NAMES AND TITLES IN EARLY TIBETAN RECORDS

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The most valuable sources of information about Tibetan names and titles in the VIIIth to IXth Centuries are:


Inventaire des Manuscrits Tibétains de Tonk Hoang. M. Lalou. (LINV)


Tibetan Inscriptions of the VIIIth to IXth Centuries, variously edited by Professor G. Tucci, Professor Li Fang-kuei, and myself, in The Tombs of the Tibetan Kings (TTK), Tunh Pao (TP) and the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (JRAS) respectively.

The first and third of the three bka’ thigs (editits) quoted in the XVth Century Chos Byung of Dpa’ Bo Gtsug Lag ’Phreng Ba (PT) which can be accepted as copies of genuinely ancient documents. The editits have been translated and transcribed by Tucci in TTK.

The names of Tibetan officials are recorded in a variety of forms. They can be written in extenso or abbreviated in different ways. In either case they usually contain elements the significance of which is quite well documented. One source of such documentation is the Lhasa Tregy Inscription of 621—622 which has the particular value of being bilingual. On that important occasion the appellations of the Tibetan ministers who witnessed the treaty were given in their fullest form; and it was stated at the beginning of the list that it contains the ]khas d lung mying rul of the witnesses.
Taking those terms in reverse order: (1) *rus* signifies the clan or patrilineal family name. Many of these *rus* are frequently recorded e.g. Khu; Mgar; Mgos; Ngan Lam; Ngege; Cog Ro; Mchims; Gnyas; Sna Nam; Pho Yong; Nam Ka; Dha’s; ‘Bring Yai; ‘Bro; ‘Brom; Myang; Tshes Pong. I reserve for a later occasion a study of the original location of the various *rus* and their individual part in Tibetan politics; but it appears that one group of families of Central Tibetan origin, headed by the Dha’s, were in constant competition with families, of which ‘Bro was the most prominent, who came from the border regions or beyond and who acquired influence in Tibet through the marriage of ladies of their clan to a Tibetan king.

(2) *Mying (ming)* is the current word for a personal name. A list of *mying* in early use, with some comments on them, is given later.

(3) *Thabs*, although unknown with that meaning in current Tibetan, clearly relates to rank or official title. It is found in TLTD II 361 and 370—rather obscurely; and in REV quite clearly in the form *gral thabs*. The meaning is confirmed by the Chinese version of the Lhasa Treaty Inscription where, as Dr. Li has shown in TP XLIV, *thabs* is the equivalent of the Chinese wei “position, rank, title”.

The *thabs* include a number of official posts whose function is reasonably clear and others more open to speculation. The general word for a minister is *blon*. The Chief Minister was known as *blon che*; and he had as colleagues several Great Ministers or *blon chen po* who are described in the Lhasa Treaty Inscription as *bka’ chen po la gyogs pa* which I have translated as “privy to the great command”, and Dr. Li as “participating in the deliberations of important state affairs”. Below these was a body of ordinary or lesser (phal or phra) ministers, described as *bka’ la gyogs pa*; and at least one instance is found of the term *bka’ blon*—TLTD II 47—which is still used in Tibet as a title of the Zhabs Pad or members of the Bka’ Shag.

Within those broad categories of greater and lesser, some ministers held titles describing their specific duties. In the higher rank are found a *ban de chen po*, Great Monk Minister (this post only appears in the later years of the royal period), and a *dmag dpon chen po*, Commander-in-Chief. In the lower grade some ministers are described
as nang blon and others as phyi blon, probably referring to their duties respectively within Tibet at the king's court and outside it on the frontiers or in occupied territory; of these the nang blon took precedence over the phyi blon.

Important posts, apparently connected with district administration were those of the brang pa and the morgan dpon. The brang pa, whose history has been examined in detail by Dr. G. Uray in Acta Orientalia Hungarica 1962, were closely linked with the organisation of Tibetan territory into ru. They cease to appear in the records after 745.

The morgan dpon appear to have been the administrative officers of districts and the Lhasa Treaty Inscription indicates that they were connected with other officers known as khab so whose duties may have been similar to those of the modern rdzong dpon. The khud pa then po appears from the one surviving mention of this post (THA p 23) to have been concerned with the receipt of property. Perhaps khud pa explained by S. C. Das at p. 148 of his Dictionary as "anything sent...an article presented" is relevant. Another post appearing more frequently is that of snam phyi pa (Treaty Inscription; THD 106; TTK 103). This ranked third in the list of ordinary officials and preceded the military officers and officers of the Exterior. A group of fifteen snam phyi pa witnessed the third bkra' thigs quoted in TTK: their duties, therefore, seem to have been important and extensive. Snam phyi with the meaning "latrine" does not seem appropriate, for it is improbable that in 18th century Tibet menial service around royal persons would have acquired the status of a formal privilege as it did in the court of Louis XIV. The number of such officials also militates against any such interpretation.

