Silver on Lapis
Tibetan Literary Culture and History

Edited by
Christopher I. Beckwith
SILVER ON LAPIS
The Tibet Society
Twentieth Anniversary
Celebration Volume

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TIBETAN LITERARY CULTURE AND HISTORY

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The Tibet Society
BLOOMINGTON
1987
SILVER ON LAPIS
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THE TIBET SOCIETY
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Preface

This volume is the product of a conference entitled "Beginning a Third Century of Tibetan Studies," which was held at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana, April 17-19, 1984, in commemoration of the two hundredth anniversary of the birth of Alexander Csoma de Kőröš. The conference was organized by the Tibetan Studies Program of the Department of Uralic and Altaic Studies at Indiana University. In addition to the authors of the papers presented here in revised and greatly expanded form, Samuel Grupper of Chicago, Katsumi Mimaki of Kyoto, and David S. Ruegg of London read papers; several other scholars also attended, including the Tibetologists Braham Norwich of New York and Michael Walter of Bloomington.

The present volume is published on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the Tibet Society in 1967.

C.I.B.
Acknowledgments

The editor would like to thank Professor Denis Sinor, Director of the Inner Asian and Uralic National Resource Center (located at Indiana University, Bloomington), and Professor György Ránki, Hungarian Chair Professor in the Department of Uralic and Altaic Studies, for their sponsorship of the stimulating conference which has resulted in this collection of papers. Thanks are also due to the Tibetan Studies Program in the Department of Uralic and Altaic Studies for assisting in the publication of the present volume.
HISTORY
The Tibetans in the Ordos and North China
Considerations on the Role of the Tibetan Empire
in World History

CHRISTOPHER I. BECKWITH

Current opinion among most orientalists with regard to the Tibetan Empire is dominated by the notion that while Tibetan culture was strongly influenced by neighboring civilizations—Indian, Chinese, Iranian, and Central Asian—the Tibetan expansion did not have any lasting effect upon the history of Asia. Thus the idea that Tibetan history is irrelevant for world history—an idea with different origins, to be sure—continues to be reinforced, even by Tibetologists. On the other hand, most historians of Tibet, Mongolia, and the Manchus, as well as a few Sinologists, agree that a thin veneer of later Tibetan Buddhist culture came to be spread across northeastern Eurasia beginning in the Mongol Empire period, and expanded again in the Manchu period. The present paper is an attempt to revise the above conclusions in the light of recent research.

After the outbreak of the An Lu-shan Rebellion in T’ang China in 755 A.D., the Tibetans took advantage of the resulting Chinese military weakness to recapture a vast stretch of Tibetan territory that had been occupied by the T’ang during the preceding two or three decades.¹ They did not stop at their old borders, however, but—perhaps seeking revenge—pressed on deeper into China, where they captured the capital, Ch’ang-an, in December of 763.² It is not often appreciated that the eastern border of the Tibetan Empire then stayed fixed for a century at a point only a short distance to the west of the Chinese capital. This was the cause of constant worry to the T’ang, since the Tibetans could and often did threaten the capital more or less at will. More important than this, however, is the fact that at the same time Tibet also controlled a vast territory further to the north and northwest of Ch’ang-an, the borderlands between the northern steppes and the traditional Chinese realm south of the Great Wall. This Tibetan military domination of the southern Ordos and neighboring regions of northwest China during the late eighth and early ninth centuries seem to have had a long-lasting effect on the history of East Asia.
The Tibetan capture of Liang chou in 764, and the consequent T’ang loss of Ho-hsi tao to Tibet meant that the direct routes from China to Central Asia (and, thus, the Western world) were all in Tibetan hands until nearly the end of the T’ang dynasty. Japanese historians have long ago noted the significance of this fact. In an article published in 1956, K. Nagasawa argues that this event was a major turning-point for the history of East-West trade because, he says, the Tibetans held onto Liang chou long after the rest of their Empire had broken up, and furthermore the Tanguts inherited the same area of control from the Tibetans, and kept it even longer. Tibetan control of the area meant—according to Nagasawa—that the bulk of T’ang China’s silk exports had to go west via the so-called “Uighur route”: from North China via the Ordos or T’ai-yüan (in Ho-tung, present-day Shansi) to Chung Shou-hsiang ch‘eng (the “Middle City for Receiving Submission”), which was located just north of the great bend of the Yellow River. From there the route passed northward to the Uighur capital on the Orkhon, and thence westward to the Arab caliphate. Although Nagasawa’s interpretation is basically correct, the story is somewhat more complicated, and his conclusions should be modified. In addition, while the debilitating effect on Tibet of the protracted warfare with the Uighurs and Chinese has been duly noted by nearly all writers on the subject, the effect of the same warfare on the Uighurs has received little attention. The Tibetan Empire’s movement northward from Ho-hsi into territory once under the influence of (or actually controlled by) the Turks—the area from Hami to the Ordos—on the one hand had a great impact on the fate of the Uighur Empire, and on the other helped lay the foundations for the Tangut Empire. The eventual results of these changes were indeed of fundamental importance for later East Asian history.

The Tibetan expansion into the Ordos region seems originally to have been merely an extension of campaigns into the area about Ch’ang-an and into Kansu, along the Silk Road into Central Asia. Through constant use of the Yellow River routes, the Tibetans ended up in an excellent position to raid the prefectures along the Great Wall, both north and south of it. They did so regularly: south from 763 on, and north from 778 onward. Most of the raids included large contingents of Tanguts, T’u-yü-hun, and others along with the Tibetans. Although the Chinese had settled some Tanguts and T’u-yü-hun in Kuan-nei and across the Wall in the southern Ordos—in order to keep them away from their former Tibetan overlords—the Tibetan army apparently brought new contingents of these peoples with them from northeastern Tibet. After the Chinese refused to honor the T’ang’s part of the bilateral agreement of 783-784 concerning payment to Tibet for military assistance against the rebel Chu Tz’u and his Uighur allies (which Tibetan assistance was decisive in the rebels’ defeat), the Tibetan army of Žan Rgyal-btsan again entered to attack the prefectures to the near northwest of the capital district. When this
move was blunted, he turned northward to begin a campaign of conquest in the southern Ordos. On or about December 10, 786, Yen chou was taken and garrisoned;\textsuperscript{13} by December 26 of the same year, Hsia chou, Lin chou, and Yin chou were likewise taken.\textsuperscript{14} The T’ang was duly alarmed; when Žaṅ Rgyal-btsan suggested a peace treaty, the Chinese snapped at the chance. By the summer of 787, everything was set for a treaty to be signed at P’ing-liang. But the Tibetans then turned the tables on the Chinese on July 8, 787, by capturing and carrying off a great number of the T’ang generals and other attendants sent to the intended treaty-signing ceremonies.\textsuperscript{15} Immediately afterward, his goal largely accomplished, Žaṅ Rgyal-btsan ordered the Ordos fortresses destroyed and the garrisons withdrawn.\textsuperscript{16} So ended the first period of Tibetan forays into the Ordos proper.

The next stage followed almost without a pause. During the Tibetan-Uighur war over T’ang-held Beshbalîq (Pei-t’ing, near present-day Urumchi) the Uighurs attacked and defeated the Tibetans at Ling chou (present-day Ning-hsia).\textsuperscript{17} After the Uighurs captured (not, as often stated, “recaptured”) Beshbalîq from Tibet in 792, they pressed the Tibetans southwards, capturing from them Qocho (Kao-ch’ang or Hsi chou, in the Turfan Depression) in the same year.\textsuperscript{18} The Tibetans, who apparently still held Hami (I chou), counterattacked—recapturing Liang chou and eventually pushing the Uighurs back to Qocho in the West. Tibet also sent armies again into the Ordos region. Although in 808 the Uighurs were able to take Liang chou and possibly hold it for a short time,\textsuperscript{19} the Tibetans responded in the following year by sending 50,000 cavalry to attack an Uighur embassy on its return home from China, somewhere beyond P’i-t’i Spring (located north of Hsi Shou-hsiang ch’eng, the “Western City for Receiving Submission”).\textsuperscript{20} Tibetan pressure on the Uighurs’ most critical lifeline was such that in 816 a Tibetan raid is said to have reached a point only two days’ journey from the Uighur capital, Ordubaliq (now known as Karabalgasun).\textsuperscript{21} Tibet kept up the pressure, to the point where the Uighurs felt the need to boast to the Chinese in 821 that not only would they be able to protect the T’ai-ho Princess on her way to the Uighur capital in Mongolia, but they would even send out 10,000 cavalry via Beshbalîq and 10,000 via An-hsi, to push the Tibetans back.\textsuperscript{22} In fact, however, the Uighurs sent at most 3,000 men to the Chinese border near Feng chou, and there is no record of any actual Uighur move against the Tibetans at this time. Moreover, it was undoubtedly only due to the conclusion of the Sino-Tibetan peace treaty of 821-822, and the Sino-Uighur and Tibetan-Uighur accords of the same year, that the Tibetans did not continue their raids in the Ordos region.\textsuperscript{23} It is clear from these events that Tibetan influence then extended across the southern Ordos and the neighboring area south of the Great Wall, southwestward throughout the whole of Kansu and Ho-hsi, and westward as far as Hami and Qocho. With the conclusion of the new treaty,
the Tibetan military presence was theoretically restricted to the parts of that territory which were under actual Tibetan administration in 821. Finally, between 849 and 863 most of the Tibetan-ruled areas outside present-day ethnic Tibet were lost.24

The most important immediate effect of the nearly century-long Tibetan presence in the Ordos and North China was the movement of a great number of people from areas further west or south into the borderlands of the northern steppe. Some of these people had fled from Tibetan control and had been moved by the T'ang in order to keep them away from Tibet. Such were most of the T'u-yü-hun and Tanguts, moved in the seventh century,25 and the Sha-t'o Turks, moved in the early ninth century.26 The Sha-t'o and T'u-yü-hun were soon moved across the Yellow River to the East into what is now Shansi and Hopei,27 where they were eventually to become power brokers in Chinese dynastic politics, to help set geopolitical patterns followed by a long succession of northern Chinese dynasties. The Tanguts, however, unlike the T'u-yü-hun and (ultimately) the Sha-t'o, seem normally to have retained a close working relationship with the Tibetan Empire during its period of domination over them, and many Tanguts, remnants of the Tibetan armies, were apparently more recent arrivals from their homeland in the northeastern marches of Tibet. Together with some Tibetans who stayed behind, they continued to be active as rebels, bandits, or raiders of one kind or another, long after the conclusion of the international peace of 821-822 and the cessation of imperial Tibetan military activities in the area. The Tanguts' power grew proportionately as that of the T'ang declined, so that by the end of the latter dynasty they were for all practical purposes independent. The Tangut Empire established in the eleventh century—with a Chinese-style dynasty later known as Hsi-hsia—was territorially more or less a reincarnation of the former Tibetan zone of influence there. The Tangut Empire lasted until its conquest by the Mongols in the early thirteenth century.

The presence of the Tibetan Empire (and later the Tangut Empire) in the lands bordering northwestern China had several far-reaching consequences. One of these was the redirection of international trade: caravans to or from China were forced either to go through Tibetan territory or to go around by a very circuitous route through Uighur Mongolia, and so westward.28 (Seaborne commerce was not affected at all, except to be encouraged.) Another, perhaps more dramatic, effect of Tibet's movement northward was its impact on the Uighur Empire. Tibet's military presence in Ho-hsi and the neighboring regions helped to separate Mongolia from Jungaria; thus, with simultaneous Tibetan pressure on both the southern Mongolian steppe and the more fertile and prosperous western part of their empire, the Uighurs ended up divided, apparently keeping the bulk of their forces in the West. The Tibetan raids into Mongolia were thus designed to divide, or at any rate had the effect
of dividing, the Uighur Empire into two separate halves. The eastern part, with the capital, Ordubaliq, was eventually weakened to the extent that it was easily crushed by the Kirghiz in 840.29 The destruction of Uighur rule in Mongolia meant the nearly total elimination of Western religious pressure, in the form of Manicheism, on Eastern Eurasia. The remaining followers of Manicheism, and the numerically weak Nestorian adherents, ultimately disappeared in the face of another world religion, South Asian in origin, namely Tibetan Buddhism.

Of all the effects of the Tibetan expansion, the most long-lasting was not primarily political, but rather cultural in nature. The late Tibetan Empire, its successor states in Liang chou and Siling (Hsi-ning), and finally the Tangut Empire, were all strongly Buddhist states, powerful enough to resist the encroachment of Islam. They allowed Buddhist clerics to pass through and cross-fertilize, for example between Tibet and the Buddhist centers on Wut'ai Shan.30 Tibetan Buddhist activity in the colonial areas just outside Amdo continued uninterrupted after the breakup of the empire. There was quite a lot of Tibetan Buddhist activity in Sha chou (Tun-huang) even after the Chinese recapture of the city in 848;31 Tibetan monks were to be found in the armies of the two feuding ministers Blon Guñ-bzer and Žañ Pi-pi, at the same time.32 In addition, it is well known that the refugee monks from Central Tibet, including eventually Lhaluñ Dpalgyi Rдорje, the assassin of Glañ Darma, settled in Amdo after attempting to preach to the Uighurs (presumably those in Kan chou); this presupposes no open hostility to Buddhism in the area. The Tibetan successor-states in Liang chou and neighboring areas were pro-Buddhist. When the Tanguts finally occupied this region they simply continued to support an already long-established Buddhist church. Furthermore, Tibetan monks were quite active at the court of the Sung dynasty in China, where they assisted in the translation of several important Buddhist texts into Chinese. When the Mongols finally supplanted the Tanguts, they did not disturb the existing Buddhist establishment; on the contrary, they supported it as strongly as their predecessors had. A crucial fact of Tibetan-Mongol relations, one generally overlooked, is that Khubilai, the Mongol Great Khan and founder of the Yüan dynasty in China, was raised by a Tangut nursemaid33 and grew up in Tangut at the court of his influential cousin Ködän. There he met 'Phagspa Lama, and the Tibetan-Mongol cultural alliance was soon firmly in place. It is clear that the Mongol ruling class (at least) wholeheartedly accepted Tibetan Buddhism by the end of the thirteenth century.34

Tibetan culture thus was enabled to expand uninterrupted northeastwards during the Tangut period and on through the Mongol and Manchu periods, with the eventual result that the dominant high culture of northeastern Eurasia, including (besides Tibet, Mongolia, Manchuria and parts of Siberia, and the southeasternmost corner of Europe) also parts of Northwest China
(mainly in Kansu) was Tibetan Buddhist culture, not Chinese culture. It is no accident that foreign accounts of eastern Eurasia written in the nineteenth century liked to refer to Tibetan as the "Latin" of what they called "High Asia"—meaning the vast area dominated by Tibetan Buddhist culture. Chinese and its attendant literary culture was, like Hindustani in India, the province of native scholars, with very few exceptions, whereas Tibetan was the common language of scholars from Tibet, Mongolia, Siberia, Manchuria, and China. One could hardly imagine this happening if the late Tibetan Empire, its successor states, and then the Tangut Empire—the latter a multinational state including Tibetans as one of its most important components—had not maintained a strong Buddhist bulwark against the powerful forces of Islamic expansion that were then eliminating Buddhism from East Turkistan.

In conclusion, the Tibetan Empire’s expansion into the Ordos and northwestern Chinese borderlands was merely the beginning of a much greater Tibetan Buddhist cultural empire that continued to spread from Tibet, eventually to dominate nearly the whole of northeastern Asia well into the twentieth century.

NOTES

1. The details of this struggle, and of the topic of the present paper, are properly the subject of a thorough book-length monograph. Here, primary-source reference will be made only to Su-ma Kuang, Tzu chih t’ung chien, 10 Vols. (Peking, 1956; repr. Taipei, 1979), abbreviated TCTC: the single most important source for T’ang- Inner Asian history, though the least utilized. The first T’ang armies in Tibet’s northeast fell in the twelfth month of 756; see TCTC, 219:7011. For citations of other sources, and a more detailed historical narrative (which omits most of the material on the present subject) see my forthcoming book, The Tibetan Empire in Central Asia: A History of the Struggle for Great Power among Tibetans, Turks, Arabs, and Chinese during the Early Middle Ages (Princeton, forthcoming), henceforth abbreviated TECA.

2. This followed the Tibetan capture of the whole of Ho-hsi and Lung-yu in the summer of that year (TCTC, 223:7146-7147) and the surrender of a Chinese official who helped lead the Tibetan army of over 200,000 soldiers (including T’u-yü-hun, Tanguts, and others) to the capital (TCTC, 223:7150-7157).


4. See Katsuotshi Nagasawa, "Toban no Kasei shinshutsu to Tô-Zai Kötsû, " Shikan, 46 (1956) 71-81. A number of articles in Japanese would appear (from the titles given in the bibliographies I have consulted) to be directly relevant to this question, as well as to the other problems I treat in this article. However, they have remained inaccessible to me.


6. In fact, it is likely that the Tanguts—intentionally or otherwise—prepared the way for the Tibetan advance by their raids, mainly in 760 and 761, into the very areas that the Tibetans occupied. See TCTC, 220:7060, 7066; 221:7093, 7096, 7097, 7100; 222:7105, 7113, 7114, 7119, 7122, and 7126.
7. Ibid., 223:7146-7147 et seq.
8. Ibid., 225-7251 et seq.
9. The Chinese sources unfortunately only rarely mention the other participants explicitly; see TCTC, 223:7150; 232:7496, 7501; 241:7774-7775, 7783-7785.
10. This is mentioned in, among other places, the gloss to TCTC, 220:7060.
11. Ibid., 231-7442; for details, see the discussion in TECA. It is notable that the Uighurs were actually at war with China, or there were very hostile relations between the two nations, quite often during the period of the Uighur Empire's existence, specifically, ca. 745-756, 764-765, 775-787; the Uighurs raided or threatened the border in 796, 813, 822, and 840. It was, nevertheless, deliberate T'ang policy to cultivate the Uighurs, probably because the Turks, unlike the Tibetan Empire, were no real danger to a united China; they were never able to penetrate very far into the country, nor hold any territory; moreover, they were separated from China by the Gobi.
13. Ibid., 232:7474.
15. Ibid., 232:7486-7487.
16. Ibid., 232:7889.
17. Ibid., 233:7524
18. See now the article by Tsuguhiito Takeuchi, “The Tibetans and Uighurs in Pei-t’ing, Anhsei (Kucha), and Hsi-chou (790-860 A.D.),” Kinki Daigaku kyóyóbu kenkyû kiyô, Vol.17 No.3 (1986) 51-68.
19. See TECA chapter six, for further details.
20. TCTC, 238:7660, 7666.
22. See the discussion in TECA, chapter six.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. TCTC, 220:7060, gloss.
27. Ibid., 237:7661.
28. On international trade during this later period, see the valuable article by Yoshinobu Shiba, “Sung Foreign Trade: Its Scope and Organization,” in Morris Rossabi, ed., China among Equals: The Middle Kingdom and its Neighbors, 10th-14th Centuries (Berkeley, 1983) 89-115. It is important to realize that the fragmented polities of the area encouraged international trade, and made it possible by providing numerous alternative routes. It is notable that one important route for East-West trade passed through the Ch’ing-t’ang kingdom in northeastern Tibet. See Shiba, pp. 100-102.
29. Interneic conflict within the Uighur Empire was primarily responsible for the collapse. Perhaps the Kirghiz, former allies of Tibet, merely succeeded in taking advantage of a situation created by the Tibetan strategists, who were finally unable to do the job themselves. For subsequent events, particularly the fate of the Uighurs who fled to China, see the unpublished dissertation of Michael Drompp, “The Writings of Li Te-yü as Sources for the History of T’ang-Inner Asian Relations” (Bloomingtont, Indiana University, 1986).
30. Already in the early eighth century under Mes Ag-tshoms Tibetan Buddhists are said to have established a connection with the Buddhist centers on Wu-t’ai Shan (Tibetan Ribo rsee lha), a mountain sacred to Mañjuśrī. According to an account in the Sba’ bzed connected to the material on the building of Samye—and therefore, it would seem, basically reliable—Sba Sañ-si visited Wu-t’ai Shan during a trip to China, and when he returned built a small temple, called Na Nhakhana, “Inner Temple,” in the imperial palace precinct at Bragmar. The temple was built “in the shape of Wu-t’ai Shan.” See C. Beckwith, “The Revolt of 755 in Tibet,” Wiener Studien zur
Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde, Heft 10 (1983) 1-16, p.13. For further discussion of Sañ-śi and his journey, see Jeffrey Broughton, “Early Ch’an Schools in Tibet,” in R. Gimello and P. Gregory, ed., Studies in Ch’ an and Hua-yen (Honolulu, 1983) 1-68, especially pp. 5-7 and notes. In 824, during the reign of Ralpacan, as is well known, Tibet formally requested the T’ang govern-ment for a map of the holy mountain; the request was granted. See P. Demiéville, Le concile de Lhasa (Paris, 1952) p.188 n.1.


32. See TECA for details and references.


34. See C. Beckwith, “Tibetan Medicine and Astrology at the Mongol Court,” Journal of the Tibet Society, Vol. 7 (forthcoming). It should not be overlooked that Tibetan Buddhism had two good chances to be established in the West as well, first through the strong patronage of the Mongol Ilkhans in Persia, and later through the patronage of the Jungars, whose Kalmyck descend-ants living on the European shores of the Caspian Sea still follow Tibetan Buddhism. The History of Ilkhanid-Tibetan relations—especially the question of the Tibetan bakhshis at the Ilkhanid court, and their influence on non-Buddhist religious beliefs and practices—is a potential gold-mine. Besides Tibetan material, there is much in Islamic sources, apparently some in Greek, and probably some in various other languages, waiting to be explored.
GLOSSARY

An-hsi 安西
An Lu-shan 安祄山
Ch’ang-an 長安
Ch’ing-t’ang 青堂
Chu Tz’u 朱泚
Chung Shou-hsiang ch’eng 中受降城
Ho-hsi tao 河西道
Ho-tung 河東
Hsi chou 西州
Hsi Shou-hsiang ch’eng 西受降城
Hsia chou 夏州
I chou 伊州
Kan chou 甘州
Kao-ch’ang 高昌
Kuan-nei 關內
Liang chou 涼州
Lin chou 麟州
Ling chou 靈州
Lung-yu 隆右
P’i-t’i 鴻鵠
P’ing-liang 平涼
Sha chou 沙州
Sha-t’o 沙陀
T’ai-ho 太和
T’ai-yuan 太原
T’u-yü-hun 吐谷渾
Wu-t’ai Shan 五嶽山
Yen chou 酉州
Yin chou 銀州
The Dynasty of Bzang-La (Zanskar, West-Tibet) and its Chronology—A Reconsideration

EVA K. DARGYAY

Introduction

The history of Ladakh, and of the dynasty ruling the territory surrounding Leh in particular, has long been the object of scholarly studies. Beginning with the brothers Schlagintweit, who came to Ladakh in the second half of the 19th century, and A.H. Francke, the Moravian missionary who became the pioneer of Ladakh Studies per se, there have been many scholars who devoted much of their endeavor to the exploration of “West Tibet”, most prominent among them Giuseppe Tucci, the first Tibetologist to examine the written records of this region, and his pupil L. Petech, who elaborated on the work of his teacher and who revised many of the statements made by A.H. Francke to bring them up to the state of the art, and most recently, D.L. Snellgrove and his pupil P. Skorupski.

Thus, it may seem that we are well informed regarding the chronology of the West Tibetan principalities, and we may ask what is the point of another study on this subject. Such doubt may be justified to some extent with regard to our knowledge of the Leh dynasty, but not with regard to the so-called “minor principalities” of this area, which stretch for thousands of square miles across the various mountain ranges of the Western Himalaya. Although the area might seem a small segment of the entire Himalayan arch, nevertheless, when travelling in the traditional way, either on horseback or by foot, it takes months to cross the mountains between Kashmir and Guge. How limited our knowledge of these “minor principalities” actually is was demonstrated by L. Petech in his recent article on the dynasty of Gu-ge.¹

In the present article I am going to investigate the dynasty of Zangla (Bzang-la), one of the small principalities located in the Zanskar (Zangs-dkar) valley, a southern tributary of the river Indus. The importance of the Bzang-la Dynasty cannot be measured by the extension of its dominion, which is by any standard insignificant (the domain never comprised more than several villages), but by the role the dynasty played as an heir to the Central Tibetan dynasty and its cultural and religious legacy. Even today the villagers of Bzang-la greet their sovereign as “descendant of Glang-dar-ma”. Illiterate though
they may be, they still cling to a strong feeling of historical continuity reaching back into the early centuries of Tibetan history. In a way, we may say that time became fossilized in this remote and almost forgotten mountain valley, thus making it an ideal object for scholarly investigations.

