

**From Rāhula with Love:
The Gruesome Liberation of Zhing shag pa Tshe brtan
rdo rje as Told by his Compassionate Executioner**

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*stobs zhes bya ba'i stobs med 'khyams po khyod//
kho bos pre ta pu ri'i 'gram du bskrad//
Zhing shag pa Tshe brtan rdo rje*

*zhing zhes bya ba'i zhing bcu tshang ba khyod//
bdag gis rā hu la yi zhal du gdab//
Byang bdag bKra shis stobs rgyal¹*

Whether apocryphal or not, the witty exchange of poetic insults between Zhing shag pa Tshe brtan rdo rje (†1599) and Byang bdag bKra shis stobs rgyal dbang po'i sde (1550–1603) is not merely concerned with derogatory puns involving each other's names.² Though Zhing shag pa did not literally expel bKra shis stobs rgyal to the shores of Pretapurī, he did banish him from Byang and turned him into a wanderer. As for bKra shis stobs rgyal, he is indeed credited (at least among his supporters) for the death, or rather "liberation," of Zhing shag pa Tshe brtan rdo rje. In the wake of his expulsion from Byang ngam ring (and of the aforementioned poetic exchange), bKra shis stobs rgyal performed a tantric rite of liberation (*sgrol ba*) called *Rāhula's Razor* (*Khyab 'jug gza' yi spu gri'i las sbyor*).³ The depiction of the rite and of Zhing shag pa's gruesome agony were subsequently the object of a letter by Byang bdag bKra shis stobs rgyal to Rig 'dzin rGyal ba'i sras po Padma chos

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¹ These two quotes are from the text presented in translation in part three of this paper.

² The "poetic insults" episode is, for example, mentioned in bDud 'joms 'jigs bral ye shes rdo rje's *Bod chen po'i rgyal rabs dwangs shel 'phrul gyi me long*, p. 493. Jacob Dalton translated it in *The Gathering of Intentions*, p. 93. It is also mentioned in Tsepon Wangchuk Deden Shakabpa, *One hundred Thousand moons*, pp. 281-282.

³ This ritual most probably comes from the *gZa' rgod dug gi spu gri'i skor la pod gnyis* by Padma las 'brel rtsal (1291–1315/1319) that can be found in volumes 28-29 of the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*.

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rgyal (d. u.).⁴ It is this letter, which will be presented in translation below, that is the centre of our attention in this paper. But first, let us briefly introduce the actors involved in this drama and review what is known about their altercation.

1. Enter the protagonists

Based on the available sources, we know that Zhing shag pa Tshe brtan rdo rje originally served as a retainer for the Rin spungs pa in gTsang and owned only a small estate. An ambitious man, he was appointed as commander of the bSam grub rtse castle in gZhis ka rtse in 1548. Some sources say that he led a rebellion along with other dissatisfied vassals in 1557, but according to the 4th 'Brug chen Padma dkar po (1527–1592), this rebellion did not take place until 1565. As a consequence of these events, Zhing shag pa emerged as "the new strongman of gTsang"⁵ and managed to maintain strong ties with the bKa' brgyud school.⁶ Along with precipitating the demise of the Rin spungs pa dynasty in its own rise, the gTsang pa dynasty founded by Zhing shag pa lasted until 1642, when it was eventually swept away by Gu shri bstan 'dzin during his conquest of Tibet.

As for Byang bdag bKra shis stobs rgyal, he was born as the son of the Byang bdag Nam mkha' rin chen, whose lineage is said to go as far back as the Mi nyag emperor Si'u rgyal po, while his mother, Chos skyong 'dzom chen, was the daughter of a Lha sa rdzong pa. He was recognized by the second rDo rje brag rig 'dzin Legs ldan rdo rje as the reincarnation of his brother, mNga' ris pañ chen Padma dbang rgyal. Though Legs ldan rdo rje was his main master, he grew up receiving teachings from many famous masters of the time such as Lo chen Ratna bha dra. According to his biography as found in the *sNga 'gyur byang gter chos skor phyogs bsgrigs*, he ruled from 1574 until about 1580 and the controversy with Zhing shag pa Tshe brtan rdo rje that led to his exile. The importance of this exile for the future of

⁴ Though Shakabpa identifies this Rig 'dzin rGyal ba'i sras po Padma chos rgyal as bKra shis stobs rgyal's master Byams pa Chos kyi rgyal mtshan (One hundred thousand moons, p. 282), I think it is in fact Legs ldan rdo rje's son, Byang pa rgyal sras Padma chos rgyal.

