known. One scheme includes the latter among the last three of the former (first *bhūmi* = *darśanamārga*, second through seventh = *bhāvanāmārga*, eighth through tenth = *āśaikṣamārga*). I cannot say how much of this doctrinal development should be read into our passage here.

<p>བྱང་ཚུབ་ལམ་ལ་རབ་ཞུགས་ནས ། ལམས་གསུམ་འཁོར་བ་སྐྱོང་བར་ཤོག ། ཨོཾ་མ་ཎི་པ་རྗེ་ཏུ། ^[17]</p>	<p>Their sufferings without exception be pacified, And they be settled in the path toward awakening, [and thus] May transmigration comprised of the three realms be emptied [of beings]! <i>Oṃ maṇipadme hūm.</i></p>
<p>ཡི་གེ་དྲུག་པའི་ཡོན་ཏན་བསྐྱོད་པ་བག་ ཤེས་སློབ་ལམ་དང་བཅས་པ། ཚོས་ སྐྱོང་བའི་རྒྱལ་པོ་སྲོང་བཙན་སྐམ་པོས་ མཛད་པ་རྫོགས་སོ། ། མངའ་བདག་ལྷུང་གི་གཏེར་མའོ། ། བརྒྱད་པོ་དེ་ཡི་གེ་དྲུག་པའི་གསུང་གི་ ཞལ་གདམས་ཀྱི་སྐོར་ཡིན་ལོ། །</p>	<p>This praise of the good qualities of the six syllable [mantra], together with its auspicious aspirational prayer, written by the Dharma-protecting king, Srong btsan sgam po, is complete. It is a treasure [discovered by] <i>mnga' bdag</i> Myang [Nyi ma 'od zer]. Those eight parts consist of the Cycle of Precepts of the expression of the six syllables.⁹⁰</p>

Despite the colophon's explicit claim to the authorship of Srong btsan sgam po, the relation of this section of text to the prior section of the same *Ma ni bka' 'bum*, our *Ma ni bka' 'bum* I, is beyond dispute, just as it must be seen as a further adaptation of the core source. It appears to be, poetically speaking, a revision, condensation and polishing of the earlier version, but also with reference to elements of the *Praise Poem* not used by *Ma ni bka' 'bum* I. In terms of modifications, not only, as mentioned above, does this version dramatically shift the focus to Potalaka, it forthrightly equates Sukhāvātī and Potalaka. This is doctrinally odd, since, whereas the latter is usually credited with an earthly locale, whether in South India or an island off the Chinese coast, Sukhāvātī belongs to a realm somehow separate from both

⁹⁰ I am very uncertain of the meaning of this sentence. It might refer to some structure of the text of which I am unaware, in which there are a number of parts, or some other structural element. Alternatively, as Charles Ramble suggests, while something of a stretch it is not entirely impossible that we should emend to **rgyal po de yi yi ge ...*, in which case we could understand, "This is the Cycle of Precepts of the teaching of that king [Srong btsan sgam po] on the six syllables," or something similar. This last sentence is not translated or noted by Phillips 2004: 276.

nirvāṇa and any saṃsāric location. Here, moreover, the earlier versions' aspirations for rebirth in Sukhāvātī have been entirely transferred to Potalaka. A good treatment of this innovation will be possible only through a broad-ranging study of Potalaka in the Tibetan imagination.⁹¹

Now, while both *Ma ṅi bka' 'bum* texts clearly demonstrate their authors' direct access to the *Praise Poem*, the secondary status of the reworking in the later *Padma bka' thang*, to which we now turn, is beyond doubt.

The *Padma bka' thang* (*Padma thang yig*)

Some two to three centuries after the initial compilation of the *Ma ṅi bka' 'bum*, our same basic text makes a reappearance in another *gter ma*, the *Padma bka' thang*, credited to Yar rje Ö rgyan gling pa (1323–?), a work Dan Martin dates to 1352.⁹² As with the *Ma ṅi bka' 'bum*, here too at the very beginning of the text we find a description of what appears to be the land of the buddha whom we know otherwise—for the text does not explicitly tell us so—to be Amitābha. However, initially rather than being named Sukhāvātī or *Padma can*, as in *Ma ṅi bka' 'bum* I, here the land is called *Padma bkod*, Lotus Array,⁹³ although later (*l.*

⁹¹ We may note, for instance, that the thangka reproduced at <https://rubinmuseum.org/collection/artwork/bodhisattva-avalokiteshvara-in-his-pure-land-mount-potalaka-C2012-4-5> does not depict Potalaka in any way resembling the description in this text. All images I have seen follow virtually the same pattern. A good discussion by Jeff Watt is found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YoZrVaJwh6E>.

⁹² Martin 2020: 132, §141. I owe my knowledge of the relevance of this text in the first place to the same note of Sørensen 1994: 98n252 from which I also learned of the *Ma ṅi bka' 'bum* connection. Concerning the relation of the two works, Sørensen says that in comparison with the presentation in the *Ma ṅi bka' 'bum*, the text here “is also found embodied with a slightly more detailed wording and longer metrum, in the first chapter.” Although the passage cited here appears in the translation of the text by Toussaint 1933: 6–8 (and in fact already in 1920: 16–18), and this in its turn was rendered into English in 1978: 4–7, it has in both forms become nearly unrecognizable. This was pointed out for the French already by Tucci 1937: 516, who retranslated a portion in his review of Toussaint. Note that the entire beginning portion of the text is not translated in Schlagintweit 1901, who otherwise was one of the first, if not the first, to deal with the work in the West. Our passage was rendered into English by Bischoff 1973: 39–42, though one can hardly escape the suspicion that despite the claims of the translator he relied extremely heavily on the Mongol—at least, his translation does not reflect the Tibetan very closely. Incidentally, by citing these texts here, the *Ma ṅi bka' 'bum*, *Padma bka' thang* and *Bka thang gser phreng*, I obviously mean in no way to suggest that these are the only sites in which our basic text makes a reappearance.

⁹³ I do not know what, if any, relation there may be between this name and the famous (actual physical) Padma bkod in the south-eastern border region of Tibet.

37) it indeed receives the name Bde can, Sukhāvati. The text here takes in its first portion a rather odd metrical structure—assuming that it is indeed metrical, as seems to be the case—namely it has 11 syllables in the first portion, followed by 13 in the second line of each couplet. I have not found any reference to this type or pattern, even in the extensive listing of Poucha 1950.⁹⁴ However, the regularity of this pattern in the lines which follow seems to be as close to a guarantee as we will get that we do indeed here have to do with a metrical text.⁹⁵

It is further of considerable interest that this text has (at least) two distinct recensions, since the old Leiden manuscript (F) contains

Likewise, I do not know how links between this earthly Padma bkod and Avalokiteśvara were understood. In this regard, Elizabeth McDougal 2016: 29 quotes the *Rtsa gsum dgongs pa kun 'dus las: Yang gsang pad shel gnas yig ma rig mun sel sgron me* revealed by Bdud 'joms drag sngags gling pa (ca. 1871–1929), thus modern but nonetheless interesting. This text includes the statement “This phenomenal land, known conventionally as Pemakö, the innermost hidden land of the lotus, is a terrestrial Sukhavati, an earthly Pure Land of Great Bliss.” I thank Cathy Cantwell for drawing this article to my attention.

⁹⁴ Under irregular metres, for “strophes à deux vers,” p. 215, Poucha lists only lines of 9+10 and 9+11 syllables; no combinations of 11 and 13 syllables occur elsewhere in his listings.

⁹⁵ I have based the text printed here on the following sources:

- A: BDRC purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW8LS29353. NGMPP PKT xyl 70054, Ms.No. 1300, Reel No.AT126/5: 3a3–4b5.
- B: Peking print. Lcang skya rol pa'i rdo rje, 1779 (Kapstein 2015 dates it to 1755). BDRC purl.bdrc.io/resource/W1KG16912: 3a4–5b5.
- C: 2001, from Sku 'bum byams pa gling. BDRC purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW22346. 3a3–5a2.
- D: *Gu ru pad ma 'byung gnas kyi rnam thar*. BDRC purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW8LS29338. NGMPP PKT ms 70322, Ms.No.1385, Reel No.AT133/9: As scanned, the leaves are not in the correct order, and the leaf with the beginning of the text is apparently missing. The text begins at folio 4a1 in l. 7 of the text, and ends on 7a1.
- E: Modern printed edition: 2016. *O rgyan padma 'byung gnas kyi skyes rabs rnam par thar pa rgyas par bkod pa padma bka'i thang yig* (Lhasa: Ser gtsug nang bstan dpe mying 'tshol bsdu phyogs sgrig khang). BDRC purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW1KG25186. Text on ages 2.5~4.11. I ignore its few readings, which are evidently, with one or two possible exceptions, typographical errors.
- F: *U rgyan ghu ru'i rnam par thar pa dang lo tshitsa'i 'gyur byang brgyas pa bkod pa*. Leiden manuscript I.KERN 2740/M405. Although not explicitly indicated in the record, this belongs to the Van Manen collection. On the basis of the paper and handwriting we know that the first two leaves (actually one full leaf and another written on only one side) belonged to a different manuscript. The first script is a rather blocky *dbu med*, after which we find a much more fluid *dbu med* hand. ka 2b2–4a4. Although photos are available (<http://hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:334506> = BDRC purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW0LULDC334506), I consulted the original in the Rare Books room at the Leiden University library. On the textual history of this work, see Kapstein 2015, and van der Kuijp 2013: 138ff.

readings which sometimes differ from those in the text printed here.⁹⁶ In some places below where I find significant differences, I quote F as well. By following this strategy, I do not wish to imply a claim about priority; F may well represent an older form, and printing its readings in smaller type is only done for the sake of convenience, but the true relation between this manuscript and other sources will only become clear from an overall comparison, one not limited to this small section.⁹⁷

Padma bka' thang

<p>དེ་ལ་རྒྱབ་ཕྱོགས་པདམོ་བཀོད་པའི་ཞིང་ ལམས་ཞེས་བྱ་བ ཅུང་།</p>	<p>In that context, in the west there is a [buddha] field called the Lotus Array.</p>
<p>གསེར་གྱི་ས་གཞི་མིག་མངས་རིས་སུ་ ཆགས་པ་ལས ཅུང་། ས་གཞི་རི་རབ་མིང་ཡང་མི་གྲག་བཅའ་ ཀྱང་མི་རྟོན་པ ཅུང་།</p>	<p>Since the surface of the ground [in that field] appears in the form of a checkerboard, Even the words '[ordinary] surface of the ground and Mount Sumeru' are not at all mentioned.</p>
<p>3 sa gzhi ri rab F: sa zhes bya ba'i</p>	
<p>བྱང་ཚུབ་ཤིང་གི་ལོ་འདབ་མེ་ཉོག་རྒྱས་པ་ ལས ཅུང་། རྗེ་ཤིང་ནགས་ཚལ་མིང་ཡང་མི་གྲག་བཅའ་ ཀྱང་མི་རྟོན་པ ཅུང་། [5]</p>	<p>Since leaves and flowers of Bodhi trees abound [in that field], Even the words '[ordinary] trees and forests' are not at all mentioned.</p>
<p>ཉིང་འཛིན་ཡན་ལག་བརྒྱད་ལྔ་ལྔ་བོ་ འབབ་པ་ལས ཅུང་།</p>	<p>Since rivers descend [in that field] with water of the eight qualities of meditative contemplation,</p>

⁹⁶ This is the witness I call F (see the note immediately above). The manuscript is in appearance rather old, and on quite thick paper, with the exception of the initial leaves. Inside the wooden cover of the manuscript something is written in very cursive *dbu med*, but I cannot make it out. The text uses several spelling archaisms and abbreviations. Without further investigation of other sources I would not dare to speculate, but I wonder whether F could present an older version of the text than that transmitted in the other sources (A–E) listed in the previous note.

⁹⁷ I print the text with the *gter shad*, but not all sources use it.

<p>སྣ་ཚོགས་ཚུ་ཡི་མིང་ཡང་མི་གྲག་བཅལ་ ཀྱང་མི་རྟོན་པ ཅུང་།</p>	<p>Even the words '[ordinary] rivers' are not at all mentioned.</p>
<p>རིག་པའི་ཡེ་ཤེས་འོད་ལྷ་རང་མེ་འབར་བ་ ལས ཅུང་། འདིག་རྟོན་མེ་ཡི་མིང་ཡང་མི་གྲག་བཅལ་ ཀྱང་མི་རྟོན་པ ཅུང་།</p>	<p>Since the spontaneous flame of the five rays of wisdom of liberating awareness burns [in that field], Even the words 'ordinary flames' are not at all mentioned.</p>
<p>8 F: rig pa ye shes lnga rang mo 'bar ba las</p>	
<p>ནམ་པར་དག་པ་སྲོལ་གྱི་རྗེ་ངད་ལྷང་བ་ ལས ཅུང་། [10] འདིག་རྟོན་རླུང་གི་མིང་ཡང་མི་གྲག་བཅལ་ ཀྱང་མི་རྟོན་པ ཅུང་།</p>	<p>Since there is a wafting up of the aromatic aroma of perfect purity [in that field], Even the words 'ordinary wind' are not at all mentioned.</p>
<p>ཁྱབ་གདལ་ཚོས་གྱི་དབྱིངས་ལ་ཕྱོགས་སྤྱང་ མེད་པ་ལས ཅུང་། འབྲུང་བ་ནམ་མཁའི་མིང་ཡང་མི་གྲག་ བཅལ་ཀྱང་མི་རྟོན་པ ཅུང་།</p>	<p>Since the all-encompassing <i>dharmadhātu</i> is without parts [in that field], Even the words 'element of empty space' are not at all mentioned</p>
<p>དབྱིངས་རིག་ཡེ་ཤེས་གསལ་བའི་ཁྲི་ གདུགས་བརྒྱལ་བ་ལས ཅུང་། ཉི་མ་ལྷ་བའི་མིང་ཡང་མི་གྲག་བཅལ་ཀྱང་ མི་རྟོན་པ ཅུང་། [15]</p>	<p>Since the illuminating canopy of liberating awareness and gnosis of the [<i>dharmad</i>]dhātu spreads [over that field], Even the names 'sun and moon' are not at all mentioned.</p>
<p>རྒྱལ་བ་འཕགས་པའི་རང་འོད་ལྷ་རུ་འབར་ བ་ལས ཅུང་། ཉིན་དང་མཚན་གྱི་མིང་ཡང་མི་གྲག་བཅལ་ ཀྱང་མི་རྟོན་པ ཅུང་།</p>	<p>Since the five spontaneous light rays of the noble Victor are ablaze [in that field], Even the words 'day and night' are not at all mentioned.</p>

<p>མཚོག་ལུན་ཚོས་ཀྱི་རྒྱལ་སྲིད་རང་ཤར་རང་ གྲོལ་སྲོང་བ་ལས ཅུ རྒྱལ་པོ་སློན་པོའི་མིང་ཡང་མི་གྲག་བཅའ་ ཀྱང་མི་རྟེན་པ ཅུ</p>	<p>Since the reign of the excellent Dharma safeguards [beings in that field thanks to] its spon- taneous emergence and spon- taneous liberation, Even the words ‘king and ministers’ are not at all mentioned.</p>
<p>བདག་དང་གཞན་གཉིས་ཐ་མི་དད་པར་ གཅིག་པ་ལས ཅུ [20] འཐབ་ཅིང་ཚོད་པའི་མིང་ཡང་མི་གྲག་ བཅའ་ཀྱང་མི་རྟེན་པ ཅུ</p>	<p>Since self and other are absolutely not different [in that field], Even the words ‘conflict and quarrel’ are not at all mentioned.</p>
<p>འཚོ་བ་ཉིང་འཇིན་ཟས་ཀྱི་འཚོ་བས་ཚེམ་ པ་ལས ཅུ ཟས་ཞེས་བྱ་བའི་མིང་ཡང་མི་གྲག་བཅའ་ ཀྱང་མི་རྟེན་པ ཅུ</p>	<p>Since [all in that field] are satiated by the nourishment of the food of meditative contemplation, Even the words ‘[ordinary] food’ are not at all mentioned.</p>
<p>སློམ་དུ་ཡིད་བཞིན་བདུད་ཅིའི་ཚུ་རྒྱན་ འཐུང་བ་ལས ཅུ སློམ་ཞེས་བྱ་བའི་མིང་ཡང་མི་གྲག་བཅའ་ ཀྱང་མི་རྟེན་པ ཅུ [25]</p>	<p>Since to quench one’s thirst [in that field] one drinks as one wishes from the flowing current of nectar , Even the words ‘[ordinary] thirst’ are not at all mentioned.</p>
<p>24 skom du yi bzhin] F: skom du</p>	
<p>གོས་སུ་རྒྱལ་བྱིས་གཙང་མའི་གོས་བཟང་ གྲོན་པ་ལས ཅུ གོས་ཞེས་བྱ་བའི་མིང་ཡང་མི་གྲག་བཅའ་ ཀྱང་མི་རྟེན་པ ཅུ</p>	<p>Since one wears the fine garments of pure morality for garments [in that field], Even the words ‘[ordinary] gar- ments’ are not at all mentioned.</p>
<p>སྐྱེ་བ་པར་འི་སྐྱེ་དུ་རྒྱས་ཏེ་སྐྱེ་བ་ལས ཅུ</p>	<p>Since birth [in that field] is to be spontaneously born atop a lotus,</p>

<p>སྐྱེ་བ་གཞན་གྱི་མིང་ཡང་མི་གྲག་བཅའ་ ཀྱང་མི་རྟོན་པ ཅུང་།</p>	<p>Even the words 'other forms of birth' are not at all mentioned.</p>
<p>ཟག་མེད་དོན་རྟོག་བྱུང་ཆོལ་མངའ་བརྟེན་ བས ཅུང་།^[30] ཆས་ཤིང་རྒྱད་པའི་མིང་ཡང་མི་གྲག་བཅའ་ ཀྱང་མི་རྟོན་པ ཅུང་།</p>	<p>Since one obtains power over one's longevity [in that field] as if it were an inexhaustible adamant, Even the words 'aging and decrepitude' are not mentioned.</p>
<p>སྐྱེ་ཤི་མེད་པའི་ས་ལ་ཡོངས་རྫོགས་འདྲོག་ བ་ལས ཅུང་། སྐྱེ་ཞིང་འཆི་བའི་མིང་ཡང་མི་གྲག་བཅའ་ ཀྱང་མི་རྟོན་པ ཅུང་།</p>	<p>Since one is perfectly established in that place free from birth and death, Even the words 'being born and dying' are not at all mentioned.</p>
<p>དུས་གསུམ་སངས་རྒྱལ་གྱི་ཞིང་མཚོག་ དེ་ན་ནི ཅུང་། མ་ལུས་ཐམས་ཅད་བྱང་ཆུབ་ལ་སྦྱོང་སྦྱིད་ བ་ལ ཅུང་།^[35] མི་བདེ་སྐྱབས་བསྐྱེད་མིང་ཡང་མི་གྲག་ བཅའ་ཀྱང་མི་རྟོན་པ ཅུང་།</p>	<p>In that excellent field of all buddhas of the three times, Since everyone without exception delights in practicing to attain awakening, Even the words 'unhappiness and suffering' are not at all mentioned.</p>
<p>བདེ་ཅན་བྱང་ཆུབ་རྫོགས་སངས་རྒྱལ་གྱི་ ཞིང་དེ་ན ཅུང་། དོ་བོ་རང་བཞིན་སྣོད་པ་ཉིད་གྱི་གཞུང་ ཡས་ཁང ཅུང་། དོས་གཉིང་ཟབ་ལོགས་རྒྱ་དང་སྤངས་ནི་</p>	<p>In the field of that perfect buddha, Blissful:⁹⁸ Is his immense palace, in essence and by nature emptiness, There are surfaces profoundly broad, walls lofty and wide, [both] immeasurable. Without distinction of inside and</p>

⁹⁸ See above p. 331, note 71.

<p>ཚད་མེད་པ་ ཅུ ལྷོ་ནང་མེད་པ་ཚོས་དབྱིངས་མངོན་ཤེས་ ལྟར་ཁྱེད་གསལ་ ཅུ [40] མི་མཐུན་པ་དང་མི་གཟིགས་པ་ནི་གཅིག་ རྒྱུ་མེད་ ཅུ</p>	<p>out, its clear windows are the higher knowledges of the <i>dharmadhātu</i>, [Looking through which] there is not even the slightest thing [that buddha] does not fathom, does not observe.</p>
<p>37 F: bde ba'i byang chub sangs rgyas zhing de de na 39 F: ngos su gting zab logs la rgya dang tshad ni dpag med pa 41 gcig kyang med] F: gags yang med</p>	
<p>སྟོང་ན་ཐེག་པ་ཆེན་པོའི་ཚོས་ཀྱི་གདུགས་ ཐུབ་པ་ ཅུ</p>	<p>Above, its parasol of the Great Vehicle is spread out.</p>
<p>འོག་ན་ཆགས་མེད་པ་ལྷོ་འོད་ལྗན་ཁྲི་ བརྟེན་པ་ ཅུ</p>	<p>Below is constructed a stainless, radiant lotus throne.⁹⁹</p>
<p>43 F: 'og nas chags pa med pa padma 'od ldan pa</p>	
<p>དགའ་བཞི་ཡེ་ཤེས་ཚད་མེད་བཞི་ཡི་གདན་ བརྟེན་པ་ ཅུ</p>	<p>Its seat of the four immeasurables is built up from the wisdom of the four kinds of joy.¹⁰⁰</p>
<p>ཕྱོགས་བཞི་མཚམས་བརྒྱུད་བྱང་རྒྱུ་ཡན་ ལག་འཕན་ཕྱུར་བ་ ཅུ [45]</p>	<p>The banner of the limbs of awak- ening is raised in the four primary and the eight inter- mediate directions.</p>
<p>ཚོས་རྣམས་ཕྱོགས་མེད་མཉམ་པ་ཉིད་ཀྱི་ད་</p>	<p>It is constructed out of the</p>

⁹⁹ Padma 'od is the name of the celestial palace of Padmasambhava.

¹⁰⁰ There appear to be various lists, one of which is *dga' ba*, *mchog dga'*, *khyad dga'* (? *dga' bral gyi dga' ba*), *lhan skyes kyi dga' ba*, joy, supreme joy, special joy and innate joy (Skt. *ānanda*, *paramānanda*, *vīramānanda*, *sahajānanda*). There is also a sexual interpretation of the term, but I doubt it is relevant here.

ལ་བྱས ཅུ་ ¹⁰¹	maṇḍala of the equality and impartiality of all things.
46 kyi da la byas] F: dkyil 'khor byas	
རེ་དོགས་སྤང་སྤང་གཉིས་སྤང་མེད་པའི་ པདམོ་བཀའ་ཅུ་	Its lotuses, which are freedom from the dualities of hope and fear and rejection and acceptance, are laid out.
ཡི་དག་དྲི་མཚོག་ཚུལ་ཁྲིམས་སྒོས་ཀྱི་དྲི་ ངད་འཕྱུལ་ཅུ་	The supreme primordially pure fragrance of morality rises in the air.
སྤྱི་ལོ་མ་བྱས་ཡི་ནས་རང་བྱུང་ལྷན་ ཀྱིས་བྱུང་ཅུ་	Unconstructed by anyone, it is primordially spontaneously self-arisen.
ཉིང་འཛིན་མི་གཡོ་ཚོས་དབྱིངས་རྒྱ་མཚོ་ དངས་པ་ལ་ཅུ་ ^[50] རྣམ་ཤེས་མ་ཆགས་ཡི་སྤྱབ་པདམོ་ཀུན་ རྫོགས་འཕྲུངས་ཅུ་	From the clear ocean of immovable contemplation, the <i>dharma-dhātu</i> , Lotuses of awareness and non-attachment perfectly emerge.
50 ting 'dzin mi g.yo] F: mi g.yo	
འཕྲོ་བ་མ་ལུས་སྤྱགས་རྗེས་སྣོམས་པའི་རྒྱན་ ཀྱིས་བརྒྱན་ཅུ་	It is ornamented by equally applied adornments through compassion for each and every being— ¹⁰²
ཕོ་བྲང་དེ་ན་སངས་རྒྱུས་འོད་དཔག་མེད་ པ་བཞུགས་ཅུ་	In that mansion dwells the buddha Amitābha.

¹⁰¹ It is very difficult to know what to do with the wording here. I follow both the reading of F and the suggestion of Cathy Cantwell that *da la* is a short-hand for *maṇḍala*. See also *Ma ṅi bka' 'bum* I l. 48. However, other sources available to Cantwell read (evidently seeing not *da* but *nga*) *ngang la byas*, which, as she says, makes sense, but may represent an editorial attempt to sort out a difficult reading.

¹⁰² Translation uncertain.

<p>53 pho brang de na] F: de na</p>	
<p>སྟོབས་བརྩུ་མི་འཇིགས་རྣམ་བཞི་སྐྱེ་ཡི་ རྒྱན་རབ་མངོས ཅུ།</p>	<p>The ten powers and the four fearlessnesses thoroughly beautify the ornament of his body.</p>
<p>54 F: stobs bcu mi 'jigs sku'i rgyan rab mdzes par brgyan</p>	
<p>སྐྱེ་ལུས་བཀོད་པ་མཚན་བབང་བལྟ་བས་ མི་ངོམས་ཤིང ཅུ།^[55]</p>	<p>One is not sated gazing upon his body's appearance and lovely [thirty-two major bodily] marks;</p>
<p>ཐོ་བྱི་ཐམས་ཅད་འོད་ཟེར་སྣ་ཚོགས་འངའ་ འོད་འབྲིགས ཅུ།</p>	<p>Variegated rays of light filling the entire sky encircle him like a rainbow.</p>
<p>ཐུགས་རྗེའི་འོད་ཟེར་དཀར་དམར་སྣ་ ཚོགས་ཕྱོགས་བརྩུར་འཕྲོ ཅུ།</p>	<p>[These] radiant variegated rosy beams of compassion spread through the ten directions.</p>
<p>རྗོགས་པའི་སང་རྒྱས་དབལ་ལྡན་སྐྱེས་བུ་ མཐུ་ལྡན་པ ཅུ། སྐྱེ་གསུང་ཐུགས་ཡོན་འཕྲིན་ལས་བལྟ་བས་ ཚོག་མི་ཤེས ཅུ།</p>	<p>No one, contemplating the body, speech, mind, qualities and activities of a powerful being possessed of the splendor of perfect buddhahood, Could ever be content [with that contemplation].</p>
<p>59 yon 'phrin las blta] F: yon tan lta</p>	
<p>རྒྱལ་བ་རྒྱ་མཚོ་འཁོར་མང་དག་ནི་སྦྱིན་ ལྟར་གཉིབས ཅུ།^[60]</p>	<p>The multitudinous retinues of the Ocean of Victors gather like clouds.¹⁰³</p>
<p>མིག་ནི་མི་གཡོ་བདེ་ཚེན་དང་ལ་མཉམ་</p>	<p>He is primally serene, his eyes unmoving, blissful,</p>

¹⁰³ The term *rgyal ba rgya mtsho* as a well-known epithet of Avalokiteśvara, on which see Solmsdorf 2019.

པར་བཞག མུ།	
བཟེ་བའི་ཐུགས་རྗེ་འོད་ཟེར་དུ་མ་ཕྱོགས་ བཅུར་འཕྲོ མུ།	His many radiant beams of loving compassion spread throughout the ten directions.
འོད་ཟེར་རེ་རེའི་ཚེ་ལས་སངས་རྒྱལ་སྤྱུལ་ པ་འགྲེད མུ།	From the tip of each of those rays of radiance are emitted buddha manifestations.
བསམ་གྱིས་མི་བྲས་གངས་མེད་བཟོད་དུ་ མེད་པ་འཕྲོ མུ།	They spread inconceivably, innumerably, inexpressibly.
གང་ལ་གང་འདུལ་དཔག་ཏུ་མེད་པས་འགྲོ་ དོན་མངོན མུ། ^[65]	Converting each according to their appropriate manner, they promote the welfare of beings limitlessly.
ཞིང་ཁམས་དེ་ན་འཕགས་པ་མིན་པ་ གཞན་མི་གནས མུ།	In that [buddha] field, there are none other than Nobles.
སྤྱུལ་པ་ཡང་སྤྱུལ་ཉིད་སྤྱུལ་ཚོར་བུ་བསམ་ མི་བྲས མུ།	It is inconceivable [how many] manifestations, further manifestations [from those manifestations], and individual manifestations there are. ¹⁰⁴
ལྷུ་རྒྱུ་གུ་རུ་པར་འབྱུང་གནས་ཀྱི་རྒྱུས་ རབས་རྣམ་པར་ཐར་པ་རྒྱས་པར་ བཀོད་པ་ལས མུ། རྒྱུ་བདེ་བ་ཆེན་པོའི་ཞིང་ཁམས་བསྟན་ པའི་ལུང་སྟེ་དང་པོའོ མུ། ^[69]	From the extended life-story narrative of the liberation of U rgyan gu ru Padma 'byung gnas, The first chapter, teaching about the Western [buddha] field of Bliss.

The relation of this text to that in *Ma ni bka' 'bum* I is direct, with only very small variations. I represent the correspondence in a table, with

¹⁰⁴ I have little confidence about my understanding of this line.

the line numbers of the *Padma bka' thang* on the left and those of the *Ma ni bka' 'bum I* on the right:

1	3
2–36	4–38
37–40	39–43
41–42	44–45
43–44	54–55
45–51	46–53
52–65	56–70
66	73–75

Lines of the *Padma bka' thang* (left) corresponding to those of the *Ma ni bka' 'bum I* (right)

As mentioned above, manuscript F appears to present an older form of the text. A more systematic study of the entire witness is obviously needed, not limited to this small section of text, but we can note, for instance, that F reads *l. 37: bde ba'i byang chub sangs rgyas zhing de de na*, against the *bde can byang chub rdzogs sangs rgyas kyi zhing de na* of the otherwise transmitted text. Any number of other cases even for this very short sequence of lines could be cited, and the variance seen here certainly calls for consideration.¹⁰⁵

The *Bka' thang gser phreng*

Finally, turning to the last full version we will consider, only slightly later than the *Padma bka' thang Sangs rgyas gling pa* (1340–1396) produced the *Bka' thang gser phreng*,¹⁰⁶ and as far as the passage of interest to us here is concerned, it is remarkably close to the *Padma bka' thang* in its prior portion, before diverging rather significantly, but

¹⁰⁵ Just as I was preparing to send off this paper, Lewis Doney wrote to me suggesting that F appears not to be a manuscript of the *Padma bka' thang* but rather the text he, in Doney 2016, calls LTGB, namely the *Orgyan pad ma 'byung gnas kyi skyes rabs lo tsha'i 'gyur byang rnam thar rgyas par bkod pa*, for which he refers *inter alia* to W23642. He further writes of the interest of F since “the manuscript I used for Doney 2016 lacks most of the first chapter and so it is great to perhaps be able to fill in that gap. Incidentally, the NGMCP manuscript no. 46493 (Microfilm reel L 142/4) may also be an exemplar of this text.”

¹⁰⁶ This is more fully titled *U rgyan gu ru Padma 'byung gnas kyi rnam par thar pa Gser gyi phreng ba thar lam gsal byed*. Martin 2020: 130, item #137, places it in the “late 1300's.” Doney 2016 is largely devoted to this work, and he seems to have gathered a great many sources on the basis of which a critical edition could be essayed. On the author see Mei 2012.

even in the overlapping portions some wording is different.¹⁰⁷ It is certainly, in this sense, to be considered a separate revelation, even though from a text-historical point of view its debt to the *Padma bka' thang* is patently obvious. As discussed rather often in discussion of *gter ma*, it is an open question how works which so obviously rely on other known works may still be considered revelations, but as Cathy Cantwell has remarked to me, "There is no problem revealing a new *gter ma* which incorporates large amounts of previously familiar material. ... If Guru Rinpoche taught one teaching at one time, why should it be remembered differently? But it is wonderful if different students are reborn at different times and receive it fresh again." Emically speaking, then, the following should not at all surprise us in its similarity to the work noticed immediately above.

Bka' thang gser phreng

<p>དེ་ལ་རུབ་ཕྱོགས་སུ་བཞུགས་པའི་ཞིང་ ལས་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་ན།</p>	<p>In that context, in the west there is a field called the Lotus Array.</p>
<p>གསེར་གྱི་ས་གཞི་མངས་རིས་སུ་ཆགས་པ་ ལ། ས་གཞི་རི་བྲག་མིང་ཡང་མི་བྲག་བཙུགས་ ཡུང་མི་རྟོག་པ།</p>	<p>Since the surface of the ground [in the field] appears in the form of a checkerboard, Even the words '[ordinary] surface of the ground and Mount Sumeru' are not at all mentioned.</p>
<p>བྱང་རྒྱལ་ཤིང་གི་མེ་འོག་གི་འབྲས་སུ་རྒྱས་ པ་ལས།</p>	<p>Since the fruits of the flowers of Bodhi trees abound [in that field],</p>

¹⁰⁷ Sources for the text:

- A: *U rgyan guru rin po che'i rnam thar rgyas pa gser gyi phreng ba*. In BDRC: Sangs rgyas gling pa, *Bka' thang gser phreng ma*. BDRC purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW8LS29365. Folio 3a2–5b6. Hirshberg NGMPP, SP ms 47714.pdf, filmed in Dzaden, Helambu, on: 1990-01-29, reel: L/269/2.
- B: *Bka' thang gser phreng*, BDRC W1PD89340, 2b1–4b3.
- C: *U rgyan guru padma 'byung gnas kyi rnam thar rgyas pa gser gyi phreng ba thar lam gsal byed*, 17th c. Spungs thang. BDRC W27933, 2b2–4b3.
- D: *Padma bka' thang*. [Mang yul gung thang]: Zhang blon Dri med bsam grub rdo rje dang Rgyal mo kun dga bu khrid, dating to 1535. BDRC purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW4CZ45306. Some text on every folio side is written in red, but I cannot determine its significance. It does not appear to be in any way related to the content. Each folio side up to 5b bears two color illustrations. 4a2–6a4.

<p>ཅི་ཤིང་ནགས་འཚལ་མིང་ཡང་མི་བྲག་ བཅའ་ཀྱང་མི་རྟེན་པ། ^[5]</p>	<p>Even the words ‘[ordinary] trees and forests’ are not at all mentioned.</p>
<p>ཉིང་ངེ་འཛིན་ཡན་ལག་བརྒྱད་ལྡན་ཚུ་བོ་ འབབ་པ་ལས། སྣ་ཚོགས་ཚུའི་མིང་ཡང་མི་བྲག་བཅའ་ཀྱང་ མི་རྟེན་པ།</p>	<p>Since rivers descend [in that field] with water of the eight qualities of meditative contemplation, Even the words ‘[ordinary] rivers’ are not at all mentioned.</p>
<p>རིག་པ་ཡེ་ཤེས་རང་མེ་འབར་བ་ལས། འཛིག་རྟེན་མེའི་མིང་ཡང་མི་བྲག་བཅའ་ ཀྱང་མི་རྟེན་པ།</p>	<p>Since the spontaneous flame of the wisdom of liberating awareness burns [in that field], Even the words ‘ordinary flames’ are not at all mentioned.</p>
<p>ནམ་དག་སློམ་གྱི་རྒྱི་ངད་ལྡང་བ་ལས། ^[10] འཛིག་རྟེན་རླུང་གི་མིང་ཡང་མི་བྲགས་ བཅའ་ཀྱང་མི་རྟེན་པ།</p>	<p>Since there is the wafting up of an aromatic aroma of perfect purity [in that field], Even the words ‘ordinary wind’ are not at all mentioned.</p>
<p>ཐུབ་གདལ་ཚོས་དབྱིངས་ཕྱོགས་ལྷུང་མེད་ པ་ལས། འབྱུང་བ་ནམ་མཁའའི་མིང་ཡང་མི་བྲག་ བཅའ་ཀྱང་མི་རྟེན་པ།</p>	<p>Since the all-encompassing <i>dharmadhātu</i> is without parts [in that field], Even the words ‘element of empty space’ are not at all mentioned.</p>
<p>དབྱིངས་རིག་ཡེ་ཤེས་གསལ་བའི་ཁྱི་ གདུགས་གདལ་བ་ལས།</p>	<p>Since the illuminating canopy of the Wisdom of Space-and-Awareness spreads [over that field],¹⁰⁸</p>

¹⁰⁸ The journal’s editor Jean-Luc Achard kindly offered me the following observation, and I follow his advice for the translation here: “The compound *dbyings rig ye shes* is a classical Rdzogs chen expression in which *dbyings* means Space in the sense of the infinite primordial space (of one’s natural state) in which the visions of *rig* (-pa) manifest in various modes such as *thig-les*, diamond chains, and so forth. In this context, *ye shes* is the sapiential state in which one’s mind abides when contemplating these visionary displays of Awareness (*rig*) within Space (*dbyings*). This is actually an indirect reference to the practice of *thod-rgal*. In this context, *dbyings-rig* refers to the visions of Space and Awareness (Space=the blue background covered

<p>ཉི་མ་ལྷ་བའི་མིང་ཡང་མི་བྲག་བཅའ་ཀྱང་ མི་རྟེན་པ། [15]</p>	<p>Even the names 'sun and moon' are not at all mentioned.</p>
<p>རྒྱལ་བ་འཕགས་པའི་རང་འོད་ལྡ་རུ་འབར་ བ་ལས། ཉིན་དང་མཚན་གྱི་མིང་ཡང་མི་བྲགས་ བཅའ་ཀྱང་མི་རྟེན་པ།</p>	<p>Since the five spontaneous light rays of the noble Victor are ablaze [in that field], Even the words 'day and night' are not at all mentioned.</p>
<p>མཚོག་ལུན་ཚོས་ཀྱིས་རྒྱལ་སྲིད་རང་ཤར་ རང་གྲོལ་སྐྱོང་བ་ལས། རྒྱལ་པོ་སློན་པོའི་མིང་ཡང་མི་བྲག་བཅའ་ ཀྱང་མི་རྟེན་པ།</p>	<p>Since the reign of the excellent Dharma, safeguards [beings in that field with] its spontaneous emergence and spontaneous liberation, Even the words 'king and minis- ters' are not at all mentioned.</p>
<p>བདག་དང་གཞན་གཉིས་ཐ་མི་དད་པར་ གཅིག་པ་ལས། [20] འཐབ་ཅིང་ཚོད་པའི་མིང་ཡང་མི་བྲག་ བཅའ་ཀྱང་མི་རྟེན་པ།</p>	<p>Since self and other are absolutely not different [in that field], Even the words 'conflict and quarrel' are not at all mentioned.</p>
<p>འཚོ་བ་ཉིང་འཛིན་ཟས་ཀྱིས་འཚོ་བས་ཚིམ་ པ་ལས། བགྲས་སྟོགས་ཞེས་བྱའི་མིང་ཡང་མི་བྲགས་ བཅའ་ཀྱང་མི་རྟེན་པ།</p>	<p>Since [all in that field] are satiated by the nourishment of the food of meditative contemplation, Even the word 'hunger' is not at all mentioned.</p>

with brocade displays, and Awareness—the *thiglé*s and diamond chains, etc.)—i.e., the visionary aspect of the natural state (*gnas-lugs*)—that is experienced by “Wisdom” (*ye shes*)—i.e., the sapiential aspect of the natural state. In fact, outwardly (on a linguistic level) they appear as subject (*ye shes*) and object (*dbyings-rig*) but in reality they are not separated: they arise as if the subject (*ye shes*, the sapiential aspect) contemplates its own display (*dbyings-rig*, the visionary aspect) without being separated from it. The experiential proof of that is that *dbyings-rig* can only be seen in the state of *Rigpa* or in this case the state of Wisdom (which basically amounts to the same), implying that these visions cannot be seen by a third party. We might further observe that since *khri-gdugs* is also a *kāvya* code-name for the sun, the line may also be interpreted as ‘Since the blazing sun of the Wisdom...’”

<p>སྒོམ་དུ་ཡིད་བཞིན་བདུད་ཅིའི་ཚུ་རྒྱན་ འཕྲང་བ་ལས ། སྒོམ་པ་བུའི་མིང་ཡང་མི་བྲག་བཅའ་ཀྱང་ མི་རྟེན་པ ། [25]</p>	<p>Since to quench one's thirst [in that field] one drinks as one wishes from the flowing current of nectar, Even the words '[ordinary] thirst' are not at all mentioned.</p>
<p>གོས་སུ་ཚུལ་བྲིམས་གཙང་མའི་གོས་གཙང་ རྒྱན་པ་ལས ། འདིག་རྟེན་གོས་ཞེས་བུ་བའི་མིང་ཡང་མི་ བྲག་བཅའ་ཀྱང་མི་རྟེན་པ །</p>	<p>Since one wears the fine garments of pure morality for garments [in that field], Even the words 'ordinary garments' are not at all mentioned.</p>
<p>སྐྱེ་བ་པར་འི་སྤེང་དུ་རྩུས་ཏེ་སྐྱེ་བ་ལས ། སྐྱེ་བ་རྣམ་བཞིའི་མིང་ཡང་མི་བྲག་བཅའ་ ཀྱང་མི་རྟེན་པ །</p>	<p>Since birth [in that field] is to be spontaneously born atop a lotus, Even the words 'other forms of birth' are not at all mentioned.</p>
<p>ཟག་མེད་དོ་རྗེ་ལྷ་བུའི་ཚེ་ལ་མངའ་མཉེས་ པས ། [30] ལྗས་ཤིང་རྒྱད་པའི་མིང་ཡང་མི་བྲག་བཅའ་ ཀྱང་མི་རྟེན་པ །</p>	<p>Since one obtains power over one's longevity [in that field] as if it were an exhaustible adamant, Even the words 'aging and decrepitude' are not at all mentioned.</p>
<p>སྐྱེ་འཆི་མེད་པའི་ས་ལ་ཡོངས་རྫོགས་འདོག་ པ་ལས ། སྐྱེ་ཞིང་འཆི་བའི་མིང་ཡང་མི་བྲག་བཅའ་ ཀྱང་མི་རྟེན་པ །</p>	<p>Since that place free from birth and death is declared to be entirely perfect, Even the words 'being born and dying' are not at all mentioned.</p>
<p>དུས་གསུམ་སངས་རྒྱལ་གྱི་ལྷི་ཞིང་མཚོག་ དེ་ན་ནི ། མ་ལུས་ཐམས་ཅད་བྱང་ཚུབ་ལས་སྦྱོད་ བསྐྱེད་པ་ལས ། [35]</p>	<p>In that excellent field of all buddhas of the three times, Since everyone without exception delights in practicing to attain awakening, Even the words 'unhappiness and suffering' are not at all</p>

<p>མི་བདེ་སྐྱུག་བསྐྱེད་མིང་ཡང་མི་བྲག་ བཅའ་ཀྱང་མི་རྟེན་པའོ། ། ༥།</p>	<p>mentioned.</p>
<p>དེ་ལྟ་བུའི་སངས་རྒྱལ་གྱི་ཞིང་ཁམས་རྣམ་ པར་དག་པ་དེ་ན། ངོ་བོ་རང་བཞིན་སྣོད་པ་ཉིད་ཀྱི་གཞུང་ཡས་ ཁང་ཆེན་པོ་གྲུ་བཞི་སྟོ་བཞི་རྟ་བབས་ ཆེན་པོ་བཞི་དང་ལྡན་པ། དེ་ཡི་ངོས་དང་སྤྱང་དང་འོག་དང་ལོགས་ དང་རྒྱུ་ཚད་དུ་ནི་དཔག་ཚད་དཔག་ དུ་མེད་པ།</p>	<p>In such an entirely pure buddha field: Is his immense palace, in essence and by nature emptiness, square, furnished with four doors and four great gates, Its sides, top, bottom, sideposts, and width, in extent [all] immeasurable and limitless,</p>
<p>ཕྱི་ལྟས་ན་ནང་གསལ་བ་ནང་ལྟས་ན་ཕྱི་ གསལ་བ། [40]</p>	<p>Looking at its exterior, its interior is transparently visible; looking at its interior, its exterior is transparently visible;</p>
<p>ཕྱི་ནང་མེད་པ། རྒྱ་ཚད་མེད་པ། ཕྱོགས་སྤྱང་མེད་པ།</p>	<p>It has no exterior or interior; Its has no extent or measure; It does not incline to either one side or the other.</p>
<p>ཚོས་དབྱིངས་ཡེ་ཤེས་ཀྱི་སྐར་ཁུང་གསལ་ བ།</p>	<p>Its palace of the wisdom of the <i>dharmadhātu</i> is lucidly clear.</p>
<p>སྤྱང་ན་ཐེག་པ་ཆེན་པོའི་ཚོས་ཀྱི་གདུགས་ སྤུབ་པ། [45]</p>	<p>Above, a parasol of the Teaching of the Great Vehicle is spread out.</p>
<p>འོག་ན་མ་ཆགས་པ་སྤྲེལ་འོད་ཀྱི་ཁྲི་བརྟེན་གསལ་ བ།</p>	<p>Below is constructed a stainless radiant lotus throne.</p>
<p>དགའ་བ་བཞིའི་ཡེ་ཤེས་དང་ཚད་མེད་པ་</p>	<p>Its walls of the wisdom of the</p>

<p>བཞིའི་རྗེགས་པ་བརྗེགས་པ།</p>	<p>four joys and the four immeasurables are built up.</p>
<p>བྱང་ཚུབ་སེམས་ཀྱི་ཡན་ལག་བརྒྱད་དང་ ལྷན་པའི་བ་དན་ཕྱོགས་འཚམས་སུ་ འབྱར་བ།</p>	<p>The pennant of the eight limbs of the aspiration to awakening is raised in the primary and intermediate directions.</p>
<p>ཚོས་ཐམས་ཅད་ཕྱོགས་རིས་མེད་ཅིང་ མཉམ་པ་ཉིད་ཀྱི་ཕྱིར། དགྲིལ་འཁོར་ལྷན་གྱིས་སྤྱོད་པ།^[50]</p>	<p>Because of the nondistinction and self-sameness of all things, A maṇḍala spontaneously appears.</p>
<p>རེ་དོགས་སྤང་བླང་གཉེས་སུ་མེད་པའི་ཕྱིར། པདམོ་བཀྲ་བ།</p>	<p>Because of the nonduality of hope and fear and rejections and acceptance, the lotuses are laid out.</p>
<p>ཚུལ་ཁྲིམས་ཀྱི་དྲི་ངད་དང་ལྷན་པའི་བརྗེས་ མེ་ཉོག་དང་སློམ་ཀྱི་དྲི་ངད་འཕྱུལ་བ།</p>	<p>The perfumed fragrance of flowers and powdered incense endowed with the scent of morality rises into the air.</p>
<p>སྤྱི་ཡུལ་མ་བྱས་ཉེ་ཡེ་ནས་རང་བྱུང་ལྷན་ གྱིས་སྤྱོད་པའི། སངས་རྒྱལ་གྱི་ཉིང་དེ་འཛིན་མི་གཡོ་བ་ཚོས་ གྱི་དབྱིངས་ཀྱི་རྒྱ་མཚོ་དངས་པ་ལས། ^[55] རྣམ་ཤེས་མ་ཆགས་ལྷན་གྱིས་སྤྱོད་པའི་པད་ མོང་འཕྱུངས་པ།</p>	<p>Unconstructed by anyone, primordially spontaneously self-arisen— From that clear ocean of the <i>dharmadhātu</i>, [characterized by] immovable contemplation of the Buddha, Lotuses of awareness and non-attachment spontaneously emerge.</p>
<p>སེམས་ཅན་མ་ལུས་ཐམས་ཅད་ལྷུགས་རྗེས་ སློམས་པར་གཟིགས་པའི། རྒྱན་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱིས་བརྒྱན་པའི་ཕོ་བྲང་ རྣམ་པར་དག་པའི་གཞུང་ཡས་ཁང་</p>	<p>Gazing upon all beings without exception with compassion, In that mansion, an immense great palace, entirely pure, ornamented with all adornments,</p>

ཆེན་པོ་ན། ། ལ།	—*—
སངས་རྒྱལ་འོད་དཔག་ཏུ་མེད་པ་ལ་འཁོར་ རྒྱལ་བ་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་ཚོགས་ཀྱིས་བསྐོར་ ནས་བཞུགས་སོ།	The buddha Amitābha dwells amid a retinue of Oceans of Victors [= Avalokiteśvaras].
དེ་ཡང་མཚན་བཟང་པོ་སུམ་བུ་སོ་གཉིས་ དང་དཔེ་བྱད་བཟང་པོ་བརྒྱ་བཅུ་སྐུ་ ལ་བརྒྱན་ཏེ། ^[60]	Moreover, he is ornamented with the thirty-two major marks and the eighty minor marks [of a buddha].
སྐྱུ་བྱད་ནི་ལྟ་བུ་སྐྱུ་ཚོགས་མི་ཤེས་པ།	One is not sated gazing upon his body.
དར་དང་རིན་པོ་ཆའི་རྒྱན་སྣ་ཚོགས་པས་ བརྒྱན་པའི་སྐྱུའི་བཀོད་པ་ནི་ཚད་མེད་ པ།	His body's array ornamented by silk and precious substances is without limit.
སོ་ཕྱི་ཐམས་ཅད་ནི་འོད་ཟེར་སྣ་ཚོགས་དང་ འཇའ་འོད་འཁྲིགས་པ།	All the perfections encircle him like a rainbow with variegated rays of light.
སྤྱུགས་རྗེའི་འོད་ཟེར་དཀར་དམར་སྣ་ ཚོགས་ཕྱོགས་བཅུ་འཕྲོ་བ།	[They, his] radiant variegated rosy beams of compassion, spread through the ten direc- tions.
སྟོབས་བཅུ་དང་མི་འཇིགས་པ་བཞི་དང་ནི་ ལྔན། ^[65]	He possesses the ten powers and the four fearlessnesses.
སྐྱུ་གསུང་སྤྱུགས་ཡོན་ཏན་འཕྲིན་ལས་ནི་ ཟད་མི་ཤེས།	His meritorious deeds of body, speech and mind are inexhaustible.
སངས་རྒྱལ་དང་བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་དཔའ་ནི་ སྐྱིན་ལྟར་དུ་སྐྱེ་བས།	He is surrounded by buddhas and bodhisattvas, as if they were clouds.

