THE JOURNAL OF THE TIBET SOCIETY

Editor
Elliot Sperling
Indiana University, Bloomington

Assistant Editors
Todd Gibson, Daniel Martin, Michael Walter
Indiana University, Bloomington

Editorial Consultants

C. I. Beckwith
Indiana University, Bloomington

A. M. Blondeau
Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Paris

J. Bosson
University of California, Berkeley

E. K. Dargyay
University of Calgary, Calgary

Y. Imaeda
Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris

J. W. de Jong
The Australian National University, Canberra

P. Kværne
Universitetet i Oslo, Oslo

A. W. Macdonald
Université de Paris X, Nanterre

K. Mimaki
Kyoto Daigaku, Kyoto

J. L. Panglung
Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Munich

L. Petech
Università di Roma, Roma

D. S. Ruegg
University of Washington, Seattle

E. Steinkellner
Universität Wien, Vienna

P. Tsering
Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, Bonn

H. Uebach
Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Munich

G. Uray
Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, Budapest

A. Wayman
Columbia University, New York

THE TIBET SOCIETY

The Tibet Society, Inc., founded in 1967, is a non-profit organization with an international membership, dedicated to the study and preservation of Tibetan civilization. The Tibet Society publishes, in addition to The Journal of the Tibet Society, the semi-annual Tibet Society Bulletin, with a circulation of 900, and the series Occasional Papers of the Tibet Society.

Membership in the Tibet Society (which includes subscriptions to all Tibet Society publications) is open to all applicants, for $20.00 a year ($10.00 for students), payable by cheque (in U.S. dollars) or international money-order. Subscription to The Journal of the Tibet Society alone is $20.00 per year.

Please address all inquiries concerning membership or subscriptions to the Tibet Society, Inc., P.O. Box 1968, Bloomington, IN 47402, USA.

Manuscripts for publication, books for review, and all correspondence regarding editorial matters should be sent to The Editor, The Journal of the Tibet Society, 157 Goodbody Hall, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN 47405, USA.
THE JOURNAL OF THE TIBET SOCIETY
VOLUME 7    1987

CONTENTS

Editorial........................................................................................................................................3

Articles
Christopher I. Beckwith (Bloomington), Tibetan
Science at the Court of the Great Khans..........5
Dan Martin (Bloomington), On the Origin of
the Prayer Wheel According to Two
Nineteenth-Century Literary Sources..........13
Elliot Sperling (Bloomington), “Lama to the King
of Hsia”.................................................................31
Alex Wayman (New York), A Problem of
“Synonyms” in the Tibetan Language:
Bsgom Pa and Goms Pa........................................51

The Tibet Society
Minutes of the 1985 Meeting........................................57
Financial Report..................................................59
Editorial

In 1987 Professor Thubten Jigme Norbu, one of the founding members of the Tibet Society, celebrated his 65th birthday. In the same year Professor Norbu retired from his teaching post at Indiana University after a twenty-two year career there. During his time with the Tibet Society and the Tibetan Studies Program of the Department of Uralic and Altaic Studies at Indiana University, Professor Norbu contributed greatly to the efforts of both groups, not simply through his normal work with students and colleagues, but by means of the warmth, humor and spirit that he brought to that work.

Professor Norbu has played a pivotal role in the work of the Tibet Society since its inception in 1967 (when he was one of the Society’s founding members). As a result, a small number of us thought that it would be appropriate to mark his 65th birthday with a modest collection of papers dedicated to him. Thus, we present this volume to Professor Norbu with the best wishes of the authors and the Tibet Society. Bkra-shis bde-legs!

E.S.
Articles

TIBETAN SCIENCE AT THE COURT OF THE GREAT KHANS

Christopher I. Beckwith

One of the most important effects of the Mongol conquests for world history was a perceptible jump in creative technological and scientific work. This was not merely the transmission Westward of the Chinese inventions of gunpowder and rockets, two items presumably ideally suited to the early Mongols. Several other fields of civilized culture also benefited from the Mongols’ activities. However, the Mongols are generally still seen as (at best) passive participants in such activity. Indeed, they are charged instead with superstitious belief in all sorts of bogus pseudo-science foisted off on them by clever foreigners. In particular, although the Mongols are commonly thought to have been rather indifferent to religion, those who have followed what the Western sources say about the Mongols’ interest in Tibetan Buddhism ascribe that interest to fascination with, or respect for, magical tricks.

There is no denying that the Western sources, at least, all agree on the Mongols’ love of magic tricks. (It should not be overlooked that the foreign magicians first perfected their skills in countries where the people were apparently even more addicted to magic than the Mongols were. And the European observers were at least as fascinated by the magic tricks as were the Mongols.) But—leaving aside the Mongols’ desire to collect taxes from yet another nation, and Khubilai’s desire to adopt the system of Tibetan Imperial Preceptors to the Tangut court for the Mongols and make it the Great Khanate’s own legitimation system¹—was fascination with magic the main reason for the
Mongols’ particularly strong interest in the Tibetans and their religion? An examination of the sources reveals other good reasons for the Mongols’ choice of the Tibetans over all other contenders.

The very first historically attested meeting between a high Tibetan leader and a Mongol lord proved to be of fundamental importance for the whole subsequent history of Tibetan-Mongolian relations. This was, of course, the meeting of Saskya Paṇḍita Kun-dga’ Rgyal-mtshan with Kōdān (Tib. Godan), son of Ögedei. Kōdān was a powerful prince based in the former Tangut state, which had included parts of northeasternmost Tibet. Saskya Paṇḍita was called to Kōdān’s court basically to surrender Tibet to the Mongols, who as usual merely wished to collect taxes from the country without the bother of conquering it. It is unnecessary to review all of the circumstances, by now well-known, surrounding this event and its aftermath. However, an often-noticed but little-known incident took place at this meeting: Saskya Paṇḍita cured Kōdān of an illness. According to Rashid al-Dīn, Kōdān was “somewhat sickly” and for that reason had been passed over as successor to Ögedei. Whatever his sickness was, it was serious enough to be mentioned in many of the abbreviated Tibetan sources on the period as well. The Fifth Dalai Lama’s history, for example, says that Kōdān “was afflicted by an illness of the chthonic deities.” Although it is known that Saskya Paṇḍita studied medicine, and even wrote a little work on curing cases of poisoning, the sources seem to indicate a religious healing rather than a medical one. In any case, the Fifth Dalai Lama and other authors do not tell us specifically what particular sickness Saskya Paṇḍita cured with his “blessing.” However, as János Szerb has pointed out, in a little-noticed text written by Phagspa—who was with Saskya Paṇḍita at the time this took place—it is stated that “due to his [that is, Saskya Paṇḍita’s] blessing, (Kōdān) speedily produced a son.” This son was none other than the influential Prince Jibik Temür, to or for whom Phagspa wrote a good number of little works in addition to the one mentioned above.

One can only speculate on the impression Saskya Paṇḍita’s successful treatment may have had on the Mongols at Kōdān’s court, but the record with respect to Tibetan doctors at the court of the Great Khans is unequivocal. In addition to curing various individuals of sickness, the two most important Tibetans at the court of the Great Khan Khubilai, Phagspa and later Dampa, were in charge of keeping the ruler in good health. Writing about the situation supposedly at the time of Temür Öljëtii, Rashid al-Dīn says—“those two bakhshis are all powerful. They
have made their nökers, who have a knowledge of medicine, attendants on the Qa’an in order to prevent Temür Qa’an from taking too much food or drink.” According to Marco Polo, the Khan’s physicians and astrologers went with him just about everywhere.

More prominent in the sources than medicine is the science of astrology. All sources agree that the Mongols were overwhelmingly influenced by their astrologers. In fact, it is clear from the descriptions of John of Plano Carpini and William of Rubruck that the Mongols' own traditional beliefs emphasized astrology and other forms of soothsaying to an unusual degree. According to these writers, the Mongols consulted the qam, or shamanistic priest of traditional Mongol religion, before doing practically anything. The head qam determined auspicious days and times for various activities, and was somewhat knowledgeable about the motions of the sun, moon, and planets. The qams were also in charge of religious activities generally and thus took care of the shrines for the images of the Mongol gods. Möngke Khan himself told William of Rubruck, “God has given you the Scriptures and you do not keep them; to us, on the other hand, He has given soothsayers, and we do what they tell us, and live in peace.”

Almost from the moment of creation of their world empire, the Mongols were besieged from all directions by proselytizers of the major organized religions of the Middle Ages. Priests, monks, and mullahs, holy men and frauds of various types, descended upon the Mongol court in force, determined to convert the most powerful nation in the world to their own religion. The Mongols, however, who were after all smart enough to conquer most of the world, had not become fools overnight. They investigated each of the competing religions, in so far as the teachers they met could explain them, and made some fairly astute comments about them. Of all the religious teachers that they met, only the Tibetan Buddhists (and to a minor degree the less numerous Kashmiri Buddhists) were skilled in the one thing that the Mongols traditionally demanded of their qam: astrology. The sources, both East and West, state that the Tibetans were outstanding in this field, and indeed ‘Phagspa, for example, wrote a large number of texts dealing with astrology.

When we turn from the early descriptions of Plano Carpini and Rubruck to the somewhat later one of Marco Polo, the qam is no longer mentioned specifically, and seems almost to have disappeared. Instead, nearly all the ceremonies and prognostications the Mongol rulers required, which were formerly
performed by the shamans, are now said to be performed by Tibetan lamas,\textsuperscript{16} who had exactly the same preeminence at the Mongol court as the \textit{qams} had formerly. Although the change-over was undoubtedly not as smooth as it seems from the sources, one is struck by the close match between the activities of the shamans and the lamas. Lest it be thought that any of the competing religions would have done the same if only given the chance, a look at any of the European or Islamic accounts shows just how unwilling the Christians and Muslims were to perform such services (although some individuals or sects, particularly the Nestorian Christians, did their best to be accepted). The same could certainly be said for the Chinese Confucians. Although the Taoists were apparently willing to cooperate, in their case it would seem that the Mongols' suspicion of the Chinese in general ruled out the possibility of any success by the Taoists, especially for such a sensitive job.

In addition to the fields of medicine and astrology, the Tibetan \textit{bakhshi}s were skilled in alchemy; short texts on alchemical subjects are to be found in the collected works of several of the Sakyapa masters.\textsuperscript{17} The sources indicate specifically that \textit{bakhshi} alchemists served the Mongols at the courts of the Great Khan Khubilai and the Ilkhan Arghun; one can assume they served other rulers as well.\textsuperscript{18}

The last field of scientific endeavor which deserves mention is linguistics. This is a field in which we today can more readily appreciate the achievement of the Tibetans; for perhaps their greatest scientific work for the Great Khans was the creation of what could be called the world's first multilingual transcription system. According to the Chinese account in the \textit{Yüan shih}, this system, now known generally as "the 'Phagspa Script," was created by 'Phagspa in response to Khubilai's order to devise an official writing system for the Mongol empire. Both the Chinese\textsuperscript{19} and the Tibetan sources remark on the excellence of this alphabet, which was used to write texts in several languages, including Mongol, Tibetan, and Chinese, in an unusually precise transcription.

In conclusion, one of the most compelling reasons that led the Mongols to patronize the Tibetans was the fact that they fit perfectly into the cultural niche occupied by the traditional Mongol shamans. The Tibetans were uniquely qualified and willing to provide the Mongols with what they desired and needed in the area of "high-tech science," meaning in particular a highly developed tradition of medicine and astrology belonging to a respectable civilized religious culture. It should be pointed out also that the references to Tibetans in the foreign
sources on the Mongols deal nearly exclusively with just these activities, although magic also is treated prominently in the European sources (which seems to indicate that the Europeans were more fascinated by magic than were the Persians, Tibetans, or Chinese, who hardly mention the subject). Moreover, it seems from Marco Polo’s account that the Tibetans performed their astrological services only for the ruling house. The Great Khans thus still had soothsayers, while at the same time the Mongols became a part of the civilized world, and—as is now hopefully becoming well-known—acquired the trappings of civilized legitimacy as world rulers with their acceptance of the cakravartin kingship ideology of the Tibetan Buddhists. As a bonus the Tibetans, the most intensely literate foreigners of the period, introduced the Mongols to the most highly sophisticated metaphysical system of the day, Tibetan Buddhism.

NOTES

1. See the article by Elliot Sperling in this volume.
5. Ibíd., p. 94.

After this paper was already in press, I was informed by Leonard Van der Kuijp that this account of the healing of Kōdān seems to be historically inaccurate, and that in fact Jībik Temür was born before Saksya Paṇḍita’s visit. Pertinent information may be found in several sources, including Sakyapa’i bka’ ‘bum, : Ngor Chen Kun-dga’ bzangpo’i bka’ ‘bum (Tokyo, 1968-1969), and ’Jam-dbyangs blo-gter dbangpo, Lam’bras slob-bshad (Dehra Dun, 1983-1985). Professor Van der Kuijp also noted that numerous other examples of Tibetans giving Mongol lords medical
treatment may be found scattered throughout the literature. Unfortunately, the publication schedule of this journal did not allow me the time to investigate any of this.


9. J. A. Boyle, transl., Rashid al-Dīn, The Successors of Genghis Khan, N.Y., 1971, p. 302. In connection with this source, I would like to remark that the long-standing mystery of the name “Kanba” (Boyle) or “Kinba” (Quatremère) is undoubtedly due to a common scribal error, or to a misreading of the way the word was written in the Persian original (our library’s copy is not at the present time available to me). In Arabic script, especially the way Persians write it, the “crossing” stroke of the letter “kaf” is commonly not connected with the base portion of the letter, and it is frequently unclear to which letter the stroke should belong. Context normally tells the reader in cases of doubt, but with foreign names context is of no assistance. In this case, if the “kaf” stroke is attached to the second rather than to the first prong of the word, what is produced is the name Pakba. (The dots for the “pe” could perhaps be the kasra noted in Quatremère’s “Kinba”). ‘Phagspa (whose name is pronounced today the same as Rashid al-Dīn’s Pakba) and Dampa thus are the two Tibetan lamas to receive special mention in both the Yüan shih and Rashid al-Dīn’s history, despite the latter source’s attribution of both to the time of Temür Öjeitü.