⁵ Olaf Czaja, *Medieval rule in Tibet*, p. 281.

⁶ Czaja (ibid) also suggests that: "Apparently, [Zhing shag pa] had a serious interest in staying on good terms with the Karma pa and, in fact, in becoming heir to the Rin spungs pa also in the religious sphere of politics and power." And on p. 279, Czaja evokes his relation with Padma dkar po: "Not much later, Padma dkar po, having become something like the *bla ma* of the new strongman Tshe brtan rdo rje, came to dBus." For a more detailed account of Zhing shag pa's rise to power, see Czaja, *Medieval rule in Tibet*, pp. 278-281, and Shakabpa, *One hundred thousand moons*, pp. 279-280.

the Byang gter tradition cannot be overstated: it led to the relocation of its headquarters from Ri bo bKra bzang to the monastery of Thub bstan rdo rje brag and "incidentally" to the fact that his son, the third rDo rje brag rig 'dzin Ngag gi dbang po (1580–1639), counted the 5th Dalai-lama Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617–1682) among his students. As for bKra shis stobs rgyal, though he does not stand among the most prominent *gter ston* of the Byang gter tradition, he nevertheless remains famous for the composition of the prayer to the *gter ston* called *sPrul sku gter ston grangs nges kyi gsol 'debs thugs rje'i nyin 'byed*.⁷ Furthermore, during his lifetime, he was an essential link in the lineage, receiving (and thus preserving) a great amount of teachings in perilous times and as such was held in high esteem by Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho himself.

While the scientific literature has yet to entirely clarify the context of the feud between our two protagonists, the scarcity of available sources cannot solely be blamed. The one-sidedness of the accounts, along with variations in the retellings certainly contribute to the confusion.⁸ Yet, the most frequently repeated canvas of the story is the following: a quarrel arose between bKra shis stobs rgyal and his brother Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan, maybe about some family estate business, and then Kun spangs lHa dbang rdo rje, one of Zhing shag pa Tshe brtan rdo rje's nine sons, favoured Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan over bKra shis stobs rgyal, resulting in the latter's expulsion from Byang ngam ring.⁹ bKra shis stobs rgyal then wandered for some time before finding refuge in Phyong rgyas stag rtse, where he became close to the ruling family in which the 5th Dalai was born a few years later.¹⁰ It is also in Phyong rgyas (and other places such as 'Bri gung) where the ritual described in the text that will interest us below is said to have been performed. As for the shroud of uncertainties surrounding Zhing shag pa's death, the issue of the

⁷ This prayer can be found in *sNga 'gyur byang gter chos skor phyogs bsgrigs*, vol. 61, pp. 90-94.

⁸ See, for example, Tsepon Wangchuk Deden Shakabpa, *One hundred Thousand moons*, pp. 281-282 and Jacob Dalton, *The Gathering of Intentions*, pp. 92-93.

⁹ In some accounts, the feud was sparked directly by Kun spangs lHa dbang rdo rje. Additionally, the uncertainty about the identity of bKra shis stobs rgyal's father contributes to the overall lack of clarity surrounding the whole affair (on this, see Dalton, *The Gathering of intentions*, p. 196 n. 34).

¹⁰ In Jay Valentine's *Lords of the Northern treasures* (p. 172) we find a translation of a passage from the *Gu bkra'i chos 'byung* (p. 674) saying that even the tribulations of this banishment are a mere "trick" of enlightened activity: "For the sake of public appearance, [Trashi Topgyel] was disgraced by [the regional leader and his own confession] and forced to move to Central [Tibet]. Although this is how it looked publicly, the real purpose of the move was to open the way for his enlightened activity in the central region [of Tibet]."