<p>སྐྱུན་མི་གཡོ་སྟེ་ཉིང་ངེ་འཛིན་ལ་སྤྱགས་ མཉམ་པར་བཞག།</p>	<p>His eyes unmoving, he rests in meditative contemplation.</p>
<p>བརྗེ་བའི་འོད་ཟེར་ནི་དུ་མ་རྩོགས་བརྩུར་ འཕྲོ་ཞིང།</p>	<p>His radiant beams of love spread severally throughout the ten directions.</p>
<p>འོད་ཟེར་རེ་རེའི་ཚེ་ནས་ཀྱི་སྐྱུལ་པ་གྲངས་ མེད་དཔག་ཏུ་མེད་པ་བརྗོད་དུ་མེད་པ་ འཕྲོ་ཞིང། [70]</p>	<p>From the tip of each of those rays of radiance spread out manifestations, numberless, unlimited, indescribable.</p>
<p>ཡང་སྐྱུལ་ཉིད་སྐྱུལ་ལ་སོགས་པ་གང་ལ་ གང་འདུལ་དང་དེ་ལ་དེར་སྟོན་གྱིས་ འགྲོ་བའི་དོན་དཔག་དུ་མེད་པ་མཛད་ པར་སྐྱུལ་ལོ།</p>	<p>Acting immeasurably for the sake of beings by demonstrating repeated manifestations there to whomever should be converted, he manifests [himself].</p>
<p>དེ་ཡང་སངས་རྒྱུས་ཀྱི་ཞིང་ཁམས་དེ་ན་ གནས་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་ནི་སེམས་ཅན་མ་ ཡིན་ཏེ། །འཕགས་པ་ཤ་སྟག་གོ།</p>	<p>Once again, all who dwell in that buddha field are not [ordinary] beings, but only Nobles.</p>
<p>ལུ་རྒྱན་གྱ་རུ་བརྒྱ་འབྲུང་གནས་ཀྱི་སྐྱེ་ རབས་རྣམ་ཐར་རྒྱས་པར་བཀོད་པ་ ལས། བྱབ་བདེ་བ་ཅན་གྱི་ཞིང་ཁམས་བསྟན་པའི་ ལེན་སྟེ་དང་པོའོ། །ཕ། [75]</p>	<p>From the extended life-story narrative of the liberation of U rgyan Padma 'byung gnas, the chapter, the first, teaching about the Western [buddha] field of Bliss.</p>

While the initial portions of the the *Padma bka' thang* and *Bka' thang gser phreng*, through their mutual l. 36, correspond very closely, thereafter they diverge significantly, although their mutual relation remains demonstrable with much borrowed language and somewhat modified structure. Even when the overall tenor is very much in line, the verbal expressions can vary. On chronological grounds alone we assume the priority of the *Padma bka' thang*. As noted above, it is extremely likely

that further revisions of the same basic material are to be found in Tibetan literature, but a search for these remains a task for the future.¹⁰⁹

By Way of Conclusion

The *Praise Poem* is one of a trio of Amitābha-related Tibetan poems from Dunhuang. No others having been identified so far, our entire knowledge of this genre—if we are justified in assessing it as such—must rest on these three text. Were it not for its own rebirth in the (pure) land of Central Tibet, the *Praise Poem* might not call for much more attention than that granted the first two to be given modern scholarly editions, the *Praise of His Mighty Name* and the *Aspirational Prayer*. There is however a slightly bigger context: taken together, and along with several other finds including Tibetan translations from Chinese of the Larger and Smaller *Sukhāvīryūha* sūtras, also found at Dunhuang (both of which I am in the course of editing), they provide a window into an aspect of Dunhuang Tibetan Buddhism which has so far remained underappreciated. These materials, and especially the *Praise Poem*, raise a host of questions, or it would be better to say, they remind us of questions we might have set aside. What, for instance, was the nature of communication between the frontier and the center, especially in the post-Imperial period? To what extent did translation and composition projects in the two regions interact with each other? We have already, of course, for long been aware that the traditional accounts of the so-called Bsam yas debates have seriously underplayed the role of Chinese materials and influence in the formation of Tibetan Buddhism. Recent research has also begun to suggest that even Tibetan translations nominally made from Sanskrit scriptural sources could in some cases have taken Chinese sources into account as well.¹¹⁰ Now, if the hypotheses offered above are accepted, we must further consider the idea that texts composed on the periphery made their way into the geographical center, where they could have been, even if only after a passage of years, then incorporated into key collections that in their turn played an important role in the formation of a central Tibetan mythology, that concerning the place of Avalokiteśvara in Tibetan identity. The evidence offered above demonstrates, if such further demonstration were necessary, that accounts of the *gter ma* literature need not have been, in all cases, mere “cover stories” for new and innovative literary productions, but in some cases

¹⁰⁹ It is not necessarily true, of course, that all literature sharing similar images need be even indirectly connected. See Appendix III.

¹¹⁰ See in particular the important work of Li 2016, 2021.

might conserve genuine accounts of the recovery of theretofore lost sources.¹¹¹

One of the results of the research offered here, then, relates to an observation of the scholar to whom, with great gratitude and affection, it is dedicated. Dan Martin (2001: 29) wrote:

If the *gter-ma* are not “entirely fabricated,” or simply ‘pulled from a hat,’ then it becomes necessary to trace the transmission of some of the elements that compose them, in hopes of being better able to assess probable routes, lines of causation. For, even if the *gter-stons* composed their *gter-mas* (as our contemporary philologists presume, given their professional refusal to accept the possibility of any prophetic utterance whatsoever), they could not have done so in a total vacuum.

This is undoubtedly correct; philologists, among whose number I count myself (and whether he likes it or not, I would consider Dan Martin also to be a philologist in the same sense), do not, in fact, credit the possibility of any prophetic utterance whatsoever, at least *stricto sensu*. At the same time, I think no one will reject out of hand (or even, out of hat) the idea that genuinely preserved texts from a prior time could indeed have been (re)discovered. I submit that here we have a crystal clear example of precisely such a case. For the *Praise Poem* to have effectively functioned in the context of the *Ma ñi bka’ ’bum* (and later texts as well) as a revelation, as a *gter ma*, I believe it most probably had come to be otherwise entirely unknown, either by virtue of its rarity in the political and cultural center or because, while once known, it fell out of favor, so far as to have become forgotten.¹¹² There could have been many causes for this disappearance, which could well have taken place in the times of confusion and chaos after the fall of the Tibetan empire.¹¹³ If the text had not been forgotten, it would have simply looked like what we now know it to be: the incorporation of an older piece of literature into a new work, a transparent example of textual reuse. But, perhaps needless to say, a forgotten past is not

¹¹¹ Cathy Cantwell suggests to me that there is no need for the sources to have been lost; they may well have been known, as indeed has been the case in more recent times.

¹¹² Again, Cathy Cantwell writes to me: “No, it need not be unknown. Of course, perhaps in this case it was, and perhaps there are many such cases in the early days of *gter ma*, but not necessarily. In later times, there is no problem to be revealing material which is well known. Dudjom Rinpoche’s *bla sgrub* is called *gter kha bdun ’dus*, because it repeats the words of 6 previous *gter stons* (starting with *gu ru chos dbang*). And much of the liturgy is word-for-word the same in all 7!” See Cantwell 2016. Likewise, we see in the continued revelation which followed the *Ma ñi bka’ ’bum* that material freely reused, and in this case there is certainly no implication that the earlier versions were at all unknown.

¹¹³ See, on the general situation, the interesting remarks of Vitali 2020.

ontologically equivalent to an entirely imaginary past, one which is appealed to as a source of authority but did not actually exist. Certainly we (we philologists, I am tempted to say) are inclined to suspect that some claims of discovery are merely translucent curtains draped in an attempt to hide innovation and new textual creation. How, then, we should ask ourselves, are we to distinguish between objects that stand on a continuum: from genuine rediscovery of textual antecedents, through reworking and reimagining, up to wholly new creations (inspired, we may certainly grant, by such profound immersion in a tradition that one can believe oneself to have discovered a treasure hidden in one's own mind)? Do all such revelations have the same authority, and the same validity? It is too simplistic to say that authority comes from the past, but Holly Gayley captures the most fundamental logic involved here when she asserts (2008: 226) that "Through the discovery of treasures, *tertöns* make the ongoing presence of the past available to others" It is not only the content of the revelations but access to the idealized past, the golden age of sages, a time (and place, and space) when awakened beings—paradigmatically, Padmasambhava—were present and accessible.¹¹⁴ The discovery of a textual antecedent to a later revealed treasure does not bridge this ontological chasm between past and present in nearly the same fashion as, emically, the *gter ston*'s discovery does, but for the philologist it is every bit as much of a treasure recovery.

The *Praise Poem* even in its reworkings and resettings does not function as many *gter ma* do, since it is not (so far as I know) connected with a ritual cycle or practice tradition, although its visual imagery, at least in part drawn from the *Pure Land Contemplation sūtra*, surely would lend itself to visualizations. I would not, therefore, be surprised to see it made use of in some visualizations or even realized (in whole or in part) in paintings, although I am not aware of any so far identified. This nonritualization may be one reason that the very presence of the section at the beginning of the *Ma ni bka' 'bum*, *Padma bka' thang* and *Bka thang gser phreng* has escaped scholarly attention, even that of those otherwise drawn to study these collections, who seem to have (on the whole, though there are certainly exceptions) devoted almost all their deliberations so far to the hagiography of Padmasambhava proper which, after all, lies at the core of these

¹¹⁴ Cathy Cantwell states it perhaps even more emphatically when she write to me: "When you have a fresh *gter ma*, it brings the immediacy to the connection with Padmasambhava and the idealised past. Once again, the students are present, and can tap into the *byin rlabs*, and everyone who receives the teaching now has that amazing link to the source. The past is brought to life again – the *gter ston* and the *chos bdag* are rebirths of the former students."

works.¹¹⁵ But even had scholars wondered about these few lines found at the beginnings of these *gter ma*, while they might have suggested some connection of the visual symbolism with scriptural sources on Sukhāvātī, in particular the Smaller *Sukhāvātīvyūha-sūtra* and its depictions of the Pure Land, and the *Pure Land Contemplation sūtra* with its often vividly visualized imagery, the preservation of the direct source material—the *Praise Poem*—only among the Dunhuang manuscripts would have prevented any recognition of the true nature of this rediscovered text. Now, thanks to a chance observation, it has been possible to draw a straight line connecting an otherwise unknown Tibetan poem to several fundamental works of the Tibetan Buddhist traditions. I flatter myself to imagine that my friend Dan Martin, for whom creative connections seemingly come naturally and spontaneously, will find this one of some interest.

¹¹⁵ It should not escape our notice, of course, that not all sources, even if otherwise closely related, offer parallels. Doney 2016: 81 remarks that “The opening section of ZL [= *Zangs gling ma*] follows a short prologue, both paying homage to the three *kāryas*—Amitābha, Avalokiteśvara and Padmasambhava—and also promising to tell the life-story of the latter while detailing his qualities. ZL chapter one and the main narrative begins this task by setting the scene surrounding King Indrabodhi”

Variant readings I (Praise Poem):

- 1:
bcu] A: cu;
'jig] A: +jīs
- 2:
chos dbying] E: chos sbying
mnyam ba] E: mnyam ba'i
- 3:
gsum dbyer] F: gsung dbyar
nam ka] C: nam ka'
- 5:
myi khyab] F: myi 'gyab
- 6:
ma rig] D: ma rigs
sel par mdzad] B: sel bar mdzad; D: sold
par mdzod, with perhaps an attempt
to erase the vowel; C is not
preserved.
- 7:
yid] B: ac yod, pc yid
rgyal po] F: rgyal bo
'dra] C: +dra+; F: a.c. +dru, with vowel
cancelled p.c..
- 8:
D:
bdud] F: bdur
- 9:
byang chub] A, E: byang cub
kyi] F: kyīs
- myu gu skyed] B: myu gu bskyed; D: myi
gur skyes; F: dmyi gu bskyed; C not
preserved
- 10:
nam thar] D: nmañ thard; F: nam tar
smyin bar] A, D: smyin par; E: smyīn par
- 11:
de 'dra'i D] A: de +dra i; B: de +dre+i; F:
a.c. de +drī +i, with i cancelled (the
cancellation mark overlaps with that
of l. 7, above); C not preserved
- ji snyed] C: cī snyed; E, F: ci snyed
- 14:
sdig] F: stīg
bshags A, D, F] B: bshegs; C not preserved
- 15:
myed pa'i] C: myad pas; D: myed pas
smon lam +debs] D: smon lam btab; F:
spon lam +debs
- 16:
thob pa myed] C: thob myed
myed pa'i +bras] F: nyid kyis sbras
- 17:
bder gshegs] C, D: bde gshegs; F: bder
gshags
mnyam bas na] A: mnyam pas na; E:
bmyam bas na
- 18:
zhing rnam] E: zhing rmañs ma
tha dad, A, D, F] B: mtha+ dad; C not
preserved.
- 19:
sems can] C: sems chan; F: sems shan
mthun] C: +thun; D: +thun;
- 20:
zhing gi] F: zhing gyi
tha dad] E: mtha dad; F: tho dad
- 21:
kyi] E, F: gyīs
- 22:
zhing gi] F: zhing gyi
mdo] A: mdod; F: dod
- 23:
smos na brjod] F: brjod na smo
- 24:
nub phyogs] E: nu phyogs
rab na] E: // / na'
- 25:
'od bar snang ba] B: snang ba +od +bar;
F: 'od bar snang ba+
- 27:
myi langs kyang] A: myi lang yang
- 28:
sems can] F: sems shan
drang ba'i] D: +drang ba+i
- 29:
yon tan] D: zhing gi yon tan
smos] A: smon
- 30:
dpal gyi] A: dpal gi
- 31:
rgya mtho las] E: rgya mtsho la
- 32:
rnam] F: rnam
pad mo 'khrungs] E: pad ma 'khrung
- 33:
chags pa] E: chags pa'i with i vowel
cancelled but 'a rten intact; F: chags
ba
la] B: las
- 34:
A: gtan
- 35:
thugs rje] B: thugs rjes

- snyoms] F: bsnyoms
 kyis] D, E, F: gyis
 36:
 dpal gyi] A: dpal gi
 myi g.yo bzhugs] D: bzhugs pa'i tshul
 37:
 kyi] D, F: gyi
 38:
 mtha' yang] F: mtha+ yas
 E end of line damaged and omits dpag,
 but following line has empty space
 into which the word perhaps could
 have fit?
 39:
 mngon shes] E: rnam shes
 drug gi skar khung] E: drug gi skar kung;
 F: drugs gyi skar kung
 gsal] D: bsal
 40:
 myi mkhyen] F: myi mkhen
 yongs] A, B, E: yong
 ye myed] B: yang myed (A: a.c. myid, p.c.
 myed)
 41:
 theg chen] D: theg cen; F: thegs cen
 42:
 byang chub] A: byang cub
 pan] D, E: phan
 43:
 'joms pa'i] E: bcom[s] ba'i
 bsgreng] D: bsgrengs; F: bskreng
 44:
 kyi dkyil] D: gyis 'kyil; F: gyis dkyil
 45:
 chags pa] F: chags pa+
 pad mo] E: pad ma
 bkram] F: bgram
 46:
 spos kyang 'thul] E: spos kyī nad (? dad?)
 47:
 kyis] D: gyi; E, F: gyis
 48:
 bcu] B: bcus
 sku'i] B: sku yi
 49:
 dpe+ byad] D: dpe byad; F: dbye byad
 mtshan bzangs] D, F: mtshan bzang
 bltar] F: blta
 bzod] D: bzad
 50:
 gzha+ bzhin] D: <erasure of ±7
 characters> gzha' bzhin; E: gzha
 bzhin (' omitted); F: gzhin [below:
 bzhi]
 52:
 +khor mang] E, F: 'khor mangs
 sprin bzhin du] E: sprin bzhin 'du'
 53:
 mthu ldan ba] B, E: mthur ldan bas
 55:
 che] B: chen,
 dpal +bar ba] E, F: dbal 'bar ba'
 56:
 gsung] F: gsun
 mnyam bzhag kyang] E: gnyan bzhag
 kyang
 57:
 thugs dam gis] D: thugs dam gyis; E:
 mthur ldan bas; F: thugs dam
 gyis
 58:
 +phro] A: +phros; B: +gyed; E: 'phro'
 59:
 dag ni] B: de dag
 61:
 dpag du] F: dbag du
 sems can sgrol] F: sems shan skral
 62:
 +gyed pa] D: 'gyes pa
 64:
 dpal gyi] A: dpal gi
 'od 'bar] B: zhing rab
 zhing rab na] B: de na ni; F: zhing rab sa
 (read: rabs) na
 E: whole line: dpal gyi zhing rabs de na ni
 65:
 my gnas pas] F: g?zhan myi gnas (some
 letter was started then abandoned
 without cancellation in the middle of
 the word)
 67:
 rin cen] E, F: rin chen (F corrected?)
 sna tshogs] F: sna 'tshogs
 brgyan pas na] D: brgyan bas na; E: gcal
 [gtsal?] bkram bas
 69:
 byang chub] A, E, F: byang cub; D: byang
 chu
 shing ni] A: shing rab
 70:
 sna tshogs mying yang myed] F: nags
 mchal mying ya myed
 71:
 brgyad ldan] A: brgyad ltan
 73:
 mye +bar bas] F: myed 'bar bas
 75:
 nam grol] E: nam 'grol

- spos kyi] F: sbos gyi
 76:
 rlung gi] F: rlung gyi
 77:
 chos kyi] F: chos gyi
 dkyil +khor] F: dkyil 'khor
 +od +phro bas] F: 'od 'phros pas
 79:
 E: between 'od and gsal two lines skipped
 on the lined paper of the manuscript
 80:
 mtshan gyi] A: mtshan gi
 82:
 rgyal po] F: rgyal po'i;
 blon po'i] B: blon po
 83:
 byang chub] A, F: byang cub
 skyid pa'i lam] F: spyod pa+i lam
 spyod pas] D: a.c. spyod pas; F: sbyod
 pas
 84:
 lam gyi] A: lam gi; D: lam kyī; F: lan kyī
 85:
 lta bas] D: blta bas
 86:
 'thab cing] B: +thob cing; F: 'thab cīn
 rtsoḍ] F: rtson
 87:
 ting nge +dzin] A: ti nge +dzin; D: ting
 +dzin
 gyi] A: gi; D: gyi ni; F: gyis
 zas za bas] F: zas zos bas
 89:
 tshul khriḿs] F: tshul khriḿ
 gtsang ma+i] D: gtsang ba'i; F: gtshang
 ma +i
 gos] F: gas
 gyon bas] D: gyon pas
 91:
 pad mo'i] B: pad ma'i
 93:
 lam bsgoms pas] F: lams bskoms pas
 94:
 skye zhiḅ] F: skye zhiḅn
 +chi ba+i] D: shi ba'i <erasure>
 95:
 dpal gi] D, F: dpal gyi
 zhiḅ rab] F: shiḅ rabs
 96:
 thams cad] D: thams chad; F: thams shad
 byang chub] A: byang cub
 97:
 myi bde] A: myi bad, with ga added
 below apparently for bdag
 98:
 byang chub] A: byang cub
 99:
 thams cad] D: thams chad; F: thams shad
 kun ni der +dong rigs] F: gun yang der
 +gror rigs
 100:
 der +gro] F: der 'gror
 101:
 byang chub] A: byang cub
 102:
 byang chub] A: byang cub;
 zhe na] F: gang zhes
 103:
 spangs la] A: spang la; F: spangs na
 104:
 khyim nas] A: khyim mnas (some
 correction but not clear in photo?)
 byung ste] F: 'byung ste
 105:
 bshes nyen] B: bshes gnyen
 106:
 bshes nyen] B: bshes gnyen; D: bsashes
 nyen
 gang zhe na] F: gang yin na
 107:
 byang chub] A: byang cub
 sems dpa+ dang] F: sems pa dang
 108:
 gsung rabs] B: gsung rab
 dang] A: dag
 109:
 kyi] F: gyi
 dmyig can rnam] D: myig can rnam; F:
 myi can dang
 110:
 dge ba'i] F: dge pa+i
 bshes nyen] B: bshes gnyen; D: bshes
 shes <below: nyen>
 111:
 bsnyen cing] D: <erasure> a.c. bsnyon
 cing; F: snyen cing
 mchod] D: a.c. mchog, p.c. mchod
 112:
 bsnyen] F: snyen
 113:
 byang chub] A: byang cub
 114:
 byang chub] A: byang cub
 115:
 skye bar] F: skye par
 116:
 byas la] F: byas na
 117:

- blugs na] B: blangs te
 118:
 +od byung bas] B: +od byung na; D, F:
 'od 'byung bas
 119:
 der ni] A: der na
 bar 'gyur] B: rab +gyur
 120:
 myi dge] D: <erasure> myi dge; F: myi ge
 btang nas] A: bar nas
 121:
 dge ba bcu la] F: dge bcu la (a.c. de
 written, vowel cancelled for dge)
 122:
 bsgoms na] D: bsgoms byas na; F: sgoms
 na
 123:
 bar 'gyur] B: rab +gyur
 125:
 dug chen] D: dug cen; F: dug 'chen
 spangs te] F: spangs ste
 126:
 +dod chags] B: mnyam kyib
 mnyam ba'i lam] B: nyid kyi lam
 bsgoms na] F: skoms na
 129:
 bden ba bzhi la] F: bden bzhī la
 byed cing] D: byed cing na; F: byed chīn
 130:
 bsgoms na] F: skoms na
 131:
 zhing mchog] F: zhīng mcog,
 skye bar +gyur] F: skye par +gyur
 132:
 ma rig] D: ma rigs
 ba'i] B: ba yi; F: ba na
 133:
 skye shi] A: skye shī+i
 bar ni] F: rab ni
 spangs te] F: spangs ste
 134:
 nyid bsgoms na] F: nyid rab skoms na
 135:
 bar +gyur] F: rab 'gyur
 136:
 nor par] D: nor pas
 mthong ba+i] A: mthong pa+i
 137:
 sgyu ma] F: skyu ma
 byas ste] A: bya ste; D: byas te; F: 'byas
 na
 138:
 skye +gag] F: skye +gyeg
 bsgoms na] F: skoms pas
 139:
 bar +gyur] F: par +gyur
 140:
 yid gyi] A: yid kyī; B: yid dang
 rnam shes gsum] A: rnams shes gsum;
 B: shes rnam gsum
 141:
 sdug bsngal] F: sdug sngal
 142:
 bsgoms na] F: skoms sna
 144:
 gsum] F: sum
 145:
 gang gis] F: gang gyīs
 147:
 thams cad] F: thams shad
 ji snyed pa] A: ci snyed pa; F: cī snyed
 ba+
 148:
 rmyi lam] A: rmi lam; F: myī lam
 sprul pa] D: spruld pa
 152:
 byas na] F: byas ste
 153:
 skye bar +gyur] F: skye par +gyur
 154:
 mchog gi] F: mchog gyī
 155:
 +grus kyi] F: grus gyīs
 zhon na] F: zhon nas
 157:
 bsam brtan] A: bsam gtan; F: bsam rtan
 gyi ni] F: gyīs ni
 158:
 shes rab mgyogs pa+i] A: shes rab kyīs ni
 +phangs te] F: +phangs ste
 159:
 rnam shes] F: rnams shes
 brgyad kyi] D: brgyad gyi; F: brgyad grīs
 dgra bsad na] F: bsad nas
 160:
 skye bar +gyur] F: skye par +gyur
 161:
 byang chub] A: byang cub
 162:
 nyid kyi] D: nyid gyi
 164:
 myed pa'i] F: myed ba+i
 dgon pa] A: dgon
 165:
 chags pa] F: chags ba
 166:
 blang] F: llang (la written over la),
 spyad na] F: spyod na

- 169:
+khrul] B: +khruls (s cancelled)
sems kyis] F: sems gis
- 170:
bskyed] B: skyed
- 171:
bar +gyur] F: par +gyur
- 172:
chos kyi] D: chos gyi; F: chos gyi
dag pas] D: +dag pas
- 174:
sems kyis] D, F: sems gyis
- 175:
+khams gsum] A, D: khams gsum; F:
kham sum
- 176:
gnas na] D: gnas te
- 177:
zhing gi] F: zhing gyi
yin no] F: yin +o
- 178:
mtshan brjod na] D: mtshan ma brjod na
- 179:
bskal pa] D: bskald pa; F: skal pa
sdig kyang] A: sdig kyang
- 180:
byang chub] A, D: byang cub
sems kyi] B: some letter erased after kyi;
D: sems gyi; F: sems gi
- 181:
byang chub] A, D: byang cub
gnyis su] F: a.c. gnyi ga su, p.c. gnyis su
- 183:
byang chub] A: byang cub
thams cad] D: thams chad; F: thams shad
- 184:
sems can] F: sems shan
- 185:
nam ka'i] B: nam ke
rang bzhin zhes] F: rang bzhiin yin
- 186:
zhing gi] F: zhing gyi
- 187:
de ni] F: de yang
- 188:
de bas] F: de pas
byang chub] A: byang cub
ldan bya] D: shes bya
- 189:
byang chub] A: byang cub
shes bya ba] A, F: zhes bya ba
- 190:
dmyigs te] F: dmyigs ste
- 191:
dmyigs pa'i]
sems nyid] B: sems ni
mnyam ba yin] B: mnyam ba na yin
- 192:
gyis] A, F: gis
rtogs te] A, F: rtog ste
- 193:
rtog myed] D: rtog nyid; F: rtogs myed
+phags pa'i] A: +phags ba+i
yul lo] F: yul +o
- 194:
mya ngan] F: mye ngan
+da+ ste] F: +da+ sto
- 195:
myi dmigs pas] F: myi dmyigs pa
kyang] F: yang
yin no] F: yin +o
- 197:
de ni, A, D] B: +di ni (F omits this line)
- 198:
de +dra'i] B: +di +dra +i
chos la rab mos na] F: chos la rams nas na
- 199:
byang chub] A: byang cub
ring ngo] F: ring +o
- 200:
kyis] D, F: gyis
- 201:
dge bshes] F: bshes nyen
- 203:
sems can] F: sems shan
ji] D: ci; F: ci
- 204:
nyes pa'i] F: nyes ba+i
kun byang nas] B: yong byang nas
- 205:
byang chub] A: byang cub
- 206:
skye bar shog] B: skye bar +gyur

*Ma ṅi bka' 'bum I:*¹¹⁶

1:

om̄ ma ṅi padme hūm̄ |] A: om̄ ma ṅi
 padme hūm̄ | dus gsum gyi sangs rgyas
 thams cad kyis dbang bskur ba |

2:

thugs rje chen po] A: thugs rje'i bdag po

4:

mangs] B: mang

8:

brgyad ldan] A: yan lag brgyad ldan

11:

sreg pa'i] A: bsreg pa'i

35:

skye shing 'chi ba'i] A: skyes shing shi
 ba'i

42:

med par] A: med pa

64:

gtibs] A: bstibs

71:

sprul ba'i] A: sprul ba

¹¹⁶ Reference here to verse numbers.

Ma ni bka' 'bum II:

1.

mchog tu] D: mchog na
 khams su] D: khams der
 med pa'i] D: med par

2.

gzugs kyi] D: gzugs snang
 ji snyed pa] D: ji snyed kun, and so again
 in 3, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14

4

dran rtog] D: dran rtogs

5

'od kyi snang ba] D: 'od snang bye brag
 chos kyi snang ba] D: chos kyi nyi ma
 rgyun mi 'chad] D: rgyun chad med

7

padma'i steng du] D: padma'i nang nas

8

kham zas] D: kha zas

11

bzhon] D: zhon

13

grol bas] C: gol bas

14

longs spyod] D: yon byed

'dod yon] D: nor gyi

15

thugs bskyed nas] D: mchog tu sems
 bskyed nas

bgrod byas shing] D: bsgrod byas nas

sku bzhugs pa] D: bzhugs nas

16

spyan ras gzigs kyi zhabs drung du] D:

khams gsum 'khor ba stongs par

////[folio ends

Padma bka' thang:

4
 'dab] F: 'dabs
 5
 grag] F: grags
 7
 grag] F: grags
 11
 grag] F: grags
 20
 F: dang added in dbu can below line
 F: cig] F: gcig
 21
 F: paper carrying the first three words
 extremely torn and illegible, but probably
 'thab cing tsod
 In F, folio 3a begins repeating l. 21: cing
 rtsod pa'i ming yang mi grag rtsal kyang
 mi nyed pa. This proves that the original
 folios, before being supplented with what
 is now folio 2 and 2a, had something else,
 and that the missing word here would
 have been 'thab; what is now folio 2a
 carries text which duplicates what was on
 the older leaf, but did not match up
 precisely in folio division. Note also the
 spelling difference, found below, rtsal
 rather than btsal.
 25
 btsal] F: rtsal, and so in all cases below.
 29
 gyi] F: kyi
 30
 brnyes pa] F: brnyes pa las
 31
 F: from ya of yang the remainder of the
 expression is abbreviated with X, and so
 in subsequent lines
 32
 yongs] F: ye
 33
 skye zhing] F: skye shing
 yang] F: kyang, and then abbreviated
 35
 la] F: las
 37
 bde can] D: bde chen
 40
 skar] F: dkar
 42
 steng na] F: steng nas
 44
 dga'] F: dga' ba
 bzhi] F: bzhi'i

45
 'phan] A: 'phen
 phyar ba] F: 'char ba
 47
 re] A: ri
 gnyis snang] F: ø
 48
 ye dag] F: ye
 49
 byung] F: bzhin
 51
 rdzogs] F: tshogs
 55
 blta bas] F: ltas
 ngoms shing] F: ngoms
 56
 'od zer] D: 'od gzar; F: 'od
 57
 thugs rje'i] F: thugs rje
 phyogs bcur] F: phyags por
 58
 ldan pa] F: ldan pas
 60
 gtibs] D: gtib; F: 'thibs
 61
 dang la] D: ngung
 62
 rje] F: rjes
 'od zer] D: 'od gzer
 du ma phyogs] F: phyogs
 bcur] F: btsur
 'phro] D: 'phre
 63
 re re'i rtse las] F: rtse la
 'od zer] D: 'od gzer
 67
 thor bu] F: 'thor bus
 bsam] F: bsams
 68
 u rgyan gu ru] D: u rgyan ghu ru; F: u
 rgyan gyi gu ru rin po che
 69
 bde ba chen po'i] F: bde ba can gyi
 bstab pa] F: btan pa'i

Bka' thang gser phreng:

2

gzhi] C, D: gzhi mig

la] C: las

3

brag] B: grags; C, D: grag, and below for all

mi rnyed pa] D: mi bsnyed pa

4

byang chub shing] D: byang chub kyi shing

me tog gi] C, D: me tog

rgyas pa las] C, D: smin pa las

5

rnyed pa] D: snyed pa

6

ting nge 'dzin] C, D: ting 'dzin

yan lag] A: yan lags

8

rang me] D: rang bzhin me

9

me'i] B: me yi

10

rnam] A: rnams

ngad ldang] A: ngan ldan

11

gi] D: gyi

12-13

D added below line

14

dbyings rig] A: dbyings rigs

gdugs] A: 'dugs

20

bdag dang] D: bdag

gcig] A: cig

22

'tsho ba] A: btsho ba; D: mtsho bas, below line

zas kyis] B, C: zas kyi

23

bya'i] A: bya ba'i

24

rtsi'i] A, D: rtsi

'thung] A: 'thang

25

bya'i] A: bya ba'i

26

gtsang] C, D: bzang

28

rdzus] B: brdzus

30

mnyes pas] C, D: brnyes pas

31

rgas shing rgud] A: rgas shing dgud; D:

rgas shi rgud

33

skye zhing] D: skye shing

35

ma lus] A: mi yul

bskyed] A: skyed; B: skyid

39

de yi] C, D: de'i

dpag tshad dpag tu] D: dpag tu

40

ltas] B bltas (twice)

42

rgya tshad] A: brgya tshad; B rgya chad

43

lhung] A: lhungs

45

kyi] A, B, D: kyis

46

padma 'od] D: padma 'og

brtsigs] D: rtsigs

47

rtsigs pa brtsigs pa] B, D: rtsig pa rtsigs

pa

48

'tshams su 'phyar ba] B: mtshams su

'phyar ba; D: tshams su phyar ba

49

cing] A: bcing

51

spang blang] A, D: spangs blangs; C:

spangs blang

padmo] D: padma

52

brdar] A: bdar

54

byung] D: 'byung

grub pa'i] C: grub pa

55

dngas pa las] B: dwangs pa la

56

pad sdong] A: pad mo

58

rgyan] A: brgyan

brgyan pa'i] D: rgyan pa'i

rnams] D: rnam

59

dpag tu med pa] A: dpag med pa

mtsho'i] A: mtsho yi

kyis] D: kyi

60

bcu rtsa] A: bcu so; B: cu rtsa

bcus] B cus

brgya] C: brgyad

61

chog] D: mchog

62

rgyan] A: brgyan

63

tho phyi thams cad ni] A: phyi rol thams

cad; D: tho physis thams cad ni

64

bcu] B: bcur

66

phrin las ni zad] A: 'phris ni zas

67

stibs] B: gtibs; C: bstibs; D: thibs

68

ste] D: te

thugs mnyam par bzhag] A: mnyam par

bzhags; D: thugs mnyam par gzhag

69

brtse] A: rtse

'phro] D: phro ba

71

la sogs] A: las sos

'dul] A: gdul

gyis] D: gyi

med pa mdzad par] A: med par mdzad

pa

73

shas stag] A, D: shas stag

74

u rgyan gu ru] A; dbu brgyan; D: u rgyan

ghu ru

Appendix I

(see note 63, above)

The way in which the three buddha bodies (*trikāya*, *sku gsum*) are portrayed in our sources here appears to be unique to Tibetan Buddhism. As far as I know, for Indian doctrine, were Amitābha a *dharmakāya* he could not have had any land at all, since it is only a *sambhogakāya* who inhabits a buddha field such as Sukhāvātī.¹¹⁷ Tibetan doctrine, however, at least for the Rnying ma pa, is clearly different. This understanding goes back at least to a work credited to Nyi ma 'od zer, the *Slob dpon padma 'byung gnas kyi skyes rabs chos 'byung nor bu'i phreng ba*, perhaps more widely known as the *Bka' thang zangs gling ma* or simply *Zangs gling ma*. In this we read:¹¹⁸

chos sku snang ba mtha' yas §
longs sku thugs rje chen po §
'phags pa spyan ras gzigs dbang phyug §
sprul sku padma 'byung gnas te §
sku gsum gyi lha la phyag 'tshal lo §
zhing khams thams cad las khyad par du 'phags pa § *nub phyogs bde ba can gyi zhing*
khams nas § *sangs rgyas snang ba mtha' yas zhes bya ba des* § *sprul sku shākya thub*
pa'i zhing khams § *mi mdzed 'jig rten gyi khams* § *lho phyogs dzanbu'i gling* § *u rgyan*
dang rgya gar gyi yul § *khyad par du bod kha ba can gyi zhing khams thams cad* § *'phags*
pa spyan ras gzigs kyis 'dul ba'i phyir § *sprul sku padma 'byung gnas zhes bya ba de* §
sku che ba'i yon tan dang rnam thar ji lta bu dang ldan zhe na §

The passage is translated, somewhat freely, by Kapstein (2004: 24) as follows:

Dharmakāya Amitābha,
 Sambhogakāya Avalokiteśvara,
 Nirmāṇakāya Padmasambhava—
 I bow before the divine Trikāya!

Among all fields, the most exalted is the western Sukhāvātī field. There, the Buddha called Amitābha—in order that Ārya Avalokiteśvara might tame Oḍḍiyāna, India, and especially all the realms of snowy Tibet, in the southern Rose-Apple Continent (Jambudvīpa), in the field of the Nirmāṇakāya Śākyamuni, the Sahā realm—emanated the Nirmāṇakāya Padmasambhava in order to fulfill the goals of living beings.

¹¹⁷ See for instance Nagao 1973: 36, who in speaking of Yogācāra doctrine refers to the *sāmbhogikakāya* as the concretization of the *svābhāvīkakāya*, that is, the *dharmakāya*.

¹¹⁸ I cite the edition used by Kapstein, which he quotes as "*Slob dpon Padma'i rnam thar zangs gling ma* (Chengdu: Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun-khang, 1989), 3," and is to be found also as Myang Nyi ma 'od zer, *Bka' thang zangs gling ma*, BDRC, purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW7956. Note that this book has an astonishing way of numerating pages and the relevant page 3 is in fact image 31 on the BDRC website.

A different passage of what seems to be another recension of this text is cited by Doney 2020a: 198n12 as containing the expression *u rgyan padma 'byung gnas kyi rnam thar las chos sku long sku sprul sku gsum gyi dbye ba'i le'u ste gnyis pa'o*, which Doney understands to mean that the second chapter of the work claims to “distinguish between the *dharmakāya*, *sambhogakāya* and *nirmānakāya*’ of Padmasambhava.”¹¹⁹ In this understanding, then, all bodies actually belong to Padmasambhava.

An understanding of the assignment of three bodies closer to that cited above from the *Zangs gling ma* is likewise clear in a work of Sog bzlog pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan (1552–1624), a Rnying ma pa, in his *Bla ma go 'jo'i zhu lan ma bsgom sangs rgyas kyi brtsod spong*.¹²⁰

sprul sku zhid po gling pa'i ma bsgom sangs rgyas kyi ril bu 'di la | |
chos sku 'od dpag med dang gos dkar mo | |
longs sku spyen ras gzigs dang dā ki ma | |
sprul sku padma lha ljam mandha ra'i | |
byang sems dkar dmar sangs rgyas rab bdun gyis | |
gdung las sgril ba'i ril bu khyad par can | |

It is taught in Emanation Body Zhikpo Lingpa's *Buddhahood without Meditation Pill*:

This is a special pill rolled from the white and red seminal fluids from the *dharmakāyas* Amitābha and Pāṇḍaravāsini, the *sambhogakāyas* Avalokiteśvara and Dākimā, and the *nirmānakāyas* Pema Lha (Padma lha) and Jam (Ljam) Mandharava, along with the bones of the seven generations of buddhas.

These passages show that the Tibetan understanding of the three bodies of Amitābha as *dharmakāya*, Avalokiteśvara as *sambhogakāya*, and a separate *nirmānakāya*, variously identified, is rather widely held. Moreover, that this idea is apparently not strictly limited to the Rnying ma but found also among the Dge lugs pa is shown by a reference in a work of Dalai Lama V, Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617–1682), the *'Dod khams bdag mo dpal ldan dmag zor ma rje khol gyis kyi dbang rjes gnang ji ltar nos tshul skor*.¹²¹ Describing the transmission lineage of a *gtor ma* practice, FitzHerbert explains that “it passes through the Padma family of compassionate buddhas:

¹¹⁹ His *ZLf*, attributed to Nyang Nyi ma 'od zer, a 1989 microfilm of *U rgyan gu ru padma 'byung gnas kyi rnam thar 'bring po zangs gling mar grags pa*. NGMCP MyCoRe Object ID number 54683; reel AT 28/2. 148: 13b2. Much of Doney's work is devoted to trying to sort out the various versions of the *Zangs gling ma*, and I will not attempt to reproduce his conclusions here. See among others Doney 2014.

¹²⁰ Ed. and trans. Gentry 2017: 278–279, with n290, quoting *Collected Writings of Sog-bzlog-pa Blo-gros-rgyal-mtshan*, vol. 2 (Delhi: Sanji Dorje, 1975): 192.4ff.

¹²¹ In *Rgyal dbang lnga pa ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho'i gsung 'bum* (Beijing: Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2009); BDRC W1PD107937, vol. 2, 322, cited by FitzHerbert 2018: 94 with n152. I thank Dan Martin for directing me to this passage in FitzHerbert's article.

Amit[ā]bha (as *chos sku*, *dharmakāya*), Avalokiteśvara (as *longs sku*, *sambhogakāya*), and Padmasambhava (as *sprul sku*, *nirmāṇakāya*); then, through further emanations (*yang sprul*), to Songtsen Gampo and the Third Dalai Lama Sönam Gyatso; and then to himself [that is, Dalai Lama V] via his two main gurus, Géluk and Nyingma respectively, namely Phabongkha and Zur Chöying Rangdröl." While found in a work, then, of a Dge lugs hierarch, the influence of the Rnying ma here is evident, as it is elsewhere in the writings of the Dalai Lama V, and I do not know how far the idea can be said therefore to be shared by the Dge lugs pa.

This Tibetan formulation is foreign also to Chinese sources. As briefly discussed by Chappell (1977: esp. 37, 40–41), for instance, in Daochuo's 道綽 (562–645) *Anleji* 安樂集 (T. 1958 [XLVII] 5c11–16), the argument is whether Amitābha is a *sambhogakāya* or *nirmāṇakāya*, and the *dharmakāya* does not come up. See also Sowa 2004.

As evidenced by Kitagawa 2020, even in the Japanese Shingon school, which one might suspect of having some greater conceptual similarities with Tibetan thought, the same two choices are debated. However, as Robert Sharf kindly points out to me, for Kūkai the Dharmakāya (although not identified with Amitābha, but rather Vairocana) does preach; see Abé 1999: 213–219, Payne 2018: 78–79. However, in a footnote to statement that in Indian Buddhism Amitābha is identified as *sambhogakāya* (2018: 111), Payne does add (2018: 290n56), unfortunately without any references, "later Pure Land teachers in Japan will identify Amitābha as the *dharmakāya*." A deeper study of this whole issue would be welcome.

Appendix II

(Samten 1975: II.96–97 = *wain* 48b2–49a3. See above note 81)

Note: this text is not critically edited:

ཨོ་མ་ཉི་པད་མེ་རྫོང་།

དུས་གསུམ་སངས་རྒྱལ་གྱི་སྐྱེ་གསུང་བྲགས་།།

འགོ་དུག་གྱུན་ལ་བྲགས་རྗེའི་སྐྱེ་གྱིས་གཟིགས་།།

བྱམས་དང་བྲགས་རྗེའི་བྲགས་གྱིས་སྐྱོབ་མཛད་པའི་།།

འཕགས་པ་སྐྱེ་རས་གཟིགས་ཀྱི་བྲག་ཤིས་ཤོག་།

ཨོ་མ་ཉི་པད་མེ་རྫོང་།

ཡི་གེ་དྲུག་མ་ཤེས་རབ་དབྱིངས་ཀྱི་ཡུམ །།
 རོར་བུ་འཛིན་པ་དབྱིངས་ལས་ཡེ་ཤེས་ཤར །།
 རིག་སྤྲུགས་འཛིན་མ་ཚོས་དབྱིངས་མཉམ་པའི་ངང །།
 ལྷགས་རྗེ་ཚེན་པོ་འཁོར་བཅས་བཀྲ་ཤིས་ཤོག །
 ཨོ་མ་ཉི་པད་མེ་རྩྭ།

བདེ་གཤེགས་རིགས་དྲུག་སྐྱུ་དྲུག་ཡེ་ཤེས་དྲུག །
 ས་རོལ་ཕྱིན་དྲུག་འཁོར་བའི་ས་རོལ་སོན །།
 ལྷུ་དྲུག་སྐྱུ་ལ་སྐྱུས་འགོ་དྲུག་སྐྱུག་བསྐྱེད་སྐྱོང །
 འཁོར་གྱི་ལྷ་ཚོགས་རྣམས་ཀྱི་བཀྲ་ཤིས་ཤོག །
 ཨོ་མ་ཉི་པད་མེ་རྩྭ།

འདས་པའི་སངས་རྒྱུས་ཚོས་ཀྱི་དབྱིངས་ན་གནས །།
 ད་ལྟར་སངས་རྒྱུས་སེམས་ཅན་འགོ་དོན་མངོན །།
 མ་འོངས་སངས་རྒྱུས་འགོ་ཀུན་དོན་ལ་དགོངས །།
 དུས་གསུམ་སངས་རྒྱུས་སྐྱོང་གི་བཀྲ་ཤིས་ཤོག །
 ཨོ་མ་ཉི་པད་མེ་རྩྭ།

ཡི་གེ་དྲུག་པ་ལྷགས་རྗེ་སྐྱུ་ལ་པའི་སྐྱུ །།
 འགོ་དྲུག་སྐྱེ་བ་སྐྱོང་འཁོར་བའི་གཡང་ས་གཅོད །།
 བྱང་རྒྱལ་ལམ་འབྲེན་སྐྱུ་གསུམ་ས་ལ་འགོད །།
 སྐྱོང་པོ་ཡི་གེ་དྲུག་པའི་བཀྲ་ཤིས་ཤོག །
 ཨོ་མ་ཉི་པད་མེ་རྩྭ།

སྐྱུ་ན་རས་གཟིགས་དབང་འགོ་དྲུག་ཡོངས་ལ་གཟིགས །།
 ལྷགས་རྗེ་ཚེན་པོའི་སྐྱོང་རྗེ་རྒྱུན་མི་འཆད །།
 འཇིག་རྟེན་དབང་ལྷུག་འགོ་བཡོངས་ཀྱི་མགོན །།
 འགོ་བའི་སྐྱེ་བས་གནས་མཚོག་གི་བཀྲ་ཤིས་ཤོག །

ཨོ་མ་ཉི་པད་མེ་རྩྭ།

ལོ་བརྒྱ་འཚོ་ཞིང་སྟོན་བརྒྱ་མཐོང་བ་དང །།

ལོངས་སྟོན་རྒྱས་ཤིང་བསམ་དོན་འགྲུབ་པ་དང །།

ཚོས་ལ་བར་ཚད་མེད་ཅིང་སྐྱབ་པ་མཐར་ཕྱིན་ནས །།

བརྒྱད་འཛིན་བྱིན་གྱིས་བརྒྱ་བས་པའི་བཀའ་ཤིས་ཤོག །།

Appendix III

(see note 109, above)

The *Thugs rje chen po'i bsgom bzlas 'Gro don mkha' khyab ma*

At one point I wondered whether we should also consider as related, directly or indirectly, to the material cited above a passage extracted from a text of great currency, also in the modern day, a short work called *Thugs rje chen po'i bsgom bzlas 'Gro don mkha' khyab ma*, authored by Thang stong rgyal po (1385–1464).¹²² I now think that this is probably less likely than that many texts concerning Amitābha and his land tend to share imagery, as one would naturally expect. Nevertheless, in order to illustrate such similarities I quote from this text in part as follows:

<p>དེ་ལྟར་ཅེ་གཅིག་གསོལ་བཏབ་པས །། འཕགས་པའི་སྐྱུ་ལས་འོད་ཟེར་འཕྲོས །། མ་དག་ལས་སྣང་འཁྲུལ་ཤེས་སྤྱངས །།</p>	<p>Thanks to the single pointed supplication [of the prayer offered] in the manner above [here omitted], Radiant rays of light have emanated from the body of the Noble One. They have purified impure karmic</p>
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¹²² A version is translated by Gyatso 1996, but apparently the sources from which she worked lacked the end of the text. My translation has been assisted by hers. Earlier Gyatso 1981: 100–141, esp. 109–111, 117–132, in her PhD thesis dedicated to the author, discussed this work in some detail, calling it “perhaps his most well-known work.” There too, however, the work lacks the ending found in the versions I consulted. I found the Tibetan text at <https://www.lotsawahouse.org/tibetan-masters/thangtong-gyalpo/drodon-khakhayabma-avalokiteshvara>, and see also BDRC W1KG4450, folios 10a–11a, numerated 19–21, this version published by Pal Nyammay Kagyupay Sangha Monlam Chenmo. It is found in numerous other sources as well.