10. It is, however, necessary to note that despite the relatively high level attained by medical science in Tibet by the thirteenth century, and despite the great amount of high-quality medical literature in Tibetan that was available, no explicit reference to scientific Tibetan medicine (see the next note) is made in any of the major sources on the Great Khanate.

11. I use the word “science” in the sense of Thomas Kuhn and the recent reformulation of his ideas by Shigeru Nakayama, i.e., a paradigm-based scholarly tradition. The idea of what “science” is or ought to be is unclear in the modern English-speaking world, and the matter is thus the source of controversy. See the discussion in my paper, “The Scholastic Method in Medieval Tibet and the West,” forthcoming in the commemoration volume for Turrell V. Wylie.

13. For example, the comments of Khubilai in Marco Polo, pp. 119–120:
On what grounds do you desire me to become a Christian? You see
that the Christians who live in these parts are so ignorant that they
accomplish nothing and are powerless. And you see that these
idolaters do whatever they will . . . They banish bad weather in
any direction they choose and perform many marvels. And, as you
know, their idols speak and give them such predictions as they ask.
But, if I am converted to the faith of Christ and become a Christian,
then my barons and others who do not embrace the faith of Christ
will say to me: "What has induced you to undergo baptism and adopt
the faith of Christ? What virtues or what miracles have you seen to
his credit?" For these idolaters declare that what they do they do
by their holiness and by virtue of their idols. Then I should not know
what to answer, which would be a grave error in their eyes. And
these idolaters, who by their arts and sciences achieve such great
results, could easily compass my death. But do you go to your Pope
and ask him on my behalf to send me a hundred men learned in your
religion, who in the face of these idolaters will have the knowledge
to condemn their performances and tell them that they too can do
such things but will not, because they are done by diabolic art and
evil spirits, and will show their mastery by making the idolaters
powerless to perform these marvels in my presence. On the day when
I see this, I too will condemn them and their religion. Then I will be
baptized . . .

14. Marco Polo, pp. 111,131 ("their Bakhshi, that is, the adepts
in astrology"), 174; *Yüan shih*, 202:4519.

15. See 'Phagspa op. cit., texts nos. 284–294 (pp. 244–3–2 to 256–
2–6).


17. See for example Vol. 4 of the *Saskyapa'i bka' 'bum*, Vol. 2
of the works of Gragspa Rgyal-mtshan, text No. 68 (p. 35–3–4 to
35–4–3), *Sman chenpo'i bcud-len*.

18. On Khubilai, see Quatremère, p. 190 n.; on Arghun, see
Quatremère, p. 194 n.

19. *Yüan shih*, 202:4518. Use of 'Phagspa script throughout the
empire (but including the use of traditional local scripts along
with it) was ordered in the sixth year of the Chih-yüan period.

20. Marco Polo describes the large number of *ordinary
astrologers, who served the needs of the people of Khanbaliq
(traders are given particular attention by the author) on pp. 158–
160. These were, he says, "Christians, Saracens, and Cathayans,
about 5,000 astrologers and soothsayers . . ." (p. 158).
ON THE ORIGIN AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PRAYER WHEEL ACCORDING TO TWO NINETEENTH-CENTURY TIBETAN LITERARY SOURCES*

Dan Martin

The prayer wheel has been an object of great fascination throughout the world; so much so that it has become a sort of symbolic marker of Tibetan-ness. The prayer wheels in numerous American, European and East Asian museums as well as living room curio cabinets repeat to us, almost like a mantra, "Tibet, Tibet, Tibet" every time we look at them. "What is that?" "Oh, that's a prayer wheel. It's from Tibet and ..." On the one hand, these items have been ridiculed as a vain human attempt to mechanize the act of prayer. On the other hand, whole books have been written about them based on the universality of wheel folklore.¹

A question that has rarely been formulated and that no one, so far as we know, has begun to answer is, "What sorts of things have Tibetans themselves had to say about the origin and purpose of prayer wheels?" Their use has become so intimately interwoven with their culture that it seems to have rarely occurred to Tibetans to ask this question of themselves. Otherwise it would be difficult to explain the nearly unbroken silence in Tibetan literature on a religious practice that has become so widespread and goes back (according to testimony to be brought forward here) several hundreds of years.

This makes the exceptions to the silence uncommonly interesting. The first of two Tibetan works to be considered here

¹To Professor Norbu, whose uncommon humanity has been a reliable source of uncommon inspiration. Thanks also to Chos-rje Bla-ma, Geoffrey Samuel, Gregory Schopen, Geshe Sopa, Michael Walter and others for various helps, hints and encouragements.
was written by the famous Gung-thang-pa Dkon-mchog-bstan-pa'i-sgron-me (1762-1823 A.D.) at the request of a monk in the largest of Mongolian monasteries in Unga, the capital of Mongolia, known today as Ulan Bator. It is impossible to date precisely, but must have been written in the early years of the nineteenth century. The life of Gung-thang-pa has only recently been outlined in an article by the Taktser Rinpoche and Professor, Thubten J. Norbu (please consult the bibliography).

Before going on to give a translation of this text by Gung-thang-pa, we would like to point out that the term "prayer wheel" is by no means a direct translation of any Tibetan term. The texts speak of wheels (’khor-lo), hand wheels (lag-’khor), or dharma wheels (chos ’khor) only; but they are also commonly referred to as "mañi wheels" (ma-ņi ’khor-lo), because they are most usually employed in the cultus or, to be more precise, the sādhana, of the Bodhisattva of Great Compassion (Thugs-rje-chen-po), a form, or simply an epithet, of Avalokiteśvara whose mantra, often called for short "Mañi" or "Six Syllables" (Yi-ge Drug-ma), is the universally known "Oṃ Mañi Padme Hūm." These Sanskrit words have almost always been translated as "Hail to the Jewel in the Lotus," or something similar. However, we believe that, in origin, the mantra had a quite different meaning. In order to demonstrate this, we will need to resort to an explanation that may require some knowledge of Sanskrit grammar; but the conclusion is a simple one.

The usual translation of the mantra assumes that the "Mañi" and "Padme" are two separate words, rather than a single compounded unit. Let us compare, as did Francke, the mantras of the three great Bodhisattvas (often called Lords of the Three Types—Rigs Gsum Mgon-po): Mañjuśrī, Bodhisattva of Wisdom; Vajrapāṇi, Bodhisattva of Power; Avalokiteśvara, Bodhisattva of Compassion.

Mañjuśrī...................................... Oṃ Vāgīśvari Mun.  
Vajrapāṇi ...................................... Oṃ Vajrapāṇi Hūm.  
Avalokiteśvara............................... Oṃ Maṇipadme Hūm.

For the first, we may know that no declined form of a masculine Vāgīśvari could end in the letter "i". A final "i" could represent one of two things, a vocative of a feminine noun ending in "i", or a neuter noun ending in "i". Vāgīśvari, "Lady of Speech", could possibly be an epithet of Sarasvatī, the feminine counterpart of the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī.

A similar grammatical argument applies as well to the form Vajrapāṇi, "The Vajra Holder". It can be a vocative of the feminine noun Vajrapāṇi, or the vocative of the neuter.
Likewise, Maṇi-Padme must be a vocative case of the feminine noun ending in “a” (it could not be a neuter in this case). The central part of all three mantras should be understood as feminine nouns in the vocative case.

Now, Vāgīśvarī represents a tatpuruṣa compound (since the first word is in a subordinate, case relation to the second), while Vajrapāṇi is a karmadhāraya compound (in which the second element is described by the first); but there is reason to think that Maṇi-Padme is neither of these two types of compounds, but rather a dvandva (conjunctive) compound which is at the same time a bahuvrīhi compound (one which defines, or is to be understood as an epithet of someone; often, a metonym). This gives us the translation, “O [thou who] hast a Jewel and Lotus.” A Tibetan book which gives translations for many Sanskrit language mantras gives, in fact, virtually the same interpretation, “O [thou who] hast a Jewel [and] Lotus” (in Tibetan, Kyé Nor-bu Padma-can). 

Although, tentatively, this grammatical problem may be considered solved, we are still far from knowing what the mantra “means”. It may help a little if we understand that the four-armed Mahākāruṇīka, the most popular form of Avalokiteśvara, is invariable envisioned with a crystal rosary in one of his right hands and a lotus in one of his left hands, while his remaining two hands (clasped before the Heart Center) contain a jewel. Now it seems clear that the jewel and the lotus are both equally emblems of the Bodhisattva of Compassion—neither should be considered to be “inside” the other. Already in 1667 A.D., in the Latin language China Illustrata, Athanasius Kircher wrote that Tibetans worship a god named Manipe by saying “Manipe, save us.” Even if Kircher’s statements on Tibetan culture were for the most part second or third hand and crudely polemical, he seems to have correctly identified the Maṇi-Padme as a name/epithet in vocative case.

Typically, it is this mantra, Om Maṇi-Padme Hūṃ, that is wound about the central axis of the cylinder. It is not a prayer in any usual sense of the word, but a part of a program of spiritual practice involving visualizations, as well as mantra recitations, and one aimed at generating the compassion of a Bodhisattva within oneself. At the same time, it may be repeated (with much scriptural justification) to allay all sorts of mundane fears as well as anxieties about future rebirths. However, since the term “prayer wheel” has entered the English language, even finding its way into dictionaries, we have preferred to retain it despite its inaccuracy. Still, it is important to keep the subcategory of hand wheel (lag ’khor) distinct.
The text by Gung-thang-pa, to be translated presently, has a particular argument which places the origin of external prayer wheels in the instructions for certain internal meditational practices. We tend to agree with this argument, even while knowing what the contrary conclusions of the cultural materialists (who would reduce all human culture to ‘practical’ or materialistic motives) will be. While the physical form of prayer wheels could have originated in the large revolving bookcases of Chinese Buddhist monasteries, the hand wheel with its ball-and-chain governor (which functions to keep up the spinning momentum) was, according to the well-known contemporary historian Lynn White, a Tibetan invention which entered into machine designs of fifteenth century Italy. If so, it would seem that a significant technological innovation was occasioned by the exigencies of the spiritual life.

This text is too short to possibly explain all the secrets of the prayer wheel’s place in Tibetan life; but, if only for making the attempt, it ranks as evidence of the first importance. The translation, as it is, was made by Dan Martin, but he will not neglect to acknowledge his debts to Professors Thubten J. Norbu and Geshe Sopa (Madison) for illuminating obscure passages. The Tibetan text has been inserted at the end of this paper, since it is not, as far as we know, readily available.

* * * * * * * *

A SHORT TREATISE ON PRAYER WHEELS

Homage to Buddha, Dharma and Saṅgha.

To speak briefly on the origin of Prayer Wheels, their accompanying contemplative visualizations, the benefits of using them, and so forth:

For their origins, there are very many explanations in the Old Translations:

It is the highest of protections and it cuts off rebirth in the Six Types.

It purifies the three transitional states and the spinning is of even greater purity than the mantra recitation itself; the benefits likewise are much greater.

There are no statements in the New Tantras teaching the use of Hand Wheels. Still, several worthy and great persons have taken up the practice and spread it among all the
monasteries of eastern and central Tibet. However, that in itself is not sufficient reason to hold it in esteem.

"The mantra of the tutelary spins quickly." Other passages exist on the circling of recitations of the wrathful deities and their "vehicles"; and many others which tell the way the letters of the mantras circle like lamps strung together. In the Vajra Songs, where it says, "It is good to turn a fast wheel," it teaches the need to turn the string of mantras in the Heart Center. Here we find the source for the practice of spinning external Wheels which are inscribed (with mantras).

The [outward] rituals for achieving the Four Actions contained in the handbooks for the sādhanas of many particular deities and Dharma Protectors as well as the directions for inscribing the Life Circle [all] agree with actual instructions for contemplation. The Guhyasamāja Tantra says, "The Om is . . . of a small chickpea-like pellet." The way of meditating on the Inner Substance as a "drop" is explained here and by many other authorities to be the source of outward "Pellet Rites" understood in the conventional sense.

The Fifth Dalai Lama's Dhāraṇi Insertion (Gzung gzhug) says that the source of [the practice of] winding about [the central axis] from the beginning [of the sacred text] is found in the [fact that] the beginning of the wheel of [visualized] mantras starts from the inside. Hence, if the contemplative visualization of an inward wheel of mantras lies at the origin of outward inscribed Wheels, then there can be no doubt that the teachings on turning a string of mantras [in visualizations] lie at the origin of the turning of external Wheels.

The contemplative visualizations [to accompany the spinning of the Wheel]: From whatever sūtra or mantra may be enclosed, light emanates and one offers worship to all the Buddha Realms. Their blessings coalesce and then melt within. Again, the light rays are emitted. They strike your own body. They purify the conscience and all the obstacles to Enlightenment, allowing the blessings of the Buddhas and Sons of Buddhas to enter. Then the light rays spread throughout the universe to cleanse the biological and non-vital worlds of any impurity. Both the biological and non-vital worlds become pure. One imagines that all beings intone together the sūtra or mantra, transmuting into a background continuity of spiritual suchness. In such manner, practicing the yogic training of body, speech and mind, the individual letters [of the sūtra or mantra] each utter their appropriate sounds, and one imagines that those who are capable of religious transformation are placed on the Paths of maturation and liberation. When this is done, one gains a
connection\textsuperscript{25} to the turning of the Wheel of Dharma [by a Buddha].\textsuperscript{26} 

The \textit{benefits of spinning the Prayer Wheel}: It brings all the same benefits said to accrue from reading the respective texts. By writing one or more mantras on a slate and turning it a few times, one can openly stop contagions, frost, hail and so forth. So, spinning a special mantra \textit{dhāraṇī} several times with pure motivation can bring unimaginable benefits. Just being struck by a wind which has touched such a Prayer Wheel cleanses a great number of sins and obstacles to Enlightenment and is said to implant the Seed of Liberation.