Further posts which are frequently recorded are: the bkra' phyin blon (Treaty Inscription; TLTD; LINV; REV) whose duties were perhaps similar to those of the present day mgon gnyer which include making known the orders of the ruler; the rtsis pa (Treaty Inscription; TLTD; REV) who can be assumed to have been the equivalent of the modern rtsis dpon, an officer responsible for the assessment of revenue and the keeping of revenue records: the zhal ce pa (Treaty Inscription; LINV; TLTD) who were judicial officers the name of whose post survives in the title of the code of laws attributed to Strong Brtisan Sgam Po—the zhal ce bcu gsum. Another judicial officer, named only in the Zhol
inscription and in the XVIIIth century Chos Byun of Dpas Bo Gtsug Lags, was the yo gal 'chos pa. According to reliable Tibetan informants the term implies mediation and reconciliation ('chos) of conflicting parties ('gal).

REV contains a long list of official posts in the Sha Cu (Tsun Huang) region most of which do not appear in documents relating to Central Tibet. Several of them—e.g. ru dpon, khei dpon, stong dpon—are based on the organisation by "horns", ten thousands and thousands, combining perhaps civil and military functions.

A general term for officers connected with military duties was dgra blo or dmar dpon another seemingly military rank—chibs dpon,—master of horse—survives as that of an officer of the Dalai Lama's retinue; the term dbang po also seems to have a military significance; and F. W. Thomas sees army rank in the word stag; but many of the instances he quotes are doubtful, although stag so in TLTD II 211 does appear to support his contention.

Official posts were divided into grades each with its special insignia consisting of ornaments and diplomas of different precious substances. In general the highest was turquoise, followed by gold, phra men, silver, brass, and copper (LINV 1071); but in THA p.60 there is mention of ke ke ru as the insignia of an award of special merit, apparently higher even than turquoise Ke ke ru is described in Jaeschke's Dictionary as "a precious white stone"; perhaps it was jade or some hard stone. During recent road-making work near Rgya Mda' an ancient tomb was uncovered in which the remains of the dead were decorated with a circular medallion of turquoise; and a similar ornament is said to have been found much earlier in a tomb near Nag Cgu Kha.

Some information about the grading and ornaments of Tibetan ministers is also found in the T'ang Annals (Hsin T'ang Shu). The Chief Minister is there called lun ch'e and h's assistant lun ch'e hu mang. These two are further described as great and little lun. There is a Commander-in-Chief called hsi pien ch'e pu; a chief minister of the interior called nang lun ch'e pu or lun nang jo; an assistant called nang lun mi ling pu and a lesser one called nang lun ch'ung; a chief consulting minister—yu han ch'e po with assistants also designated mi ling and ch'ung. All the ministers taken together are described as shung lun ch'e po t'u chu.
Their ceremonial ornaments are, in descending importance, of se, se, gold, gilded silver, and copper; they hang in large and small strings from the shoulder.

The above information can be generally reconciled with that from Tibetan sources; but the post of lun ch'e hu maing is not easily identified. Or Maing is the personal name of a Chief Minister who held office from 727 to c. 740; there may be confusion with that, or with the term ag dpon which is applied in T/HD 10 to an assistant under training with the Chief Minister. The words mi ling and chung stand for bring and chung “middleing” and “small”. Hsi pien is an undifferentiable term for a military officer. It might represent srid dpon (otherwise unknown) or as suggested by Professor Li Fang-kuei, might stand for spyan, a title appearing in REV. T'u chu, as suggested by Professor Li, may represent Tibetan dgu which may have either a plural force or its intrinsic meaning of “nine”; and it may be significant that in the Treaty Inscription the list of senior ministers contains exactly nine names, as does that in the Edict of Khi. Srong Lde Btsan—that of Khi Lde Srong Btsan lists eight senior ministers. The Chinese records may, therefore, have preserved a trace of a Board of Nine Senior Ministers of which no mention has survived in Tibetan documents. From the list of ornaments, it would appear that phra men was gilded silver; but the Chinese list is shorter than the Tibetan and, on the analogy of mu men, a precious stone, I still have doubts whether phra men might not have been a variegated hard stone such as agate or onyx which has long been highly prized in Tibet.