<p> ཕྱི་སྣོད་བདེ་བ་ཅན་གྱི་ཞིང་།། བྱང་བཅུད་སྐྱེ་འགྲོའི་ལུས་ངག་སེམས་།། ལྷན་རས་གཟིགས་དབང་སྐྱེ་གསུང་ ལྷགས་།། ལྷང་གྲགས་རིག་སྣོད་དབྱེར་མེད་ལྷུང་།། </p>	<p> appearances and mistaken cognition. The external surroundings have become the field of Sukhāvati. The inner contents—the body, speech and mind of beings— Have become the body, speech and mind of Avalokiteśvara, His appearance, voice and aware- ness have become inseparable from emptiness.¹²³ </p>
<p> བདག་གཞན་ལུས་སྣང་འཕགས་པའི་སྐྱེ་།། ལྷ་གྲགས་ཡི་གེ་དྲུག་པའི་དབྱེངས་།། དན་རྟོག་ཡི་ཤེས་ཆེན་པོའི་སྣོང་།། དགེ་བ་འདི་ཡིས་སྐྱུར་དུ་བདག་། ལྷན་རས་གཟིགས་དབང་འགྲུབ་ལྷུང་ བས་།། འགྲོ་བ་གཅིག་ཀྱང་མ་ལུས་པ་།། དེ་ཡི་ས་ལ་འགོད་པར་ཤོག་། </p>	<p> The appearance of my body and those of others are the body of the Noble One. Our voices are the melody of [his] six syllables [<i>om maṇipadme</i> <i>hūm</i>]. Our thoughts are the great expanse of [his] insight. Through the virtue produced by this [prayer], may I quickly, Having gained the attainment of Avalokiteśvara, Settle every single being without exception In his state as well. </p>
<p> འདི་ལྟར་སྒོམ་བརླས་བགྱིས་པའི་བསོད་ བླམས་གྱིས་།། བདག་དང་བདག་ལ་འབྲེལ་ཐོགས་འགྲོ་བ་ ལྷན་།། མི་གཙང་ལུས་འདི་བོར་བར་ལྷུང་མ་ཐག་། </p>	<p> By the merit of cultivating in this manner and quietly reciting [the six-syllable mantra], May I and all beings connected with me, Immediately after we have cast off this impure body, Be spontaneously born in Sukhā- vati! </p>

¹²³ I see no way to indicate in English the differing sets of terms for body, speech and mind, which are first unmarked, but then in the second instance all honorific terms, and third another set again, a usage that befits reference to a buddha or bodhi-sattva. More usual are the first two sets, but perhaps the third is also common in Tibetan contexts, with which I am not very familiar.

<p>བདེ་བ་ཅན་དུ་བརྒྱས་ཏེ་སྐྱེ་བར་ཤོག ། སྐྱེ་མ་ཐག་དུ་ས་བཅུ་རབ་བཤོད་ནས །། སྐྱེ་ལ་པས་ཕྱོགས་བཅུར་གཞན་དོན་བྱེད་ པར་ཤོག །</p>	<p>Immediately after our birth there, traversing the ten bodhisattva stages [and becoming Avaloki- teśvara ourselves], May we, through [our] manifesta- tions, work for the benefit of others in the ten directions!</p>
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Although given the large number of Amitābha/Sukhāvātī *sādhana*s in existence, as stated above, we need see here no special connection with the *Praise Poem*, the passage is worth citing as evidence for the pervasive presence of some central imagery. An overall survey of such imagery remains a desideratum.

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The 1983 Copy of Köten's 1244 Letter to Sa skya Paṇḍita

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he year 1244 is traditionally believed to be the year that the Mongol prince Köten¹ extended an invitation to Sa skya Paṇḍita, starting a relationship which, after some twists and turns, finally evolved into the so-called Mongol-Sa skya hegemony in Tibet. Two of the early Tibetan sources related to this invitation have been subjected to philological scrutiny: Dieter Schuh suggested that at least part of Köten's invitation letter preserved in A mes zhabs's (1599–1657) 1629 history is the result of forgery;² David Jackson later cast doubt on the alleged origin of another important epistle copied by A mes zhabs, the so-called “Sa skya Paṇḍita's letter to the Tibetans,”³ which is traditionally believed to have come from the meeting of Köten and Sapaṅ. These two scholars have drawn attention to some critical issues concerning the textual transmissions of these two early documents of great political significance. In this article, we will reevaluate some of the problems they identified through the reading of a hitherto underappreciated document found in 1983 at the Sa skya monastery (hereafter referred to as “the '83 copy”). In 1989, Huang Bufan 黃布凡 and Chen Qingying 陳慶英, though unaware of their two western colleagues' works, published a study of the '83 copy, explaining its anomalies and arguing for its authenticity. However, due to the poor circulation of the edited volume that contained the article, their study has so far received little notice even in China. The '83 copy that they studied is a unique version of Köten's letter – it contains not only a unique Tibetan version of the text but also a set of Tibetan transcriptions of Chinese annotations. As we will see, the phonology of the Chinese matches the Early Mandarin of the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries. The '83 copy thus constitutes an earlier layer of the textual transmission of

¹ For the Mongol spelling of Köten (Kuoduan 闊端, Kuodan 廓丹, or Kuteng 庫騰 in Chinese, Go dan or Go tan in Tibetan), see Atwood 2015, 21.

² Schuh 1977, 26–69.

³ Jackson 1986.

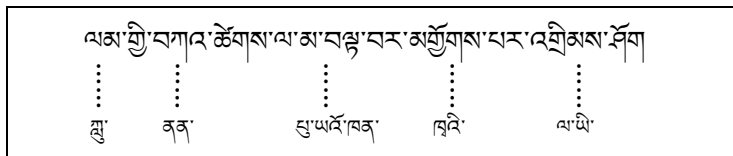
the letter in question.

Recently, we introduced the studies by Schuh and Jackson to our peers in the Chinese academic world in the hope that their important contributions would receive due attention (Sun & Chen 2020). Conversely, the present essay aims to fully present the '83 copy of Köten's letter to scholars in the west. After a revised reconstruction of the Chinese gloss, we will also introduce recently discovered fragments of a Tangut woodblock-print that was produced through the patronage of Köten in 1244, to better contextualize his letter and discuss the multilingual and multiethnic officials in his court. Notably, Köten is addressed in the Tangut print set as "the crown prince," which echoes some historical records about Köten's endeavor to pursue the throne of the Mongol *qa'an*. We believe that it is appropriate to dedicate this essay to our friend Dan Martin, who has greatly enriched our understanding of Tibetan epistolary culture.

1. The '83 Copy of Köten's Letter

One of the authors, Chen Qingying, had the rare opportunity to view the document in the summer of 1983 when he visited the Sa skya monastery. It is a 30cm wide by 10cm tall piece of thick white paper with writing on both sides, preserved in a room on the second floor of a building located across from the grand assembly hall. The room in which the letter was found was referred to as an "archive-cum-library" (*cangshu shi* 藏書室) by local monks and housed other manuscripts alleged to be epistles of Sa skya Paṇḍita. Largely owing to certain restrictions, but also because the camera (a Seagull [海鷗] 135mm) brought by Nga phod 'Jigs med (阿沛·晉美) was out of film, Chen Qingying and his companions (Nga phod 'Jigs med, Luo Zhao 羅焯, and Ding Mingyi 丁明夷) were unable to take any pictures but had to copy selected documents by hand, one of which was the '83 copy.

This copy contains not only a unique Tibetan version of Köten's letter but also Tibetan transcriptions of Chinese annotations. For example,



These notes obviously denote the Chinese *lu* 路 (*klu*), *nan* 難 (*nan*), *buyaokan* 不要看 (*pu ya'o khan*), *kuai* 快 (*khwa'i*), and *lai* 來 (*la yi*). Taken together, they do not follow Chinese syntax, but when the word order is slightly adjusted, they carry the same meaning as the Tibetan counterparts they gloss: "Disregarding the hardship of the road, quickly come here!"

Huang Bufan, a linguist of Sino-Tibetan phonology, recognized the importance of the phonology and, together with Chen Qingying, reconstructed most of the Chinese expressions. Below is a reproduction of the '83 copy with revised reconstructions based on Huang & Chen 1989. Original transcriptions appear in brackets and are followed by our reconstructed characters. To clarify the structure, we present the text within the frame of an imperial edict and wherever possible use the same terms that have been used to study medieval European documents.⁴

[Invocatio] tshe ring gnam (tshang ming then *長命天) gyi she mong (shri ta *勢大?) dang (hwa *和) bsod nams chen po'i (ta hu *大福) dpal (hu ko'i *富貴) la brten (thā *托?)

[Intitulatio] rgyal po (ham ti *皇帝) nged kyi lung (shing tri *聖旨)/

[Publicatio] sa skya (pa'i thu *白土) paṇḍita (ho'e 佛爺?) kun dga' (phu hyi *普喜) rgyal mtshan (throm *幢) dpal (hu ko'i *富貴) bzang po (zhan *賢) la go bar byed pa'i gnam (ngo 'ji ta'u *告知道)/

[Narratio and Dispositio] nged pha ma (hu mu *父母) dang / gnam sa'i (then ti *天地) drin lan (ngan tyan *恩典) 'jal ba'i ched du (trung *重)/ lam (klu *路) gyi blang dor (ho'i tshu'i *會取?) ma nor bar (pu thra *不差) ston (chu khan *出看?) shes pa'i (ho'i *會) bla ma (sri hu *師傅) cig (yi ko *一個) dgos pa (ya'o *要) brtag pa byas (cin tro *斟酌) dus (sri'u *時候) khyed (ni *你) du 'dug pas (hri ha'o *是好?)/ lam (klu *路) gyi dka' tshogs (nan *難) la ma blta bar (pu ya'o khan *不要看) mgyogs par (khwa'i *快) 'grims shog (la yi *來)/

[Sanctio] yang na so rgas zer na (ni g.yu'i la'o la'o *你曰老了) sngon (tshan *前) ston pa thub pa'i dbang pos (shi kya ho yu hwam *釋迦佛玉皇?) sems can (i tshi drung srin pi shin *一切眾生百姓) gyi

⁴ Schuh 1977, Chapter 4 (158–177).

don du lus grangs med sbyin par btang ba (mo shru she sri *沒數
 施捨) ci tsam (sya pi *相比?)/ khyed (ni *你) kyi chos (hwa *法)
 go ba'i dam bca' (ta'i zho *大學?) (mam *盟?) dang e 'gel (ngo
 shin hyi *?)/ ngas (ngo ling *我令[/領]?) mtha'i khirms ra che ba
 (ta'i hwa tu *大法度)⁵ blangs dmag chen po'i (ta'i ping *大兵)
 'bab 'dur byas na (shrang tsa'i ta'u can *傷在刀劍) sems can
 mang po la (yi tsi drung sring *一切眾生) mi gnod pa e yin (drus
 pu hya *誅不下?)/ nga (ngo *我) dang sems can mang po'i (yi tsi
 drung sreng *一切眾生) don (sri *事) du mgyogs par 'grims shog
 (sen la'i *迅來?)/ nyi ma nub phyogs (si ci'u bzhi tha'u *西州日
 頭?) kyi bande rnams (sing tu *僧徒?) khyed shes su 'jug pa yin
 (ni phu wa'i tsun *你普為尊?) /

[List of gifts⁶] gngang sbyin (shrang si *賞賜) dngul (yin tsa *銀子) bre
 lnga / gos (ton ji *緞織?) ta hūm (dmar chen *大紅)⁷ gi chos gos
 (rgya sra *袈裟) mu tig gi tshom⁸ can (hwam cin tru *黃珍珠?) la
 mu tig (cin tru *珍珠) stong phrag drug (lu tshan *六千) dang
 nyis brgya (ri pa'i *二百)/ gos lu hang (ljang ser *綠黃) gi ring
 'gag (chan ka la *?)⁹/ lham (sho tsa *靴子) 'bob (can ba *氈襪?)
 dang bcas pa kha ti kha tshang yug gnyis (kyin chon ri *錦全二
)¹⁰/ thon ti (shan sren *?)¹¹ kha tshang yug gnyis (ri phi *二疋)/
 gos chen sna lnga (u sre'i *五色)¹² yug (yi ko *一個) nyi shu
 rnams (ri phi *二疋)¹³ yod (ya'u *有)/

[Proclamation and Personnel] 'di'i don la (ci sri *這事) (gim gam *今

⁵ = *yeke jasaq?*

⁶ The list of gifts (die Aufzählung der Geschenke) is intentionally not discussed by Schuh 1977. The list of gifts and the personnel appointed to the task are also uncommon elements in later protective or tax-exemptive edicts.

⁷ The Tibetan transcription of Chinese, *ta hūm* (< *dahong* 大紅), is used in the Tibetan letter, and the Tibetan *dmar chen* is used as its annotation. *Lu hang* (< *lūhuang* 綠黃) and *ljang ser*, which appear several lines below, are the same.

⁸ Read *tshon?*

⁹ Not identified.

¹⁰ Although the three syllables were written together, they respectively correspond to Tibetan terms *kha thi*, *kha tshang*, and *yug gnyis*. Here, *gin* may represent the Chinese *jin* 錦. *Quan* 全 refers to *kha tshang*, which may be the same as *kha gang*, a measurement for textiles, like Chinese *yifang* 一方.

¹¹ We wonder whether *thon thi* is related to the Mongolian *taji*, which means *shanduan* 閃緞, a kind of shiny satin.

¹² This may refer to *wuse duan* 五色緞, "five-colored satin."

¹³ The number in the gloss ("two") does not match the Tibetan ("twenty").

喊)¹⁴ dor shrī mgon (hu ko'i hu *富貴怙)¹⁵ dang (hwa *和)/ jī ba
 kha (mi sdi *)¹⁶ mngags pa yin (khyu la'o *去了)/
 [Eschatocol] 'brug lo (lung nyan *龍年) zla ba brgyad pa'i (pa yo *八
 月) tshes grangs la (ki bzhi *吉日) song ba (khyen khyud *遣去)
 dge/ shu bham (ha'o *好)/

As Professor Huang Bufan has demonstrated, the Chinese phonology represented by these transcriptions matches the Early Mandarin represented by the *Zhongyuan yinyun* 中原音韻.¹⁷ We can also see randomness in the choice of different Tibetan transcriptions for the same Chinese characters, such as *srin*, *sring*, and *sreng* for *sheng* 生, which seems to suggest that this was an *ad hoc* or personal note rather than a systematically edited annotation. Interestingly, in the case of words that are already in the form of their foreign transcriptions (perhaps already loanwords/Erbwörter at the time), the annotator uses Tibetan to gloss them: *dmār chen* for *ta hūm* (< *dahong* 大紅) and *ljang ser* for *lu hang* (< *lūhuang* 綠黃). This practice indicates that the annotator may have been a bilingual speaker of Chinese and Tibetan, instead of a monolingual Tibetan speaker who simply wrote down the sounds. The '83 copy not only offers us a new look at the date of the letter, it also provides philologists with new materials to work with. For example, some terms for textiles, such as *thon ti* and *kha ti*, may not have come from Chinese, at least according to this annotator.¹⁸

But what was their usage? Although the later edicts of the Yuan dynasty had a dimension of public performance, we do not know in this particular case whether the letter was read out loud before an audience that included the primary recipient. If that was the case, the annotations may have accompanied the original document to facilitate its reading by the drafter, messengers, or negotiators, who may have included monolingual speakers from Köten's court. We will discuss this point in the next section.

¹⁴ This most likely corresponds to the Tibetan *mngags* that comes later in the sentence.

¹⁵ We thank Xie Guangdian 謝光典 for his suggestion on this reconstruction.

¹⁶ It is unclear whether this form represents the Sanskrit *jīvaka*, which is also the name of a famous physician. The *Blue Annals* record a Mongol general called Mi li byi, who went to Tibet with the general Dor ta. We cannot help but wonder if that name has anything to do with this Mi sdi.

¹⁷ Huang & Chen 1989.

¹⁸ See Karsten 2018 for more possibilities regarding their origins.

2. Sources of Skepticism

The multiple variations between the '83 copy and other versions allow us to review the skepticism expressed by scholars. Schuh, reading versions of the letter such as that of A mes zhabs, finds it odd that Köten's court would have made use of so much Buddhist discourse in the letter.¹⁹ The '83 copy gives us a variant reading that partly supports this doubt. When talking about the *raison d'être* of Sa paṅ's future trip, the letter says,

The '83 copy	A mes zhabs's version ²⁰
<i>nga dang sems can mang po'i don du ...</i>	<i>sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa dang sems can mang po la ...</i>
"For the sake of me and many sentient beings ..."	"For the Buddha's Teaching and many sentient beings ..."

The tone in the '83 copy thus sounds more like what we would expect from a Chinggisid ruler at this time, emphasizing the Mongol lord himself rather than the Buddha's Teachings.

The '83 copy is, however, not totally free of Buddhist discourse. Are we then to take all the Buddhist elements as the work of later editors? As Schuh has remarked, even by the end of the Yuan dynasty, the official ideology of the empire only traced the royal patronage of Buddhism to the reigns of Ögedei and Möngke.²¹ Christopher Atwood has also noted that "the Mongol image of 'Tibet' in the 1240s and 1250s was not based on the religiously-dominated society of Central Tibet, but rather on the pastoralists and farmers of Kökenuur."²² However, we cannot for this reason simply dismiss any understanding of Tibet as a Buddhist society on the part of Köten. Since the appearance of studies by Sperling, Dunnell, and most recently Atwood, we can no longer talk about the early Mongol-Tibet interface without taking into account the Xia and Jin experience with Tibetans.²³ The evidence we will present below also supports our belief that Köten and his courtiers are likely to have used Buddhist discourse in their negotiations with central Tibetans.

Recently, two woodblock-printed fragments of the Tangut version of Zhenzhi's 眞智 *Foshuo dabaisangai zongchi tuoluoni jing* 佛說大白傘蓋總持陀羅尼經 (Taishō Tripiṭaka no. 977, i.e., the *Uṣṇīṣasitātapatrā*

¹⁹ Schuh 1977, 38.

²⁰ Schuh 1977, 34.

²¹ Schuh 1977, 58–69.

²² Atwood 2015, 40.

²³ See Atwood 2015 for a full bibliography.

Dhāraṇī) were identified by Shi Jinbo.²⁴ These fragments fortunately include a portion of the printing colophon, which was composed by a certain “national preceptor” (國師) named *Buddhavajra (𑖀𑖄𑖘𑖅𑖆𑖇𑖈) and which clearly states that it was through the patronage of Köten that this trilingual (Tangut, Tibetan, and Chinese) block-print of the *Uṣṇīṣasitātapatrā Dhāraṇī* was produced in 1244. The cult of *Uṣṇīṣasitātapatrā* was doubtless inherited from the former Tangut kingdom.²⁵ Moreover, printing editions in these three languages are also a tradition of the Tangut royal house, the earliest extant specimen of which is dated to 1149 – almost a century before Köten’s patronage.²⁶ That is to say, in the same year when the invitation letter was sent to Sa skya, Köten was a patron of Buddhism just as the former Tangut kings before him had been, and he may also have employed members of the local Buddhist community in his administration.²⁷ Shen Weirong, in his reading of the Buddhist texts of the Kharakhoto collection, observes that the Buddhist community in the area had an excellent translational aptitude, being able to create new texts based on both the Chinese and Tibetan traditions.²⁸ These data allow us to imagine the use of Chinese and Tangut as working languages in Köten’s administration.

The Tangut fragments have also betrayed the self-proclaimed political status of Köten. There, Köten is addressed as 東宮皇太子, literally “east-stairs crown-prince.” This must be the Tangut equivalent of Köten’s title, *donggong huangtaizi* 東宮皇太子, “crown-prince of the eastern-palace,” found in the 1243 Chinese edictal inscriptions at the Caotang monastery in Huxian (鄆縣草堂寺閣端令旨碑).²⁹ Another section of the colophon addresses Köten as 𑖀𑖄𑖘𑖅𑖆𑖇𑖈, “Crown Prince /ko ta/,” with the last two syllables being transcriptions of Köten. Therefore, both Tangut and Chinese contemporary sources address him as the “crown prince,” meaning he was expected by certain people to be the heir apparent to the

²⁴ Shi 2015; and Shi 2016. Although the Tibetan prints have not been found, Zhenzhi’s version corresponds to the *’Phags pa de bzhin gshegs pa’i gtsug tor nas byung ba’i gdugs dkar po can gzhan gyis mi thub pa zhes bya ba’i gzung*s (D593).

²⁵ Shi 2015; and Shi 2016. The cult was already popular among the Sino-Tibetan communities of Dunhuang during the eighth to tenth centuries. For Dunhuang’s *Uṣṇīṣasitātapatrā* cult and its social role, see Yu 2020.

²⁶ Hamanaka & Sizova 2020.

²⁷ This new evidence also prompts us to slightly revise the beginning of the Mongol patronage of Buddhism to the 1240s; see van der Kuijp 2004 for later Mongol support of Tibetan Buddhist text printing.

²⁸ Shen 2020.

²⁹ For the inscriptions, see Cai 2017, 21.

throne,³⁰ which was at that time empty, while the political power rested in the hands of the regent-dowager Töregene (regent 1242–1246, d. 1246), Köten's mother.

This period, however important for the development of the Mongol-Tibetan relationship, was a time when Mongol politics was, in Jagchid Sechen's words, "extremely chaotic."³¹ The Imperial Preceptor 'Phags pa (1235–1280) in the 1270s already considered Köten's older brother Güyük (1206–1248) to be the third *qa'an* of the Mongol empire.³² This is arguably the orthodox view at Qubilai's court at that time; however, this may have not been the case for other historiographical traditions. As Liu Yingsheng has observed, the Chinese *Yuan shi* 元史 does not include Güyük in the *benji* 本紀 ("biography of emperors") section, and the two Persian sources by Juwaynī and Rashīd al-Dīn both refer to Güyük as a mere *qan*, while they call other Mongol emperors *qa'an*.³³ Moreover, Juwaynī reports that Köten once proposed himself as the rightful successor to the throne.³⁴ Rashīd al-Dīn also mentions that Köten was chosen as the heir apparent by Chinggis Qan.³⁵ In other words, Persian sources indicate that Köten may have competed with his brother Güyük for the emperorship. We are also reminded that, although the demanding of hostages was a standard Mongol practice, it was exceptional, as Atwood has noted, on the part of Köten to have felt confident enough to keep Sa paṅ and his nephews in his own entourage and not forward them to the emperor.³⁶ Therefore, the act of sending an imperial edict to Tibet in 1244 and subsequently keeping the resulting hostages for himself might have stemmed from his ambition to claim the throne.

This may explain why Köten, in his invitation letter to Sa paṅ, calls himself *rgyal po* (usually "emperor" in the edictal context) and the

³⁰ Although it is generally believed that the *huangtaizi*-system was first established by Qubilai in 1260 and the use of imperial titles by the Mongols cannot be interpreted simply through their Chinese origins (see Hung Chin-fu 2010, 754), the phrase *donggong huangtaizi* in both Chinese and Tangut seems to point to a possible earlier example of such institution among the Mongols.

³¹ Jagchid Sechen 1978, 34. For a survey of the discordant sources on Güyük and Köten, see *ibid.*, 34–42. It remains to be examined what early sources were responsible for the confusingly diverse treatment of the two figures in later Tibetan and Mongol sources.

³² For 'Phags pa's writings on the Mongol royal family, see Ishihama 2001, 35–40.

³³ See Liu 2016. For a survey of sources on Köten, see Pochekaev 2018. For *qa'an* as a title reserved for the emperor, in contrast to *qan* which refers to the subordinate khan, see de Rachewiltz 1983.

³⁴ See, for example, Boyle 1997, 251; and Pochekaev 2018, 8.

³⁵ Liu 2016, 47 suggests that the Chinggis Qan here was a mistaken reference to Ögedei Qan.

³⁶ Atwood 2015, 42.

letter itself a *lung* (“edict,” Mon. *jarliq*) in Intitulatio.³⁷ This use of *lung* constitutes one reason for Schuh’s doubt about the authenticity of the letter’s formality, because if Köten was just a prince he would only have been able to issue a *gtam* (Mon. *iige*) and not a *lung*, which was reserved for the *qa’an*.

A letter sent to Sa paṅ from the hierarch of the dominant ‘Bri gung school, Sphyan snga Grags pa ‘byung gnas (1175–1255/1256) further corroborates the idea that Köten may indeed have used “*lung*” in his letter. In it, he asks Sa paṅ to come to him in person, warning that “the golden-paiza-envoys said, ‘if you [Sa paṅ] do not come personally, no matter what you say, since we do not have the king’s edict (*rgyal po’i lung*), we dare not to invite you, and we have indeed not yet invited you.’”³⁸ The term “king’s edict” here may have represented the same understanding of Köten’s status as the invitation letter.

It is thus possible that Köten was intentionally posing as the Mongol *qa’an* in his communications with Tibet in 1244. That said, it should be noted that the letter is probably the earliest extant Tibetan witness of Mongol chancellery practices, and it is therefore possible that it contains certain “anomalies” (judged by later standardized practice) due to irregular translations and other factors.³⁹ We have to leave problems such as the simultaneous use of both *lung* and *gtam* to the future.

3. Mentions and Citations

With the ‘83 copy we can also address some of the textual issues raised by Jackson concerning Sa paṅ’s *Letter to the Tibetans*. Sa paṅ’s letter has come under suspicion because 1) the earliest mentions and citations of it do not appear until the sixteenth century; and 2) the style, “colloquial in tone and not at all elegant,” is unlike that of Sa paṅ’s other writings.⁴⁰

We believe the two issues are connected and both depend on the nature we attribute to Sa paṅ’s letter. If the letter represents the result of Sa paṅ’s negotiation with Köten, its colloquial style and late

³⁷ The Tibetan term *rgyal po* seems to have not been exclusively used for *qa’an*, but both the formulaic Intitulatio and the following *lung* indicate that *rgyal po* here means “emperor.”

³⁸ Sphyan snga 2000, vol. 1, 59: *de la gser yig pa rnams kyis / rin po che lo tsāba mar la mi ‘byon na zhal kyin gang btang yang nged la rgyal po’i lung med pas sphyan ‘dren mi phod cing mi ‘dren par bya bar gda’ /*. For the close connection of Sphyan snga and his successors with the Mongols, see Czaja 2013, 89–99; and Samten & Martin 2015, 298.

³⁹ For example, the issue of title confusions that arose due to status changes, which is briefly dealt with in Qiu 2011, 106–7.

⁴⁰ Jackson 1986, 20.

inclusion in his oeuvre would not be strange. The interrogative particle *e* in Sa paṅ's letter, which may strike a Tibetan reader as too colloquial,⁴¹ is actually reflecting the Mongolian *ilü'ü*, a common particle in edicts with which a rhetorical question "Aren't you afraid?" is made.⁴² We thus prefer the alternative hypothesis made by Jackson, which is that Sa paṅ's letter "was the product of close consultations with the Mongols."⁴³ The "collected works" (*gsung 'bum*) of a scholar would not include such a quasi-political settlement.

As for its late appearance, not only in catalogues but also in citations, we can think of two factors that may have contributed. First, during the time of Möngke (r. 1251–1259) and the succession war that followed his death, the two letters' significance for Tibetan politics became limited. Even after 'Phags pa became the imperial preceptor and Sa skya the most powerful order in Tibet, Köten's heritage would have been downplayed because he was not of Tolui's blood line. As far as we know, 'Phags pa only mentioned Sa paṅ and Köten's meeting once in his collected works, that is, in his 1275 praise for prince Manggala's (d. 1278) patronage of Buddhist text production.⁴⁴ It is possibly because prince Manggala, the third son of Qubilai, was deemed by 'Phags pa to be the successor of Köten in terms of their domains and roles in the empire.⁴⁵ Second, there seems to have been a general trend toward giving increasing weight to official documents in Tibetan historiography. For example, none of the fourteen official documents of the Yuan government included in the *Gnyags ston pa'i gdung rabs*, a work of the eighteenth century,⁴⁶ were found in the earlier and otherwise more detailed biography of Mus chen Rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po (1287–1347),⁴⁷ although in many places the early biography was copied almost verbatim into the *Gnyags ston pa'i gdung rabs*. This seems to suggest that these official documents took on new historical significance some four centuries after their issuance.

The two letters' inclusion in later historical writings has also to do with the renewed Tibeto-Mongol connection that had developed since the late sixteenth century, especially in the case of A mes zhabs, who witnessed a new influx of Mongols, as well as the rise of the Manchus in Inner Asia, and corresponded with them through

⁴¹ Jackson 1986, 20.

⁴² For *ilü'ü* in the *Secret History of the Mongols* and edicts, see Junast 2002.

⁴³ Jackson 1986, 20.

⁴⁴ See Ishihama 2001, 36.

⁴⁵ For Manggala's life, see Shurany 2017.

⁴⁶ See Everding 2006 for this work and the documents it preserves.

⁴⁷ Nam mkha' 2015. We thank Trawang (Sichuan University) for this reference.

letters.⁴⁸ Letters and government documents began to become more prominent for religious leaders in Tibetan politics in the following period, as also shown by the emergence of the large numbers of letter-writing manuals that are listed in Schneider 2003 and Martin 2016.

Moreover, new mentions and citations of the letter continue to be found. For example, Rin spungs Ngag dbang 'jigs med grags pa, (1532–1597),⁴⁹ in his poetical presentation of the life of Sa paṅ, obviously used Köten's letter and copied the list of gifts almost unchanged.⁵⁰ He thus offers us a version closer to the '83 copy in many places than that of A mes zhabs, as is clear from the following examples:⁵¹

The '83 Copy	Rin spungs (1579)	A mes zhabs (1629)
<i>gos ta hūm gi chos gos</i> ...	<i>gos ta'i hung gi snam</i> <i>sbyar ...</i>	<i>gos chen gyi chos gos ...</i>
<i>... dor shrī mgon dang /</i> <i>jī ba kha mngags pa yin /</i>	<i>... rdo shrī mgon dang /</i> <i>dzi ba kha mngags pa yin</i> <i>/</i>	<i>... dor sri mgon dang /</i> <i>dpon jo dar ma gnyis</i> <i>gtang ba yin/</i>
<i>... tshes grangs la song</i> <i>ba dge /</i>	<i>... tshes grangs la song ba</i> <i>dge /</i>	<i>... gnam gang la bris</i>

Rin spungs Ngag dbang 'jigs med grags pa himself was far from a rigorous historian,⁵² and we are not sure why he placed this prose passage between flowery verses in a practically unaltered form. But it should be noted that this citation of the letter predated A mes zhabs by half a century. We hope that in the future more of such records will be found.

4. Conclusion

Having read the '83 copy, an early version of Köten's letter to Sa skya paṅdita, we agree with Schuh that later versions of the letter, such as that of A mes zhabs's, were adulterated.⁵³ However, we wish to

⁴⁸ Oyunbilig & Shi 2014 studies the Mongol version of the correspondence between A mes zhabs and the Qing court that is found in the Qing archives.

⁴⁹ For the most recent study on his life (including his elusive dates), see Zhang 2021.

⁵⁰ Rin spungs 1985, 187–89.

⁵¹ See Sun & Chen 2020 for a complete comparative chart that shows how Köten's letter is rendered by Rin spungs Ngag dbang 'jigs med grags pa.

⁵² Rin spungs Ngag dbang 'jigs med grags pa's free adaptation of other works can sometimes be outrageous. For instance, he has transplanted the content of the fifteenth-century *Man lung pa'i lam yig* (TBRC W1KG13947, 1a–2a; and Newman 2020, 1–4) onto Sa paṅ's trip to meet Köten in Liangzhou (Rin spungs 1985, 199–201), therefore his version of the trip is furnished with vivid details.

⁵³ Schuh 1977, 40.

emphasize that the extent to which it was edited is debatable. Köten may have intentionally presented himself as the Mongol emperor to Tibet, and he may very well have used Buddhist discourse in his edict. The Chinese gloss in the 83' copy and Köten's connection with the printing of Buddhist texts point to the possible involvement of the multilingual personnel who had once worked for the former Tangut kingdom in the drafting of the invitation letter.

Crucial to improvement of our understanding of the letter is to better understand the people behind it: who produced it, what languages they spoke, and what their religious practices and political conventions were. The '83 copy and the Tangut fragments discussed above problematize some of the historiographical records concerning Köten and warrant a revisiting of these questions.

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Images of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama in the Public Opinion of the Late Qing Period

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Hs the paramount political and religious leader of Central Tibet, the thirteenth Dalai Lama Tupten Gyatso (1876-1933) had a considerable influence on the political situation of both political and ethnographic Tibet during the late Qing and early Republican periods. His reign (1895-1933) was a turbulent period when Tibet encountered the outside world, and external events began to influence internal Tibetan affairs. Though there have been many studies of the thirteenth Dalai Lama in both English and Chinese,¹ few have focused on public opinion in the late Qing period in terms of the attention paid to and the general understanding of this Dalai Lama.² A clear understanding of influences shaping public sentiments about the thirteenth Dalai Lama in the late Qing period is relevant for our examination of late Qing policies of administering Central Tibet and the evolution of the situation in Central Tibet.

1. Background of the Dalai Lama's Exile (1904-1909)

The thirteenth Dalai Lama was born in 1876 and took over the reins of the Lhasa government in 1895. The major problem Tibet faced right

¹ Major books on the thirteenth Dalai Lama include: Charles A. Bell, *A Portrait of the Dalai Lama: The Life and Times of the Great Thirteenth* (London: Collins, 1946); Tokan Tada, *The Thirteenth Dalai Lama* (Tokyo: Center for East Asian Cultural Studies, 1961); K. Dhondrup, *The Water-Bird and Other Years: A History of the 13th Dalai Lama and After* (New Delhi: Rawang Publishers, 1986); Glenn H. Mullin, Christine Cox and Namkha Tashi et al, *Path of the Bodhisattva Warrior: The Life and Teachings of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Snow Lion Publishing, 1988); Zhu Qiyuan and Xirao Nima, *Zhonghua minguo shiqi dalai lama yu zhongyang zhengfu de guanxi* (Beijing: Zhongguo zangxue chubanshe, 2004); Luo Bu, *Gandan pozhang shiqi Xizang difang shi zonglun: Yi shisan shi dalai lama xinzheng gaige wei zhongxin* (Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 2010), etc.

² One exception is Lu Xiangliang's article in Chinese which discusses views of the thirteenth Dalai Lama in public opinion in the late Qing period. In addition, Wendy Palace's article also uses news reports and articles in missionary newspapers in English to examine the Dalai Lama's activities in Peking (Beijing) from September to December 1908. For details, see Lu Xiangliang, "Qingmo gonggong yulun zhong de shisan shi Dalai Lama", *Lilun jie* 11, 2011, pp. 119-21; Wendy Palace, "The thirteenth Dalai Lama in Peking September–December 1908", *Asian Affairs* 29, no. 2, 1998, pp. 171-80, DOI: 10.1080/714857154.

before and during the early years of his reign was the menace of the British in India. Tibetans feared the threat would put the survival of Buddhism at risk. Before the Dalai Lama assumed political power, hostilities broke out over Sikkim. The Tibetans had territorial suzerainty over Sikkim, but they had ceded control over its foreign relations to the British. In mid-1886, Tibetan forces occupied a strategic position in Lungtar (Rlung thar)³ which commanded the trade route between Darjeeling and Tibet. They ignored the British demand that they withdraw. In early 1888, after diplomacy failed, the British sent an armed force through Sikkim, which expelled the Tibetans and took over Sikkim. These actions resulted in “the Convention between Great Britain and China Relating to Sikkim and Tibet” in 1890 and the “Regulations Regarding Trade, Communication and Pasturage to Be Appended to the Sikkim-Tibet Convention” in 1893. These agreements recognized the Sikkim-Tibet border and allowed for the opening of a British Trade Agency at Yatung (also written as Yadong; Gro mo), just inside Tibet. Nevertheless, the Tibetans ignored any agreements signed between China and Britain regarding Tibet. Consequently, these events not only severely undermined the Chinese claim of sovereignty over Tibet and the interests of Tibet. It also greatly reduced the prestige and popular trust of the Qing dynasty.

After the thirteenth Dalai Lama assumed political power, he continued Tibet's policy of excluding European influence—a stance that had been implemented since 1792. At the same time, he increasingly resisted Chinese influence over Tibetan affairs. However, he began to show an interest in the West and in Russia, in particular. This was greatly influenced by his close associate and political advisor, the Buryat lama Agvan Dorzhiev (also Dorjiev, 1853/4-1938), who was a Russian subject.⁴ Dorzhiev had studied at Drepung monastery from 1873⁵ to the mid-1880s.⁶ He excelled in his studies and was appointed as the

³ In Tibetan it is also rendered as Lungtur (Lung thur), and in English it is also written as Lingtu.

⁴ Sources on Dorzhiev's background and diplomatic activities include John Snelling, *Buddhism in Russia: The Story of Agvan Dorzhiev, Lhasa's Emissary to the Tzar* (United Kingdom: Element, 1993); Alexandre Andreyev, *Soviet Russia and Tibet: The Debacle of Secret Diplomacy, 1918-1930s* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2003), pp. 20-39; Nikolay Tsyrempilov, “The Open and Secret Diplomacy of Tsarist and Soviet Russia in Tibet: the Role of Agvan Dorzhiev (1912-1925)”, *Asiatic Russia: Imperial Power in Regional and International Contexts*, ed. Tomohiko Uyama (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), pp. 216-34; Zhou Weizhou, ed., *Yingguo Eguo yu Zhongguo Xizang* (Beijing: Zhongguo zangxue chubanshe, 2000), pp. 174-81, etc.

⁵ *Chö-Yang: The Voice of Tibetan Religion and Culture*, Year of Tibet Edition (Dharamsala: Council for Religious and Cultural Affairs of H.H. the Dalai Lama, 1991), p. 80.

⁶ In the mid-1880s, after fifteen years of study, Dorzhiev attained the title of *tsennyi khenpo* (also rendered as “Tsanid-Hambo”, Tib. *mtshan nyid mkhan po*), which

“study partner” (*mtshan zhabs*) to the Dalai Lama. To Tibetans, he was popularly known as Sokpo Tsenshap Ngawang Lobsang. Through him, the Dalai Lama learned about Russia and its increasing influence in Central Asia. To counterweigh the threat posed by the British, the Dalai Lama began to seek ways to increase contacts with other countries, including Russia. As a result, between 1897 and 1901, under the instructions of the Dalai Lama, Dorzhiev undertook several journeys to Russia and Europe as a Tibetan emissary.⁷ The subjects of the discussions and consultations were Russian political and military assistance to Tibet and the possibility of a Russo-French alliance to resolve the Tibet problem.⁸

The presence of citizens of the Russian Empire such as Dorzhiev and others in Tibet and also Dorzhiev’s diplomatic activities could not go unnoticed by the British in India. Reports about the presence of hundreds of Russian military advisers in Lhasa and a secret alliance formed between the Dalai Lama and Czar were received by the British government by 1900. These alarmed Lord George Nathaniel Curzon (1859-1925), the Viceroy of India (1899-1905), who was a popular proponent of active confrontation with Russia.⁹ In particular, reports in the Russian press about Dorzhiev’s diplomatic missions as a Tibetan emissary further aroused suspicions in Lord Curzon and others that Russia was drawing Tibet into the Great Game to control the routes across Asia. Subsequently, Lord Curzon and others publicized without restraint that Russia would pose a direct threat to India.¹⁰

roughly translates as “Master of Buddhist Philosophy” or “Professor of Buddhist Metaphysics”. See John Snelling, *The Sacred Mountain: Travellers and Pilgrims at Mount Kailas in Western Tibet and the Great Universal Symbol of the Sacred Mountain*, Revised and Enlarged Edition (London and the Hague: East-West Publications, 1990), p. 232.

⁷ While the Tibetans may have had purely local interests in playing the “Russian card”, some historians are certain that Dorzhiev had broader goals in mind arguing for a pan-Buddhist movement merging all Buddhists into one state under the aegis of the Russian Empire. For details, refer to Helen Hudley, “Tibet’s Part in the Great Game”, *History Today* 43. no.10, 1993, pp. 45-50.

⁸ See Nikolay Tsyrempilov, “The Open and Secret Diplomacy of Tsarist and Soviet Russia in Tibet”, p. 218.

⁹ Nikolay Tsyrempilov, “The Open and Secret Diplomacy of Tsarist and Soviet Russia in Tibet”, 218. Lord Curzon was appointed to implement British foreign policy changes in relation to Russia (i.e., active confrontation with Russia), and such policy shifts occurred when a conservative majority came to power in Great Britain in 1899.

¹⁰ British Indian strategists were always deeply concerned with the issues that might threaten the security of British India, and began to see Russian expansion into Central Asia in the nineteenth century as a threat. While the notion of a Russian threat originally related to the northwest frontier, in the late 1880s it came to be applied to the Tibetan frontier (McKay, 2003, pp. 71-72). After the Arrival of Lord Curzon as Viceroy of India in late 1898, the Russian threat— “real or imagined”—became

In 1903, this suspicion and fear prompted Lord Curzon to take a more direct approach. Specifically, he began setting up a permanent British mission in Tibet to maintain British interests. Under the leadership of Colonel Francis Younghusband (1863-1942), British forces launched a second invasion of Tibet.¹¹ Forces occupied such strategic towns as Chumbi (Chu bed; Ch. Chunpi) and others. When the British troops marched toward Lhasa, they were fiercely blocked by Tibetan troops. But the newly appointed *amban* You Tai (also Youtai, 1844-1910), serving as *amban* from 1902 to 1906, used all means to obstruct and undermine the Tibetan troops' struggle against the British. As a result, the Tibetan troops had to retreat in defeat. In July 1904, the British troops pressed on toward Lhasa. Consequently, the thirteenth Dalai Lama was forced to flee Lhasa, without notifying You Tai. Using the Dalai Lama's secret flight and his apparent lack of "respect" for the Qing court as excuses, You Tai memorialized to strip the Dalai Lama of his title and to have the Panchen Lama placed in charge of Tibetan affairs.¹² The Qing court believed You Tai's statement and approved his request. Since Ü and Tsang had split into distinctive factions, the Panchen Lama argued that it would be inconvenient for him to be concurrently in charge of Ü. Instead, he requested assigning the oldest disciple of the Dalai Lama to be temporarily in charge of Tsang.¹³ In this way, the Panchen Lama tactfully declined the Qing appointment. These actions of the Qing court led to ill feeling not only between the Dalai Lama and the Qing court but also toward the Panchen Lama. This situation prepared the way for endless troubles for the Tibetan situation in the future.

2. *Accounts of the Dalai Lama's Escape from Lhasa and Exile in Urga*

Newspapers in China reported the flight of the Dalai Lama and his whereabouts. One of them read as follows:

a major concern, and apparent evidence for Russian involvement in Tibet rapidly increased. For details, see Alex McKay, "19th-Century British Expansion on the Indo-Tibetan Frontier: A Forward Perspective", *The Tibet Journal* 28, no. 4, 2003, pp. 61-76 and Alex McKay, "The British Invasion of Tibet, 1903-1904", *Inner Asia* 14, no. 1, 2012, pp. 8-9.

¹¹ Younghusband led the 1903-04 British expedition to Tibet, whose putative aim was to settle disputes over the Sikkim-Tibet border. However, by exceeding instructions from London, the expedition controversially became a de facto invasion of Tibet. See George N. Curzon, *Russia in Central Asia in 1889 and the Anglo-Russian Question*, reprint of the 1889 original (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1967), p. 277.

¹² You Tai, "You Tai zoudu" (diyi juan), *Qingji chouzang zoudu*, Disan ce (Beijing: Guoli Beiping yanjiuyuan shixue yanjiuhui, 1938), p. 14, p.18-19.

¹³ "Ming Dalai dizi quanshe qianzang zhuwei", *Dalu* (Shanghai) 3, no. 13, 1905, p. 7.

Since the British troops entered Lhasa, the Dalai Lama was scared and fled. Nobody knows where he went. According to a letter from Xining received by the *amban*, it appears at present that the Lama was in Chaidamu (Tswa 'dam), Qinghai Province. Measures were taken to prevent him from fleeing to other places. We have heard that the telegraph sent by the *amban* had already reached Beijing.¹⁴

Furthermore, *Wanguo gongbao* (also transcribed phonetically as *Wan Kwoh Kung Pao*; *The Globe Magazine*),¹⁵ a missionary newspaper, openly published articles in Chinese vilifying the Dalai Lama and Tibet. First it translated and published "An Investigation into the Dalai Lama" ("Dalai Lama kao"). Originally published in the *Times*, this article was full of biases and prejudices. For example, it viewed Tibetan people's devotion to the *Geluk* school of Tibetan Buddhism as "ignorant and crude", and it maintained that the thirteenth Dalai Lama was "cold-hearted and obstinate, and acted recklessly on impulse". It also denounced the Chinese government's brutal and tyrannical rule in Tibet, and it implied that the deaths of several Dalai Lamas at a young age could be traced to the murderous hands of the Chinese government. It held furthermore that the reason the thirteenth Dalai Lama had been able to take over the reins of the Lhasa government upon coming of age was that he was secretly protected by the "Society for the Protection of the Country" in Tibet.¹⁶ This article seriously harmed the Dalai Lama's reputation. Subsequently, *Wanguo gongbao* published another short article, which cited Younghusband's short excerpt on the Dalai Lama from his paper published by the Royal Geographical Society.¹⁷ Younghusband had stated that Tibetan monks did not sincerely venerate the Buddha at all. He portrayed Tibetan monks as "lazy, filthy, greedy, selfish, stupid and ignorant of human affairs" and further belittled them as being devoid of any merit. Having placed themselves among the ranks of the civilized people, the authors of the article condescendingly maintained that Tibet "was not useful for the world at

¹⁴ "Dalai Lama zhi zongji", *Lujiang bao* 85, 1904, p. 12.

¹⁵ Its predecessor was *Zhongguo Jiaohui xinbao* (*Chinese Church News*), a weekly news magazine set up by an American Southern Methodist missionary named Young John Allen (aka Lin Lezhi) (1836-1907) in 1868. In 1874 it was renamed *Wanguo gongbao* (*Chinese Globe Magazine*). The magazine aimed to introduce broad knowledge of Western geography, history, culture, politics, religion, science, art, industry and other general items. For details about *Wanguo gongbao*, see Xiantao Zhang, *The Origins of the Modern Chinese Press: The Influence of the Protestant Missionary Press in Late Qing China* (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 46-61.

¹⁶ Lin Lezhi and Ren Baoluo, "Dalai Lama kao", *Wanguo gongbao* 192, 1905, pp. 9-15.

¹⁷ I have not been able to locate the original paper written by Francis Younghusband.

all".¹⁸ Such statements had a great impact on public opinion in China and internationally. It made the Tibet issue much more complex, and it created many obstacles hampering the Chinese government's effort to rectify Tibetan affairs.