—Blo-bzang-bsam-gタン, a faithful monk of the monastery of Khalkha (Hal-ha) known as Khu-re Chen-mo, impressed on me the need for a work on their rationale and benefits. So I, Reverend Dkon-mchog-bsstan-pa’i-sgron-me, hastily composed this brief outline of topics relating to Prayer Wheels.

* * * * * * * * *

The second and last work on prayer wheels\textsuperscript{27} which we have located, dating a little later than Gung-thang-pa’s, it seems, is by the Seng-chren Bla-ma Blo-bzang-bstan-dzsin-dpal-byor, a Gelugpa teacher at Tashilhumpo monastery who was born in 1784 A.D.\textsuperscript{28} Like Gung-thang-pa’s text, it was written at the instigation of a Mongolian monk-ethnographer,\textsuperscript{29} in this case a monastic financial manager (\textit{phyag-mdzod}) of the Torgut league named Blo-bzang-smon-lam. Since this work is relatively long and deals with matters tangential to the origin and significance of prayer wheels, it will not be translated here. We will only touch on some of the pertinent issues which it raises.

Just like Gung-thang-pa, the Seng-chren Bla-ma divides his discussion into three parts: 1) the origins of Wheels, 2) their actual use, and 3) the benefits (of their use). The first part, being the most interesting for our purposes, begins with a long story in which Nagārjuna visits the land of nāgas\textsuperscript{30} and asks the nāga king Bodhisattva for a dharma wheel (\textit{chos ’khor}).

“This wheel quickly liberates the beings of the six types from the suffering of low rebirths just by seeing, hearing, thinking about, or touching it. After the preceding Buddha Dipa-mkara gave it to us, we nāgas have been put at ease and several have travelled down the Path to Buddhahood. This is the Wheel of the mantra which unites the Body, Speech, Mind, Artistry and Industry\textsuperscript{31} of all Buddhas—Om Maṇi-Padme Hūṃ. Therefore I give it to you. Establish this profound Wheel in earth, water, fire, air, and so forth, and it will benefit beings and Buddhism.”
Then Nāgārjuna brought the practice back to Indian and gave it to the skygoer Lionface (Sīmhavakrā). She gave it to Tilopa, Tilopa to Naropa, and Naropa to Marpa who brought it to Tibet. The lineage continues up to the second Karmapa hierarch, Karma-bakshi (1206-1283 A.D.). The Seng-chen Bla-ma had seen such a manuscript work which said, "There is much about the benefits of these Wheels in the collected works of Karma-bakshi," but he was evidently not able to consult these collected works directly, since he leaves it as a matter for future investigation.

In the second part, on the actual use of prayer wheels, he acknowledges that there are several different ways of going about it. Still, he gives some recommendations about the central axis (the "life wood," srog shing) and so forth. The central axis should be of sandal, juniper or other non-poisonous wood, with various mantras and dhāraṇīs inscribed at its top, sides and bottom. The ink should be mixed with fragrances. When winding the strips of paper around the axis, the letters should show on the outside. Whether one starts with the beginning or end of the mantra makes no difference, but in the time of the author, the former practice was widespread. The roll should be measured to fit the size of the cavity in the wheel. Then various dhāraṇīs and designs are suggested for inscribing in circular pattern on the tops and sides of the wheel's exterior.

In the third part, the Seng-chen Bla-ma again cites the work by Karma-bakshi, with its 7-syllable verse, directly, telling how establishing a wheel in any of the four elements liberates the beings who inhabit that element from suffering and bad rebirths. Those who require more detail are told to search in the collected works of "Karma[-bakshi]." Then there is a long quote from a dhāraṇī of eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara on the benefits of the "heart" [mantra] and of fasting on the 14th and 15th of the month. This is followed by another quote from The Vastly and Totally Completed Thought of Great Compassion telling how the use of the mantra purifies even such terrible crimes as destroying a stūpa or stealing the property of monks. Then he cites the verses of praise to Avalokiteśvara by the Indian nun Dpal-mo.

Finally, he cites a work by the author of our first work on wheels, Gung-thang-pa's work on fasting rites (Smyung-gnas-kyi Zur Rgyan), as his source for the preceding citations (except for the first which derived from a work by Karma-bakshi). None of these quotes say anything directly about prayer wheels, but only about the benefits of fasts and recitations involving the Six Syllables; the benefits of prayer wheels are only implied.
In the closing lines, the Seng-ch'en Bla-ma voices his disapproval of the practice of putting more than one sacred text inside the same prayer wheel. Dedicatory verses and a colophon complete the work.

These two early nineteenth century works, while they may be quite illuminating as examples of Tibetan views on the general use of prayer wheels, leave us with many questions about the when and how of their invention. Since the Seng-ch'en Bla-ma could quote (directly or indirectly) from a work by Karma-bakshi, we may assume these Wheels were already in existence at the beginning of the Mongol period in the mid-thirteenth century. Still, we have no way of knowing whether they existed then in their present form. Did Karma-bakshi bring them back from China? Were they introduced into Tibet from India along with the main Bka'-brgyud-pa spiritual lineage in the eleventh century? Or did they, as Gung-thang-pa suggests, exist in Tibet already in the time of the Old Translations? We do not know.

We also cannot know from the evidence at what time the ball-and-chain governor became attached to the wheel, making the hand wheel (lag 'khor) possible. In the seven-syllable verse citations of Karma-bakshi's work by the Seng-ch'en Bla-ma, one finds the terms dharma wheel (chos 'khor) and wheel ('khor-lo) only. These wheels could be powered by the four elements (and, presumably, the earth-powered wheels were turned by human agency), but the hand wheel does not occur there. It may be so that our late literary sources provide us with no compelling reason to believe the ball-and-chain governor was a part of the prayer wheel in this early period (an important part of Lynn White's argument for diffusion), but neither do they provide any compelling reasons for doubt. Instead, they make us wish for more evidence.

Further studies of Tibetan sources as well as early Chinese ethnographies and some possible Indian evidence will bring more light to this particular issue. The question is not an idle one, since it promises to yield evidence which could be used to argue for or against certain classic and contemporary models of the history of science and of technological development. Is it so strange to imagine that human striving (sādhana) within the religious sphere would have an effect on technology? Or could this be a case of "reinventing the wheel"?

Finally, the curiosity which prayer wheels evoke in the world outside Tibet is perhaps understandable, but avoidable. When people have developed a basic understanding of sādhana in general (a more nuanced understanding of the sādhanas of Avalokiteśvara in particular) and a better understanding of the Buddhist ways of paying respect to holy script, Prayer Wheels
will appear to be less curious and more logical, even expectable, given their historical background and usage within the religious culture of Tibet.

NOTES

1. See Simpson, *Buddhist Praying Wheel*. For some remarkable photographs of various prayer wheels, see the work by Alvin Hunter in the bibliography appended here.


3. Franke, "Meaning of the Om-man-i-padme-hum Formula."

4. It is uncertain why these mantras should be of the feminine grammatical gender. Thomas (p.464) and Franke (op.cit.) believed that they must refer to the feminine counterparts of the Bodhisattva (see also Bharati, *Tantric Tradition*, pp. 133-34). We are not so certain about this. It may be that the mantras were on their own side considered to be in ‘feminine’ relationships with the male Bodhisattvas. D. C. Bhattacharyya, for one, believes that certain mantras preceded feminine deities who emerged as personifications of them (*Studies*, p. 68). Prajñāparamita is a more obvious example of a text which took on feminine iconographic form (ibid., p. 29 ff.) Of course, this historicist model of deity developing after text appears to conflict with our argument on the meaning of the Six Syllables as given below. There may be no point to this argument at all, since grammatical gender in Sanskrit, as in other languages, bears an ambiguous relation to natural gender.

5. See Sde-srid, *Blang*, p. 574, line 4 (and also p. 568, which reads: kye nor bu padma). Snellgrove (*Indo-Tibetan*, vol. 1, p. 195) translates, “O thou with the jewelled lotus!” This is grammatically a possibility, since it takes the Maṇi-Padme to be a *karmadhārāya* compound, but it does not take into account the iconographic syntax. Of course, grammatically defensible meanings may scarcely touch the full range of meanings that have been found in these six syllables, and we have no intention of subtracting them. For a larger view of the meaning of this mantra, please consult Govinda, *Foundations*, and Kyabje Yonzin, "The Significance of the Six Syllable Mantra." As these works make clear, mantras are just the opposite of "meaningless"; rather, they are extraordinarily meaning-laden.
6. For a painting of the four-armed Great Compassion, see Janet Gyatso, *Technique*. This work also contains a translation of one of the most popular *sādhanas* of Great Compassion in use in Tibet, that by Thang-stong-rgyal-po, along with very readable and concise explanations of the visualizations and recitations involved. It is therefore highly recommended as background for this paper. Readers of Tibetan books may be interested to know that the Tibetan text behind J. G yatso’s work may be found appended to the biography of Thang-stong-rgyal-po by ’Gyur-med-bde-chen (pp. 349-50), and several commentaries on it are available. For details, see G yatso, *Literary Transmission*, p. 109 ff.

7. Kircher, *China Illustrata* Latin text, p. 71; translation by C. van Tuyl, p. xxiv. Note also, for curiosity’s sake, the engraving of “Manipe” on p. 72. For more on this work, see van Tuyl, “Account of the Journey” (especially p. 8, which has the same translated passage on “Manipe”). See also Desideri’s early 18th-century refutation of Kircher in Filippi (ed.), *An Account of Tibet*, pp. 295-96. Desideri here comes quite close to the conclusion about the meaning of Maṇi-Padme which we have put forward above. For an even earlier European notice (circa 1250) of the “On mani baccam”, or, “God, thou knowest”, see William of Rubruck, *Journey*, p. 146.

8. The Tibetan word *gsol-'debs* may mean “prayer” as a request for favors, but the word does not appear in this context. The *smon-lam* is a more characteristic Mahāyāna “prayer”, but more of an “aspiration”, a “wish” that one will one day or in some future life be in a position to benefit others.


10. White, *Medieval Technology*, p. 116, etc. See also Aris, “Tibetan Technology”.

11. The Sanskrit names for the founder, doctrines and followers (especially the monks and nuns) of Buddhism.

12. The Tibetan word translated as “contemplative visualization” is *dmigs-pa*. In this context it refers to the creation of mental objects as a support for spiritual practice. The word “imagination” could have been used as well.

13. This means the first translations of Buddhist Tantras under the old Tibetan imperial dynasty. They are generally accepted (although sometimes with reservations) by all Tibetan Buddhists even though the Indian (or Central Asian, or Chinese) originals from which they were translated were, for the most part, no longer available for inspection in the 10th and 11th centuries. Many sūtras were also translated during the same period, but their authority has never been held in doubt (and those early sūtra translations were mostly revised later on,
sometimes several times). The “verses” translated here would seem to be a composite of several quotes from various sources. Gung-thang-pa cites them as general examples of the sorts of things the Old Translation sources have to say on the subject.

14. Mantras are said to “protect” the mind during meditation (according to a traditional etymology of the Sanskrit word).

15. The Six Types are the beings belonging to the six realms of possible rebirth in Buddhist soteriological cosmology. They are “gods”, “demi-gods”, humans, animals and “hungry ghosts”, as well as the inhabitants of the hells. Each realm is said to be purified by one of the Six Syllables of Om Maṇi-Padme Hūṃ. This is probably the oldest “use” of the mantra, which may be traced to the Kāraṇḍavyūha Sūtra (found among the Gilgit manuscripts of the 6th to 7th centuries), and exists as well in Tibetan documents from Tun-huang and in chapters 37-39 of the Zangs-gling-ma biography of Padmasambhava rediscovered by Nyang-ral Nyi-ma-‘od-zer (1124-1192?). For a discussion of these sources, see Imaeda, “Note préliminaire,” and references provided there.

16. The three transitional states (bar-do) are: 1) the moment of death, 2) the after-death state, 3) the time of rebirth.

17. “New Tantras” means the tantra translations done by Rinchen-bzang-po and others beginning in the mid-tenth century A.D., in order to distinguish them from the tantras which had been translated previously (note 13, above).

18. The title given in the text is Rdo-rje Tshig Shram. Rdo-rje Tshig-rkang is Tibetan for Sanskrit Vajrapada (or Vajradhā), the ecstatic songs of the adepts known as Siddhas. I am unable to trace the text referred to. This and the other brief quotations are difficult to interpret out of context, even if the general sense seems clear.

19. The Four Actions are classifications for fire rites (sbyin-bsreg) as well as general motivations which prompt ritual activities. They are: 1) peace (zhi), 2) growth, or increase (rgyas), 3) influence (dbang) and 4) force. Without an underlying aspiration for bringing Enlightenment for all beings, these can be ordinary magical, rather than spiritual, motives. In this paragraph, Gung-thang-pa cites a few supporting instances of religious externals which had their origins in contemplative visualizations.

20. Some allusion to the “chick-pea” in the heart according to the Guhyasamāja system may be noted in Wayman, Yoga, p. 273.

21. In the conventional sense, these Pellet Rites involve physically present pellets distributed as a sacrament, said to grant long life. In the ultimate sense, they relate to the indestructible ‘substance’ of meditational experience conceived of as a “drop” (or pellet, or “seed” mantra) in contemplative visualizations.
The “indestructible drop” (mi-shigs-pa’i thig-le) is said to reside in the Heart Center.

22. In his 1649 work entitled, Gzu-gnas Blo-idan Ngo-mtshar Skyed Byed Gzung’s-bul-gyi Lag-len ‘Khrul Spong Nying-mor Byed-pa (contained in Rituals of Rdo-rje-brag, vol. 1, pp. 389-437), the Fifth Dalai Lama discusses various ideas about how the dhāraṇīs should be wound about the central axis. His discussion does not directly concern prayer wheels, since these dhāraṇī rolls are meant to be inserted in (stationary) images or stupas. He says that, according to Bu-ston, they should be wound from the end (of the dhāraṇī), while according to Ngor-chen, they should be wound like a snake (?) beginning from the Om (i.e., the first letter). After considering the question, citing a few Tantras, the Dalai Lama comes out in favor of the tradition of Ngor-chen, finding no scriptural authority to support the tradition of Bu-ston (pp. 410-11). Future studies of prayer wheels should take these dhāraṇī rolls into account, and attempt to determine whether one could have influenced the development of the other.