I do not propose to examine the rather scanty evidence about the personal names of the Tibetan royal family or the regnal titles of the kings, which fall into a pattern of their own; but some other terms applied to important personages, and not designating specific official functions, may be mentioned. Chee po, “Great One”, is sometimes used as a sort of title (TLTD 97:98; and 339); but this is rare and probably provincial. Rje btsas, a term used of officials in high position, has caused some speculation. Thomas, although translating it in TLTD II as “Your Excellency”, later, and more satisfactorily, concluded that it means “succession, or successor in a post”.

The title zhang, in certain clearly definable circumstances, signifies that the person so described or a member of his
family was at some time in the relationship of maternal uncle to a king of Tibet. Families with this distinction, which figure prominently in early records, are Mchims, Snam Nam, Brö, and Tshes Pong. From this title must be distinguished the term, shag lan (sic) which seems to be used as a general designation of ministers of all ranks and may there be the equivalent of the Chinese shang as in shang shu "head of an office".

Another shag relationship was that described as shag dbon, "uncle and nephew" which existed between the Emperor of China and the King of Tibet as the result of the marriage of Svang Btsan Sgam Po, and later of Khri Lde Gtsug Btsan, to Chinese princesses. There was a similar relationship between Tibetan kings, as shag, and the 'A Zha chiefs, as dbon, through the marriage in 689 of the Tibetan princess Khri Bangs to the 'A Zha ruler. Other Tibetan princesses also married neighbouring rulers—in 671 a Zhang Zhung prince; in 736 a Khagom of the Dru Gyis (Tsugshg); and in 740 the Bru Zha Rje. None of those rulers is specifically mentioned as dbon nor are they recorded as rgyal pho - "vassal", although at some times Bru Zha and parts of Zhang Zhung may well have been claimed as tributary.

The King of Nanchao, at times a powerful ally, at others a formidable enemy of the Tibetans, was accorded the title of Btsan Po Gzung—the Younger Brother King; and it is possible that when Nepal was under Tibetan domination their king held the title of Btsan Pe Ceen—the Elder Brother King. But by the time of the edicts of Khri Srong Lde Btsan and Khri Lde Svang Btsan the only princes to be mentioned as rgyal pho are the Dbon 'A Zha Rje whose name is given as Dvd Kyi Bul Zh Khud Bor Ma Ga Tho Yo Gon Kha Gan, the Rkong Dkar Po Mang Po Rje, the head of a princely family of Rkong Po who were ancient congers of the Tibetan rgyal family and the Myang Btsan Khri Bo, the head of a Myang principality which may have been the heritage of the great minister Myang Mang Po Rje Zhang Snang who was all-powerful in the early days of Svang Btsan Sgam Po and was disgraced and executed in about 636.

Other personages who may have been included among the rgyal pho can be seen in documents in TLTD and LINV relating to the administration of the border regions. The term rtse rje appears frequently, sometimes with a territorial label e.g., the rtse rje of Sha Cu (Tun Huang); of
Ka Dag; of Nob Chen (Greater Lob Nor), of Nob Chung; others are known by names e.g., rtsa rje Khrom Bsher, Bzang Khong, rtsa rje Ju Gug; and one is described as "tsog rtsa rje." That title to dog, which also appears frequently and is found in THD, is related by Thomas to the Turkic tu ruy, another title bo bo, zho co; jo cho, etc.) is related to the Kharoshthi cjhbo; and a ma ca, a title used in Khöstan, is identified as representing the Sanskrit amatya. The title na sung rje is also found in connection with distinctly non-Tibetan, possibly Zhaṅg-Zhaṅg, names—Ri Stag Rhya and Spung Rhye Rhya—; and the title Sang rje pa, although similar in appearance to the well documented Tibetan rank of sang bлоn, may have had a special local significance.

There is scope for further study of the distribution of these non-Tibetan forms.