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compatibility between the different dates that have reached us is not the least of them. The most commonly accepted date of death for Zhing shag pa Tshe brtan rdo rje is 1599.¹¹ As for bKra shis stobs rgyal, his banishment from Byang ngam ring is usually considered to have occurred when he was thirty or so (which would bring us around 1580), and we also know that he died in 1603, just four years after Zhing shag pa's alleged death.¹² Yet, in his biography, the performing of *Rāhula's Razor* is rather presented as a middle life feat, occurring more or less as he had just arrived in dBus, thus giving him time afterwards to raise and teach his son, Ngag gi dbang po, as well as travel with him and discover several *gter ma*. Though the agony of Zhing shag pa Tshe brtan rdo rje appears to have lasted rather long in the letter translated below, an agony persisting for almost twenty years can be somewhat perplexing for researchers, and some claims are certainly to be reconsidered in this story. I do hope we will be able to put in order all these intricate events in the years to come.

2. The violent liberation of Zhing shag pa Tshe brtan rdo rje

It goes without saying that the use of a wrathful ritual had nothing to do with personal revenge on the side of bKra shis stobs rgyal, but everything to do with Zhing shag pa's evil deeds and the way he governed his lands. Because of these, he ticked all the boxes in the tenfold list of "fields" (*zhing bcu*, variously translated as "ten fields", "ten conditions", "tenfold guilt", "tenfold heinous crimes", etc.) that make one a proper candidate to be (unwillingly) liberated. According to Jacob Dalton, this type of tenfold lists became popular in later Tibet, replacing a previously fivefold one,¹³ and the items in the list

¹¹ See for example, Benjamin Bogin, *The Red and Yellow war: Dispatches from the field*, p. 258: "Karma Tseten Dorjé ruled until his death in 1599, when he died in suspicious circumstances that will be considered shortly. He was succeeded by his son, Karma Tensung Wangpo (Karma bstan srung dbang po), who maintained his father's patronage of the Karma Kagyü school and, through the Karma hierarchs, an alliance with the Chogthu tribes of Mongols." See also James Gentry, *Substance and sense*, p. 138: "In 1599, upon the death of the first gTsang pa sde srid Zhing shag pa Tshe brtan rdo rje, his son Karma bstan srung dbang po took possession of 'U yug's gLing mkhar fortress."

¹² Yet even the dates of bKra shis stobs rgyal's birth and death are disputed since the recently published *gTsang la stod byang ngam ring gi rig gnas lo rgyus* by Gung thang bstan 'dzin nor bu still gives the (unlikely) dates of 1540–1578, while maintaining 1580 as the date of birth of his son Ngag gi dbang po (cf. pp. 204–205).

¹³ See Dalton, *The Taming of the Demons*, p. 87: "The fivefold list is reminiscent of the earlier nontantric set of "five sins of immediate retribution" (*pañcānantaryāni*), five sins said to send the offender straight to hell at death. The five crimes for liberation may represent a tantric response to these earlier five sins, though it

can vary, though the general tone of the faults in it is hostility towards the Dharma and its upholders. In *The "Calf's nipple" (Be'u bum) of Ju Mipam ('Ju Mi pham) – A handbook of Tibetan ritual Magic*, Bryan Cuevas gives the following tenfold list:

The ten fields are listed by Klong rdol Ngag dbang blo bzang (1719–94) in his *gSang sngags rig pa 'dzin pa'i sde snod las byung ba'i rgyud sde bzhi'i ming gi rnam grangs* as follows [...]: [1] those who subvert the teachings of the Buddha; [2] those who blaspheme the Three Jewels; [3] those who rob the goods of the monastic assembly; [4] those who slander and condemn the Mahāyāna; [5] those who attack the guru/lama; [6] those who slander their tantric brothers; [7] those who hinder an evocation;¹⁴ [8] those who have neither love nor compassion; [9] those who break their vows and pledges; and [10] those who hold wrong views about karma and its effects."¹⁵