The Chinese press also paid close attention to the Dalai Lama's exile in Urga, Mongolia. Several reports dealt with the Lama's reception upon his arrival in Urga in late 1904. For instance, *Datong bao* (*Great Harmony*) reported that the Mongol nobility and common people all came to pay homage to the Dalai Lama and offered a great amount of silver to him.¹⁹ In addition, another newspaper *Dalu* (*The Continent* [Shanghai]) provided a detailed account of the Dalai Lama's arrival at Urga and the reception he received there:

Leading several thousands of his followers, recently the Dalai Lama arrived in Urga, with 200 loads of luggage carried by camels. Since the local people have been looking forward to his arrival for a long time, upon his arrival in the vicinity of the city, though it was extremely cold, over 20,000 people, including Han Chinese and Mongol officials, monks, officers, soldiers, shopkeepers, etc., all went out of the city several kilometers to welcome the lama. When [the party] reached the city proper, the local authorities again paid their respects by firing cannons. As soon as [the Lama] reached the city, he stayed at a hall prepared in advance, where the local monks often went to pay respect to the Lama. At the time, the monks in the Mongol regions and those in regions to the north of Lake Baikal all came to pay homage to the Lama. With the permission of Russian officials, the monastic leader Chindoyev (?)²⁰ from eastern Siberia came all the way to pay respect to the lama.....²¹

Furthermore, though the Tibetan usual practice forbade [the Lama] from meeting with Europeans, the report points out that the Dalai Lama did so this time.²²

At the time, Chinese reporters and journalists were very indignant at the Dalai Lama's going into exile in Urga. Apparently, many suspected that the Dalai Lama's intention was to seek help from the Czar. One news report in *Tongxue bao* (*General Studies Newspaper*) went so far as to head a report with the title "The Dalai Lama is a scoundrel". The

¹⁸ Lin Lezhi and Fan Yi, "Xizang lama zhi chengdu", *Wanguo gongbao* 196, 1905, p. 63.

¹⁹ "Mengren chongbai Dalai", *Datong bao* 3, no. 18, 1905, pp. 1-2.

²⁰ The first character of the name of this monastic leader is not clear.

²¹ See "Dalai lama zhi Kulun", *Dalu* (Shanghai) 3, no. 3, 1905, p. 18.

²² See "Dalai Lama zhi Kulun", *Dalu* (Shanghai) 3, no. 3, 1905, p. 18.

report specifically points out that the Dalai Lama was planning to travel to Russia and how anxious authorities in Beijing were upon learning of the news. The report held that the Lama's visit would definitely place the Mongols under Russian influence. Consequently, authorities had already dispatched officials to stop the Lama from proceeding to Russia. It further stated that the only way to preserve Tibet would be to send a Mongol prince or duke to welcome the Lama solemnly and politely to Beijing. There, the authorities should allocate a big monastery to him, attentively provide for him, and take strict measures to prevent him from visiting Russia.²³ Meanwhile, the Chinese provincial officials were also aware of the danger posed by the Lama's intention to visit Russia via Urga. Earlier on the governor-general of Sha'anxi and Gansu provinces, the governor of Xinjiang, and others had sent telegraphs to the Qing court. All of them warned the court to take strict precautions against the Dalai Lama's seeking refuge in Russia via Urga.²⁴ Imperial Envoy Yan Zhi, who oversaw the reception of the Dalai Lama, was also aware of the Dalai Lama's contact with Russia.²⁵ At the time the news about the Dalai Lama's imminent visit to Russia was spreading like wildfire. The detailed account of the Dalai Lama cited above further claims that the Dalai Lama had once received a Russian officer.²⁶ The statement reads: "[They] talked for a long time. Some people say that the Lama would go to a major monastery near Lake Baikal, and others say that he would go to St. Petersburg".²⁷

It was also rumored that the Dalai Lama had borrowed 60,000 rubles from Russia, but an investigation conducted by the Qing government turned up no evidence.²⁸ Interestingly, in reviewing many news reports about the Lama's imminent visit to Russia, there is only one brief report about his serious rift with Jetsün Dampa, the religious ruler of Mongolia, and it does not include any details about the increasing tension between them. With the title "Kulun lama can Dalai lama" ("The Urga Lama's impeachment of the Dalai Lama"), the news report opens by pointing out that the Dalai Lama was still in Urga.

²³ "Dalai wulai", *Tongxue bao* 1, no. 15, 1906, p. 454.

²⁴ Cited from Lu Xiangliang, "Qingmo gonggong yulun zhong de shisan shi Dalai Lama", p. 119.

²⁵ Zhongguo diyi lishi dang-anguan, Zhongguo zangxue yanjiu zhongxin, *Qingmo shisan shi Dalai Lama dang-an shiliao xuanbian* (Beijing: Zhongguo zangxue chubanshe, 2002), p. 93.

²⁶ This official must be Shishmaryov, the Russian consul to Urga. The Dalai Lama asked him directly whether Russia would protect Tibet from China and Britain. For details, refer to Nicolai S. Kuleshov, *Russia's Tibet File* (Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1996), p. 38.

²⁷ "Dalai Lama zhi Kulun", *Dalu* (Shanghai) 3, no. 3, 1905, p. 18.

²⁸ "Chaban Dalai Lama zhi jiekuan", *Dalu* (Shanghai) 3, no. 10, 1905, p. 6.

Continuing that he had not begun his journey back to Tibet on pretext of illness, it then simply states that recently the Lama had a falling out with the Urga Lama ("Kulun Lama"), referring to Jetsün Dampa, and adds that the latter "sent a secret memorial to the [Qing] government, claiming the Dalai Lama was actually a person who would do harm to China".²⁹ Furthermore, in view of the Dalai Lama's conflict with Jetsün Dampa, the aforementioned imperial envoy, Yan Zhi, memorialized to have the Dalai Lama quickly return to Tibet.³⁰

3. *Representation of the Dalai Lama during His Exile in Shanxi*

In 1905, the Qing court issued an edict to the Dalai Lama that ordered him to return to Central Tibet.³¹ Since the British troops had not completely retreated yet, the Dalai Lama was not willing to do so. Claiming that he was ill, the Dalai Lama did not embark on his return journey to Central Tibet. According to the news report in *Dalu* (*The Continent* [Shanghai]) published in 1905, the Lama tried various ways to delay his return.³² Eventually, the Dalai Lama accepted the decree, and agreed to return to Central Tibet. However, another news report states that the Lama was travelling slowly, stopping and staying at various places along the way. In particular, it mentions that the Dalai Lama was still staying at Jingning city (present-day old Qitai town, Qitai county of Changji Hui Autonomous Prefecture) in Xinjiang province.³³ After he reached Qinghai, Zhang Yintang (also written as Chang Yint'ang, 1866-1935), the imperial envoy who was dispatched to investigate and rectify Tibetan affairs by the Qing court in 1906,³⁴ maintained that the British were against the Dalai Lama's returning to Central Tibet. Zhang suggested the Qing court order the Dalai Lama to temporarily postpone his journey back to Central Tibet. Having accepted Zhang's suggestion, the Qing court had the Dalai Lama stay at Kumbum (sku 'bum) monastery to pass the winter. The officials who received the Dalai Lama were resentful toward him. They complained that he had a haughty and condescending attitude and accused him and his large entourage of willfully exacting money and goods. They argued that since the Lama had a large entourage, their daily expenses

²⁹ "Kulun Lama can Dalai Lama", *Dalu* (Shanghai) 3, no. 11, 1905, p. 4.

³⁰ Zhongguo diyi lishi dang-anguan, and Zhongguo zangxue yanjiu zhongxin, *Qingmo shisan shi Dalai Lama dang-an shiliao xuanbian* (Beijing: Zhongguo zangxue chubanshe, 2002), p. 93.

³¹ "Ming Yan Zhi song dalai huizang", *Dalu* (Shanghai) 3, no. 6, 1905, p. 8.

³² "Dalai Lama buyuan huizang", *Dalu* (Shanghai) 3, no. 9, 1905, p. 4.

³³ "Yuchi Dalai lama huizang", *Guangyi congbao* 152, 1907, no page no. marked.

³⁴ Zhang Yintang's tenure in Tibet was just under a year, from the end of 1906 to 1907.

were enormous. The report stated that there were altogether over 2,000 Mongol followers travelling with the Dalai Lama and complained that the Lama and his entourage were perverse and violent. It mentioned that, wherever they went, they would “extort” money and provisions and plunder cattle and horses. It especially highlighted their need for a great amount of food. Satisfying this daily demand required slaughtering one hundred sheep and thirty yaks.³⁵

In 1907, the Dalai Lama claimed that he had not acclimated to Xining and requested the Qing court’s permission to stay at Mt. Wutai (Riwu Tse’nga; Ri bo rtse lnga). The Qing court approved his request. One news report in *Datong bao* (*Great Harmony*) stated that after the Dalai Lama and his entourage had reached Shanxi Province, they continued to be extravagant and wasteful. It suggested that to win over the Dalai Lama, the Qing court had allowed the Lama to demand whatever he desired and did not hesitate to use state funds to satisfy his needs.³⁶ Followers in various regions and even high officials and prominent gentry went to pay homage to the Dalai Lama in an endless stream along his path. In addition, local officials and common people in Shanxi complained that most of the Dalai Lama’s retinue were domineering and lawless. Thus, local officials and common people in Shanxi found their presence disruptive, and they were tired of dealing with them.³⁷

Another news report with the title “Dalai Lama ziju dishi” (“The Dalai Lama considers himself as the Imperial Tutor”) also recounts the reception of the Dalai Lama, his conduct in Taiyuan city, and the cost of provisions for his trip:

The Dalai Lama of Tibet made a pilgrimage trip to [Mt.] Wutai. On the eighth day of the previous month when he travelled via the outskirts of Taiyuan city in Shanxi Province, he temporarily stayed there. All officials under the provincial governor went out to the suburb of Taiyuan to welcome the Dalai Lama. The protocol for receiving the Dalai Lama was very solemn and grand; canopies and banners were yellow, and all guards of honor were also dressed in yellow ... After [the Lama] arrived at the governor’s office, [he] only saluted the governor, then sat still. [The Lama] considered himself to be the Imperial Tutor ... It is said that after [the Lama] had stayed [here] for several months, [he] would set out for [Mt.] Wutai. It is also learned that the provisions for the Lama on his trip through the region cost approximately as much as tens of thousands of gold coins. (The editor’s note): Who are

³⁵ “Dalai gouliu Xining qingxing”, *Guangyi congbao* 130, 1907, p. 7.

³⁶ “Dalai lama dijin shi”, *Datong bao* 9, no. 8, 1908, pp. 31-32.

³⁷ “Jinsheng buyuan Dalai Lama jiuliu”, *Datong bao* 10, no. 5, 1908, p. 35.

the Dalai and Panchen? [They] troubled us to provide for provisions and furnishings for them to such a great extent. Alas for the people, sweat and blood are gone! Who is to blame? [Blame] the aggressive Imperial Tutor.³⁸

Compared with other reports, the cost of provisions for the Dalai Lama during this trip seems to have been grossly exaggerated. Yet, like the previous news report, this one also criticized the Dalai Lama for being haughty and condescending and lamented that the hard-won money of the people was wasted to provide for the Lama during the trip.

The Dalai Lama sent his special envoys to Beijing to get in touch with the great powers. Consequently, Great Britain, the United States, Germany, Japan, and Russia each dispatched officials to Mt. Wutai to call on the Dalai Lama. The Chinese believed that the British envoy had united with the American envoy and was making additional efforts to win over the Dalai Lama so that the latter would be inclined to take a pro-British stance. This event drew the attention of the Chinese press.³⁹

The Dalai Lama's purported actions and manners in Shanxi Province caused public opinion in China to feel resentment toward him and to find him unsatisfactory. One article in *Tongxue bao* condemned the Dalai Lama as being a "scoundrel" (Ch. *wulai*), stating that "since the Dalai Lama stayed in Mt. Wutai, the ground of Shanxi was immediately one *chi* (equivalent to 1/3 meter) lower." This was attributed to the Lama's indulging in wanton extravagance. The article argued that it was intolerable for [the local government] to provide [for him and his entourage]. It even claimed that "if the Buddha had a soul, he would never allow such savage monks to disturb the world".⁴⁰ The article provided further explanation from eight different perspectives.⁴¹ Some aspects of the article were certainly exaggerated, but it is true that the reception of the Dalai Lama incurred a considerable expense. When the state treasury was short of funds, it would be inevitable that such expenses would be criticized. Citing the report in *Jilin gongmin ribao* (*Jilin Citizen Daily*), another article published in the same newspaper called the Dalai Lama a "devil" and referred to him as "a person who did harm to the whole of Tibet". The Dalai Lama is also described as not knowing anything and as being "wanton and tyrannical". Appealing to the Qing government to quickly take appropriate measures to deal with the situation in Central Tibet, it proposed to send shrewd

³⁸ "Dalai Lama ziju dishi", *Ban xingqi bao* 1, 1908, p. 35.

³⁹ "Ji Dalai Lama laijing shi", *Datong bao* 9, no. 20, 1908, pp. 32-33; "Meishi jinye Dalai Lama", *Datong bao* 10, no. 1, 1908, p. 37.

⁴⁰ "Dalai wulai", *Tongxue bao* 5, no. 16, 1908, p. 497.

⁴¹ "Dalai wulai", *Tongxue bao* 5, no. 16, 1908, pp. 497-98.

and efficient officials to quickly rectify the internal affairs and diplomacy of Central Tibet, and not to allow the Dalai Lama to participate in politics.⁴²

4. *Accounts of the Dalai Lama's activities in Beijing and his escape to India*

In 1908 the Dalai Lama wanted to go to Beijing to have an audience with the emperor; after much deliberation, the Qing court approved his request.⁴³ When the Dalai Lama arrived in Beijing, the Qing court received him with great fanfare.⁴⁴ The Qing court dispatched the assistant minister of the Ministry of Colonial Affairs (*Lifan bu*) Da Shou and the right councilor of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Zhang Yintang, to be responsible for the reception of the Dalai Lama.⁴⁵ And Emperor Guangxu and the Empress Dowager Cixi personally received the Dalai Lama.⁴⁶ Reportedly, they ordered the Dalai Lama to meet them and to see them off by kneeling down in front of them during the feast.⁴⁷ During the Dalai Lama's stay in Beijing, the Qing court lowered the status of the Dalai Lama in terms of the protocol of their meeting, the Lama's right to memorialize the emperor directly, the granting of a title to him, and other aspects. All of this contributed to the Dalai Lama's dissatisfaction with the court⁴⁸ and shattered the Dalai Lama's hope to resist the *amban's* reform by relying on the Qing court.

Public opinion at the time continued to criticize the Dalai Lama for being extravagant and for being all too well provided for by the Qing court. The news report "Dalai Lama zheyang kuo ma" ("Is the Dalai Lama so rich?") recounts the following:

Apparently, as soon as the Dalai Lama reached Beijing on the fourth day, the authorities granted him tens of thousands of taels of silver. [They] also gave him countless bolts of silk and satin woven by the people of Sichuan. This is interesting. Now, it is said that every day, the assistant minister of the Board for the Administration of Outlying Regions (*lifan yuan*) Dashou is practicing the etiquette for having an audience with the emperor. Everybody, close your eyes and think

⁴² "Guanyu Dalai shijian", *Tongxue bao* 6, no. 1, 1908, p. 13.

⁴³ "Er-shi-yi ri yu Dalai lama laijing bijian", *Dongfang zazhi* 5, no. 7, 1908, p. 3.

⁴⁴ "Zhi dalai ruijing zhisheng", *Datong bao* 10, no. 10, 1908, p. 30.

⁴⁵ "Chu bari pai Da Shou Zhang Yintang zhaoliao Dalai Lama", *Dongfang Zazhi* 5, no. 10, 1908, p. 93.

⁴⁶ "Er-shi ri Dalai lama jinjian yu renshou dian", *Dongfang zazhi* 5, no. 10, 1908, p. 96;

"Huangshang shuli dai Dalai", *Datong Bao* 10, no. 3, 1908, p. 13.

⁴⁷ "Shiri dashi ji: er-shi-liu ri", *Anhui baihuabao* 3, 1908, p. 5.

⁴⁸ "Dalai buping", *Tongxue bao* 6, no. 7, 1908, p. 209.

about this: This Da[lai] and that Da [Shou], one bald and the other with a pigtail, have assumed the posture of performing a *kowtow* and attending feasts together for a while. If we say this is not anything worth seeing, then there can't be anything else that is so funny. There is another terrible thing: It is said that every day the Dalai spends 13,000 taels of silver—the hard-won money of the people—and he is only a bald [monk].⁴⁹

This short report clearly expressed the author's indignation against both the Dalai Lama and the assistant minister Da Shou (i.e., the Qing authorities). The tone of the entire report is sarcastic. Without showing any respect for the Dalai Lama, the report uses denigrating words such as "bald" (Ch. *tu*) to refer to the Lama. Words used in the report are mostly slang, and the report was written in vernacular. Thus, we can probably surmise the purpose of writing and publishing the report was to have the general public learn about and condemn the activities of the Dalai Lama.⁵⁰

Similarly, starting with the phrase "The Dalai is as stupid as a deer or a pig" ("Dalai chunru lushi"), another news report condemned the Dalai Lama for being extremely barbaric by harassing the public to provide for him during his stay in Shanxi Province. It not only censured local officials such as the governor and others for not daring to intervene in the Lama's activities and for attending upon him with extreme respect. It also denounced the Manchu emperor and the empress dowager for respectfully treating him as a guest of honor and criticized princes, dukes and other officials for paying homage to the Lama. The report acknowledged that the Dalai Lama and his entourage were acting like extremely "stupid beasts". At the same time, it also suggested that to prevent the Lama and Tibet from falling under the control of Russia in the north or British in the south, the Qing authorities had to give the Lama and his entourage preferential treatment and tolerate their activities. Yet, the report maintains that allowing the Lama and his entourage to do as they wished without any restrictions was to enable the "beasts" (Ch. *yeshou*) of Tibet to degrade civilized countries such as China.

One can tell from the context that the report was written by a Chinese student studying abroad at the time. The author pointed out that if Chinese students studying abroad—himself included—were slightly careless about their manners and conduct, those whom they had insulted would reprimand them. Arguing that how Chinese officials

⁴⁹ "Dalai Lama zheyang kuo ma?" *Jingye xunbao* 30, 1908, pp. 58-59.

⁵⁰ The report was published in *Jingye xunbao*, a vernacular periodical launched by students of China College (*Zhongguo gongxue*) in 1906.

dealt with the Lama and his entourage reflected the savageness and extreme freedom enjoyed by Chinese officialdom, the report cited a few cases in which Chinese diplomats and officials had exhibited absurd, unprofessional, or inappropriate manners and behavior in public and on diplomatic occasions. However, when these diplomats or officials were asked whether they had encountered any restrictions or humiliation during these occasions, all claimed not only that they were treated with special regard as officials but also that all their inappropriate manners and conduct were forgiven by foreigners. Indeed, these Manchu authorities considered Chinese students studying abroad to be so narrow-minded that they often attempted to restrict their own conduct by claiming their conduct might be disgraceful, resulting in considerable loss of their freedom. Finally, to show how “ridiculous” it was to treat the Dalai Lama and his entourage as the Qing authorities had been doing, following the logic of the previously mentioned officials, the author speculates on how Manchu rulers would be treated were they to visit foreign countries. The author sarcastically deduces that—in the future, after China had been carved up—if the Manchu emperor and empress dowager having the same qualification as that of the Dalai Lama came to visit foreign cities such as London, Paris, and Berlin, they would be able to do exactly what they would in China and go about as they wished without any regard for local laws and practices and without any intervention from foreign authorities. The author ends his report with a question, “However, is the Manchu government concerned about being carved up?”⁵¹ In sum, this piece clearly denotes resentment not only toward the Dalai Lama and his entourage but, more importantly, toward Manchu authorities. Moreover, it also reflects the anti-Manchu sentiments of the general public.

Due to the eagerness to “save the nation from subjugation and ensure its survival” (*jiuwanng tucun*) and “consolidate the borderlands” (*gonggu bianjiang*), Qing officials as well as the common people held that the Qing court should lose no time in rectifying Tibet’s affairs by taking advantage of the opportunity afforded by the Dalai Lama’s presence in inland China. At the time, the newly appointed *amban* Zhao Erfeng⁵² sent a secret telegraph to the Qing court requesting to have the Dalai Lama stay in Beijing so as to reorganize the affairs of Tibet.⁵³ Several reports stated that some ministers had memorialized

⁵¹ Jingguanzhe, “Dalai Lama”, *Xin shiji* 67, 1908, pp. 13-15.

⁵² Though Zhao was appointed as the *amban*, he declined the post and recommended Wen Zongyao, another Han official hailing from Guangdong. For details, see Dahpon David Ho, “The Men Who Would not be Amban and the One Who Would: Four Frontline Officials and Qing Tibet Policy, 1905-1911”, *Modern China* 34, no. 2, 2008, pp. 210-46.

⁵³ “Zhengfu yiyun jiliu Dalai”, *Datong Bao* 10, no. 10, 1908, p. 31.

the court to confer the title “religious king of Mongol and Tibet” on the Dalai Lama. This would indicate that he was especially in charge of religious affairs and was forbidden to interfere in Tibetan politics. In response, the Dalai Lama expressed his unwillingness to accept the new charge and title.⁵⁴ The minister mentioned in the previous report must have been Zhang Yintang. Zhang submitted the “Memorial Concerning Internal and External Affairs and Dealing with the Aftermath” on January 13, 1908. There Zhang proposed to abolish the offices of the *amban* and the assistant *amban* and to appoint an Inspection Commissioner of Tibet (*xingbu dachen*), who would be granted greater power to administer Tibet. Zhang also advocated reducing and recapturing the administrative power from the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama and having them especially in charge of religious affairs only.⁵⁵

Many articles published in various newspapers also suggested that the Qing court should separate politics from religion in Tibet. For instance, one article states “[We] show the tactics of loose rein to the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama; while [we] show them great respect with necessary courtesy, in reality we have restrained their real power”.⁵⁶ Another article suggests that “the old system of the *amban* should be restored, and the *amban* should still control the power of diplomacy, military and finance As for the Dalai Lama, he should only be allowed to be in charge of religious affairs, and should not be permitted to interfere with any administrative affairs”.⁵⁷ Still another report claims that rectifying the affairs of Tibet was the right of China as the sovereign state and reforming Tibetan politics need not to be restricted by the Dalai Lama.⁵⁸

The call for “separating religion from politics” in Tibet in the public opinion of China was quite strong and powerful. However, at the time, the Qing court’s determination to rectify the affairs of Tibet did not allow for any change. The thirteenth Dalai Lama was extremely dissatisfied with the situation. Indeed, it seems that this prompted him to be more eager to seek support from the great powers. Reportedly, the Dalai Lama had close contacts with envoys of the great powers, and the

⁵⁴ “Qingjia Dalai fenghao”, *Datong Bao* 10, no. 10, 1908, 31; “Qingjin Dalai ganshe zhengzhi”, *Daong bao* 10, no. 12, 1908, p. 29; “Dalai bu rongyi jiayu”, *Anhui baihua-bao*, 2, 1908, p. 6; “Shiri dashi ji: Er-shi-yi ri”, *Anhui baihuabao* 3, 1908, pp. 3-4.

⁵⁵ Zhongguo zangxue yanjiu zhongxin, Zhongguo diyi lishi dang-anguan, eds., *Yuan yilai Xizang difang yu Zhongyang zhengfu guanxi dang-an shiliao huibian* (Beijing: Zhongguo zangxue chubanshe, 1994), Vol. 4, p. 1558. For details about Zhang’s activities in Tibet, refer to Dahpon David Ho, “The Men Who Would not be Amban and the One Who Would”, pp. 210-46.

⁵⁶ Tian Lusheng, “Xizang dashi tonglun”, *Guangyi congbao* 172, 1908, pp. 1-2.

⁵⁷ “Zhengdun Xizang tiaoyi”, *Guangyi congbao* 175, 1908, pp. 1-4.

⁵⁸ “Lun zhengdun Xizang buke zhuanxun Dalai zhi yijian”, *Guangyi congbao* 184, 1908, pp. 1-2.

British were also making great efforts to win over the Dalai Lama. Thus, the Chinese authorities and the public believed the Lama's contacts with envoys increased his centrifugal tendency day by day.⁵⁹ Interestingly, one news report specifically mentions that the Dalai Lama was proficient in spoken and written Russian. It points out that all the clauses in "Measures for Administering Tibet" drafted by the Dalai Lama himself were written in Russian; he directly interacted with the Russian envoy upon paying a return visit to the latter, though he employed interpreters when paying return visits to envoys of other countries.⁶⁰

Barely two months after the Dalai Lama arrived in Beijing, the Guangxu Emperor and Empress Dowager Cixi passed away one after another. As the Qing authorities were busy with funeral arrangements, they had the Dalai Lama return to Central Tibet.⁶¹ On his way back to Central Tibet, the Dalai Lama was said to have remotely controlled the Lhasa government's effort to resist "New Policy Reforms" that *amban* Lian Yu was in the process of implementing and to have had clandestine contact with Britain and Russia.⁶² He was also accused of inciting monks to gather a mob to besiege the Qing troops stationed in Tibet.⁶³ To ensure the implementation of the "New Policy Reforms", *amban* Lian Yu had memorialized a request to transfer Sichuan troops to Tibet to suppress the mob.⁶⁴ In response, the Dalai Lama dispatched Tibetan troops with the intent of blocking the Sichuan troops' advance into Central Tibet.

After the Dalai Lama returned to Lhasa, he became almost completely antagonistic toward *amban* Lian Yu. Not only did he stop providing supplies to the office of the *amban*, he also wrote a letter to assistant *amban* Wen Zongyao to impeach Lian Yu. In the letter, he listed nineteen crimes Lian Yu had committed and requested someone to replace him. Seeing that the Sichuan troops' advance into Tibet was already a certainty, in February 1910 the Dalai Lama went to see Wen, again; the two agreed to handle various issues peacefully. After Wen returned to the office of the *amban*, he consulted Lian Yu concerning how to deal with the issues together with the Dalai Lama. Stubbornly

⁵⁹ "Si gongshi jinjie Dalai Lama", *Datong bao* 10, no. 11, 1908, 24; "Dalai huibai ge zhushi zhi xiandao", *Datong bao* 10, no. 14, 1908, p. 31.

⁶⁰ "Shiri dashiji: chusan ri", *Anhui baihuabao* 4, 1908, p. 3. Another news report about the Dalai Lama's audience with the emperor in the Renshou Hall also mentions in passing that the Dalai Lama was fluent in Russian. See "Er-shi ri Dalai Lama jinjian yu renshou dian", *Dongfang zazhi* 5, no. 10, 1908, p. 96.

⁶¹ "Er-shi-ba ri Dalai Lama Huizang", *Dongfang zazhi* 5, no., 12, 1908, p. 155.

⁶² "Xizang jinshi zashu", *Dongfang zazhi* 7, no. 1, 1910, pp. 20-21.

⁶³ "Zangseng weigong guanbing zhi haiwen", *Guangyi congbao* 210, 1909, p. 11; "Zangseng weigong guanbing zhi haiwen", *Datong bao* 11, no. 24, 1909, p. 30.

⁶⁴ "Xizang qingdiao chuanbing tanya", *Guangyi congbao* 9, 1909, p. 192.

adhering to his own opinions, Lian Yu refused to co-sign the official communication to the Dalai Lama; moreover, he deleted the article "peacefully handle various issues". Consequently, Wen had to sign the official communication alone and send its translated version to the Dalai Lama to make the latter feel at ease. Not long after, the vanguard forces of the Sichuan troops reached Lhasa and clashed with the Tibetan troops. The Dalai Lama left Lhasa with apprehension. Upon learning the news, Wen tried to persuade Lian Yu to dispatch troops to stop the Dalai Lama, but Lian Yu refused to listen. Later, it was too late to send troops to chase and stop the Dalai Lama, and eventually the Dalai Lama fled to India. The details of the event were reported in *Dongfang zazhi* (*The Eastern Miscellany*), which lamented and grieved over Lian Yu's stubborn actions that were to sow the seeds for disaster in the future.⁶⁵

After Lian Yu reported the Dalai Lama's exile into India to the Qing court, the Qing court issued an edict abolishing the Dalai Lama's title again. It also ordered Lian Yu to look for another young reincarnation for the Dalai Lama and decreed to have the Panchen Lama temporarily placed in charge of affairs in Tibet.⁶⁶ The Qing court passed a resolution to retrieve the political power of Tibet. It reads as follows:

In the future, all religious affairs of Tibet are to be handled by the newly installed Dalai Lama. Before a regular province can be established in Tibet, all business affairs and foreign affairs of Tibet are to be dealt with accordingly by the *amban*, following the order of the Qing government. The Dalai Lama should not interfere in these affairs by exceeding his authority.

Meanwhile, the Qing court also sent diplomatic notes to all envoys of various countries stationed in China. This notified them not only that all future government affairs of Tibet would be reported to the Qing government for approval before being implemented by the *amban* but also that the Qing court would not recognize any private agreements the Dalai Lama had signed with any foreigners.⁶⁷ The Dalai Lama requested Britain, Russia, and other countries to intervene on his behalf. Thus, these governments made inquiries to the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs about this issue. Thereupon, the Chinese Ministry of

⁶⁵ "Xizang Dalai Lama taodun yuwen", *Dongfang zazhi* 7, no. 3, 1910, pp. 4-6.

⁶⁶ Wen Tian, "Xuanton er-nian zhengyue zhongguo dashi ji", *Dongfang zazhi* 7, no. 2, 1910, pp. 21-27.

⁶⁷ "Jueyi huafen Xizang zhengjiao quan", *Datong Bao* 13, no. 13, 1910, pp. 28-9; "Zangwu tonggao geshi", *Waijiao bao* 10, no. 22, 1910, p. 17; "Xizang zhengjiao fenli zhi jichu", *Datong Bao* 13, no. 19, 1909, p. 29.

Foreign Affairs publicly proclaimed the crimes committed by the Dalai Lama, claiming that the Dalai Lama “is domineering and excessively arrogant, acts willfully and lawlessly. His action of taking up arms and mobilizing people caused popular resentment [against him] to rise high”. The proclamation maintained that dismissing the Dalai Lama would not affect the system of the government of Central Tibet.⁶⁸ After weighing the pros and cons, Great Britain and Russia eventually did not interfere on the Dalai Lama’s behalf. Chinese newspapers reported on the responses of the great powers toward the Dalai Lama’s request. Reportedly, while Great Britain stated that it would not interfere with affairs of Central Tibet, Russia also clarified that it did not invite the Dalai Lama to come to visit Russia. Furthermore, Japan was said to have commented that the way the Qing court dealt with the Dalai Lama showed that Chinese policy toward the rule of its dependencies had improved.⁶⁹ Public opinion in China did not oppose the Qing court’s action of abolishing the Dalai Lama’s title. To the contrary, some criticized the Qing government for punishing the Dalai Lama too lightly. A report “Lun chaoting chengchu Dalai shi” (“A discussion of the Qing court’s punishment of the Dalai Lama”) claimed that the Qing court had, by all means, treated the Dalai Lama with leniency, had received him with courtesy, and had forgiven his wrongdoings many times; in sum, the report held that nothing could extenuate the Dalai Lama’s action of not thinking about the grace of the country, defying the order of the Qing court, and fleeing to a foreign country. Meanwhile, it denounced the rumor that the Dalai Lama was planning to travel to Beijing via India to seek to redress the alleged injustices done to him as “the talk of the young and innocent in their sleep” (*tong-ai yiyu*).⁷⁰ One can see from the style of the writing that the author of the news report was motivated by Han-Chauvinistic thought. The author hoped that the Qing government would reclaim political power over Tibet, carry out reforms, transform the social traditions of Tibet, and consolidate the border region. The Dalai Lama’s reputation in the public opinion of inland China had reached its lowest point.

The Diplomatic Review translated and published the review about the Dalai Lama’s exile into India by the Swedish explorer Sven Anders Hedin (1865-1952). First published in a British newspaper, Hedin’s article maintained that the Tibet issue was just tantamount to China, Britain, and Russia playing a game. In his view, when the Dalai Lama went

⁶⁸ “Waibu xuangao Dalai zuizhuang”, *Guofeng bao* 1, no. 5, 1910, pp. 77-78.

⁶⁹ “Ying-e lianguo zhi yijian”, *Dongfang zazhi* 3, 1910, cited from Lu Xiangliang, “Qingmo gonggong yulun zhong de shisan shi Dalai Lama”, p. 120; “Sanxu Xizang yaowen”, *Datong bao* 13, no. 6, 1910, pp. 30-1; “Lun Xizang zhibian”, *Waijiao bao* 7, 1910, pp. 18-20.

⁷⁰ “Lun chaoting chengchu Dalai shi”, *Guangyi congbao* 232, 1910, pp. 1-5.

into exile at Urga, Russia did not grasp the opportunity firmly; when the Dalai Lama went to Beijing to have an audience with the Qing emperor, Qing China did not take advantage of the opportunity either. And now that the Dalai Lama was in exile in India, one would have to wait and see whether the British authorities would be able to seize the opportunity to support Tibet's independence or bring Tibet under its control. In Hedin's view, the Dalai Lama was only a political chip—something of a rarity that could be hoarded for a better price. In the eyes of foreigners, the Dalai Lama played a decisive role in solving the Tibet issue. In contrast, when we look at the attitude of the Chinese people toward the Dalai Lama, both government officials and the public had very bad impressions of him and viewed him as an obstacle to reforming Tibetan administration. They even urged Lian Yu to find the reincarnation as soon as possible to replace the thirteenth Dalai Lama, and this caused the Dalai Lama to despair. Later the Qing court proclaimed a discontinuation of the search for the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama, agreed to provide an allowance for the Dalai Lama, and sent people to get in touch with the Dalai Lama on several occasions.⁷¹ The Qing court hoped that the Dalai Lama would return to Tibet, but the two parties could not agree on the conditions for his return.

From this point on, news reports continued to appear around the Dalai Lama. These included such stories as the Dalai Lama's meeting with the Viceroy of India, or a rumor about the Dalai Lama's plan to travel to Russia to meet with the Czar, or a report of the Dalai Lama's death in India;⁷² however, these were all short news reports. One can see that public opinion was no longer concerned with the Dalai Lama. Instead, the Chinese people began to pay close attention to the New Policy Reforms in Tibet; public sentiment hoped that the New Policy Reforms implemented by *amban* Lian Yu would initiate a new situation in Tibet, safeguard sovereign rights, and consolidate the defense of the border.

Conclusion

Looking back at reports about the Dalai Lama in newspapers and periodicals from the late Qing period, we find that the Dalai Lama only attracted the attention of the public opinion in China after he went into exile in inland China. This attention was stimulated by the second British invasion into Tibet in 1904. Before this event, the Dalai Lama, the

⁷¹ "Zhengfu zhi duidai Dalai", *Recheng* 1, 1910, pp. 8-9; "Nigei Dalai jintie fei", *Datong Bao* 13, no. 11, 1910, p. 27.

⁷² "Dalai yu yindu zongdu", *Guofeng bao* 1, no. 5, 1910, p. 82; "Dalai Lama shi shouduan", *Xiehe bao* 21, 1911, p. 11; "Dalai Lama zhi jinshi", *Xiehe bao* 16, 1911, p. 1.

political and religious leader of Tibet, was only a vague symbol in the minds of most Chinese people. Foreign missionary newspapers represented by *Wanguo gongbao* (*The Globe Magazine*) published articles whitewashing the British invasion into Tibet and vilifying the Dalai Lama without restraint. These reports seriously undermined the image of the Dalai Lama in the minds of the Chinese public.

During the Dalai Lama's stay in inland China, the Qing court did not hesitate to spend a large sum of state funds to receive the Dalai Lama with solemn ceremonies and various privileges. Initially, the Chinese public was curious about the leader of the Geluk school of Tibetan Buddhism. Thus, it would have been quite natural for them to pay close attention to him. However, the Dalai Lama was accused not only of being domineering and arrogant toward high-ranking officials in inland China but also of failing to discipline his retinue. He and his retinue were perceived as extravagant and wasteful and considered to have demanded supplies without any restraint. Thus, according to public opinion, they had harassed and disturbed local regions where they stayed or had passed through. The current circumstances in China were already difficult, and this naturally led to resentment of the Dalai Lama. Furthermore, the Dalai Lama's stay in inland China allowed him to have close contact with officials of the great powers who were stationed in China. Frequently, news from Central Tibet and the Sichuan borderlands reported that monks and Tibetan troops had attacked the Chinese government troops and were obstructing the implementation of New Policy Reforms. All this impacted public opinion and dramatically tarnished the image of the Dalai Lama. After the Dalai Lama returned to Central Tibet, he once again mustered Tibetan troops to obstruct the Sichuan troops' advance into Tibet. Later, after he went into exile in India, he requested Great Britain, Russia, and other countries to pressure the Qing court to intervene on his behalf. Reporting on this, the official news coming from the Chinese government led the Chinese people to denounce the Dalai Lama. Both orally and in writing, they expressed their indignation with the Qing court having spent enormous funds to receive the Dalai Lama, only to have it lead to such bad results. They maintained that merely stripping the Dalai Lama of his title was too light a punishment for his actions. To reclaim the political power over Tibet as soon as possible, they appealed to the Qing government to separate politics from religion in Tibet.

In short, the reputation of the Dalai Lama in the public opinion of China was utterly ruined. Eventually, the Qing court was unable to handle its relationship with the Dalai Lama appropriately, and the Dalai Lama remained in exile in India. After the 1911 Revolution, the Dalai Lama returned to Central Tibet and launched "the movement to

drive out Han Chinese". Subsequently, the conflict between Han Chinese and Tibetans became acute and greatly strained the relationship between Central Tibet and inland China. This had a negative impact on the situation in Tibet during the Republican period.

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Abbreviations:

DB: *Datong bao* 大同报 (*Ta Tung Pao*) [*Great Harmony*]

DL: *Dalu* 大陆 [*The Continent (Shanghai)*]

DZ: *Dongfang zazhi* 东方杂志 [*The Eastern Miscellany*]

GC: *Guangyi congbao* 广益丛报 [*Broad Benefits*]

TB: *Tongxue bao* 通学报 (*Tung Heoh Pao*) [*General Studies Newspaper*]

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Travel, Love and Lost Things: The earliest Sino-Tibetan Divination Manuscript

Sam van Schaik
(The British Library)

I don't remember when I first met Dan Martin, but it hardly matters when there have been so many memorable meetings and conversations over the years. In this category of conversations, I'm including both those in person, often at conferences over breakfasts, lunches and dinners, and those that happened in the comments sections of Dan's and my blogs, *Tibeto-Logic* and *Early Tibet*. Dan was a regular, thoughtful, provocative, and funny contributor to the comments of my blog between 2007 and 2014, when I stopped writing for it. Dan, indefatigable, always learning, and always sharing what he is learning with us, has continued with his own.

In 2008, working for the International Dunhuang Project at the British Library, I came across a set of diagrams with Tibetan writing on the back of a Chinese scroll. The scroll had been catalogued and placed in the sequence of Chinese manuscripts from Dunhuang (Or.8210/S.) and thus the Tibetan side had been completely overlooked for nearly a hundred years. Though the collections from Dunhuang are always full of surprises, this was a big one. The scroll was digitised by IDP and colour images can now be accessed on their website (idp.bl.uk). I spent some time trying to understand the scroll, which turned out to be a series of divination practices in the Chinese astrological tradition, and later that year I wrote a post introducing it in my blog post 'The Golden Turtle: A Sino-Tibetan divination manuscript.'

As was so often the case in those days, Dan was the first to comment on this blog post, offering up an interesting correspondence with Dzogchen texts. A lively conversation continued in the comments, with Dan kindly offering references to Chinese astrological divination in Tibetan sources, and useful suggestions about the nature of the animal depicted at the end of the scroll.¹ The appearance of this divination scroll in that blog post, and the subsequent catalogue of Tibetan texts found in the sequence of Chinese Dunhuang manuscripts at the British Library, by Kazushi Iwao, Tsuguhito Takeuchi and myself (2012), caused quite a lot of interest, and the scroll has featured in interesting articles by Dieter Schuh (2012), Duncan Poupard (2018), and Ronit Yoeli-Tlalim (2018). However, neither my original blog post nor

¹ I'd also like to thank others who commented on that post, some of them anonymously. I'm particularly grateful for Andrew West's suggestions, which have also informed this paper.

these articles have dealt with the scroll and its contents as a whole, so it seems worth doing that here.

Compared to the surviving texts on dice divination, there is little discussion of Chinese divination systems in the Tibetan texts from Dunhuang.² A notable exception, though one that is easily missed, is found in the manuscript IOL Tib J 339. This is a pothi, apparently from the tenth century, to judge from the handwriting, which contains a series of homages to the Buddha, the dharma, the sangha, and other noble objects. The verses are written with much space between them, which has been filled with commentary in a much smaller handwriting. In one verse, the dharma is called 'the supreme *gtsug lag*'. The commentary written underneath this line goes on to distinguish between right and wrong forms of *gtsug lag*. Right *gtsug lag* is Buddhism itself, which is defined here in terms of teaching, accomplishment and the path. The definition of wrong *gtsug lag* is interesting for what it reveals about the systems of divination in practice at the time.

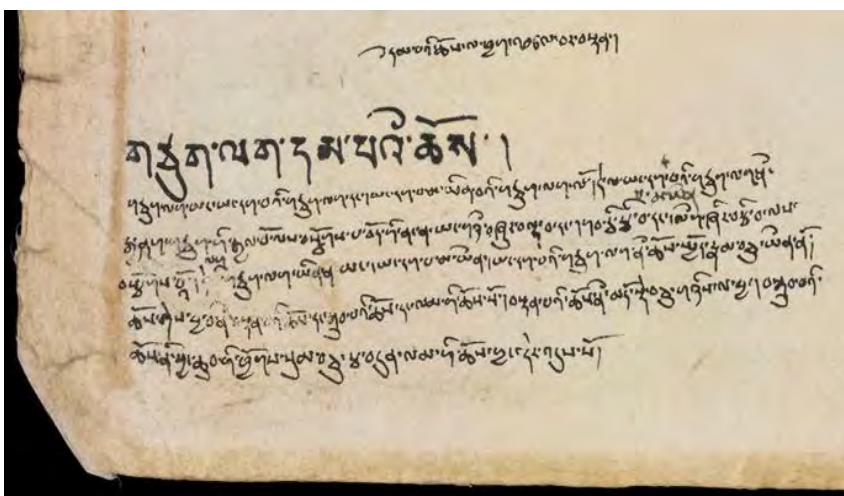


Fig.1 -- Detail from IOL Tib J 339, where the term *gtsug lag* is discussed.

The first kind of wrong *gtsug lag* is called 'the emperor of the Chinese *gtsug lag*' (*rgya nag gi gtsug lag gi rgyal po*). The exact system that is being referred to here is unclear but it may refer to the Chinese system of

² If the numbers of surviving manuscripts mean anything, it seems that Tibetan dice divination was more popular than Tibetanized Chinese divination systems in Eastern Central Asia in the ninth and tenth centuries. For excellent and recent reviews of the dice divination manuscripts and the tradition they represent see Ai 2019 and Dotson 2019.

astrology in general, in which the night sky is equated with the emperor, his palace and entourage.³ The commentary tells us that there is wrong *gtsug lag* 'even within Tibet'. This is said to include studying the portents of the days (*gnyi bzhur blta ba*), probably referring to a divination system for deciding whether particular days are favourable for certain activities. Another kind of wrong *gtsug lag* is the *gab tse*, a word still used by Tibetans to refer to astrological charts. The last form of wrong *gtsug lag* is something called *li zhi*, which, as Andrew West has pointed out, is almost certainly a transliteration of the Chinese word *li ri* 曆日. This means 'astrological almanac' and is a common term for almanacs during this period. For example, the title of the almanac for the year 978 on the recto of Or.8210/S.612 is *Da Songguo guanben kanding daben liri* 大宋國官本勘定大本曆日.⁴

We can see from the discussion of *gtsug lag* in this manuscript that Chinese divination systems were well known, and apparently practiced in Tibet by the tenth century. It is surprising though, that only one Tibetan manuscript from Dunhuang, as far as I know, gives a complete treatment of divination systems that seem to derive from the Chinese tradition.⁵ This is the scroll that is the subject of this article, Or.8210/S.6878.⁶ Dieter Schuh has confirmed that this scroll is the earliest example of the Sino-Tibetan divination tradition:

The Dunhuang document described above clearly shows that the

³ This can be seen in another Dunhuang manuscript containing the famous star map (Or.8210/S.3326). As the authors of a study of this manuscript state: 'As was usual in the Chinese sky representations, the North Polar region features the central Purple Palace with the Celestial Emperor at the pole, surrounded by his family, servants, military officers and the corresponding housing' (Bonnet-Bidaud, Praderie and Whitfield 2009: 7).

⁴ Comment by Andrew West dated January 6, 2008, on the original blog post (van Schaik 2008).

⁵ There are many Dunhuang manuscripts containing Chinese texts on divination; see the chapters in Kalinowsky (ed.) 2003. Comparison between these and the Tibetan texts in S.6878 is an important next step in the further study of this scroll but is beyond the scope of this study.

⁶ There are a few other divination diagrams found in the Tibetan manuscripts from Eastern Central Asia. From Dunhuang, the scroll Pelliot tibétain 55 contains a circular diagram in twelve parts, based on the Buddhist twelve links of dependent origination. The extensive text above the diagram suggests that this is a divination by the day of the month, akin to the first method on S.68678; unfortunately, the beginning of the scroll is fragmentary, and the practice is not fully described. The text immediately below the diagram, which does not seem to be related to it, is on magical practices for dealing with good and bad dreams; for a transliteration and translation, see Crescenzi and Torricelli 1995. Another circular diagram, though very fragmentary, is among the manuscripts found by Aurel Stein at the Tibetan fort of Miran in the Lop Nor desert; this was used for dice divination, as Brandon Dotson (2019) has shown.

content of the "science" later known as *Nag-rtsis* and so on, and adopted from China, was disseminated in the Tibetan language in the 9th – 11th centuries and was used by Tibetans. The Dunhuang Document S.6878 is also the oldest evidence for the practice of these divination teachings from China in the Tibetan cultural area.⁷

Considering the uniqueness and importance of the Tibetan texts it contains, I would like to consider the provenance and material nature of the physical scroll itself. The scroll is just over 25cm wide and over 4m in length, and the top is badly damaged, while the bottom still has the original wooden roller. On the top corner of the scroll, 'Chien 0204' has been written, in what looks like Aurel Stein's own handwriting. This is different from the more commonly seen 'Ch.' prefix used by Stein for manuscripts from Dunhuang. A few other scrolls with similar 'Chien' numbers appear in the photographic plates of Stein's account of his third expedition, *Innermost Asia*. Here, Stein describes how during his return visit to Dunhuang in 1914, during his third expedition, he purchased and sent to London another 570 scrolls to add to those he had removed during his second expedition:

In the rock-cut shrine which formerly served as his quarters and now had become his storeroom, he now produced two big boxes crammed with well-preserved manuscript rolls. By the careful appearance of their writing and the superior quality of the paper it was easy to recognize that the specimens I was able rapidly to examine belonged to that great stock of canonical texts, mostly Buddhist and dating from Tang times, with which Wang Tao-shih, under the influence of quasi-religious scruples, had in 1907 been least willing to part... For a total donation of five hundred Taels of silver he agreed to transfer to my possession the 570 Chinese manuscript rolls of which his reserve store was found to consist. Their total bulk is sufficiently indicated by the fact that their transport required five cases, each as large as a pony could conveniently carry.⁸

Stein also guessed that the scrolls had already been examined and rejected by Paul Pelliot when he had visited the caves and purchased a

⁷ Schuh 2012: 324: 'Das vorstehend beschriebene Dunhuang-Dokument belegt eindeutig, daß Inhalte der später als *Nag-rtsis* etc. bezeichneten, aus China übernommenen "Wissenschaft" im 9. – 11. Jahrhundert in tibetischer Sprache verbreitet waren und von Tibetern benutzt wurden. Das Dunhuang-Dokument S.6878 ist zudem der älteste Beleg für die Praktizierung dieser aus China stammenden Divinationslehren im tibetischen Kulturraum.'