Above all, Csoma de Kőrös, whose 200th birthday we celebrate with this symposium, spent more than a year in the castle of the King of Bzang-la, the name of which is given as “Yangla” in Csoma’s correspondence. Dr. Gerard, a physician touring the Western Himalaya in order to vaccinate a part of the local population, met Csoma de Kőrös there. In a document preserved by the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Dr. Gerard describes the deprivation endured by Csoma while pursuing his studies in Bzang-la:

There he sat, enveloped in a sheep-skin cloak, with his arms folded, and in this situation he read from morning till evening without fire, or light after dusk, the ground to sleep upon, and the bare walls of the building for protection against the rigors of the climate. The cold was so intense as to make it a task of severity to extricate the hands from their fleecy resort to turn the pages.\(^2\)

Although Csoma de Kőrös himself was apparently not much interested in history, it seems suitable to re-examine on this special occasion the dynasty under whose protection he completed some of his most valuable studies.

Being less brave than Csoma de Kőrös, I stayed a few days in summer 1978 and two more weeks in 1979 in Bzang-la, where I gratefully accepted King Bsod-nams don-grub nam-rgyal-lde’s hospitality. This was part of two expeditions to Zanskar sponsored by the University of Munich, Department of Indian Studies, and financed by the Volkswagenwerk Foundation (Stiftung Volkswagenwerk, Hannover, West-Germany). My husband, a native Tibetan who was trained in the monasteries of his country before he had to leave it due to political developments, accompanied me, and it was this fact which opened many doors for me and put me in a somewhat privileged position enabling me to carry out the kind of research whose results I present here.

The present article is organized into three parts: Part 1 describes and examines a type of document called \textit{chap brjod}. They are to be found in Zanskar, where they were added to embellished manuscripts of Buddhist sutras in order to tell the history of the family ordering the copying of the sutra. The \textit{chap brjod} record, among other events, the presently ruling members of the royal house and name the most important figures of the monastery nearby as well. For this reason the \textit{chap brjod} is a contemporary document whose reliability is similar to that of an eye-witness report.

Part 2 will survey our knowledge regarding the history of the Bzang-la Dynasty as it was before the discovery of the \textit{chap brjod}, that is to say the
Zanskar Chronicle and the genealogy of the Bzang-la dynasty as published and translated by A.H. Francke and similar material.

In part 3 the various sources will be compared and suggestions for a redrafted chronology will be presented. Mainly I shall contrast the data derived from the *chab brjod* which I take as primary, i.e. contemporary historical documents, with those derived from "the historical works" which were written at a time much later than the events recorded.

Part 1: The *Chab brjod* of Bzang-la

Before I describe the individual documents photographed by me at Bzang-la in 1979 during the second Zanskar expedition as part of the "Ladakh Project", I shall introduce the type of document which we are talking about here. The name *chab brjod* was given to these documents by the natives of Zanskar, when I asked them what they called these records. This name may be understood as "declaration of might", in the sense of a genealogy recording the mighty deeds of a noble house. For mere convenience I prefer to call them donor chronicles, because these documents tell the genealogy and the history of a donor (Skr. dānapati, Tib. sbyin bdag) performing a meritorious deed generally for the benefit of his deceased parents, for purging his own evil deeds, and for the benefit of all sentient beings. Thus the donor chronicle ought to be understood within the framework of merit-making as a major means for proceeding on the Buddhist path to enlightenment.

The existence of these documents was unknown to me before I set out for Zanskar, and even then it took many months till I finally, just a few weeks before my final departure—and the beginning of winter—discovered them incidentally. As soon as I had learned of their existence I tried to photograph as many as possible, but the circumstances were more than adverse. First, the documents are owned by individual families who are proud of their ownership. This means that I had to deal with numerous families, some cooperative, but most initially hostile, when I approached them asking to be shown the documents. Secondly, the documents are, in the view of their owners, sacred texts, there being thus a significant reluctance to let me see and photograph them. Thirdly, as I had to visit each individual family, this meant a lot of walking, crossing rivers, renting horses, missing people at their homes, and searching for them while working in their fields. The photographing and recording was done in much haste, because the threat that the owner might reconsider his permission for photographing was always imminent. For this reason the technical quality of the photographs is not as good as it could be. Furthermore my photographic equipment was not tailored for recording documents, because I had not expected to discover such material.
Investigations in other parts of Ladakh, such as the Markha valley and the surroundings of Leh, have shown that the habit of adding a chab brjod to a newly copied sutra does not exist in these areas. From my conversations with the people outside of Zanskar I got the impression that the habit was actually confined to Zanskar proper. Occasionally some chab brjod could be discovered outside of Zanskar, either through marriage or other family ties.

The donor chronicles are composed according to a well established pattern which is only slightly modified in each individual case. In the following I shall outline the most common model found in the old chab brjod of Bzang-la. Inevitably the document starts with a praise to the lama and the Three Jewels (Buddha, dharma, sangha), including therein also the hierarchs and masters of a specific lineage and school of Tibetan Buddhism (chos lugs). In general the leading figures of Madhyamaka and Yogācāra in India are mentioned, followed by the early Tibetan masters of the Bka’-brgyud School and the Bka’-gdams, or Dge-lugs School. Only occasionally is Padmasambhava mentioned. The paragraph sometimes ends with a eulogy of the specific text to which the donor chronicle is attached.

The next passage records the beginning of the world and its order: from a whirl of wind the physical world evolves, while the sentient beings are descendants of the Gods of Clear Light. The centre of the world is Vajrāsana where Śākyamuni achieved enlightenment. From there one must cross the Nine Black Mountains in order to reach Mt. Ti-se. The river Indus originates from its western face and to the left of the river Indus, there is Zanskar.

After Zanskar, the author’s native land, has been located within a sacred cosmos (the hub of the universe is the place of Buddha’s enlightenment), the document records the presently ruling monarch’s genealogy. The ruler is described as the embodiment of a powerful, yet pious king. The sway of his power is untarnished, his morality beyond the faintest doubt. For historical studies this is the most valid paragraph within the entire document. In my subsequent study I will focus mainly on the data reported therein.

The paragraph following in the chab brjod praises the meritorious act, the motivation for performing it, and the participants. The meritorious act consists mainly in copying a Buddhist sutra (most frequently the Prajñāpāramitā), but also in casting bronze statues of Buddhist deities, or in painting a scroll. The motivation for such a deed is to dedicate the merit generated through this act to the benefit of the donor’s deceased parents, in some cases to ensure the prosperity of the living (and ruling) members of the family, to purge one’s own wrong deed, and in general to the benefit of all sentient beings. Usually a list follows, giving all the names of people who somehow contributed to the performance of this meritorious act.

Sometimes the scribe has added a sentence speaking of his own feelings and motivations. A short wish concludes the document.
This literary pattern is applied in all four donor chronicles recorded by me at the "new castle" (mPhags pa bstan 'byam) of the royal family of Bzung-la in summer 1979. I found the chronicles added to the Vajrachchedikā, Mdzang blun, and 'Dul ba, although in two cases the chronicles mention texts to which they were originally added which are other than those to which they are presently attached. But it was my impression that the collection of Buddhist texts housed in the shrine room of the "new castle" was in a state of disorder.

In the following I shall describe each chronicle briefly. Only those parts which are relevant to our examination of chronological and genealogical problems will be translated.

Chronicle issued under the Rule of king Khri-dpal-lde

The document starts with a eulogy of the Three Jewels, Shakyamuni’s deeds, and the most popular bodhisattvas (Maitreya, Mañjuśrī, Avalokiteśvara, and Vajrapāni), before referring to the compilation of Buddhist scripture and its most prominent specimens together with the masters associated with this task.

The masters who brought the light of the dharma to Tibet are commemorated in gratitude, after which the document refers to the early masters and hierarchs of the Bka’-gmdams school: Atiśa, Brom-ston, Rngog Legs (for: Legs-pa shes-rab), and Sras (?). The only other tradition named here is that of the Bka’-brgyud referred to with its prominent yogis, Mar-pa and Mi-la ras-pa.

The next passage introduces the reader to the dominant figures of Zanskar. First the royal house [of Bzung-lha] is praised as the scion of the illustrious Ikṣvāku family which traces its origin back to the first king to rule men, Mang-po’i bskur-ba. Secondly, the kings and ministers of Tibet who lit the lamp of the dharma in the darkness of their own country are commemorated. They are said to have established their people in happiness. Thirdly, the Dge-lugs tradition is praised as being manifest in Zanskar through some of [Tsong-kha-pa] Blo-bzang grags-pa’s outstanding disciples, such as Byang-sems Shes-rab bzang-po and Mdo-sde rin-chen and their present embodiment, Blo-bzang rnam-rgyal. They, together with their entourage of hundreds of thousands (!) of monks, are venerated.

The next paragraph describes the position of Zanskar within the cosmos, as already outlined above. The ruling house is introduced as follows:

In the land born from the centre, Zangs-dkar, the land of religion, at the vital point of the earth, there is the palace (read pho brang for kho rang) of Bzung-la. It is placed upon a seat of mountains which are known as an auspicious place, resembling a garuda with his wings wide-spread and baring his teeth and claws. This is the place where skillful scholars [trained] in the five disciplines emerge. e ma ho. To
this imperishable palace (read \textit{pho brang} for \textit{pho rang}) came Gnya'-khri btsan-po of the Šākya family due to the merit perfected by [the people of] Tibet. (ca. 4 syllables erased) Gradually from this [origin] came forth Skyid-lde nyi-ma mgon who, turning his horse toward Mnga'-ris, invaded the Upper Land. From him came the three lde, The three rulers of the Upper Land (\textit{stod kyi lde gsum mgon gsum}). But in particular, the great King Gshegs-lde came to Zangs-dkar whose son Seng-ge-lde established the royal throne. [He was] of a dynasty whose "golden wheel" was never interrupted in its course, and whose yoke of the legal code was never shaken off. The treasure-vas of prosperity was never disturbed. The realm of his power never shrank, like a garuda's wings. The mighty chos rgyal Khri-dpal-lde terrifies the enemies abroad like an iron meteorite from the sky, but with his dear kinsmen he is gentle like chinese silk (read rgyal mo dar for rgya dar). By virtue of the union of religion with secular [power] he protects his sons and subjects. At a time when his helmet was high, under the power of your gracious rule the drum of your fame resounded from the sky and the banner of your reputation unfolded over the mountain peaks. Ga-dun rgyal-mo, the pious wife of the donor, the embodiment of Tārā, beautiful and sweet like the personification of a goddess, venerates the [Three] Jewels and the Lamas. She is very gentle with the royal parents and the friends. She lives in harmony with the princes, minister, and magnates. She silences the mighty ones. She advises her entourage, servants, and sons.

After praising the meritorious deed the chronicle mentions the royal children and expresses the desire and hope that they may enjoy the same power and prosperity as their parents obviously did:

The best prince \textit{no no} Nam-mkha’ dpal-lde and \ldots (3-4 syllables erased), the best princess No-bu dpal-’dzom, may [they] gain authority over wealth [limitless] like the sky by virtue of their pure attitudes. May the realm of their might expand like a lake during summer! May their lives be firmly grounded like the Lord of Mountains (i.e. Mt. Meru)!

The chronicle then resumes the praise of the queen who is said to be assisted by slob dpon Blo-bzang, \textit{a pa} Dpal-’byor tshe-yang, and the monk, Dkon-mchog tshe-stan (sic).

Supplementary donations, consisting mainly of beer and "some money", were made by members of the royal family, all identified by the title \textit{no no}, by several monks, and by subjects of Pid-mo, a village on the western shore of the Zanskar river, opposite of Bzang-la. This village was under the jurisdiction of the Bzang-la kings till 1842 when the last one had to surrender to the
invaders from Jammu. The scribe has added a sentence saying that he had carried out his task in an appropriate manner.

*Chronicle Issued during the Rule of no no Nam-mkha' dpal-lde*¹¹

The document starts like the previous chronicle with a praise of the Three Jewels, Buddha Śākyamuni, and some of the most popular Bodhisattvas. The *Vinaya Piṭaka* is praised as the best collection of the Buddhist scripture, understandably when we know that the chronicle was attached to a copy of the *Vinaya*. The prominent "hearers" [of the Hinayana tradition], as well as the masters of the Mahayana are venerated, in particular for their contribution to the Buddhist canon.

The dissemination of Buddhism in Tibet during the era of phyi dar (starting with the 10th cent.) is presented as mainly the work of Atiśa, 'Brom-ston, Rngog Legs[pa'i shes-rab] and the Bka'-brgyud masters Mar-pa and Mi-las-pa. Somewhat out of context the chronicle mentions briefly the Indian dynasty, and in particular the Ikṣvāku family, and their descendants, the Tibetan rulers (this claim is in accordance with the view of Tibetan historians solely).

The next paragraph praises Tsong-kha-pa and those of his disciples vital in establishing the Dge-lugs tradition in Ladakh and Zanskar: Shes-rab bzang-po, Mdo-sde Rin-chen, but also Dben-sa-pa, his disciple Blo-bzang rnam-rgyal, and his present follower Sangs-rgyas rgyal-mtshan.

The cosmography in this chronicle is similar to that in the previous document. The praise of the Zhangla dynasty and its link with the Yar-lung dynasty are given in the same words as in the previous chronicle. However, the present chronicle inserts a sentence whose meaning is not clear to me. Therein Zanskar, the land of religion, is apparently compared to India, "the land of astrology"; to China, "the land of Ge-sar’s army"; and to Tibet, which is abundant in grain. For this reason, the document seems to say, this is the hub of the earth (sa'i tse ba), resembling the eternal knot. At this extraordinary place scholars trained in the five disciplines flock together like ordinary people at the market.

The final paragraph describes the donors and their meritorious act. The donors are no no Nam-mkha’ dpal-lde and his brother Blo-bzang chos-kyi rgyaltsan (sic). They had ordered the painting of four "golden scrolls" (gser thang) for the benefit of the deceased 'Bad-pa Rnam-rgyal; a snul gdung, perhaps a term for a kind of silver reliquary, was made for the deceased Ga-ga Dru-nga-pa Blo-bzangs (sic) rnam-rgyal. In commemoration of the royal parents, Ga-tun rgyal-mo and her husband (this is the exact wording of the document), Buddha statues were erected and volume U of the *Vinaya Piṭaka* copied.

The document concludes with a list of supplementary donors, among them being several clergymen with the title of dka' bcu ba and others characterized as dge slong. Among the laypeople a certain "Hu-sen" (for: Husain) should
be mentioned as he was obviously a Muslim. Donors from Tsha-zar, Stong-lde, and Sa-ni are listed.

*Chronicle Issued under the Rule of no no Tshe-ring rab-brtan*\(^\text{12}\)

The document begins with praise of the lama and the Three Jewels as the foundation of all good. The lay patrons of early Buddhism are mentioned as soliciting the prominent disciples of Buddha to teach them the sutras, and also the masters involved in compiling the Buddhist scripture. Next, Asanga and Nāgārjuna are referred to as the masters shaping the formation of religious practice, or Madhyamaka.

Thon-mi Bsam-bhota (sic) is praised for studying grammar, logic, metric, etc., with a South Indian brahmin, and he is also credited with introducing these disciplines to Tibet.

Turning to the political authorities, the text honours first the Indian kings, starting with praise of the Ikṣvāku family, and secondly the Tibetan kings and their ministers as patrons of the dharma, because they brought the light of the teaching to the darkness which hovered at this time over the Tibetan country.

Tsong-kha-pa is addressed as a second Buddha who intentionally chose to be born in Tibet at a time when the Buddha-doctrine existed there only as a name. Those who follow Tsong-kha-pa’s tradition are honoured and praised, starting with Byang-sems Shes-rab bzang-po and Mdo-sde Rin-chen and continuing to the present abbot Blo-bzang bkra-shis and his monks.

The description of Zanskar and the royal palace at Bzang-la are given as in the previous documents. Also, the royal ancestors, starting with [G]nya’-khri btsan-po and leading to “the great king” Gshegs-lde who is claimed to have established the monarchy in Zanskar, are praised with the same words as in the first document. With respect to the present ruler the chronicle says the following:

Because of the merit accumulated in previous existences no no Tshe-ring rab-brtan, who is faithful and whose heart is the doctrine, was born in the family of the religious kings (*chos rgyal*).

Together with the queen, whose name is not given, he installed a Buddha statue and 21 images of Tārā, as well as an icon of the White Protector (*mgon dkar*).\(^\text{13}\) As “vocal support” (*gsung rt'en*) of the buddha-nature they had the *Mdo mangs* copied. As their children are mentioned “the lovely daughter” (*gces ma*) Lha-dzom dbang-mo, the younger *no no* (whose name is not given), and “the lovely daughter” Tshe-ring dpal-'dzom dbang-mo. Their future fate is prayed for as follows:

May their rule spread as it did during the life of their parents, and may their lotus feet be firmly grounded as on diamond!

In performing this meritorious deed the members of the royal family were assisted by servants of their household, such as the steward (*gnyer pa*), cook (*byan byed*), and brewmaster (*chang ma*) who by tradition is a woman.
It is striking that the usual list of supplementary donors is missing in this document. The reason for this may perhaps lie in the fact that Tshe-ring rab-brtan was not fully recognized as king at this time, which may be concluded from his title no no commonly reserved for members of the nobility. But on the other hand he is praised in the same manner as the ruling kings usually are.

*Chronicle Issued under the Rule of King Don-’grub dpal-lde*¹⁴

The document starts with 15 verses praising the eminent objects of devotion and prominent Buddhist masters. Among them are mentioned Nāgārjuna, Asaṅga, Tilopa, Padmasambhava, Atiśa, ’Brom-ston, Dpal-grub Rdo-rje Lha, whose activity is said to have concentrated upon the southern Mon, Tsong-kha-pa and his disciples Byang-sems sher-bzang, Dpal-Idan shes-rab, and Mdo-sde rin-chen. Finally, Mkhas-bsum bzang-po is referred to in such a way that I assume he was the contemporary Dge-lugs hierarch in Zanskar.

The universe and its origin are described in the usual way and so is Zanskar and the castle of Bzang-ilha (such is the spelling of the place name in this document), located “at the summit of the centre of Zang-dkar’.

Beyond the mountains there are the ‘outsiders’, i.e. the enemies, while “inside”, between the mountains, there are the loving kinsmen.

[There live] the great ruler of men, Don-grub dpal-lde, who belongs to the lineage of ’Jam-sher [and has his ancestral] origin [in this] lineage, and ’Dzom-pa rgyal-mo who is an embodiment of Tārā. They perform the meritorious deed of writing the Śatasahāsrikā three times in gold for the benefit of their deceased father, Dpal-lde, and for purging their own misdeeds. Furthermore, they had erected a stupa of the byang chen type, and statues of the Buddha.

In performing these deeds the donors were assisted by a ma co ’Dzoms-rgyal bzang-mo, the cousin Chos-skyabs dpal-lde, and a ce ’Gu-ru rgyal-mo. Other participants were slob dpon Don-grub dpal-bzang, [a] khu Bsod-nams rab-brtan, no’o ’Dzom-lde don-bzang, and Rin-chen-’dzom. There the list of dignitaries seems to end and the remaining names belong to common people, subjects of the royal family, who had to contribute beer, etc., for the entire ceremony.

The four scribes, Rol-ma bkra-shis, Dkon-mchog skyabs-pa, Tshe-ring dpal-’byor, and another one, have copied the sutra in the way of the earlier scholar Khyung-po Gyu-khari.

Finally, the merit resulting from this act is devoted to all sentient beings, but in particular to this valley so that “men’s diseases and cattle’s diseases will be quiet’’.

Part 2: The Zangla Genealogy as Recorded in Historical Works

A. *The Chronology of the Bzang-la Ruler in the Zangs dkar chags tshul gyi lo rgyus*¹⁵
The chronicle records the great war during which the Tibetans seized Zanskar and destroyed all the native castles and fortresses. In the aftermath of this disaster Tibetan (?) clans occupied the habitable areas of Zanskar: the Zhang-rung clan settles in Dpa'-gtum, the Skya-pa takes the north (byang ngos), which might be interpreted as the territory of later Bzang-la, three clans (Lha-sa, Gung-blon, and Khyi-shang) occupy Ston-g-sde. The chronicle continues as follows:

Because many thieves and robbers have come at this time, and because of the great [difference between] the learned and the common people, from Gu-ge, [a part] of Spi-ti, the great King (lit. god) named Shakya thub-pa was invited and was chosen by all men of Zangs-dkar to be [their] king. They brought for him a queen from 'Bru-shal. Next year, when Yab-sgod had set out on a bridal tour, he abducted the queen, and the King Shag-thub went to heaven. Subsequently when the queen gave birth to a son she nourished him for as long as he was small. [When the boy was] at an age of five Yab-sgod said: this is not my son. Because he did not recognize him as his own [the son] went to Kashmir. [There he] lived among black men.\textsuperscript{16}

Due to the unusual behavior of an elephant, the young man is recognized as king and receives the name Seng-ge-lodor. He is married to a daughter of the ruler of Kashmir. The land of Ka-skra-bar\textsuperscript{17} is given to him where her resides henceforth. Three sons are born to him. The eldest succeeds his father on the throne of Ka-skra-bar. Blo-bzang-lde, the next son, is granted rule over the southern region [of Zanskar] on the other side of the Dpon-tse Creek\textsuperscript{18} up to Mar-khyim. Khri-nam-lde is given the land to the north, such as Tsa-zsar, Bzang-la, and what is on this side of the Me-ltse Creek.\textsuperscript{19}

Blo-bzang-lde has three sons: the eldest, known as Tshang-rgyal-po, receives more or less the same land that Blo-bzang-lde held previously. The following passage is distorted, so that one can only extract the names of the two younger sons: the middle one had the name Ra-dug rgyal-po, and youngest was known as Bde-mchog-skyabs. Subsequently, the document is mainly concerned with recording the rulers of Ste-sta and their relationship with Phug-thal, but it introduces the story of the founding of the later Phug-thal monastery in the following manner:

Rgyal-bsam Rin-chen-dpal-lde, son of Khri-nam-dpal-lde, and [his] mother 'Dzom-pa rgyal-mo, both at this time became patrons of Byang-sems [Shes-rab bzang-po]. They donated to him Dags-rkang, Kar-lang, and Tsha-zar as premises of the religion (chos gzhi). Subsequently, they established the great monastery as Tsha-zar.\textsuperscript{20}

\textbf{B. The Genealogy of the Bzang-la Rulers According to Zangs bzang la'i rgyal brgyud kyi dkar chags}\textsuperscript{21}
A.H. Francke reports that the existence of this document was first indicated to him by the Ven. Bakula Rin-po-che, abbot of Dpe-thub monastery near Leh. Later, a copy of the document was made by Joseph Tshe-btaran of Leh and sent to A.H. Francke together with its Urdu translation.

The BzangBrgyud (line 1/2) records that Seng-ge-lde was the son of Bde-gtsug-mgon, whose elder brother, Dpal-mgon, seized Ladakh, while he took possession of Zanskar. Later (line 6/7) it states that Nam-mkha’ dpal-lde’s elder son was Khri-dpal-lde, and his son in turn was Tshe-dbang rab-btaran dpal-lde. The remaining members of the royal house of Bzang-la as mentioned in the BzangBrgyud are of no concern at this moment.

C. The Genealogy of the Bzang-la Dynasty According to the Ma yig as recorded by the present bka’ chen Blo-bzang bzod-pa

The MaYig is obviously a paraphrase of the same document used by A.H. Francke’s assistant to produce the BzangBrgyud. As Blo-bzang bzod-pa is the de facto hierarch of Tikse monastery and all its branch monasteries in Zanskar, I assume that he had direct access to the original document, a privilege never granted to a foreigner. For this reason his version deviates in several points from the BzangBrgyud, thus supplementing it in a most welcome manner. This gives the MaYig almost the validity of another source. Therefore, not surprisingly, the MaYig presents Seng-ge-lde as son of Lde-gtsug-mgon, and Khri-dpal-lde as Nam-mkha’-dpal-lde’s son, while Tshe-dbang rab-btaran dpal-lde, elder son of Khri-dpal-lde, succeeded him on the throne of Bzang-la. King Don-grub tshe-dbang dpal-lde is introduced as mag pa, a husband chosen from another family in order to live with the princess of Bzang-la and to continue the lineage there, as her parents did not have a suitable son to succeed as king. His wife had the name Zla-mdzes dbang-mo.

BzangBrgyud mentions princess Zla-mdzes dbang-mo as the mother of three sons, but the document does not disclose who had been their father, whom the MaYig identifies as mag pa. This inconsistency raises of course the question of the fidelity of both sources. As the situation stands at the moment, I feel unable to make any assessment.