But even if someone is a suitable target for such violent liberation, these rituals require skills, and bKra shis stobs rgyal happened to possess them, and this fact is certainly not unrelated to the later specialization of Byang gter in fierce magic.¹⁶ After the events, he wrote a letter to Padma chos rgyal in which he describes what happened to Zhing shag pa when he accomplished the *Khyab 'jug gza' yi spu gri* ritual and justified its use. From an etic point of view, the strangest aspect of the affair is not so much that a death sentence can somewhat be justified when it is imposed and executed by an individual and not by some legal authority, but the fact that the first beneficiary is not so much "society" as the offender himself. And indeed, a little further in bKra shis stobs rgyal's biography, it is said that the enemies whose lives he had taken, instead of going into bad destinies, had the joy to be directly promoted to abide in the *dharmadhātu*.¹⁷

To this day, this letter has never been translated except for the first

should be noted that enumerations of seven or ten crimes are also seen in the earliest stratum of Mahāyoga materials. Having been identified as guilty of one of the five crimes, the victim is determined to be a "field" for liberation."

¹⁴ *sgrub la bar chad byed pa bdun*.

¹⁵ Cuevas, "The 'calf's nipple' (Be'u bum) of Ju Mipam ('Ju Mi pham)", p. 186, n. 37.

¹⁶ The object of this paper being merely the translation of bKra shis stobs rgyal's letter, I refer anyone interested in this type of liberation rite to Jacob Dalton's *The Taming of the Demon, passim*.

¹⁷ "rnam shes ngan 'gror mi gtong bar mdzad de chos kyi dbyings su gnas spar bar mdzad", *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs*, Vol. 62, p. 373.

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few verses.¹⁸ Yet, its depiction of the episode is so graphic, with such an uncanny blend of tragic, comic, and ironic traits, the sufferings of Zhing shag pa being described with a dark humor that makes one laugh while reading the most horrible things, that we deemed its publication worthwhile. The core of the text is made up of enneasyllabic verses. I adopted a stanzaic grouping for these verses, and retained it even in the two instances where it was not the most obvious solution, because it had proved effective the rest of the time. The style is rather difficult, very elliptical and even grammatically confusing at times, so that the translation is in many places tentative, to say the least. My lack of firsthand experience in wrathful magic did not help, but I hope this translation will arouse the curiosity of researchers about a figure who deserves to be better known.

3. *The translation*

The following passage is part of the biography of Byang bdag bKra shis stobs rgyal dbang po'i sde compiled/composed by Chos dbyings, located in Volume 62 of the *sNga 'gyur byang gter chos skor phyogs bsgrigs*.¹⁹ The page numbers between brackets are from this edition, but its probable source is the 5th Dalai lama's biography of Ngag gi dbang po, entitled *Byang pa rig 'dzin chen po ngag gi dbang po'i rnam par thar pa ngo mtshar bkod pa rgya mtsho*,²⁰ where the text is almost identical, with just a few cuts made by the author of the *Ngo mtshar gtam gyi phreng ba*.

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When [bKra shis stobs rgyal] arrived in dBus, to Zhing shag pa Tshe brtan rdo rje's letter full of maligned joy saying:
 "You! the powerless wanderer²¹ named "Power",
 I expel you to the shores of Pretapurī!"²²

¹⁸ By Shakabpa, *One hundred thousand moons*, p. 282.

¹⁹ The biography of bKra shis stobs rgyal occupies pp. 357-393 of volume 62 and is part of *The Garland of Wondrous Tales (Nga mtshar gtam gyi phreng ba)*, and the passage translated here runs from p. 368, line 5, to p. 372, line 5.

²⁰ It runs from p. 708, line 6, to p. 711, line 6, of the 5th Dalai lama's *Nga mtshar bkod pa rgya mtsho*.

²¹ An alternate version of the verse has *kham pa khyod* instead of *'khyams po khyod*, in which case it should be interpreted as a reference to the Mi nyag family roots of bKra shis stobs rgyal and not to the fact that he is now homeless.

²² The name Pretapurī meaning "City of the hungry ghosts", the threat in Zhing shag pa's verse is obvious. For Pretapurī as a *gnas yig*, see Federica Venturi, "A *gnas yig* to the holy place of Pretapurī," *passim*.