⁸ Stein, *Innermost Asia*, p.358. Stein also mentions "The packets of Chien-fo-tung rolls that I was subsequently able to rescue by purchase at Su-chou and Kan-chou" (p.356). Plates of a few Chinese scrolls with 'Chien' numbers appear in the photographic plates in *Innermost Asia*, listed as CHIEN. 0249, 0293, 0405, 0566 (Plates CXXVIII and CXXIX).

significant number of the remaining manuscripts: "There could be little doubt that these fine *chings* had passed through Professor Pelliot's hands when, a year after my own visit, he had subjected whatever was then left of the great hoard to his expert, if necessarily hurried, examination."⁹ The index of objects in *Innermost Asia* does not have any reference to manuscripts with the 'Chien' prefix, but this is explained by Stein's own statement that he was not able to provide any information about the contents of these scrolls, which he was now leaving to the cataloguing work of Lionel Giles.¹⁰ Other scrolls with a 'Chien' number inscribed on them are all in the 6000s of the Or.8210/S. sequence, which also indicates that they were added to the sequence subsequent to the manuscripts of Stein's second expedition.

Returning to the scroll S.6878, this is a bilingual manuscript, with one side containing only Tibetan text, and the other, the Chinese text of part of the *Mahāprajñāpāramitāsūtra*.¹¹ This is therefore one of many scrolls from Cave 17 in Dunhuang which has Chinese written on one side and Tibetan on the other. While it is often assumed in cases like this that the Chinese sutra is the original text on the scroll, with the Tibetan added later, here it could be the other way round. The Tibetan divination text starts halfway down the scroll, just after a join between two panels of paper. It is hard to see why the text would have been copied at this point and have fitted perfectly into the remaining part of the scroll. It seems more likely that a shorter scroll with the Tibetan text was extended by gluing more panels on, and then the Chinese text was written on the new panels and the blank reverse side of the panels with the Tibetan text. When we look at the Chinese side of the scroll, we can see a clear difference in paper quality between the panels with the Tibetan text on the other side, and the panels probably added later. There is also a water stain along the edge that is not continuous across the panels.

⁹ *Innermost Asia*, p.358.

¹⁰ Stein, *Innermost Asia*, p.358: "In 1920 these rolls, together with the other manuscript materials recovered in the course of my third journey, reached a safe place of temporary deposit at the British Museum under the care of Dr. L. Giles. A first rapid inspection which this valued Sinologue collaborator was kind enough to make has confirmed my belief that most of the rolls would prove to contain texts of the Chinese Buddhist canon. But their detailed examination must wait until Dr. Giles has completed the cataloguing of the thousands of Chinese manuscripts brought away in 1907 from the same hoard, a lengthy task on which he has been engaged for a number of years."

¹¹ *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra* 大般若波羅蜜多經 (N. 1; K. ii-iv; T.220).

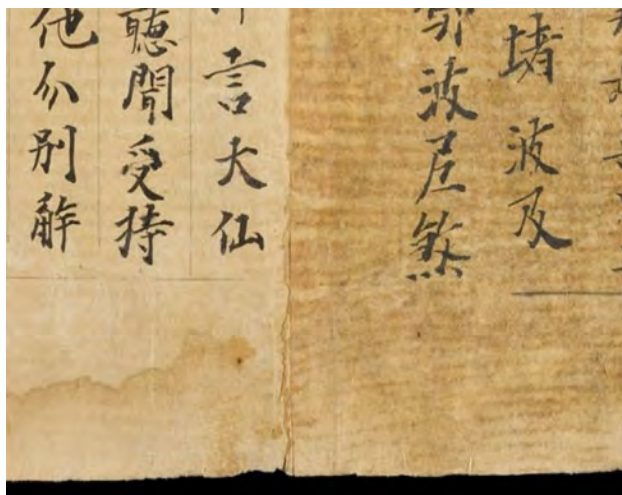


Fig.2 -- Detail of Or.8210/S.6878. showing the difference in paper quality between the part of the scroll with Tibetan text and the part without, and the water stain that ends at the division between the two panels.

If the Tibetan text and diagrams are older than the Chinese text, and moreover, the added panels then suffered considerable wear and tear after the Tibetan scroll was repurposed, we would expect the scroll to predate the *terminus ad quem* for Dunhuang manuscripts, the early eleventh century, by several decades at least. The Tibetan writing is neat but without the calligraphic flourishes seen in many tenth-century Buddhist manuscripts from Dunhuang. It resembles most closely the 'sutra style' of the multiple copies of Tibetan sutras made towards the end of the Tibetan imperial period, in the mid-ninth century.¹² Thus I would tentatively date the Tibetan part of the scroll to the mid to late ninth century.

The divination practices detailed on the scroll fall into three parts. The first part comprises two diagrams for determining good and bad days for travelling. The second part comprises nine diagrams for determining the outcomes of a match between a man and a woman, based on their birth year. The third part consists of a single diagram, 'the golden turtle' which is used by calculating the day of the month and matching it with a body part of the turtle. Thus there are twelve diagrams in all.¹³

¹² See the categories of early Tibetan styles in van Schaik 2014.

¹³ As Dieter Schuh has pointed out (2012: 320), the catalogue entry in Iwao, van Schaik and Takeuchi (2012: 82) incorrectly states that there are thirteen diagrams; this is entirely my fault, not that of the other authors.

The First Divination Method: Travel

The first two diagrams on the scroll are for divination before a journey is taken. The divination is calculated by the day of the month on which the journey is started. Thus, this is a form of hemerology, divination of auspicious days of an activity.¹⁴ The month has thirty days, and each day is contained in one of the 'heavens' (*gnam*). Dieter Schuh states that what we see here in the scroll is directly derived from Chinese astrology, and the topic appears in the later Sino-Tibetan tradition under the heading of *byes 'gro'i rtsis*.¹⁵ The 'heavens' of the two diagrams in the scroll are clearly linked to the twenty-eight 'heavenly mansions' (*xiu* 宿) of the Chinese astrological system. However, both of the two diagrams on the scroll are divided into only eight parts, each subdivided, but only to separate the name of the 'heaven' from a list of days of the month belonging to that heaven. This allows the diviner to identify any day of the month with one of twelve heavens.¹⁶

Chart 1



The table below gives the correspondences in the order they appear in

¹⁴ On hemerology in the Chinese manuscripts from Dunhuang, see Kalinowsky 2003: 213-300.

¹⁵ Schuh 2012: 320-322.

¹⁶ Though it is clearly from a different tradition, it is interesting to compare the circular diagram for the interpretation of dice divination found at the Tibetan fort at Miran (S.15000/302), which has recently been discussed by Brandon Dotson (2019).

the divination results, which starts at the section to the left of 6 o'clock (*gnam gyi skor*), and moves anti-clockwise:

The door of heaven (<i>gnam gyi sgo</i>)	1, 9, 10, ¹⁷ 17, 25
The junction of heaven (<i>gnam gi tsigs</i>)	2, 10, 18, 26
The gaining heaven (<i>gnam gyi grog</i>)	3, 11, 19, 27
The appearing heaven (<i>gnam gyi snang ba</i>)	4, 12, 28
The palace of heaven (<i>gnam gyi pho brang</i>)	5, 13, 20, 21
The obscured heaven (<i>gnam gyi grib</i>)	6, 14, 22, 30
The wealth of heaven (<i>gnam gyi phyug pa</i>)	7, 15, 23
The thief of heaven (<i>gnam gyi rkun</i>)	8, 16, 24

The second chart follows a different system of classification and begins in the section just below 3 o'clock (*bye'u dmar po*), moving anti-clockwise from there. The results are then looked up in the text below the diagram. In the text, the readings are separated with two or four circles; in dice divination these can refer to dice rolls, but there is nothing to indicate this is the case here, so they may just be scribal variants, the circles being a common way of separating passages of texts in the Dunhuang manuscripts.¹⁸ The results themselves make it clear that the primary purpose of the travel, and the reason for seeking divination, was financial.

- If it falls upon a day of the door of heaven: if you go on a long journey, it will be good. Auspicious!
- If it falls upon a day of the junction of heaven: wherever you go, you will incur a loss. Very bad!
- If it falls upon a day of the rising heaven: wherever you go, you will meet with partners, and everything you do together will result in financial gain and accomplishment. Very good!
- If it falls upon a day of the appearing heaven: you will encounter feasting with meat and beer. Good!
- If it falls upon a day of the palace of heaven: wherever you go, you will meet with a partner, and he will bring great profits. Very good!
- If it falls upon a day of the obscured heaven: wherever you go, there will be a loss of wealth and property, resulting in ruin. Very bad!
- If it falls upon a day of the wealth of heaven: wherever you go,

¹⁷ The appearance of the number 10 here as well as in the next house is probably a scribal error.

¹⁸ The fact that the circles do not appear after the final entry in either this or the next section of results also suggests that they are not part of the divination, but just visual cues to divide the readings from each other.

you will meet with partners, and everything you do together will result in financial gain and accomplishment. Very good!¹⁹

- If it falls upon a day of the thief of heaven: wherever you go, you will be attacked by thieves. Very bad!

Profit and loss feature heavily in these results, and it is clear that the main purpose of consulting an expert in this method would have been to check the likely success of a journey for financial purposes. So, the person requesting the divination would be a merchant, or at least someone engaged in travelling for mercantile purposes.

Chart 2



The second chart is based on three animals that are associated with different parts of the sky in Chinese astrology: the red bird (*zhuque* 朱雀), the white tiger (*baihu* 白虎), and the blue dragon (*qinglong* 青龍). The tiger's colour is not mentioned here, and the black turtle which usually makes up the complete set of four is not present (though note the turtle at the end of the scroll); nevertheless, the association is clear.

The little red bird (<i>bye'u dmar po</i>)	1, 9, 17, 25
The tiger's head (<i>stag gi mgo</i>)	2, 10, 18, 26

¹⁹ Note that this result is the same as the day of the rising heaven.

The tiger's armpit (<i>stag gi mchan khung</i>)	3, 11, 19, 27
The tiger's foot (<i>stag gi rkang pa</i>)	4, 12, 20, 28
The blue dragon (<i>'brug sngon po</i>)	5, 13, 21, 29
The dragon's head (<i>'brug gi mgo</i>)	6, 14, 22, 30
The dragon's armpit (<i>'brug gi mchan khung</i>)	7, 15, 23
The dragon's foot (<i>'brug gi rkang pa</i>)	8, 16, 24

Here the numbers of the days are similar, but not exactly the same as in the previous chart. The results of this method are again written below the diagram.

- On a day of the little red bird: wherever you go, you will meet with partners. Very good!
- If it falls upon a day of the tiger's head: if you are going for the benefit of a superior, it will be good, but if you are going for the benefit of yourself, it will be bad.²⁰
- If it falls upon a day of the tiger's armpit: wherever you go, it will be mediocre.
- If it falls upon a day of the tiger's foot: wherever you go, you will not receive any profit. Mediocre to low.
- If it falls upon a day of the blue dragon: if you are going for the benefit of a superior, it will be good, but if you are going for the benefit of yourself, it will be bad.
- If it falls upon a day of the dragon's head: wherever you go, you will incur a loss. Bad.
- If it falls upon a day of the dragon's armpit: you will make a profit. Very good!
- If it falls upon a day of the dragon's foot: wherever you go you will not obtain anything.²¹ Very bad!

Despite the similarity of the days in the two charts, the results do not accord with each other, and this second one contains worse or mediocre results. Once again, profit and loss feature here, giving the impression that the person seeking the guidance of the divination expert would have been a merchant. As Edward White has pointed out, these two charts are very similar to Chinese divination charts that appear in the compilation titled Jade Box Record (*Yuxia ji* 玉匣記). The Chinese diagrams are also divided into eight segments, each divided in two to show the parts of the sky and the corresponding days. The Jade Box

²⁰ Here, I have tentatively translated *bla* as 'a superior' as it is hard to interpret the word in this context.

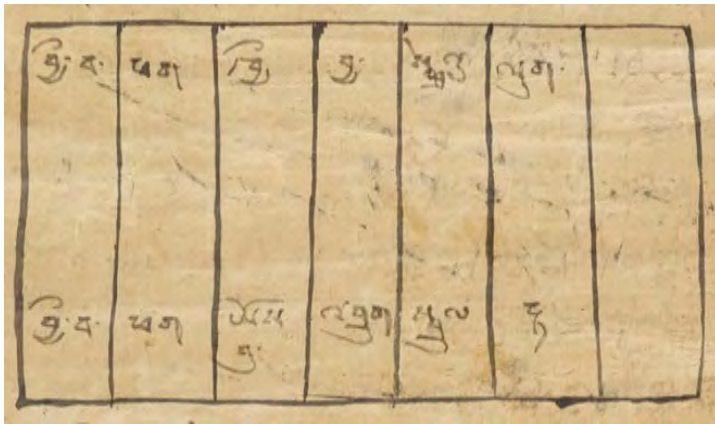
²¹ Here, I am reading *'byor* for the text's *'brod*.

Record has three such charts and explains that different charts are to be used depending on which month the journey is made. Despite certain variations in the arrangement of the parts of the sky, the corresponding days of the month, and some details of the results of the divination, these charts clearly derive from the same tradition. As White has pointed out, this general method of divination, also used for other purposes including determining the best days for a burial, is called *zhoutang* 周堂, 'periodic halls'.²²

The Second Divination Method: Love

The next divination topic concerns matches between a man (*pho*) and a woman (*mo*). This falls under the category of *bag rtsis* in the later Sino-Tibetan tradition. This divination takes up most of the scroll, with nine charts in total, though there is less explanatory text than in the other two divinations. Though I have used the word 'love' to describe the theme of these relationship divinations, the results are actually concerned with practical outcomes of a marriage match, such as wealth, status, and children. This aspect of Chinese astrological divination is still important in both Chinese and Tibetan traditions, and in the age of the internet has become popular all over the world.²³

Chart 3



This is a simple set of six columns (and the empty seventh column

²² See this Twitter thread by Edward White: <https://twitter.com/edwardW2/status/1400328689905115143?s=20>

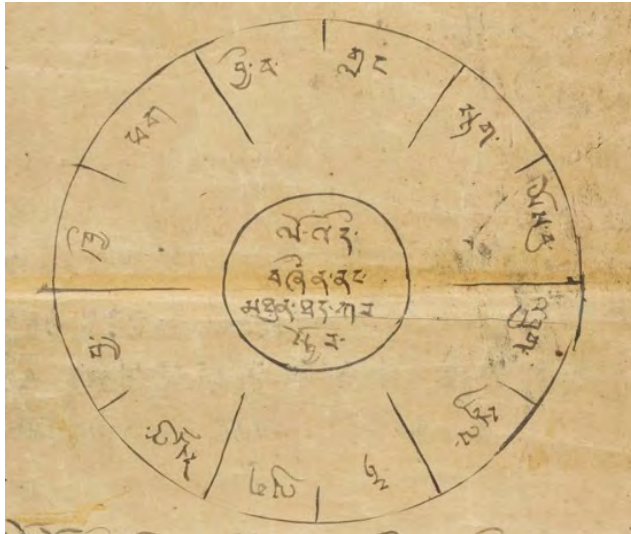
²³ Schuh 2012: 322. The travel divination diagrams are in the 5th volume of the Jade Box Record.

seems to be a scribal mistake). The animals at the top of each column are matched to those at the bottom, as follows:

- rat & rat
- pig & pig
- dog & hare
- bird & dragon
- monkey & snake
- sheep & horse

The text reads: “If the man and the woman are matched in this way, then they will have high status without having to seek it.”²⁴

Chart 4



This chart is a circle, divided into twelve for the twelve animals, but with alternating short and long lines, so the animals fall into pairs again. There is a smaller circle in the middle which contains some text instructing the diviner to “join the [birth] year with the internally concordant one.” By this method, the pairs which are within the groups with longer lines are:

- rat & ox

²⁴ The translation here is tentative: I have translated the Tibetan *blon mtsan* as ‘high status’ but I am not completely sure of this.

- tiger & hare
- dragon & snake
- horse & sheep
- monkey & bird
- dog & pig

The explanatory text tells us that “If the man and the woman are matched in this way, then each will benefit the other. If rat or ox are matched with dog, then there will be no children [but still] each will benefit the other.”

Chart 5



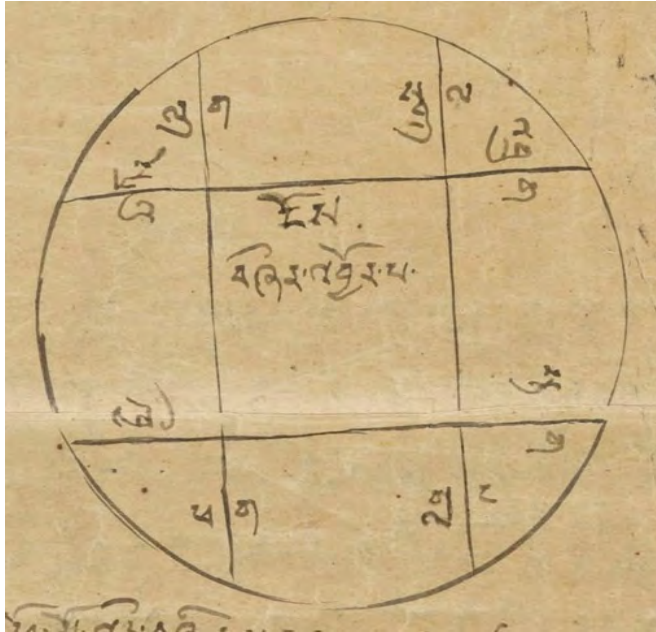
This is a circle divided by four intersecting lines to make eight parts. The text in the middle says simply “the four connections”. If the animals closest to each other are connected, then the four pairs are as follows:

- sheep & monkey
- dog & pig
- ox & tiger
- snake & dragon

The explanatory text states that “If the man and the woman are

matched in this way, then there will be five male children and two female children."

Chart 6

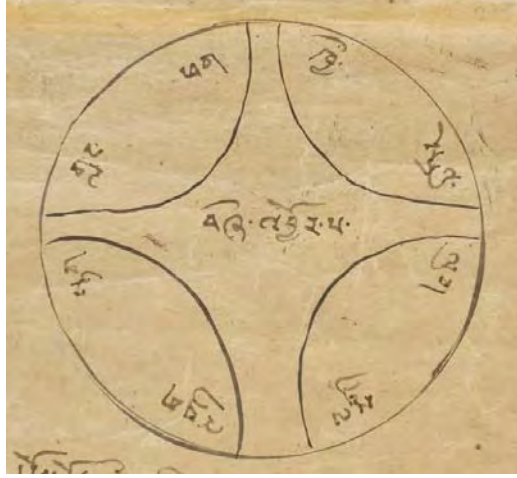


This is the same design as the chart above, but the text in the middle says, "joined at the four sides". It is not clear to me whether this indicates a different method of matching the animals, but if one uses the same method as in the previous chart, these are pairs:

- snake & dragon
- tiger & ox
- pig & dog
- monkey & sheep

The explanatory text simply states, "If the man and the woman are matched in this way: wealth and status."

Chart 7



This chart is in the form of a circle, with four internal curved lines delimiting four animal pairs. The text in the middle says, "Four links." The groups are:

- ox & pig
- dog & monkey
- sheep & snake
- dragon & tiger

The explanatory text states, "If the man and the woman are matched in this way: great valour."

Chart 8

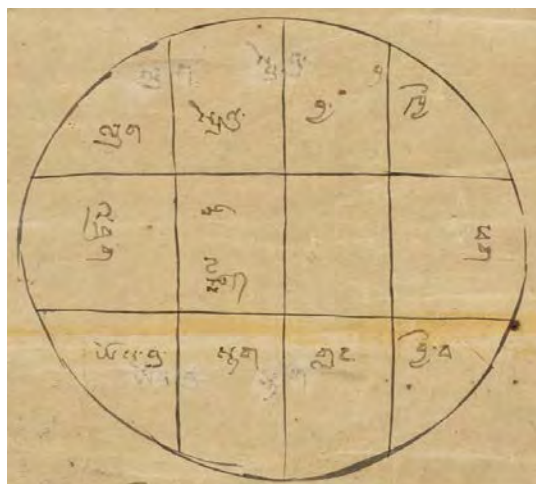


This chart takes the same form as the one above, but gives six internal groups of animal pairs. They are:

- ox & rat
- pig & dog
- bird & monkey
- horse & sheep
- snake & dragon
- rabbit²⁵ & tiger

The explanatory text states, "If the man and the woman are matched in this way: longevity, wealth and status."

Chart 9



This chart is a circle divided by two horizontal and three vertical lines, forming twelve sections. One animal is written in each section, each for the middle left section which contains two, and the middle right one, which is left empty. The scribe originally started to write some animal names across the lines, as in Charts 5 and 6, but then erased these. All twelve animals are present, but apart from the two which inhabit the same section, snake and horse, there is no clear method for pairing them. If they are considered to be paired with any adjacent section, and assuming that the snake and horse (usually considered a

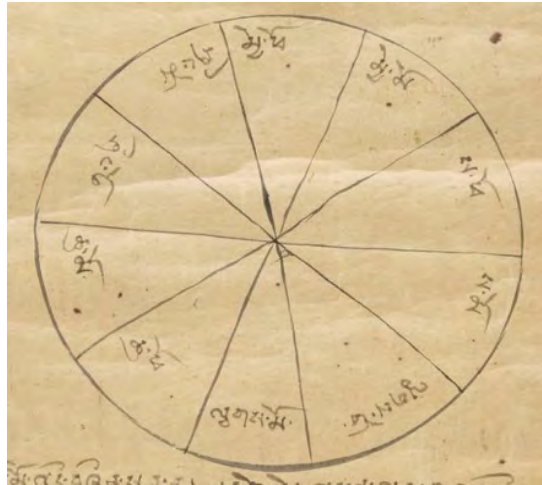
²⁵ The text here has *ri bong* rather than *yos bu*. The latter term, which appeared in Chart 3, is more commonly used in the Tibetan zodiac.

bad match) are not a pair, then the following would apply:

- rat: pig, ox
- ox: rat, tiger
- tiger: ox, hare, snake, horse
- hare: tiger, dragon
- dragon: hare, sheep, snake, horse
- sheep: dragon, monkey
- monkey: hare, bird, snake, horse
- bird: monkey, dog
- dog: bird, pig
- pig: dog, rat
- snake: tiger, monkey, dragon
- horse: tiger, monkey, dragon

The explanatory text says, "If the man and the woman are matched in this way: wealth and status."

Chart 10



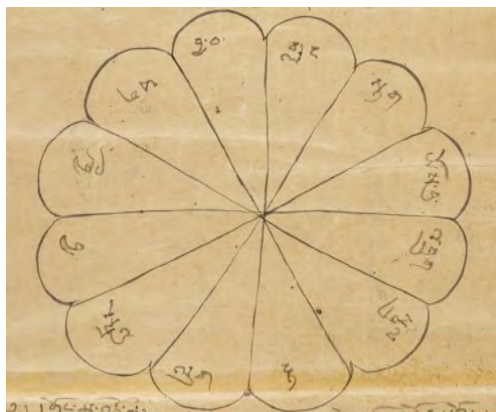
This chart is a circle divided through the middle with straight lines forming ten segments. Unlike the other charts, this one presents the elements of the zodiac, each in a male and female form. Like the animal cycle representing the years, this is a traditional aspect of the Chinese zodiac which has continued to the present day. If we take the pairs to

be formed by neighbouring segments, they are as follows:²⁶

- male fire pairs with female fire and wood
- female fire pairs with male fire and earth
- male earth pairs with female earth and fire
- female earth pairs with male earth and iron
- male iron pairs with female iron and earth
- female iron pairs with male iron and water
- male water pairs with female water and iron
- female water pairs with male water and wood
- male wood pairs with female wood and water
- female wood pairs with male wood and fire

The explanatory text says, "If the man and the woman are matched in this way, then much virtue and benefit will be the outcome."

Chart 11



This chart is flower-shaped, and divided into twelve sections, each containing one animal name. The sequence of animals here is the classic one from Chinese astrology. A line of text above it states that "The below are not to be joined." A line of text below this chart states "The above shows what are called 'the six afflictions' which are not to be

²⁶ Read in this way, the table is in accord with the harmonious relationships in later Sino-Tibetan astrology. From Philippe Cornu (1990: 59-60): "The son of Wood is Fire; the son of Fire is Earth; the son of Earth is Metal; the son of Metal is Water; and the son of Water is Wood." The table also avoids the following bad correspondences: "The enemy of Wood is Metal; the enemy of Metal is Fire; the enemy of Fire is Water; the enemy of Water is Earth; the enemy of Earth is Wood."

joined." This indicates that there is only one unfavourable match for each sign. If we take the signs directly opposite each other to be the unfavourable pairs, which is the usual practice in Chinese astrology, then the bad matches are as follows:

- rat & horse
- ox & sheep
- tiger & monkey
- hare & bird
- dragon & dog
- snake & pig

These are the classic unfavourable matches in Chinese astrology, as we see through to the present day.²⁷

The Third Divination Method: Lost Things

The final divination rests on the interpretation of a single chart, which is in fact an illustrated animal. This section is titled "The divination (*mo*) of the golden turtle, for finding things that have escaped or been lost."²⁸ Here, I have translated the Tibetan word *mo* as 'divination'. In the later tradition this word usually refers to divination by means of dice, but here, as with the other charts on this scroll, it is a calendrical practice. Like the first divination on the scroll, the results of this depend on the day of the month, when the loss occurred. The title suggests that the divination might be used not only for inanimate objects, but also for animals, servants or enslaved people who have escaped.

The diagram itself is a sketch on a creature called a *ru sbal*. In later Tibetan sources this always means a turtle or tortoise. Here, the animal depicted has no shell, and looks somewhat like a frog rather than a turtle. The Tibetan words for turtle and frog, *ru sbal* and *sbal po* respectively, are very similar, and Duncan Poupard has pointed out that there is a similarity here with a Naxi divination tradition featuring an animal which is both turtle and frog. However, the animal depicted here not only lacks a shell, but possesses a tail and claws, unlike a frog.

The turtle on the scroll does in fact closely resemble later Tibetan versions of turtles found in divination diagrams and amulets; for example, in a series of amulets to be worn by people born in particular years, studied by Tadeusz Skorupski, the turtle has a similar tail,

²⁷ E.g. the excellent educational resource at <http://idp.bl.uk/education/astrology/astrology.html> (accessed 2 May 2021).

²⁸ Here, as in my original blog post, I use the word 'turtle', although the Tibetan *ru sbal* can be applied to both the turtle and tortoise.

clawed legs, and bulbous nose. Another interesting thing about the amulets discussed by Skorupski is that the turtles are viewed from underneath; if that is the case in the sketch here as well, the shell might have been assumed to be unseen on the other side of the turtle. The difference is the missing circular shape of the body in these designs, stylised so that it can contain circular diagrams, but also suggesting the shell.²⁹ Thus what we have in the 'golden turtle' here on the Dunhuang scroll does seem to be a turtle without its shell depicted (a suggestion which Dan Martin made in a comment on my original blog post). It is quite possible that the circle representing the shell is not depicted on the Dunhuang scroll simply because it was not necessary for teaching the method that is described here.

As Dan Martin pointed out to me in a comment on my original blog post on this scroll, 'the golden turtle' is also the name of a Dzogchen text in the Nyingma and Bonpo traditions. This text was studied by Samten Karmay who showed that the Nyingma version was simply a repurposed form of the Bonpo one. The use of the term 'golden turtle' in this Dzogchen text is then probably explained by its Bonpo origin, as an example of their use of earlier terms from Tibetan ritual practice in their texts, such as *g.yung drung* and *gtsug lag*. In fact, the latter term also appears in the title of the Bonpo golden turtle Dzogchen text.³⁰

Chart 12



²⁹ Skorupski, *Tibetan Amulets*, pp.60-64. In fact, other animals - the twelve animals of the zodiac - depicted in amulet diagrams also have their body replaced by circular diagrams (pp.95-106)

³⁰ The full title of the Bonpo text is *rGyud kyi rgyal po gser gyi rus sbal g.yung drung thigs pa man rdo rje theg pa rtsa ba'i rgyud*. See Karmay 2007: 220-223.

Inside the turtle, the words “golden turtle” are written, as well as a faint syllable *'bri*, meaning to write or draw, and probably an instruction that this animal is to be drawn for each divination. The instructions written above the diagram are as follows:

Count from the first lunar day of the month on which the loss happened to the date of the loss, match this with a point on the golden turtle and mark it. If the loss happened within this thirty-day month, start from the head and count around to the right. If it happened beyond this thirty-day month, start from the tail and count around to the left.³¹ Write whether the result is good or bad at the tail of the turtle.

Thus, the practice is to identify the turtle body part that corresponds to the day on which the thing was lost. This is done by generating a number which corresponds to the date of the thirty-day lunar month on which the item was lost, counting round the turtle and seeing where you end up. Whether you count clockwise or anticlockwise will depend on whether the item was lost within the last month or not. Some of the turtle's body parts (the nose, arms, armpits and feet) are repeated on its right and left side, but the result does not depend on which side the mark is made on. The results are then read as follows:

- If it was lost on the day of the head, it will be found if you look in the vicinity of a laundry washer.
- If it was lost on the day of the ears, then even if you come across it while out searching, it will not be beneficial to get your hands on it.
- If it was lost on the day of the arms, you will find it if you look for it on a high mountain, in a ravine, or in the middle of a graveyard.
- If it was lost on the day of the armpits, you will find it if you look for it at the goldsmiths, at the watermill, or in the town centre.³²
- If it was lost on the day of the feet, you will find it if you look near an aristocrat, a minister, or an official gathering.
- If it was lost on the day of the tail, you will find it if you look in the direction of your girlfriend.³³

³¹ Dieter Schuh's translation (2012: 322-323) interprets this part of the text as saying that the direction of counting depends on whether the month has thirty days or less than thirty days; however, as I understand it, the lunar month would always be thirty days, except in exceptional circumstances.

³² Here 'town centre' is a tentative translation of *grong 'khor*.

³³ //gser gyI ru bal mo ste//bros pa dang/rlag btsal pa'/zla ba gang la bab kyang rung ste//tshes zhag gcig nas bgrangs la stor pa'I/nyi ma ru sbal kyi tshigs gar bab pa dang/sbyar te gdab bo/zla ba sum/cu thub na ni/mgo nas g.yas logsu bgrang/zla ba sum cu myi thub na ni/mjug bas g.yon logsu bskor te bgrango//bzang ngan gyi tsigs ni/ru sbal kyi mjug du bris so// //mgo 'i nyi ma la/stor na btso blag mkhan gyI/ 'khor du btsal na rnyed//rna ba'I nyi ma la stor na/btsal te lam du phrad kyang /bdag gl lag tu thob la myI phan no//lag pa'I pa'I

Thus, of the six results, five give hints as to where to look, some of which are so vague that their use to the inquirer seems questionable. Only one result is negative, stating that even if the thing (or animal, or person) is found, this will not actually benefit the seeker.

Conclusion

As we have seen, the scroll Or.8210/S.6878 is uniquely important for our understanding of the history of Chinese astrology in Tibet. Yet, as with many such manuscripts, its significance and importance to us may not reflect how it was perceived at the time. One question we always need to ask about manuscripts from the Dunhuang cave is, was this made to be used? Many manuscripts were prestige items copied for merit and may rarely or never have been opened again. Others were copied by students, so their purpose was the learning process itself. This text is not the type to generate merit, so the first option is unlikely. The diagrams and texts might well have been used for teaching or copied out in the learning process by a student. Equally, the manuscript might have been the property of someone practicing divination, used in the process of providing a reading. It's interesting to note that the turtle divination text instructs us to write the result at the turtle's tail; since no such results are written on the scroll, it seems this scroll was not used for that practice at least, but rather as a model, much as we have models for talismans written on some Dunhuang scrolls.³⁴

There is good reason to think divination methods of this sort would have been in use: they relate to ever-present concerns about trade and profit, successful marriages, and the recovery of lost property. Yet the manuscript itself suggests that these divination texts and diagrams were not used much; if I am right that they predate the Chinese side of the scroll, then they were repurposed, perhaps not long after being written. Unlike the worn and fragmented top part of the scroll, the divination diagrams look fresh and have few marks or stains, as if they had been kept safely rolled up in the scroll rather than being revealed for use many times.³⁵ As we have seen, there are a few errors and corrections in the diagrams, so perhaps this was the result of a learning

nyi ma la stor na/rI mthon po dang/grog mo dang/mchad khrod du/btsan (=btsal) na rnyed//mchan khung gI nyi ma la stor na/gser mgar dang/rang tag (=thag) dang/grong 'khor du btsal na rnyed//rkang pa'I nyi ma la stor na/rdze (=rje?) sgo dang/zhang lon dang/ tshong dus su btsal na rnyed//mjug ma'I nyi ma la stor na/grog (=grogs) mo pyogsu btsal na rnyed//

³⁴ See Copp 2011.

³⁵ Compare the worn and very fragmentary sheet containing the diagram for dice divination (Or.15000/302) discussed in Dotson 2019.

effort after all, a step in a student's progress to being an expert in these divination systems. It is nice to think that those who created the Dunhuang manuscripts were sometimes still learning, just as we are.

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The Khyung po, Dor ta and Rtse drug: War and Peace in Steng chen during the pre-Yuan years

Roberto Vitali

Trait in Dan Martin that has always impressed me is his free approach to life and studies. He has an independent mind, and this explains why Dan has a knack for finding unconventional, unusual topics in his research, which he takes to unexplored territories. I am also taken by his wide-ranging perspective. He is not someone who drills at a theme for ages. He likes to venture into the unknown and to find correlations that would be hardly imaginable otherwise. He knows how to untie the endless knots of many unsolved scholarly questions.

Creativity is not his only way. He is rigorous in work that needs complete dedication (translations, bibliographies, dictionaries). About Dan the rigorous scholar, I sympathize with his view that *gsan yig-s* are important material which open unknown vistas. Their perusal, despite their repetitiveness, leads to discoveries of hidden gems.

I also think that the composite history of Jerusalem where he lives—one of the great centers of world civilization—contributes to his depth of thought. I personally experienced how true this is. Jerusalem and his background studies at Bloomington have contributed to his capacity of crossing boundaries into the interdisciplinary dimension in which he works so well.

1. The transfer of the Khyung po and other Se Khyung dBra people to Steng chen

The Se Khyung dBra clan belong to the 'A zha *mi'u rigs* tribe that had originally settled in the area extending from mTsho sngon to the Chinese borderlands, contiguous with the plateau. The Khyung po are members of this clan and their presence in Khams goes back to a time that defies historical certainty. It is also uncertain when these people from areas in A mdo settled in Khams. It is also unknown whether they were part of a migration that involved other groups of the 'A zha tribe such as the Rlangs belonging to the dBra division, who established themselves in a wide area of Khams including its northwestern regions, west of the Ngom chu and towards Nag[s]

shod. Another migration—more recent but still ancient—saw splinters of the Khyung po clan move in the opposite direction, from west to east. They went from Zhang zhung, where the Khyung po resided for centuries and played an important dynastic role, to settle in an area in northwest Khams which the Bon po literature calls Sum pa Glang gi Gyim shod. It became known as Steng chen at a later time. This migration dates to the reign of Mang srong mang rtsan (late 7thc.). The Khyung po's return to Steng chen was not their own decision. The Spu rgyal Bod had imposed the transfer.

2. *The Khyung po involved in the incidents of the 1240s*

The Bon po literature not uncommonly connects antecedents to events that involved masters of the school to a remote past. The incidents I deal with here place Stong rgyung mthu chen on center stage at Gnam mtsho phyug mo. One of the great 'Dzam gling masters of the hoary past, he is used in the episode to introduce the future existence—a long time thereafter indeed—of the co-protagonists of the narrative I am concerned with in this essay. Stong rgyung mthu chen, at Gnam mtsho, was intent in subduing the *klu srin-s* of the lake, who were causing him much trouble.

Owing to their negative karma, these *klu srin-s* were reborn, many centuries later, as the people called Khyung po.¹ These developments of the narrative are typical of the Bon po literature's disregard for historical sequence. A big gap in time separates the rebirths of the *klu srin-s*, active in the second quarter of the thirteenth century, from the legendary Stong rgyung mthu chen, who lived in deep antiquity.

The thirteenth century members of the Khyung po clan, who had roles in the narrative, were the children of the six Khyung po Rgyal tsha brothers. They were distant descendants of the Khyung po people who migrated to Sum pa Glang gi Gyim shod owing to the deci-

¹ *Khyung po gdung rabs* (f.4a,6-f.4b,5): "Earlier, while Zhang zhung sTong rgyung mthu (f.4b) chen was residing on one occasion at the *yang dben* of Nam mkha' mdzod in the area of Byang Gnam mtsho phyug mo do gling, the *klu srin-s*, residents of the lake, who moved in the lake to steal, blocked with water the rocky entrance to [his] meditation cave. At that time, Stong rgyung mthu chen threw his hand implement, a big bell, into the sky. At the rock, from the upper steps of the stairs [leading to] the sky he rode on his drum and soared into the intermediate space. It happened that the *klu srin-s* came out from the surface of the lake up to their chest, so he threw his *phur pa* [against them] in turn and slay them. Thrice he chased them, who were on the verge of death. He cast them away, who uttered abusive expressions. At that time, a rain of stones, Stong rgyung mthu chen's pebbles, fell at at sKor gling of Gnam mtsho. Stong rgyung mthu chen died in the land of Rgya gar (sic)". The way the *klu srin-s* came out of the lake waters up to their chest corresponds to their typical depiction in *thang ka-s*.

sion of their Spu rgyal Bod pa superiors. They are identified as Nang chen grags pa, the son of Ston 'bum, A bla, the child of Ston sras, and the Khyung po religious master Shes rab rgyal mtshan, the son of Ston thar (see n. 31). Two more Khyung po personalities played a major part in the incidents, but their origin is not disclosed. These were the brothers Dpon Dge, alias Bsges gshen Ye shes dpal and Dpon Dbus, alias Dad pa rgyal mtshan.

Paying the debt of their bad karma, the re-incarnations of the *klu srin*-s were reborn as Hor gyi mi chen Dor ldong and Ye stor.² Dor ldong is Dor ta, the headman of the well-known great Mongol invasion of Tibet in the year 1240, during the last years of the reign of O go ta [= Ögedei Khan] (r. 1229-1241). Ye stor's role in Dor ta's expedition is not explained in the Tibetan documents. His role may have been that of second in command in the campaign, but he would not have been the only one (see below for Li byi ta).

3. O go ta and Go dan [= Köten]:
the inception of the Hor pa policy in Tibet

In the last years of his reign, O go ta passed from a policy of relative neglect towards Tibet to military action, which he personally supervised. The Hor had little interest in Tibet before Dor ta's campaign of 1240 but, in line with the orders of the emperor, Dor ta established Mongol jurisdiction over Tibet for the first time.³ This explains why Tibetan historiography holds that Dor ta was the first to lead a Hor pa military action against the plateau inasmuch as the 1240 expedition was the most extensive and politically important despite traces in the literature about the Hor having launched various incursions into the plateau before 1240. I will discuss *in extenso* these attacks against A mdo on another occasion.

The change in O go ta's approach towards Tibet depended on

² *Khyung po gdung rabs* (f.4b,5-6) reads: "Two incarnations were born in the land of Tibet. They were known as Khyung Dpon dGe and Dpon Dbus, altogether two. As to the *klu srin*-s in their *rnams shes* (spelled so for *rnam shes*, "ordinary mental faculties"), they were born as Hor gyi mi chen Dor ldong and Ye stor. They were accompanied by an army [composed of] divisions of troops. Likewise, when they tackled their karmic debts of an earlier time, they realised that becoming Hor zi (?) did not [bring] liberation". Does Hor zi stand for Hor [Shi] zi[n] "Hor administering death (?)", as written elsewhere (see n. 26)?

³ The earliest contacts between the Tibetans and the Mongols, peaceful in nature on the occasion, occurred in 1219 between 'Bri gung gling pa Shes rab 'byung gnas and the generals of the army of Jing gir rgyal po {Chinggis Khan} in the Tarim Basin (see the 'Bri gung gling Shes rab 'byung gnas kyi rnam thar p.23,3-p.24,2 in Vitali, *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang* n. 687). Earlier interaction between Jing gir rgyal po and the Tibetans has no historical foundation.

turning Byang ngos, the old frontier land contiguous with the plateau previously held by the Tangut kingdom, into the center of the newly formulated policy towards Tibet. Go dan the second son of the Mongol emperor—he was a younger brother of the next Hor Khan Go yug [Güyüg (r. 1246-1248)]—was entrusted the fiefdom of Byang ngos in the previous year (1239). He was thus posted near Tibet, whose affairs he supervised on behalf of O go ta.⁴ This meant that Tibet became a target of the Hor's Central Asian policy.

Official records of Tibetan historiography say that Dor ta, known as *nag po* to the Tibetans for his proverbial cruelty, burnt down Rwa sgreng and Rgyal lha khang, cut off the heads of 500 monks, and attacked 'Bri gung which was saved by a miraculous rain of stones. They also say that Dor ta ravaged the lands of Tibet all the way to the Himalayan range from Kong po to the border of Bal po, tearing down all castles he found in Lho brag, Gnyal, Lo ro, Byar po, Mon Dpal gro and lHo Mon (present-day Bhutan).⁵

In a previous work of mine ("The book of names of Nyang stod *bla ma-s*"), I pointed out that Dor ta's troops also advanced as far as

⁴ *Si tu bka' chems in Rlangs kyi Po ti bse ru* (p.110 lines 2-3): "Rgyal bu Go dan was the Byang ngos pa ruler [handling matters] in the direction of Tibet". Wylie, "The Mongol Conquest of Tibet Revisited" (p.109-113) sees in Go dan the driving force behind the Dor ta 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 (1504-1566) in his *Mkhas pa'i dga' ston* p.1416 lines 14-17, 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).

⁵ *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 khrims* and *rgyal khrims* 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 estimates that Dor ta nag po's appearance in Tibet happened during the reign of O go ta, the son of Jing gir rgyal po".

Nyang stod in Gtsang, where they caused death and havoc at Gnas rnying.⁶ This led me to say that the military fronts of Dor ta nag po's campaign were three, each one directed towards one region of the plateau. One front of his campaign remained in Dbus to pursue local objectives in this land,⁷ another front was directed against the Himalayan territories, and the third targeted Gtsang.

Dor ta had two main objectives. He intended to control as many areas in Tibet as possible and to single out a Tibetan powerhouse to subdue in order to establish Hor pa power over the plateau. He planned to adopt the same treatment the Mongols reserved for other countries they invaded, where they put to death the local headmen. Therefore, Dor ta resolved to sentence to death the 'Bri gung sgom pa Shak rin, a towering personality of his day. The *T'ai si tu bKa' chems* says that Spyan snga Rin po che (1175-1255, abbot of Gdan sa mthil from 1208 to 1235) saved his life by means of a miraculous performance.

Legends aside, the Hor realised that there was no headman in

⁶ *Gnas rnying skyes bu rnams kyi rnam thar* (f.19a,4-f.19b,4) says: "When the Hor troops went on a rampage (*sdang pa*, lit. "became hostile") in Dbus Gtsang, Dor to (spelled so) seized Skyegs 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 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 khams* 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 appear [against] the *mi ma yin*-s of Hor Bod. He behaved like a rje btsun Mi la's *yogi* [throughout the territory] all the way to the 'Brin chu. Likewise, inconceivable miracles took place". See Vitali 2014: 552–555).

⁷ One episode absent in the official records may have a semblance of authenticity because it suits well the unfolding of Dor ta's campaign in dBus. It is mentioned in the entry of the *bstan rtsis* of Ldan ma 'Jam dbyangs tshul khriims' classic *Khams stod kyi lo rgyus smad cha* for the year iron rat 1240 (ibid. p.161,10-11). Ldan ma 'Jam dbyangs tshul khriims writes without mentioning his authority: "The Hor troops gutted the Po ta la'i lha khang". The identity of the Po ta la'i lha khang that would have been set on fire by Dor ta is an unsolved matter. Although the Po ta la'i lha khang might not necessarily refer to a temple on the hill of Lha sa, the itinerary of Dor ta's campaign strongly advocates the possibility that this temple was there, given the importance of the town and its proximity to his other military objectives. It would ensure that Dor ta would have carried out a sack of Lha sa. A bit more surprising is that the official historiography neglects the event altogether, unusual had it truly happened.

Dbus-Gtsang but a plurality of noble families—Shak rin belonged to one of them. This situation was reflected in the subsequent Mongol decision to choose a plurality of chieftains from the noble families of Tibet. The strategy of taking a headman in captivity to Hor yul to act as interlocutor with the people of the plateau was implemented soon thereafter by Go dan, who chose to deport Sa skya Pañdi ta (1182-1251) and his two young nephews.

The first move after the Mongol occupation of Central Tibet was to launch a census of the population for the Hor to know their subjects. The census, a well-known pillar of the Mongol system of dominance, was a task undertaken by Dor ta himself and Li byi ta, both said to be the expedition chiefs in a passage of the *Si tu bKa' chems* in the *Rlangs kyi Po ti bse ru*.⁸ Nothing is said about whether Dor ta made a census in Khams and A mdo. This lets one presume that it was not held, although its importance in the Mongol system of governance would make one suppose the opposite, but once again no record of a census is kept for the regions of the highlands in the east.

Having identified who his new subjects in Central Tibet were, O go ta passed orders to them for the first time in the history of the relations between the Hor and the Tibetans. The practice whereby military campaigns in Tibet were followed by the imposition of a Mongol structure of governance was inaugurated at the time. As is well-known, 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 but under Mongol control in the absence of a supreme leader of the country, whom Dor ta could not locate because he did not exist.⁹

⁸ The *bstan rtsis* appended to the *Si tu bka' chems* in *Rlangs Po ti bse ru* (p.447 line 21-p.448 line 2) says: "In iron male rat 1240, by Hor rgyal po O ko (spelled so) (p.448) ta's order, Hor dmag Li byi ta and Dor ta, these two, having been sent earlier and later, made a census of the [Tibetan] population's households (*dud*).

⁹ Perhaps for the same reason tht Dpa' bo Gtsug lag phreng ba, a Khams pa, records Dor ta's presence in his own land but only marginally, T'ai si tu Byang chub rgyal mtshan, a child of Central Tibetan soil, records the organisation of Dbus-Gtsang. T'ai si tu mentions the decree granting the administration of Tibet to the 'Bri gung pa/Phag mo gru pa camp. They exercised power for a brief period of time—from 1241 up to Go yug's reform of a few years later. The *bstan rtsis* appended to the *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 khrims* and *chos khrims* 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 *rnam pa* (spelled so for *gnam sa*) *dpa' shi* to be the Mnga' ris skor

O go ta was the Hor pa emperor who expanded the role of the Tibetans, eminently religious in the period, as their interaction with the Tangut court shows, to more secular areas as an effect of his 1240 appointment of Tibetan officers to oversee the governance of various regions of the plateau.

4. *Steng chen and the Mongols*

The older Bon po texts do not hide their authors' disliking for the Hor pa domination of Tibet during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Although expressed in unequivocal terms—in their prophecies for instance: see the *lung bstan*-s in *Sources for a History of Bon*—hardly any episode of active defiance is recorded in their works. This applies to almost every other historiographical work of any school, which could mean that hardly any pro-active stance was taken by the Tibetans. Cases are few (see below for one of them) and I therefore make use in this example of a limited number of sources because there are

gsum *dpon*. They were appointed as headmen 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*". In the organisation of power delegated by the Mongols to Tibetans in Tibet, the 'Bri gung sgom pa Shak rin, who was granted supreme authority over Dbus-Gtsang, had, as subordinates, a governor (*dpon*) of Gtsang, the Phag mo gru pa *sgom pa Rdo rje dpal*—a Dbus pa by the way—and one governor (*dpon*), Gzhon nu 'bum, overseeing the Yar 'brog lho pa (presumably the people of Lho brag). The *bstan rtsis* appended to Ta'i si tu'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 but the traditional assessment of the inception of the *khri skor* system is, as well known, to have been the earth dragon year, 1268. Recognized as existing almost thirty years before the actual beginning of the system, a state of affairs noted by Sørensen-Hazod in *Rulers on the Celestial Plain* (p.556-557), the allusion to the existence of a Phag mo gru pa *khri dpon* in the iron rat year 1240 seems to be used anachronistically. In any event, the matter is confusing because, in another passage, Ta'i si tu 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. 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. Ta'i si tu 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 and elsewhere (Kham and A mdo?). On the *khri skor bcu gsum* system see the *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". The *Ngor chos 'byung* (p.326,7) says: "When [gro mgon 'Phags pa (1235-1280)] was thirty-four, in the 1268, *dpon chen* Shakya bzang po established the *khri skor bcu gsum*". Also see Wylie, "The First Mongol Conquest of Tibet Reinterpreted" (p.125), where the establishment of the *khri skor* system relates to the Mongol census of Tibet in the same year.

few that deal with the topic I discuss.