Returning to the mying: it has been surmised that some frequently recurring elements in Tibetan names, apart from those identifiable as thubs and rabs, signify some sort of rank or title. Bcog, etc. have transliterated the names of Khri Sum Rje Rtsan Bsher and 'Bel Skye Zang Ldong Tshab as "le bsher Khri Sum Rje Rtsang de Dha's" and "'Bal Skye Zang, le Tshab de Ldong"; and it is noted there that bsher means "heu fonctionnaire". This is apparently mere guesswork, and a key to the significance of such syllables is found in three early documents—LNY 1240, 1415, and TLTD II p. 370 B—which seem to have been overlooked. Taking the first and last as examples, they read: (1) rabs ni 'brom/mkhan ni ndo bsher/mying ni 'jog bu/ru ni 'brang yas/mkhan ni rgyal grigs (quotation left incomplete); and (2) rabs ni sena myes/ mkhan ni srigs grigs/mying ni nysa bskus/ru ni 'gral mnyam/mkhan ni lang skyes/mying ni don nsu/ru ni 'bren/mkhan ni... (Document damaged).

The important element in each case is the word mкhаn which seems to signify some sort of title by which the person was known. Mkhan with that specific meaning is not current in Tibetan today but is familiar as a suffix (like the Hindi wula) indicating a man's skill or profession—what he knows, and also what he is doing, e.g., shing mkhan, a carpenter, mdza mkhen, a potter; and 'gro mkhan, one who is going; 'bual mkhen, one who has killed. Jakeshke, in his dictionary—followed as usual by Das—states that this suffix can also be used in a passive sense, e.g., sad khan ni lug, "the sheep which was killed". Such a use would be in line with the suggestion that mkhan in the old documents
could mean h- w a man was known; but well educated Tibetans have denied that such a form is permissible in Tibetan today and I cannot recall any instances in classical Tibetan. Jaeschke's example is attributed to Western Tibet; and even if the practice is not now known in Central Tibet, the step between the two forms is perhaps not a very long one.

At all events, it is possible in the light of the two passages quoted above to analyse official names and titles even farther than in terms of tbabs, ras, and nyings. For example: (1) Dba’s Khri Sum Rje Rtsan Bzer. His ras is Dba’s; his mchab Khri Sum Rje; his nyings, Rtsan Bzer. (2) Pal Skye Zang Ldron Tshab: his ras is Pal; his mchab Skye Zang; his nyings, Ldron Tshab. (3) Taking a name from the Treaty Inscription, Nam Blon Mehims Zhang Rgyal Bzer Kho Ne Brtan. His thabs is Nang Blon; his ras, Mehims, he is Zhang through relationship with the royal family; his mchab is Rgyal Bzer his nyings. Kho Ne Brtan. (4) A name from THD. Blon Che Dba’s Stag 'gra Khong Lod. His thabs is Blon Che; his ras, Dba’s; his mchab, Stag Sgra; his nyings, Khong Lod.

Abbreviations of the names of officials take different forms in different documents but generally in each document a consistent practice is adopted. In THD two systems are used. For example (1) the full name and title of Blon Che Dba’s Khris Gyigs Zhang Nyen is abbreviated to Blon Che Khi Gyigs—i.e. thabs + mchab; and (2) when a ras is mentioned the nyings is used and not the mchab, e.g. Mgar Stong Rtsan Yul Zung, Dba’s Mang Po Rje Pu Tshab, and Cog Ro Snying Zing Kung appear as Mgar Yul Zung, Dba’s Pu Tshab, and Cog Ro Zing Kung respectively. These systems are followed in the majority of the documents in TLID and LINV but two other systems also are found there, although in fewer instances than (1) and (2) above. They are: (3) some officials are described by their thabs, mchab and nyings but their ras is omitted. There is also an example of this in the Zhwa’s Lha Kang inscriptions where a member of the Myang ras is described as Blon Snag Bzang 'Dus Khong. In system (4) both thabs and ras are omitted and we find such names as Rgyal Bzer Legi Tshän—mchab and nyings only. Yet a further two systems appear in the edicts from PT which, it may be remembered, are not original documents. In the third edict there are a few instances of system (2) e.g. Cog Ro Rkyi Brtan; Kha Mye Gyigs. These are ras + nyings; but the greater
number of the abbreviations are in the form (5) rus + thabs + ming, e.g. Cog Ro Blon Gung Kong. Persons who are zhang are described in a different manner from that used in the Treaty inscription. There the practice is Mehims Zhang, etc., etc.; in the edict the form is Zhang Mehims, etc.; etc. The first edict produces system (6) using the thabs and the ming only, e.g. Blon Ngan Lam Stag Sya Klu Gung is abbreviated to Blon Klu Gung; and in this edict zhang are also described by their ming only, e.g. Zhang Legs 'Dus. This usage may perhaps also be found in THD where the names Zhang Rgya Sto and Zhang Tre Gung look more like ming than mikhau, but there is also an instance there of the name Zhang Btsan To Re which is an established mikhau.