[he] replied:

“You! The one called “Field” with the ten fields²³ complete,
I send you into the mouth of Rāhula!”²⁴

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And in accordance with that saying, Zhing shag pa was annihilated along with seven descendants through a wrathful action relying on the ritual [called] *Rāhula's Razor*. About the justification for this [action], [bKra shis stobs rgyal wrote in a letter accompanying] an offering sent to Rig 'dzin rGyal ba'i sras po Padma chos rgyal:²⁵

“At the feet of Zhabs drung rGyal ba'i sras po,

Thus I say: today again, having come and standing in the direct presence of your precious body, [I thank] your great kindness.

Thanks to the infallible care of Padmasambhava, the Lord of the Victorious Ones,

And the final adamantine words of the great Rig 'dzin [Legs ldan rdo rje],²⁶

Owing to the fact that he has been totally bound under oath, Rāhula has become like a servant of mine.²⁷

[His] former non-virtuous latent tendencies having fully developed,
[The] hater of the virtuous ones, engaged in immoral misbehavior,
The one called “Field,” with the heart's blood of a Ten-fielder,
May he be instantly devoured by the powerful Rāhula!

At the centre of a large retinue behaving with conceit²⁸

²³ For more information on the subject, see Dalton, *The Taming of the demons*, Chapter 3, and especially, p. 87 and note 49.

²⁴ For more information on Rāhula in the violent liberation practices, see Sørensen and Hazod, *Civilization at the Foot of Mount Sham-po*, pp. 167-73. For general information about Rāhula, see Bell, *Tibetan Demonology*, pp. 38-41.

²⁵ Most probably Legs ldan rdo rje's son Byang pa rgyal sras Padma chos rgyal.

²⁶ The allusion is not transparent. All we know is that the tradition says that when Legs ldan rdo rje was about to die, upon seeing the tremendous devotion of bKra shis stobs rgyal who was begging him to lengthen his life, he is said to have promised him to be reborn as his son, the future Rig 'dzin Ngag gi dbang po. On this, see Jay Valentine, *Lords of the Northern Treasure*, pp. 158-159, and for the doubts about the authenticity of the episode, see pp. 162-165.

²⁷ The translation is tentative. In *One hundred thousand moons*, Shakabpa quotes the first verses of the letter, thus rendered in English by Derek F. Maher: “I faithfully practice Padmasambhava's reliable perception and the vajra words, difficult to transgress, which have been spoken by you, the supreme Rikdzin. As a result, I have command over Rāhula.” Shakabpa, *op. cit.*, p. 282.

²⁸ This verse seems to refer to Zhing shag pa and his retinue rather than Rāhula and his retinue, though one could argue that it describes the latter, considering the positive connotation *khengs pa* can have when it refers to demons and rituals.

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And at a time of equilibrium between waxing and waning moon,
Rāhula, along with his father, mother, sons, retinue and messengers,
Swiftly came in that direction²⁹ under the impetus of a wrathful
appetite.

Instantly, because of the pain caused by a resplendent poisonous
spike,³⁰
[Zhing shag pa displayed] various signs of paralysis and confusion,
[370]
[Letting out] moans of unbearable torment from his mouth.
[He found himself] in a situation like [that of someone] rushing to the
hell realms.

[As for] the people surrounding him, behaving as enemies, friends or
in between,
Such a situation is pretty much like the proverb that says:
"To buy at the cost of one's own insincerity."³¹
"Now, this is indeed the magic power of the black mantras!"

Thus they whispered to one another...
His distressed sons, wife, his entire entourage,
Behaving with startled confusion and experiencing misery,³²
Began to emit violent lamentations whilst embracing [him].

As his torment made him wail moans of lamentations,³³
Of the entire assembly of people residing in that region,
Every one of them, witnessing this situation, was freed from doubt:
"Here's what happens when one makes an enemy of a tantric
practitioner!"

Then, his close relatives, out of affection, [summoned]

²⁹ *I.e.* where Zhing shag pa stood at that time.

³⁰ The phrase *gzi brjid dug gzer* may be intended to refer both to an actual "resplendent poisonous spike" and also to an arrow nocked in the bow that Rāhula carries in most representations.