What one deduces from the accounts found in the official historiographical literature such as the best-known *chos 'byung* and *lo rgyus* is that the Tibetans did not confront the Hor militarily. It would seem that a good dose of passivity spared them a complete annihilation of their socio-political system, unlike what happened in other countries where the Mongols beheaded the local power structure.

The little that is known about Dor ta's military activity in Khams while he was en route to invade Dbus-Gtsang and the lands of the Himalayan range in 1240 is enriched by the record of an extraordinary confrontation, an episode of Bon po heroism. My choice of this topic is in view of Dan Martin's passion for Bon. The events I discuss here pertain to the secular domain, a diversion Dan could appreciate from standard themes of its tradition, that is, the religious domain, which nonetheless impinge on activities undertaken in favor of the Bon po religion.

That the episodes I tackle have gone largely unnoticed rests on the isolation of the Bon po literary material, especially the few that concern its secular sphere, which is often neglected even by its historians who are more concerned with the religious unfolding of this tradition.

These incidents took place before Sa skya Paṇḍita wrote his famous letter to the Tibetans in which he urged them to surrender to the Hor (A mes zhabs, *Sa skya'i gdung rabs* p. 135,22-p.140,17). Points in the missive are indicative of his preoccupation that the Tibetans could underestimate Mongol might as other countries had done and for which there were dire consequences. I wonder whether Sa skya Paṇḍita also considered that, besides other Tibetan groups famed for their strength, people from Khams were among the few who went on a collision course to confront the powerful Mongols. The sequence of events that I will introduce occurred prior to the subsequent recommendations Sa skya Paṇḍita issued in his message.

The historical literature of Tibet treats the earliest official Mongol invasion recorded for Central Tibet and, in a more marginal manner, peripheral areas of Dbus-Gtsang towards the Himalayan range as if the Hor came to this wide expanse of lands from nowhere. It is obvious that, to reach Central Tibet, attack monasteries and kill people, Dor ta's army must have crossed A mdo and Khams. The itinerary that Dor ta followed in Khams and Dbus can be roughly traced. He took the *byang lam*, the northern route, given his presence in Steng chen which is confirmed by his advance to Sog yul according to Dpa'

bo Gtsug lag phreng ba,¹⁰ but there are no indications about the localities he touched while crossing A mdo and the rest of Khams. One more sign that Dor ta travelled on the *byang lam* is that he torched Dam dkar dgon, a Karma bKa' brgyud monastery on the bank of the Rdza chu in Nang chen.¹¹ The destination of Dor ta's campaign—Rwa sgreng, Rgyal lha khang and 'Bri gung—before heading south and west to the Himalayan range and Gtsang are one more indication in the same sense.

The history of the Hor in Tibet is made of invasions, victories, and a heavy-handed treatment of the Tibetans. The episode I deal with steps out of this steadfast sequence of negative facts for the inhabitants of the plateau, although it too did not take place without suffering and loss on the part of the Tibetans.

A combined reading of the *Khyung po gdung rabs* and the *Khyung*

¹⁰ Dpa' bo Gtsug lag phreng pa mentions a few regions crossed by Dor ta on the way to Central Tibet. He is not profuse in his description of the itinerary and even less so when the Hor chieftain traversed Khams. *Mkhas pa'i dga' ston* (p.1416,14-17) says: "Later, in iron rat 1240, the Hor troops, with Dor tog (spelled so) as commander, for the first time came to Tibet 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". With these words Dpa' bo marks the crucial steps of Dor ta's advance in Tibetan territory, Mdo stod (A mdo), Mdo smad (Khams), Sog chu (Sog yul contiguous to Steng chen/Sum pa Glang gi Gyim shod), and Rwa sgreng being the theatre of important events in Dor ta's military offensive. Was Sog chu/Sog yul the scene of another key incident on the way? Or does Dpa' bo mean Steng chen, the territory of Dor ta's warfare against the Khyung po? The *Mkhas pa'i dga' ston* (p.1416,13-20) adds: "When Jing gi (spelled so) was fifty-nine (sic, he was dead by then), in iron rat (1240), he would be born in 1182 according to Dpa' 'bo), given that Dor tog (i.e. Dor ta) was made head of the troops at Go dan's place Byang ngos, he led Hor troops to Tibet for the first time. According to the prophecy by O rgyan rin po che: "Mdo stod, Mdo smad, Sog chu and Rwa sgreng etc. ..., but I do not want to go into it in detail, for it is a matter of sorrow, people in Mdo stod, Mdo smad, Sog chu ka etc. were killed as soon as [the Mongols] saw them. Rwa sgreng was greatly damaged. Stag lung was hidden by fog and they did not see it. Rgyal lha khang was burnt. 500 monks, such as btsun pa So ston, were killed. No harm was caused to 'Bri khung because 'Bri khung Spyang snga Grags pa 'byung gnas made a rain of stones fall". It is the work by Dpa' bo Gtsug lag 'phreng ba which outspokenly makes Dor ta's campaign the earliest, while in several sources written before the *Mkhas pa'i dga' ston* this invasion is the first one included in their treatment of the Mongol relations with Tibet during the period.

¹¹ *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".

po'i lo rgyus rnam thar, belonging to the group of texts definable collectively as the *Khyung rabs*, provides a better sequence of the events. These are the texts that report the incidents I deal with here.

Dor ta nag po's Hor pa invasion was the factor that triggered the hostilities in Steng chen. The Khyung po of the territory revolted against the presence of Dor ta's warriors in their land. The account is a rarity because it records events in Khams that led to an armed resistance against the invaders. A wind of war blew, brought by the Hor pa troops,¹² headed by the incarnations of the *klu srin*-s of Gnam mtsho.

The Khyug po inflicted upon the Mongols the affront of stealing a *gser yig* ("golden letter") from Do rta.¹³ There is no information of the contents of the golden letter, a document normally issued by a high authority, including the Mongol emperor. It can be presumed that the *gser yig* touched on important political and military matters that concerned the Tibetans, or else it would have not been in the hands of Dor ta, charged by O go ta with the mission to bring the Tibetans under Hor pa governance. Otherwise, it would not have been snatched away by the two Khyung po headmen.

The Khyung po dignitaries from Steng chen, the brothers Dpon dGe and Dpon Dbus, stole it together with a solid silver duck with a golden beak, which seems to have been part of Dor ta's booty. The duck reminds one of Tibet's past and its participation in the nomadic world of the Central Asian steppes; its production of images depicting extraordinary animals is also found as a badge of imperial Tibet's dignitaries. The *Tang Annals* record that the tent of Khri Ral pa housed wondrous objects of precious metal.¹⁴ Ink made of precious materials was popular among Bon po masters. As for Hor pa looting, a life size crystal *mchod rten* was taken away from Gnas rnying decades later to be placed on the roof of Se chen rgyal po's palace.¹⁵

¹² *Khyung po gdung rabs* (f.5b,1-2) adds: "Thereafter Hor troops appeared. The shepherd of 'O brgyad noticed that the the lord of the secular realm (*srin rgyal*, i.e. the Hor Khan) with 100 heads and 1,000 arms manifested in the sky filling it".

¹³ *Khyung po'i lo rgyus rnam thar* (f.10a,6-f.10b,1) says: "Later, since those (i.e. Dpon Dge and Dpon Dbus) stole the Hor's golden letter and a two silver *bre* bird with a golden beak, they tied them on Khyung po (f.10b) horses. They fled in rebellion".

¹⁴ *New Tang Annals* (f.6a, Pelliot transl., *Histoire ancienne du Tibet* p.128-p.129): "Au milieu [du campement], il y avait une haute terrasse, entourée d'une riche balustrade. Le *btsan-po* était assis dans sa tente. [Il y avait] des dragons avec et sans cornes, des tigres, des pantheres, le tout fait en (p.129) or".

¹⁵ *Gnas rnying skyes bu rnam ky'i rnam thar* (f.11a,5-6): "During *rta pa'i zla ba*, Yol Thog 'bebs destroyed with nine bolts of lightning the white rock mountain resembling the open mouth of a lion, which could become a hostile place for the A me (spelled so) Yol [brothers]. It split like pieces of bamboo. From inside, a man-size crystal *mchod rten* and [another] *mchod rten*, one *khru* in size, appeared. The

The accounts of the events in the *Khyung po gdung rabs* and the *Khyung po'i lo rgyus rnam* tell a different story about the Mongol reaction. One says that it was immediate. They went chasing Dpon Dge and Dpon Dbus, which indicates that they were the headmen of the Khyung po rebellion. Dor ta and Ye rtags trapped and killed them.¹⁶ Another account says that they died in battle, one that was waged by the Khyung po against the Hor after the pursuit of the stolen goods (see nos. 16 and 17). Both versions do not say whether the golden letter was recovered.

The way the strife is described shows that the Mongols, when the confrontation was in full swing, had the upper hand initially. The Hor arrested Khyung po A bla and he was taken captive to Hor yul, deportation being a typical Mongol system to deal with their hostages. This happened after Dpon dge and Dpon Dbus were assassinated. The *Khyung po gdung rabs* assigns A bla's deportation in Mongols' captivity to before the 'O brgyad battle,¹⁷ the next episode in the saga.

5. A Khams pa victory against the Hor

The *Khyung po gdung rabs* and the *Khyung po'i lo rgyus rnam* describe to a limited extent the events that led Khams pa people from 'O brgyad in Steng chen to obtain a rare victory in battle against the Hor. A single Tibetan victory over the Mongols during the period should not be discounted given the fame of Hor pa invincibility. One episode of a successful expulsion of Hor troops from his land was achieved by a dignitary linked by a patron-patronized relationship (*yon mchod*) to U rgyan pa Rin chen dpal (1230-1309).¹⁸ It occurred in

man-size one was taken away by the Hor and installed as a '*gan dzi ra* of the Ta'i tu palace". Khubilai's capital Ta'i tu was begun in 1267. The main palace was completed in 1274 (Vitali, *Early Temples of Central Tibet* p.104 and p.120 n.178). Building activities continued for several decades to come. In absence of details concerning the crystal *mchod rten*, it is virtually impossible to ascertain the palace adorned by it. For a chronology of the construction of Ta'i tu see Shatzman Steinhart 1983.

¹⁶ *Khyung po'i lo rgyus rnam* *thar* says to which locality the two Hor pa warriors went in pursuit of Khyung po Dpon dGe and Dpon Dbus to recover the stolen items. The text (f.10b,1-2) reads: "Having gone to their pursuit, the Hor dignitaries Dor rto and Ye rtags, two of them, chased Khyung po Dpon dGe and Dpon Dbus from Byi'u lung mda' up to the foot of Byang ri and killed them there".

¹⁷ *Khyung po gdung rabs* (f.5b,2-3) reads: "Then Shes rab rgyal mtshan intervened. The Hor assassinated Khyung po Dpon dGe and Dpon Dbus. The Hor deported Khyung po A bla and persecuted the teachings of G.yung drung Bon".

¹⁸ *Deb ther sngon po* (p.1267,3-10): "His (i.e. Bya mnga' bdag's) sons were Dge slong ba, Bya Rin chen and Chos rgyal dpal bzang, three in all, who were known as the Bya Rigs gsum mgon po. Dge slong ba's sons were Rin chen dpal. Dbang phyug ri chen, Rin chen bzang po and Dwags po ba. His (i.e. Bya Rin chen's) subjects (*mi*

Bya yul during a subsequent Mongol campaign, not Dor ta's. The *yon mchod* Bya Rin chen established with U rgyan pa, given the *grub chen's* birth date, is proof that he did not cast away from his lands either Dor ta or Do be ta who invaded Tibet in 1252 (*Mkhas pa'i dga'ston* p.1419 lines 6-7). Bya Rin chen repulsed the Mongol army that burned 'Bri gung down in iron tiger 1290 and continued its campaign south of the Brahmaputra and into the Himalayan range. This is proved by *Lho rong chos 'byung* (p.740,6-21) among other works, which talks about U rgyan pa's visit to Mdo mkhar (spelled so), Thang po che, Gnyal, Chag lo tsa ba's Te ra and Lo ro. At the last destination of this journey, he realised that the second Karma pa re-embodiment Karma Pakshi (b. 1204) had died at that time, that is, in the year 1283. U rgyan pa's *yon mchod* with Bya Rin chen should be placed in those years, followed by the Bya dignitary's successful expulsion of the Mongols which is confirmed for 1290.

The spiritual master Khyung po rin po che Shes rab rgyal mtshan is introduced in the *Khyung rabs* texts, engaged in moving hurriedly with destination Steng chen when the situation precipitated.¹⁹ He did not opt for a conciliatory attitude—a defensive move—like some *bla ma-s* who tried to come to terms with the Mongols,²⁰ or at best per-

se spelled so for *mi ser*) were the people of G.ye, Dwags [po], Dmyal, Byar and Lo ro. He held many estates in these [areas]. Bya Rin chen subdued all [territories] such as G.ye, Dmyal, Dwags [po], and Lo ro. He repulsed the troops of the Hor and was appointed everyone's headman. He entertained *yon mchod* with grub chen U rgyan pa".

¹⁹ On the way, Khyung po rin po che Shes rab rgyal mtshan is attributed the same miraculous performance as Stong rgyung ring mo, the Khyung po dignitary of the third/fourth quarter of the 7th century who moved to Sum pa Glang gi Gyim shod. The text says that, during the migration, he left behind a flower on every spot he stomped his feet, a manifest derivation from the legend of the previous Khyung po exponent. The *Khyung po gdung rabs* (f.5a,6 -f.5b,1) adds that Khyung po rin po che Shes rab rgyal mtshan rode on a horse which was fast like a *garuda*: "Khyung po rin po che Shes rab rgyal mtshan rode on Mdo ba rta rje lding khyung (the "flying *khyung* lord of excellent horses"). (f.5b) He went to Mdo smad. On every spot on which he stomped his feet, a flower each appeared". A conciliatory way out from the two versions could be to proffer that horse hoofprints blossomed into flowers.

²⁰ Even Sphyan snga Rin po che, despite sparing the life of sgom pa Shak rin and preserving 'Bri gung from a Hor pa attack by means of a miraculous performance, came to terms with Dor ta to avoid further damage (see above n.5). One more case, for instance, is the effort of Sangs rgyas yar byon (1203-1272), the third abbot of Stag lung, to use his charisma and convince the Mongols not to create havoc by sending an emissary for pacification. Among various sources dealing with the event, *Sangs rgyas yar byon gyi rnam thar* (*Stag lung chos 'byung* p.276,8-13) reads: "On one occasion, a large army of Hor Du mur's troops came to Tibet. [Sangs rgyas yar byon] gave gifts to Zhang btsun and sent him to the headquarters of the Hor. Having rolled up only a few prayers [as gifts for them], [this was enough] to pacify their evil minds and they were subdued. Upon travelling to the

formed rituals in order to contain the Mongols (*Hor bzlog*) or rites of protection (*rim 'gro*). Khyung po rin po che Shes rab rgyal mtshan's contribution to the conflict between the Khyung po and the Hor was that he put his spiritual status coupled with his determination at the service the people of 'O brgyad in Steng chen and the members of the Khyung po clan. He supported the rebels and was adamant in his uncompromising encouragement to take the offensive. Khyung po rin po che Shes rab rgyal mtshan, a religious personality, exercised spiritual control over his people, whom he pushed into action against the Hor when the situation seemed to turn sour for the Khams pa.

The Hor put up a show of strength deploying a striking number of warriors, but the Khams pa managed to eliminate them.²¹ With the intervention of the sky the Mongol troops were annihilated. The victory is attributed to a miraculous stone hail and a rain of lightnings. These themes are a classic of the Tibetan vision of Mongol culture. The rain of stones echoes the treatment Dor ta received when he tried to destroy 'Bri gung. The supernatural tones that led to victory in battle have been transferred from 'Bri gung to Khams (or vice versa). Differently from the miraculous hail that prevented the *dgon pa* from being torn down by the Hor, the case of the stones falling on the heads of the Mongols in Steng chen was an offensive designed to wipe out their troops. The other literary classic, typical of the culture of the animistic Mongols, is that the episode proves their dependency on the sky.²²

headquarters of the Hor, they had a one-night halt on the way, so the men had to carry his residential tent (*gzims gur*) on their head. They had the vision that Thugs rje chen po was sitting [on their heads]. They made prostrations". Du mur's campaign took place during an unidentified year before 1253.

²¹ *Khyung po'i lo rgyus rnam thar* (f.10b,2-4) says: "Then, from the Tshug mar gsum border, the queen of secular existence with 100 heads and 1,000 arms appeared in the three worlds. A stone hail like eggs fell continuously, [making the sound] *khri li li*. Those stones can still be seen at present. A saying was that those stone served the purpose as rotten curd and rotten chang. People stated that, under the rain of stones, not a single man of the Hor troops was spared". The *Khyung po gdung rabs* (f.5b,3-5): "Thereafter, Shes rab rgyal mtshan said that the retinue of the lord of the secular realm (*srid pa rgyal po*, i.e. the Hor supreme) had to be repulsed. The shepherds, too, joined and proclaimed likewise [that the Hor should be eliminated]. A hail of stones, each one like an egg, rain and lightnings fell. The Hor troops—men and horses altogether—died without exception and [therefore the army] was destroyed. The communities of the land of 'O brgyad absorbed the lineages of the two Khyung po brothers (i.e. Dpon Dge and Dpon Dbus) into their pastoral class".

²² The notion that the Khyung po were able to induce the deity of the intermediate space, Mongol Tengri (Tibetan: *gnam*), to defeat the Hor is a metaphor of the supernatural power of the sky, acknowledged as superior by the mighty Mongol

Hor pa retaliation was quick. The Mongols sent other troops to the area, which shows that those defeated and killed at 'O brygad were a detachment of their army. The rebellion was quelled.²³ Shes rab rgyal mtshan, named Khyung Dbus rin po che in the passage (*Khyung po'i lo rgyus rnam thar* f.7b,4 and f.9b,5-6), was compelled to flee owing to the presence of this other Hor military contingent sent to the area to curb the gallant assertiveness of the Khams pa rebels.²⁴ The convoluted itinerary Khyung Dbus rin po che followed in his flight from the Hor brought him towards the region of the Dngul chu and then, from Nag[s] shod in the upper side of the river, he went to the locality that *Khyung po'i lo rgyus rnam thar* names Khyung Dbus rdzong. The land along the river, which becomes known as Rgyal mo Rngul chu in its southern side, was a safe haven,²⁵ for the Hor did not pursue him

conquerors who had to bow to it. See the case of the Tshal pa master Dung khur pa, whose status was enhanced by the Mongol perception that he had the skill to control the sky. The *Mkhas pa'i dga' ston* (p.1414,17-p.1415,1) reads: "It seems that the earliest to come [to Hor yul and nearby lands] were the teachings of the Tshal pa, ahead of the Sa [skya pa and] Kar [ma pa]. Zhang rin po che's disciple, Gtsang pa Dung khur pa, seven in all, including [this] teacher and [his] disciples, went to Hor yul and stayed at a hermitage. The [local] Mongol nomadic encampments were engaged in grazing sheep. [Dung khur pa and disciples] practised meditation, while [the Mongol nomads] mainly [attended upon] the sheep. One day there was heavy hail and a flood, and all sheep [in other areas] died. He (i.e. Dung khur pa) focused his concentration on the hail, which stopped falling instantly, so that their sheep did not suffer at all. This being extraordinary, [the Mongols] asked for an explanation and, not being able to speak the language, [Dung khur pa] pointed his index finger towards the sky, which they understood as meaning that he had received empowerment [from there]. Great fame and merit (p.1415) ensued [to him]".

²³ The aftermath of the battle was a time for compassionate attention. The inhabitants of 'O brygad performed funerary rites for their victims and erected a *mchod rten bkra shis sgo mang* with no indication of its purpose but the one—I assume—of *gdung rten* for the dead. *Khyung po gdung rabs* (f.6a,1-3): "A *sku 'bum* was built on top of the mountain. It is well known that [this *mchod rten*] built by the [people] of 'O brygad bestowed great blessings. At present, it has ended up inside the *sa rta*. Blood was [found] scattered in the ashes. Sha ri ram relics and numerous images appeared in the ashes".

²⁴ *Khyung po'i lo rgyus rnam thar* (f.10b,4-6): "Owing to [the presence of] another major Hor army detachment, Khyung Dbus rin po che, carried by the *rta rje lding khyung* ("khyung, flying lord of horses"), left for the region of the Lho Rngul chu. From Nag stod of Sha rong he set out to Brag dkar choosing [to travel in] the sky. He extracted a *chu gter* ("water repository") which was embedded in a rock. Having stayed there, the Hor troops could not [do anything]. At present [the locality] is known as Khyung Dbus rdzong".

²⁵ A shorter and a longer description of Rngul chu and why it is associated to the south—of Steng chen in particular—are respectively found in an old text and a contemporary source. The *IHo rong chos 'byung* (p.745,14-15) says: "The rivers in the east flow to Nag shod. After mixing with the Sog chu [the river] becomes known as rNgu (spelled so) Rgyal nag mo". IHo bsTan 'dzin nyi ma writes in the

there, which would have been a detour from their objective in Central Tibet.

While the *Khyung po gdung rabs* focuses on Khyung po A bla being taken prisoner at the time of the conflict that ensued when the Hor assassinated Khyung Dpon dGe and Dpon Dbus, and mentions no more than he was deported to Hor yul (see n. 16), the *Khyung po'i lo rgyus rnam thar*, on the other hand, tells about his life in captivity in the land of the Mongols. Six years after his detention, he was the object of an assassination attempt that was foiled by U zi ma, a Mongol woman who took care of him.²⁶ Hence, it not being anywhere indicated whether Dor ta was in Khams in 1239 or after his attack of Dbus in 1240, A bla would have been taken hostage around 1240 and would have continued to be a captive in Hor yul after the assassination attempt of around 1245, since he had a child from the same Mongol woman. This shows that, in the Hor pa view, matters were not settled with the Khyung po after Dor ta's campaign. The multiple battles between the Khyung po and the Hor were more than an incident on the way to Dbus, but instead local resistance that took the Mongols time to defuse. Old scores were still influencing the Mongol relations with A bla given the attempted murder, quite different from the treatment Sa skya Paṇḍita received at Byang ngos.

To wrap up the historical sense of the contention between the Khyung po and the Hor and its multifarious facets that go from the enforcement of the Hor pa law to a rare case of armed resistance by the Tibetans, the facts suggest that the dispute between the Khyung po and the Hor was a war, not a single battle. It was a sequence of battles.

6. A time of Bon po self-assertion

After the situation cooled down so that his life was no more threatened, Khyung po Shes rab rgyal mtshan returned to Steng chen, for

, *mDo Khams Dge 'Brong lo rgyus* (p.155,9-15): "After several minor water courses cross Nag shod, 'Bri ru smad and Khams Sring mo rdzong in succession, [they converge]. The place of the confluence of the two rivers Nag [chu] and Sog chu is known as Nag Sog sum mdo. After the Nag chu and Sog chu merge, [the river] is universally known as Rgyal mo Rngul chu. It receives the minor water courses of Dkar shod, Rgyal shod, Re shod and gently flows to the north of Dpal 'bar, to the south of Steng chen, the middle of Lho rong and Dpa' shod, the west of Mdzo sgang and Rdza yul and from the right side of Kha ba dkar po into Yun nan".

²⁶ *Khyung po'i lo rgyus rnam thar* (f.10b,6-f.11a,2): "Six years having elapsed from when A bla (f.11a) was captured by the Hor troops, Hor Shi zin (i.e. Dor ta's successors) came to kill him. The daughter of the Hor dignitary A ta 'gu ti, namely U zi ma, saved his life so that this noble brother, child of Tibet, was spared from being killed".

he was granted a holy place most sacred to the Bon po tradition, named Shel le rdzong drug in as related in the *Khyung po gdung rabs*.²⁷ This extraordinary holy place with a stunning landscape is commonly known nowadays as Khyung po Rtse drug. Shel le rdzong drug was the focal point of the Khyung po in Sum pa Glang gyi Gyim shod (spelled Sum gling Gyim shod in the text), the quintessential hermitage of the Bon po tradition. The grant had been prophesied to Shes rab rgyal mtshan before his migration to Khams by his *bka' srung* whose identity is not revealed in the *Khyung po gdung rabs*.²⁸

In those days, the territory of Steng chen was in the hands of the Rgya who belonged to the ancestral lDong *mi'u rigs*.²⁹ Steng chen was ruled by the dignitary Rgya gtsug gtor Nyi ma 'brug grags. This means that the Rgya were the lords of the land inhabited by a Khyung po population. The Rgya had not been involved in the contention with the Hor but there are no clues to ascertain whether they suffered from the conflict.

The *Ldong rus mdzod* says that the Rgya were settled at Rma chen Spom ra and also held lands in Zal mo sgang,³⁰ the *sgang* out of the

²⁷ *Khyung po gdung rabs* (f.6a,5-f.6b,2): "Then, when Rin po che Shes rab rgyal mtshan went to the locality, the headman of the land Steng chen, Rgya gtsug gtor Nyi ma 'brug grags, great in might (f.6b) and political power, this master of the *rig pa'i gnas lnga*, said: "Although the advice of Sangs rgyas gong ma and any lineage in whatever case could be destroyed even now, I offer the *bstan pa* and the royal seat of the Rgya to the Khyung po. This likewise is a time of happy acquisition occurring". In the tripartite division of the lands of Zhang zhung, the Bon po tradition has it that Shel le Rgya gar and Sum pa Glang gyi Gyim shod belonged to Zhang zhung Sgo. *Zhang zhung rig gnas* (p.32,5) mentions its constituent areas as She le Rgya skar and Khyung po Gting rdzong, called so rather than Khyung po rdzong drug.

²⁸ *Khyung po gdung rabs* (f.6a,3-5): "At that time, the *bka' srung* on a red mule gave Khyung po Shes rab rgyal mtshan an order [containing] instructions likewise: "The holder of the Dbra dkar Khyung po lineage must go to Mdo Khams smad. He should make arrangements to make the teachings shine like the sun and moon. Even clouds in the sky will shine in the future. At the holy *rdzong* site of Sum [pa] gling Gyim shod in front of the extremely noble Shel le rdzong drug is the seat of the Steng chen pa Khyung po at Gser nya mtsho. You should go to this locality'. So said he". *Khyung po gdung rabs* defines as Mdo Khams smad the territory of Sum pa Glang gi Gyim shod—known as Khyung po or Steng chen in more modern times—which indicates how territorially volatile are the geographic definitions of Khams. Mdo Khams smad normally addresses a more easterly and also southerly sector of the region.

²⁹ Shar yul Phuntsok Tsering (*A Survey of Bonpo Monasteries and Temples in Tibet and the Himalaya* p.165-166) takes Rgya gtsug tor Nyi ma 'brug grags for a Chinese. He equivocates his affiliation to the Rgya clan which, on the contrary, is of immaculate lDong origin. The Rgya belonging to the lDong tribe were fully-fledged Tibetans in the 13th century and also since ancestral time.

³⁰ *lDong ru mdzod* (Hermanns ed. f.13b,1-2 = p.197,36-37) "Rgya tse dkar po is one lDong. Rma chen Pom (spelled so) ra in the east is [his] unchangeable holy

six situated in the western/central part of Khams. The diffusion of the Rgya clan members, therefore, encompassed a huge tract of lands from Zal mo sgang to Rma chen Spom ra and, in the east, they inhabited various areas of A mdo.

In its outline of the Khyung po genealogies, the *Khyung po'i lo rgyus rnam thar* looks closely at the events that established a direct relation between the Khyung po and the Rgya in the territory of Steng chen. The generation that instituted this rapprochement was that of the four 'Dan children, known as the 'Dan Khyung. One of them, Khyung Dbus, who had settled at sPom ra ancestrally inhabited by a group of Rgya, gave two *bre* of silver to the local Khyung po exponent sTon thar. One *bre* was gifted to support the younger members of the clan. He gave the other in prevision of the future intermarriage with a wondrous Rgya woman who would bring glory to the Khyung po by giving birth to her children.³¹ One of them was

place". Ibid. (f.17a,2-3 = p.200,6-7): "The Bi ri [division of the Rgya] had cattle as many as Zal mo sgang".

³¹ *Khyung po'i lo rgyus rnam thar* (f.8b,2-4): "Those [living in Khams, long] after the ancestral lineage (i.e. the one descending from Khyung sder sngon mo), were Rgyal ba dpal, Shes rabs (spelled so) dpal and Dpal bzang po. They were those who held ranks such as *rta dben bru* and the seal with a tiger-head jewel. Given that Rgyal rin held the rank of the Chinese emperor's *rta dben bru sha*, there is an account that he placed a gold-written 'Bum over the emperor's head". Ibid. (f.9a,5-f10a,6): "Gtsug gsum Stag [was born] at sunshine of the daybreak (sic) when Khu byug died. Khyung po Myes tshab was one son born to Stag pa. He was also known as Stong 'bar. Dam pa Khyung sgom was the one [born] after the latter. As for his name, he was also known as Shes rab sgom. Dben pa A lug was the one [born] after the latter. He was also known as Ston (f.9b) lug. The youngest was known as Khyung Dbus. His name was Dad pa rgyal mtshan. These four were the four 'Dan tsha children, also known as the 'Dan Khyung. Stong 'bar's son was Stong thar. Ston lug's son was dpon Slob 'gres po. As for his name, he was also known as Bkra shis 'bar. He had no descendants. His brothers died. Mkhas pa Khyung Dbus settled at Rma Pom (spelled so) ra. Having gone to see sTon thar, he gave him two *bre* of silver. He said: "One is for your sons' living expenses (*rgyag rten* spelled so for *rgyags rten*), and as for the other being a support to Rgya Re bza's legendary aura (*gtam*), boys and girls of wealth and merit will come to exist". He did likewise. When Rgya bza' came to the family, that night she laid the foundation of the group of the six Rgya stag (the "six Rgya tigers"). Later, six sons were born to her. The eldest was Stong sras, [born] after him was Khyung Dbus rin po che Shes rab rgyal mtshan; [born] after the latter was Ston pa Bon sgra; [born] after the latter was Bsges gshen Ye shes dpal who was also known as Dpon dgGe; [born] after the latter was Dpon Dbus (f.10a) who, as for his name, was known as Dad pa rgyal mtshan; the youngest was Stong 'bum also known as Ston A 'bum and later Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan as a monk. They were known as the Rgyal tshang spun drug of father Ston thar. Based on *lha chos sa gsum nag tshong* ("smuggling in the three lands [where] *lha chos* [is practised]"), the people of the camp took it yonder and settled down permanently in the lower area of Byi'u lung of Dbus. There was an offer of a hill-ock by the Ja ro phos pa. Ston sras's son from Stag bza' was the *slob dpon bla ma*

Khyung Dbus rin po che Shes rab rgyal mtshan to whom Rgya gtsug gtor Nyi ma 'brug grags granted Rtse drug and control over Steng chen.

The Rgya dignitary was led by the presence in the land of a *bla ma* of the calibre of Khyung po rin po che Shes rab rgyal mtshan to realise that Steng chen had to go back to its ancient owners.³² This may be a sign that until Khyung po Shes rab rgyal mtshan came to Steng chen the Khyung po did not have leadership in the territory. The grant marked the Khyung po's re-appropriation of land in the 1240s that had been their own since at least the late seventh century but could have been theirs long before, given the reverence they had for their ancient and most sacred Shel le rdzong drug. It is difficult to establish when Khyung po Rtse drug was selected as a great hermitage site. The Bon po tradition holds it that it was theirs from time immemorial.

The change of control from the Rgya to the Khyung po brought a reformed leadership in Steng chen. The grant of Khyung po Rtse drug led the Khyung po clan to take over secular control of Steng chen, too. In the first instance both religious and secular power were assigned to Shes rab rgyal mtshan. Hence, they both were in the hands of a religious exponent, which amounted to a theocratic choice.

whose name was A bla. Later, he was a monk by the name of Nam kha' rgyal mtshan. sTon gnyan had many sons and daughters. A karmic debt [was paid] with their lives from an early time. Communities, such as the Khrom tshang, convened upwards from Mdo smad. They were named Sa Hor. The derogatory name Khrom tshang A stis stayed with those who pitched camps (*sgar 'dab ru*, spelled so for '*debs ru*') of the Khyung po kin".

³² *Khyung po gdung rabs* (f.6b,2-f.7a,1) further elaborates: "Rgya rje Nyi ma 'brug grags went on riding on a Khyung po horse. Khyung po Shes rab rgyal mtshan proceeded well inside Rma la bzhi. He came across the religious throne of the Rma on the plain. Clad in silk, he rode to the tiered throne of the Rgya but with damage in its structure. Then, having been invited to Rgya rdzong under [Nyi ma 'brug grags]'s power in Khams, Rgya gtsug gtor Nyi ma 'brug grags asked Khyung po Shes rab rgyal mtshan for teachings. He likewise gave them. "Now, as [said] in the *kha byang* of the Sangs rgyas gong ma, I [offer to you] the teachings of the Rgya that exist in the land of Rgya, the whole of Rgya and the sentient beings who live in the present circumstances. [In exchange of] yourself and the teachings of the Khyung po, given that I, Rgya rje Nyi ma 'brug grags, occupy this *gdan sa*, may the holy place [be allotted] to yourself, Khyung Rgyal, and the castle of the Rgya under [my] jurisdiction in Khams. (f.7a) May it pass under [your] control, Khyung Rgyal!". He gave him a golden vessel [note: one should consult the other account]. As requested, [Khyung po Shes rab rgyal mtshan] gave him a combination of appropriate teachings". The Rgya rdzong reached by Shes rab rgyal mtshan was composed by a twin locality, for the *Khyung po gdun rabs* elsewhere says that Rgya Nyi ma 'brug grags had a dual seat at Gser ri and G.yu ri (ibid. f.9a,5, but it seems that the Khyung po secular rulers from A bla onwards chose Brag dmar me ri rdzong chen to be their secular hub in Steng chen (ibid. f.9a,6).

But the system was changed almost immediately. Shes rab rgyal mtshan renounced both roles.³³ Religion and secularism went into the hands of two different Khyung po clan members. Shes rab rgyal mtshan pass-ed the chieftainship of Steng chen to Nang chen grags pa and A bla, who broke free from his captivity in Hor yul and managed to return to Khams.³⁴

Whatever treatment was reserved to Khyung po A bla—including the policy of taking a Tibetan dignitary as hostage to be the Hor pa interlocutor with the people of the plateau in a way similar to Sa skya Pandita—this proved to be unsuccessful. A bla managed to survive in captivity but did not have a role in Mongol policy towards Tibet. He returned to his land with a son from the Hor mo noblewoman who saved his life.³⁵

Was A bla taken to Byang ngos, by then the center of the Mongol policy concerning Tibet? He was deported to Hor yul before Sa skya Paṇḍita began his journey to Hor yul in 1244 to meet Go dan in Byang ngos. Did they meet at this seat of Mongol power?

The *Khyung po gdung rabs* tells us that, after Shes rab rgyal mtshan's refusal to accept responsibilities in Steng chen and delegation of control over both spheres to his stepbrothers, he did not stay in the region. It is somewhat confused concerning his whereabouts. The text says that he settled at Khyung lung dngul mkhar not to be taken for the capital of Zhang zhung (see n.32). The *Khyung po'i lo rgyus rnam thar* (f.7a,5-6) clarifies that this was the castle founded by the Khyung po in the late 7th century at Rma chu Bkra ri, named so by the Khyung po. This indicates that the Bon po idea was that the place

³³ *Khyung po gdung rabs* (f.7a,1-4): "Khyung rin po che Shes rab rgyal mtshan said: "I myself am a peculiar personality in the ten directions. I have no means to rule the land and its community. However, I wish to lend your Rgya land, castle, and community that I have received to the Khyung po. I [will give them] to my two half-brothers A bla and Nang chen grags pa. I will keep on staying at Zhang zhung Khyung lung dngul mkhar. I grant them this one gift. You should send two messengers to summon him (i.e. A bla)"."

³⁴ *Khyung po gdung rabs* (f.7a,6-f.7b,2): "When Khyung A bla returned from the land of the Hor, the two men sent to invite him witnessed [his return]. The message of the grant was communicated with the request [to accept it]. (f.7b) A bla having been invited, the headman (i.e. A bla) and the assistants, three in all, [travelled] via the *lho lam*. From the area in Shing rong dbyangs chen la kha, offers of flowers like rain being bestowed [upon him], he went upwards with great happiness to return to his own land".

³⁵ *Khyung po'i lo rgyus rnam thar* (f.11a,2-4): "[Hor mo U zi ma] became familiar with him, and a son was born who was unaffected by fire, water, and wild animals. He happened to subsist on light and lightnings and he was given the name Hor btsun Byang chub rgyal mtshan. He gathered many people and looked after them. One aristocratic relative (*lha gnyen*) gave him protection so that he was called Lha gnyen Mgon 'bum".

still was Zhang zhung, no more a kingdom but a *locus mentis*.

An internal rearrangement took place between Nang chen Grags pa and A bla. The former, who received honors from the emperor of China, once again not identified in the text, stressed his predisposition to follow the religious path.³⁶ He did not want to have the burden of secular responsibilities which Rgya gtsug gtor Nyi ma 'brug grags granted A bla.³⁷ Nang chen Grags pa was the spiritual head of the Khyung po community, A bla its secular head, so that religion and politics, that is, *Chos* and *srid* were separated.

After being released by the Hor, Khyung po A bla traveled on the *lho lam*, southern route, from China to Khams.³⁸ It is not clear whether the reference to the *lho lam* concerns the road he took in China or the tract in Khams that would have brought him to Steng chen. If *lho lam* refers to Khams, he must not have entered the Tibetan plateau from the area of Rab sgang/Khams Mi nyag where, in those years, refugees from the erstwhile Tangut kingdom converged to escape Jing gir rgyal po's destruction of their state, an area too far south from the destination of sTeng chen. He may have travelled along the more southern route from Dkar mdzes to Sde dge and Chab mdo rather than farther north across Rma chen, 'Bri klung and Nang chen.

As with what happened with A bla who was able to return to Khams to assume the responsibility of his post, so Nang chen Grags pa, the person designated to hold Khyung po Rtse drug, was not in Steng chen. He himself was staying at eastern Khyung lung dngul mkhar from where he was summoned.

This *lo rgyus* historical part of the *Khyung po gdung rabs* ends with the aftermath of the contention between the Hor and the Khyung po, and begins with a section that relates the names of the Khyung po genealogy of Steng chen. Most of these people are unknown to me,

³⁶ *Khyung po'i lo rgyus rnam thar* (f.11a,6-f.11b,4): "After Dpon dGe and Dpon Dbus, altogether two, were killed (*bsgrung*), from the servant A mtsho bza' a son of Ston'bum was (f.11b) born. He was Nang chen Grags pa rgyal mtshan. At the age of thirteen, he was asked to take a wife from his entourage. He said: 'I do not choose household life. I will practice *lha chos*'. The senior ministers invited an important wife to protect the lineage. Due to that, Nang chen Grags pa rgyal mtshan was extremely disturbed. Thus, he said: 'I must only practice *lha chos*. As for the lineage of the Khyung po family, to protect it a little, [you] should go to Hor yul to look for A bla. The Hor did not kill him yet. It is possible [to take him back]'".

³⁷ *Khyung po gdung rabs* (f.9b,3-4): "Rgya rje Nyi ma 'brug grags, who had got the land and the community, all of them, arranged that Khyung A bla should have them".

³⁸ The document published by Sharyul Phuntso Tsering, which he does not identify, also mentions that A bla travelled the *lho lam* (*A Survey of Bonpo Monasteries and Temples in Tibet and the Himalaya* p.166).

but among those who did not have a part in the events (secular and religious) of those years, they too should have had a significant place in the history of the Tibeto-Mongol relations.

The child whom A bla had with the Hor mo who had given support during his captivity went eventually to live in Tibet (see above n.35). He is one of the few Tibetans of Mongol origin whose existence is documented for the period. He is called Hor btsun Byang chub rgyal mtshan in the *Khyung po gdung rabs*. Hence, he is identified by his matrilinear side. His Hor pa blood was *sha* while, for instance, the Mongol blood of Hor khang Ma bsam bu ("unintended son") (*Hor chos rje sku phreng gong rim gyi rnam thar* p.35,4-5), the progenitor of the Tre Hor lineage, was *rus*.

The time frame of all these activities extends to a good number of years after the initial contention between the Khyung po and Dor ta. It must allow for the captivity of A bla in Hor yul, his having a child with a Mongol woman, and his return with the son they bore. A safe *terminus ante quem* is the inception of the Yuan domination of Tibet in 1268 during the thirty years that elapsed from the strife that broke out around 1240 and the passage of Tibet under the authority of Se chen rgyal po [= Qubilai Khaghan (r. 1260-1294)].

Eventually the scions of A bla split into three encampments, the Rang lo, Gser pa and Tshab shwe pa, defined as *sgar-s* (*Khyung po gdung rabs* f.9a,2-f.9b,2; is *sgar* in this sense different from *ru* but still implying a 'brog pa condition?). They were the chieftains of the Khyung po. Initially they formed a three-fold unity, but they split afterwards. The Rang lo gave birth to the Khyung dkar and Khyung nag divisions. The Tshab produced the Khyung tshab, hence they did not substantially proliferate but expanded their territorial influence to A mdo. Like the Khyung tshab, the Gser pa carried on without substantial modifications to the clan.

7. A subsequent Khyung po religious episode in Steng chen

The passage from a hermit/individualistic pattern of Bon po practice to a monastic organisation in Steng chen was the outcome of religious charisma and courage on the political scene. It took place either rather early or late in comparison with other regional strongholds of Bon. For instance, in Mustang the Bon po monastic phase began earlier, i.e., in the second half of the twelfth century (Klu brag dgon).³⁹ In

³⁹ For the studies by Klu brag pa Bkra shis rgyal mtshan (1131-1215) on monastic discipline at G.yas ru Dben sa kha see the *Zhang zhung snyan rgyyud bla ma'i rnam thar* (p.86,4-6). For his foundation of Klu brag, thus establishing a monastic community in Glo smad see Vitali, *A short history of Mustang* (p.36).

Dol po it happened during the 14th century (Bsam gling dgon, see the *Zhang zhung snyan rgyud bla ma'i rnam thar* p.93,2-3), around the time of the similar phase in Steng chen. Bon po monasticism was far ahead in its features and time frame from the patterns of Buddhist monasticism on the plateau, if one thinks of the post-1054 (the death date of A ti sha) creation of the Bka' gdams pa school, the establishment of Sa skya pa school in 1073 or the birth of the networks of Bka' brgyud pa subschools in Central Tibet and Khams.

The adoption of monasticism in Steng chen coincided with the foundation of the eponymous monastery, Steng chen *dgon*, by the charismatic master Khyung rin po che Shes rab rgyal mtshan. In his treatment of Steng chen dgon pa, Sharyul Phuntso Tsering in his *A Survey of Bonpo Monasteries and Temples in Tibet and the Himalaya* p.164 places the life of Khyung Dbus Shes rab rgyal mtshan first in the tenth century and then writes that he founded Steng chen dgon pa in 1061. In the *Bon dgon khag gi lo rgyus* (p.288,6), Sharyul Phuntso Tsering gives, instead, the birth date of Khyung po Shes rab rgyal mtshan as iron ox 1061, the same year he attributed the foundation of Steng chen dgon pa to the Bon po master in his *A Survey of Bonpo Monasteries and Temples in the Tibet and the Himalaya* (p.164). I presume that the unidentified document he has used to discuss Steng chen gives the monastery's foundation date to an iron ox year which he assigns to the first *rab byung* and, therefore, he takes it for 1061, but it makes sense to postdate it to fourth *rab byung*, hence to 1241. The correction in favor of 1241 is justified by Shes rab rgyal mtshan's deeds in Steng chen around that year and Dor ta's concomitant campaign.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ In the *bsTan 'byung skal bzang mgul rgyan*, Dpal ldan tshul khriims has an overview of holy institutions in Sum pa Glang gi Gyim shod after the ancient period which, nonetheless, may go back to a time earlier than the great *bstan pa me ro/phyi dar* divide. He is non-committal on the issue but the way he deals with his material acknowledges that some of the holy places existed beforehand. Dpal ldan tshul khriims (*Bstan 'byung skal bzang mgul rgyan* p.503,8-15) writes: "The *gdan sa-s* of the noble Khyung po in Stod, Smad and Bar are so numerous that I indeed do not know all of them. Nonetheless, a great monastery founded during *bstan pa phyi dar* in Bar Khams was Sog Lcags zam g.yung drung gling, which was cited above. Extremely many erudites and meditators born in the Khyung po clan came [to work] at this institution, but their names are not recorded. Likewise, it is a fact that there were a few monastic communities at Gyim shod stod smad at an early time but at present their locations and the *lha khang-s* [themselves] are not known for sure. For the sake [of this analysis], to elucidate likewise the existence of the seats of the Khyung dkar nag gser, three in all, associated [among themselves] in the name of nobility, the *gdan sa* of the Khyung dkar was Brag dmar ri bdun; the *gdan sa* of the Khyung nag was Rtse drug ri khrod; the *gdan sa* of the Khyung gser was Bya ze yang rdzong, which, in earlier time, were splendid and bestowed blessings".

All in all, the Khyung po in Steng chen occupy a historical niche that has few counterparts in the centuries of post-imperial Tibet. They passed from putting up a gallant rebellion against the Hor with victories and defeats—rare if not unique events during the Mongol dominance of Tibet before Yuan rule—to bring their land in a span of a few years to a time of religious glory that made it the epitome of a Bon po enclave that it continues to be today.

The importance of the Khyung po's achievement goes beyond the individual sphere. An example of single-handed refusal to bow to the Hor and their subordinates is that of U rgyan pa Rin chen dpal. It cost the Bka' brgyud pa master dearly but left him unimpressed and defiant (see Vitali, "Grub chen U rgyan pa and the Mongols of China"). The achievements of the Khyung po were collective and, despite highs and lows, they were able to renovate the glory of Rtse drug, a place that, despite the adulterations of modernity, still breathes a spirituality and a sense of a world with values different from the predominant standards of the present.

8. *Unsolved matters*

A few pending matters for which there is no easy solution are:

~ the precise years of the events in Steng chen, hence how they relate to Go dan's time of appointment in Byang ngos and Dor ta's campaign, although evidently around 1240.

~ consequently, the temporal slot of Dpon dGe and Dpon Dbus's assassination.

~ whether the conflict between the Khyung po and Hor happened on Dor ta's way-in or way-out of Central Tibet (to paraphrase Xenophon's account of the campaigns of Cyrus in Asia Minor; was it during Dor ta's *anabasis* or *katabasis*?). This incertitude leads to a minimum *delta* of years, either before or after the year 1240.

~ the absence of any indication of the year in which Dor ta returned to Hor yul.

Addendum

A micro-gnas yig of Khyung po Rtse drug

An important piece of history of the subsequent period is the major monastic foundation at Khyung po Rtse drug in 1383 by Blo ldan snying po (b. 1360), a member of the Khyung po clan and a child of the Steng chen soil. The holy place was transformed from a her-

mitage to a center for a Bon po congregation.⁴¹ The *Khyung po gdung rabs* has a short *dkar chag* of the holy building that Khyung po Blo ldan snying po constructed.⁴² The model he used for his *gtsug lag khang* is treated in mythical terms, for it was Gsas khang Bkra shis legs thang from the realm of Rtag gzigs (spelled so) 'Ol mo lung ring, but it cannot be ruled out that, in cosmopolitan fourteenth century Khams, the *dgon pa* echoed the style of a monastery of the Indian Northwest. This would signify that he adopted a structure whose unconventional conception was extraneous to the architecture of Tibet of the period. The *Khyung po gdung rabs* talks about a few important endowments to the temple. On its outside, the roof must have been wondrous, endowed with a chain in heavy iron (a material linked with Bon) attached to it. Lavish use was made of gold. Inside, gold was used for the main receptacle holders—a statue of Khri smon rgyal bshed and the seven *mchod rten*—and other images. Blo ldan snying po equipped a chapel in the monastic complex with a library of books written both in gold and silver.