Part 3: A revised Genealogy of the Bzang-la Rulers

In this part I shall compare the information on the Bzang-la rulers as given in the donor chronicles with that derived from ZangLo, BzangBrgyud, and MaYig supplemented with further sources. For the sake of historical accuracy we have also to consider the information on the non-ruling members of the royal house of Bzang-la and not just those of the kings. This might give further clues with regard to the reliability of our sources.

The first era we shall examine is that of the establishment of the kingdom of
Zanskar. This achievement is commonly attributed to King Gshegs-lde (this is the name given in the donor chronicles). In ZangLo his name is spelled both Shakya thub-pa and Shag-thub. The situation is further complicated by the information recorded in the biography of 'Khrul-zhig Ngag-dbang tshe-ring (1717-1794), a famous tantric of the Bka'-brgyud tradition in Zanskar. There we read:

Later they (the “three brothers, the lords”) were succeeded by three Kings: Mgon-lde, Khri-lde, and Gshegs-lde. The elder [King], Mgon-lde, seized Gu-ge; the middle [son], Khri-lde, captured Mar-yul, i.e. Ladakh; the younger [son], Gshegs-lde, occupied Pu-rangs. Subsequently [they all] became known as kings. Later this succession lineage expanded [its influence] to Spi-ti. From Spi-ti the great King Shakya Thub came to Zangs-dkar, and he seized Dpal-gtum (sic). He also built a castle in the north [of Zangs-dkar] and he established monasteries in the north and south as well. His son, Seng-ge-lde, succeeded him in power. . . . Sen-ge-lde’s son was Tshe-ring dpal-lde, whose son was Seng-ge-lde alias Dzo-gi rgyal-po. At this time Tshe-ring dpal-lde was king . . .

Apparently the biography differentiates between an earlier King Gshegs-lde who captured Pu-rangs, and a later King Shakya Thub, who came from Spi-ti to Zanskar. The later king is said to be the father of Seng-ge-lde who in the chab brjod is presented unanimously as Gshegs-lde’s son. As the “three brothers, the lords” who are commonly accredited with the seizure of West Tibet, are well documented in the major historical works, we may easily recognize that the biography deviates significantly from the main stream of Tibetan historical writings. It seems to me that ZangLo has misspelled the name of King Gshegs-lde as Shak[ya] Thub-[pa], and that Ngag-dbang tshe-ring’s biography has attempted an unreasonable compromise, since all the donor chronicles—and I have documented more than 50 different chronicles—give the name of the ruler who became the first king of Zanskar as Gshegs-lde. At least some of the donor chronicles were written at a time closer to that when King Gsheg-lde lived than ZangLo, whose actual date of composition is still under discussion, or the biography written at the beginning of the 19th century. For this reason I am willing to give a higher degree of validity to the chab brjod than to the other historical works.

According to the donor chronicles, King Gsheg-lde “came to Zangs-dkar” as stated in the donor chronicles issued under the Kings Khri-dpal-lde and Tshe-ring rab-brtan. In the latter document he is accredited with establishing the monarchy in Zanskar, while in the other chronicles his son, Seng-ge-lde, is praised as the one who “founded the throne”. In donor chronicles which were not related to the royal house of Zangla the same statement is found. The
BzangBryud (line 1/2), however, knows him as the son of Bde-gtsug-mgon, who—for obvious reasons—must be seen as a member of the Ide gsum mgon gsum group of rulers so frequently referred to in the donor chronicles. It is noteworthy that the MaYig also records similarly. In other words, the Bzang-la donor chronicles and the genealogy of the Bzang-la rulers (in the two available versions BzangBrgyud and MaYig), although stored in the same castle and known to the same people, recorded the beginning of the royal house of Bzang-la in two different ways.

In the ZangLo Shag-thub’s son bears the name Seng-ge-ldor and one might speculate either that Seng-ge-lde and Seng-ge-ldor are two variations of the same name, or that because of the similarity in name two different persons were confused. I am inclined to believe that Seng-ge-lde and Seng-ge-ldor are two versions of one and the same name relating to one person, the son of Shag-thub, alias Gshegs-lde. The latter was a native of Gu-ge before he became the first king of Zanskar. There are various indications that during the 10th/11th cent. and perhaps for a short time afterwards the rulers of Gu-ge extended their influence also over parts of Mnga’-ris, which includes Zanskar.27

May we speculate that when in the aftermath of the breakdown of the Central Tibetan dynasty riots broke out in Zanskar, a scion of the powerful Gu-ge dynasty was solicited to come there to re-establish order and peace? This assumption is supported by the BzangBrgyud (line 1/2), where Seng-ge-lde’s father is given as Bde-gtsug-mgon, one of the “three brothers, the lords” who were the first Tibetan rulers to come as refugees to West Tibet to establish there a new principality after their family had lost its power over Central Tibet.28 Because of the dates derived from the chronology of the Central Tibetan dynasty we may surmise that these events took place in the 10th cent. Although we have no means to decide how correct the information is, nevertheless both streams of historical records, i.e. the donor chronicles and the ZangLo vs. the BzangBrgyud and MaYig relate the beginning of the Bzang-la monarchy with the 10th century. The historical situation prevailing at that time makes the recorded events highly likely.

Basically the confusion found in the historical works such as the ZangLo, BzangBrgyud, MaYig, and KhrulRnam is confronted with the unanimous record of the donor chronicles. The donor chronicles were—to my notion—never mutilated or copied, once they had been written and included in the main manuscript.

The first period requiring a re-examination is the time of King Khri-dpal-lde and Nam-mkha’ dpal-lde. In the donor chronicles Khri-dpal-lde is Nam-mkha’ dpal-lde’s father; however, in the BzangBrgyud this succession is reversed.29

First let me examine Khri-dpal-lde’s family. In the donor chronicle (79-33, 10/17) the queen is portrayed as closely associated with slob dpon Blo-bzang
[legs-pa] who heads also the list of supplementary donors. In the ZangLo a Blo-bzang-lde is endowed with land on the southern shore of the Dpon-rtse Creek, while his brother Khri-dpal-lde receives the northern part of the valley, i.e. the territory surrounding Bzang-la. The BzangBrgyud reports that Khri-dpal-lde had two sons, i.e. Tshe-dbang rab-brtan dpal-lde and zhabs drung Blo-bzang ye-shes rgyal-rtshes who became appointed as bla ma. Is he identical with slob dpon Blo-bzang? Rather not, but perhaps a relative of him. We might think that, slob dpon Blo-bzang legs-pa was his uncle and like him the nephew became a monk. Do we have here the same pattern as in the Gu-ge dynasty that the brothers share for a while the royal power till one of them joins the sangha and assumes a leading position within the Buddhist clergy? It seems plausible that the Blo-bzang-lde of the ZangLo is the same person as the Blo-bzang legs-pa of the donor chronicle. This would explain his close affiliation with the queen and his guiding and counselling her in planning the meritorious act. Furthermore, slob dpon Blo-[bzang] legs-pa is mentioned in the Vaidūrya ser-po as the second abbot of Stong-sde since the monastery became incorporated into the Dge-lugs School under bla ma Rgyal-rtshes-pa Klu-sgrub dpal-bzang-po.

In order to use this information as an aid for dating King Khri-dpal-lde we have to get an idea of when the monastery of Stong-sde was transferred to the Dge-lugs School. This event we have to conceive within the framework of the Dge-lugs School’s growth in Mnga’-ris in general. The VaiSer accredits Tsong-kha-pa’s personal disciple, Stod Shes-rab-bzang-po, a native of Ladakh, with this achievement:

In his own (i.e. Tsong-kha-pa’s) works it is said: To the right of the river Si-ta my teaching will grow. In accordance with this forecast the Venerable [Tsong-kha-pa’s] personal disciple, Stod Shes-rab-bzang-po founded the Stag-mo lha-khang at Khri-sa (modern Thikse).

Shes-rab-bzang-po is also mentioned as transferring the Dkar-sha (modern Karcha) monastery into the control of the Dge-lugs school. In his recent publication, Zangs dkar gyi rgyal rabs dang chos ’byung, bka’ chen Blo-bzang bzod-pa credits Shes-rab bzang-po, alias Bla-ma Byang-sems with establishing the Dge-lugs system in Stong-sde. Therefore we may conclude that the first Dge-lugs abbot of Stong-sde, Klu-sgrub dpal-bzang-po, was a contemporary with Shes-rab bzang-po. If this assumption is correct then we may surmise that Blo-bzang legs-pa lived a few years after Shes-rab bzang-po, who had seen Tson-kha-pa (1357-1419). Thus we may assume that Blo-bzang legs-pa was alive during the latter part of the first half of the 15th cent.

Based upon these considerations and assumptions King Khri-dpal-lde must be dated into the latter part of the first half of the 15th century. He seems to
have succeeded his father Rin-chen-dpal-lde who is mentioned as Stod Shes-rab bzang-po’s patron. This would make Rin-chen dpal-lde a contemporary of King Grags-bum-lde, acclaimed for re-establishing the Dpe-thub monastery (modern Spituk). At the same time as the first Dge-lugs strongholds were established in Upper Ladakh, i.e. in the vicinity of Leh, the ruler of Bzang-la in Zanskar did the same. King Khri-dpal-lde of Bzang-la had Buddhist sutras copied, religious icons established, and appointed his brother (?) as abbot of Ston-g-sde monastery which, we may assume, received royal endowments and protection at the same time. Thus, by and large the reign of King Khri-dpal-lde marks a culturally creative era in Zanskar.

King Khri-dpal-lde was succeeded by his son Nam-mkha’ dpal-lde. This succession is clearly stated in the chab brjod issued under the reign of King Khri-dpal-lde where his son, no no Nam-mkha’ dpal-lde and his daughter, Nor-bu dpa’-dzom, are named. This record is supported by the second donor chronicle found in the castle of Bzang-la, that is, the one issued under the rule of no no Nam-mkha’ dpal-lde and his brother Blo-bzang chos-kyi rg[ya]l-[m]ts[han]. Concluding from the title no no added to the ruler’s name, we learn that Nam-mkha’ dpal-lde had not yet been crowned at the time when the meritorious act was performed. The main reason for making the donations described in the donor chronicle was the death of ‘Bad-pa nam-rgyal and Ga-ga drung pa Blo-bzangs (sic) nam-rgyal. Both were obvious clergymen; the first of them I was unable to trace in any other source. But the latter is mentioned in the ZangLo as the brother of Nam-mkha’ dpal-lde; his name is given there as “drung pa Phug-pa Blo-bzang rgyal-mtshan,” which might indicate a certain affiliation with the Phug-tal monastery, although his name does not occur in the list of the Phug-tal abbots. But above all, the first anniversary of the death of Ga-tun Rgyal-mo, the king’s mother, caused her sons to perform an act of pious devotion in order to dedicate to her the generated merit. Ga-tun Rgyal-mo must have been an impressive character overshadowing her husband, King Khri-dpal-lde, who is only marginally mentioned in the donor chronicle. In the light of the chab brjod’s validity the references to King Nam-mkha’ dpal-lde found in the BzangBrgyud (line 1/2) and the MaYig become questionable.

The donor chronicle written at the time of Nam-mkha’ dpal-lde portrays him as emulating his parents’ meritorious deed when he performed his own pious act. This shows that King Khri-dpal-lde, and, perhaps even more so, Queen Ga-tun Rgyal-mo, were devoted patrons of the new religious movement dawning upon Mnga’-ris: the Dge-lugs School. Their son had then the sole intention of following his parents. In his attempt he could count upon the support given to him by his subjects, as the donor chronicle lists numerous additional donors, including residents of the villages of Tsha-zdar, Ston-g-lde, and Bi-shu (under Bzang-la jurisdiction until recent times), but also from the distant Sa-ni. Among the clergymen participating in the donation slob dpon
Blo-bzang leg-pa is mentioned again, thus documenting that he survived his royal brother, Khri-dpal-lde, for some years. Several others bear the titles bka’ bcu pa or dge sLong. Among the donors from the village Bi-shu a certain “Hu-sen” is named demonstrating that some of the people of Zanskar had adopted Muslim names at this time.

This event leads us to consider the first raid by Muslim Kashmiris into area bordering on Zanskar. The first campaign to cross the Zoji La, the main pass entering Ladakh, was carried out by Rai Madari at the turn of the 14th century. At this time his target was Baltistan, not Ladakh. When Sultan Zain al-Abidin (1420-1470) ascended the throne of Kashmir he personally led a raid against Tibet. Invading Ladakh, he sacked Sheh, and stipulated tributes from districts as distant as the Manasarovar. But we have to bear in mind that the regions of Mt. Ti-se and the Manasarovar Lake were connected with Ladakh by means of a popular pilgrimage trail leading through Zanskar. Many Buddhist monks and tantrics chose this path when they headed for areas in Central or Southern Tibet; later, in the 17th and 18th centuries, the patriarchs of the ’Brug-pa Bka’-brgyud-pa travelled along this route. May we assume that Zain al-Abidin’s army took the same trail? Was Hu-sen (Husain) of Bi-shu a representative of the Sultan, or was he merely a Zanskari who had joined the Sultan’s army and adopted a Muslim name? We may never know the precise circumstances which caused this man to change his name, but it seems certain to me that he was a Buddhist and therefore a Zanskari or Ladakhi, otherwise we would fail to explain his participation in a Buddhist devotional act. It is unlikely that a Muslim would contribute to the casting of Buddhist icons and the copying of Buddhist scripture. The fact that Zain al-Abidin’s campaign might have crossed Zanskar during the 3rd decade of the 15th century supplements independent reasons for dating the rule of Nam-mkha’ dpal-lde. If my assumption is correct that a Zanskari would adopt a Muslim name only after the successful execution of the first Muslim raid into Zanskar, then we ought to date the rule of Nam-mkha’ dpal-lde into the years after 1420, the year when Zain al-Abidin set out on his campaign. By and large, this would agree with the presumptive date derived from examining the donor chronicles. In the light of this data it seems plausible to date Nam-mkha’ dpal-lde into the early part of the 2nd half of the 15th century.

A.H. Francke’s suggestion that Nam-mkha’ dpal-lde be dated into the latter part of the 17th century (1650-1680) loses evidence through the data disclosed in the chab brjod.

The third chab brjod was issued under the rule of no no Tshe-ring rab-brtan. In the document Blo-bzang bkra-shis is mentioned as the present representative of Tson-kha-pa’s lineage in Zanskar. This is the sole hint in the entire document that helps us to date it tentatively. Among the abbots of Karcha monastery a certain Tsha-zar dka’ chen Blo-bzang bkra-shis is mentioned.
During his tenure the *bla brang* of Karcha was built. In Blo-bzang bzod-pa’s list the abbot under consideration was the 20th head of the Karcha congregation. The 9th abbot is said to be a contemporary of the Ladakh King Seng-ge nam-rgyal, dated by L. Petech to 1616-1642.\(^{41}\) Tempting though it might be, it would be unwise to use this information to calculate the approximate date of abbot Blo-bzang bkra-shis, because we do no know how long each abbot ruled: some might have been in power only for a few years, while others ruled life-long. Moreover, the compiler of the list admits that after the 14th abbot the succession becomes doubtful. The *VaiSer* mentions as last abbot “‘Zangsmkhar (sic) Blo-bzang rdo-rje’”\(^{42}\) corresponding to “‘Zangs-dkar-pa Blo-bzang rdo-rje’” of Blo-bzang bzod-pa’s list where he occupies position 14. In other words, Blo-bzang rdo-rje ruled a few years before 1698, the year when Sangs-rgyas rgya-mtsho completed his chronicle of the Dge-lugs School.\(^{43}\) Thus we may guess that abbot Blo-bzang bkra-shis ruled during the third or fourth decades of the 18th century. This assumption allots about 5 to 7 years to each of the 5 abbots ruling since Blo-bzang rdo-rje, whom I dated shortly before 1698.

Theses assumptions allow us to date *no no* Tshe-ring rab-brtan tentatively into the latter part of the first half of the 18th century. May we speculate that Tshe-ring rab-brtan was identical with Tshe-dbang rab-brtan dpal-lde who is mentioned in the *BzangBrgyud*.\(^{44}\) In this source, however, Tshe-dbang rab-brtan dpal-lde is recorded as the son of Khri-dpal-lde, who according to the donor chronicles has to be dated into the latter part of the first half of the 15th century. A Tshe-ring rab-brtan is also mentioned in a document issued from Ba-sgo in 1717, a date which would roughly agree with my present suggestion; however, I am unable to decide whether or not we deal here with the same person.\(^{45}\)

The last donor chronicle I recorded was issued under the rule of King Don-grub dpal-lde who is praised as member of the ’Jam-sher clan. The dominant clergyman of the Dge-lugs tradition at the time is given as Mkhas-btsum bzang-po. Because the lineage of the Dge-lugs school includes such figures as Mdo-sde rin-chén and Byang-sems Shes-rab bzang-po, we have to conclude that this donor chronicle was issued after the Dge-lugs tradition had become the dominant religious force in Zanskar; however, I am unable to trace in any other source the persons mentioned in this document. This makes it impossible for me to date King Don-grub dpal-lde at the present.

Based upon the data disclosed in the donor chronicles and the correlation references found in other sources, as discussed here, I tentatively suggest that the chronology of the Bzang-la rulers be modified as follows:

Rin-chén dpal-lde: Contemporary of Grags-pa ’bum-lde (beginning of 15th century); beginning of the growth of the Dge-lugs tradition in Zanskar. His son was Khri-dpal-lde.
Khri-dpal-lde: Ruled during the latter part of the 1st half of the 15th century. He was married with Gatun rgyal-mo. Both were devoted patrons of Buddhism. slob dpon Blo-bzang legs-pa, second abbot of Stong-sde, was the leading cleric and continued to marshall the religious activity at the court during the reign of the son Man-mkha’ dpal-lde as well.

Nam-mkha’ dpal-lde: His sister was Nor-bu dpal-'dzom, his brother Blo-bzang chos-kyi rgyal-mtshan, a cleric. The king’s sovereignty was even accepted in distant Sa-ni, not only in the villages in the vicinity of Bzang-la. He ruled supposedly during the first decade(s) of the 2nd half of the 15th century.

Tshe-ring rab-brtan: Tentatively dated into the latter part of the first half of the 18th century.

Don-'grub dpal-lde: No dating possible.

Conclusion

The fact that the donor chronicles record contemporary events limits the possibility that they falsify the names or positions of the presently ruling king, or alter the names of the members of his family. Therefore their validity is superior to that of the historical works (ZangLo, BzangBrgyud, MaYig, etc.). Furthermore, scrutinizing the events recorded in the historical works by comparing them with the records given in the donor chronicles, it becomes evident that the historical works are unreliable for chronological and genealogical studies.

Unfortunately, however, the historical works were in a way “public property”, kept in the archives of the monasteries or castles, while the chab brjod were private documents and thus - in general - not accessible to historians, either native or western. Thus the “historical works” issued a tremendous influence upon shaping our understanding of the history of the western Himalayan kingdoms.

It remains to be explained why the “historical works” present the events in the way they do. In order to address this problem, we may guess that the archival records constituting the sources for the local historians were in a state of utter disorder, which might not be surprising when we consider the many raids and campaigns devastating the area of the Western Himalayan principalities. We can only hope that through intensifying our search we shall discover more contemporary documents, thus enabling us to come to a more accurate understanding of West Tibet.
NOTES

3. Sendai Catalogue no. 16.
6. Archive no. 79-33, 10/17, which refers to the yet unpublished photographic reproduction of these documents.
7. Square brackets indicate that these words do not occur in the document and were added by me for contextual reasons.
8. The golden wheel is a symbol for the realm of the king’s power.
9. The treasure vase contains the grain used for forecasting the next harvest, but also used later as seed for the king’s field.
10. Every chronicle uses at this place the pronoun of the second person.
11. Archive no. 79-33, 18/20.
12. Archive no. 79-33, 8/9.
13. His iconographic appearance is described briefly by R. de Nébesky-Wojkowitz, Oracles and Demons of Tibet. London: Oxford University Press, 1956, p. 64.
16. ga rog is identical with pho rog according to my informant, the blon po of Karcha; both words mean black people.
18. Dpon-tse is the written form of the place name “Pensi” as in Pensi-La, the main pass leading into Zanskar from the Kargil area. Thus we may assume that Blo-bzang-lde was entrusted with land south of the creek coming down from the Pensi-La, i.e. the area of Ag-sho, Bra-dkan, etc.
19. Me-ltse’i grog-po is the name of the torrent running down from the mountains east of Bzang-la and flowing by beneath the castle of Bzang-la.
20. This monastery was known as Ba-mo dgon, which does not exist anymore. Information by Karcha Blon-po.
22. In Zangs dkar gyi rgyal rabs dang chos ’byung, in Tibetan, publ. in Benares, 1979, p. 9-10, hereafter MaYig.
25. For further details s. L. Petech, The Kingdom of Ladakh. Rome: S.O.R., 1977, p. 17. The rulers given in the biography as successors of the “three brothers, the lords” are in other sources identical with these three rulers.


33. F.N. *VaiSer* p. 225, line 6-7.


38. *VaiSer* p. 226, line 16.


44. A.H. Francke, p. 163, line 7.

45. L. Petech, *Kingdom*, p. 81, no. 9.
Some Notes on the Early 'Bri-gung-pa Sgom-pa

ELLIO T SPERLING

It is not unusual to find that general literature dealing with Tibet frequently portrays the country, prior to 1950, as a "theocracy." More often than not, this reflects an imperfect understanding of only the last stage in the development of Tibetan government, what popular writers like to refer to as rule by a "God-king." While the term "theocracy" is not very satisfactory as a description of Tibet's traditional polity, it is nevertheless true that during the course of many centuries civil authority in Tibet was exercised by several religious sects. The different forms of this sectarian rule are as yet not well studied, a state of affairs that can be attributed largely to the dearth of primary information which has so far been uncovered on the subject.\(^1\) It is with a view toward contributing something to what is currently known about sectarian rule in Tibet that the following brief remarks on the subject of the chief civil officials of the 'Bri-gung-pa subsect, the 'Bri-gung-pa sgom-pa, are presented.

The scanty amount of available source material concerning the sgom-pa illustrates one of the basic problems inherent in any attempt at studying the various forms of sectarian authority in Tibet. In the case of the sgom-pa we have no materials, Tibetan or non-Tibetan, which deal with them at any length. A simple list of the 'Bri-gung-pa sgom-pa is given by the 5th Dalai Lama.\(^2\) This was brought to light by Giuseppe Tucci and quoted in Tibetan Painted Scrolls,\(^3\) as was a similar list given by Sum-pa mkhan-po Ye-shes dpal-'byor in the Dpag-bsam ljon-bzang.\(^4\) Another list of sgom-pa is contained in a short anonymous work entitled Rgyal-rabs sogs Bod-kyi yig-tshang, which is found in the library of Rai Bahadur T.D. Densapa of Gangtok.\(^5\) Unfortunately these lists provide us with no factual details beyond the names of the sgom-pa. For further information we must rely largely on two 'Bri-gung-pa gser-’phreng: one by 'Bri-gung Kun-dga’ rin-chen\(^6\) and another by the Che-tshang sprul-sku Bstan-'dzin padma’i rgyal-mtshan.\(^7\) These works, however, deal almost exclusively with the lives of the 'Bri-gung-pa spiritual leaders (for the most part the abbots of 'Bri-gung) and the meager information on the sgom-pa which they provide is given in the form of scattered facts that are incidental to the larger mosaic of the life stories of the 'Bri-gung-pa hierarchs. It is from these short references, as well as from some further incidental material on the sgom-pa in another source, the Si-tu bka’-chems,\(^8\) that we must work.
The 'Bri-gung-pa date their beginnings to 1179/1180, when 'Jig-rt'en mgon-po (1143/1144-1217) began expanding the scale of the cloister built by Mi-nyag sgom-rings at 'Bri-gung.\(^9\) 'Jig-rt'en mgon-po's family, the 'Brug-rgyal Skyu-ra family, played a central role in the history of the 'Bri-gung-pa subsect, one which may be compared to the role played by the 'Khon family within the Sa-skya-pa sect.\(^10\) It is therefore not surprising to see that the Skyu-ra dominated the position of sgom-pa at its very inception. The origins of both the 'Bri-gung-pa subsect and its chief civil and military office are described briefly by the Che-tshang sprul-sku, who states that

In the Earth-Pig year (1179/1180), when ('Jig-rt'en mgon-po) was thirty-seven years old, he founded the great see, the glorious monastery of 'Bri-gung Byang-chub-gling itself . . . . The official, sgom-pa Rdo-rje seng-ge, was appointed to handle the [civil] affairs [of the subsect].\(^11\)

In this short passage we learn the essential function of the sgom-pa. However, the Che-tshang sprul-sku has here condensed the events of an extended process in the development of the 'Bri-gung-pa into two short comments, for the office of sgom-sku does not go back as far as the subsect's actual beginnings, as has been assumed. This point should be emphasized, for it then allows us a somewhat clearer image of the early 'Bri-gung-pa. In all probability the subsect did not appear on the stage of history with fully developed secular and material resources. Not surprisingly, it took time for the subsect's fortunes to reach the point where a full-fledged civil and military administration would be required.\(^12\)

The creation of the post of sgom-pa could only have occurred some decades after 'Jig-rt'en mgon-po established the 'Bri-gung-pa. We can conclude this on the basis of information about the first sgom-pa drawn from the biographies of the early 'Bri-gung-pa abbots. Therein we find that Rdo-rje seng-ge (whom all of our lists designate as the first sgom-pa\(^13\)) was a well-connected member of the Skyu-ra family. He was a first cousin to 'Jig-rt'en mgon-po, as his father, Dkon-mchog rin-chen, and 'Jig-rt'en mgon-po's father, Rnal-'byor-pa Rdo-rje, were brothers.\(^14\) Dkon-mchog rin-chen had three sons. The eldest was Dbon rin-po-che Bsod-nams grags-pa (1199/1200-1247), the second abbot of 'Bri-gung;\(^15\) the middle son was Rdo-rje seng-ge; and the youngest one was Gcung rin-po-che, Rdo-rje grags-pa (1210/1211-1278), the fourth abbot of 'Bri-gung.\(^16\) Taking the birth dates of Rdo-rje seng-ge's brothers into consideration, we can reliably state the Rdo-rje seng-ge was born between 1199 and 1210. It would have been impossible for him to have assumed the position of sgom-pa in 1179, or at any time during the twelfth century.