23. At one time, ‘conscience’ meant the same as the word ‘consciousness’ does today. Consciousness of faults is called sdig-pa in Tibetan because it “stings” (sdigs-pa). Remorse and regret are, in Buddhist as well as Christian worlds, a primary motive for undertaking the religious life.

24. There are two sorts of obstacles to Enlightenment according to Mahāyāna: 1) obstacles due to mistaken view of knowable objects (shes-bya) and 2) obstacles due to troubling emotions (nyon-rmongs).

25. In this context, “connection” (ten’-bre) also means a “prophecy” that one will one day be so fortunate as to be born in a time and place in which the words of a Buddha will be heard first hand.

26. Dharma-cakra-pravartana, “turning the Wheel of Dharma”, is an expression used for the Buddha’s preaching in general. Sometimes, it is said that there were three “turnings” (see Joshi, Studies, p. 240, for examples). The expression may have something to do with the origins of prayer wheels, as was suggested long ago by Rockhill (Land of the Lamas, p. 334, or, Notes on Tibet, p. 18). It may be interesting to speculate in terms of later developments on how the attributes of Vairocana came to be mixed with those of Avalokiteśvara. In the mandala typologies, Vairocana (who is pictured with the gesture of “turning the Wheel of the Dharma” in iconography) presides over the Wheel type, which counters or encompasses the “basic poison” of stupidity/delusion (gti-mug). Avalokiteśvara is Bodhisattva of the Lotus type with its basic poison of
attachment/lust. Therefore, it is a mystery that the early text from Tun-huang called Civilizing the Three Poisons should recommend the Om Mani-Padme Hum (in variant forms) of Avalokiteśvara for purifying stupidity/delusion. It may prove profitable to investigate how this symbolic interchange took place to understand better the origins of the prayer wheel. See Imaeda, "Note préliminaire" as well as Snellgrove, Indo-Tibetan, vol. 2, p. 454. Evidently, the word Mani-Padma was preserved as part of a Vairocana mantra in Japan (see Waddell, Tibetan Buddhism, p. 149).

27. Schlagintweit (Buddhism in Tibet, p. 232) noted already in the mid-19th century the existence of some books on the benefits of turning prayer wheels, but he names no specific titles or authors.


29. The use of prayer wheels in Mongolia was already well enough established in 1636, that the Manchu ruler T'ai-tsung could recommend to his ministers that the practice be prohibited. See Farquhar, "Emperor as Bodhisattva", p. 21.

30. The story is often told how Nāgārjuna visited the land of the nāgas and brought back the Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras to the land of humans (although wheels are not given as the reason for this visit). See, for example, Tāranātha, Seven Instruction Lineages, pp. 5-6.

31. The work 'industry' is used here in an older sense. Phrin-las is work aimed at the welfare of others, and in traditional Tibetan society, this word covered bridge and dike building, as well as other such public works as monastery and temple building.

32. Evidently, the Seng-chen Bla-ma quotes this story from a work which in turn quotes Karma-bakshi, but he could not consult the original work. The seven-syllable verses here and in part three would seem to represent the actual words of Karma-bakshi, but to be certain, it would be necessary to trace the textual source. For biographical information on Karma-bakshi, see Karma Thinley, History of the Sixteen Karmapas, pp. 47-52. It is perhaps of interest to note (on p. 48) that he initiated the practice of 'communal singing' of the Six Syllables. See also 'Gos Lo-tsa-ba, Blue Annals, pp. 485-87. For information on the few available works from the collected works of Karma-bakshi, said to have once filled six volumes, see Kapstein, "Limitless Ocean".

33. Seng-chen's passage on pp. 492 (line 4) to 493 (line 2) is equivalent to Derge Kanjur, Rgyud, vol. tsa, folio 138 verso (line 3) to folio 139 recto (line 1) in the work entitled 'Phags-pa Spyan-
ras-gzigs-dbang-phyug Zhal Bcu-gcig-pa zhes bya-ba’i Gzungs (Tohoku nos. 693 & 899).

34. Full title: ‘Phags-pa Byang-chub-sems-dpa’ Spyan-ras-gzigs-dbang-phyug Phyag Štong Spyan Štong dang ldan-pa Thogs-pa Mi Mnga’-ba’i Thugs-rje-chen-po’i Sems Rgya-cher Yongs-su Rdzogs-pa zhes bya-ba’i Gzungs. This work may be found in the Tantra section of the Derge Kanjur, vol. tsa, folios 94-129; and in vol. e, folios 168-205 (Tohoku nos. 691 and 897).

35. This is the Indian nun Dpal-mo, whose name could be re-Sanskritized as either Śrī or Lakṣmī, most likely the latter. In 1963, a biography of “Kamala Bhikshuni” was published separately. It is by a ’Brug-pa Lama named Rab-brtan who stayed at a leprosy hospital at Kalimpong. See Rab-brtan, Dge-slong-ma Dpal-mo’i Rnam-thar. This nun is remembered mainly for her role as initiator of the tradition of a popularly performed fasting rite which was named after her (Dpal-mo lugs), and as the author of some praises to Great Compassion (Peking nos. 3549, 3560 and 3561) as well as a sādhana devoted to the eleven-headed form (Peking no. 3557). She would seem to belong to the earlier half of the eleventh century. See especially Gos Lo-tsa-ba, Blue Annals, pp. 1007 ff. (the story of her lineage ends on p. 1018). The text of hers which is quoted here is ‘Phags-pa Spyan-ras-gzigs-dbang-phyug-gi Bstd-pa (Tohoku no. 2739). Her famous Po Bstd is so called because it is a poetic work of praise (bstd) in which the bulk of the lines end in the syllable po (Tohoku no. 2738).

36. This work, entitled Smyung-gnas-kyi Cho-ga’i Zur Rgyan Bde-ba-can-gyi Lam-yig, written in the year 1816, may be found in Gung-thang-pa, Collected Works, vol. 7, pp. 289-326. It is about the fasting rites according to the tradition of Dpal-mo (whose story he tells on pp. 293-94). The majority of the third part of Seng-chen’s work is copied from this work: pp. 492 (line 3) through 494 (line 1) in Seng-chen’s work is the same as pp. 295 (line 2) through 297 (line 1) in this work by Gung-thang-pa.

37. The very learned Mongolian Tibetan scholar who goes by the name Chos-rje Bla-ma told me (Bloomington, June 8, 1987) he believes that the wheel with ball-and-chain governor came into existence during the fourth or fifth rab-byung (in other words, between 1207 and 1326). He also told me of a recent work on wheels by a Geshe named Stong-thun (correct spelling?) which was published some years ago by the Institute of Tibetology at Gangtok. I was unable to consult this work.

38. I would like to thank Dr. Gregory Schopen (Indiana University, Bloomington) for making available to me his not-yet published paper entitled, “A Note on the ‘Technology of Prayer’ and a Reference to the ‘Revolving Book-case’ in an 11th Century Indian Inscription.”
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Gung-thang-pa Dkon-mchog-bstan-pa'i-nyi-ma, 'Khor-lo'i Rnam-gzhag Mdo-rbsdus (marginal title: Tsa-kra). A woodblock print in 4 leaves from the printery of the Mongolian monastery Bsod-nams-kun-sdud-gling. This work was not located in the author's Collected Works. The original is to be found in the Chicago Field Museum's Berthold Laufer Collection of Tibetan woodblock prints and manuscripts, catalog no. 657.05.
Gyatso, Janet, The Literary Transmission of the Traditions of Thang-stong-rgyal-po: A Study of Visionary Buddhism in

Gyatso, Janet, A Technique for Developing Enlightened Consciousness. Buddhist Association of the United States and the Institute for Advanced Study of World Religions (Fort Lee 1980).


Imaeda, Yoshiro, “Note préliminaire sur la formule Om mani padme hūṃ dans les manuscrits tibétaines de Touen-houang.” Contributions aux études sur Touen-houang. Librarie Droz (Geneva/Paris 1979), pp. 71-76.


Kircher, Athanasius, China Illustrata. Ratna Pustak Bhandar (Kathmandu 1979).


Tāranātha, *The Seven Instruction Lineages*. Tr. by David Templeman, Library of Tibetan Works and Archives (Dharamsala 1983).


“LAMA TO THE KING OF HSIA”

Elliot Sperling

It has become possible, over the course of several decades, to discern with increasing clarity the outlines of a variety of ties that linked Tibetans and Tanguts in the period prior to the destruction of the Tangut state in 1227. The works of E. I. Kychanov, Luciano Petech, R. A. Stein, and others, have served to highlight the historical reality of this relationship,¹ and to stimulate further interest in it. The northeastern Tibetan region of A-mdo was where Tibet bordered the Tangut state; the area in fact has a well-established history as a traditional highway for Tibet’s commercial and cultural relations with other peoples and countries. It is an honor, then, to be able to offer this article dealing with an aspect of Tangut-Tibetan relations in felicitations of the sixty-fifth birthday of my mentor, Stag-'tsher rin-po-che Thub-bstan 'jigs-med nor-bu, surely one of A-mdo’s worthy sons.

Though Tibetan source materials on this subject are yet to be fully sought out and analyzed, it is already clear that some of the lacunae characterizing current knowledge on the question may be cleared up through increased attention to classical Tibetan works. Bearing this in mind, I would like to call attention in this article to one interesting aspect of the relationship between Tibetans and the Tangut state just prior to its destruction: the

I am pleased to acknowledge the influence and encouragement of my friend Dr. Samuel M. Grupper with regard to the subject of this paper. On the basis of his own research he long ago confided to me his opinion that the antecedents of the dual sacred and secular relationship which linked Tibetans and Mongols in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries might well be found in the Tangut state.
appearance of Tibetan Buddhist clerics at the Tangut court in the role of "imperial preceptor" (Ch. ti-shih > Tib. ti-shri/shri).

At the outset, we should point out that the presence of Tibetan clerics among the Tanguts is not something hitherto unremarked upon. Over two decades ago, R. A. Stein made note of contact between the Karma Bka'-brgyud-pa and the Tangut throne.² Shortly thereafter, E. Gene Smith called attention to links between the founder of the 'Bri-gung Bka'-brgyud-pa, 'Jig-rten mgon-po, and the early thirteenth-century Tangut court, symbolized by the hierarch's dispatch of an image of Mañjughoṣa to the court at the time of the 1207 campaign of Činggis Qan.³ The same Tibetan source which mentions this incident also elaborates slightly on the contacts between 'Jig-rten mgon-po and the Tangut ruler:

A Tangut [Tib. Me-nyag = Mi-nyag] king presented to 'Jig-rten mgon-po, the 'Bri-khung-pa [= 'Bri-gung-pa (hierarch)], silk garments and gold; and then, inasmuch as he entreated him, 'Jig-rten mgon-po dealt with the auspices, and there was peace then in the Tangut realm for a period of twelve years. As a result, the gold-robed [Tib. gos ser-po-can] Tangut king who follows this example offers homage [i.e., to the 'Bri-gung-pa].⁴

The spiritual link between the Tangut court and various Bka'-brgyud-pa subsects goes beyond religious offerings of homage, however. This fact becomes manifestly apparent as we delve further into other Bka'-brgyud-pa sources. Specifically, we find in works of the Karma-pa and 'Ba'-rom-pa subsects evidence of the institutionalization of the post of imperial preceptor at the court, a post that was held (at least in the final decades of the Tangut state's existence) by Tibetan clerics. Readers may well be struck by the fact that this state of affairs appears to parallel that which later developed at the court of the Mongols—conquerors of the Tangut state—during the time of Qubilai and 'Phags-pa Blo-gros rgyal-mtshan. As will be seen below, an awareness of this parallel almost certainly informed certain elements of later Tibetan writing on Tangut history.

Some of the earliest intimations that we have had about a sacral relationship between the Tangut court and Tibetan clerics derive from the work of Prof. R. A. Stein. In one article in particular, translating from the chapter of the Mkhas-pa'i dga'-ston dealing with Tangut history, he rendered into French a significant allusion to that relationship:

Le roi Tha'i-hu avait invité le Seigneur de la Religion Dus-gsum mkhyen-pa (1110–1193) lorsque celui-ci demeura à mChur-phu (monastère, siège des Karmapas au Tibet), mais il ne vint pas, «Eh bien!», dit le roi, «envoie-moi comme chapelain à ta place un élève
qui soit ton égal!» (Le lama) envoya alors le savant gCaṅ-so-ba, et le roi le vénéra comme son lama.

This bit of information can be further supplemented by textual material that has become available since the publication of Professor Stein’s article. The cleric dispatched by Dus-gsum mkhyen-pa was his disciple, Gtsang-po-pa Dkon-mchog seng-ge (?-1218/1219), concerning whom we have a brief biographical notice in an important Karma-pa historical work, the Zla-ba chu-shel-gyi phreng-ba. In view of its brevity, we may quote it in full:

As regards Gtsang-po Bkra-shis, or Gtsang-po-pa Dkon-mchog seng-ge: by miraculous means he was accepted as a disciple (by Dus-gsum mkhyen-pa) at La-stong Thang-chung [sic; = La-stod Thang-chung]. Afterwards he went through all of the teachings at Mtshur-phu. When the king of the Tangut [state of] Hsia [Tib. Mi-nyag ‘Ga’] invited the lord himself (Dus-gsum mkhyen-pa), he sent Gtsang-po-pa in his stead, having bestowed on him the utpattikrama and sampannakrama teachings of [Rdo-rje] phag-mo and then exhorited him, (saying) “meditate in the mountains of Ho-lan-shan [Tib. Ha-la-shan]!” There he served as lama to the king of Hsia and received the appellation “Gtsang-po ti-shri.” Successively, he presented to the great see of Mtshur-phu: first, cloth for golden vessels and facilities for the erection of an outer stupa; second, a gallery for the divine temple; and third, ritual offering items. And with a series of presentations of thirteen of the monastery’s most extraordinary items, etc., he performed extensive works for the doctrine. Then, in the Earth-Male-Tiger year [i.e., 1218/1219], he died in Liang-chou [Tib. Byang-ngos] in the state of Hsia. As for his students, 'Gro-mgon Ti-shri ras-pa, an adherent of the doctrines of the ‘Ba’-dbram Bka’-bgyud-pa, was state chaplain [Tib. dbu-bla] to the Tangut king. The funereal affairs [and matters relating to] the chapel and the reliquary of Gtsang-po-pa were carried out by Ti-shri ras-pa.