³¹ These verses are rather obscure, and I could not find the referenced *gtam dpe*. It seems to imply that the people surrounding him are all he could get with the "counterfeit money," which was his lack of faithfulness.

³² The 5th Dalai lama's *Ngo mtshar bkod pa rgya mtsho* has *stab por spyod pas* instead of *stab por spyod te*. Here, I take *stab po* as synonymous with *rtab pa* and *rtab rtab po*. Jäschke has the example "*stab stab por song nas*" translated as "having become quite startled and confounded" under the *rtab pa* entry.

³³ Following Jean-Luc Achard's suggestion, I emend *dung* (present in both versions) to *gdung*, which is more natural. Otherwise, the verse should be rendered by something like: "This sound of lamentation was like the cry of a conch shell."

Through the [officers] in charge and according to the extent of their knowledge,
 People expert in medicine and in this type of situation.³⁴
 [But this] small gathering of timely fools,

It was as if [they] taught him the sufferings experienced in the lower realms.

[As they repeated] the ferocious sounds "*hūṃ phaṭ*" and [used] all kinds of power-ingredients,³⁵

He experienced heat and cold, and as if with a fatal arrow,
 They exerted themselves to strike again and again with the whip of fire and water.³⁶

Then, thanks to a follower of our own tradition from Zha lu,³⁷

Through the profound connections of various magical rites,

[Zhing shag pa] could now and then utter a few words

[371]

And was able to experience [his] sufferings for a few days.³⁸

At that time, in his mind was a mass of stirring thoughts:

He was so attached to mundane happiness that

Its associated sufferings, if given a material form,

Would undoubtedly rival even with [the size of] a mountain!

At that time, along with his relatives and friends,

He remembered all his previous transgressive actions.

As he repented, he was like one who craves [to get] ambrosia from a poison,

[and] I've heard it said that he begged me to save him.

Then, later in that day of [mental] agitation,

He was reduced to a mere name by the Lord of the three worlds.³⁹

³⁴ This *tshul 'di'i rig byed mkhan* seems to designate people expert in the art of saving individuals in a situation similar to the one of Zhing shag pa, so probably experts in divination, sorcery or even the Tibetan equivalent of exorcism.

³⁵ *Thun* might also refer to ritual blades used by his physicians in order to cure him or to some specific practice sessions.

³⁶ This metaphor probably refers to moxibustion.

³⁷ I could not identify this person yet.

³⁸ The meaning seems to be that he had passed out, but that thanks to the Zha lu pa in question, he was conscious again so that he could at last taste the sufferings he was missing while unconscious.

³⁹ It seems peculiar to refer to Rāhula as the "Lord of the Three Worlds." It is unclear if this is a longstanding tradition or neologism unique to this letter.

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At the time of revealing the unfailing truth,⁴⁰
The actual situation was clearly manifested.

In the pit where the fierce magic had been practised,
The *liṅga* split into pieces because of the increasing heat,
The *ba ling*⁴¹ burst into flames and [there was] another sign.⁴²
I saw many visions, so I then offered a torma of gratitude.

After that, I heard with pleasure the garland of good news
From the messengers⁴³ and about this affair, even nowadays,
Please be so kind as to take a look at the other [effects]
Of my own powerful invocation of truth within that year.

In the region of Byang, homeland of the men of perverted conduct,
Although the time to enjoy the cold, springtime, was near,
[They were] struck by thundering fierce lightnings,
[And] in the temples, magical fires were spreading.
[372]

Also, the military forces that tried to harm me,
When going back home, had close to thirty
Accidents, etc. and there are many more details.
Did the noble master hear anything about these?

How could these [feats be achieved] by my own power?
[It was through] Padmasambhava's compassionate deeds and in
particular
[Through] the supreme *rig 'dzin*'s unequalled kindness,⁴⁴
[Who], knowing the future, blessed my commitment.⁴⁵

I kept the cherished promise [to my Master] unstained as my own
heart,
Without regret, I carried the mountain of truth on my back,
Without transgressing [my oath], I worshipped diligently the

Regardless, he may have received this name as a result of the rather common confusion between Rāhula and Viṣṇu, the latter being also called khyab 'jug.