Although we cannot be sure as to the exact date of which Rdo-rje seng-ge became sgom-pa, it is clear that he was an important figure for both the 'Bri-gung-pa and the Skyu-ra family. Among his children were Thog-kha-ba Rin-
chen seng-ge (1226/1227-1284/1285), the fifth abbot of 'Bri-gung,\(^{17}\) and Mtshams-bcad-pa Grags-pa bsod-nams (1238/1239-1286) the sixth abbot.\(^{18}\) Another son, A-nu-rgyal,\(^{19}\) became the grandfather of the seventh and eighth abbots, Bcu-gnyis-pa Rdo-rje rin-chen (1278-1314)\(^{20}\) and Nyer-brgyad-pa Rdo-rje rgyal-po (1284-1350),\(^{21}\) and the great grandfather of the ninth, Nyer-gnyis-pa Chos-kyi rgyal-po (1335-1407).\(^{22}\) Rdo-rje seng-ge was, at the very least, an important factor in the physical continuity of the Skyu-ra abbotship of 'Bri-gung. Unfortunately we have no information on the manner in which political and military power was exercised by him. This simply underlines the fact that the meager information we have is culled from sources concerned essentially with the lives of the abbots of 'Bri-gung, who for the most part (to judge from the contents of their biographies) appear to have been quite removed from the military and political activities of the early sgom-pa, up through at least the fourteenth century.

Nevertheless, the military scope of the office of sgom-pa is well known from the source materials which we have concerning the later sgom-pa. We may surmise that Rdo-rje seng-ge presided over a military force; certainly his successor, Shākya rin-chen, the second sgom-pa, did.

Shākya rin-chen was the 'Bri-gung-pa sgom-pa at the time of the early Mongol incursions into Tibet. The 'Bri-gung-pa sources state that it was Shākya rin-chen who was captured by the Mongol commander Dor-rta in 1240, and who was released, so it is said, when he caused a shower of stones to fall from the sky.\(^{23}\) However one may interpret these accounts, this incident is significant in allowing us to see that it was the sgom-pa of the 'Bri-gung-pa, i.e., the military and civil leader of the sect, with whom the Mongols were dealing, not the abbot of 'Bri-gung (at that time Spyan-snga Grags-pa 'byung-gnas [1175/1176-1256]).\(^{24}\) This clearly highlights the military role of the sgom-pa during this period (one readily understands why the Mongol military forces would deal with the sgom-pa) and adds weight to the impression that the authority and influence of the sgom-pa were already considerable. We may reasonably conclude that the secular fortunes of the 'Bri-gung-pa had risen quickly following the subsect’s initial period of development, a period that had culminated in the establishment of a full-fledged civil and military bureaucracy in response to new exigencies. Shākya rin-chen was evidently a personage of influence in the highest circles of the 'Bri-gung-pa organization. Among all the people who took part in the decisions that brought Grags-pa 'byung-gnas to the throne of 'Bri-gung as the third abbot, Kun-dga’ rin-chen mentions only Shākya rin-chen by name.\(^{25}\) In addition, the Rgya-Bod yig-tshang states that while serving as 'Bri-gung-pa sgom-pa Shākya rin-chen afforded general counsel to both the 'Bri-gung-pa and the Phag-mo gru-pa,\(^{26}\) while the Che-tshang sprul-skhu implies that Shākya rin-chen was strong enough to pose a threat to the Sa-skya-pa. According to him, the well-known
'Bri-gung-pa revolt of 1290, the *gling-log*, had its origins in the animosity which developed between Shākya rin-chen and the Sa-skya-pa over fears that Shākya rin-chen had territorial ambitions within Tibet. This, he asserts, ultimately produced a deterioration in relations between several of the 'Bri-gung-pa *sgom-pa* and Sa-skya-pa *dpon-chen*.\textsuperscript{27}

The 'Bri-gung-pa revolt, as is well known, was actually a major set-back for the subplot. Nevertheless 'Bri-gung-pa sources don’t shed much light on the events leading up to it; in fact we lose track in our sources of the various *sgom-pa* and their activities in the period prior to it. Other Tibetan sources have various accounts of the revolt,\textsuperscript{28} none of them wholly satisfactory. For their part, 'Bri-gung-pa sources uniformly make protestations of innocence about the role of the 'Bri-gung-pa and put the blame for the climactic developments of the whole affair on unnamed “evil people” who spoke slanderously about the 'Bri-gung-pa to Qubilai.\textsuperscript{29} As we have just noted, however, tension between the 'Bri-gung-pa and the Sa-skya-pa was evident well before the *gling-log*. Concomitantly, relations between the 'Bri-gung-pa and Qubilai do not appear to have ever been particularly good. 'Bri-gung-pa sources do not present the Mongol emperor in a very favorable light, particularly when describing the visit of Karma Pakshi to his court.\textsuperscript{30}

In any event, our sources are silent regarding the *sgom-pa* on our lists after Shākya rin-chen, until we reach the *sgom-pa* designated as Sgom-pa Dbon-po.\textsuperscript{31} The Che-tshang sprul-sku tells us that it was he who brought Stod-Hor troops into Tibet in the wake of the destruction of 'Bri-gung in 1290, and adds that this caused the Sa-skya-pa to urge Qubilai to take a softer line toward the 'Bri-gung-pa, ultimately allowing for the reconstruction of 'Bri-gung.\textsuperscript{32} Kundga rin-chen gives essentially the same account.\textsuperscript{33} These may or may not be attempts to put the best face possible on what was undeniably a major disaster for the 'Bri-gung-pa. Other sources which have been cited by Petech, Tucci, and Wylie maintain that the Stod-Hor troops came to assist the 'Bri-gung-pa prior to the *gling-log*, led by the *sgom-pa* and the Stod-Hor prince Rin-chen, both of whom were captured in battle, Sgom-pa Dbon-po subsequently being executed.\textsuperscript{34} The modern historian Dung-dkar rin-po-che gives the name of the 'Bri-gung-pa *sgom-pa* who led Stod-Hor troops to Tibet to fight for the 'Bri-gung-pa as Kun-rdor rin-chen, but he makes no citations or references to any other works as sources for this information.\textsuperscript{35} While this name doesn’t appear on any of our lists of *sgom-pa*, it is entirely possible that this was Sgom-pa Dbon-po’s actual name; we can be certain that it wasn’t “Dbon-po.”

Throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the 'Bri-gung-pa religious hierarchs do not appear to have played a significant part in the political and military activities of the *sgom-pa* and the 'Bri-gung-pa forces. During the period of the *gling-log*, in fact, the abbot, Bce-gnyis-pa Rdo-rje rin-chen, was only eleven years old and the religious affairs of the see were in the hands of a
regent, Jo-snubs Rdo-rje ye-shes (1223/1224-1293/1294), who fled with Rdo-rje rin-chen to Kong-po at the time of the destruction of 'Bri-gung.36

The 'Bri-gung-pa defeat was undoubtedly disastrous for the subsect, yet the remarks found in 'Bri-gung-pa writings to the effect that their forces were still able to regroup in the west and that their strength remained sufficient to force Qubilai to show them leniency and allow them to rebuild,37 may not be entirely wrong. By the mid-fourteenth century the 'Bri-gung-pa had recovered enough of their strength to throw their forces into a conflict with the dynamic civil leader of the Phag-mo gru-pa, Ta'i-si-tu Byang-chub rgyal-mtshan (1302/1303-1364/1365), a confrontation that admittedly resulted in a further military failure for the subsect.

In the period after the gling-log Sgom-pa Dbon-po was succeeded by Slob-dpon Ye-shes dpal, who is mentioned by Byang-chub rgyal-mtshan in his testament, the Si-tu bka'-chems. This non-'Bri-gung-pa source contains evidence to suggest that relations between the civil officials of the 'Bri-gung-pa and Phag-mo gru-pa had already become somewhat strained by the time of Ye-shes dpal’s tenure as sgom-pa.38 Thus, although the abbot of Gdan-samthil entertained good feelings toward Ye-shes dpal, Byang-chub rgyal-mtshan was not similarly inclined.39 We may also note, however, that under Ye-shes dpal relations between the sgom-pa and the Yüan court seem to have assumed an air of normalcy once more; Ye-shes dpal was granted a seal and an edict of appointment by Qubilai.40

Following the death of Ye-shes dpal, the 'Bri-gung-pa decided upon the appointment of Rin-chen rdo-rje as senior sgom-pa (sgom-chen) and Kun-dga’ rin-chen as junior sgom-pa (sgom-chung), according to the account of Byang-chub rgyal-mtshan (who claims to have been influential in the decision).41 This information concerning the end result of the selection process is significant, for it is the first reference in our sources to any kind of bureaucratic structure associated with the office of sgom-pa.42 It is also very meager, informing us only that a junior sgom-pa served under a senior sgom-pa. Even so, it does clarify one point for us. The use of the term sgom-chen for the 'Bri-gung-pa sgom-pa has been noticed by several scholars.43 Based upon the remarks in the Si-tu bka’-chems, we may now conclude that the term ‘sgom-chen’ simply represented the position of the highest ranking figure (the personage who is otherwise generally referred to as the ‘sgom-pa’) within the administrative structure of the 'Bri-gung-pa civil bureaucracy; that is, as ‘senior sgom-pa’ in relation to a ‘junior sgom-pa’ and also (we may be certain) in relation to a number of other positions in the civil bureaucracy of lesser rank.

Byang-chub rgyal-mtshan has little to say about Rin-chen rdo-rje, allowing us to assume that relations between the two of them were not overtly hostile. This was not the case, however, with Rin-chen rdo-rje’s successor as sgom-pa
(i.e., sgom-chen), Kun-dga' rin-chen, whom we have just seen mentioned as junior sgom-pa. It is made clear in the accounts of both Byang-chub rgyal-mtshan and the Che-tshang sprul-skhu that Kun-dga’ rin-chen, after becoming sgom-pa, sought to reassert the military might and independence of the 'Bri-gung-pa in the face of the ascending power of the Phag-mo gru-pa. He gathered together troops (at Mtho-lding, we are told\textsuperscript{44}) and presented Byan-chub rgyal-mtshan with a military ultimatum that left no room for any course other than that of armed conflict.\textsuperscript{45} This turn of events was disastrous for 'Bri-gung-pa power. The subsect’s forces were decisively defeated at Bra-gor, in the region of Gnyal, and as a result, their military aspirations to be the major power in Central Tibet were largely checked. Kun-dga’ rin-chen appears to have died shortly thereafter, having clearly miscalculated.\textsuperscript{46} As a further result of this defeat Kun-dga’ rin-chen does not seem to have fared well in the historical memory of the 'Bri-gung-pa. The Che-tshang sprul-skhu, one of our 'Bri-gung-pa sources, speaks of him with extreme disfavor, blaming the strife between the 'Bri-gung-pa and the Phag-mo gru-pa on him, for having acted toward Byang-chub rgyal-mtshan, his sovereign, in “the manner of a rebellious subject” (bangs gyen-lhog-gi 'rnam-pa).\textsuperscript{47}

During this conflict a significant role was played by the junior sgom-pa of the 'Bri-gung-pa, Shākya bzang-po, who tried without success to continue resistance against the Phag-mo gru-pa after the defeat at Bra-gor.\textsuperscript{48} Following a settlement that allowed for the release of 'Bri-gung-pa prisoners held by the Phag-mo gru-pa, and after the death of Kun-dga’ rin-chen, Shākya bzang-po was named as the latter’s successor in the post of senior sgom-pa.\textsuperscript{49} As the chief civil official of the 'Bri-gung-pa, Shākya bzang-po also received a measure of recognition from the Yüan court, which granted him the title of ta'i-si-tu some time shortly before the dynasty’s collapse.\textsuperscript{50} We should note that this recognition, as well as the recognition which 'Bri-gung-pa authority was to receive from the Ming court in the fifteenth century,\textsuperscript{51} indicate that the defeat inflicted upon the subsect by Byang-chub rgyal-mtshan (like that suffered in the course of the gling-log) was by no means completely debilitating.

It is at this point, with Shākya bzang-po’s tenure as sgom-pa, that two of our lists end, and it is with Shākya bzang-po too that the 5th Dalai Lama ends his specific use of the term sgom-pa for the chief civil official of the 'Bri-gung-pa, remarking that

Afterwards, Shākya bzang-po took up the office of sgom-pa. Then, although there arose the custom [by which] the tsung-ch’i (rdzong-ji) Bsod-[nams] rin[-chen] and the uncle (sku-zhang) Tshul-[khrims] rgyal[-mtshan?] held secular power, upon the dharmarāja (chos-rgyal) Rin-cen [sic, = chen] dpal-bzang[-po] was laid [the position of] bla-dpon; that is, he was in full possession of fine orders [giving both] reli-
religious and civil [authority]. The youngest of the two sons born [to Rinchen dpal-bzang-po], Bco-Lnga rin-po-che, reached an exalted position by means of [his] religious and civil [authority]. The eldest of the three sons that [Bco-Lnga rin-po-che] had went to the Phag-mo [gru-pa]. The middle one, the dharmasvāmin (chos-rje) Kun-dga’ rin-cen [sic], sat upon the [abbotial] throne [of the 'Bri-gung-pa].

This statement by the 5th Dalai Lama essentially implies that the office of sgom-pa, as the seat of civil power among the 'Bri-gung-pa, faded away after Śākyya bzang-po's tenure. The impression thus generated would lead us to conclude that the civil and military duties previously associated with the sgom-pa were now delegated to various members of the 'Bri-gung-pa establishment (including some of the subsect’s high-ranking religious figures), with no need for the particular office itself, nor even, perhaps, for the bureaucratic framework it provided. However, information provided by the Che-tshang sprul sku (and by Sum-pa mkhan-po) alters this impression somewhat.

According to the Che-tshang sprul sku, the title of sgom-pa was borne by Bsod-nams rin-chchen and Rin-chchen dpal-bzang-po, whose names are mentioned by the 5th Dalai Lama; and by another figure who is also referred to in the passage just cited: Rin-chchen rnam-rgyal, the son of Rin-chchen chos-kyi rgyal-rtsho dpal-bzang-po (the 5th Dalai Lama’s Bco-Lnga rin-po-che) who is said to have married a Phag-mo gru-pa woman. Another significant 'Bri-gung-pa personage, Rin-chchen dpal-gyi rgyal-rtsho, is also mentioned as a sgom-pa by 'Bri-gung-pa sources. For his part, Sum-pa mkhan-po includes Bsod-nams rin-chchen and ‘Tshul-khrims rgyal[rtsho?]’ on his list of sgom-pa.

Bsod-nams rin-chchen was already holding the post of sgom-pa when he received the title of tsung-chi'i from the Ming court in the year 1400/1401. Rin-chchen dpal-gyi rgyal-rtsho (1395-?) must have followed Bsod-nams rin-chchen almost immediately in the office, for it was certainly in recognition of his military activities as sgom-pa that he received the title of ch'an-chiaowang (‘the prince who spreads the doctrine’) in 1413 from the Ming court. Rin-chchen dpal-gyi rgyal-rtsho was the son of Don-grub rgyal-po (1369/1370-1427/1428), the tenth abbot of 'Bri-gung, and like his father he too was eventually named to the abbotial seat of 'Bri-gung. Prior to that time, however, Rin-chchen dpal-gyi rgyal-rtsho spent several years charged with the military and civil administration of the subsect. To a certain extent the role of sgom-pa fell to him because of the need to assure the continuity of the Skyu-ra lineage as the leadership line of the 'Bri-gung-pa; this is essentially what 'Bri-gung-pa sources relate. Thus, Rin-chchen dpal-gyi rgyal-rtsho took a wife who bore him a son, Rin-chchen dpal-bzang-po (1421/1422-1467[?]), who, as we have seen, functioned as both the civil and religious head of the subsect.
The importance attached to Skyu-ra domination of the position of sgom-pa, as well as of the abbotship of 'Bri-gung, may be hinted at in the Che-tshang sprul-sku’s comment that

At that time, in that [Rin-chen dpal-bzang-po,] the one who had taken up the responsibilities of sgom-pa had no other brothers, [he] simultaneously attended to [both] the religious and civil [administration of the 'Bri-gung-pa].

While our information on the family backgrounds of most of the sgom-pa is non-existent, the very few for whom we do have information all belong to the Skyu-ra lineage. Thus, it can be assumed that (as the passage by the Che-tshang sprul-sku just quoted clearly implies) the office of sgom-pa was generally in the hands of the Skyu-ra in much the same way as was the abbacy of 'Bri-gung.

Rin-chen dpal-bzang-po in his turn married and had children. His two sons, Rin-chen chos-kyi rgyal-mtshan dpal-bzang-po (1446/1447[?]-1484) and Rin-chen chos-kyi rgyal-po (1448/1449-1504), both rendered service to the see of 'Bri-gung. Rin-chen chos-kyi rgyal-mtshan dpal-bzang-po followed his father as abbot, while Rin-chen chos-kyi rgyal-po took up the responsibility of serving as sgom-pa. It is most probably Rin-chen chos-kyi rgyal-po who is the subject of the entry in the Ming shih-lu for March 1,1469, telling of the dispatch of a mission from Ming Hsien-tsung that was entrusted with the task of delivering a letter patent to the 'Bri-gung-pa figure ‘‘Ling-chan chien-ts’an pa-erh tsang-pu.’’ It is of interest to note that some sources relate that Rin-chen chos-kyi rgyal-po had a strong desire to pursue spiritual and scholarly endeavors, and thus was able to hand over his duties as sgom-pa for a time to his brother, Rin-chen chos-kyi rgyal-mtshan dpal-bzang-po, while he undertook these pursuits. After his brother’s death in 1484, Rin-chen chos-kyi rgyal-po was nominated to serve as abbot of 'Bri-gung, but he never accepted the post. A further point of interest is that while we have no information on the financial affairs of the other sgom-pa, in the case of Rin-chen chos-kyi rgyal-po we know that he held an estate as his primary source of income. It is certainly not unreasonable to conceive of similar arrangements existing for the support of other sgom-pa.

Rin-chen chos-kyi rgyal-mtshan dpal-bzang-po married (perhaps as a duty connected to his service as sgom-pa) and, as noted, became the father of another 'Bri-gung-pa sgom-pa, Rin-chen nam-rgyal (1472/1473-?), who took as his bride a woman born into the Phag-mo gru-pa line. This marriage, involving the civil leader of the 'Bri-gung-pa and the lineage of the titular lords of Central Tibet, essentially constituted an alliance and not surprisingly produced a close secular relationship between the 'Bri-gung-pa and the Phag-mo gru-pa who, as we have seen, had been hostile rivals during at least one period
in the fourteenth century. This recalls the close relationship between the two subsects during the tenure of Shākya rin-chen as sgom-pa, to which reference has already been made. The Che-tshang sprul-sku states that Rin-chen nram-rgyal grew up, went to the Phag-mo gru-pa to marry, and "accepted the responsibilities of sgom-pa pertaining to the [office of] Khang-gsas nang-so." Further along he remarks that

Ever since the sgom-pa Rin-chen nram-rgyal had taken a wife from among the Phag-mo [gru-pa], the so-called [post of] Thog-kha nang-so among the sgom-pa of 'Bri-gung and the so-called [post of] Kha-gsang nang-so among the Phag-mo [gru-pa] went to brothers of one lineage, and thus 'Bri-gung was famed as Khang-thog . . . .

Although Rin-chen nram-rgyal appears to have resided among the Phag-mo gru-pa, his position within the 'Bri-gung-pa lineage does not seem to have been diminished. His Phag-mo gru-pa wife bore him a son, Byams-pa chos-kyi rgyal-mtshan legs-idan rin-chen dpal-bzang-po, who in turn became the father of Rin-chen nram-rgyal chos-kyi grags-pa rgyal-mtshan dpal-bzang-po (1520-1576), the abbot who followed Rin-chen nram-rgyal's brother, Kundga' rin-chen (1475/1476-1527), and his nephew, Rin-chen phun-tshogs chos-kyi rgyal-po (1509/1510-1557), on the abbatial throne of 'Bri-gung.

With the few references to Rin-chen nram-rgyal's position as a civil official of the 'Bri-gung-pa, however, our view of the office of sgom-pa within the subsect once more fades. While Rin-chen nram-rgyal was certainly not the last person to exercise civil authority among the 'Bri-gung-pa (as a bla-dpon or a nang-so), our sources seem to cast no light on any later figures specifically designated sgom-pa. For the present, therefore, it is with Rin-chen nram-rgyal that these brief remarks must conclude. Nevertheless, it is still possible to venture a few final observations about the 'Bri-gung-pa sgom-pa based upon the information that we have already noted.

The position of sgom-pa developed among the 'Bri-gung-pa some decades after the subsect's start in 1179. The fact that it took so long for the post to develop would clearly indicate a gradual evolution of the political circumstances of the 'Bri-gung-pa during the subsect's early decades, implying that at first they did not have the kind of worldly concerns (or resources) that would necessitate the creation of a specialized civil and military bureaucracy. These concerns must have developed at the end of the twelfth century and/or the beginning of the thirteenth, and indicate that the 'Bri-gung-pa had by then attained a degree of material wealth that demanded changes in their original organization. The resulting bureaucracy was one that utilized military force as an important element of secular power. Thus, the 'Bri-gung-pa were ultimately capable of raising troops and entering into armed conflicts. Within this bureaucracy the sgom-pa were the highest officials, but certainly not the only
ones. Although we know almost nothing about these others, we can at least point out the position underneath the office of sgom-pa, that of sgom-chung, or "junior sgom-pa" (in relation to which the chief civil official of the 'Bri-gung-pa, i.e., the figure whom we have generally referred to as sgom-pa, was often termed sgom-chen, or "senior sgom-pa"). In those instances where we know the name of a particular sgom-chung the person in question inevitably rises to the position of sgom-chen. We can adduce from this that there may have existed some limited sense of bureaucratic mobility through the ranks of the civil and military bureaucracy of the 'Bri-gung-pa.

The available information on a small number of sgom-pa suggests that the office was probably the domain of members of the Skyu-ra family, and served as the medium for the clan's exercise of civil and military authority. In the religious sphere this was paralleled by the Skyu-ra domination of the abbacy of 'Bri-gung during most of the period with which we have dealt. If the example of Rin-chen chos-kyi rgyal-po is at all typical, we may also surmise that the sgom-pa were allowed financial support from the income generated by specific estates held by the 'Bri-gung-pa.

Until the lifetime of Rin-chen dpal-gyi rgyal-mtshan there seems to have been a very sharp boundary drawn between the religious and secular bureaucracies of the 'Bri-gung-pa. Thus, we find no evidence of the religious hierarchs playing major roles in events such as the 'Bri-gung-pa gling-log. During and after the lifetime of Rin-chen dpal-gyi rgyal-mtshan, however, it is not unusual to find 'Bri-gung-pa figures charged with the highest posts in both realms. This development is no doubt related to the marked decline in secular power experienced by the 'Bri-gung-pa at the time, much as the original appearance of the sgom-pa as a separate civil and military post signified the growth of such power. This question, and many of the others relating to the history of the 'Bri-gung-pa that have been raised here, await further detailed study.