Blo ldan snying po's reform went beyond the function of Khyung

⁴¹ Upon dealing with Khyung po Rtse drug, Dpal ldan tshul khriims divides its existence into two grand historical phases, the ancient one when it was a hermitage and meditation place, the later one when it was a monastic centre. Dpal ldan tshul khriims (*Bstan 'byung skal bzang mgul rgyan* p.504,2-3) remarks: "The meditation caves and the objects of the three bodies of Rtse drug ri khrod existed in continuity since early times under the control of *bla [ma-s]* committed to meditation. Subsequently, in the days of Sangs rgyas gling pa, a meditation centre was established and incarnation *bla [ma-s]* came [there] in succession, so that the teachings were greatly expanded". The allusion to *gter ston* Sangs rgyas gling pa (1340-1396) in Dpal ldan tshul khriims's treatment refers to the evolution of Khyung po Rtse drug into a *dgon pa* accomplished by Khyung Blo ldan snying po in 1383, for the two were contemporaries. Dpal ldan tshul khriims's statement should be decoded in the sense that the function of Rtse drug kept being devoted to meditation but monastic life was perpetrated along a lineage of monastery holders.

⁴² *Khyung po gdung rabs* (f.9b -f.10a,3): "The excellent incarnation body Blo ldan snying po was invited. In accordance to the prophecy issued to this incarnation by the *rig 'dzin mkha' 'gro-s*, he built Phreng gtsug lag khang chen using Gsas khang Bkra shis legs thang from the realm of Rtag gzigs (spelled so) 'Ol mo lung ring as model. On its top was a gilt finial made of seventy-seven *khal* of copper with a chain attached to it, made of sixty *khal* of iron. Inside it three Byang chen and, outside it, gilt finials were made of twenty-one *srang* of gold. Inside, the quintessential [images] were Khri smon rgyal bshed, seven excellently made *mchod rten* and three *ston pa* not going back to the past but of that day. Golden statues were the main ones that were made. [Blo ldan snying po] produced 108 golden images; (f.10a) 108 religious books [written in] gold and 108 religious books [written in] silver. Moreover, canopies, banners (*'phen* spelled so for *'phan*), parasols and silk emitting pleasant sounds and implements for worship transformed [the *gtsug lag khang*] into a *gzhal yas khang* with innumerable precious objects made of gold, silver and iron, so that a necklace of deities from Li yul paid their homage [to it]".

po Rtse drug as a site where a congregation was gathered. He brought about a radical transformation of the doctrinal principles. He professed the *ris med pa* concept (I do not intend here any reference to the later Ris med movement) that a syncretic view of Bon and Chos both from the philosophical viewpoint and its practical application should be adopted.⁴³ He was an exponent of this religious solution.

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⁴³ Blo ldan snying po is attributed a statement that explicates his religious position. *Khyung po gdung rabs* (f.10a,5-f10b,2) mentions it: "He said: "It is a fact that Dam pa'i Bon and Chos each have lineages and seats that merge. Hence, I accept this [attitude] without doubt, I myself Blo ldan from a family of fortunate beings practice such a syncretic method. The successive lineages of the Dbra Khyung Gser tsha, their *bla* [*ma-s* and] chieftains, each performing golden bits of meditative practice, the communities without a voice, (f.10b) and the subjugated communities should make each and every receptacle of body and speech. I request that the chieftains should make in succession sets of *'Bum* and each one of the large and middle-sized communities sets of *mDo*. May [all this] be pursued without indolence".

gling pa'i rnam thar stan pa'i 'brug sgra bzhug go, in 'Bri gung Ratna'i ming can gyi skyes rabs mos gus dran pa'i lcags skyu and rje btsun Rin chen phun tshogs kyi rnam thar smad cha dad pa'i gdung ba sel byed, *The Autobiography of 'Bri-gung-pa Rin-chen-phun-tshogs (1509-1557) and its continuation by Rin-chen-dpal, with Rin-chen-phun-tshogs' Biographies of 'Bri-gung-gling-pa Shes-rab-'byung-gnas (1187-1241) and 'Bri-gung-pa Kun-dga'-rin-chen*, Bir, Bir Tibetan Society, 1985.

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A Stone Carved Old Tibetan *Tshe dpag du myed pa'i mdo* Found in Leb 'khog of Yu shul, Qinghai Province

青海玉树勒巴沟发现的古藏文刻经《无量寿宗要经》

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Abstract: In the summer of 2012, Qinghai Provincial Institute of Cultural Heritage and Archaeology, the Center for Tibetan Studies and the Department of Archaeology at Sichuan University organized a cooperative archaeological team to conduct a survey of four Buddhist cliff carvings in the Leb 'khog valley of Yu shul, Qinghai Province. The second site, named Dbus nag byon pa, consists of five groups of negative lined carvings combined with Tibetan inscriptions including scenes of the monkey offering honey to the Buddha, the Buddha's birth, his teaching, his descent from the heaven of the thirty-three, his nirvāṇa and so on. In the middle of the site, there is a 28-line Tibetan inscription of the *'Phags pa bcom ldan 'das ma shes rab gyi pha rol du phyin pa'i snying po* (Group C) and there is a Tibetan inscription of the *Tshe dpag du myed pa'i mdo sde* (Group B) to its lower left. This paper provides a transcript based on an on-site reading and a Chinese translation of the inscription. To determine the filiation of the text of this inscription, we compared the different Tibetan and Chinese "editions" of this sūtra found in old Dunhuang manuscripts and in the Buddhist canons. This stone carved sūtra is a concise version; only the mantra (*sngags*) section is intact, with other sections missing or simplified. It is estimated that the inscription dates to the first half of the ninth century and belongs to the so-called Middle Old Tibetan period. This stone carved *Tshe dpag du myed pa'i mdo sde* provides one more important version of this sūtra of the Tibetan imperial period.

摘要: 2012年夏天,青海省文物考古研究所与四川大学中国藏学研究所、四川大学考古学系联合组成的考古队对青海玉树勒巴沟的四处佛教石刻进行了调查。其中在勒巴沟第二地点,即吾娜桑嘎石刻点发现了阴线刻佛传故事和藏文佛经。该石刻点的画面可分为五组,表现的佛传故事目前辨识出来的有猕猴献蜜、佛诞生、佛降自三十三天、降伏外道、涅槃等,每幅场景下面或旁边均刻写有藏文题记,是对画面内容的解说。

抄录并进行拓片,对以前经文内容转录中存在的问题进行了纠正、补充。在此基础上,本文将之与敦煌遗书和藏文大藏经中的同名佛经进行对勘,找寻与之相近的文本,并比较不同的汉、藏译本,探讨该经的大体年代,以引起对该刻经的重视。



图一 勒巴沟吾娜桑嘎佛教石刻各组画面的分布示意图



图二 勒巴沟吾娜桑嘎佛教石刻所在山体搭起脚手架的场景

一、石刻《无量寿宗要经》的转录和翻译

《无量寿宗要经》刻于青海玉树勒巴沟吾娜桑嘎石刻点 B 组佛诞图的右侧下方,共 15 行,岩面高约 1.7 米,最宽处约 1.65 米,上窄下宽略呈三角形。内容可分为三段,每一段的起首都有单云头符。第 1-2 行为第一段,为题名;第 3-8 行为第二段,为经咒;第 9-15 行为第三段,为持诵该经咒的功德(图三、图四)。经文的内容转录和翻译如下,前面

的数字为笔者加注的行号⁶：

1. །|| ཚོ་དཔག་དུ་མྱེད་
2. པའི་མདོ་ལྷེ།།
3. །|| བཙམ་ལྷན་འདས་ཚོ་[དཔག]མྱེད་
4. པའི་ཡེ་ཤེས་ཤིན་ད་ཏུ་གདོན་མྱེ་བ་པའི་གཟེ་བཟོང་
5. རྒྱལ་པོ་[ལ]ཕྱག་འཚལ་ལོ།། ཏང་ཅ་ཐུ། ན་མོ་ལྷ་ག་བ་ཏེ་
6. [ཨ]པ་འི་[མི་ཏ་ཨ]ཡུ་གཉའ་ན་སུ་འི་ནི་མྱེ་ཏ་ཏེ་འ་ཐུ་[ཡ]ཏ་ཐུ་ག་ཐུ་ཡ་
7. [ཨ?]ར་ཏ་ཏེ།། [སྲི་མུ?]ག་སམ་འབྲུ་ལྷུ་ཡ།། ལྷོ་མ་ས་ཅ་སང་ལྷ་ར་
8. པ་འི་འུད་ལྷ། [དར་མ་?]ཏེ་ཐུ། (?) □□ མ་ཏ་ན་ལ་པ་འི་ལྷ་ལེ་ལྷ་ཐུ།།
9. །|| ལྷགས་འདི་ཐུ[གས] (?) □□ ན་ཏེ་མཚོད་ན། ཚོ་འིང་། ལྷིག་འབྲུང་། ལྷས་
10. ཡུང་བསྐྱུང་པར་འལྱར། ཚོ་ལྷེ་མ་ལ་ངན་མོང་དུ་མྱེ་མྱེ། འུད་མེད་མྱེ་ལྷས་སུ་
11. ལྷེས་མྱེ་འལྱར།། སངས་རྒྱས་ཀྱི་ཞིང་ཡོན་ཏན་དཔག་དུ་མྱེད་པ་སྣོགས་པ་དང་
12. ཅན (?) □□ ས་པ་གར་འདོད་སར་ལྷེའོ།། ཚོ་ལྷེ་ལྷེ་དེན་བ་ཚོབ་པར་འལྱར། ལྷགས་བཅུའི་
13. ས[ངས] རྒྱས་ལ་ཕྱག་བྱས་ཤིང་མཚོད་པར་འལྱར། འདི་ལྷགས་ན་ཚོས་ཀྱི་ཕུང་པོ་སྣོང་
14. ལྷག་བཅུད་ལྷ་ཙམ་བཞི་ལྷགས་པར་འལྱར་འོ། གཞན་ཡང་ལྷོ་ཏན་མང་མོད་ཀྱི། འདིར་ནི་
15. མདོ་ཙམ་ལྷིས་སོ།།

⁶ 题记的录文在已发表的考古简报中有公布，此处对原来的录文和翻译有所更新，以本文为准。

翻译如下：

无量寿经

顶礼无量寿智决定光明王世尊！怛姪他！南谟薄伽勃
底 [阿]波唎[蜜哆] [阿]喻纒砚娜 须毗你悉指陀 帝
祖啰佐野 怛他羯他耶 [阿]罗诃羝 [三藐]三勃馱耶。
唵 萨婆桑悉迦啰 钵唎输底 [达磨]底 伽□□ 摩诃
娜耶 波唎婆唎莎诃。

受持读诵供奉此经咒，将会长寿、净除罪恶、得诸神
卫护，来世不堕恶趣、不生女人之身，积聚无量功德佛田，
□□降生于所想之地，得忆前生后世，即同供养十方诸佛。
聆听此经，如同聆听八万四千法蕴，另有诸多功德，是以
略写于此。⁷



图三 勒巴沟吾娜桑嘎 B 组题记

⁷ 译文参考了下文分类中的汉文本甲本 I 和甲本 II。



图四 勒巴沟吾娜桑嘎B组题记拓片

二、汉、藏文《无量寿宗要经》的分类

根据石刻题记该经可直译为《无量寿经》，但一般汉译称为《大乘无量寿经》《无量寿宗要经》《佛说无量寿宗要经》《大乘无量寿宗要经》等等。因为汉译佛经中另外还有一部《无量寿经》，是曹魏康僧铠所译，在敦煌汉文写经和汉文大藏经中均有收录。尽管名字相同，但并非同一部经，为示区别，因此本文所讨论的《无量寿经》的汉译名一般都加上“宗要”二字⁸，如《大正藏》No.936（以下简称 T936）收录的该经题名称《大乘无量寿经》，经尾则题《佛说无量寿宗要经》⁹。《大正藏》所收本子与敦煌写本相同，如中国国家图书馆藏敦煌遗书 BD2323、BD2493 以及法藏 P. 4532¹⁰等等，也是如此题名。由于本文石刻题名中并无“大乘”（ཐཱ་གཤམ་ཆེན་པོ་）字样，因此译为《无量寿宗要经》。敦煌藏文写本中一般

⁸ 黄明信、东主才让：《敦煌藏文写卷〈大乘无量寿宗要经〉及其汉文本之研究》，《中国藏学》1994（2）：67。

⁹ 《大正藏》第19册，1998：82-85。

¹⁰ BD2323 见任继愈主编：《国家图书馆藏敦煌遗书》第33册，北京图书馆出版社，2006：90-92。BD2493 见《国家图书馆藏敦煌遗书》第34册，2006：393-396。P. 4532 见国际敦煌项目 IDP 网站。

称为“ཚོད་པ་གཏུ་ཕྱེད་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་ཞེག་པ་ཚེན་པོའི་མངོད་”，译为《大乘无量寿宗要经》。该经是吐蕃统治时期最为通行的一部经，在敦煌藏文写卷中，该经数量最多，有学者统计出敦煌藏文写本《大乘无量寿宗要经》的数量为2336件¹¹；在敦煌汉文写卷中，该经的数量也相当可观，是隋唐时期流传最广的六部经卷之一，总计有977卷¹²。这一数字随着未公布材料的出现，可能还会有所增加。

由于藏文写本《大乘无量寿宗要经》数量众多，分藏于世界各地，百余年来有众多的学者对之进行刊布、研究，青海民族大学桑吉东知对此有了很好的总结¹³，兹不赘述。王尧先生曾经将《大乘无量寿宗要经》的藏文本分为两大类：敦煌写本和传世刻本¹⁴。前者指敦煌发现的藏文写卷；后者指保存在各种版本的藏文大藏经中的刻本。在青海玉树勒巴沟石刻《无量寿宗要经》发现之前，学界一般均采纳王尧先生的意见，认为只有这两类文本的存在。近年，桑吉东知在对敦煌藏文本《大乘无量寿宗要经》的研究过程中注意到了玉树勒巴沟的石刻本，在原先两种分类的基础上，增加了石刻本，并与前两类文本做了比较研究¹⁵。

《大乘无量寿宗要经》的内容大致可以分为五个部分：一、缘起。二、若干千万佛一时同声说此经。汉藏文各本中具体数目有所不同。三、咒语。每当说完该经的功德，即出现一段同样的咒语，反复出现多次。各本出现的次数不完全相同，各本中咒文的长短也有所不同。四、分说书写持诵、布施供养此经的功德。功德一般共有18种或16种，各本亦有不同。五、偈语。共六段，各本中也是长短不一¹⁶。

¹¹ 黄维忠：《8-9世纪藏文发愿文研究——以敦煌藏文发愿为中心》，北京：民族出版社，2007：179。夏吾措和桑吉东知的最新统计结果为：藏文写本《大乘无量寿宗要经》的数量为2281件，其中国外收藏1530件，国内收藏751件，见夏吾措、桑吉东知：《敦煌藏文写本〈大乘无量寿宗要经〉的分类与流变关系研究》，《西藏大学学报》2021（3）：58。

¹² 黄明信、东主才让：《敦煌藏文写卷〈大乘无量寿宗要经〉及其汉文本之研究》，《中国藏学》1994（2）：61-62。该文指出这六部流传最广的经卷是：《大般若波罗蜜多经》《金刚经》《金光明最胜王经》《妙法莲花经》《维摩诘所说经》《大乘无量寿宗要经》。作者还列出了《观世音经》，排第七。

¹³ 桑吉东知：《敦煌藏文写本〈大乘无量寿宗要经〉整理研究的回顾与展望》，《青藏高原论坛》2019（2）：101-108。

¹⁴ 王尧：《藏汉佛典对勘释读之三〈大乘无量寿宗要经〉》，《西藏研究》1990（2）：101-106。

¹⁵ བསེན་པོ་ལྷོ་མཚན་གྱི་ལྷན་ཁྲིམས་ཀྱི་འཕེལ་བྱུང་ལཱ་ཁག་ཀྱི་ཚོད་པ་གཏུ་ཕྱེད་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་ཞེག་པ་ཚེན་པོའི་མངོད་། ལ་དཔྱད་པ། མཚོ་རྒྱན་མི་འགལ་སྐོབ་ཚེན་འགྲེལ། 2016（1）：58-73。

¹⁶ 黄明信、东主才让前揭文中将该经内容分为六个部分，笔者将其第三、第四部分合并，因其均是分说该经的功德。再者，本文所讨论的石刻本中，咒语出现在功德的前面，因此这里笔者将咒语部分置于功德部分的前面。

根据各部分内容的不同,尤其是咒语长度的不同,学界对《无量寿宗要经》进行了分类。一般将汉文本分为甲本、异甲本、乙本三类或甲乙本两类,将藏文本分为甲本、乙本两类。左丽萍统计出敦煌写卷中,汉文本《无量寿宗要经》甲本 1200 本,乙本 6 件¹⁷,从中可知敦煌汉文写本《无量寿宗要经》绝大多数为甲本。黄明信统计中国国家图书馆所收 227 个藏文写卷中,甲本 145 卷,乙本 82 卷¹⁸。甲本和乙本数量上的差距不如汉文本那么大。中国国家图书馆在整理敦煌遗书过程中,对汉文本《无量寿宗要经》的异甲本和乙本进行了标注¹⁹,没有标注的则为甲本,占绝大多数;将藏文本《无量寿宗要经》分为甲本和乙本,均进行了标注²⁰。英国国家图书馆藏敦煌遗书有些也标注了甲乙本²¹。法国国家图书馆藏敦煌藏文文献和甘肃藏敦煌藏文文献也收录有大量的藏文本《大乘无量寿宗要经》,但没有标注甲本还是乙本²²。夏吾措和桑吉东知在研究敦煌研究院收藏的藏文本《大乘无量寿宗要经》时,按照经文的差异和咒语长短,将之分为甲乙丙丁四种,认为他们均属于同一个译本的不同抄本,在甲本传抄的过程中产生了乙本,乙本传抄的过程中产生了丙本,丙本传抄的过程中产生了丁本²³。将汉、藏译本放在一起进行比较的有上山大峻,他将三种汉文本和两种藏文本(甲、乙本)放在

¹⁷ 左丽萍:《敦煌〈大乘无量寿经〉写本考暨俗字汇辑》,浙江师范大学硕士学位论文,2014: 7-41。这 6 件乙本中,国图藏 BD6348 号下有 3 份写本,作者统计为 3 件,这三件内容完全一致,如果作为一件,实际上乙本只有 3 件。

¹⁸ 黄明信、东主才让:《敦煌藏文写卷〈大乘无量寿宗要经〉及其汉文本之研究》,《中国藏学》1994(2): 67。

¹⁹ 如标注为异甲本的 BD3334 号,见《国家图书馆藏敦煌遗书》第 45 册,2007: 379-382。标注为乙本的 BD6348 号 1、号 2、号 3,见《国家图书馆藏敦煌遗书》第 85 册,2008: 84-92。

²⁰ 如《国家图书馆藏敦煌遗书》第 124、125、126 册,几乎全部为藏文本的《大乘无量寿宗要经》,每一部均标注了甲本或乙本。

²¹ 如方广錩、[英]吴芳思主编:《英国国家图书馆藏敦煌遗书》第 3 册收录的斯 147 号《无量寿宗要经》,标为乙本,桂林:广西师范大学出版社,2011: 66-67。《英国国家图书馆藏敦煌遗书》第 18 册收录的斯 1173 号 1、号 2《无量寿宗要经》,标为甲本,2013: 353-356。

²² 如《甘肃藏敦煌藏文文献》第 1 卷敦煌研究院卷中,《大乘无量寿宗要经》占将近一半,第 2 卷敦煌市博物馆卷中,全部为《大乘无量寿宗要经》,均未标注甲乙本。见马德、勘措吉主编:《甘肃藏敦煌藏文文献》①、②,上海古籍出版社,2017-2018。《法国国家图书馆藏敦煌藏文文献》第 32、33、34 册(上海古籍出版社,2020)收录的全部为藏文本《大乘无量寿宗要经》,也没有标注甲乙本。

²³ 夏吾措、桑吉东知:《敦煌藏文写本〈大乘无量寿宗要经〉的分类与流变关系研究》,《西藏大学学报》2021(3): 58-64。

一起进行了简单比较²⁴。此外，还有一些更为详细的分类。黄明信、东主才让将汉文本的《无量寿宗要经》分为五种²⁵，但实际上，《大正藏》中的 T936 同其所分第二种敦煌本相同，可归为一类；其未对国家图书馆藏敦煌遗书中标为乙本的 BD6348 进行讨论。《大正藏》No. 937 收录的宋代法天所译《佛说大乘圣无量寿决定光明王如来陀罗尼经》（以下简称 T937），与敦煌本不同，王尧认为其“当系据梵本译出”，黄明信认为其是“异译本”²⁶。桑吉东知在研究台湾地区收藏敦煌藏文文献时，认为台湾地区收藏的 16 件藏文本《大乘无量寿宗要经》有三种不同的写本系统²⁷。

在前人研究基础上，根据各种文本中第二部分若干千万佛同声说此经的次数、全文咒语的遍数和咒语的长短、功德的数目等的不同，笔者对汉、藏文本的《无量寿宗要经》进行进一步的仔细考察，提出更为详细的分类，但仍遵循前人的分类，原定为甲本、乙本的尽量不改变其大的分类标准，以免造成混淆。本文仍将汉文本的《无量寿宗要经》分为甲本、乙本两大类，每类下面再分出两个亚类。其中占绝大多数的敦煌汉文写本《无量寿宗要经》甲本，包括《大正藏》T936，定为甲本 I 类。在国家图书馆所藏敦煌遗书中，有一种汉文本《无量寿宗要经》被认为是“异甲本”，本文定为甲本 II 类。甲本 II 类的咒语比甲本 I 类多了最后一遍，咒语多了两句。国家图书馆所藏敦煌遗书中的汉文本《无量寿宗要经》乙本，本文定为乙本 I 类。英国国家图书馆所藏敦煌遗书中也定为乙本的斯 147 号，本文定为乙本 II 类。乙本中同声说经的次数和功德数都比甲本少，乙本 II 最简约。T937 宋代法天的译本因不属于敦煌写本，本文暂不将其纳入讨论范围。各本各部分之间的差异如下：

汉文本：

甲本 I：若干千万佛同声说此经 9 次。全文咒语 29 遍，每遍 15 句。功德

²⁴ 上山大峻：《敦煌佛教の研究》，京都：法藏馆，2012：437-455。

²⁵ 黄明信、东主才让：《敦煌藏文写卷〈大乘无量寿宗要经〉及其汉文本之研究》，《中国藏学》1994（2）：63。

²⁶ 《大正藏》所收第 19 册 No. 937 由宋代法天所译《佛说大乘圣无量寿决定光明王如来陀罗尼经》与敦煌本不同，王尧先生认为其“当系据梵本译出”。该本咒语只出现一次，各功德的出现顺序也与敦煌本不同，差异较大，不能作为同本，因此本文暂不讨论该本。其相关研究见王尧：《藏汉佛典对勘释读之三〈大乘无量寿宗要经〉》，《西藏研究》1990（2）：103。黄明信、东主才让：《敦煌藏文写卷〈大乘无量寿宗要经〉及其汉文本之研究》，《中国藏学》1994（2）：68。

²⁷ བསེ་ཚང་སངས་རྒྱལ་དོན་གྲུབ། ཐའི་ལམ་སྐུ་ཉེན་ཉོན་ལོང་ཡིག་ཚའི་ཉམ་ཚགས་དང་ཞིབ་འཇུག་སྐོར་གླེང་བ།—— ཞོ་དུ་《ཚོ་མདོ་》ཡིག་ཚར་རིགས་དབྱེ་བ། ལྷ་ཁོའི་བོད་རིག་ལ། 2020（3）：119-130。

甲本 II: 若干千万佛同声说此经 9 次。咒语 29 遍, 每遍 16 句。功德 17 个。同甲本 I 相比, 咒语少了最后一遍, 即在偈语结束后的那遍咒语缺失了; 咒语和甲本 I 的 Derge 675 相比, 缺失了 ཨཱཱ་ཤེ། སྐུ་མཚན་ལྷན་གྱིས་གྲུབ་པའི་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་གྲུབ་པའི་ 两句, 功德部分缺失了功德 4。代表性写本如 P.t.98³⁴。

甲本 III-1: 若干千万佛同声说此经 5 次。咒语 24 遍, 每遍 16 句。功德 16 个。缺功德 4 和 16, 功德 1 同 P.t.98。如 P.t.105³⁵、P.t.3671、BD14266、Dy.t.132、Dy.t.134、Dy.t.142 等等。

甲本 III-2: 同甲本 III-1 唯一不同的地方是: 功德 1 和功德 3 相同。如 P.t.3603、P.t.3774、BD3886、BD14231、BD14267、BD14288、Dy.t.132、Dy.t.79 等等。甲本 III-1 和甲本 III-2 即是中国国家图书馆藏敦煌遗书中分类为甲本的。

乙本: 若干千万佛同声说此经 5 次。咒语 24 遍, 每遍 13 句。功德 16 个。缺功德 4 和 16, 功德 1、3 相同。如 P.t.3943-3946、P.t.3670、P.t.3672-3676、BD14256、BD14230、Dy.t.163、Dy.t.136、Dy.t.174、Dy.t.175、Db.t.101、Db.t.112、Db.t.186、Db.t.188。该本即是中国国家图书馆藏敦煌遗书中分类为乙本的。

敦煌写卷中, 还有一种版本, 在一个文本中, 既有长咒语也有短咒语, 可归入甲本 III 或乙本类, 如 Dy.t.170。夏吾措和桑吉东知将之列为丙类³⁶。但考虑到咒语的长短不是分类的唯一标准, 需要结合咒语的遍数和功德部分综合考量, 因此这种本子可以根据其他方面的特点将之归入甲本 III 类或乙本中。

以上几种写本, 甲本 I 最为完整, 也最工整, 但在大量的敦煌写卷中, 这种本子十分罕见, 甚至甲本 II 也十分少见, 最常见的是甲本 III 和乙本。本文的甲本 III-1、甲本 III-2 和乙本分别对应于夏吾措和桑吉东知分类中的甲类、乙类和丁类。

受岩面空间的限制, 本文讨论的石刻本中刻写的非常简略。第一部分仅保留了一句话, 第二部分和第五部分没有出现, 仅保留了第三和第五部分, 只有咒语相对完整, 功德部分也非常简略。因此该石刻本堪称《大乘无量寿宗要经》的极简本, 下面将之与汉、藏各本进行对勘, 比

³⁴ 《法国国家图书馆藏敦煌藏文文献》③, 上海古籍出版社, 2007: 33-42。其中 39 页实为第 38 页之重复, 第 40 页编号为 P.t. 98V 的刚好可以接上第 39 页, 构成一部完整的《大乘无量寿宗要经》。

³⁵ 《法国国家图书馆藏敦煌藏文文献》③, 上海古籍出版社, 2007: 143-146。

³⁶ 夏吾措、桑吉东知:《敦煌藏文写本〈大乘无量寿宗要经〉的分类与流变关系研究》,《西藏大学学报》2021 (3): 58-64。

较他们之间的异同之处。

三、对勘

(1) 题名

勒巴沟石刻题名为：ཚདལག་དུ་མེད་པའི་མདོ་ལྷེ། 直译为：无量寿经。

甲本 I 为：འཕགས་པ་ཚད་ལེ་ཤེས་དཔག་དུ་མེད་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་ཐེག་པ་ཆེན་པོའི་མདོ།

敦煌写本几乎均为：ཚདལག་དུ་མེད་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་ཐེག་པ་ཆེན་པོའི་མདོ།³⁷

勒巴沟石刻本没有敦煌写本中出现的“ཞེས་བྱ་བ་ཐེག་པ་ཆེན་པོ”（大乘）字样，甲本 I 则又比敦煌写本多了“དང་ལེ་ཤེས”（智）字样。勒巴沟石刻本与敦煌写本更为接近。

汉文本中，则有与本石刻本完全相同的题名，如甲本 II 的 BD3334、乙本 I 的 BD6348 和乙本 II 的斯 147，均题名为《无量寿经》。

(2) 忆念佛名

勒巴沟：བཅོམ་ལྷན་འདས་ཚེ་ཁྱེད་པའི་ཡེ་ཤེས་ཤིན་དུ་གདོན་མྱི་བའི་གཞི་བརྗོད་[བྱ]ལ་པོ་

Derge 674: སངས་རྒྱལ་ཚེ་དང་ཡེ་ཤེས་དཔག་དུ་མེད་པ་ཤིན་དུ་རྣམ་པར་ངེས་པ་གཞི་བརྗོད་ཀྱི་རྒྱལ་པོ་

敦煌写本和 Derge 675 均为：སངས་རྒྱལ་ཚེ་དང་ཡེ་ཤེས་དཔག་དུ་མེད་པ་ཤིན་དུ་རྣམ་པར་གདོན་མྱི་བའི་རྒྱལ་པོ་

勒巴沟石刻中写为“བཅོམ་ལྷན་འདས”（薄伽梵或世尊），藏文大藏经和敦煌写本中则均为“སངས་རྒྱལ”（佛）；勒巴沟的“གདོན་མྱི་བའི”（决定）在 Derge 674 中则为“རྣམ་པར་ངེས་པ”，而“གཞི་བརྗོད”（光荣、威严、威德）一词则仅出现在 Derge 674 中。此处勒巴沟的用法与藏文大藏经版本和敦煌写本均不完全相同。

汉：

甲本 I：无量智决定王如来/无量寿智决定王如来

甲本 II：智寿无量决定威德王如来

乙本 I：智寿无量决定威德王如来

乙本 II：残

若从汉文本来看，勒巴沟石刻本的佛号则可以与汉文本的甲本 II 和乙本 I 相对应。

³⁷ Pt.98 和 BD14231 号 1 在 མེད་ 之间均加有小圆点隔音符。Pt.3943 在分句符 | 之前还有小圆点，并且 བ 后面加 འ，如 བའ། མདོ།。BD14256、14230 也出现再后加字 འ，如 མདོ་འ 写作 མདོའ。

(3) 若干千万佛一时同声说此经时的具体数字

勒巴沟石刻本缺失该部分。

藏文本：

甲本 I：99, 84, 77, 65, 55, 45, 36/35, 25, གང་ལྟའི་ལྷུང་བཅུ་ལྗེ་མ་རྟེན་གྱིས་དགོངས་པ་གཅིག་གིས་

甲本 II：99, 84, 77, 65, 56, 45, 36, 25, ལག་ལག་འུལ་ལྷུང་བཅུ་ལྗེ་མ་རྟེན་གྱིས་དགོངས་པ་གཅིག་དང་དབྱེད་ཀྱིས་གཅིག་གིས་

甲本 III：99, 45, 36, 25, གང་ག་ལྟའི་ལྷུང་བཅུ་ལྗེ་མ་རྟེན་གྱིས་དགོངས་པ་གཅིག་དང་དབྱེད་ཀྱིས་གཅིག་གིས་

乙本：99, 45, 36, 25, གང་ལག་ལྟའི་ལྷུང་བཅུ་ལྗེ་མ་རྟེན་གྱིས་དགོངས་པ་གཅིག་དང་དབྱེད་ཀྱིས་གཅིག་གིས་

汉文本：

甲本 I：绝大多数为：99, 104, 7, 65, 55, 45, 36, 25, 恒河沙姪佛
有少数将 104 写为 105, 36 写为 35 者，如 BD2357 号 2。

甲本 II：99, 104, 7, 65, 55, 45, 36, 25, 百俱胝殑伽沙诸佛

乙本 I：99, 45, 36, 25, 百俱胝殑伽沙诸佛

乙本 II：残

T937：99, 84, 77, 66, 55, 44, 36, 25, 十殑伽河沙数俱胝佛

各藏文本的译本大体上是一致的，只是次数不同，长本说 9 次，短本说 5 次。汉文本各本译法不同，如“恒河沙姪佛”“百俱胝殑伽沙诸佛”等，不过与藏文本最大的区别是 104 和 7 两个数字，在藏文本中为 84、77，这在宋代法天译本（T937）中更正了过来。汉文本中 104、77 极有可能是藏文数字 84 和 77 的误译。

(4) 咒语

虽然壁面空间有限，但勒巴沟石刻完整地刻出了该经的咒语部分。

勒巴沟石刻：	ྱད་ཅུ་ལྷུ་མེད་ཀྱི་ལྷུང་བཅུ་ལྗེ་མ་རྟེན་གྱིས་དགོངས་པ་གཅིག་གིས་	ན་མོ་རྩ་གལ་ཉེ་	[ཨ་]པ་རི་མེ་ཉེ་	[ཨ་]ཡུ་གཉེན་ན།
藏：				
甲本 I (Derge675)：	མེད་ཀྱི་ལྷུང་བཅུ་ལྗེ་མ་རྟེན་གྱིས་དགོངས་པ་གཅིག་གིས་	ན་མོ་རྩ་གལ་ཉེ་	ཨ་པ་རི་མེ་ཉེ་	ཨ་ཡུ་གཉེན་ན།
甲本 II (P.t.98)：	ྱད་ཅུ་ལྷུ་མེད་ཀྱི་ལྷུང་བཅུ་ལྗེ་མ་རྟེན་གྱིས་དགོངས་པ་གཅིག་གིས་	ན་མོ་རྩ་གལ་ཉེ་	ཨ་པ་རི་མེ་ཉེ་	ཨ་ཡུ་གཉེན་ན།
甲本 III-1 (P.t.105)：	ྱད་ཅུ་ལྷུ་མེད་ཀྱི་ལྷུང་བཅུ་ལྗེ་མ་རྟེན་གྱིས་དགོངས་པ་གཅིག་གིས་	ན་མོ་རྩ་གལ་ཉེ་	ཨ་པ་རི་མེ་ཉེ་	ཨ་ཡུ་གཉེན་ན།
甲本 III-2 (BD14231)：	ྱད་ཅུ་ལྷུ་མེད་ཀྱི་ལྷུང་བཅུ་ལྗེ་མ་རྟེན་གྱིས་དགོངས་པ་གཅིག་གིས་	ན་མོ་རྩ་གལ་ཉེ་	ཨ་པ་རི་མེ་ཉེ་	ཨ་ཡུ་གཉེན་ན།
乙本 (P.t.3943)：	ྱད་ཅུ་ལྷུ་མེད་ཀྱི་ལྷུང་བཅུ་ལྗེ་མ་རྟེན་གྱིས་དགོངས་པ་གཅིག་གིས་	ན་མོ་རྩ་གལ་ཉེ་	ཨ་པ་རི་མེ་ཉེ་	ཨ་ཡུ་གཉེན་ན།

³⁸ 藏文本的咒语中，ྱད་ཅུ་ལྷུ་མེད་ 一般只出现在第一遍，后面不再出现。

³⁹ གཉེན་ 和 གཉེན་ 都有使用。

⁴⁰ བ་ 和 ལྷུ་ 都有使用。

汉:

甲本 I:	南谟薄伽勃底 1	阿波喇蜜哆 2	阿喻纒硯娜 3
甲本 II:	南谟薄伽跋帝 1	阿波喇蜜多 2	阿喻纒硯那 3
乙本 I:	南谟薄伽跋底 1	阿波利蜜多 2	阿喻也那 3
乙本 II:	怛姪他 1	南谟薄伽薄底 2	阿波利蜜多 3 阿喻也那 4

勒巴沟石刻: ལུའི་ཞི་རྩེ་ཉ་ 5 ཉེ་རྩོ་འཇུ་ཡ། 6 ཉ་ཐུག་ཐུག་ཡ། 7

藏:

甲本 I:	ལུའི་ཞི་རྩེ་ཉ་ 5	ཉེ་རྩོ་འཇུ་ཡ། 6	ཉ་ཐུག་ཐུག་ཡ། 7
甲本 II:	ལུའི་ཞི་རྩེ་ཉ་ 5	ར་ཇུ་ཡ། 6	ཉ་ཐུག་ཉ་ཡ། ⁴¹ 7
甲本 III-1:	ལུའི་ཞི་རྩེ་ཉ་ 5	ར་ཇུ་ཡ། 6	ཉ་ཐུག་ཉ་ཡ། 7
甲本 III-2:	ལུའི་ཞི་རྩེ་ཉ་ 5	ར་ཇུ་ཡ། 6	ཉ་ཐུག་ཉ་ཡ། 7
乙本:	ལུའི་ཞི་རྩེ་ཉ་ 5	ར་ཇུ་ཡ། 6	ཉ་ཐུག་ཉ་ཡ། 7

汉:

甲本 I:	须毗你悉指陀 4	嚧佐野 5	怛他羯他耶 6
甲本 II:	须鼻你失只多 4	帝祖罗左耶 5	怛他竭多耶 6
乙本 I:	须毗你只多 4	帝祚罗左耶 5	怛他栴多耶 6
乙本 II:	须毗你只多 5	嚧左耶 6	怛他栴多耶 7

勒巴沟石刻: [མ]ར་ཉ་ཉ། 8 [སྐ་ཐུ]ག་མམ་འབྲུ་ཐུག་ཡ། 9 མྱོ་ 10

藏:

甲本 I:	མན་ཉ། 8	སྐ་ཐུ་ཐུ་ཐུ་ཐུ་ཡ། 9	ཉ་ཐུ་མྱོ་ 10
甲本 II:	缺	缺	ཉ་ཐུ་ཐུ་ཐུ་ 8
甲本 III-1:	缺	缺	ཉ་ཐུ་ཐུ་ཐུ་མྱོ་ ⁴² 8
甲本 III-2:	缺	缺	ཉ་ཐུ་ཐུ་ཐུ་མྱོ་ 8
乙本:	缺	缺	མྱོ་ 8

汉:

甲本 I:	缺	缺	怛姪他唵 7
甲本 II:	阿罗诃羝 7	三藐三勃馱耶 8	怛姪他 唵 9
乙本 I:	阿罗诃帝 7	三藐三勃馱耶 8	怛姪他 唵 9
乙本 II:	缺	缺	

⁴¹ ཐུ 和 ཡ 都有使用。

⁴² P.t.3774 为 ཉ་ཐུ་ཐུ་ཐུ་མྱོ་。

勒巴沟石刻: ས་ན་སངས་རྒྱ་མ་ 11 བ་རི་ཤུད་ལྷ་ 12 [ལྷ་མ་?] ཉེ་13

藏:

甲本 I: ས་ན་སངས་རྒྱ་མ་ 11 བ་རི་ཤུད་ 12 ལྷ་མ་ཉེ་ 13

甲本 II: ས་ན་སངས་རྒྱ་མ་ 9 བ་རི་ཤུད་ཉེ་ 10 ལྷ་མ་ཉེ་ 11

甲本 III-1: ས་ན་སངས་རྒྱ་མ་ 9 བ་རི་ཤུད་ཉེ་ 10 ལྷ་མ་ཉེ་ 11

甲本 III-2: ས་ན་སངས་རྒྱ་མ་ 9 བ་རི་ཤུད་ཉེ་ 10 དར་མ་ཉེ་ 11

乙本: ས་ན་སངས་རྒྱ་མ་ 9 བ་རི་ཤུད་ཉེ་ 10 དར་⁴³མ་ཉེ་ 11

汉:

甲本 I 萨婆桑悉迦啰 8 钵（波）唎输底 9 达磨底 10

甲本 II: 萨婆桑塞迦啰 10 波唎输馱 11 达摩抵 12

乙本 I: 萨婆僧塞羯罗 10 波利输馱 11 达摩底 12

乙本 II: 萨婆僧塞羯啰 9 波利输馱 10 达摩底 11

勒巴沟石刻: ལྷ་ཁོ་ལ་ 14

藏:

甲本 I: ལྷ་ལ་ 14 ས་ལྷ་ཉེ་ 15 ས་ལྷ་བ་བེ་ཤུད་ 16

甲本 II: ལྷ་ལ་ 12 ས་ལྷ་དག་ཉེ་ 13 ལྷ་ལ་བ་བེ་ཤུད་ཉེ་ 14

甲本 III-1: ལྷ་ལ་ 12 ས་ལྷ་དག་ཉེ་ 13 ས་ལ་བ་བེ་ཤུད་ཉེ་ 14

甲本 III-2: ལྷ་ལ་ 12 ས་ལྷ་དག་ཉེ་ 13 ས་ལ་བ་བེ་ཤུད་ཉེ་ 14

乙本: 缺 缺 缺

汉:

甲本 I: 伽迦娜 11 莎河某持迦底 12 萨婆婆毗输底 13

甲本 II: 伽迦那 13 娑姆特羯羝 14 莎幡婆毗林提 15

乙本 I: 伽迦那 13 娑漫羯帝 14 娑婆婆毗输提 15

乙本 II: 缺 缺 缺

勒巴沟石刻: ས་ལྷ་ན་ལ་ 15 བ་རི་བེ་ལེ་ལྷ་ལ་ 16

藏:

甲本 I: ས་ལྷ་ན་ལ་ 17 བ་རི་བེ་ལེ་ལྷ་ལ་ 18

甲本 II: ས་ལྷ་ན་ལ་ 15 བ་རི་བེ་ལེ་ལྷ་ལ་ 16

甲本 III-1: ས་ལྷ་ན་ལ་ 15 བ་རི་བེ་ལེ་ལྷ་ལ་ 16

甲本 III-2: ས་ལྷ་ན་ལ་ 15 བ་རི་བེ་ལེ་ལྷ་ལ་ 16

⁴³ དར་ 和 ལྷ་ར་ 都有使用。

乙本:	མ་ཉ་ན་ཡ། 12	པ་རི་བ་རེ་ག་ལྷ། 13
汉:		
甲本 I:	摩诃娜耶 14	波喇婆喇莎诃 15
甲本 II:	摩诃那耶 16	波喇跋隸 莎诃 17
乙本 I:	摩诃那耶 16	波利跋隸 莎诃 17
乙本 II:	摩诃衍那 12	波喇 跋隸 莎诃 13

汉文本甲本 II 和乙本 I 的咒文几乎完全相同，都是有 17 句。甲本 I 与之相比少了“阿罗诃羝 三藐三勃馱耶”两句；乙本 II 与之相比，除了少了这两句外，还少了“伽迦那 娑姆特羯羝 莎幡婆毗林提”这三句，不过开头多了“怛姪他”，另三个版本中，“怛姪他”出现在第 7 句或第 9 句。乙本 II 的咒文最短，只有 13 句；甲本 II 和乙本 I 的咒文最长，均有 17 句；甲本 I 居中，有 15 句，是数量最多的一个版本。

藏文本甲本 I 咒语最长，有 18 句；乙本咒语最短，只有 13 句。开头一句只有甲本 I 是 ཨྲ，其他各本都是 ཉད་ཏྲ་ཐ་ཨ་ཉེ། སྲ་ལྷོ་བྱང་རྒྱ་ཡ། 这两句只有甲本 I 有，其他各本不见。这两句后面的 ཉད་ཏྲ་ཐ་རྫོག་ 中的 རྫོག་ 有时前面有分句符，跟着下一句连在一起，有时则后面有分句符，跟前面的 ཉད་ཏྲ་ཐ་ 连成一句，有时则单独出现，不见其前的 ཉད་ཏྲ་ཐ་。乙本还缺失三句：གཞན་ མ་ལྷ་ དགལ་ཉེ། མ་བ་བ་འུ་དྲུག་གྱེ།。

单从咒语看，汉文本的甲本 II 和乙本 I 最接近藏文本的甲本 I。汉文本的乙本 II 与藏文本的乙本最接近。汉文本的甲本 I 和藏文本的甲本 II、甲本 III 比较接近。勒巴沟的石刻本则同藏文本的甲本 I、汉文本的甲本 II、乙本 I 比较接近。

(5) 功德

由于岩面空间有限，功德众多，勒巴沟石刻只给出了部分功德的关键词句，但仅凭这些关键词句，就能判断出其为哪一种功德，如 ཚ་རིང།

（长寿）是功德 1，ཇེག་འབྱང།（除罪）是功德 6，ལྷ་སྲུང་བསྐྱེད་བར་འགྱུར།（诸神卫护）指的是功德 9，不过刻出来的只有大约 9 种功德，并不完整，最后用 གཞན་ ཡང་ལྷོ་ཉན་མང་（其他许多功德）一言以总之，没有一一列出。下面列出藏、汉各本中完整的 18 或 16 种功德，以资比较。

1. 甲本 I: དེ་ཚེ་ཟད་པ་ལས་ཚེ་ལོ་བརྒྱ་ཐུབ་པར་འགྱུར་ཉེ། ཚེ་ཡང་རྣམ་པར་འཕེལ་བར་འགྱུར་རོ།
甲本 II: དེ་ཚེ་ཟད་པ་ལས་ཚེ་ལོ་བརྒྱ་ཐུབ་པར་འགྱུར་རོ། ཚེ་ཡང་རྣམ་པར་འཕེལ་བར་འགྱུར་རོ།
甲本 III-1: དེ་ཚེ་ཟད་པ་ལས་ཚེ་ལོ་བརྒྱ་ཐུབ་པར་འགྱུར་ཉེ། ཚེ་ཡང་རྣམ་པར་འཕེལ་བར་འགྱུར་རོ།

甲本 III-2: དེས་ཚོས་ཀྱི་ཕུང་པོ་རྣོང་ཕག་བརྒྱད་ཅུ་ཙུའི་འདྲི་བཅུག་པར་འགྱུར་རོ། (同功德 3)

乙本: དེས་ཚོས་ཀྱི་ཕུང་པོ་རྣོང་ཕག་བརྒྱད་ཅུ་ཙུའི་འདྲི་བཅུག་པར་འགྱུར་རོ། (同功德 3)

甲本 I: 如其命尽, 复得长寿而满年。

甲本 II: 寿命将尽增满百年。

乙本 I: 寿命将尽增益百年。

乙本 II: 寿命将尽增满百年。

2. 甲本 I: དེ་སེམས་ཅན་དམུལ་བ་དང། ལྷོལ་སོང་གི་སྐྱེ་གནས་དང། གཤེན་ཇེ་འེ་འཇིག་རྟེན་དུ་ནམ་ཡང་སྐྱེ་བར་མི་འགྱུར་ཏེ། རྣམ་དུ་ཡང་མི་ཁོམ་པར་སྐྱེ་བར་མི་འགྱུར་རོ། གང་དང་གང་དུ་སྐྱེ་བའི་སྐྱེ་བ་ཐམས་ཅད་དུ་སྐྱེ་བ་དྲན་བར་འགྱུར་རོ།

甲本 II: དེ་སེམས་ཅན་དམུལ་བ་དང། ལྷོལ་སོང་གི་སྐྱེ་གནས་དང། གཤེན་ཇེ་འེ་འཇིག་རྟེན་དུ་ནམ་དུ་ཡང་སྐྱེ་བར་སྐྱེ་བར་མི་འགྱུར་ཏེ། དེ་རྣམ་དུ་ཡང་སྐྱེ་བར་སྐྱེ་བར་སྐྱེ་བར་མི་འགྱུར། གང་དང་གང་དུ་སྐྱེ་བའི་སྐྱེ་བ་ཐམས་ཅད་དུ་སྐྱེ་བ་དྲན་བར་འགྱུར་རོ།

甲本 III-1: དེ་སེམས་ཅན་དམུལ་བ་དང། ལྷོལ་སོང་གི་སྐྱེ་གནས་དང། གཤེན་ཇེ་འེ་འཇིག་རྟེན་དུ་ནམ་དུ་ཡང་སྐྱེ་བར་སྐྱེ་བར་མི་འགྱུར་རོ། དེ་རྣམ་དུ་ཡང་སྐྱེ་བར་སྐྱེ་བར་སྐྱེ་བར་མི་འགྱུར་ཏེ། གང་དང་གང་དུ་སྐྱེ་བའི་སྐྱེ་བ་ཐམས་ཅད་དུ་སྐྱེ་བ་དྲན་བར་འགྱུར་རོ།