The forms of abbreviation are, therefore, numerous; but on the available evidence the most common system is (1), i.e. thabs + mikhau. The existence of a rus + ming abbreviation, however, makes it impossible to say with certainty whether all nobles possessed a mikhau; but as there are examples where the names of persons known to have possessed a mikhau are abbreviated to rus + ming, and as a very large number of mikhau existed—lists are given below—it seems probable that all nobles who attained ministerial rank were known by a mikhau. It seems equally probable that ordinary people did not have a mikhau. LINV 2169, for example, refers to persons only by their rus and ming; and many documents in TLTD and LINV relate to persons who can be seen from the context to have been farmers, soldiers, workers and ordinary citizens. The names usually consist of two syllables only and many of them can be shown from established examples to be ming; the form of others differ from the usual model of a mikhau, as can be seen from the lists which follow. Many of the names are prefixed by a rus, usually differing from the well-established rus of the Tibetan nobility, and in many cases of non-Tibetan appearance. This is not surprising as the documents originate in the border regions and the rus fall into distinctive groups in the different regions. From Sba Cu (Tun Huang) there are such family, clan or racial names as 'Im; Hang; Le; Le'u; K'eu. The usual prefix for names from Khotan is Li and from the Tu Yu Hun, 'A Zha. The rus Ngan does not appear often but may perhaps refer to people of Sogdian origin. Similarly the personal names fall into distinctive groups. From Sba Cu are found for example—Le Shing; P'eu P'e'u; Hyan Ce; 'Im 'Bye Le'u; Wang Kun

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Te: from Nob. (Lop Nor) Spoung Rang Slong; Nga Srosg; Lbeg Ma; Nung Zul; Nir Sto: from Li (Khotan) Ku Zu; Ye Ye; Shi Nir; Gu Dod; Bu Du. Lists of such names have been collected by Thomas and can be seen in LTD II.

Although it is not intended to examine in any detail names other than those of lay officials but it may be noted that the Tibetan monastic names which make their appearance towards the end of this period follow their own line, drawing on the Buddhist religious vocabulary, e.g. Ting Nge 'Dzin Bzang Po; Dga' Ldak Byang Chub; Rdo Rje Rgyal Po; Dpal Gyi Shes Rab, Byang Chub Bkra Shis; Don Grub; Ye Shes; etc.

To conclude this study I have extracted lists to show the nature of the mkhan and mying. The lists, which are not intended to be a full catalogue, are in two parts; the first contains examples established by their appearance in names given in extenso, the second contains mkhan and mying which are found in close association with established examples and show a similar character. They may, therefore, be assumed to be respectively mkhan or mying.

MKHAN

[A] Klu Bahe R: Klu Bzang; Skye (Skyes) Bzang; Khri Gang; Khri Sgra; Khri Snyon; Khri Mnyen; Khri Mnyes; Khri Do Re; Khri 'Brong; Khri Bstan; Khri Gyu; Khri Gzigs; Khri Bzang; Khri Sum Rje; Khri Sum Bzer; Khlo Bzer; Gis Bzang; Dge Bzer; Rgyal Sgra; Rgyal Nyen; Rgal Ta; Rgyal To Re; Rgyal Ston; Rgyal Tsha; Rgyal Tshang; Rgyal Bzer; Rgyal Gzigs; Rgyal Bzang; Rgyal Legs; Chung Bzang; Snya Do Re; Snya Do Re; Snya Bstan; Snya Bzher; Snyan To Re; Sng Gu; Sng Sgra; Sng Rma; Sng Bzer; Sng Gzigs; Ston Nya; Ston Re; Ston Rtsan; Brtan Sgra; Brtan Bzer; Mdo Bzer; Ldon Bzang; Snang To Re; Snang Bzer; Snang Bzang; Dpal Bzer; 'Brug To Re; 'Brug Po; 'Brug Rtsan; Mang Rje; Mang Nyan; Mang Po Rje; Mang Bzer; Mang Rtsan; Mang Zhham; Snong To Re; Bstan Sgra; Bstan To Re; Bstan Nyan; Btsan Bzer; Zha Nga; G Yu Legs; Legs Snyan; Legs To Re; Legs Bzer; Legs Sum Rje; Lha Bzer; Lha Bzang.