Nevertheless, we may hope that the remarks presented in this paper have shed some light on one of the manifestations of political power and authority in Tibet. We may hope too that they might stimulate further investigations of the rise and development of the various forms of sectarian rule in that country, a subject that is certainly far more complex than is intimated by this short paper.

NOTES

1. Political organization in traditional Tibet has been the subject of heightened interest lately, particularly in the People's Republic of China. Among the recent works to appear that typify this trend are Dung-dkar Blo-bzang 'phrin-las, Bod-kyi chos-srid zung-'brel skor bshad-pa, Peking 1981; and Yang Hsü-hao, "Chien-che Hsi-tsang 'cheng-chiao ho-i' chih-tu," Hsi-tsang yen-chiu (1983.II), 85-90. The first work has received much attention in intellectual circles in the Tibetan
diaspora, and was reprinted in Dharamsala in 1982 by the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives. In spite of this recent activity, a comprehensive study of the diverse manifestations of interrelated religious and political rule in Tibet, exploring the origins and growth of the different sectarian systems developed in the country is yet to appear. However, for a study of government and politics at Sa-skya, and among the Sa-skya-pa (concentrating on the twentieth century), see C.W. Cassinelli and Robert B. Ekvall, A Tibetan Principality, Ithaca 1969.

2. Rgyal-dbang lnga-pa chen-mo [= Ngag-dbang blo-bzang rgya-mtsho], Gang-chen-yul-gyi sa-la spyon-pa’i mtho-ris-kyi rgyal-blon gtsos-bor brjod-pa’i deb-ther rdzogs-laden gzhon-nu’i dga’-ston dpid-yid-kyi rgyal-mo’i glu-dbyangs, Peking 1981, p. 111. For the names on this list, see Appendix I at the end of this paper.


4. Sum-pa mkhan-po Ye-shes dpal-’byor, ’Phags-yul Rgya-nag chen-po Bod dang Sog-yul-du dam-pa’i chos byung-tshul dpag-bsam ljon-bzang, in Collected Works of Sum-pa-mkhan-po, New Delhi 1975, I f. 103v. For the names on this list, see Appendix I at the end of this paper. This list has also been provided by Tucci, op.cit., pp. 652-653, but Tucci’s copy of the text seems to omit one of the names, Byang-shes. Tucci does note (p. 699) the appearance of Byang-shes on the 5th Dalai Lama’s list, but he assumes that Byang-shes and Byang-chub (the sgom-pa who follows Byang-shes on the lists) are one person.

5. Rgyal-rabs sogs Bod-kyi yig-tshang, f. 22v. For the names on this list, see Appendix I at the end of this paper. I must express my gratitude to my learned colleague, Tashi Tsering of Dharamsala, for calling this work to my attention and for kindly placing it at my disposal during my stay in India in January, 1984. I am informed that the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives is planning to publish it in the near future.


11. Che-tshang sprul-skru, op.cit., ff. 59r-59v:

dgung-lo so-bdzun-pa sa-phag-lor gdan-sa chen-po (59v) dpal ’Bri-gung Byang-chub-gling-gi chos-sde ’di-nyid btab . . . .don Rdo-rje seng-ge ’phrin-las-kyi byed-bor bskos

See also ’Bri-gung chos-rje, op.cit., f. 39v. We should note too that in his chapter on the ’Bri-gung-pa, Dpa’bo op.cit., f. 747, states that ’Jig-rgen mgon-po came to ’Bri-gung in the Iron-Male-Mouse year (1180/1181), when he was thirty-eight.

13. See Appendix I at the end of this paper.


15. Concerning the life of Dbon rin-po-che, see ‘Bri-gung chos-rje, op. cit., ff. 42r-45” (folio 45 is missing from the edition currently available); and Che-tshang sprul-sku op. cit., ff. 79r-81r.

16. Regarding the life of Gcung rin-po-che, see ‘Bri-gung chos-rje, op. cit., ff. 46v-51r; and Che-tshang sprul-sku op. cit., ff. 82r-85v. Note the variant dates for him mentioned on p. 4 of the English table of contents in the first source.

17. Concerning the life of Rin-chen seng-ge, see ‘Bri-gung chos-rje, op. cit., ff. 51r-53v; and Che-tshang sprul-sku, op. cit., ff. 85v-87r. Note the variant dates for him mentioned on p. 4 of the English table of contents in the first source.

18. Concerning the life of Grags-pa bsod-nams, see ‘Bri-gung chos-rje, op. cit., ff. 53v-56v; and Che-tshang sprul-sku, op. cit., ff. 87r-88v. Note the variant dates for him mentioned on p. 5 of the English table of contents in the first source.

19; Regarding A-nu-rgyal’s place in the Skyu-ra lineage, see ‘Bri-gung chos-rje, op. cit., ff. 51v and 57r; Che-tshang sprul-sku, op. cit., ff. 86r and 90r; Dkon-mchog rin-chen, Rgyal-ba’i dbang-po ‘Bri-gung-pa chen-po’i gdung dang gdan-rabs 27 byon-tshul gces-bsdud rin-po-che’i phreng-ba, in ‘Bri-gung-pa Texts, Leh 1972, I f. 15r; and Mkhhas-btsun bzang-po, op. cit., IX p. 194. According to ‘Bri-gung chos-rje, op. cit., ff. 51r-51v, Rdo-rje seng-ge had four sons: Thog-kha-ba rin-chen seng-ge, A-nu-rgyal, Stag-ma Rdo-rje seng-ge, and Mtshams-bcud-pa Grags-pa bsod-nams. However, Che-tshang sprul-sku, op. cit., f. 86r, gives five sons to Rdo-rje seng-ge: the four just mentioned, plus a younger one named Dkon-mchog tshe. The last named son is also mentioned in ‘Bri-gung chos-rje, op. cit., f. 57r, but as one of A-nu-rgyal’s three sons, the other two being Rdo-rje rgyal-mtshan and Bsod-nams rdo-rje. Dkon-mchog rin-chen, op. cit., f. 15r, also gives A-nu rgyal three sons, naming them as Rdo-rje rgyal-mtshan, Bsod-nams rin-chen, and Dkon-mchog brtsegs. Note that Mkhhas-btsun bzang-po, loc. cit., follows the pattern in ‘Bri-gung chos-rje, listing two sons for A-nu-rgyal and five for Rdo-rje seng-ge, the name of the youngest of the latter’s sons being given as Dkon-mchog mdzes. All of our sources designate A-nu-rgyal’s son Rdo-rje rgyal-mtshan as the father of the abbots Rdo-rje rin-chen and Rdo-rje rgyal-po of ‘Bri-gung.

20. Concerning the life of Rdo-rje rin-chen, see ‘Bri-gung chos-rje, op. cit., ff. 56v-60v; and Che-tshang sprul-sku, op. cit., ff. 90r-92v. Note the variant dates for his death mentioned on p.5 of the English table of contents in the first source. The assignment of numbers to the ‘Bri-gung-pa abbots differs with various sources. I have generally followed the numbering given by the Che-tshang sprul-sku, but I have not counted Jo-snubs Rdo-rje ye-shes (concerning whom, see note 36, below) as the seventh abbot, as he does. The Che-tshang sprul-sku op. cit., f. 89r, acknowledges that Rdo-rje ye-shes was not really an abbot of ‘Bri-gung (nor was he a member of the Skyu-ra lineage) and had only been appointed as a regent (rgyal-tshab-du mnga’-gsol-ba) due to Rdo-rje rin-chen’s youth at the time of Grags-pa bsod-nams’ death. Thus, Rdo-rje ye-shes is not listed among the abbots of ‘Bri-gung by ‘Bri-gung chos-rje, op. cit., (but cf. the remarks on p. 5 of the English table of contents regarding “Chos-sgo-ba Rdo-rje ye-shes,”’ as he is referred to by Roerich, op. cit., p. 609; and by Mkhhas-btsun bzang-po, op. cit., IX p. 275), nor by La-dwag rtogs-sprul [ = Rtogs-ladan rin-po-che] Thub-bstan bst-an-pa’i rgyal-mtshan, Chos-rje ‘Bri-gung-pa’i gdan-rabs mdor-bsdus, n.p., n.d. [written at Mtsho Padma in 1965]. He is listed, however, as an abbot by Dkon-mchog rin-chen, op. cit., ff. 14v-15r (= “Jod-gnub Ye-shes rdo-rje”’ [sic]).
21. Regarding the life of Rdo-rje rgyal-po, see 'Bri-gung chos-rje, op. cit., ff. 60v-64r; and Che-tshang sprul-sku, op. cit., ff. 92v-94v. Note the variant date for his death mentioned on p. 5 of the English table of contents in the first source.

22. Concerning the life of Chos-kyi rgyal-po, see 'Bri-gung chos-rje, op. cit., ff. 64r-73r; and Che-tshang sprul-sku, op. cit., ff. 95r-100r.

23. These events are recounted in Che-tshang sprul-sku, op. cit., f. 82r; and Lha-rigs Rlangspkyi rnam-thar, ff. 230-231. Other Tibetan accounts of this incident have long been available in translation; see Turrell V. Wylie, “The First Mongol Conquest of Tibet Reinterpreted,” Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies XXXVII (1977), p. 107.

24. Cf., however, Luciano Petech, “Tibetan Relations with Sung China and with the Mongols,” in Morris Rossabi, ed., China Among Equals, Berkeley 1983, pp. 181 and 197. Nevertheless, the 'Bri-gung-pa and Phag-mo gru-pa sources cited in the previous note make it clear that Shākya rin-chen, and not Grags-pa 'byung-gnas (who, though abbot of 'Bri-gung, was a member of the Rlangs clan, the dominant family of the Phag-mo gru-pa), was the 'Bri-gung-pa figure taken prisoner by the Mongols. Regarding the life of Grag-pa 'byung-gnas, see 'Bri-gung chos-rje, op. cit., ff. 45v-46v (folio 45 is missing from the edition currently available); Che-tshang sprul-sku, op. cit., ff. 81r-82r; and Roerich, op. cit., pp. 571-579.

25. 'Bri-gung chos-rje, op. cit., f. 46r. As may be inferred from the preceding note, relations between the 'Bri-gung-pa and the Phag-mo gru-pa were fairly close at this time. During his lifetime, Grags-pa 'byung-gnas served as the abbot of both Gdan-sa-mthil and 'Bri-gung. As is well known, the origins of the 'Bri-gung-pa are closely bound up with the Phag-mo gru-pa subsect. 'Jig-rten mgon-po too, during his lifetime, held sway over the sees of both 'Bri-gung and Gdan-sa-mthil; see Roerich, op. cit., pp. 569-570. Cf. also, 'Bri-gung chos-rje, op. cit., f. 39v.


27. Che-tshang sprul-sku, op. cit., ff. 89r-89v.


29. See the 'Bri-gung-pa accounts of the gling-log provided by 'Bri-gung chos-rje, op. cit., ff. 58r-58v; and Che-tshang sprul-sku, op. cit., ff. 89r-91r.

30. See 'Bri-gung chos-rje, op. cit., ff. 47v-48? (folio 48 is missing from the edition currently available); and Che-tshang sprul-sku, op. cit., ff. 83r-83v.

31. He is referred to in some sources as Sgom-pa Dpon-po. Compare the two references to him given by Tucci, op. cit. (1949), pp. 631 (“Dbon-po”) and 652 (“Dpon-po”); and see also Appendix I at the end of this paper. Note too that the recent edition of the 5th Dalai Lama’s history which I have utilized in preparing this paper refers to him as Sgom-pa Dpon-po, while the copy used by Tucci (op. cit., p. 631) refers to him as Sgom-pa Dpon-po.

32. Che-tshang sprul-sku, op. cit., ff. 90v-91r.

33. 'Bri-gung chos-rje, op. cit., f. 58v.


36. Concerning the life of Rdo-rje ye-shes, see Che-tshang sprul-sku, op. cit., ff. 88v-90r; and Dkon-mchog rin-chen, op. cit., ff. 14v-15r. As already mentioned in note 20, above, Rdo-rje ye-shes was not a member of the Skyu-ra lineage. He was descended from a line that included the important Rnying-ma-pa figures Snubs nam-mkha’i snying-po (one of Padmasambhava’s chief
disciples; see Roerich, op. cit., p. 705), and Snubs Sangs-rgyas ye-shes (concerning whom, see Mkhhas-btsun bzang-po, op. cit., III pp. 136-155 [= Gnubs-chen Sangs-rgyas ye-shes]).

37. 'Bri-gung chos-rje, op. cit., f. 58v; and Che-tshang sprul-skhu, op. cit., ff. 90v-91r, both intimate that the 'Bri-gung-pa success in gaining Mongol support in the west (i.e., stod-phyogs, the “upper regions”) resulted in a severance of some of the Yüan court’s lines of communications.


40. Che-tshang sprul-skhu, op. cit., f. 91r. We can see that Ye-shes dpal was active in the position of sgom-pa for quite some time, since his tenure overlapped the careers of both Qubilai (1215-1294) and Byang-chub rgyal-mtshan (1302/1303-1364/1365; see, however, the variant dates for his death mentioned by Zhwa-sgab-pa, op. cit., I p. 335). We may note that when Ye-shes dpal died it was Byang-chub rgyal-mtshan who was chosen to represent the Phag-mo gru-pa in paying respects at 'Bri-gung; see Lha-rigs Rlangs-kyi rnam-thar, ff. 453-454.

41. Lha-rigs Rlangs-kyi rnam-thar, ff. 455-456.

42. This information was later incorporated into the 5th Dalai Lama’s history; see Rgyal-dbang Inga-ba chen-mo, op. cit. p. 111.


44. Lha-rigs Rlangs-kyi rnam-thar, f. 491. Mtho-lding is located in Western Tibet, where (as Petech, op. cit. [1978], pp. 313-325, has amply illustrated) the 'Bri-gung-pa were well established. Regarding Mtho-lding, see Wylie, op. cit. (1962), p.125.


46. Ibid., ff. 493-495. Regarding Bra-gor, see Ferrari, op. cit., p.126.

47. Che-tshang sprul-skhu, op. cit., f. 94v.

48. Lha-rigs Rlangs-kyi rnam-thar, ff. 493-494, mentions the capture by Phag-mo gru-pa forces of 363 soldiers raised in Tshe-kha by Shākya bzang-po. The soldiers were captured in Tse-kha and were from that area and 'Phan-yul. Tshe-kha is probably in or near 'Phan-yul, which itself lies to the north of Lhasa; see Ferrari, op. cit., pp. 82-83; and Wylie, op. cit. (1962), p. 162.

49. Lha-rigs rlangs-kyi rnam-thar, ff. 494-495.

50. See Che-tshang sprul-skhu, op. cit., f. 98r ("ta-si-tu"). Ta'i-si-tu renders into Tibetan the Chinese ta-ssu-t’u, a title that is quite old. During various periods in dynastic China the ssu-t’u was an official charged with responsibility for education. Thus, Colin Mackerras, The Uighur Empire According to the T’ang Dynastic Histories, Columbia S.C. 1972, p. 195, renders ssu-t’u as “director of instructions.” So too, we may render ta-ssu-t’u as “grand director of instructions.” This title was given by the Yüan court to a number of Tibetan figures (including, as we have seen, Byang-chub rgyal-mtshan), but was discarded for bestowed upon Tibetans by the Ming, except in those instances during the dynasty’s first years when the Chinese court actively sought to renew such titles for Tibetans who had received them from the previous Mongol rulers. Since the strife between the Phag-mo gru-pa and the 'Bri-gung-pa which preceded Shākya bzang-po’s accession to the post of sgom-pa can be dated to the 1350’s (see Zhwa-sgab-pa, op. cit., I p. 332), we can assume that he was granted the title of ta'i-si-tu/ta-ssu-t’u not too long before the collapse of the Yüan in 1367. As such, he was also recognized as the myriarch (khris-dpon) of 'Bri-gung; see Dpa'-bo, op. cit., p. 750. According to Che-tshang sprul-skhu, op. cit., f. 91r, the 'Bri-gung-pa myriarchy (khris-bskor) was “subjugated as one of the myriarchies of Dbus and Gtsang” (Dbus-Gtsang gi khris-bskor 1 mnga'-bangs-su bcug-ste) only when the gling-log had been put down and Qubilai was taking steps to ameliorate the situation by allowing reconstruction to take place at 'Bri-gung.
quoted. It is more common to find the Chinese term wang rendered into Tibetan as dbang, rather than as wamp. Cf. the references to Rin-chen chos-kyi rgyal-po as Dbang rin-po-che, in ‘Bri-gung chos-rje, op. cit., f. 90r, and in Tucci, op. cit. (1971), p. 198; as Dbang Rin-chen chos-rgyal, in Dpa’-bo, op. cit., p. 753; and as Dbang Rin-chen chos-kyi rgyal-po, in Che-tshang sprul-sku, op. cit., f. 112r. According to an earlier Ming shih-lu entry, for February 7, 1469 (see Mindai Seizō shiryō, loc. cit.), the emperor had ordered that “Ling-chan chien-tsan pa-erh tsang-pu” was to inherit the title of ch’an-chiao wang, previously held by his father, “Ling-chan pa-erh-chien chien-ts’an.” The former holder of the title referred to in this entry is probably Rin-chen dpal-bzang-po, even though the transcription given for his name can only render something akin to “Rin-chen dpal-gyi rgyal-mtshan;” see Satō, op. cit., p. 447; and Tucci, op. cit. (1949), p. 689. The date for this shih-lu entry indicates that the date of 1467/1468 for Rin-chen dpal-bzang-po’s death given by ‘Bri-gung chos-rje, op. cit., f. 87v, ought to be accepted in preference to that given by Che-tshang sprul-sku, op. cit., f. 109v (see note 56, above). This is not the only instance of confusion surrounding Ming transcriptions of the names of ‘Bri-gung-pa figures. The name of Don-grub rgyal-po, the father of Rin-chen dpal-gyi rgyal-mtshan, is usually transcribed in Ming sources as if it were “Don-grub rgyal-mtshan;” see Satō, op. cit., pp. 439-440. We should point out that our sources seem to indicate that the title of ch’an-chiao wang was passed down along the line of ‘Bri-gung-pa sgom-pa rather than along the line of abbots at ‘Bri-gung. Thus, the title was bestowed on Rin-chen dpal-gyi rgyal-mtshan, Rin-chen dpal-bzang-po, and Rin-chen chos-kyi rgyal-po, all of whom have their tenures as sgom pa (rather than as abbot) in common. (It should be noted that Rin-chen dpal-gyi rgyal-mtshan received the title of ch’an-chiao wang well before he was named abbot; in fact he fled from ‘Bri-gung very shortly thereafter and thus never really functioned in the post. Rin-chen chos-kyi rgyal-po, as noted, never accepted the abbacy, even though he was named to it.) This accords with the fact that the title of wang, as bestowed on various Tibetan figures during the early Ming, was essentially a secular title, in contrast to that of fa-wang (“king of the dharma;” i.e., “dharma-rāja”), which was reserved for certain prominent religious hierarchs. The transcription of names is not the only area in which Ming sources are problematic regarding ‘Bri-gung-pa figures. Prior to “Ling-chan pa-erh-chien chien-tsan” (whom we can suppose to be Rin-chen dpal-bzang-po) being designated ch’an-chiao wang by the court, the title is given to someone described as Rin-chen dpal-gyi rgyal-mtshan’s son, and whose name is transcribed as “Ch’o-erh-chia-chien-pa lin-chang”; see Mindai Seizō shiryō, p. 107. Satō, op. cit., p. 443, suggests that these characters might transcribe something like “Chos-rgyal Byams-pa rin-chchen.” In any event, it is not possible at present to hazard a guess as to who might have held this title among the ‘Bri-gung-pa between the eras of Rin-chen dpal-gyi rgyal-mtshan and Rin-chen dpal-bzang-po. So far, we know of no other children, aside from Rin-chen dpal-bzang-po, fathered by Rin-chen dpal-gyi rgyal-mtshan, nor are we aware of the names of any other sgom-pa during this period. In addition, ‘Bri-gung-pa sources show that no one else was named to the abbacy of ‘Bri-gung during this period. The identifications made on the basis of the Chinese transcriptions mentioned throughout this note must of course remain tentative; we can only assume, on the basis of the serious discrepancies between the ‘Bri-gung-pa sources and the Ming sources (including the remarks on the ‘Bri-gung-pa in Chang T’ing-yü, et al., Ming-shih, Peking 1974, ch. 331. p. 8584) that the Ming materials are far from reliable in this area. On these transcriptions and the personages involved, cf. Satō, op. cit., pp. 442-448.

62. ‘Bri-gung chos-rje, op. cit., f. 93v; and Dpa’-bo, op. cit., p. 753.

63. Thus, even though his appointment as abbot brings him biographical entries in the various ‘Bri-gung-pa gser-phreng, ‘Bri-gung chos-rje, op. cit., ff. 93v; Dpa’-bo, op. cit., p. 753; and Che-tshang sprul-sku, op. cit., ff. 112r and 113r-113v, make it clear that he refused to accept the abbacy. The Che-tshang sprul-sku does not even assign him a number within the abbatial succession.

64. See note 61, above.

65. According to Che-tshang sprul-sku, op. cit., f. 111r, Rin-chen chos-kyi rgyal-mtshan
dpal-bzang-po married one Rin-chen dpal-mo, the beautiful daughter of the rdzong-dpon of Stagtse, a man named Bsam-grub who was of the lineage of Mgar-lung, said to be subject to the Skyu-ra. Stagtse is located in Dbus, in the region of "Ol-kha; see Ferrari, op. cit., p. 121; and Wylie, op. cit. (1962), pp. 171-172. Aside from Rin-chen nram-rgyal, the oldest son born from this marriage, Rin-chen chos-kyi rgyal-mtshan dpal-bzang-po fathered at least two other sons, Kun-dga' rin-chen, who held the position of abbot at 'Bri-gung after Rin-chen chos-kyi rgyal-po declined it, and Chos-kyi rgyal-po Bstan-pa'i rgyal-mtshan; see 'Bri-gung chos-rgbje, op. cit., f. 89r; and Che-tshang sprul-sku, op. cit., f. 111r. Regarding Kun-dga' rin-chen and Chos-kyi rgyal-po Bstan-pa'i rgyal-mtshan, see notes 70 and 71, below.

66. Che-tshang sprul-sku, op. cit., f. 111r (Khang-gsar nang-so'i sgom-pa'i khur-bzhes). 'Bri-gung-pa sources refer to Rin-chen nram-rgyal as sgom-pa without further qualification often enough to allow us to conclude that he served the civil administrations of both the 'Bri-gung-pa and the Phag-mo gru-pa. This impression is also supported by the later remarks in Che-tshang sprul-sku, op. cit., f. 155v (cited in the following note), which indicate that Rin-chen mam-rgyal, through this marriage alliance, brought the civil administrations of both subjects together. Khang-gsar in all probability refers to a structure housing the nang-so at Sn'e'u-gdond, the administrative seat of the Phag-mo gru-pa; cf. the remarks about Kha-gsang and Thog-kha in the next note. Regarding Sn'e'u-gdond, see Ferrari, op. cit., pp. 123-124; and Wylie, op. cit. (1962), p. 170. The title of nang-so denoted civil officials (who were quite similar to the sgom-pa of the 'Bri-gung-pa) found in various realms in Tibet; see Tucci, op. cit. (1949). p. 35: "The highest official of the state . . . . . was the Na'gh so . . . . . The Na'gh so presided over the administration of justice . . . . . and was a sort of Prime Minister."

67. Che-tshang sprul-sku, op. cit., f. 155v:


These comments indicate a use of the term nang-so in reference to later civil officials of the 'Bri-gung-pa. (Cf. Tucci, op. cit. [1971], p. 200, but note that the dates he gives for the events recounted are far too early.) These figures, however, fall outside the limited scope of this paper. "Kha-gsang nang-so" may be a variant reference to the "Khang-gsar nang-so" mentioned in the preceding note, and thus Kha-gsang may simply denote a structure. However, this cannot be established with certainty at present. Thog-kha, on the other hand, can be identified as a structure at 'Bri-gung. The fifth abbot of 'Bri-gung, Rin-chen seng-ge, spent seven years engaged in austerities in the Thog-kha gser-khang there, and subsequently bore the appellation "Thog-kha-ba." Cf. the diverse references to this pavilion given by 'Bri-gung chos-rgbje, op. cit., ff. 52v, 55r, 60r, 67r, and 70v; Che-tshang sprul-sku, op. cit., ff. 86r, 91r-91v, and 92r; Dpa'-bo, op. cit., p. 751; and Satô, op. cit., p. 443. Undoubtedly, this building also housed the later nang-so. "Khang-thog," as a reference to 'Bri-gung, in all probability takes the syllable "thog" from the building's name.