This biographical notice, though curt, provides us with added detail on the life of Dkon-mchog seng-ge and on his activities at the Tangut court. Strikingly, however, it gives us a sense of continuity, for it clearly notes the succession of another Tibetan cleric to fill the position of imperial preceptor that Dkon-mchog seng-ge had held. It is appropriate then that we now turn our attention to this successor, the ‘Ba’-rom-pa cleric Ti-shri ras-pa, as we take up the next strand in our story.

The ‘Ba’-rom-pa are a far less well-known subsect of the Bka’-bgyud-pa than the Karma-pa. With its name variously rendered as ‘Bab-rom-pa, ‘Ba’-ram-pa, ‘Ba’-sgrom-pa, ‘Ba’-dbram-pa (as in the passage just cited), etc., the subsect nevertheless constituted one of the four primary branches of the Dwags-po Bka’-bgyud-pa, that division of the sect derived from the schools established within the lineage of Dwags-po lha-rje Sgam-po-pa Bsod-nams rin-chen. The founder of the ‘Ba’-rom-pa subsect, ‘Ba’-rom-pa
Dar-ma dbang-phyug (1127/1128-1203), was a direct disciple of Sgam-po-pa; and it was a disciple of his, Ti-shri Sangs-rgyas ras-chen (1164/1165-1236), who appears in the Zla-ba chu-shel-gyi phreng-ba as 'Gro-mgon Ti-shri ras-pa, imperial preceptor at the Tangut court and successor to Gtsang-po-pa Dkon-mchog seng-ge. Unfortunately, our sources for the history of the 'Ba'-rom-pa are by no means as full as those that lay at our disposal regarding the Karma-pa. Thus, the materials available to us concerning the emergence of Sangs-rgyas ras-chen at the Tangut court all tell us the same story:

. . . . [Sangs-rgyas ras-chen] at the age of thirty-three, in the Dragon Year [i.e., 1196/1197], went to the Tangut realm. After serving as the revered and supported lama of the Tangut king and his attendants [of the lineage of (?)] Sho-ho Rgyal-rgod, he dwelled there for thirty-three years. He set everyone on the path of the dharma. He founded four great monasteries, and an unimaginably (extensive) monastic community spread. At the age of sixty-three he came (back) to Tibet.

Ti-shri Sangs-rgyas ras-chen, the second of the Tibetan imperial preceptors known to us, is also the last, for the Tangut state was destroyed several years before his death. Nevertheless, his tenure in the Tangut lands was not made wholly fruitless by subsequent political events. His successor in the 'Ba'-rom-pa lineage was himself from the Tangut realm. This was Gsang-ba ras-pa dkar-po Shes-rab byang-chub (1198/1199-1262), born there in a region named as "Gdung-phyar-chu" in our Tibetan sources.

Gsang-ba ras-pa dkar-po Shes-rab byang-chub not only survived the upheaval that put an end to the Tangut state, he is supposed to have gained at least some favor in the eyes of the Mongol emperor Qubilai. Although he would not appear to have been the only Tibetan cleric among the Tanguts to have survived the state's collapse, the fact of his special position among the Tanguts makes his reappearance at Qubilai's court worth noting. We have clearly seen that the establishment of Tibetan imperial preceptors at a foreign court predates the patronage accorded the Sa-skya-pa by the Mongols, and therefore that it was not the rise of the Mongols that first drew Tibetan clerics into international affairs as sacral figures serving non-Tibetan monarchs. Gsang-ba ras-pa dkar-po then was no less than a living link to this earlier, brief tradition.

Unfortunately, the paucity of information provided on this point by our 'Ba'-rom-pa sources is acute to the point of frustration. The 'Ba'-rom-pa materials do not permit us to expand upon much of the speculation that their remarks on
Gsang-ba ras-pa dkar-po’s link to Qubilai provoke. These sources merely state that “... the Mongol king known as Qubilai [Tib. Go-be-la] bowed his head [to Gsang-ba ras-pa dkar-po’s link to Qubilai [Tib. Go-be-la] bowed his head [to Gsang-ba ras-pa dkar-po]. He presented him with six places as myriarchy subjects.”

This brief statement, however, still permits us to draw some inferences about Gsang-ba ras-pa dkar-po, and to allude to another facet of Tangut-Tibetan links. Our ‘Ba’-rom-pa writers, as we have just seen, speak of a myriarchy being presented to Gsang-ba ras-pa dkar-po; a curious comment, since it is generally known that insofar as Qubilai is concerned Tibetan sources describe the presentation of the thirteen myriarchies of Central Tibet as a donation given by the emperor solely to ‘Phags-pa Brol-gros rgyal-mtshan, the renowned Sa-skya-pa cleric and Yüan imperial preceptor. The story of the emperor’s donation (in which no other sects or sectarian leaders figure as recipients of the presentation) is sufficiently recounted in a number of modern works as to allow us to forego a discussion of it here.

The generally-accepted list of the thirteen myriarchies over which ‘Phags-pa and the Sa-skya-pa were given dominion warrants our attention, however, because it includes two bearing a name that we have already mentioned in connection with Tangut-Tibetan ties: Lho La-stod and Byang La-stod. We may recall that it was at “La-stod thang-chung” that Gtsang-po-pa Dkon-mchog seng-ge is said to have first encountered Karma Dus-gsum mkhyen-pa, his guru and the one who later dispatched him to serve at the Tangut court.

The reference to myriarchy subjects being presented to Gsang-ba ras-pa dkar-po Shes-rab byang-chub ought not to be taken to suggest that Qubilai maintained a link with the ‘Ba’-rom-pa that in some ways incorporated a grant of power and authority similar to what he had accorded the Sa-skya-pa both at court and in Tibet. On the contrary, it would appear that any favor shown by the court to the Tangut ‘Ba’-rom-pa heirarch fell within the context of the cleric’s recognition and acceptance of the supremacy of the Mongol alliance with the Sa-skya-pa. This interpretation suggests itself not simply because of the weight of Tibetan historical tradition concerning ‘Phags-pa and Qubilai, but because of what is known about the ruling house of Byang La-stod in Gtsang, one of the myriarchies of thirteenth-century Central Tibet.

Byang La-stod seems to designate that area north of the Gtsang-po with its administrative center at Ngam-ring, or Byang Ngam-ring, while Lho La-stod is the region directly to the south of the river. Sometime after the events recounted above the two regions seem to have become united. There exist works
that tell us something about the ruling lineage of Byang La-stod, and to which references have been made by western scholars. To these we may add the *Sde-pa G.yas-ru Byang-pa'i rgyal-rabs rin-po-che bstar-ba*, by Dpal-Idan chos-kyi bzang-po (fl. 15th century?), reprinted in India in 1974. This work expands upon information that R. A. Stein brought to light almost four decades ago indicating that the myriarchy’s lords were descended from the rulers of the Tangut state. It was Professor Stein, in fact, who pointed out at that early date the link between the Tangut royal line, the myriarchy’s rulers, and the cleric dispatched by Dus-gsum mkhyen-pa to the Tangut court. In the *Sde-pa G.yas-ru Byang-pa'i rgyal-rabs rin-po-che bstar-ba* the origin of Byang La-stod’s ruling lineage is described as follows:

The lineage of the glorious G.yas-ru Byang-pa: earlier, from a branch which had gradually emerged from the kings of China, [came] the Tangut Si-tu [sic = Si-hu] king who took the capital by force and held sway over the great country. Those of the sixth generation from him, members of the great and high lineage [of] the nephew of the Tangut Rgyal-rgod [king], gradually came west via Gtsang. Some time after the country had been taken they moved from Ra-sa rgyad-po-lung and took Stag-ste seng-ge-lung [sic = Stag-bde seng-ge-lung in La-stod].

The next several lines of the text describe Byang La-stod as a region in which a number of Tanguts settled and held sway, and over which there was a ruling house that had allied itself with the Sa-skya-pa sect during the time of Sa-skya pandita. Much as the rulers of Byang La-stod had accepted Sa-skya-pa domination of Central Tibet, so too it would appear that the Tangut monk Gsang-ba ras-pa dkar-po Shes-rab byang-chub had also accepted the rule of Qubilai. His presentation with myriarchy subjects surely signifies this, rather than his actual empowerment over one of the myriarchies of Central Tibet (irrespective of whether the myriarchy in question was in fact Byang La-stod). It could not have been, however, simple submission that was at issue in this instance. Acquiescence to the sacral alliance between Qubilai and the Sa-skya-pa on the part of the successor to the Tibetan imperial preceptors at the Tangut court was no less than an acquiescence to the transfer to the new order of the sacral power generated by the relationship that Tibetan clerics had previously entertained with the Tangut ruler.

The significance of the earlier relationship can be detected in certain Tibetan writings. It is by now well known that one Tibetan tradition linked the Mongol prince Köden (to whose court Sa-skya pandita and his nephew Ḥphags-pa had been attached) with the Tangut rulers by designating Köden an incarnation of the emperor Rgyal-rgod. A further indication in
this regard is the mention made in the *Sa-skya gdung-rabs chen-mo* of a recreated seal of the Tangut emperor Rgyal-rgod that figures in the bestowal upon 'Phags-pa of the title *ti-shih*. According to this source this was in conjunction with Qubilai's request for an initiation. The events are recounted as follows:

Then, after the great lama [i.e., 'Phags-pa] had gone himself to the emperor, in the (hierarch's) sixty-sixth year, the Iron-Male-Horse Year [i.e., 1270/1271], the king once more requested initiation. At that time a crystal seal of the Tangut Rgya-rgod [ = Rgyal-rgod] king was made up. Then, [this] crystal seal adorned with six continents and a special edict were presented [to 'Phags-pa], and the title "Prince of India's deities below the heavens and above the earth, emanated Buddha, creator of the script, he who sets the nation on (the path of) peace, the *pandita* sage in the five sciences, 'Phags-pa *ti-shih* (Tib. *ti-shi*)," was bestowed on him.32

The event described in this passage relates to a series of initiations, rites, and bestowals that marked the relationship between 'Phags-pa and Qubilai; they have been dealt with by others and there is no need to say more about them at the moment.33 We ought simply to note the implicit acknowledgment by our source of the Tangut emperor's connection to the sacral relationship that had evolved between Qubilai and 'Phags-pa. We may also reiterate here that the textual evidence at our disposal up to this point indicates a Tangut link to one of the myriarchies under Sa-skya-pa domination, apparently one (or possibly even both) of the La-stod myriarchies. The textual evidence further indicates that this link was maintained in a peaceable manner within the context of Sa-skya-pa domination of Central Tibet.

There were of course other Sa-skya-pa clerics besides 'Phags-pa who came to hold the position of imperial preceptor under the Mongols, just as earlier Tibetan clerics had held the position at the Tangut court. While we have alluded to the continuity between the respective positions of the Sa-skya-pa and Bka'-brgyud-pa clerics with whom we have been dealing, we have not noted one other aspect to all of this, one which adds a further element of continuity to the story that we have so far recounted. This is the evidence offered by our Bka'-brgyud-pa sources to the effect that the position held by the Bka'-brgyud-pa clerics at the Tangut court was in fact one that had devolved upon them from Chinese predecessors.

The existence of such Chinese predecessors should not be considered altogether unexpected. It is a well-known fact that Chinese Buddhists and Chinese Buddhism had important roles in the spiritual life of the Tangut state. Chinese Buddhism already had several centuries of strong tradition behind it by this
time. By contrast, Tibetan Buddhism (then just at the beginning of the phyi-dar period) was only in the earliest stages of its emergence as an organized religious force during most of the Tangut state’s existence. The subsequent rapidity of its development as a spiritual and temporal force is reflected in its ultimate appearance at the Tangut court in the state’s last decades and then in its prominent place in the Mongol state. The earlier role of certain Chinese clerics at the Tangut court may well have set the stage for this rapid growth in Tibetan Buddhism’s international prominence.

We find mention of the Chinese predecessors to the Tibetan imperial preceptors at the Tangut court in biographies of Dus-gsum mkhyen-pa, the first “Black Hat” Karma-pa hierarch and the cleric who dispatched Gtsang-po-pa Dkon-mchog seng-ge to the court. Part of the biographical tradition devoted to him deals with his recounting to his disciples the details of their past lives (an ability that is reflected in his Tibetan name). According to the Zla-ba chu-shel-gyi phreng-ba:

In that the precious lama was fully realized, they asked him who among the first ranks of those in his entourage had been whom during the times of the enlightened ones. Thus he said “There were four [in one incarnation lineage]: one called Mitrayogin [Tib. Mi-tra dzo-ki], the yogin in the vihara of Lokavihara in southern India, there was also a monk called Dge-ba’i blo-gros in the upper reaches of Mnga’ris who did much for the benefit of sentient beings, and there was the lama of the Tangut dharmaraja called Rgya Be-bum ring-mo and also called Rgya Byang-chub sms-dpa; and you, Dge-bshes Dkon-mchog seng-ge.”