[B] Klug Sgra; Klug Mnyen; Klug Gzigs; Khri Dog Rje; Khri Rna; Khri Bzer; Gyu Bzer; Dge Bzang; Rgyal
MYING

[A] Klu Gong; Klu Dpal; Sar Kong; Skyi Zung; Kha Ce; Khar Tui; Khong Gie; Khong Sto; Khong Zung; Khong Lod; Khyi Chung; Khyi Ma Re Dod; Khri Gong; Khri Gda Khri Sibs-Gung Rton; Dge Tsugs; Rgyan Kol; Rgya Gong; Rgyal Kong; Rgyal Suv Gru; Rgyal Sibs; Sngos Btsan; Rje Gol; Rje Chung; Rje Tsings; Nya Sgo; Mnyen Lod; Stag Skyes; Stag Snya; Stag Snang; Stag Rtsang; Stag Tshab; Stag Lod; Brad Gong; Brad Snga; Mdo Btsan; Mdo Lod; Thun Kong; Dus Kong; Dus Dpal; Rdog Rje; Ldron Tshab; Ldron Zhi; Ldom Bu; Ne Stangs; Ne Btsans; Ngag Kong; Dpal Dus Sbe Btsan; Spangs Lha; Spangs Skyes; Phes Po; Phan Gang; Byin Byin; Sbar Gung; Sheg Chung; Mon Chung; Mon Tshas; Myes Snang; Myes Rma; Rma Snang; Smon Btsan; Smon Zung; Btsan Kong; Btsan 'Brod; Zhag Snang; Zhag Yen; Bshi Btsan; Zu Btsan; Zin Kong; Zla Gong; Btsang Kong; 'Or Mang; Ya Sgo; Yab Lag; G-yu Gog; G-yu Btsan; Dam Shags; Rr Tshab; Rr Zung; Le Gong; Legs Dus; Legs Po; Legs Tsings; Legs Gung; Sum Snang; Gnas Mthong; Lha Sgra; Lha Mthong; Lba Bo Btsan; Lha Zung; Lha Lod; Lhas Byin; Lho Gong; Hab Ken.

[B] Klu Rtor; Klu Rma; Klu Btsan; Khyi Bu; Khyi Ma Re; Khyi Legs; Stag Chung; Sgsags Legs; Sgsags Sibs; Dge Legs; Tre Gong; Throm Po; Dus Dpal; Dus Rma; 'Dus Tsings; Ldron Gang; Dpal Srog; Sbe Rga; Gtsugs Legs; Btsan Zig; Rtag Btsan; Btsan Legs; Gsags Sto; Gsags Btsan; Gsags Sibs; Lha Skyes; Lha Gong; Lha 'Brug Btsan; Lha 'Brug Btsan; Lha Legs.

The general appearance of the mkhad an dnyang can be seen from the above lists. Although most of the components are common to both, certain pairs of variables
occur far more frequently—though not exclusively—in one group or another. In the examples I have collected bsher is almost exclusive to the mkhan; while legs, legs, and kong, as final syllables, are exclusive to the mying. The instances where one pair of syllables appears to be used as either a mkhan or a mying are not a large proportion of the available material.  

Uncertainty on this point is increased by the apparently indiscriminate use of either mkhan or a mying after the title zang; and perhaps also personages of border clans—e.g. those described as po ro—may not always have possessed a mkhan. Ordinary people on the border may have taken as personal names forms used in Tibet itself only as mkhan. In general one can detect a characteristic pattern in both mkhan and mying; and further research might remove doubts about the equivocal examples.

The same mkhan occurs in more than one family; and although some components appear rather frequently in certain ras—e.g. many Rinpoche’s names contain the syllable bshes—none is exclusive to any particular ras. More obviously, many people shared the same mying. Here, too, some syllables recur in particular noble families e.g. many Cog Ro names end in kong. That syllable is not exclusive to Cog Ro nor is it found in all their names; but it does seem to be a frequent part of names from ras connected with the border regions and this may be significant.

Some of mkhan and mying can be translated after a fashion. Stag Sgra ‘Tiger Voice’; Sag Gzigs, ‘Tiger Look’; Khri Sum Rje ‘Lord of Three Thrones’; Lha Brang, ‘Excellent Deity’; Stag Tshab ‘As Good As a Tiger’; Smon Brtan, ‘Powerful Prayer’; Lhas Byun, ‘Blessed by God’; and so on. The translation of other syllables—e.g. the frequent bsher—is not clear, but it is not my intention to speculate on their meaning here. Generally, the mkhan appear more grandiose and complimentary than the mying. The existence of so large a member of mkhan excludes the probability that they were systematic titles (though an exception might be made for mong po rje) and the conclusion is that mkhan was a sort of sobriquet or name of honour conferred on persons of noble birth or high rank.