68. See the references to this in Rgyal-dbang lnga-pa chen-mo, op. cit., p. 111, previously cited; and Tucci, op. cit. (1971), p. 199: "[Rin-chen mam-rgyal] went to P'ag mo gru, took up the office of sGom pa and had a son . . . . ."

69. Concerning the life of Rin-chen nram-rgyal chos-kyi grags-pa rgyal-mtshan dpal-bzang-po, see Che-tshang sprul-sku, op. cit., ff. 141r-147v.

70. Regarding the life of Kun-dga' rin-chen, See Che-tshang sprul-sku, op. cit., ff. 115r-128r. It is of interest that Dung-dkar Blo-bzang 'phrin-las, op. cit., p. 84, mentions a 'Bri-gung-pa sgom-pa named Kun-dga' rin-chen, engaged in the military actions that were undertaken against Dge-lugs-pa holdings around 'Bri-gung in 1526. However, there is nothing in the Che-tshang sprul-sku's biographical entry on the abbot Kun-dga' rin-chen that connects him with the office of
sgom-pa, or with any direct military role in this strife; see the references to these troubles in Che-tshang sprul-sku, op. cit., ff 127r-127v. Cf. also, Rgyal-dbang Inga-pa chen-mo, op. cit., p. 111-112; Sum-pa mkhan-po, op. cit., I f. 103v (both of which are translated in Tucci, op. cit. [1949], pp. 631 and 653); and Tucci, op. cit. (1971), pp. 199-200.

71. Concerning the life of Rin-chen phun-tshogs chos-kyi rgyal-po, see Che-tshang sprul-sku, op. cit., ff. 130r-139v. His father, Chos-kyi rgyal-po Bstan-pa’i rgyal-mtshan (1478/1479-?), was a brother of Rin-chen mam-rgyal and Kun-dga’ rin-chen; see ’Bri-gung chos-rje, op. cit., f. 89r; and Che-tshang sprul-sku, op. cit., f. 111v.


GLOSSARY

ch’an-chiao wang 闇教王
Chang T’ing-yü 張廷玉
Chien-che Hsi-tsang “chung-chiao ho-i”
    chih-tu 简析西藏“正教合一”制度
Ch’o-erh-chia chien-pa ling-chan 練兄加監巴領占
fa-wang 法王
Hsi-tsang yen-chiu 西藏研究
Ling-chan chien-ts’an pa-erh tsang-pu 領占堅參巴兒藏卜
Ling-chan pa-erh-chieh chien-ts’an 領占巴兒結堅參
Mindai Chibetto no Rigompa-ha no
    Keitō ni tsuite 明代チベットのリゴンバ派の系統について
Mindai Man-mō shiryō 明代滿蒙史料
Mindai Seizō shiryō 明代西藏史料
Ming Hsien-tsung 明憲宗
Ming-shih 明史
Ming shih-lu 明實錄
Satō Hisashi 佐藤長
ta-ssu-t’u 大司徒
Tamura Jitsuzō 田村實造
tsong-ch’i 總旗
wang 王
Wu-t’ai-shan 五臺山
Yang Hsü-hao 杨許浩
APPENDIX I

Three Lists of 'Bri-gung-pa Sgom-pa*

5th Dalai Lama

1. Sgom-pa Rdo-rje seng-ge
2. Shākya rin-chen
3. Byang-she
4. Byang-chub
5. Spangs-ras
6. Chos-seng
7. Rin-cen seng-ge
8. Sgom-pa Dpon-po
9. Sgom-pa Shākya dar
10. Rin-cen grags
11. Ye-shes dpal
12. Rin-cen rdo-rje
13. Slob-dpon Kun-rin
14. Shākya bzang-po
15.
16.

Sum-pa mkhan-po Ye-shes dpal-'byor

1. Rdo-rje seng-ge
2. Shākya rin-chen
3. Byang-shes
4. Byang-chub
5. Spang-ras
6. Chos-seng
7. Rin-seng
8. Sgom-pa Dpon-po
9. Shāk-dar
10. Rin-grags
11. Ye-dpal
12. Rin-rdor
13. Kun-rin
14. Shāk-bzang
15. Rdzong-ji-pa Bsod-rin
16. Sku-zhang Tshul-rgyal

Rgyal-rabs sogs Bod-kyi yig-tshang

1. Sgom-pa Rdo-rje seng-ge
2. Sgom-pa Shakya rin-chen
3. Sgom-pa Byang-she
4. Sgom-pa Byang-chub
5. Sgom-pa Spang-ras
6. Sgom-pa Chos-seng
7. Sgom-pa Rin-chen seng-ge
8. Sgom-pa Dpon-po
9. Sgom-pa Shakya dar
10. Sgom-pa Rin-chen grags
11. Sgom-pa Slob-dpon Ye-shes dpal
12. Rin-rdor
13. Slob-dpon Kun-dga' rin-chen
14. Slob-dpon Shakya bzang-po

* See notes 2, 4, and 5.
APPENDIX II
Members of the Skyen Lineage Mentioned in E. Sperling's "Some Notes on the Early 'Bri-gung-pa Skyen-po'"

Snags-chang Dpe-ka dbang-rgyal/Snags-chang Spe-ka dbang-rgyal

Mikhan-po Dar-ma
Rnal-byor-pa Rdo-rje
Dkon-mchog rin-chen
Bstan-pa 'Bar-ba

"Jig-mten mgon-po (1143/1144-1217)
† Dkon rin-po-che Bsdul-nams grags-pa (1199/1200-1247)
* Rdo-rje seng-ge
† Gicang rin-po-che Rdo-rje grags-pa (1210/1211-1278)

† Stag-ma Rdo-rje seng-ge
† Dkon-mchog thub/Dkon-mchog mtha
A-nu-rgyal
† Thog-kha-ba Rin-chen seng-ge (1226/1227-1284/1285)
† Mtnams-bcad-pa Grags-pa bsdul-nams (1238/1239-1286)

† Dkon-mchog thub/Dkon-mchog brtsegs
Rdo-rje rgyal-mthhan
Bsdul-nams rdo-rje

† Bcug-gnyis-pa Rdo-rje rin-chen (1278-1314)
Kus-dga' rgyal-mthhan
† Nyer-brgyad-pa Rdo-rje rgyal-po (1284-1350)

† Nyer-gnyis-pa Chos-kyi rgyal-po (1335-1407)
Rdo-rje rgyal-mthhan
† Don-grub rgyal-po (1369/1370-1427/1428)

** Rin-chen dpal-gyi rgyal-mthhan (1395-?) – married – Smi-legs dpal-'dren
** Rin-chen dpal-brtsegs-po (1421/1422-1467(?))

† Rin-chen chos-kyi rgyal-po (1448/1449-1504)
* Rin-chen mtsam-rgyal (1472/1473-?)
† Rin-chen chos-kyi rgyal-mthhan dpal-brtsegs-po (1446/1447/?)-1484 – married – Rin-chen dpal-mo

* Rin-chen mtsam-rgyal (1472/1473-?)
† Kus-dga' rin-chen (1475/1476-1527)
Chos-kyi rgyal-po Bstan-pa'i rgyal-mthhan (1478/1479-?)
† Rin-chen phun-tshogs chos-kyi rgyal-po (1509/1510-1557)

† = abbos
* = gsum-pa

† = concerning the positions of Stag-ma Rdo-rje Seng-ge and Dkon-mchog thub/Dkon-mchog mtha/Dkon-mchog brtsegs within the Skyen lineage, see note 19.
MEDICINE
The Development of the Human Embryo
According to Tibetan Medicine: The Treatise
Written for Alexander Csoma de Kőrös
by Sangs-rgyas Phun-tshogs

THUBTEN JIGME NORBU

Csoma de Kőrös’s first meeting with Sangs-rgyas Phun-tshogs took place in 1823 in the valley of Zangskar.1 Sangs-rgyas Phun-tshogs was “the chief physician of Ladakh” at the time. He wrote for Csoma de Kőrös a short survey of Tibetan medicine called Gso dpyad yan lag brgyad pa rgyud bzhi’i bsdoms tshig bkod pa, Verses of the Four Treatises, the Eight Branches of Healing and Diagnosis. After the initial benedictions, Sangs-rgyas Phun-tshogs says,

Even so, I will write a little here to repay my debt to my friend who was born in Rum of India, a place in the world of Jambudvipa, a scholar joined (to me) by the karmic threads of past deeds.2

The book then starts with a general history of medicine in India; subsequently discusses the content of the Four Treatises: the Root Treatise (Rtsa rgyud), Explanatory Treatise (Bshad rgyud), Precepts Treatise (Man ngag gi rgyud) and Later Treatise (Phyi ma’i rgyud); and ends with a history of medicine in Tibet.

The part I have chosen to talk about is the section on how the fetus develops, explained according to the second chapter of the Explanatory Treatise. This section is translated below.

Quite a large part of Tibetan medical literature is devoted to the science of human reproduction and growth. The explanation of human physical development (lus chags tshul) is always explained so that it is analogous to ideas on development of the universe (’jig rten chags tshul). There are several sūtra sources, the most important being the Nanda Womb Entering (Dga’ bo mngag ’jug, Peking Kanjur, no. 760.13 vol.23), the work cited by Sangs-rgyas Phun-tshogs at the end of the translation below. Being a sūtra, it of course puts emphasis on the transmigrating consciousness (bar ma do’i rnam shes), but it also gives a long discussion of each week of fetal development, for each
of which it has a special name. Overall, it is very similar to the translation. But there is little mention here of methods to promote conception, and more about the entrance of consciousness into the womb. There are interesting connections with the Tibetan Bardo literature. This is perhaps the source for the statement in the Bardo Thodol which surprised Carl Jung, that the transmigrating consciousness will enter the womb and become male if is is attracted to the woman while feeling hatred for the man; or female if it is attracted to the man and feels hatred for the woman. In the first case, the consciousness identifies with the semen. In the second, with the mother’s liquid. Without feeling any attraction, the consciousness will not enter the womb and conception will not take place. When the consciousness without good merit enters the womb, it feels fear and has the idea it is running to hide in a grass house, a leaf house, a walled place, a thick mountain forest, a cave, etc. If it has great merit, it has the idea it is climbing on top of a tower or high roof, or is entering a palace to sit on a throne. This sūtra may be the source for the peculiar names for the earliest stages of fetal development found in Tibetan: mer mer po, nur nur po, etc.

There are other Indian sources for fetal development found in Tibetan translation in the Tanjur: 1) Yan lag brgyad pa’i snying po bs dus pa by Pha khol (Vāgbhaṭa), Peking, vol. 141, no. 5798, chapter two. 2) the auto-commentary of the same called: Yan lag brgyad pa’i snying po shes bya ba’i sman dp yad kyi bshad pa, Peking, no. 5799. 3) Yan lag brgyad pa’i snying po’i rnam par ’gre l pa tshig gi don zla zer, another commentary on the same by Zla ba la dga’ ba, or Zla dga’, or Candrāṇandana, Peking, no. 5800, vol. 142, chapter two.

The famous Four Treatises, which are used as the main textbook for the teaching of medicine in Tibet, include in the second chapter of the second treatise, the Explanatory Treatise, a discussion of gynecology. One of the most detailed (and also authoritative) of its commentaries is the Bai ḍūrya sngon po by Sde srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho. His work contains many details left out by other sources, and he quotes extensively from earlier works, including all of those mentioned above, as well as several tantra sources (of which the Kālacakra Tantra deserves special mention).

The first part of the second chapter of the Explanatory Treatise (and the same in the commentary by the Sde srid) is devoted to the conditions on which reproduction is based, the menstrual cycle, etc. The second part of the second chapter is on conception and the growth of the embryo. Conception occurs when the following three things meet:

1. Sexual fluids (khu khrag)
2. Five elements ('byung ba lnga)
3. Consciousness (rnam par shes pa).

These three are combined into a seed (sa bon).
In the recent book entitled *Tibet*, there is a full-color reproduction of a medical scroll illustrating the second chapter of the *Explanatory Tantra*. It illustrates the various faults which may prevent conception, then the various elements that join together at conception. Finally, week by week, the development of the fetus is charted. It has been remarked that the three general stages of fetal development called the Fish, Turtle, and Pig stages sound strangely modern and “evolutionary.” But actually these three stages were known to Karma pa Rang byung rdo rje (1284-1339 A.D.) and Sde srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho. I hope this short survey of Tibetan gynecological and embryological literature and the following translation of a text which was written for a non-Tibetan, will spark more interest in the Tibetan view of this strange and often fascinating subject.

I will now tell how that which is to be cared for, the body, is formed. There are three parts to the discussion:

I. Primary causes of the body’s formation.

II. Contributing causes of the body’s formation.

III. The signs of birth.

I. The primary causes of the body’s formation are: the father’s semen, the mother’s blood and the combination of consciousness (nram shes) and the five elements. If the father’s semen predominates, the child will develop into a boy; if the mother’s blood predominates, a girl; if in equal parts, a neuter. If the blood forms into two (parts), twins will develop. The sperm produces bones, brains, and spinal cord (gzhung pa). The mother’s blood produces flesh, blood and internal organs (don snod). From its own mind (sems) comes the consciousness pertaining to the senses.

II. After (the child) is formed this much, the main contributing causes of its growth are these. The right and left veins of the ‘child container’ (bu snod) and the uterus (bsam se’u, a general term for the organs, male or female, that produce the reproductive substances), the vessel-organ from which the blood falls (these three) are joined to the centre of the semen, blood and mind in the womb. In this way, the chyme of the mother’s food is gradually conducted, as an irrigation ditch from a pond makes the crops of the field grow. There is further growth for nine months, transforming by the motive force (rlung) of thirty-eight weeks.

If described in detail, in the first week it is like milk and blood mixed together. The second week it dries up a little and gels (nur nur por ’gyur ro//). The third week it becomes like a curd. This is the time when the *Explanatory Treatise* describes a method of producing a male child. In the fourth week, if it forms a round shape, it will be a male. If it forms something like wet sand
(mer mer), it will be a female. If it forms an oblong shape it will be neuter.\textsuperscript{12}
In this first month, the mother has various mental and physical discomfor ts.

The second month: In the fifth week, the first part of the body, the navel, forms. In the sixth week, the ‘life vein’ forms from the navel. In the seventh week, the shape of the two eyes is approximated. In the eighth week, starting from the shape of the eyes, the shape of the head forms. The ninth week, the form of the upper and lower body forms.

The third month: In the tenth week, the shape of the two shoulders and two hips is approximated. In the eleventh week, the shapes of the nine sense openings are approximated. In the twelfth week, the shapes of the five solid organs (don) are approximated. In the thirteenth week, the shapes of the six vessel organs (snod) are approximated.

The fourth month: In the fourteenth week, the upper bones of the two arms and the hip bones become formed. The fifteenth week, the fore arms and shin bones form. In week sixteen, the fingers and toes form. The seventeenth week, the veins connecting the inside and outside (of the body) form.

The fifth month: In week eighteen, the flesh and fat form. In the nineteenth week, the tendons (chu ba dang rgyus pa) form. In the twentieth week, the bones and marrow form. Week twenty-one, it is covered outside by skin.

The sixth month: The twenty-second week, the apertures of the nine sense doors open. The twenty-third week, the hair of the head and body and the fingernails grow. The twenty-fourth week, the solid and vessel organs develop completely. At that time, (the child) will know happiness and sorrow. The twenty-fifth week, the movement of the air (rlung, the nervous impulses) begins. In week twenty-six, it begins to experience clear thoughts.

The seventh month: From the twenty-seventh to the thirtieth week, the whole of the body becomes apparent.

The eighth month: From the twenty-first to the thirty-fifth weeks, the whole body grows larger, internally and externally.

The ninth month: In the thirty-sixth week, (the child) get the idea that it doesn’t like the womb. In the thirty-seventh week, it gets the idea to turn upside down.\textsuperscript{13} The thirty-eighth week, he turns upside down and comes out. Even when this month is over, it still may not be born because of dripping blood or motive force (rlung). Furthermore, if the right side of the belly is high and the body is light, a son will be born. If the left side of the belly is high and the body is heavy, a daughter will be born. If mixed up, it will be neuter. If the center is high on both sides, twins will be born.

III. The signs of birth: The (mother’s) body becomes stretched and loose. The lower part of the body becomes heavy and there is pain in the waist and buttocks. There is pain in the stomach and urinary organs (chu-so) and they expand and contract. When the female organ opens, lots of urine comes out
and she gives birth with such an excessive pain that she thinks she will die.\textsuperscript{14} All this may be known in detail from the Kanjur’s Nanda Enters the Womb Sūtra (Dga’ bo Mngal ’Jug).

—This was chapter two (of the Explanatory Treatise), which shows the manner of the body’s formation.

NOTES

2. Ibid., p. 226. Pp. 252-8 are translated at the end of this paper. No title page is given. The same passage was translated by Csoma de Kőrösi in his article, ‘Analysis of a Tibetan Medical Work’. Differences between my translation and his are footnoted below. His article was first published in 1835, but reprinted in 1984 (see bibliography).
4. Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, Sde srid, Bai dūr Srong po. See bibliography.
5. Ngapo Ngawang Jigmei, et al., Tibet, p. 124. The letters which mark each part of the illustration are keyed to letters in the text of the Explanatory Treatise as found in Rgyud Bzhi, part kha, ff. 2b-4a. Unfortunately, the reproduction is slightly unclear, and could not be reproduced well enough to be included in this article. In addition to this chart, the reader is referred to the impending publication in the Buryat A.S.S.R. of a complete series of medical charts.
6. Dbang ’dus, Gso ba rig pa’i tshig māzod, pp. 181, 333-4, 578.
8. Csomá omits “the five elements.”
9. Csomá translates “hermaphrodite,” technically incorrect, since ma ning means one who has neither or both of the ‘marks’ of sex, while hermaphrodites have both.
11. The Tibetan text is abbreviated here. The internal organs are classified as the five substantial (don) and the six container (snod) organs. As for the first, they are heart, lungs, liver, spleen and kidneys; the second are stomach, small intestine, large intestine, bladder, gall bladder and reproductive organs (bsam se’u, see below). Csomá omitted the heart from the first category and calls the second category, “vessels or veins.”
12. Csomá paraphrases this passage on determining sex.
13. Csomá says that the child feels nausea on the thirty-seventh week.
14. Csomá merely paraphrases the third section up to this point saying only, “The tokens and circumstances of approaching birth are then described.”
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Researches on Poison, Garuḍa-birds and Nāga-serpents based on the *Sgrub thabs kun btus*

ALEX WAYMAN

Tibetan literature deals with poison in a number of texts, conveniently incorporated in the Tibetan *śādhaṇa* (deity evocation) collection *Sgrub thabs kun btus*, ¹ especially in Vols. Cha and Nya of the fourteen-volume set. Here the term for ‘poison’ (*T. dug*) has a range of usages and applications far exceeding what we could expect in Western conceptions, also far exceeding those found in Indian Buddhism itself. To differentiate the part due to the Indian heritage from what else is found in these Tibetan texts, whatever be the source, it is relevant to introduce numerical groups, namely, the three, the four, and the five kinds of poison. The threefold system does not implicate the Garuḍa-birds or Nāga-serpents. The system of four poisons, with a fifth one added, in terms of the four or five elements, goes with both the Garuḍa-birds and Nāga-serpents; and a secondary system of five poisons was found in a ‘lion-faced’ Ḍākinī text.

*The threefold set of poison*

In an early, primitive paper I dealt with the Buddhist theory of poison, which stresses three psychological poisons—lust, hatred, and delusion (in Sanskrit, usually *rāga, dveṣa, moha*). ² The Indian books on medicine, including Vāgbhaṭa’s *Aṣṭāṅghahrdayasamhitā*, which was translated into Tibetan along with a large commentary, set forth two kinds of natural poisons: ‘stable’ poison from the stationary realm, e.g. from roots of plants; and ‘mobile’ poison from the moving realm, e.g. from snakes among animals. The snake is a symbol for a kind of poison that moves toward the victim, as though in hatred; while one would go to a stationary poison, such as those in certain mushrooms, as though with delusion. But then there are some Buddhist texts with magical formulas to use against poisons; and in the commentarial tradition of the *Mahāmāyurī*, also in the Tibetan canon, I found a third poison added to the natural two. ³ This is a category I would now translate as ‘concocted’ (the Sanskrit for *byas pa* probably *kṛta* or *kṛtaka*), e.g. the kind of poison a chemist makes, out of desire for some purpose, perhaps dreadful. The text in which the third kind was found also gives the mythological poison as an example,
namely the one called Hālāhala in the Purāṇic story of churning the ocean. Apparently the churning of the ocean to yield the poison is why one calls this kind of poison ‘concocted’. And if I am justified in associating the concoction of poison with ‘lust’, it follows that the three inner, or psychological poisons, are correlated with three outer ones. This is a typical way of thinking in the Buddhist Tantras, “as without so within” (yathā bāhyam tathā dhyātman iti).\(^4\)

So far it is purely Indian. To place the discussion on the Tibetan scene, I turn to the *Sgrub thabs kun btus*, Vol. 6 (Cha). A native ritual compendium around the Lord Vajrasattva (*bcom ldan ’das dpal rdo rje sems dpa’*) contains this verse:\(^5\)

```
/ 'dod chags ze sdaṅ gti mug gsum / 
/ de dag 'jig rten dug gsum ste / 
/ bcom ldan saṁs rgyas dug mi mña’ / 
/ saṁs rgyas gzi yis dug bcom mo //
```

Those three—lust, hatred, delusion—are the three poisons of the world. The Buddha Bhagavat does not carry the poison. The Buddha’s brightness destroys the poison.

After alluding to the possibility of getting rid of the poison by the example of the Buddha, the text tells what a performer should do to attempt the same. After various ritual formulas, he should say:

```
/ sa ni dug gi ma yin te / 
/ sa ni dug gi pha yaṅ yin / 
/ bden pa’i bden tshig ’di dag gis / 
/ tshe ’das dug ni dug med šog //
```

Earth is the mother of poison. Earth is the father of poison. By these (two) true words of truth, may the poison of the past become non-poison!

And adds

```
/ dug ni sa yi naṅ du soṅ / 
/ gaṅ ba’i snod du dug soṅ žig svāhā /
```

May the poison pass into the earth. May the poison pass into the full vessel! Svāhā.

The formula is repeated, substituting the words, ‘water,’ ‘fire,’ ‘wind’. The *Sgrub thabs kun btus*, Vol 5 (Ca) has a similar statement in a Bhaisajyaguru
(healing Buddha) ritual.⁶

Oṃ. Homage to the Lord. May I, named so-and-so, a defiled person in the passage of time destroying all the obscuration of poison—become possessed of the three virtues. This earth is the father of poison. This earth is the mother of poison. By these true words of truth, may the three poisons pass into the earth.

And again, one repeats with substitution of words for the other three elements. Notice here the difference, or at least clarification, that the three poisons are to be converted into virtues. Now, this talk about ‘mother of poison’ and ‘father of poison’ has a definite non-Buddhist aura. In order to make it more Buddhist, one may bring in the theory of the four goddesses who are the purity of the four elements. This is what a ritual on the deity Śrī-Vajrabhairava in a different ritual collection (probably Gelugpa) tries to do, at the same time clarifying the ‘full vessel’.⁷ For earth the statement is this:

Earth is the mother of poison, and earth is the father of poison. By these true words of truth, may poison of past time become non-poison. May the poison pass into the earth; may the poison pass into the full vessel. Svāhā.

This is followed by a prayer that the performer may attain the nature of (the goddess) Locanā, the purity of the earth element no matter what the earth poison. The statement using the word ‘water’ goes with the goddess Māmakī, the purity of the water element no matter what the water poison; and ‘may the poison pass into the ‘moist vessel’ (gser ba’i snod).’ The statement using the word ‘fire’ goes with the goddess Pāṇḍarā, the purity of the fire element no matter what the fire poison; and ‘may the poison pass into the ‘hot vessel’ (tsha ba’i snod).’ The statement using the word ‘wind’ goes with the goddess Samaya-Tārā, the purity of the wind element no matter what the wind poison; and ‘may the poison pass into the ‘swinging vessel’ (g’yo ba’i snod).’

In the foregoing, to get rid of the three psychological poisons by rendering them non-poison, the performer uses the four elements.

Garuḍa-birds and poison

In the mythology, the Garuḍa is the enemy of serpents, who are associated with poison. The basic text in Sgrub thabs kun btus, Vol.8 (Nya) is an evocation of the Khyuṅ-khra (Garuḍa-falcon), which includes this bowing verse:⁸

/ brtan dañ g’yo ba’i dug rnams kun / 
/ me dañ chu bzin ’joms mdsad pa / 
/ rigs lha ye šes lha yi dnos /
I bow, praising you, Garuḍa, who destroys like the fire and water, all the poisons of the stationary and the moving; who is the living presence (doṇos) of the five families and the five wisdoms.