The main import of this passage lies in the revelation that Gtsang-po-pa had three previous lives during the times of the “enlightened ones” (Tib. sangs-rgyas). For our interests, however, particular significance rests with the notion that Gtsang-po-pa was actually part of an incarnation lineage that included at least one previous spiritual master at the Tangut court. This information places our discussion in a richer context, even though it is presently impossible to further identify that incarnation whom our text names as Rgya Be-bum ring-mo or Rgya Byang-chub sms-dpa. We may note that the element “Rgya” in both names must denote, in this context, a regional identification with China. Such designations in Tibetan appellations are quite common; so we can at least assume that the figure in question was a Chinese monk. This implies that a tradition of sacramal empowerment existed at the Tangut court, one in which Chinese monks served as spiritual masters to the emperor; and the evidence we have examined earlier shows that
late in the twelfth century that sacral role devolved upon Tibetan clerics, specifically monks belonging to Bka’-brgyud-pa subsects.

If we may be allowed to draw this conclusion from the evidence thus far presented, then there are any number of further questions that now arise. These relate to the nature of the Chinese empowerment tradition at the Tangut court (i.e., the extent of its derivation from and relationship to earlier Buddhist ideas of sacral rule in China); the significance of the rise of Tibetan clerics at that court, and its meaning in terms of ritual and textual change in the actual process of ritual empowerment; and the precise way in which the Mongol conquerors of the Tangut state dealt with this tradition. We have already seen the perception in Tibetan tradition of links between the situation that existed at the Tangut court and the “priest-patron” relationship involving the Sa-skya-pa at the Mongol court. One is well justified in speculating that the hostility that later marked Qubilai’s relations with some of the Bka’-brgyud-pa subsects had its origins in hostile sentiments deriving from the Mongol destruction of the state whose ruler had relied on Bka’-brgyud-pa clerics and rituals for sacral empowerment. It is not my intention to address these diverse issues here, but merely to call attention to them as avenues for further investigation.

NOTES


4. Shes-rab ‘byung-gnas, op. cit., f. 79r.[a]

6. We may easily take the second syllable in the appellation given by Stein ("gCart-so-ba") to be the product of scribal confusion at some point between the Tibetan letters pa and sa as written in their dbu-med forms. Cf. the parallel passages in Dpa’-bo, op. cit., p. 434 ("Gtsang-so-ba") and Si-tu pan-chen Chos-kyi ’byung-gnas and ’Be-lo Tshe-dbang kun-khyab, Sgrub-brgyud Karma kam-tshang brgyud-pa rin-po-che’i rnam-par thar-pa rab-byams nor-bu zla-ba chu-shel-gyi phreng-ba (New Delhi, 1972), I, f. 22v ("Gtsang-po-pa").

7. This work is perhaps not cited as often as Dpa’-bo Gtsug-lag ‘phreng-ba’s famous Chos-byung mkhas-pa’i dga’-ston. Although it was completed by ’Be-lo Tshe-dbang kun-khyab in 1775 (a year after the death of the Si-tu pan-chen), more than two centuries after the appearance of Dpa’-bo Gtsug-lag ‘phreng-ba’s work, and although it does not deal with the vast range of Tibetan history that the Mkhas-pa’i dga’-ston takes up, it is nevertheless the most extensive chronicle of the history of the Karma-pa subsect presently available. One may clearly note that what seems to be a wide array of original documents and archival records (in most cases no longer extant) were utilized by the Si-tu pan-chen and in several cases copied into his text.

8. Further references to the same events in Dpa’-bo, op. cit., pp. 431 and 790; and Si-tu pan-chen, op. cit., I f. 12v, make it clear that the region referred to is correctly rendered as La-stod thang-chung. This of course denotes the area of La-stod in Gtsang, concerning which cf. Alfonsea Ferrari, Mk’yen Brise’s Guide to the Holy Places of Central Tibet (Rome, 1958), p. 153; and Turrell V. Wylie, The Geography of Tibet According to the ’Dzam-gling rgyas-bshad (Rome, 1962), p. 129. I cannot make any further comments on the name Thang-chung ("Small Plain"); however, we may note that the area of Byang La-stod has further important links to the Tanguts beyond its association with Gtsang-po-pa Dkon-mchog seng-ge. These will be mentioned below.


10. The Ho-lan-shan range lay to the west of the Tangut capital of Hsing-ch’ing-fu (the modern city of Yin-ch’uan); see T’an Ch’i-hsiang, ed., Chung-kuo li-shih ti-t’u chi (Shanghai, 1982) VI, map 36-37. Concerning the name of the range, see Paul Pelliot, Notes on Marco Polo (Paris, 1959–1973), pp. 132–137. The sacral significance of the Ho-lan-shan range for the Tangut rulers is attested to by the location of the royal tombs in the vicinity of its eastern foothills; see Li Fan-wen, Hsi-hsia yen-chiu lun-chi
(Ning-hsia, 1983), pp. 154–155. Perhaps more importantly, we should note the remarks of R. A. Stein, op. cit. (1951), p. 226: “Or le Dieu du Sol (gzi-bdag) de Gha et de Byaṅ-ṇos est précisément Ha-la ṣan, c’est-à-dire la chaîne montagneuse du Ho-lan chan ou Alachan qui s’étend en effet entre Kan-tchou at Ning-hia.” Concerning “Gha,” see note 9, above; on Byang-ngos (“Byaṅ-ṇos”), see note 12, below.

11. I.e., for gser-‘bum, read gser-bum.

12. Byang-ngos is identified with Liang-chou in one of the Ming dynasty Sino-Tibetan glossaries studied by Nishida Tatsuo, Seibankan yakugo no kenkyū (Kyoto, 1970), p. 112. N.b., however, the reference to the name given by R.A. Stein, op. cit. (1951), p. 227, and his general references to Byang-ngos as the Chinese town of Kan-chou (pp. 239 ff.).

13. Si-tu pan-chen, op. cit., I, f. 26v.[c]. Regarding the first portion of this biographical notice on Dkon-mchog seng-ge, cf. the following passage from the biography of Dus-gsum mkhyen-pa given in Dpa’-bo, op. cit., p. 431:[d]

[Dus-gsum mkhyen-pa,] during his return trip [from a cemetery in India to Mtshur-phu,] covered the road from Kashmir and Pu-rangs in but an instant and [arriving] in La-stod Thang-chung expounded the Rnam-bzhi rgyud-grol [teachings] learned from Indrabodhi the Middle One [Tib. Indra-bho-dhi Bar-ba] to the kalyāṇamitra [Tib. dge-bshes] Gtsang-so-ba [sic] “Go to Mtshur-phu!” he exhorted him, and then he said that previously, in four births, he had been a disciple [i.e., of Dus-gsum mkhyen-pa]. Thereupon he brought him to the consummate goals [of his spiritual studies]. Afterwards he presented him as chaplain to the Tangut king.

A few things brought up by Dpa’-bo Gtsug-lag ‘phreng-ba merit further reference. The trip to an Indian cemetery and then to La-stod to which he makes reference is described unequivocally in Si-tu pan-chen, op. cit., I.f. 12v, as having occurred in a dream; hence the mention of a miraculous aspect to the meeting between Dus-gsum mkhyen-pa and Gtsang-po-pa in the Si-tu pan-chen’s short biographical account of the latter. Concerning Indrabodhi the Middle One, see Eva K. Dargyay, The Rise of Esoteric Buddhism in Tibet (Delhi, 1977), pp. 39-40 (“Indrabhūti”); and Mkhas-btsun bzang-po [= Khetsun Sangpo], Rgya-gar pan-chen rnam-skyi rnam-thar ngo-tshar padmo’i ’dzul-zhal gsar-pa [= Biographical Dictionary of Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism, I] (Dharamsala, 1973), p. 253-256 (“Indrabhuti”). Note that both authors mention an apparent identification of him with Indrabodhi/Indrabhuti the Younger One. The reference to four previous lives of Dkon-mchog seng-ge is also of interest to us,
for in two of these he is specifically said to have dwelt as a monk at the Tangut court. This last point will be dealt with further on.

14. On the ‘Ba’-rom-pa and their place within the organization of the Bka’-brgyud-pa, see the introduction (by E. Gene Smith?) to Rgyal-ba rdo-rje ’chang dang grub-thob bka’-bzhi’i rnam-par thar-pa zur-tsam-cig [= Dkar Brgyud Gser ’Phreng A Golden Rosary of Lives of Eminent Gurus] (Leh, 1970) p. 5. In spite of the diverse forms of the subsect’s name they should not be confused with the ‘Ba’-ra Bka’-brgyud-pa, an offshoot of the ‘Brug-pa subsect.

15. At present the biographical sources on the ‘Ba’-rom-pa hierarchs at my disposal are all rather meager. Short biographical notices on them can be found in a collection of “biographical songs” (Tib. rnam-mgur), apparently put together by one “Shribhadra” (= Dpal-bzang-po) and available in two modern printings: Bka’-brgyud rdo-rje ‘chang-nas bzung gsang-bdag phyag-r dor dngos-byon karma dznya-na’i du-byon-pa [sic] grub-pa brnyes-pa’i sgrub-brgyud bstan-pa’i srog-shing dpal-ldan Ba-sgom pa’i rnam-mgur thos-grol nyin-byed ‘od-stong phyogs-las rnam-par rgyal-ba’i phreng-ba, in ’Bab-rom Bka’-brgyud-kyi chos-skor thor-bu sna-tshogs (Delhi, 1982), vol. II; and Bka’-brgyud rdo-rje ’chang-nas bzung gsang-bdag phyag-r dor dngos-byon karma dznya-na’i bar-du byon-pa grub-pa brnyes-pa’i sgrub-brgyud bstan-pa’i srog-shing dpal-ldan Ba’rom-pa’i rnam-mgur thos-grol nyin-byed ‘od-stong phyogs-las rnam-par rgyal-ba’i phreng-ba, in Ritual Texts of the ’Ba’-rom Bka’-brgyud-pa Tradition (Delhi, 1985). The first print, recopied by a modern scribe in a contemporary dbu-can hand, will be referred to hereafter as Mgur (1982); the second (which seems to be a photocopied printing—only slightly touched up—of an old dbu-med manuscript) as Mgur (1985). Note that the two printings often differ significantly with each other. Biographical notices on ‘Ba’-rom-pa Dar-ma dbang-phyug can be found in Mgur (1982), ff. 33r–41r; Mgur (1985), ff. 22v–28r; and George N. Roerich, The Blue Annals (New Delhi, 1975), pp. 469–470. In addition, there exists a modern collection of ‘Ba’-rom-pa biographies said to be culled from a ‘Ba’-rom gser-’phreng seen by its author while in Tibet: Skyo-grwa Sku-rgyal [= Bla ma Sku-rgyal Karma-phrin-las-’od zer], Bka’-brgyud che-bzhi-las dpal ‘Ba’-rom-pa. chen-po’i brgyud-pa gser-gyi phreng-ba’i rnam-thar thos-grol nyin-byed ‘od-stong phyogs-las rnam-par rgyal-ba (Tashi Jong, 1985). N.b., however, that the biographies of Dar-ma dbang-phyug and Sangs-rgyas ras-chen contained in it (pp. 23–29 and 29–35, respectively) are essentially identical to those in Mgur (1982) and Mgur (1985): cf. the notices on Dar-ma dbang-phyug already cited and, for the life of Sangs-rgyas ras-chen, Mgur (1982), ff. 47v–51v; and Mgur (1985), ff. 35v–38r. All three of these ‘Ba’-rom-pa texts deal with the lineage up
through Skyo-brag Karma ye-shes, a contemporary of the Karma-pa hierarch Dbang-phyug rdo-rje (1556-1603), which may give us an indication of the date of compilation of the original biographical notices that all three texts carry. It is presently not possible to say much more about the background of these collections as historical texts.

16. Mgur (1985), f. 37r, (from which we are quoting) describes Sangs-rgyas ras-chen’s supporters as: Mi-nyag rgyal-po spyan-snga Sho-ho Rgyal-rgod-rnams. Mgur (1982), which (as noted) is a thoroughly recopied modern dbu-can version, renders the same passage on f. 50r as: Mi-nyag-yul rgya-sgo spyan-snga Sho-ho Rgya-rgan-rnams. Skyo-grwa Sku-rgyal, op. cit., p. 33., follows the latter text. However, Mgur (1982) may well suffer from an excess of scribal rationalizations. While Rgya-rgan might may seem to make sense as a readily understandable term in Tibetan, Rgyal-rgod is in fact a well-attested name found in Tibetan accounts of the lineage of the Tangut rulers. Note though that it is also commonly encountered as Rgya-rgod; see Stein op. cit. (1951), pp. 234–235. At present we cannot say anything substantive about the name Sho-ho, but cf. “Si-hu” and its variants in note 28, below.

17. Mgur (1985), f. 37r.[e] Cf. Mgur (1982) f. 50r; and Skyo-grwa Sku-rgyal, op. cit., pp. 32–33. There is a clear problem in this passage concerning the dates and/or length of Sangs-rgyas ras-chen’s stay in the Tangut state. Obviously he could not have gone there at age thirty-three, remained for another thirty-three years, and then gone back to Tibet at age sixty-three. Both versions of Mgur give identical dates. Skyo-grwa Sku-rgyal, our modern author (whose text essentially agrees with that in Mgur [1985]), appears to have attempted to resolve the question by assigning the cleric a stay in the Tangut state of only three years. That, however, cannot be accepted as a possibility in view of Sangs-rgyas ras-chen’s attested presence there at the time of Dkon-mchog seng-ge’s death in 1218/1219. We might better consider a stay closer to thirty years; i.e., allowing for Sangs-rgyas ras-chen to have gone to the Tangut realm at age thirty-three and to have left at age sixty-three. Such a conjecture would permit us, moreover, to postulate that his departure was possibly linked to the imminent destruction of the state at the hands of the Mongols.