甲本 III-II: དེ་སེམས་ཅན་དམུལ་བ་དང། ལྷོལ་སོང་གི་སྐྱེ་གནས་དང། གཤེན་ཇེ་འེ་འཇིག་རྟེན་དུ་ནམ་ཡང་སྐྱེ་བར་སྐྱེ་བར་མི་འགྱུར་ཏེ། རྣམ་དུ་ཡང་སྐྱེ་བར་སྐྱེ་བར་སྐྱེ་བར་མི་འགྱུར་ཏེ། གང་དང་གང་དུ་སྐྱེ་བ་ཐམས་ཅད་དུ་སྐྱེ་བ་དྲན་བར་འགྱུར་རོ།

乙本: དེ་སེམས་ཅན་དམུལ་བ་དང། ལྷོལ་སོང་གི་སྐྱེ་གནས་དང། གཤེན་ཇེ་འེ་འཇིག་རྟེན་དུ་ནམ་ཡང་སྐྱེ་བར་སྐྱེ་བར་མི་འགྱུར་ཏེ། རྣམ་དུ་ཡང་སྐྱེ་བར་སྐྱེ་བར་སྐྱེ་བར་མི་འགྱུར་ཏེ། གང་དང་གང་དུ་སྐྱེ་བ་ཐམས་ཅད་དུ་སྐྱེ་བ་དྲན་བར་འགྱུར་རོ།

甲本 I: 不堕地狱, 在在所生, 得宿命智。

甲本 II: 不堕地狱饿鬼傍生阎罗王界及八难中, 所生之处常得宿命。

乙本 I: 不堕地狱饿鬼傍生阎罗王界及八难中, 所生之处常得宿命。

乙本 II: 不堕地狱饿鬼傍生阎罗王界及八难中, 所生之处常得宿命。

3. 甲本 I: དེས་ཚོས་ཀྱི་ཕུང་པོ་བརྒྱད་ཁྲི་བཞི་རྣོང་འདྲིར་བཅུག་པར་འགྱུར་རོ།

甲本 II: དེས་ཚོས་ཀྱི་ཕུང་པོ་རྣོང་ཕག་བརྒྱད་ཅུ་ཙུའི་འདྲིར་བཅུག་པར་འགྱུར་རོ།

甲本 III-1: དེས་ཚོས་ཀྱི་ཕུང་པོ་རྣོང་ཕག་བརྒྱད་ཅུ་ཙུའི་འདྲིར་འཇུག་པར་འགྱུར་རོ།

甲本 III-2: དེས་ཚོས་ཀྱི་ཕུང་པོ་རྣོང་ཕག་བརྒྱད་ཅུ་ཙུའི་འདྲིར་བཅུག་པར་འགྱུར་རོ། (同功德 1)

乙本: དེས་ཚོས་ཀྱི་ཕུང་པོ་རྣོང་འཇུག་བརྒྱད་ཅུ་ཙུའི་འདྲིར་བཅུག་པར་འགྱུར་རོ། (同功德 1)

甲本 I: 如同书写八万四千一切经典。

甲本 II: 即同书写四十百千亿法蕴。

乙本 I: 即同书写百千四十亿法蕴。

乙本 II: 即同书写百千四十亿法蕴。

4. 甲本 I: དེས་ཚོས་ཀྱི་ཕུང་པོ་བརྒྱད་ཁྲི་བཞི་རྣོང་བྱེད་དུ་བཅུག་པ་དང། རབ་ཏུ་གནས་པར་བྱས་པ་ཡིན་ལོ།

甲本 II: 缺

甲本 III-1: 缺

甲本 III-2: 缺

乙本: 缺

- 甲本 I: 即是书写八万四千部，建立塔庙。
- 甲本 II: 即同书写八万四千法门，建立塔庙。
- 乙本 I: 缺
- 乙本 II: 缺
- 5. 甲本 I: དེའི་མཚན་མེད་པ་ལྔ་ཡོངས་སུ་བྱང་བར་འགྱུར་རོ།
 甲本 II: དེ་མཚན་མེད་པ་ལྔ་ཡོངས་སུ་འབྱང་བར་འགྱུར་རོ།
 甲本 III-1: དེའི་མཚན་མེད་པ་ལྔ་ཡོངས་སུ་འབྱང་བར་འགྱུར་རོ།
 甲本 III-2: དེའི་མཚན་མེད་པ་ལྔ་ཡོངས་སུ་བྱང་བར་འགྱུར་རོ།
 乙本: དེའི་མཚན་མེད་པ་ལྔ་ཡོངས་སུ་བྱང་བར་འགྱུར་རོ།
 甲本 I: 能消五无间等一切重罪。
- 甲本 II: 灭除五无间业。
- 乙本 I: 灭除五无间业。
- 乙本 II: 灭除五无间业。
- 6. 甲本 I: དེའི་ལྷོག་པའི་ཕྱང་པོ་རི་རབ་ཚམ་ཡང་ཡོངས་སུ་བྱང་བར་འགྱུར་རོ།
 甲本 II: དེ་ལྷོག་གི་ཕྱང་པོ་རི་རབ་ཚམ་ཡང་ཡོངས་སུ་འབྱང་བར་འགྱུར་རོ།
 甲本 III-1: དེའི་ལྷོག་གི་ཕྱང་པོ་རི་རབ་ཚམ་ཡང་ཡོངས་སུ་འབྱང་བར་འགྱུར་རོ།
 甲本 III-2: དེའི་ལྷོག་གི་ཕྱང་པོ་རི་རབ་ཚམ་ཡང་ཡོངས་སུ་བྱང་བར་འགྱུར་རོ།
 乙本: དེའི་ལྷོག་པའི་ཕྱང་པོ་རི་རབ་ཚམ་ཡོངས་སུ་བྱང་བར་འགྱུར་རོ།
 甲本 I: 设有罪（重罪），犹如须弥尽能除灭。
- 甲本 II: 罪如须弥即当弥灭。
- 乙本 I: 罪如须弥即当弥灭。
- 乙本 II: 罪如须弥即当弥灭。
- 7. 甲本 I: དེ་ལ་བདུད་དང་བདུད་ཀྱི་རིས་ཀྱི་ལྷ་དང་གནོད་ལྷོན་དང་། སྲིན་པོས་སྐྱགས་བཙལ་ཀྱང་སྐྱགས་རྙེད་པར་མི་འགྱུར་རོ།
 甲本 II: དེ་ལ་བདུད་དང་བདུད་ཀྱི་རིགས་ཀྱི་ལྷ་དང་། གནོད་ལྷོན་དང་སྲིན་པོས་སྐྱགས་བཙལ་ཀྱང་སྐྱགས་རྙེད་པར་མི་འགྱུར་རོ།
 甲本 III-1: དེ་ལ་བདུད་དང་བདུད་ཀྱི་རིས་ཀྱི་ལྷ་དང་གནོད་ལྷོན་དང་། སྲིན་པོས་སྐྱགས་བཙལ་ཀྱང་སྐྱགས་རྙེད་པར་མི་འགྱུར་རོ།
 甲本 III-2: དེ་ལ་བདུད་ཀྱི་རིས་ཀྱི་ལྷ་དང་གནོད་ལྷོན་དང་སྲིན་པོ་སྐྱགས་བཙལ་ཀྱང་སྐྱགས་བཙལ་བ་རྙེད་པར་མི་འགྱུར་རོ།
 乙本: དེ་ལ་བདུད་ཀྱི་རིས་ཀྱི་ལྷ་དང་གནོད་ལྷོན་དང་སྲིན་པོ་སྐྱགས་བཙལ་ཀྱང་སྐྱགས་བཙལ་བ་རྙེད་པར་མི་འགྱུར་རོ།
 甲本 I: 若魔魔之眷属、夜叉罗刹不得其便，终无枉死。
- 甲本 II: 诸魔眷属、夜叉罗刹，伺求其短不能得便。
- 乙本 I: 诸天摩、夜叉罗刹，伺求其短不能得便。
- 乙本 II: 诸天魔、夜叉，伺求其短不能得便。
- 8. 甲本 I: དེ་འཆི་བའི་དུས་ཀྱི་ཚེ་ལངས་རྒྱས་བྱེ་བ་ཕྱག་དྲུག་ཅུ་ཙུང་གུམ་⁴⁴མངོན་སུམ་དུ་ཕྱང་རྟོན་པར་མཛད་དེ། ལངས་རྒྱས་རྟོང་གིས་
 དེ་ལ་ཕྱག་རྟོང་བར་འགྱུར། ལངས་རྒྱས་ཀྱི་ཞིང་ནས་ལངས་རྒྱས་ཀྱི་ཞིང་དུ་འགྲོ་བར་མཛད་པར་འགྱུར་ཏེ། འདི་ལ་མེ་ཚོམ་

⁴⁴ Derge 675 为 ལྷག་ཅུ་ཙུང་གུམ་ , Derge 674 为 ལྷག་ཅུ་ཙུང་གུམ་ 。

དང་སྐྱེ་ཉི་དང་། ཡིད་གཉིས་མ་ཟེང་ཅིག།

甲本 II: དེ་འཆི་བའི་དུས་ཀྱི་ཚེ་སངས་རྒྱལ་བྱེ་བ་ཕྱག་དགུ་བཅུ་ཙུམ་མངོན་སུམ་དུ་སྟོན་པ་མཛད་དེ། སངས་རྒྱལ་སྟོང་གིས་དེ་ལ་
ཕྱག་རྒྱུང་བར་འགྱུར། །སངས་རྒྱལ་གྱི་ཞིང་ནས་སངས་རྒྱལ་གྱི་ཞིང་དུ་འགྲོ་བ་མཛད་པར་འགྱུར་ཏེ། འདི་ལ་ཐེ་ཚོམ་དང་།
སྐྱེ་ཉི་དང་། ཡིད་གཉིས་མ་ཟེང་ཅིག།

甲本 III-1: དེ་འཆི་བའི་དུས་ཀྱི་ཚེ་སངས་རྒྱལ་བྱེ་བ་ཕྱག་དགུ་བཅུ་ཙུམ་མངོན་སུམ་དུ་སྟོན་པར་མཛད་དེ། སངས་རྒྱལ་སྟོང་གིས་དེ་ལ་ཕྱག་
རྒྱུང་བར་འགྱུར། །སངས་རྒྱལ་གྱི་ཞིང་ནས། སངས་རྒྱལ་གྱི་ཞིང་དུ་འགྲོ་བར་མཛད་པར་འགྱུར་ཏེ། འདི་ལ་ཐེ་ཚོམ་
དང་སྐྱེ་ཉི་དང་ཡིད་གཉིས་མ་ཟེང་ཅིག།

甲本 III-2: དེ་འཆི་བའི་དུས་ཀྱི་ཚེ་སངས་རྒྱལ་བྱེ་བ་ཕྱག་དགུ་བཅུ་ཙུམ་མངོན་སུམ་དུ་སྟོན་པར་མཛད་དེ། སངས་རྒྱལ་སྟོང་གི་དེ་ལ་ཕྱག་
རྒྱུང་བར་འགྱུར་རོ། །སངས་རྒྱལ་གྱི་ཞིང་ནས་སངས་རྒྱལ་གྱི་ཞིང་དུ་འགྲོ་བར་མཛད་པར་འགྱུར་ཏེ། འདི་ལ་ཐེ་ཚོམ་དང་སྐྱེ་ཉི་
དང་ཡིད་གཉིས་མ་ཟེང་ཅིག།

乙本: དེའི་འཆི་བའི་དུས་ཀྱི་ཚེ་སངས་རྒྱལ་བྱེ་བ་ཕྱག་དགུ་བཅུ་ཙུམ་མངོན་སུམ་དུ་སྟོན་པར་མཛད་དེ། སངས་རྒྱལ་སྟོང་གིས་དེ་ལ་ཕྱག་
རྒྱུང་བར་འགྱུར། །སངས་རྒྱལ་གྱི་ཞིང་ནས། སངས་རྒྱལ་གྱི་ཞིང་དུ་འགྲོ་བར་མཛད་པར་འགྱུར་ཏེ། དེ་ལ་ཐེ་ཚོམ་དང་སྐྱེ་ཉི་
དང་ཡིད་གཉིས་མ་ཟེང་ཅིག།

甲本 I: 当命终时，有九十（九十九）娑佛，现其人前，蒙佛（千佛）
授手，能游一切佛刹，莫于此经生于疑惑

甲本 II: 临命终时，得值九十九俱胝诸佛现前赞叹，摩顶授记，从一
佛国至一佛国，决定得生，勿怀疑惑。

乙本 I: 临命终时，得值九十俱胝诸佛现前赞叹，摩顶授记，从一佛
国至一佛国，决定得生，勿怀疑惑。

乙本 II: 临命终时，得值九十俱胝诸佛现前赞叹，摩顶授记，从一佛
国至一佛国，决定得生，勿怀疑惑。

9. 甲本 I: ལྷུལ་པོ་ཆེན་པོ་བཞི་དེའི་ཕྱི་བཞིན་དུ་འབྲང་ཞིང་བསྐྱུང་བ་དང་། བསྐྱུང་བ་དང་། རྗེད་པར་འགྱུར་རོ།

甲本 II: ལྷུལ་པོ་ཆེན་པོ་བཞི་དེའི་ཕྱི་བཞིན་དུ་འབྲང་ཞིང་བསྐྱུང་བ་དང་། བསྐྱུང་བ་དང་། རྗེད་པ་ཕྱེད་པར་འགྱུར་རོ།

甲本 III-1: ལྷུལ་པོ་ཆེན་པོ་བཞི་དེའི་ཕྱི་བཞིན་འབྲང་ཞིང་བསྐྱུང་བ་དང་། བསྐྱུང་བ་དང་། རྗེད་པ་ཕྱེད་པར་འགྱུར་རོ།

甲本 III-2: ལྷུལ་པོ་ཆེན་པོ་བཞི་དེའི་ཕྱི་བཞིན་འབྲང་ཞིང་བསྐྱུང་བ་དང་། བསྐྱུང་བ་དང་། རྗེད་པ་ཕྱེད་པར་འགྱུར་རོ།

乙本: ལྷུལ་པོ་ཆེན་པོ་བཞི་དེའི་ཕྱི་བཞིན་འབྲང་ཞིང་བསྐྱུང་བ་དང་། བསྐྱུང་བ་དང་། རྗེད་པར་འགྱུར་རོ།

甲本 I: 常得四天大王随其卫护。

甲本 II: 四大天王常随卫护。

乙本 I: 四天大王常随卫护。

乙本 II: 四天大王常随卫护。

10. 甲本 I: དེ་བཞིན་བཤེགས་པ་འོད་དཔག་ཏུ་མེད་པའི་སངས་རྒྱལ་གྱི་ཞིང་འཛིག་རྟེན་གྱི་ཁམས་བདེ་བ་ཅན་དུ་སྐྱེ་བར་འགྱུར་རོ།

甲本 II: དེ་བཞིན་བཤེགས་པ་འོད་དཔག་ཏུ་མེད་པའི་སངས་རྒྱལ་གྱི་ཞིང་འཛིག་རྟེན་གྱི་ཁམས་བདེ་བ་ཅན་དུ་སྐྱེ་བར་འགྱུར་རོ།

甲本 III-1: དེ་བཞིན་བཤེགས་པ་འོད་དཔག་ཏུ་མེད་པའི་སངས་རྒྱལ་གྱི་ཞིང་འཛིག་རྟེན་གྱི་ཁམས་བདེ་བ་ཅན་དུ་སྐྱེ་བར་འགྱུར་
རོ།

རོ།

甲本 III-2: དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ་འོད་དཔག་ཏུ་ཕྱེད་པའི་སངས་རྒྱལ་གྱི་ཞིང་འཇིག་རྟེན་གྱི་ཁམས་བདེ་བ་ཅན་དུ་སྐྱེ་བར་འགྱུར།

乙本: དེ་དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ་འོད་དཔག་ཏུ་ཕྱེད་པའི་སངས་རྒྱལ་གྱི་ཞིང་འཇིག་རྟེན་གྱི་ཁམས་བདེ་བ་ཅན་དུ་སྐྱེ་བར་འགྱུར།

甲本 I: 当得往生西方极乐世界阿弥陀净土。

甲本 II: 必定往生极乐世界。

乙本 I: 必定往生极乐世界。

乙本 II: 必定往生极乐世界。

11. 甲本 I: ས་ཕྱོགས་གང་དུ་མདོ་སྡེ་འདི་འདྲི་བའི་ས་ཕྱོགས་དེ་ཡང་མཚོན་རྟེན་དུ་འགྱུར་ཏེ། དུག་བྱ་བའི་འོས་སུ་འགྱུར་རོ། ལྷོ་མོང་གི་སྐྱེ་གནས་སུ་སོང་བའི་བྱ་དང་རི་དགས་གང་དག་གི་རྣམས་ལུ་གྲག་པར་འགྱུར་པ་དེ་དག་ཐམས་ཅད་སྐྱ་ན་མེད་པ་ཡང་དག་པར་རྒྱགས་པའི་བྱང་ལྷུབ་དུ་མངོན་པར་རྒྱགས་པར་འཚང་བྱ་བར་འགྱུར་རོ།

甲本 II: ས་ཕྱོགས་གང་དུ་མདོ་སྡེ་འདི་དཀོན་མཚོག་འདི་འདྲི་བར་འགྱུར་བའི་ས་ཕྱོགས་དེ་ཡང་མཚོན་རྟེན་དུ་འགྱུར་ཏེ། དུག་བྱ་བ་འོས་པར་འགྱུར་རོ། གལ་ཏེ་ལྷོ་མོང་གི་སྐྱེ་གནས་སུ་སོང་བའི་བྱ་དང་རི་དགས་གང་དག་གི་རྣམས་ལུ་གྲག་པར་འགྱུར་བ་དེ་དག་ཐམས་ཅད་སྐྱ་ན་མེད་པ་ཡང་དག་པར་རྒྱགས་པའི་བྱང་ལྷུབ་དུ་མངོན་པར་རྒྱགས་པར་འཚང་བྱ་བར་འགྱུར་རོ།

甲本 III-1: ས་ཕྱོགས་གང་དུ་མདོ་སྡེ་དཀོན་མཚོག་འདི་འདྲི་བར་འགྱུར་བའི་ས་ཕྱོགས་དེ་ཡང་མཚོན་རྟེན་དུ་འགྱུར་ཏེ། དུག་འཛམ་བར་ཡང་འགྱུར་རོ། གལ་ཏེ་ལྷོ་མོང་གི་སྐྱེ་གནས་སུ་སོང་བའི་བྱ་དང་རི་དགས་གང་དག་གི་རྣམས་ལུ་གྲག་པར་འགྱུར་བ་དེ་དག་ཐམས་ཅད་སྐྱ་ན་མེད་པ་ཡང་དག་པར་རྒྱགས་པའི་བྱང་ལྷུབ་དུ་མངོན་པར་རྒྱགས་པར་འཚང་བྱ་བར་འགྱུར་རོ།

甲本 III-2: ས་ཕྱོགས་དཀོན་མཚོག་མདོ་སྡེ་འདི་འདྲི་བར་འགྱུར་བའི་ས་ཕྱོགས་དེ་ཡང་མཚོན་རྟེན་དུ་འགྱུར་ཏེ། དུག་འཛམ་བར་འགྱུར། གལ་ཏེ་ལྷོ་མོང་གི་སྐྱེ་གནས་སོང་བྱ་དང་རི་དགས་གང་དག་གི་རྣམས་ལུ་གྲག་པར་འགྱུར་བ་དེ་དག་ཐམས་ཅད་སྐྱ་ན་མེད་པ་ཡང་དག་པར་རྒྱགས་པའི་བྱང་ལྷུབ་དུ་མངོན་པར་རྒྱགས་པར་འཚང་བྱ་བར་འགྱུར།

乙本: ས་ཕྱོགས་དཀོན་མཚོག་མདོ་སྡེ་འདི་འདྲི་བར་འགྱུར་བའི་ས་ཕྱོགས་དེ་ཡང་མཚོན་རྟེན་དུ་འགྱུར་ཏེ། དུག་འཛམ་བར་འགྱུར། གལ་ཏེ་ལྷོ་མོང་གི་སྐྱེ་གནས་སོང་བྱ་དང་རི་དགས་གང་དག་གི་རྣམས་ལུ་གྲག་པར་འགྱུར་བ་དེ་དག་ཐམས་ཅད་སྐྱ་ན་མེད་པ་ཡང་དག་པར་རྒྱགས་པའི་བྱང་ལྷུབ་དུ་མངོན་པར་རྒྱགས་པར་འཚང་བྱ་བར་འགྱུར།

甲本 I: 书写是无量寿经典之处，则为是塔，皆应恭敬作礼。若是畜生或为鸟兽得闻是经，如是等类，皆当不久得成一切种智。

甲本 II: 所在地方书写此陀罗尼法宝，是处即成塔庙，应当作礼围绕，或生傍生鸟兽之中间，闻此陀罗尼者，得无上菩提。

乙本 I: 所在他方写此陀罗尼法宝，是处即成塔庙，作礼围绕，或生傍生鸟兽，闻此无量寿陀罗尼，得成无上正觉。

乙本 II: 所在地方写此陀罗尼法宝，是处即成塔庙，作礼围绕，或生傍生鸟兽等身，闻此无量寿陀罗尼，得成无上正觉。

12. 甲本 I: དེ་བྱད་མེད་ཀྱི་དངོས་པོར་⁴⁵ནམ་དུ་ཡང་སྐྱེ་བར་མི་འགྱུར་རོ།

甲本 II: དེ་བྱད་མེད་ཀྱི་དངོས་པོར་ནམ་དུ་ཡང་སྐྱེ་འགྱུར་རོ།

甲本 III-1: དེ་བྱད་མེད་ཀྱི་དངོས་པོར་ནམ་དུ་ཡང་སྐྱེ་འགྱུར་རོ།

⁴⁵ Derge 674 为 ལུས་སུ་

甲本 III-2: དེ་བུད་མྱེད་གྱི་དངོས་པོ་ནམ་དུ་ཡང་མྱི་འགྲུ་ལོ།

乙本: དེ་བུད་མྱེད་གྱི་དངོས་པོར་ནམ་དུ་ཡང་མྱི་འགྲུ་ལོ།

甲本 I: 毕竟不受女人之身。

甲本 II: 决定不受女人之身。

乙本 I: 必定不生女人之身。

乙本 II: 必定不生女人之身。

13. 甲本 I: གང་ཞིག་ཚོང་པའི་ཤེས་དཔག་ཏུ་མེད་པའི་ཚོས་ཀྱི་རྣམ་གྲངས་འདིའི་ཕྱིར་ཀླུ་པ་ན་གཅིག་སྤྱིན་པ་བྱིན་ན། དེས་སྤོང་གསུམ་གྱི་སྤོང་ཚེན་པོའི་འཇིག་རྟེན་གྱི་ཁམས་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་ལྷ་བདུན་གྱིས་ཡོངས་སུ་བཀའ་སྟེ་སྤྱིན་པ་བྱིན་པར་འགྱུར་རོ།

甲本 II: གང་ལ་ལ་ཞིག་ཚོས་ཀྱི་རྣམ་གྲངས་འདིའི་ཕྱིར་ཀར་ཤ་པ་ནི་འགའ་ཞིག་སྤྱིན་པ་བྱིན་ན། དེས་སྤོང་གསུམ་གྱི་སྤོང་ཚེན་པོའི་འཇིག་རྟེན་གྱི་ཁམས་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་ལྷ་བདུན་གྱིས་ཡོངས་སུ་བཀའ་སྟེ་སྤྱིན་པ་བྱིན་པར་འགྱུར་རོ།

甲本 III-1: གང་ལ་ལ་ཞིག་ཚོས་ཀྱི་རྣམ་གྲངས་འདིའི་ཕྱིར་ཀར་ཤ་པ་ནི་འགའ་ཞིག་སྤྱིན་པ་བྱིན་ན། དེས་སྤོང་གསུམ་གྱི་སྤོང་ཚེན་པོའི་འཇིག་རྟེན་གྱི་ཁམས་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་ལྷ་བདུན་གྱིས་ཡོངས་སུ་བཀའ་སྟེ་སྤྱིན་པ་བྱིན་པར་འགྱུར་རོ།

甲本 III-2: གང་ལ་ལ་ཞིག་ཚོས་ཀྱི་རྣམ་གྲངས་འདིའི་ཕྱིར་ཀར་ཤ་པ་ནི་འགའ་ཞིག་སྤྱིན་པ་བྱིན་ན་དེས་སྤོང་གསུམ་གྱི་སྤོང་ཚེན་པོའི་འཇིག་རྟེན་གྱི་ཁམས་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་ལྷ་བདུན་གྱིས་ཡོངས་སུ་བཀའ་སྟེ་སྤྱིན་པ་བྱིན་པར་འགྱུར་རོ།

乙本: གང་ལ་ལ་ཞིག་ཚོས་ཀྱི་རྣམ་གྲངས་འདིའི་ཕྱིར་ཀར་ཤ་པ་ནིའང་གའ་ཞིག་སྤྱིན་པ་བྱིན་ན། དེས་སྤོང་གསུམ་གྱི་སྤོང་ཚེན་པོའི་འཇིག་རྟེན་གྱི་ཁམས་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་ལྷ་བདུན་གྱིས་ཡོངས་སུ་བཀའ་སྟེ་སྤྱིན་པ་བྱིན་པར་འགྱུར་རོ།

甲本 I: 或有能于是经少分能惠施者，等于三千大千世界满中七宝布施。

甲本 II: 若复有人于此法门能施一钱，即等三千大千世界满中七宝持用布施。

乙本 I: 若复有人于此法门能施一钱，即等三千大千世界满中七宝持用布施。

乙本 II: 若复有人于此法门能施一钱，即等三千大千世界满中七宝持用布施。

14. 甲本 I: གང་ཞིག་ཚོས་ཀྱི་རྣམ་གྲངས་འདི་ལ་མཚོན་པར་བྱེད་པ་དེ་དག་གིས་དམ་པའི་ཚོས་མཐའ་ཅད་ཁོང་དུ་རྒྱུད་པར་འགྱུར་རོ།

甲本 II: གང་ལ་ལ་ཞིག་ཚོས་ཀྱི་རྣམ་གྲངས་འདི་ལ་མཚོན་པར་བྱེད་པར་འགྱུར་བ་དེས། དམ་པའི་ཚོས་མཐའ་དག་རྒྱུབ་པར་མཚོན་པར་འགྱུར་རོ།

甲本 III-1: གང་ལ་ལ་ཞིག་ཚོས་ཀྱི་རྣམ་གྲངས་འདི་ལ་མཚོན་པར་བྱེད་འགྱུར་བ་དེས། དམ་པའི་ཚོས་མཐའ་དག་རྒྱུབ་པར་མཚོན་པར་འགྱུར་རོ།

甲本 III-2: གང་ལ་ལ་ཞིག་ཚོས་ཀྱི་རྣམ་གྲངས་འདི་ལ་མཚོན་པར་བྱེད་པར་འགྱུར་བ་དེས། དམ་པའི་ཚོས་མཐའ་དག་རྒྱུབ་པར་མཚོན་པར་འགྱུར་རོ།

乙本: གང་ལ་ལ་ཞིག་ཚོས་ཀྱི་རྣམ་གྲངས་འདི་ལ་མཚོན་པར་བྱེད་པར་འགྱུར་བ་དེས་དམ་པའི་ཚོས་མཐའ་དག་རྒྱུབ་པར་མཚོན་པར་འགྱུར་རོ།

甲本 I: 若有能供养是经者，则是供养一切诸经等，无有异。

甲本 II: 若复有人供养此陀罗尼, 即同供养一切诸法。

乙本 I: 若复有人供养此陀罗尼, 即同供养一切诸佛。

乙本 II: 若复有人供养此陀罗尼, 即同供养一切诸法。

15. 甲本 I: དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ་རྣམ་པར་གཞིགས་དང་། གཞུག་རྒྱུ་ཅན་དང་། གྲུ་ཐུབ་པ་ལ་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་ལྷ་བདུན་གྱིས་
མཚོན་པ་བྱས་པའི་བསོད་ནམས་ཀྱི་ཕུང་པོའི་ཚད་ནི་བཟང་བར་རུས་ཀྱི། ཚོད་དང་ཡེ་ཤེས་དཔག་ཏུ་མེད་པའི་བསོད་ནམས་ཀྱི་
ཕུང་པོའི་ཚད་ནི་བཟང་བར་མི་རུས་སོ།

甲本 II: དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ་རྣམ་པར་གཞིགས་དང་། གཞུག་རྒྱུ་ཅན་དང་། གྲུ་ཐུབ་པ་ལ་བསྟོགས་པ་ལ། རིན་པོ་
ཅེ་ལྷ་བདུན་གྱིས་མཚོན་པ་རྣམས་ཀྱིས། མཚོན་པ་བྱས་པའི་བསོད་ནམས་ཀྱི་ཕུང་པོའི་ཚད་ནི་བཟང་བར་རུས་ཀྱི། ཚོ་
དཔག་དུ་མྱེད་པ་འདི་འི་བསོད་ནམས་ཀྱི་ཕུང་པོའི་ཚད་ནི་བཟང་བར་མྱི་རུས་སོ།

甲本 III-1: དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ་རྣམ་པར་གཞིགས་དང་། གཞུག་རྒྱུ་ཅན་དང་། གྲུ་ཐུབ་པ་ལ་སྟོགས་པའའ་ལ་རིན་
པོ་ཆེ་བདུན་གྱིས་མཚོན་པ་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་མཚོན་པ་བྱས་པ་འི་བསོད་ནམས་ཀྱི་ཕུང་པོའི་ཚད་ནི་བཟང་བར་རུས་ཀྱི་ཚོ་
དཔག་དུ་མྱེད་པའི་བསོད་ནམས་ཀྱི་ཕུང་པོ་དེའི་ཚད་ནི་བཟང་བར་མྱི་རུས་སོ།

甲本 III-2: དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ་རྣམ་པར་གཞིགས་དང་། གཞུག་རྒྱུ་ཅན་དང་། གྲུ་ཐུབ་པ་ལས་སྟོགས་པ་
ལ། རིན་པོ་ཆེ་ལྷ་བདུན་གྱིས་མཚོན་པ་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་མཚོན་པ་བྱས་པ་འི་བསོད་ནམས་ཀྱི་ཕུང་པོའི་ཚད་ནི་བཟང་བར་རུས་ཀྱི།
ཚོ་དཔག་དུ་མྱེད་པའི་མདོ་འདི་འི་བསོད་ནམས་ཀྱི་ཕུང་པོའི་ཚད་ནི་བཟང་བར་མྱི་རུས་སོ།

乙本: དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ་རྣམ་པར་གཞིགས་དང་། གཞུག་རྒྱུ་ཅན་དང་། གྲུ་ཐུབ་པ་ལས་སྟོགས་པ་ལ་རིན་པོ་ཆེན་ལྷ་
བདུན་གྱིས་མཚོན་པ་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་མཚོན་པར་བྱས་པའི་བསོད་ནམས་ཀྱི་ཕུང་པོའི་ཚད་ནི་བཟང་བར་རུས་ཀྱི། ཚོ་དཔག་
དུ་མྱེད་པའི་མདོ་འདི་འི་བསོད་ནམས་ཀྱི་ཕུང་པོའི་ཚད་ནི་བཟང་བར་མྱི་རུས་སོ།

甲本 I: 若有人以七宝供养如是七佛, 其福有限。书写受持是无量
寿经典, 所有功德不可限量。

甲本 II: 若复有人以七宝供养七佛, 所谓....., 所得功德尚有限量,
受持此咒福不可量。

乙本 I: 若以七宝持用供养七佛, 功德尚有限量, 无量寿陀罗尼福不
可量。

乙本 II: 若以七宝持用供养七佛, 功德尚有限量, 无量寿陀罗尼福
不可量。

16. 甲本 I: རིན་ལྷ་པོ་ཆེ་ལྷ་བདུན་མཚོན་པའི་རིན་པོ་ཆེའི་ཕུང་པོར་བྱས་ཏེ་སྦྱིན་པ་བྱིན་པ་དེའི་བསོད་ནམས་ཀྱི་ཕུང་པོའི་ཚད་ནི་
བཟང་བར་རུས་ཀྱི། ཚོད་དང་ཡེ་ཤེས་དཔག་ཏུ་མེད་པའི་བསོད་ནམས་ཀྱི་ཕུང་པོའི་ཚད་ནི་བཟང་བར་མི་རུས་སོ།

甲本 II: རིན་པོ་ཆེ་ལྷ་བདུན་མཚོན་པའི་རིན་པོ་ཆེའི་ཕུང་པོར་བྱས་ཏེ་སྦྱིན་པ་བྱིན་པའི་བསོད་ནམས་ཀྱི་ཕུང་པོའི་ཚད་ནི་བཟང་བར་
རུས་ཀྱི། ཚོ་དཔག་དུ་མྱེད་པ་འདི་འི་བསོད་ནམས་ཀྱི་ཕུང་པོའི་ཚད་ནི་བཟང་བར་མྱི་རུས་སོ།

甲本 III-1: 缺

甲本 III-2: 缺

乙本: 缺

甲本 I: 若有七宝等, 于须弥以用布施, 其福上能知其限量, 是无量

寿经典，其福不可知数。

甲本 II：若复有人以妙高山等七宝持用布施，其所获福犹可限量，受持此咒福不可量。

乙本 I：缺

乙本 II：缺

17. 甲本 I：ལྷ་མཚོ་ཆེན་པོ་བཞི་རྩུ་ཡོངས་སུ་གང་བའི་ཐེགས་པ་རེ་རེ་ནས་བཟང་བར་རྩུས་ཀྱི་ཚེ་དང་ཡེ་ཤེས་དཔག་ཏུ་མེད་པའི་བསོད་ནམས་ཀྱི་ཡུང་པོའི་ཚད་ནི་བཟང་བར་མྱེ་རྩུས་སོ།

甲本 II：ལྷ་མཚོ་ཆེན་པོ་བཞི་རྩུ་ཡོངས་སུ་བཀའ་བ་འོ། ཐེགས་པ་རེ་རེ་ནས་བཟང་བར་རྩུས་ཀྱི། ཚེ་དཔག་དུ་མྱེད་པའི་བསོད་ནམས་ཀྱི་ཡུང་པོའི་ཚད་ནི་བཟང་བར་མྱེ་རྩུས་སོ།

甲本 III-1：ལྷ་མཚོ་ཆེན་པོ་བཞི་རེ་རྩུ་ཡོངས་སུ་བཀའ་བའི་ཐེགས་པ་རེ་རེ་ནས་བཟང་བར་རྩུས་ཀྱི། ཚེ་དཔག་དུ་མྱེད་པའི་མདོ་འདི་བསོད་ནམས་ཀྱི་ཡུང་པོའི་ཚད་ནི་བཟང་བར་མྱེ་རྩུས་སོ།

甲本 III-2：ལྷ་མཚོ་ཆེན་པོ་བཞི་རེ་རྩུ་ཡོངས་སུ་གང་བའི་ཐེགས་པ་རེ་རེ་ནས་བཟང་བར་རྩུས་ཀྱི། ཚེ་དཔག་དུ་མྱེད་པའི་མདོ་འདི་བསོད་ནམས་ཀྱི་ཡུང་པོའི་ཚད་ནི་བཟང་བར་མྱེ་རྩུས་སོ།

乙本：ལྷ་མཚོ་ཆེན་པོ་བཞི་རེ་རྩུ་ཡོངས་སུ་གང་བའི་ཐེགས་པ་རེ་རེ་ནས་བཟང་བར་རྩུས་ཀྱི། ཚེ་དཔག་དུ་མྱེད་པའི་མདོ་འདི་བསོད་ནམས་ཀྱི་ཡུང་པོའི་ཚད་ནི་བཟང་བར་མྱེ་རྩུས་སོ།

甲本 I：如（如是）四大海水可知滴数，是无量寿经典所生果报，不可数量。

甲本 II：假使四大海水可知滴数，此陀罗尼福不可量。

乙本 I：假使四大海水滴数由可知，无量寿陀罗尼福不可量。

乙本 II：假使四大海水滴数可知量，无量寿陀罗尼福不可量。

18. 甲本 I：མཚོད་པར་བྱེད་པ་དེ་དག་གིས་ཕྱོགས་བརྒྱའི་སངས་རྒྱས་ཀྱི་ཞིང་ཐམས་ཅད་དུ་དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་ལ་ཕྱག་བྱས་པ་དང་། མཚོད་པ་བྱས་པ་ཡིན་ནོ།

甲本 II：མཚོད་པར་བྱེད་པར་འགྱུར་བ་དེས། ཕྱོགས་བརྒྱའི་སངས་རྒྱས་ཀྱི་ཞིང་ཐམས་ཅད་དུ་དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་ལ་ཕྱག་བྱས་པ་དང་། མཚོད་པ་བྱས་པར་འགྱུར་ནོ།

甲本 III-1：མཚོད་པ་བྱེད་པར་འགྱུར་བ་དེས། ཕྱོགས་བརྒྱའི་སངས་རྒྱས་ཀྱི་ཞིང་ཐམས་ཅད་དུ་དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་ལ་ཕྱག་བྱས་པ་དང་། མཚོད་པ་བྱས་པར་འགྱུར་ནོ།

甲本 III-2：མཚོད་པ་བྱེད་པར་འགྱུར་བ་དེས་ཕྱོགས་བརྒྱའི་སངས་རྒྱས་ཀྱི་ཞིང་ཐམས་ཅད་དུ་དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་ལ་ཕྱག་བྱས་པ་དང་། མཚོད་པ་བྱས་པ་ཡིན་ནོ།

乙本：མཚོད་པ་བྱེད་པར་འགྱུར་བ་དེས་ཕྱོགས་བརྒྱའི་སངས་རྒྱས་ཀྱི་ཞིང་ཐམས་ཅད་དུ་དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་ལ་ཕྱོག་བྱས་པ་དང་། མཚོད་པ་བྱས་པ་ཡིན་ནོ།

甲本 I：即如恭敬供养一切十方佛土如来，无有别异。

甲本 II：即同供养十方诸佛。

乙本 I：所供养功德即成礼敬供养十方诸佛。

乙本 II：所供养功德即成礼敬供养十方诸佛。

藏文本中，只有甲本 I 具有 18 种功德，甲本 II 具有 17 种功德，其余三个版本均只有 16 种功德，缺少功德 4 和功德 16。甲本 III-2 和乙本的功德 1 同功德 3 相同，因这两句比较相似，有抄错的嫌疑。各译本的译文除个别词汇译法不同外，总体上译文比较统一。如功德 3 中的数字八万四千，甲本 I 为 བུད་མི་བཞི་སྟོང་，其他四个本子均为 ལྷོང་ཐག་བུད་མི་བཞི་སྟོང་。在功德 16、17 中都出现的无量寿，甲本 I 为 ཚོད་དང་ཡེ་ཤེས་དཔག་ཏུ་མེད་པ་，其他四个本子均为 ཚོད་དཔག་ཏུ་མེད་པ་。

比较四种汉文本的功德部分，两种甲本均有 18 种功德，两种乙本则缺失了功德 4 和功德 16，只有 16 种功德。汉译本中功德 1 和功德 3 明显不同，不存在抄错的情况。甲本 I 的译文不同于另外三个本子，两个乙本的译文完全一样，甲本 II 的译文与两种乙本相似。甲本 I 的译文更为典雅，其他三个本子更为直白易懂。

综合以上各部分各版本之间的异同，大致于藏文本的甲本 I 对应于汉文本的甲本 II；藏文本的甲本 II 对应于汉文本的甲本 I；藏文本的甲本 III 对应于汉文本的乙本 I；藏文本的乙本对应于汉文本的乙本 II。勒巴沟石刻本因为较简短，缺失部分较多，仅咒语部分是完整的，这一部分接近于藏文本甲本 I，但题名和佛号则又与之不完全一致，倒是与汉文本保持一致，或许它是根据另一种不同的本子缩略刻写而成，亦或是根据汉文本译回去的，尚不能断定。

至于《无量寿宗要经》是从藏文本译为汉文本，还是从汉文本译为藏文本，前辈学者的意见不一。黄文焕提到河西吐蕃经卷中占绝对多数的《大乘无量寿宗要经》使人感到是供养品，其中有些卷子很可能是根据同名汉卷译制的⁴⁶。但是在吐蕃时期的译经目录中《丹噶目录》和《旁塘目录》中列出的译自汉地的目录中均未发现该经，这两个目录也未见收录有这部经⁴⁷。方广钊认为我国历代经录中没有记载该经，也不为我国历代大藏经所收。《大乘无量寿经》是 8、9 世纪敦煌陷蕃时期根据藏文本译出⁴⁸。王尧先生所辑法成的译著目录中，无论由汉文译为藏文还是由藏文译为汉文的经籍目录，也未见到该经⁴⁹。但在《大正新修大藏

⁴⁶ 黄文焕：《河西吐蕃经卷目录跋》，《世界宗教研究》第二集，1980：58。

⁴⁷ བོད་མངའ་སྡེ་ཐོན་པའི་ལྷོ་མཚན་འཕྲུལ་རྩིས་ཀྱི་དཀར་ཆག་བཞུགས་འཕྲུལ་(དཔེ་བཞུགས་མ) དཔེ་116 བེ་ཅིན། ལྷོ་མཚན་འཕྲུལ་དཔེ་བཞུགས་འཕྲུལ་། 2005: 799-800. བོད་མངའ་སྡེ་ཐོན་པའི་ལྷོ་མཚན་འཕྲུལ་དཀར་ཆག་ལྷོ་མཚན་འཕྲུལ་བཞུགས་འཕྲུལ་། བེ་ཅིན། མི་རིགས་དཔེ་བཞུགས་འཕྲུལ་། 2012: 19.

⁴⁸ 方广钊：《影印敦煌遗书〈大乘无量寿经〉序》，《敦煌学辑刊》2001（1）：21。

⁴⁹ 王尧：《藏族翻译家管·法成对民族文化交流的贡献》，《文物》1980（7）：50-57。

由此可知 བརྒྱུ་ལྷ་མཚན་པའོ 为 བརྒྱད་ལྷ་མཚན་པའོ 的误写，因此汉译本八万四千的翻译是正确的，百千四十和百四十千则有可能是根据误写的藏文本的误译。汉译本中若干千万佛一时同声说此经的具体数字，第二遍的数字，藏文本甲本 I 和甲本 II 均为 84，汉译本甲本 I 和甲本 II 则为 104，推测同样是由于 བརྒྱད (八) 误写为 བརྒྱ (百) 的缘故。这在宋代法天的译本中才纠正了过来。

从这些藏文本相同而汉译不同的情况推测，笔者认同《无量寿宗要经》的汉文本是根据藏文本译出的观点，有些藏文本抄写有误的地方，汉译本也出现了误译。

四、勒巴沟石刻本《无量寿宗要经》年代的推测

由于在勒巴沟吾娜桑嘎石刻点没有发现纪年题记，因此无法得知其确切刻制年代。目前只能根据与附近及周边地区发现的类似书写风格的、有纪年的石刻的比较来推测其年代。

石刻《无量寿宗要经》中除了常见的古藏文的书写特点，如元音符号 ཾ 反写，མི 和 མིད 写作 མྱི 和 མྱིད，གཉལ 和 མྱེགས 的写法也常见于敦煌古藏文写卷。石刻本身也体现出一些独特的特点：一，藏文的刻写方正平直，如字母 ར、བ、ག 显得方方正正，古朴质拙。二，字间点刻写的深且圆，十分清晰，并且有时位于字母的中间。三，ཤ、ལ 的左上角有一明显短横，ལ 的右上角有一明显短横，这些字母若带元音符号时就刻写于这条短横的上方，因此 ཤ、ལ 的元音符号在其左侧头上，ལ 的在其右侧头上。四，元音符号 ཾ 或 ཾ 几乎横平行于字母，元音符号 ཾ 则几乎垂直于字母。五，ཏ 字母的书写，起笔为一横，第二笔竖线则从第一横的中间垂直向下。若头上有上加字 ར，ཏ 中 ར 的竖线和 ཏ 的竖线几乎在一条直线上。六，如果字母 ཤ 或 ལ 有下加字，如 ཤ་ལ、ལ་ལ、ཤ་ལ、ལ་ལ 等，则下加字居中对齐于 ཤ 或 ལ 的右侧竖线，像是悬吊在基字的右脚上。这些特点在附近的勒巴沟恰冈石刻、西藏昌都地区仁达摩崖石刻，甚至山南的桑耶寺兴佛证盟碑都有发现（图五）。几乎相同的刻写风格，表明其年代应该相距不远。勒巴沟恰冈石刻题记中有“马年”字样，学界一般认为是 9 世纪上半叶的 814 或 826、838 年⁵⁶。西藏昌都地区仁达摩崖石刻有“猴年”“赞普赤

⁵⁶ Amy Heller, "Buddhist Images and Rock Inscriptions from Eastern Tibet, VIIIth to Xth century, Part IV." In Ernst Steinkellner ed., *Tibetan Studies vol. 1 (Proceedings of the 7th Seminar of IATS, Graz 1995)*, Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1997: 385-404. 汉译本见 [瑞]艾米·赫勒著，杨莉译：《公元 8-10 世纪东

松德赞”字样，学界一般认为是 804 年⁵⁷。桑耶寺兴佛证盟碑的年代大约在 779 年⁵⁸。

P.t.999 提到“作为天子赤祖德赞之功德，在沙州写造了汉、藏文的经典《无量寿经》”⁵⁹，可知大量汉、藏文的《无量寿经》写造于吐蕃赞普赤祖德赞时期（815-841 年在位）。杜晓峰认为英国国家图书馆藏的大量藏文本《无量寿宗要经》年代为 820s- 840s，并总结了其正字法上的诸多特点，认为是属于古藏文中期（Middle Old Tibetan）⁶⁰。其中所讨论的一些特点勒巴沟石刻本也具备，如 བའི་ དཔག་དུ་ རྒྱལ་ གནད་ གཞུང་ 等等用法。综合以上因素考虑，笔者认为勒巴沟石刻本的年代大体同勒巴沟恰冈石刻的年代接近，为 9 世纪上半叶。该藏文石刻《无量寿宗要经》在敦煌写卷之外又提供了一个重要的版本。该经和《圣薄伽梵母般若波罗蜜多心经》一起出现在大型系列佛传故事场景的中央，其目的和功能值得深入探讨。



藏的佛教造像及摩崖刻石（节录）》，《国外藏学研究译文集》第十五辑，拉萨：西藏人民出版社，2001：189-210。正式调查简报见乔虹、卢素文：《青海玉树勒巴沟恰冈佛教摩崖造像调查简报》，《藏学学刊》第 16 辑，2017（1）：148-163。

⁵⁷ 恰白·次旦平措撰、郑堆、丹增译：《简析新发现的吐蕃摩崖石文》，《中国藏学》1988（1）：76-81；

⁵⁸ 王尧编著：《吐蕃金石录》，北京：文物出版社，1982：167-169。

⁵⁹ 陈庆英：《从敦煌藏文 P.T. 999 号写卷看吐蕃史的几个问题》，《陈庆英藏学论文集（上）》，北京：中国藏学出版社，2006：24-41。陈楠：《P.T. 999 号敦煌藏文写卷再研究——以往汉译本比较及相关史事补正与考辨》，《中国藏学》2008（3）：19-27。

⁶⁰ Brandon Dotson, “Misspelling ‘Buddha’: The officially commissioned Tibetan *Aparimitāyur-nāma Mahāyāna-sūtras* from Dunhuang and the study of Old Tibetan orthography.” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 2016 (1): 129-151. 该文中，作者将古藏文分为三个时期：古藏文早期（7 世纪中期—8 世纪中期）、古藏文中期（8 世纪晚期至 9 世纪中期）、古藏文晚期（9 世纪晚期至 12 世纪早期）。

- 图五 1. 西藏昌都仁达摩崖石刻 2. 西藏桑耶寺兴佛证盟碑 3. 青海玉树勒巴沟恰冈石刻
4. 青海玉树勒巴沟吾娜桑嘎石刻 (1.2. 由夏格旺堆供图, 谨致谢意!)