This tradition uses the symbolism of ‘fire’ and ‘water’ for elimination of the poisons.9 There are many such passages in these texts. For a water example, an earlier text of Vol. 8 (Nya) has:10

/ raṅ byeṅ ye ṣes sems ŋid chus /
/ dug lña dug gsum dri ma bbru /

(May) the water of true consciousness, the self-arisen wisdom, wash (away) the five poisons and the three poisons!

For the fire, the fierce method, an example is apparently the ‘‘tongue of yakṣa flame’’ (ya-kṣa me dbal).11 The fire and water thus go with the two kinds of poison, the stationary and the mobile of the Indian medical texts. Indian Buddhist texts also make this division, calling them the stationary (acara) and the moving (cara).12 The fire of the stationary is in a place. Water, by flowing, goes with the moving. The next Garuḍa text regards the fire and water as requiring ‘ransoming,’ since it mentions various items that can be offered for the purpose and says, ‘one offers this ransom (glud) for the pair fire and water’ (me chu dag gi glud ’di ’bul).13

Then the five kinds of Garuḍa may well be a replacement of the five kinds of Dākinī found in the Mahāmāyā-manḍala of the manḍala compendium Niṣpannayogāvali,14 as in this comparison:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sugata-Garuḍa</th>
<th>Buddha-Dākinī</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vajra-Garuḍa</td>
<td>Vajra-Dākinī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratna-Garuḍa</td>
<td>Ratna-Dākinī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Padma-Garuḍa</td>
<td>Padma-Dākinī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karma-Garuḍa</td>
<td>Viśva-Dākinī</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The comparison is justified, because the Dākinī is understood as the ‘sky-walker’ hence agrees with the high-flying bird. ‘Sugata’ is a title of the Buddha. The Mahāmāyā-manḍala includes Viśva-Dākinī in the Amogha-siddhi family, which is usually called the Karma family.

The passage in the first Garuḍa text presents correspondences to each Garuḍa by way of bowing, thus:15 ‘I bow to Sugata-Garuḍa, who is the nature of Dharmadhātu wisdom, who has overcome the poisons arising from delusion by purification of earth.’ The text then abbreviates. Next, Vajra-Garuḍa, Mirror-like Wisdom (ādarsa-jñāna), poisons arising from hatred '
purification of water. Ratna-Guruḍa, Sameness Wisdom (samatā-j.), poisons arising from greed, by purification of space. Padma-Guruḍa, Discriminative Wisdom (pratyavekṣaṇā-j.), poisons arising from lust, by purification of fire. Karma-Guruḍa, Procedure-of-Duty Wisdom (kṛtyānuṣṭhāna-j.), poisons arising from envy, by purification of wind. Thus, the text routinely mentions the five elements for countering the five poisons, while claiming that ‘fire’ and ‘water’ suffice in actual practice.

The text shows how to arrange the Guruḍa group in directions:16 In the middle, the white Buddha-Guruḍa. E. the blue Vajra-Guruḍa. S. the yellow Ratna-Guruḍa. W. the red Padma-Guruḍa. N. the green Karma-Guruḍa.

It is clear from the above that the elements are the standard four, augmented by the fifth called ‘space’ (ākāśa). Space is the pervading one. But this points to the curious nature of the correspondences, because the space correspondence goes with the ‘Sameness Wisdom’ which makes sense for seeing all natures the same. However, the one put in the middle is expectedly the Buddha-Guruḍa; but this goes with purification of earth.17

Independent of the element correspondences is a list of five poisons in an evocation of the Ďākīnī ‘Lion-faced’; and as the correspondence of the Guruḍa to the Ďākīnī was pointed out above, it does not seem amiss to introduce the list here without making a special section for it. This fascinating list is:18 ‘poison of seeing’ (mثša ba’i dug), ‘poison of touch’ (reg pa’i dug), ‘poison of exhaling’ (kha rλns kyi dug), ‘poison of feeling’ (tshor ba’i dug), ‘poison of expectation’ (bsam pa’i dug). This set has profound implications. Thus, ‘poison of seeing’ appears to be the belief in the evil eye to harm or sicken at a distance; and perhaps also the ability of certain creatures to paralyze their prey by staring at them. ‘Poison of touch’ shows a belief in the spread of disease by such contact as hand-shaking. ‘Poison of exhaling’ suggests the mythology of the dragon; and perhaps also contagion through the breath. ‘Poison of feeling’ suggest mass hysteria and mob on the loose; and perhaps it is a belief in psychosomatic influence as the corrosive character of some feelings. ‘Poison of expectation’ where the Tibetan word bsam pa is equivalent to Sanskrit words cintā, abhipraya, āśaya, could well be what the Greeks referred to (in translation) as ‘disorder of the soul,’ and called ‘folly’ which was of two kinds, madness and stupidity.19

A large garuḍa-bird text has a generous exposition of treating poison.20 It is too technical to cover adequately here; and I shall restrict myself to a few observations. It starts, ‘Here is the counsel of the multi-colored diamond Garuḍa for curing poison... Here there are three parts: 1) method of examination, 2) method of remedy, 3) after-deeds.’ Under method of examination, it says, referring to poison generally:21 if cast in tea, it debilitates the sight-organ (chaṇ la btab na mig la’o); If cast in meat or fat, it debilitates the smell-organ (śa’am snum la btab na sna la’o); if cast in whites, i.e. milk products, it
tates the hearing organ (rtsam par btab na rna ba la’o). (the text omits a remark for touch.) Later, under remedy, the text states that it will tell what to do if the poison has afflicted one of the five sense organs:22 If it afflicts the eye, one averts it with a liquid mixture of tiger bone (mig la babs nal stag gi rus pa’i sman mar); if it afflicts the tongue, of parrot (bone) (lce la ne tso’i); if it afflicts the nostrils, of wolf (bone) (sna la sbyain ki’i); if the ear, of vulture (bone) (rna ba la bya rgod kyi). (Again, the text omits a remark for touch).

Before passing to the topic of Nāgas, I should briefly refer to that part of the legend of Garuḍa that pertains to the present discussion. Once Garuḍa was intent on making off with the pot of amṛta (ambrosia) guarded by two monstrous serpents who never closed their eyes. Whoever they looked at with those eyes would be poisoned to death. (The poison eyes are referred to above). Garuḍa blinded those eyes by raising a dust storm with his wings.23

Nāga-serpents and poison

The topic of serpents and poison involves an extensive body of literature. The life of Śākyamuni, the founder of Buddhism, has important elements of snakes for which he had a sense of affiliation, even affection—whether or not one calls it the mythological overlay—and which afforded him shade as in the episode of the serpent Mucilinda. A scholar named Vogel devoted a large chapter to this topic in his admirable book on the serpent lore of India.24

The text especially used here is in the Sgrub thabs kun btus, Vol. 6 (Cha), an evocation (sgrub thabs) of Lokeśvara Simhanāda, a form of Avalokiteśvara. So far I have no information on whether the name ‘Simhanāda’ (lion’s roar) is implicated; previously, the list of five poisons (‘poison of seeing,’ etc.) was taken from a ‘Lion-faced’ Dākinī evocation—this might simply be a coincidence. Before going to the material to be extracted from that Vol. 6 text, some general information is necessary.

In relating eight serpents to the four elements, we can find an Indian antecedent. Thus, Celupā’s commentary on the Guhyasamājatantra, Chap.XV, verse 103, mentions that the expression ‘various snakes (sarpa)’ means snakes of water, snakes of the wind, as well as ones of various colors.25 This generalizes the theory of snakes to go with the elements, but not necessarily like the European lore of gnomes of earth, undines of water, salamanders of fire, and sylphs of wind. This is because the Indian, and here the Tibetan, symbolism of the snake regards it as the carrier of poison. It should be noticed though, that the usual survey-type book, such as the one on animals by Sen, associates the snake just with water, particularly with rain.26

Indeed, the nine great Nāgas are worshipped to this day in Nepal to produce rain. Varuṇa, white, is in the center; Ananta, dark blue, in the east; Padmaka, color of a lotus-stalk, in the south; Takṣaka, saffron-colored, in the west;
Vāsuki, greenish, in the north; Śaṅkhapāla, yellowish, in the south-west; Kulika, white colored, in the north-west; Mahāpadma, gold-colored, in the north-east. Last to be pulled onto the eight-petalled lotus was Karkoṭaka, blue in color, hence in the south-east. These nine are in fact the ones of our Tibetan text, which therefore suggests a Nepalese provenance for these theories.²⁷

The Nāgas were routinely put in the eight directions in late Indian literature, as in the Bhavisya Purāṇa: Ananta in the East, Vāsuki in the North-East, Takṣaka in the South, Karkoṭaka in the South-East, Padmanāga in the West, Mahāpadma in the South-West, Śaṅkhapāla in the North, and Gadā-padma in the North-West.²⁸ Because nāga also means ‘elephant’, eventually this association of Nāgas with directions became the ‘elephant of the direction’. Thus, now we do not know whether the celebrated Buddhist logician’s name Dignāga means ‘elephant of the direction’ or ‘serpent of the direction’.

The colors differ for the eight Nāgas in an Ucchuṣmājambhala-sādhana in the Sādhana-māla, 577.11,f. Ananta blue (nila); Takṣaka red (rakta); Mahāpadma white (dhavala); Karkoṭaka dark blue (śyama); Vāsuki white (śukla); Padma, color of lovely Jasmine; Śaṅkhapāla yellow (piṭa); Kulika purple-spotted (dhūmābhakarbura). But these serpents, and also when they are involved in the tantric maṇḍala rite of determining the place to dig, are not apparently associated with the four elements in the manner of our text.

As to the names, the eight Nāgas are the first eight in the Buddhist dictionary Mahāvyutpatti chapter on names of the Nāgarājas (Serpent Kings). The names from mantras and Tibetan as found in our text, however, are as follows: Vāsuki (T. nor rgyas); Śaṅkhapāla (T. duñ skyoñ); Ananta (T. dga’bo); Kulika (T. rigs ldan); Padma (T. pad-ma); Takṣaka (T. ’jog po); Mahāpadma (T. bde chen); Karkoṭaka (T. stobs rgyu). The serpent Ananta has the official Tibetan translation Mha’-yas. The name Dga’-ba here found reflects the Sanskrit Nanda, name of a celebrated Nāga important in the Buddha legend. This indicates a one-time confusion between the names Ananta and Nanda by pronunciation similarity. The name Mahāpadma has the official Tibetan translation Pad-ma-chen-po. The name Bde-chen (‘great joy’) here found is possibly an epithet for ‘lotus’ (padma), since the word padma is always transcribed into Tibetan letters, never translated. Finally, the leader of the eight Nāgas is Varuṇa (T. chu lha). In a sanskrit praise of Varuṇa, this deity is described with ‘form of Nāga (nāgarūpa).²⁹

Now we have the necessary background for initially citing our text:³⁰

Vāsuki and Śaṅkhapāla of the Kṣatriya caste are yellow, and control earth. Ananta and Kulika of the Brahmin caste, are white and control water. Padma and Takṣaka of the Vaisya caste are red and control fire. Mahāpadma and Karkoṭaka of the Śūdra caste are blue and control wind. And they overcome all poisons of those (elements). Their leader
Varuṇa has the nature of the element space (ākāśa)... If one has not clearly determined the poison, he should recite the Varuṇa (formula). He performs the yoga of Simhanāda, honors the Buddhas, makes bālī offerings to the Nāgarājās. Having offered, honored, and praised, he should clearly visualize a white serpent on a trident; and recite as much as is necessary: Oṃ PHUḤ VARUṆĀYA NĀGARĀJA PHUḤ HŪM PHĀṬ. Then, when one has clearly determined the poison, one should recite the earth for wind poison; the fire for earth poison; the water for fire poison; and the wind for water poison.

Later in the text, we read that the poison of earth is heavy and lying in wait (lici ziṅ 'thibs pa); the poison of water is cool and chilling (graṅ ziṅ bsil pa); the poison of fire is hot and rapacious (tsaṅ ziṅ sred pa); the poison of wind is light and sneaking (yaṅ ziṅ g'yo ba). With the assumption that the two terms used for each element poison go respectively with the two serpents of an individual element, I studied the Tibetan words to arrive at such renditions as ‘cool and chilling’ to go with the mild and fierce ones of the serpent pair.

The continuation of the Tibetan text shows what is meant by reciting the earth for wind poison, etc. It involves the well-known astrological theory of elements, namely that water and earth are concordant, and wind and fire concordant, while the two sets are mutually incompatible. Hence the red fire is used to overcome earth; and earth’s friend, the white water, overcomes fire. Fire’s friend, the blue wind, overcomes the water; and the yellow earth overcomes, i.e. stops, the wind. So the text says:

Hence, if one has clearly determined the poison, one should recite the mantra to oppose the respective one. If it is a case of earth poison, one recites the mantra of fire, to wit: For the duration of the self-evocation, one imagines himself as Simhanāda with a bright trident, on which the two red serpents (i.e. Padma and Takṣaka) are joined. He recites the heart mantra of Simhanāda, and Oṃ PADMĀYA NĀGARĀJA PHUḤ HŪM PHĀṬ SVĀHĀ. Similarly, when it is a matter of a water poison, the blue serpents (Mahāpadma and Karkoṭaka) are joined on the trident and (in the middle) MAHĀPADMĀYA KARKOṬĀYA, with mantra introduction and conclusion as before. In the case of the fire poison one joins the two white serpents (Ananta and Kulika) using (in the middle) the mantra ANANTĀYA KULIKĀYA. For the wind poison one joins the yellow serpents (Vāsuki and Śāṅkhapāla) with the mantra (in the middle) VĀŚUKĀYA ŚĀNKHAPĀLĀYA. If one cannot determine the poison, then it is said, “Varuṇa is the chief one who destroys all those (i.e. poisons). The elements have the nature of the sky. Hence, recite this one assiduously.” So one contemplates a white serpent on the trident; and after reciting the heart mantra of the Lord, one recites a
hundred thousand times OM PHUḤ VARUNĀYA NĀGARĀJA PHUḤ HŪM PHAṬ SVĀHĀ, and then he clearly determines the poison.

Notice that pairs of serpents intertwined, but kept apart, on the caduceus (here, the trident), symbolize the God of Healing. The two serpents in each case are indicated in the mantra by the concluding syllables HŪM PHAṬ SVĀHĀ, of which in the theory of Buddhist mantra, the HŪM PHAṬ is the fierce male mantra and SVĀHĀ is the mild female mantra. This confirms that one of the serpent pair represents the fierce, the other the mild, as was mentioned above in connection with the two kinds of poison for each element. The syllable PHUḤ seems to be a special mantra used for snakes.

The first pair mentioned is the two red serpents Padma and Takṣaṇa which control fire. According to Vogel, Takṣaṇa is “poisonous, fierce, and relentless” so he would have the rapacious kind of fire poison. Besides, the Atharva-Veda referred to him as Takṣaṇa Vaiśāleya, which may be a reason for putting him in the Vaiṣya caste. Assuming that Padma has the alternate forms Padmaka and Padmanāga, he is said to be virtuous, hence has the mild kind of poison, called simply ‘hot’.

Next, the two blue serpents Mahāpadma and Karkoṭaka which control wind. Karkoṭaka had a human body with snake tail, and was ashamed of his deformity; according to another legend he is the spokesman for the obedient Nāgas, so would belong to the Śūdra class. He presumably has the sneaking kind of wind poison. Mahāpadma is also a Nāga with human face; he can appear in a dream to direct a person to places of buried treasure, so should have the light kind of wind poison.

The two white serpents Ananta and Kulika control water. Vogel identifies Ananta with Śeṣa, the world-serpent who supports the reclining Vishnu. Since his mind delighted in righteousness, this agrees with the placement in the Brahmīn class, and suggests the mild kind of water poison, simply cool. Vogel provides little description of Kulika, who presumably has the fierce kind of water poison, the chilling.

Finally, there are the two yellow serpents Vāsuki and Śaṅkhapāla, who control earth. Vāsuki is very popular in the legends. He presides over the Nether World and is the guardian spirit of the house, which is consistent with his control over earth in our text. As the ruler of the Nāga city Bhogavati, Vāsuki is reasonably called Kṣatriya. In the myth of churning the ocean, Vāsuki was made the churning rope, implicating a base in the oceanic floor. The churning produced the fierce poison Hālāhala, so I take Vāsuki’s earth poison to be the fierce kind, the lying in wait. Śaṅkhapāla is the hero of a Jātaka where he exhibits extraordinary forbearance, which goes with earth. Śaṅkha as a treasure goes with the treasure-bearing nature of earth. The story (from the Divyāvadāna) that Śaṅkha is the name of a future king whose reli-
gious counselor named Brahmāyu will be father of the future Buddha Maitreya, agrees with placement in the Kṣatriya class.Śāṅkha’s poison would therefore be the mild kind—earth poison called ‘heavy’.

In summary of the conclusions this table is offered:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>With mild poison</th>
<th>With fierce poison</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Earth</td>
<td>Śāṅkhapāla (heavy)</td>
<td>Vāsuki (lying in wait)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Ananta (cool)</td>
<td>Kulika (chilling)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire</td>
<td>Padma (hot)</td>
<td>Takṣaka (rapacious)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wind</td>
<td>Mahāpadma (light)</td>
<td>Karkoṭakā (sneaking)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Besides, our previous citations of water as the father of poison and as the mother of poison—the same said of the other three elements—seem to agree if we take “mother of poison” to represent the mild poison, and “father of poison” to represent the fierce poison.

The role of Varuṇa as the Nāga of final resort, if one is unable to determine the poison among the four elements, the text justifies, saying “the elements have the nature of the sky,” so Varuṇa’s ‘ocean’ is space. This shows that the elements are frequently imperceptible, since the text said, “If one has not clearly determined the poison, he should recite the Varuṇa (formula);” and then, in the course of his samādhi on a white serpent and pronouncing the mantra many times, he manages eventually to determine the poison. For this reason, this theory of each element bearing specific poisons cannot be the basis of a school of medicine. In comparison, the theory of Philistion of Locri followed by the Italian and Sicilian school, held that disease is due to the four elements each having a power: fire the hot, air the cold, water the moist, earth the dry. Notice that only for fire the hot, do the attributions to the elements agree with the poison descriptions of our Tibetan text. Indeed, in the case of hot, cold, moist, dry, these are acknowledged to be perceptible qualities. Hence, even though Buddhism holds that the body is formed of the four elements (the mahābhūta) and their derivatives (bhaūtika), a theory of poison in the four elements as causes of disease would not be practicable as a school of medicine. One can only teach on the basis of perceptible qualities.

At variance with the element correspondence to the eight great serpents is the case in the commentary ascribed to Buddhaguhya on the Sarvadurgatipariśodhana-tantra which has a maṇḍala of the eight:

Ananta and Kulika of the Brahmin clan arise from fire, and are white. Vāsuki and Śāṅkhapāla of the Kṣatriya clan arise from earth, and are yellow. Takṣaka and Mahāpadma of the Vaisya clan arise from wind, and are red. Karkotaka and Padma of the Śūdra clan arise from water, and are black.

The only pair in complete agreement is Vāsuki and Śāṅkhapāla. This text switches Padma and Mahāpadma with their paired serpent. While the color
schemes agree (except for Padma and Mahāpadma, as mentioned), the attributed element for three of the pairs differs from our previous data. In contrast, Buddhaguhya, in his great commentary on the Vairocanābhīsambodhi-tantra, Chap. III, states, in agreement with our previous data, that gods of yellow color go with the earth-ṃandala; of white color with the water-ṃandala; of red color with the fire-ṃandala; of blue or black color with the wind-ṃandala.47; The above-mentioned commentary on the Sarvadurgatipariśodhana-tantra then puts these eight serpents on eight petals of a lotus with Vajrapāni in the center, and treats the symbolism of the ‘poison’. The previous procedure amounted to applying an incompatible poison to counteract a poison, thus presumably to ‘detoxicate’ it, rendering it a non-poison. This commentary adopts the principle of ‘extraction’ of poison from the Tantra itself, indicated by the Tibetan term draṅ for this process. The Tantra is cited, “he draws out (draṅ) by hand, reciting phud (=phuḥ), every last bit of the poisons” (dug rnam thams cad ma lus par/ phud ces bya ba’i lag pas draṅ).48 This commentary goes on to mention the very system of incompatible poisons that I presented above, and presumably intends the result to be an extraction rather than a detoxification, maintaining the symbolism of extracting the poison from the serpent fangs.

Thus, two procedures are possible—extracting or neutralizing. The business of extraction appears to agree with early Buddhism, which stressed the elimination of unvirtuous natures (akusala-dharma) and of the defilements (kleśa) generally. The theory of neutralizing the poison agrees more with the later Tantra position that one does not really get rid of anything, so best restore it to the pristine condition; do not get rid of the poison: convert it to non-poison.

May I briefly refer to the association of the Nāga Śaṅkhapāla with the ant-hill. Vogel reports from the Śaṅkhapāla-jātaka that the Bodhisattva in his birth as a Nāga proceeded to the world of men, and lying down upon an ant-hill, vowed that anyone wanting any part of his body is welcome to it. 49 It is therefore pertinent to mention the Buddhist ‘Discourse on the Anthill’ (Majjhima-Nikāya, No. 23). In this scripture (Vammikasutta), various items are dug up from the ant-hill, finally at the bottom a Nāga. When asked, the Buddha gave symbolic meanings to each item, finally saying for the Nāga that it represents a monk whose fluxes (S. āsrava) are eliminated, and who should be reverenced. This agrees perfectly with the attribution to Śaṅkhapāla of the ‘heavy’ poison, because ‘heavy’ is the meaning of the Sanskrit word guru, teacher of the disciples.

Finally, we should recall that the offerings to serpents were made especially for their help in getting rain. It is appropriate therefore to mention the rain sequence of the elements according to the Kālacakra-tantra exegesis Vimalaprabhā.50 When Csoma de Körös introduced Western scholars to this
fascinating system in 1833 he referred to it as a "peculiar religious system," and this rain sequence is certainly peculiar. Here, arising from the void are the wind atoms, as a course of motion. Then by their friction as accompaniment, arise the fire atoms, i.e. lightning. Next, attended with wind and fire, arise the water atoms, i.e. rain. Then, holding the rain, arise the earth atoms, along with a rainbow in the sky. The atoms of 'taste' pervade them all, hence 'space' (ākāśa).

Regretfully I must take leave of the topic, without having done sufficient justice to the rich lore of serpents.

NOTES

1. I gave a report on this collection at the XXIXe Congrès international des Orientalistes, Paris, Juillet 1973 (Section organisée par Ariane Macdonald); cf. Études tibétaines (L'Asiatheque, 1976), pp. 87-89. The collection was made by the Ṣa-skya-pa sect.


5. The work is: Bcom ldan 'das dpal rdo rje sems dpa'i bṣiṅ bgrub phrin las daṅ bca's pa'i yi ge dchos grub 'dod 'jo, Vol. 6 (Ca); passage at no.f. 231-5, 6, 7.

6. The passage in Vol 5. (ca) is at no.f. 218.

7. The Rnam par rgyal ba'i grva tshaṅ phan bde legs bṣad glin 'dus sde'i žal 'don gyi rim pa phyogs sdebs; library edition, 1977, Lib. of Congress I-Tib. 77-906334, 3-vols. (rituals of the Potala and the Dalai Lamas); my copy, paper, Spring 1970. The particular text is: Dpal rdo rje 'jigs byed kyi 'zi rgyas dbaṅ drag gi sbey sreg daṅ gsn po'i sbyaṅ chog bca's, fol. 18a-b.

8. Khyuṅ khra'i sgrub thabs las tshogs rjes gnaṅ daṅ bca's pa, no.f. 141-3.

9. This reminds us of the 'Miracles of the Pairs' which Gautama Buddha according to legend exhibited at the city of Sāvatthi, when both flame and water issued from his body, since with the present information we can associate these elements with the realms of the stationary and the moving; cf. Edward J. Thomas, The Life of Buddha as Legend and History (New York, 1952), pp. 98-99.

10. Bla ma ṣi ba gsaṅ ba 'dus pa'i gzuṅ rtsa ba phrin las cha lag daṅ bca's pa'i skor, no.f. 47-7.

11. Vol. 8 (Nya), Gu ru drag dmar ṣaṅ lugs 'brin po me'i spu gri'i sgrub rjes man ṣag, no.f. 132-5, 6.

12. Cf. Prajñākaramati's commentary on Bodhicaryāvatāra, Chap. IX, 127: cause (kāraṇa) of the moving (cara) and stationary (acara) world. This distinction is necessary for the lay and monk Buddhist prohibition against killing, since this sin is directed toward the 'moving', not toward the 'stationary' world of vegetables and so on.