2. There are three instances in THD of the proclamation of the name of a King: Khrī 'Dus Srong in 685 at the age of nine; Khrī Lde Gtsug Btsan in 712 at the age of eight; and Khrī Srong Lde Btsan in 756 at the age of thirteen. Of these the original name of Khrī Lde Gtsug Btsan is recorded—viz. Rgyal Gtsug Ru.

3. See Zhol Inscription S. lines 3 and 4 and TLTD 22-25; 59; 302; 339; and 404. Of these TLTD 22-25 is the most illuminating: "Bdag cag pha tshan phyis yang ba 'i rje blas ni ma legs/ba'gyi pha Ma Ko Can yas sha phel ba'i rje blas 'di bdag cig Led Kong yi bu bsha rngo thog las bko bar" "That rje blas (right to office) which our father's family regularly enjoyed, does not (now) exist. The rje blas earned by the performance of services especially by our father Ma Ko Can let one from the descendants of our Led Kong who is capable be appointed to that rje blas."

4. A branch of Mchims seems to have been known as Mchims Rgyal; see the well attested Mchims Rgyal Rgyal Grzigs Shu Steng (Zhol and THD) also in the third edict in TTK: Mchims Rgyal Btsan Bzer legs Grzigs; Mchims Rgyal Srong Snya Mon Bui'an; Mchims Rgyal Stag Bzer. Rgyal Grzigs, Bshian Bzer and Stag Bzer, without a prefixed Rgyal, are known mkhan. That prefix does not appear in the names of other zhag who are identified as belonging to the Mchims ras.

5. See TTK, p 58, Tucci does not however notice the unexplained spelling lon which is most frequent in this term Zhung blon does appear in LINV 166: Zhung BIon Chen po Zhang Khrī Sum Rje; in TLTD II 222: Zhang BIon Khrī Bzer; also in LINV 981 and TLTD II 148. But for zhag lon see LINV 113, 1155, 1083; REV passim; TLTD II 9, 21 137; and a dozen other instances. To these can be added ten instances of the form zhag lon chen po and some significant examples e.g. 139 and 153 where a distinction is made between lon and blon, viz. Zhang Lon Chen po BIon Dge Brang. The zhag lon the pha' and chags rtsis kyi blon po rnam dang
zhang lon che phra are recorded as witnesses to a decree in the Zhwa'i Lhakhang inscription. In the Zbol inscription it seems that a person not related to the royal family by marriage could be given the rank of zhang lon. It may also be noted that no examples are found of e.g. lon che, wang lon, phyi lon, etc.

6. THD records relations between Tibet and T'ang (Nanchoa) as early as 703 in the reign of 'Dus Strong. In the next reign Khri Lde Gtsug Brtsan, who had a wife from T'ang, received an envoy from the Myawa—a part of the Nanacho kingdom. He is described in THD as having given the title btsan po gsum to the Nanchoa ruler who is named Kag La Bong (Ko Lo Feng c. 768-779). This passage has been mistranslated by the editors on p. 150. Collaboration of information on Nanchoa from Tibetan and Chinese sources needs to be undertaken. For the latter see W. Stott in TP 1963, where earlier works both in French, English and Chinese are cited.

7. See THD p. 19 (46) relating to the year 707. "Pung Lag Rang du btsan po gsum la ba’lpho rgyal sa nas phab!" A Rebellion in Nepal about this time is recorded in the T'ang Annals; and if the reading is the bal (as the editors seem to have taken it in their translation at pp 40-41), it seems that the Nepalese king was described as Btsan po Gcen. "the elder brother king."

8. The 'A Zha were conquered by the Tibetans in the time of Strong Brtsan Sgam Po; his son Gunq Strong married an 'A Zha princess. When the 'A Zha later tried to defect to China the Tibetans in fury totally defeated them (670). Some, under a family called Mou Jong fled east and were settled by the Chinese around Liang Chou. The rest remained as vassals of Tibet. The marriage of princess Khri Bangs to the 'A Zha chief in 689 established the zhang dpon relationship which is referred to in a THD p. 78: "Bon 'A rje dang zhang dpon gsal sa chom." The editors, reading dpon, quite miss the mark by translating 'Bon chef de 'A Zha [but nomme zhang dpon gnad tshom]". Thomas, TLTD II. p. 6, reading dpon, gets nearer. "The "Bon 'A Zha chief and the uncle (nephew?) resigned (exchanged?) their posts.", but the point is that on the king's visit, which was expressly to assert his authority, he and the 'A
Zha chief were established in their proper places as Uncle and Nephew.