18. See the brief biographical notes on Gsang-ba ras-pa dkar-po in Mgur (1982), ff. 81r–82v; Mgur (1985), ff. 57r–57v; and Skyo-grwa Sku-rgyal, op. cit., pp. 35–36. The first two sources state that he died in his sixty-fifth year (i.e., 1262/1263). Mgur (1982) refers to the month as rta-zla, Mgur (1985) as the first month of the year. Note, however, that rta-zla can refer to either the fifth month of
a year or to the period from the sixteenth day of the twelfth month of one year through the fifteenth day of the first month of the next year. See “Tsang-Han ta tz’u-tien” pien-hsieh-tsu, Bod-rgya skar-rtsis rig-pa’i tshig-mdzod [= Tsang-Han li-suan-hsüeh tz’u-tien] (Ch’eng-tu, 1985), p. 163. Skyo-grwa Sku-rgyal mentions the rta-zla month, but in what is a clear error says that he died in his twenty-fifth year.

19. Gdung-phyar-chu is not readily identifiable. We may note though that the Tibetan word chu, aside from obviously designating a river, has also been used in different periods to transcribe the Chinese administrative term chou. Nishida op. cit., p. 109 provides the well-known example (from the Ming period) of Ho-chou transcribed into Tibetan as Ga-chu.

20. Petech, op. cit., p. 180 (citing Dpa’-bo, op. cit., pp. 792–793), mentions a tradition that he considers at least partly suspect, concerning one cleric, Gtsang-pa Dung-khur-ba, who along with his students had travelled to Mongolia and then to the Tangut realm where he was found shortly thereafter by Çinggis Qan during his incursion in 1215. The Mongol conqueror is then supposed to have grown to respect Dung-khur-ba as a religious figure. It is clear from Dpa’-bo’s remarks (op. cit., p. 792), however, that he mentions this story in an attempt to rebut the notion that the Sa-skya-pa were the first to bring Buddhism to the Mongols. Dung-khur-ba was a Tshal-pa Bka’-brgyud-pa cleric, and is mentioned in Tshal-pa Kun-dga’ rdo-rje, Déb-ther dmar-po (Peking, 1981), p. 130, in the account of the Tshal-pa subsect. In his recent annotations to this work Dung-dkar Blo-bzang ’phrin-las (p. 452) gives his full appellation as Gtsang-pa Dung-khur-ba Dbang-phyug bkra-shis and states that he had been invited to serve as the lama of the Tangut emperor. He then is said to have preached to and served Çinggis Qan following his destruction of the Tangut state (i.e., after 1227). Petech considers the story to be without historical foundation, at least as far as it concerns Çinggis. But even with regard to the comments just cited concerning Gtsang-pa Dung-khur-ba’s activity among the Tanguts there is presently no way to substantiate them further. Our information on Gtsang-pa Dung-khur-ba is meager, and if we are to consider the remarks concerning Çinggis and the Mongols suspect, then we may also have to cast doubt upon the veracity of those remarks concerning the Tanguts, since it is not unlikely that they were incorporated into the story as a necessary corollary, deriving from an awareness of the Tangut precedent for the later relationship between Sa-skya-pa clerics and the Mongol throne.
23. For the thirteen myriarchies, see the lists in Giuseppe Tucci, Tibetan Painted Scrolls (Rome, 1949), pp. 681–682.
29. Dpal-Ildan chos-kyi bzang-po, Sde-pa G.yas-ru Byang-pa’i rgyal-rabs rin-po-che bstar-ba in Rare Tibetan Historical and Literary Texts from the Library of Tsepon W. D. Shakabpa (New Delhi, 1974), f. 1v.[f] Ra-sa rgad-po-lung cannot be identified, although one is naturally tempted to place it in the Lha-sa region. Concerning Stag-bde seng-ge-lung, cf. Roerich, op. cit., p. 1008 (on Nying-phug-pa): “He was born . . . in the valleys of sTag-bde seṅ-ge after they had come to La-stod . . .”

It is not my intention to deal with the difficult subject of interpreting the Tibetan genealogies of the Tangut kings; however, I ought to write down here a few sentences on those whose names have figured in our considerations so far. In the preceding note we have made brief mention of Si-hu, who appears as the first Tangut ruler. Rgyal-rgod (a name that also occurs as Rgya-rgod: see note 16) is also important as one of the most frequently mentioned Tangut emperors. He figures in a number of Tibetan works; we have just seen him linked to the ruling house of Byang La-stod, while other works (as will be seen) link him to the Mongol prince Köden. Rgyal-rgod is said to be the son of the Tangut emperor The-hu in the A-mdo history.
by Brag-dgon-pa Dkon-mchog bstan-pa rab rgyas, *Mdo-smad chos-byung* [= Deb-ther rgya-mtsho] (Lan-chou, 1982), p. 20, wherein he is identified as the emperor who had invited Dus-gsum mkhyen-pa to his court (i.e., he is the Tha’i-hu to whom we have already seen Stein make reference). Much as Rgyal-rgod is linked to a Tangut line that developed in Tibet, so too Tha’i-hu appears in one of our sources linked to a Tangut line found in eastern Khams, after the migration and growth of Tangut communities in the area. Among the prominent Karma-pa clerics who emerge in that region in the fifteenth century are some belonging to a clan bearing the name “Rma-se,” which the Si-tu pan-chen, op. cit., I. f. 255r, describes as “part of the clan of the Mi-nyag [i.e., Tangut] king Tha’i-hu and others” (Tib. Mi-nyag-gi rgyal-po Tha’i-hu la-sogs-pa’i gdung-rigs-kyi nang-tshan). The form Tha’i-hu/The-hu clearly seems to derive from a Chinese original.


35. Dge-ba’i blo-gros, an important translator, was contemporaneous with Atiśa and the Buddhist revival in Western Tibet in the eleventh century. See Roerich, op. cit., p. 70. Note that he is described as being from Rma, a name that we have seen as an element in the appellation “Rma-se,” which is ascribed to a branch of the Tangut royal line. The name Rma can be linked with areas of northeastern Tibet that were associated with the Tang-hsiang ch’iang (forebears of the imperial Tanguts), most visibly, perhaps, in the Tibetan name for the Huang-ho (“Yellow River”): Rma-chu. See R.A. Stein, *Recherches sur l’épopée et la barde au Tibet* (Paris, 1959), pp. 197–199; and *Les tribus anciennes des marches sino-tibétaines*, (Paris, 1961), pp. 52–54.

37. The other elements in the two names ascribed to this figure offer us nothing from which we can make a further identification. “Byang-chub sems-dpa’” (“Bodhisattva”) can easily be rendered into Chinese as “P’u-sa,” but it is not possible at present to identify this name with a known Chinese monk at the Tangut court. The same is true for “Be-bum [i.e., Be’u-bum] ring-mo.” The last element in this name clearly means “long,” while the first denotes a brief work along the lines of a handbook; see Chang I-hsun, *op. cit.*, p. 1841 (“be’u-bum”). It is difficult to imagine a possible Chinese name that a monk might have borne as an equivalent to the Tibetan term, although another, more basic meaning for be’u-bum, denoting a cow’s nipple, can suggest something such as “Niu-ju.” Sarat Chandra Das, *A Tibetan-English Dictionary* (Delhi, 1973), p. 876, defines be’u-bum as a “cow’s dug from which the calf sucks milk; fig. that which yields nourishment to . . . spiritual life.” With regard to niu-ju, used similarly in Chinese to denote the teachings of the Buddha, see Ting Fu-pao, *Fo-hsüeh ta tz’u-tien* (Peking, 1984), p.361 (“niu lü erh ju”).
[a] ༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༉༈
[d] བསྟན་འཛིན་བཞིའི་གནས་པོ་བསྡུའི་གནས་པོ་བོད་བོད་དང་
བོད་དང་བོད་གཞི་མཚན་བཞི་ཁྱིམ་བ་པའི་ཐབས་
བོད་དང་བོད་གཞི་མཚན་བཞི་ཁྱིམ་བ་པའི་ཐབས་
བོད་དང་བོད་གཞི་མཚན་བཞི་ཁྱིམ་

[e] ཨོ་ཐོབ་བཞི་ངོ་བོ་བཞི་ཁྱིམ་བ་པའི་ཐབས་

[f] བོད་དང་བོད་གཞི་མཚན་བཞི་ཁྱིམ་

[g] འོ་ཐོབ་བཞི་ངོ་བོ་བཞི་ཁྱིམ་བ་པའི་ཐབས་
ཉེ་བོ་མཐོང་ཞེས་བསྡུས་པ་དང་སོར་གྱིེས་ཤིང་གི་ཐོག་མོ་དུ་མཐོང་
ནོ་རྒྱུས་དམིགས་བཞི་ནད་གསུམ་སོང་བ་ཐོག་མོ་གྱིཝ་བསྡུས་པ་
བོད་ཀྱི་ཞིང་གི་ཐོག་མོ་དུ་མཐོང་ནོ་རྒྱུས་དམིགས་བཞི་ནད་གཟིགས་
གྱིཝ་བསྡུས་པ་ཐོག་མོ་དུ་མཐོང་ནོ་རྒྱུས་དམིགས་བཞི་ནད་
གྱིཝ་བསྡུས་པ་ཐོག་མོ་དུ་མཐོང་ནོ་རྒྱུས་

[ h ]

སྡེ་ཡུལ། སངས་སོད་བོད་དོན་ལས་ཐོག་མོ་དུ་མཐོང་
དོན་དམིགས་པ་དང་སོར་གྱིཝ་ཤིང་
ཁུལ་ཐོག་མོ་དུ་མཐོང་ནོ་རྒྱུས་

དོན་དམིགས་པ་དང་སོར་
ཁུལ་ཐོག་མོ་དུ་མཐོང་ནོ་རྒྱུས་

དོན་དམིགས་པ་དང་སོར་
ཁུལ་ཐོག་མོ་དུ་མཐོང་ནོ་རྒྱུས་

དོན་དམིགས་པ་དང་སོར་
ཁུལ་ཐོག་མོ་དུ་མཐོང་ནོ་རྒྱུས་
A PROBLEM OF ‘SYNONYMS’ IN THE TIBETAN
LANGUAGE:
BSGOM PA AND GOMS PA

Alex Wayman

When in summer 1951 in Berkeley, California, I first became acquainted with (now Professor) Thubten Norbu by his alternate name Taktser Rinpoche, I checked out for his use from the University of California’s Tibetan collection the Gsuni ‘bum of Kloṅ-rdol Bla-ma Ngag-dbang-blo-bzaṅ. This 18th century savant had written a series of survey works on the principal topics of study in the Gelugpa monasteries. Thereby, Taktser could quickly review his entire course of monastic training.

Section 8a of Kloṅ-rdol Bla-ma’s treatise is devoted to grammatical topics (sgra rig pa). Using the edition by Ven. Dalama (Mussoori, 1963), Vol. I, p. 404, we find several synonymous terms mentioned, as in my translation:

(They) say that the two expressions don go ba and don rtogs pa have the same significance (viz., “understanding the meaning”). Likewise, that “reaching the depth of dharma by realizing directly the true nature (dharmatā)” has the same significance as “understanding by realizing directly the true nature.” They say that bsgom pa (“cultivation”) and goms pa (“repeated practice”) have the same significance; but that is the case when applying (the terms) to the path, while there is no certainty in other (contexts). [a]

To begin to appreciate the observations of that passage, it could be mentioned that a book by Dhadphale about synonyms in the Pāli Buddhist canon has been published in India.1 The author, in this fascinating work, seems to take the terms as either synonymous or not. But Kloṅ-rdol Bla-ma describes a situation where terms may be synonymous in some context and not so in another context. My approach is to first consider how
the Tibetan translators from Sanskrit used the terms bsgom pa and sgom pa to render Sanskrit terms. Such data will serve as a basis for coming to conclusions.

Notice that in the Mahāyāna-Sūtrālankāra, either goms pa or sgom pa renders abhyāsa (repeated practice), and so goms pa is equivalent to sgom pa in such a context. Sgom pa also renders bhāvanā (cultivation). In the same text, bsgom pa las byun renders bhāvanāmāyī (consisting of cultivation, or of intense contemplation); and bsgoms par bya, bhāvayitavya (to be cultivated, or to be intensely contemplated).²

In translating the Abhidharma-skosabhāṣya, the term sgom pa’i lam is used for bhāvanāmārga (path of cultivation); and both sgom pas spaṅ bar bya ba and bsgom pas spaṅ bar bya ba render bhāvanāmārga (path of cultivation); and both sgom pas spaṅ bar bya ba and bsgom pas spaṅ bar bya ba render bhāvanā-heya. Also, the expression bsgoms pa las byun ba occurs. Goms pa is used for both abhyāsa and bhāvanā.³

The Bodhicaryāvatāra-paṇjikā on Chap. IX, uses bsgom pa’i lam for bhāvanāmārga.⁴

It promptly follows that goms pa (or sgom pa) and bsgom pa are replaceable in translating bhāvanā-mārga or bhāvanā-heya. However, only goms pa (or sgom pa) renders abhyāsa, and only bsgom pa (or, bsgoms pa) renders bhāvanāmāyī ([the insight] arising from, or involved with bhāvanā). This data supports Kloṅ-rdol Bla-ma’s observations, since sgom pa (or goms pa) and bsgom pa are synonymous in the terminology of the path, i.e. ‘path of cultivation’ (bhāvanā-mārga) and ‘what is to be eliminated by cultivation’ (bhāvanā-heya), namely, on the path of accepting the good and rejecting the bad. But there is no certainty of their like significance when goms pa means ‘repeated practice’ (abhyāsa) and when bsgom pa occurs in the compound bhāvanāmāyī (‘consisting of cultivation’).

The distinction of using such terms both to apply and not to apply to the Buddhist path is clarified by a passage in Asaṅga’s Yogācārabhūmi. His verse treatise on the three ‘instructions’ of Buddhism, a treatise entitled Ābhiprāyikārtha-gāthā, gave a problem to the translators. The Tibetan translator is the celebrated Ye-ses-sde and the Indian pandit for this part was probably Jinamitra. Asaṅga had used two Sanskrit terms to indicate the difference between a path description and a non-path description. The usual literal renditions of Sanskrit terms were in this case abandoned, and the Tibetan expressions are the ones of interest here: ’dren mo (guiding) and so so (respective).⁵

The Three Instructions are of Morality, Mind training, and Insight. In consideration that the Buddhist path requires a sequence of members, e.g., the Eightfold Noble Path, or the Ten-
Stage path of the Bodhisattva, it follows that any discussion that does not 'mix' them, i.e., consider them in relation to others, is not necessarily a path discussion; and in such a case, the members are referred to as so so. When one does consider them as members of a path, it is necessary to deal with such topics as whether one of them could be practiced by itself without the others; and in such a case, the explanations are 'dren mo.