⁴⁰ This might refer to the moment when one invokes the truth during protectors' rituals.

⁴¹ The *ba ling* is a torma that represents meat in the ritual.

⁴² *I.e.* another sign of the ritual's success.

⁴³ Here, the messengers are probably ordinary travellers bringing news about Zhing shag pa's fate.

⁴⁴ This is likely to refer to his beloved master Rig 'dzin Legs ldan rdo rje.

⁴⁵ The *bzhal* from the *Byang gter phyogs bsgrigs* is obviously faulty, so I follow the *Ngo mtshar bkod pa rgya mtsho* and emend it to *gzhal*.

protectors and guardians of the Dharma,
Aspiring to quickly lay hold of the [state of] inwardly abiding
without foes.

Thus, through my supreme faith in the regent of my kind and noble
teacher whose kindness from [this] existence and in all future lives is
hard to fathom, may you consider [this letter] as a cloud of offering in
which you may rejoice. Whatever pleases [you], I joyfully offer!

Appendix

Wylie transcription of the text

*dbus su phebs skabs zhing shag pa tshe brtan rdo rjes snying tshim gyi yi
ger/ stobs zhes bya ba'i stobs med 'khyams po khyod/ /kho bos pre ta pu ri'i
'gram du bskrad/ /ces bskur ba'i lan du/ zhing zhes bya ba'i zhing bcu
tshang ba khyod/ /bdag gis rā hu la yi zhal du gdab/ /ces gsungs 'dugs pas
ltar/ zhing shag pa bdun brgyud dang bcas pa khyab 'jug gza' yi spu gri'i
las sbyor la brtan nas drag po mngon spyod kyis tshar bcad pa yin te/ de'i
rgyu mtshan skor rig 'dzin rgyal ba'i sras po padma chos rgyal la 'bul ba
gnang 'dug pa 'di lta stel/ zhabs drung rgyal ba'i sras po gang gi zhabs
drung du/ zhu ba/ deng dus kyang sku rin po che mchog tu dangs ngos de
gar phebs yod 'dug pa bka' drin che/ rgyal dbang padma'i gzigs pas bslu med
cing/ /rig 'dzin mchog gi 'da' ka rdo rje'i gsung/ /ches cher dam la bzhag pa'i
rten 'brel gyis/ /rā hu la de bdag gi bran ltar gyur/ /snga nas mi dge'i bag
chags yongs brtas pas/ /dge byed la sdang tshul min log spyod mkhan/
/zhing shes zhing bcu tshang ba'i snying khrag de/ /mthu ldan gza' mchog
chen pos mod la bzhes/ /khengs par spyod pa'i 'khor tshogs mang po'i dbus/
/dkar nag phyogs kyis mnyam 'jug dus kyis tshel/ /khyab 'jug yab yum sras
'khor pho nyar bcas/ /phyogs der rngam stabs shugs kyis myur bar 'ongs/
/de yi mod la gzi brjid dug gzer gyis/ /rengs dang rmongs pa'i rnam 'gyur
du ma dang/ /kha nas mi bzad [370] gdung ba'i skad dang bcas/ /dmnyal bar
rings pa bzhin du dus la lhung/ /dgra gnyen bar mar spyod pa'i 'khor de dag
'di lta'i tshul ni rang gi bden med kyis/ /rin du byas te nyos pa'i dpe bzhin
no/ /da ni sngags nag de yi mthu yin no/ /zhes zer la la yid dga' zhub bur
smra/ /bu dang chung ma mya ngan 'khor tshogs rnames/ /stabs por spyod de
sdug bsngal myong de la/ /'khyud bzhin cho nge drag po 'debs par gyur/
/cho nge'i sgra ni 'bod pa'i gdung⁴⁶ bzhin du/ /yul der gnas pa'i mtha' dag
skye bo'i tshogs/ /kun kyang tshul de mthong bas som nyi bral/ /sngags par
dgra bslang 'di ltar yong zhes smras/ /de nas gnyen grogs rnames kyis brtse
sems kyis/ /gso rig pa dang tshul 'di' rig byed mkhan/ /khur 'dzin de dag*