The matter is complicated by frequent references to the 'Bon 'A Zha (which must be distinguished from bdon) who seem to have been a tribe or section of the 'A Zha. Perhaps the 'A Zha chief was both a 'Bon 'A Zha as well as being dbon to the Tibetan king; but the existence of such similar words may have caused confusion even in early days. There is no mention of 'Bon 'A Zha in Tibetan records until the 'Bon Da Rgyal in 675. This name is represented in the T'ang Annals as P'en Ta Yen, and the holder was a valiant ally of the Tibetans. Da Rgyal seems to be a princely title and other Da Rgyal, not described as 'Bon, are mentioned before 675. E.H. Parker in A Thousand Years of the Tartars, p. 110, says that the Tu Yu Hun who fled to China (670) became known as Hwun. Perhaps Sinologists can find a key there, or in the name Mou Jong.


10. In JRAS 1952 (Zha'ai Lhakhang) I suggested placing Myang in the Gyanse Nyang (Myang) Chu region; but I now think it far more probable that the home of the Myang family was in and to the west of the headwaters of the Myang Chu of Rkong Po - now known as the Rgya md'a or Kam chu. The legend of Dri Gum Rtsan po, although claimed in recent times for the Gyanse valley, is properly connected, - as I am assured by several learned Tibetans - with the lower course of the Rkong-po Myang Chu. The site of Zha'ai lha khang, where a leading member of the Myang family built a chapel, also points towards Rkong po.

11. The character which is most naturally represented in Tibetan, as in French, as zg'an, is one of several names indicating Sogdian origin. There were colonies of Sogdians in Eastern Central Asia from Hami and Lop Nor to the Ordos, see J. R. Hamilton, Les Ouïgboures: Li Fang-kuei, "Sog", in Central Asian Journal, 1957; E. Pulleyblank in TP, XLI, 1952. Perhaps the origin of Nyan Lam Stag Sgra Klu Khong may be sought there, The Zhol Inscription suggests that his family had newly come to prominence in Tibet. Might he have been not
only a contemporary but also a fellow countryman of An Lu Shan whose Sogtian origin and whose name—Rokshān—have been established by Fulcher blank in “The Background to the Rebellion of An Lu Shan”?

12. I note examples I have detected; there may well be several more. (1) Klu Bzher is found in REV as apparently a mkhan—Blon Klu Bzher Sago Btsan; but in TTK third edict, where many other names are quoted with an established mying, it appears as Le'u Blon Klu Bzher; and in TLTD II the name appears without any title and therefore looks like a mying.

(2) Less Bzang. LINV 1230 and TLTD II 138 have Blon Legs Bzang—a usual mkhan form. TLTD II 20 has Zhang Legs Bzang which is equivocal; but in LINV 1094, 1172 and 1175 it appears to be a mying

(3) Khri Sgra is an established mkhan in THD pp. 65, 66; also in TTK third edict but in TLTD II 50 it seems to be a mying.

(4) Stag Bzang is quoted by Thomas in TLTD III from a Miran document as the name Stag Bzang Khri Dpal; there are several instances in TLTD II of Blon Stag Bzang—the usual mkhan form; but in LINV 540 it is found with what looks like a non-Tibetan ras name—‘Bi Stag Bzang—apparently as a mying.

(5) Mdo Bzher, described as a mkhan in LINV 1240, appears in LINV 1078 apparently as a mying—Shag Mdo Bzher.

13. Rkong Dkar Po Mang Po Rje is an attested rgyal phran (JRAS 1954 and TTK third edict). The Da Rgyal Mang Po Rje appears to have been an ‘A Zha prince. The third edict mentions a Myang rgyal phran; the great minister of Strong Brtan Sgam Po whose father led the movement which put Strong Brtan’s grand-father ‘N pown, is called Myang Mang Po Rje Zhang Snag. His family may have been awarded the status of rgyal phran for this service. Mang Po Rje is also found as part of the names of persons of special distinction from the Mgar Khu, Dba’s and Cog Ro ras; but evidence is not conclusive.