When one uses such a distinction of terms for the terms bsgom pa and goms pa, it follows that the case when they are synonymous is when the discussion is guidance on the Buddhist path. However, when goms pa (or sgom pa) renders abhyāsa (repeated practice), this might be just repeated practice of one member of the path, such as 'morality'. And when bsgom pa renders part of bhāvanāmaya, one of the three levels of educated insight (šes rab), namely, 'hearing' (thos pa las byun ba'i šes rab), 'pondering' (bsam pa las byun ba'i šes rab), and 'intense contemplation' (bsgom pa las byun ba'i šes rab), it is also indeterminate, since if this bsgom pa kind of šes rab is preceded by the previous two levels of šes rab, it applies to the path; but if this bsgom pa is not 'mixed' with those two, it is 'respective', not applicable to the path.

Now, for some evidence from the Tibetan dictionaries. I shall employ three: the Brda dag miṅ tshig gsal ba by Dge-bses chos-kyi-grags-pa; the Dag yig ma nor lam bzan by Jampa Chogyal; the three-volume Bod rgya tshig mdos chen mo.6

The first one, by Geshe Chos-grags, is doubtless a fine dictionary, but it is surprisingly feeble for these particular terms. For goms pa, it states, chuṅ nu nas 'dris pa'am goms pa, "Starting from a meager (ability) to become familiarized (or accustomed); or goms pa." For sgom pa it has sgom bzin pa, directing the reader to its sgom entry, which is: dp quyad sgom daṅ 'jog sgom lta bu, "e.g., the 'examining-cultivation' and the 'stoppage-cultivation'," which is terminology of the path.7 It has no entry for bsgom-pa but does have bsgoms-pa, saying: sgom bsgoms zin pa, "sgom which has ended is bsgoms," and sgom pa.

The second one, by Jampa Chogyal, is very helpful. By having an entry for goms, but none for sgom in this syllable dictionary, there is the compiler's suggestion that sgom and goms differ only in the position of the 's' by metathesis. This is perhaps also Klon-rdol Bla-ma's interpretation by his using the form goms pa instead of sgom pa in the passage I cited at the outset. Jampa Chogyal also appears to associate goms with gom pa ('step' or 'pace'), perhaps in the sense of steps of the path. The dictionary has for goms:
Starting from a meager (ability) to become familiarized (or accustomed); or to practice in steps; or to habituate the mind and have familiar practice; or, with a causal step to conclude the practice in the manner of steps; or repeated practice with the meaning of pondering.[b]

The dictionary has for bsgom:

To familiarize (oneself) by repeated practice as though the topic of cultivation were a god, and to (properly) orient the mind again and again.[c]

The dictionary has for bsgoms:

Compassion finished is bsgoms; causing the practice; the topic of cultivation; the imperative, ‘Practice it!’; and when applied to the path, the two, cultivation (bsgom pa) and repeated practice (goms pa) have the same meaning.[d]

Turning to the third dictionary, the relevant entries are in the first volume of the Bod rgya tshig mdsod chen mo, namely in the Stod cha. The entry for goms pa is in two parts:

(1) Learning; repeatedly reviewing the knowledge in hand, one becomes a pandit; the manner of conducting livelihood; newly practicing. (2) familiarity in becoming enlightened; practice of the good; practice of the bad; having trained many times, to become an expert.[c]

The entry for sgom pa is also in two parts:

(1) either bsgoms pa, bsgom pa, or sgoms; to familiarize the mind again and again with the meaning of pondering; practice of samādhi; practice of forbearance. (2) the knowledge of means habituated in mind; one of the respective three of the theory-systems, namely, views, conduct, and pondering (sgom); having dwelt in one-pointedness of mind, to cast pondering (sgom) [upon the meditative object].[f]

For bsgom pa, this dictionary has: sgom pa’i ma ons pa, “future (tense) of sgom pa.” This is the interpretation of the ‘b’ prefix as a sign of future tense. Thus bsgom pa is the culmination of sgom pa. For bsgoms pa it has: sgom pa’i ’das pa, “past (tense) of sgom pa.” For sgoms, it has: sgom pa’i skul tshig, “imperative mood of sgom pa.” Apparently, it is the intention of this imperative mood to be in present tense.

Some of the foregoing usages are illustrated in verses of Dharmakīrti’s Pramāṇavārttika, Pratyakṣa chapter, the Tibetan versions.
k.29 This appearance on it as a formation, or the apprehension of the external entity as real—is a delusion, manifested by repeated practice (goms, S. abhyāsa) of views for immemorial time.[g]

k.284 Even when one regards the non-genuine ‘totalities’ of earth, etc. as uncleanliness, they clearly appear and without (using) discursive thought, manifested by the power of having contemplated (bsgoms pa, S. bhāvanā).[h]

k.285 Therefore, whether it be the genuine or the non-genuine which one has contemplated (bsgoms gyur pa), when one perfects the pondering (sgom pa, S. bhāvanā) (or, cultivation), it is the result of the clear non-discursive mind.[i]

k. 286 Here, whatever be the non-deception like the previously explained given thing, we claim it to be the authority of perception arisen from what was pondered (bsgoms byun, S. bhāvanāja). The rest is distorted [e.g., the uncleanliness, the ‘totalities’ of earth, etc.].[j]

The foregoing should clarify some of the usages of the terms in Kloṅ-rdol Bla-ma’s passage.

NOTES

1. M. G. Dhadphale, Synonymic Collocations in the Tipiṭaka: a Study (Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, India, 1980).


4. Takashi Hirano, An Index to the Bodhicaryāvatāra Pañjikā, Chapter IX (Suzuki Research Foundation, Tokyo, 1966).

5. Cf. Buddhist Insight; Essays by Alex Wayman, ed. by George R. Elder (Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1984), pp. 338–39. The Sanskrit for ‘dren mo is saṃbhīnna; for so so is abhinna.

6. The Geshe Chos-grags dictionary is well known; I have the original Lhasa edition in two volumes with Tibetan paper, the edition published in Peking with Chinese translation, and the North India reprint of the Tibetan in a Western-style book. The Jampa Chogyal dictionary was published in 1969 by the Jayyed Press, Delhi. The Bod rgya tshig mūsod chen mo in three large volumes is a recent committee publication at the Mi-rigs-dpe-skrun-khaṅ, Peijing, with Chinese translations of the Tibetan definitions.
7. Cf. Alex Wayman, translator, *Calming the Mind and Discerning the Real;* Buddhist Meditation and the Middle View, from the *Lam rim chen mo* of Tsoṅ-kha-pa (Columbia University Press, New York, 1978). The two Tibetan terms are used for the two main sections of Buddhist meditation: the ’jog-sgom for ūg-gnas (S. śamatha), “calming (the mind)”; the dpyad-sgom for lhag-mthoṅ (S. vipaśyanā), “discerning (the real).”

The Tibet Society

MINUTES

20th Annual Membership Meeting
April 10, 1987
Boston Sheraton, Boston, Massachusetts

The meeting was called to order at 8:10 p.m. by Elliot Sperling. Kathleen Connors was appointed secretary, and Robert Service and Dennis Voaden were appointed to count ballots for the Board of Directors election. Larry Epstein, Richard Gard, and Hannah Robinson were elected to the Board.

Minutes of the 1986 annual membership meeting in Chicago were read and accepted unanimously, as well as the Financial Report, which stated that the balance for The Tibet Society as of December 31, 1986, was $10,101.91.

Professor Sperling announced that with the resignation of Christopher Beckwith as editor of The Journal of the Tibet Society (though he is being retained as an editorial advisor) and assignment of himself along with Dan Martin and Michael Walter as new editors, the Journal would be delayed, but is due to come out within several months. Also due for publication are papers delivered at the conference held in Bloomington in 1984, Beginning a Third Century of Tibetan Studies: A Conference Honoring the birth of Csoma de Koros in 1784. The volume, to be entitled Silver on Lapis, will be published in commemoration of the 20th anniversary of The Tibet Society, Inc., with a reduced price for members.

Professor Sperling called for questions on old or new business. A visiting journalist writing on the Lhamo dance troupe from Lhasa asked for comments from anyone who had seen their performance. One couple reported that they had seen the troupe in St. Louis, where they had been well-received. One person, also a member of the Asia Society, had elected not to attend the show at the Asia Society in New York. Another stated that the Tibetans who had seen the performance did not find the dance to be authentic, nor could they understand the dialogue. The Village Voice had reported that the troupe had heavy Chinese influences, and another article on the subject was due to be published soon by The Wall Street Journal.
Hannah Robinson then reported on the Union Catalogue for Tibetan Language Materials in North America that she and Michael Walter were working on, and asked for input on the cooperative project, which she categorized in three phases: First, to collate the PL480 materials, which Mr. Walter had estimated as 5,000 bibliographical items, to be made into microfiche and book form. Contents of the collected works were then to be catalogued separately, with 100,000 items broken into five divisions for publication. The catalogues would be sent to all librarians for the addition of any missing items. Ms. Robinson wrote a grant proposal for $1,000,000 and asked for suggestions on subject headings for the sake of cohesiveness. A comment was made that since PL480 contained mostly liturgical materials, separate items needed to be printed with their general headings (using the metaphor of “arias from operas are useless without the operas cited”) and that a device must be invented that permits cross references and analysis and which brings coherence to the cycle.

Professor Thubten Norbu reported a paying membership of about 300, including international members and institutions, and 1000 Newsletters sent to subscribers. He then thanked everyone for attending and thanked the secretary and ballot counters for their assistance. The meeting was adjourned at 8:44 p.m. Richard Kohn announced that his film, “Lord of the Dance,” was to be shown that evening.

Kathleen Connors
Secretary pro tempore
The Tibet Society, Inc.

FINANCIAL REPORT

January – December, 1986

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balance (Dec. 31, 1986)</td>
<td>$10,101.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate of deposit interest</td>
<td>485.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment checking interest</td>
<td>246.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership</td>
<td>4,265.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donations</td>
<td>2,085.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>273.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales: Bulletin and Journal</td>
<td>143.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$17,599.65</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EXPENSES:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Supplies</td>
<td>180.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postage</td>
<td>844.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulk mailing fee</td>
<td>50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulk mailing permit</td>
<td>50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books, Publications, Posters</td>
<td>6,582.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petty Cash</td>
<td>218.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filing fee: Sec. of State</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box Rent</td>
<td>53.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bursar’s Account</td>
<td>664.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL EXPENSES</strong></td>
<td><strong>$8,653.81</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Balance in Checking (December 31, 1987) $ 945.84

Savings $ 8,000.00
The Journal of the Tibet Society is a scholarly periodical devoted to all areas of research on Tibet and regions influenced by Tibetan culture, including the arts, astronomy, geography, history, linguistics, medicine, philosophy, religion, the social sciences, and other subjects. Publication in the Journal is open to scholars of all countries. The languages of the Journal are English, French, German, and Tibetan. The editor welcomes the submission of articles, brief communications, and books for review, which deal with Tibet or the Tibetan cultural realm.

Tibetan may be transliterated by contributors in accordance with any of the standard scientific transliteration systems generally accepted. The following rules must be observed, however:

1) Absolute consistency must be maintained, except when quoting previous writers’ works, in which case the system found in the quoted original must be retained in the quotation.

2) If any capitalization is necessary, only the first letter of any word may be capitalized, e.g., Dpal-Ldan, and not d’Pal-Ldan., the exception being that in words beginning (in transliteration) with a non-alphabetic diacritical mark—such as the apostrophe—the following letter is to be capitalized, e.g. ‘Jam-dpal.

3) The type font currently available to us includes the following diacritical marks and special letters: ’ " " ‘ ’ ā ĕ ē ě ē ň ĉ. (A complete Greek font is also available.) It is therefore desirable for all translation, whatever the system, to restrict itself accordingly.

Transcription of other commonly used languages with non-Latin scripts is to be done according to the following systems:

Arabic: ٠ ١ ٢ ٣ ٤ ٥ ٦ ٧ ٨ ٩ ح خ س ش ص ث ج خ ف ك ل م ن ه ي ي

The article should always be transcribedāl- (or Al-), and diphthongs should employ w and y (instead of u and i) as second elements.

Chinese: The Wade-Giles or Pinyin systems.


Mongol: The system found in N. Poppe, Grammar of Written Mongolian, Wiesbaden, 1954.

Russian: а б в г д е ж з и й к л м н о п р с т у ф х ц ш щ ъ ы ю я

Sanskrit: The system adopted by the 10th International Congress of Orientalists (Geneva, 1894).

Manuscripts should be typed on white bond paper, double-spaced, with wide margins on all sides. Notes must also be typed double-spaced, consecutively numbered, on a separate page or pages at the end of the manuscripts (not at the bottom of the page). Please submit a neat, finished manuscript. The original copy should be submitted. Authors must retain at least one copy of their manuscript. It is necessary that all errors be corrected on the galleys, which should be returned immediately.

All quoted passages of Tibetan more than a few words in length can be noted in the article text with a number (such as a line-reference to the original source) in square brackets—e.g.: [8.1]—and then written or typed out in a Tibetan print-style script (dbucan) on a separate page or pages. These passages will be printed in Tibetan at the end of the article. In other words, the original Tibetan of such passages will not appear in translation in the body or notes of an article, but will appear in Tibetan script alone, at the end of the article. (For examples, please see the articles H. Uebach and A. Wayman in Volume I. The same method is to be followed for citations of Chinese words or Japanese words containing ideograms, which unless very well known should generally be provided. For example, please see the article by J. Kolmaš in Volume I. For certain kinds of studies, this procedure may not be feasible, in which case exceptions might be made.