⁴⁶ Following Jean-Luc Achard's suggestion, I emend *dung* (present in both versions) to *gdung*.

rnams kyis shes⁴⁷ bya'i khyon/ /dus der 'os pa'i blun rmongs 'ga' tshogs nas/ /ngan 'gror spyod pa'i sdug bsngal slob pa bzhin/ /hūm phat drag po'i sgra dang thun sna tshogs/ /tsha grang myong la gsod mda' ji bzhin du/ /me chu'i lcag gis yang yang 'debs la brtson/ /yang der rang rigs rjes 'jug zha lu pas/ /sna tshogs rten 'brel zab mo'i cho ga yis/ /skabs skabs cung zad smra dang sdug bsngal dag /myong bar shes pa [371]zhag 'ga'i bar du byung/ /de dus de yi sems la 'gyu ba'i tshogs/ /srid pa'i bde bar zhen dang de 'brel ba'i/ /sdug bsngal dag la gzugs su byas pa na/ /lhun po la yang 'gran par gdon mi za/ /skabs der nye grogs rnams dang lhan cig par/ /sngon du thal ba'i las tshogs rnams dran tel/ /'khyod bzhin dug las bdud rtsi 'dod pa ltar/ /bdag la srung ba slong zer gleng ba thos/ /de nas 'gyus ba'i tshes la slad nas kyang/ /srid gsum bdag pos ming gi lhag mar mdzad/ /bden pa bslu med ston pa'i dus de'i tshel/ /ji lta'i tshul ltar 'dir ni mngon sum gsäl/ /rig sngags drag po sgrub pa'i sa khung du/ /ling ga dag la drod phebs tshal bar gas/ /ba ling me 'bar gzhan yang mtshan ma ni/ /dngos nyams ji snyed mthong nas gtang rag phul/ /de rjes pho nya'i gtam snyan phreng ba dag /legs thos 'di lta'i tshul ni da dung yang/ /bdag nyid bden tshig ches btsan lo khongs su/ /gzhan dag la yang gzigs pa gnang tshal lo/ /byang phyogs log spyod skye bo'i yul dag tu/ /dpyid dus grang reg spyod la nye skabs kyang/ /gnam lcags drag po'i thog gis bsnun pa dang/ /gtsug la khang la rdzu 'phrul me 'bar zhing/ /bdag la mtho[372]'tsham dpung tshogs rnams la yang/ /phyir log dus su sum cur nye ba'i grangs/ /gdong thug brgyab sogs zhib cha mang mchis pa/ /yongs 'dzin dam pa'i snyan du gsan nges sam/ /'di dag rang stobs ji zhig o rgyan rje'i/ /thugs rje'i 'jug pa dag dang khyad par du/ /bka' drin mnyam med rig 'dzin mchog de yis/ /ma 'ongs dus mkhyen dam bzhag byin rlabs dang/ /sel med dam tshig gces spras snying ltar bcang/ /'khyod med bden pa'i ri bo rgyab tu khur/ /g.yel med chos skyong srung ma mchod la brtson/ /dgra med nang gnas myur du 'dzin par smon/ /shes skye ba nas tshe rabs thams cad du bka' drin gzhal⁴⁸ bar dka' ba'i yongs 'dzin dam pa bka' drin can gyi zhal skyin gang der dad pa mchog gis khyed nyid dgyes pa'i mchod sprin du dgongs/ ci bder nyams dgar phul/

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⁴⁷ I follow the *Ngo mtshar bkod pa rgya mtsho* and emend *byes bya* to *shes bya*.

⁴⁸ I follow the *Ngo mtshar bkod pa rgya mtsho* and emend *bzhal* to *gzhal*.

Compassion]: *sPrul sku gter bkra shis grangs nges kyi mtshan bsdoms gsol 'debs thugs rje'i nyin byed*, in *sNga 'gyur byang gter chos skor phyogs bsgrigs*, s.l., Byang gter dpe sgrig tshogs chung, bdr:MW2PD17457_C9E8B2, vol. 61, pp. 90-94.
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