13. The Bcom ldan 'das rdo rje khyuṅ khra'i sgrub thabs las tshogs rjes gnaṅ daṅ bca's pa'i skor, Vol. 8 (Nya), no.f. 183-6. The word dag can mean 'pure', but here I take it as the sign of the dual.

14. Nispannayogāvali (n.4, above), introduction, p. 43.

15. Khyuṅ khra (n.8, above), no.f. 141-1, 2, 3.

17. The correspondences of elements to poisonings is of a more expected nature in A.H. Francke, "gZer myig. A book of the Tibetan Bonpos," *Asia Major*, 1924, p. 309:

In some beings hatred burns like fire,
In others, lust circulates like water,
In some, ignorance rages like darkness,
In others, envy grows as if [planted in the] soil,
In some, pride whirls like the wind.

18. Vol.8 (Nya), Mkha’ ’gro seṅge’i gdon pa can gyi man ṃag zab mo, no.f. 278-4.5.

24. J. Ph. Vogel, *Indian Serpent-Lore, or the Nāgas in Hindu Legend and Art* (Delhi, 1972), the large chapter II (pp. 93-131).


28. Bhaviṣya-purāṇa, Sanskrit with Marathi translation (Chap. 1 by Rāśivaḍekāra; Chap. 2-3 by Bāpaṭa) [n.p. 1909], Chap. 1, p. 162-3; no. lines 75-82.


30. Sgrub thabs kun btsus, Vol. 6 (Cha), the ‘*Jig rten dbaṅ phyug seṅ ge sgra’i sgrub thabs rjes gaṅ las tshogs dāṅ bcas pa*’, no.f. 496-1, ff.
31. ‘*Jig rten dbaṅ phyug*, no.f. 513-4,5.

Thus, the heads of the mild and fierce pair are kept apart.

34. That the Greek god of healing Asklepios should be represented in Tibet is not surprising; cf. Christopher I. Beckwith, “The Introduction of Greek Medicine into Tibet in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 99.2 (1979) (also, Indiana University Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies, Reprint Series 40), pp. 297-313. For other Greek influences—granted that some may have come from India as intermediary—cf. Alex Wayman, *The Buddhist Tantras; Light on Indo-Tibetan Esotericism* (New York, 1973), pp. 21-23, mentioning the four Aristotelian causes, as well as attribution of functions to corporeal centers in a manner comparable to Greco-Roman concepts. The theory of the four elements as compatible and incompatible is part of Greek astrology which was introduced to India at the time of the ancient ‘Silk Road’ (c. 100 B-C. to 200 A.D.).


42. Ibid., pp. 198-9, 201.
43. Ibid., pp. 215-216.
46. Tibetan Tanjur (PTT), Vol. 76, p. 38-5-1,2. The colors are quite different from those attributed to the Nāgas in Vajravarman’s commentary, as reported in Tadeusz Skorupski, ed. and tr., *The Sarvadurgatiparipariśodhana Tantra* (Delhi, 1983), p. 57.
47. Tibetan Tanjur (PTT), Vol. 77, p. 159-2-6,7.
48. This is taken by the commentator from what Skorupski calls ‘Version A’ of the Tantra; cf. his p. 346.7-8.
APPENDIX

A Bon-po Passage on Poison

A.H. Francke did not complete the translation on the Gzer myig in his serial translation efforts (Asia Major, 1924, 1926, 1927, 1928, and [posthumously] 1949). I possess in paper the part labelled (headless script) Mdo gzer mig gi smad kyi po-ti-ka (second part of the Gzer mig). The first work here is entitled: Mkha' 'gro gsan gcod kyi dug phyuṅ ɲaṅ tshan khrul ba sor ra ba (The bathing Sarabha, the natural order of extracting poison that is the Dākinī’s secret ‘cutting’).

/dāṅ po dug phyuṅ la rdsas kun bsags pa
'di skad do/
kyai daṅ po dug phyuṅ gaṅ nas byuṅ/
dug gi pha ni gnam yaṅ yin/
dug gi ma ni sa yāṅ yin/
gnam sa rdsu 'phrul ldebs pa la/
bu ni dug nag spun dgu srid/

sa dug boṅ na rdo dug mkhar sgoṅ daṅ/
chu dug btsa' khu šiṅ dug sdag ma daṅ/
rtsa dug re lcags ldum dug thaṅ phrom daṅ/
gser dug ra gan dṇul dug za ŋe daṅ/
bsan dug boṅ na nag po 'di mams kyis/
yi dam lha daṅ srün ma'i tshogs/
lha btsan dgra lha zo dor daṅ/

skan rdsas sgrub rdsas mchod rdsas daṅ/
pho braṅ sgrub khahn sna mams daṅ/
dme yug nal daṅ sna phyi'i tham/
thab gzhob mkhon 'dre žugs pa daṅ/
rgyu chuṅ phud ŋams lhag sør 'gal 'khrul daṅ/

sme mnol ŋams grib ci soṅ ba/
dug phyuṅ chag bsal sbran phud do/
sgrub gšen yon bdağ 'khor bcas kyi/
mi gtsaṅ ŋams sgrib byaṅ gyur cig/

Here is told the compilation of substances in regard to the primordial extraction of poison. Hail, the primordial extirpation of poison, wherever it arose. The father of poison is the sky. The mother of poison is the earth. The magic of sky and earth quakes, and gives rise to the nine brother sons of black poison, namely:
1. Poison of soil is aconite. 2. Poison of stone is metallic grains. 3. Poison of water is birth fluid. 4. Poison of tree is parasite vine. 5. Poison of herbs (rtsva) is the shrub Daphne. 6. Poison of orchard is the tough shrub. 7. Poison of gold is brass. 8. Poison of silver is lead. 9. Poison of the powerful is the donkey.

On account of these black ones, there are tutelary deities, the host of protective deities, the deities called Lha btsan and Dgra lha, fasting; the substances for the rite, for the accomplishing, for the offering; palaces, meditation halls, the ancients. Should there occur, sleeping on dirty sheets, earlier or later crime; ill-will as a burning hearth, demonic possession, feeble or cast-out wandering; escape of mental faculties, erratic conduct; weakness through infection; or darkening of mind—one should extract the poison, cast out the fragments, get rid of the occasion. May the Gshen of the ‘work’ purify the unclean and the obscuration of mind, of the patron along with his followers!

The end.
PHILOLOGY
Text Structure and Rule Ordering in the First Tibetan Grammatical Treatise

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1.1 The contemporary worker in Tibetan studies will surely have no difficulty in associating his or her field of specialization with one of the areas in our subject first explored, or in some way or another significantly touched upon, by the Hungarian pioneer whose bicentenary we have come together to celebrate during these meetings here in Bloomington. Many of the papers to be read today and tomorrow will—as for example even the titles of several of the scheduled contributions indicate—have specific reference to one or another of Csoma de Kőrösi’s early studies. The absence of an overt reference to Csoma or to his work in the title of our own paper should, however, by no means be taken to indicate a lack of specific relation to the Hungarian pioneer’s accomplishments; we have here to deal with the beginnings of grammatical analysis and description, and indeed with the beginnings of linguistic science itself within the Tibetan culture; and in such a context a gathering such as this hardly needs, we believe, an overt reminder that Europe’s, and the West’s, first important introduction to the texts with which we are here concerned is also to be found among Csoma’s first accounts of what he dubbed “the historical and grammatical works to be encountered in Tibet.”

1.2. By the ‘First (and Second) Tibetan Grammatical Treatises’ we make specific reference to the Sum-cu-pa (=SCP) and Rtags-kyi hjug-pa (=RKHP), resp., two early linguistic texts that have already been the subject of considerable study in the West and in Japan, and that in Tibetan scholastic tradition have universally been attributed to ‘Thon-mi sambhoṭa’ in his quasi-mythic role as inventor of the Tibetan script and founder of Tibetan literary culture. For our part, it is probably useful to sum up at the outset our present position on the question of the historicity of these two texts, even without going into the details of the question, in order to provide the gist of the historical-philological background necessary for the remainder of this paper.

In short, we presently hold that (a) both the SCP and the RKHP are, exactly as the Tibetan tradition has always asserted, extremely old, even ancient texts, although we can no longer associate ourselves with that same tradition in ascribing both to a single historical individual or to a single point in historical time; (b) the SCP and the RKHP, although both old, are in part at least
originally of different dates, a fact obscured but not completely concealed by editorial work to which both of our received texts have been subjected with a view to harmonizing the details of the two; from this effort at editorial harmonization also date the several cross-references that today appear to link together our received texts of these two treatises; (c) compared with the SCP, the RKHP is the more homogenous of the two, its content and linguistic-descriptive approach showing that, even in the somewhat late harmonized form in which we now have this text, it is nevertheless the product more or less of a single fairly narrow time span; but within the SCP the survivals of several chronologically disparate text strata are still plainly visible, particularly SCP sl. 8, which describes an early form of Old Tibetan somewhat prior to the later canonical Written Tibetan.  

In this fashion, our present view of the SCP and RKHP, growing out of recent Western and Japanese scholarship on these two texts, does not at all contradict the principal elements of the Tibetan historical tradition concerning these texts; in particular it affirms that tradition’s cardinal allegation of the texts’ antiquity; but it does go over and beyond the tradition in its reconstruction of the pre-history of these texts, and in its recovery of at least a portion of their subsequent vicissitudes, both topics that were for one reason or another closed books to the Tibetan tradition, including, oddly enough, the tradition of the historians, who must in all candor today be admitted to have known rather less about these things than we might otherwise have expected.  

1.3.1 The present contribution takes as given a number of preliminary findings relating to the structure and the descriptive-analytic, i.e. the linguistic techniques of the SCP initially sketched in LDT; this was the first occasion in the literature for attention to be drawn to any of the issues that will be elaborated in the present paper. LDT is particularly relevant for its suggestion that the SCP essentially consists of three major parts (‘I’, ‘II’, and ‘III’, cf. LDT passim., but especially at §3.1.2), a basic proposition that underlies most of the treatment of this text in the present contribution.  

1.3.2 The study of these two early Tibetan grammatical treatises has hardly been distinguished, in recent years, either by the frequency or by the quality of the secondary literature devoted to it; indeed, much precious time and effort have necessarily had to be lavished on refuting uninformed and misleading contributions that otherwise have threatened to set our field back, rather than to advance it (e.g., Yamaguchi Zuı̆hō 1976, refuted in GTR and LDT).  

Useful and positive contributions to our understanding of the early grammatical tradition in Tibet, particularly contributions that genuinely facilitate our study of the SCP and RKHP, are therefore always more than welcome if only because, ever since the short-lived flurry of activity in this field initiated by Jacques Bacoı̆t and Johannes Schubert in the late 1920s, they remain so exceedingly rare: but such contributions are due a particularly warm welcome
when, as in the case of two recent papers by Nils Simonsson 1982a, 1982b, they not only add greatly to our comprehension of these always cryptic and enigmatic texts, but at the same time also point the way toward new methods and approaches for our study that will surely contribute greatly to the future solution of still other, perhaps today even still unformulated, problems in these texts.

Quite apart from those specific issues in the interpretation of RKHP śl. 32 upon which his contributions throw significant light, Simonsson’s two recent papers are of great importance for our studies because of the attention that they focus upon a number of methodological issues in the study—not to mention in the translation!—of these texts, and particularly because of the clarity with which their author first identifies, then expresses himself upon, a number of these questions.

First place among these points we would assign to Simonsson’s succinct evaluation of the dangers inherent in blindly following the later interpretations of the Tibetan schools in our own readings of these two early texts. No one, of course, is ever about to suggest that unilaterally turning our backs upon everything that the accumulative weight of the Tibetan scholastic tradition has to teach us about the meaning of these or of any other early texts would be other than sheer, fruitless folly. We must always acquaint ourselves with what the culture itself out of which our texts grew, and the culture which in turn these same texts themselves fructified, has to tell us about what our texts mean. But to do this is by no means the same as to treat the SCP and RKHP as if they were mere code-books or darkly enciphered messages, i.e. not really texts at all but puzzles or ciphers, meaningless sequences of linguistic xs and ys that could only be decoded by consulting the deciphering lore of the later lamas. For all the difficulty of their terse, enigmatic style of statement, the SCP and RKHP are both texts; and texts can, moreover must, be read as texts. Simonsson scores this first point with admirable brevity: “Like Pāñini’s sūtras the Tibetan sūtras are written in an extremely laconic style which makes them very difficult to interpret, but easy to distort by commentators who cherish opinions of their own” (1982b.286). Put in another way, at the same time that we consult the later commentators, we must always be on guard against the distortions that they may have introduced in the course of “cherish[ing] opinions of their own”. Nor need it be pointed out at length that such distortions generally make themselves most obvious when, as so frequently proves to be the case, accommodation of the “cherished opinions” of the later commentators would require us to fly directly in the face of the plain sense, and especially of the grammar, syntax, and lexical meanings, of the original early texts themselves.

Second, Simonsson demonstrates, both by the example of his own careful exegesis of SCP śl. 1 and of RKHP śl. 32, as well as by his critical evaluation
of previous renderings of these passages, the almost awesome responsibility necessarily involved in any attempt to translate either selections from, or the entire text of, either work.

Most important to understand in this connection is that no lack of gratitude for the enormous labors of pioneers in this field, such as Bacot or Schubert, is involved in our critical evaluation of their early efforts. We could hardly work at all without the benefit of the earlier studies, and yet, as Simonsson deftly points out, too often one or another of the early translators has simply "not cared to translate this [or that] word, this resulting in his interpretation of the whole grammar turning out practically meaningless" (1982b.288). So much for sins of omission; one scarcely need dwell upon the even more disastrous results obtained when, as frequently, the earlier translators have not avoided difficult words and terms, but instead have replaced them outright with quite incongruent, when not totally irrelevant, Western school-grammar categories.

Third, not only in precept but also by example Simonsson has clearly demonstrated the only method actually available to us for solving the problems presented by these two early grammatical treatises from Tibet—not the uncritical rote replication of the "cherished opinions" of the later commentators, but the painstaking philological exploration ab initio of virtually every technical term in the SCP and the RKHP—in the course of which we must constantly balance the considerations of "the Buddhist philosophical speculation" on the one hand with "the Pāṇinian tradition" of the Indic vyākaraṇa on the other (1982a.537, but also passim.). This point is hardly a new one in Simonsson's work: it was originally made with equal force in his ITS, p. 242 (cf. 1982a.543); but the passage of nearly three decades has not in the least diminished its impact.

Fourth, and finally, Simonsson puts us even further in his debt by deftly placing into a rational and reasonable scientific perspective the still vexing question of the historicity of Thon-mi Sambhoṭa, the putative author of these texts: "Whether Thon-mi Sambhoṭa lived in the seventh century A.D. or earlier, or even is legendary, is scarcely of importance for us here. It is important, however, that two grammatical treatises do exist, attributed to a person of that name, and that these treatises, the sūtras, have been in the center of Tibetan grammatical thinking for many hundreds of years" (1982b.286). This point is extremely well taken; but at the same time, it ought not discourage us from continuing to seek out, whenever possible, documentable text-parallels, if not text-sources, in both the Indic and the Tibetan grammatical tradition, for specific SCP and RKHP passages, particularly for a number of especially enigmatic passages in these two texts: frequently (as e.g. in the case of SCP śl. 12, see §3.3.5 infra) the identification of such independent textual testimony not only throws light upon the dating of one or more passages in the grammatical treatises, but also provides a reliable method for penetrating the
veil of distortions with which the later commentators have clouded over our comprehension of many important elements in the early Tibetan grammatical tradition.

1.3.3 Heartening also to those concerned with the study of these early texts from Tibet are the many indications, increasingly to hand, showing how our studies, in their own and necessarily limited fashion, frequently recapitulate not only much of the practical method but also a good deal of the intellectual impetus that presently propels the van for Indic grammatical studies proper, especially Pāṇinian researches. This is a development that was only to be anticipated, particularly in view of the intimate relationship between the early Tibetan grammatical works and the vyākaraṇa that has, inter alia, most recently been emphasized de novo in both of Simonsson’s new contributions (but particularly 1982a passim., and 544), where he demonstrates that even “in spite of the fact that [a specific] illustrating example . . . is a typically Buddhist one, we shall have to turn to the Pāṇinian tradition in order to understand” it.

It would be folly to assert, or even to imply, that anything in the Tibetan grammatical tradition ever approached Pāṇinian standards of subtlety and sophistication. But even though the tradition is thus, in a sense, far from Pāṇinian, it is still indubitably Indic, and so it must always be approached from the point of view of the Indic grammarians and their views.

We have already had occasion to explore one aspect of this Tibetan recapitulation of the trend of Pāṇinian studies: the denigration that the SCP (and its author[s]) have had to endure on the part of certain modern students of this text is neatly paralleled by the abuse that e.g. Whitney once was short-sighted enough to heap upon Pāṇini himself: but “before we . . . similarly make the mistake of assuming that the author(s) of the SCP were not sensible, and that this text abounds in errors, and that we are entitled to reject it outright merely because it does not agree with our concept of what it should be or say, we will do well to remember how absurd Whitney’s imprecations strike the Indologist—as well as any serious linguist—today” (LDT §3.3).

Another of the several directions along which our Tibetan linguistic studies frequently display almost startling parallels with the path of recent Pāṇinian researches concerns the manner in which much of the later Tibetan tradition for reading our texts has long been characterized, to an overgenerous degree, by what we may term ‘the unwarranted presumption of synonymity’; it was only to be expected that when, in the late 1920’s, Western scholarship first fitfully directed its energies toward these sources, it too would inherit a large amount of this gratuitous postulation. The technique involved in this presumption of synonymity is highly seductive: unfortunately also it is almost always misleading, when it is not simply incorrect.
When one or the other of these two ancient grammatical texts opts for two (or more) distinct terms or expressions for a linguistic entity that appears to us today (or even to the lamas of the schools a few hundred or so years ago) to be pretty much one and the same, the gratuitous presumption of synonymity urges us simply to sweep all this under the rug, by assuming that terms $x$, $y$, $z$ . . . $n$ are, in such cases, nothing more than redundant synonyms employed in elegant variation, i.e. that they ‘all mean the same thing’.

Even on the face of the matter, this is generally highly unlikely, particularly when we keep in mind the terse, succinct style of both the SCP and the RKHP. One can hardly imagine a literary form less hospitable to elegant variation than the spare, concise language of these two texts. Synonymity also becomes increasingly improbable when we consider the issue in the light of recent developments in Pāṇinian studies, to which this portion of our remarks has immediate reference—developments usefully summed up in Deshpande 1984, reviewing Kiparsky 1979. As Deshpande describes the situation, ‘‘[w]ith some 2500 years of Pāṇinian commentators and their modern followers believing that [terms $x$, $y$, and $z$] are synonyms, one must admire K[iparsky]’s courage in starting with the hypothesis that each term may denote a different kind of option, and also appreciate his originality in seeking valid methods to prove his hypothesis. . . . if one is to disagree with [the commentators], then one cannot rely on the same old ways of justifying one’s interpretations. One must find ways which are totally independent of the tradition, and at the same time these must be convincing and ingenious.’’ In a word, Kiparsky has sought to detect—and to document!—differences in Pāṇini’s description and analysis in cases ‘‘where the entire tradition of Pāṇinian grammarians has been able to find no difference in meaning’’. In the process he has not only evolved ‘‘significant methodological, historical, and substantive implications for future research,’’ he has also documented that ‘‘his basic claim seems to be better justified than the alternatives of blindly clinging to the traditional belief that these [lexically different] terms mean the same’’ (Deshpande 1984.162, 161, 163).

In other words, by abandoning the gratuitous assumption of synonymity, Kiparsky has gotten us closer to the original sense of his texts. Our texts too, though much later in time, and originating in quite a different country and language, and also based upon linguistic description and analysis of far less sophistication and intricacy than those underlying Kiparsky’s corpus, are nevertheless part and parcel of the same overall Indic tradition as that in which Kiparsky works. Not only does it thus behoove us to turn constantly to the Pāṇinian, resp. the Indic, grammatical tradition in order to understand our texts, as Simonsson stresses; we are also generally well advised to approach that tradition, and our texts, whenever possible in terms of the methodological approach exemplified by Kiparsky on putative synonymity.
Above everything else, this means constantly being on the alert against the gratuitous assumption of synonymity: whenever the Tibetan commentators (or Western scholars uncritically parroting their views) insist that terminological diversity in the SCP and RKHP is meaningless ("x, y, z . . . n all merely mean the same thing"), we must always be prepared at least to consider the possibility that each different term in the original may instead well have meant something different. And, as we hope to illustrate in the present contribution through specific illustrations drawn from the SCP, considering the issue in this fashion frequently throws new light on the sense as well as on the implications of this ancient linguistic text, light that is as welcome as it is long overdue.

Also displaying impressive parallels to many of the questions raised by these Tibetan grammatical studies are a number of the issues treated with impressive power of conviction by Cardona in his account of the method of description of the Indic grammarians as reflected in the so-called Śiva-sūtras of Pāṇini's grammar (Cardona 1969). The first six ślokas (in the conventional numbering) of the SCP also constitute, in effect, a sīva-sūtra-like preliminary to the grammar-proper of this treatise (LDT §3.1.2 with note 44); and as a consequence there is much for our studies to learn from Cardona's explication of these fourteen preliminary Pāṇinian sūtras, particularly in his stress on the apparently diverse but actually unitary function of the various aspects of these passages, i.e. for "the formation of pratyāhāras to be used in rules", his emphasis upon the way in which "Pāṇini's grammar is thematically divisible into several main parts", and especially his identification and reconstruction of his so-called L-Pāṇini as "a classification of sound which must be considered pre-Pāṇinian" (Cardona 1969.12, 3, 9). Each of these parts of Cardona's study has much to teach us about how we may most usefully approach our own texts, and in what follows we shall have more than one occasion for implementing his method and approach in terms of our rather less involved materials.

2. To sum up, then, our point of departure for the present study of the SCP, it is actually necessary to recapitulate only two basic facts that by now have been established about this text. Both are exceedingly simple, but by the same token, both also are exceedingly important. The SCP is old, and it is a text, i.e. it is an old text.

Upon each of these two discrete terms, as well as upon the sum total implied in their collocation above, depend a number of working hypotheses that we shall attempt to implement in §3 infra; but first it is necessary to elaborate upon some of the principal implications of these categorizations.

2.1 The SCP is old. This holds valid and remains significant almost without regard for the still partly unresolved questions of its date and authorship, cf. Simonsson 1982b.286 (already cited supra, 1.3.2). Indeed, one wonders if
we actually possess any original Tibetan literary composition, i.e. texts not translations from Indic or other originals, that are older than the SCP, or at least older than the now partially lost Old Tibetan Urtext that may be demonstrated to underlie certain portions of the received-text SCP (cf. the discussions of SCP śl. 8 in LDT and GTR, passim.).

Because the SCP is old, it naturally follows that we must approach the problems of its meaning (not to mention those of its translation) with all due regard for the views of the later Tibetan scholastic tradition in which this treatise has been continually transmitted and studied, probably for ca. a thousand years. In the same way, students of Pāṇini must necessarily work carefully through the vast body of lore and learning of which Kātyāyana and Patañjali represent only the peak of a great mountain of erudition. But because the SCP is old, far older without question than any of the subsequent commentators upon it, we must not repeat the fatal methodological error of confusing the respect and attention that are properly due the lore of the later lamas with the equally proper critical philological scrutiny that are due this text by reason of its antiquity. It would be absurd to claim that we “know more than the lamas” on this or any other Tibetological topic; but it would be equally absurd not to be willing to recognize, and to admit, that we may very well know different things than they did, and do, particularly when text-critical techniques unknown to them permit us to work in the light of earlier, recovered (resp. restored) stages of text history not at their disposal. Cardona has put this point too extremely well: “... I am obviously indebted to the Indian commentators ... One cannot help but have great admiration for the erudition and acumen of commentators ..., and their comments have served both to help in understanding the grammar and to point up problems. Careful attention to commentatorial statements does not, of course, imply blind acceptance of them all” (1969.3).

Previous studies of the SCP and RKHP have in fact all too frequently confused “careful attention to commentatorial statements” such as those to be found in the magisterial work of the Mahāpaṇḍita of Situ with blind acceptance of them all. The great Situ commentary on the first two grammatical treatises is, it hardly need be stressed, the most comprehensive and thoroughgoing guide that we possess for our study of these texts; it is also by that same token liable to be the most dangerous, because of its author’s overpowering compulsion to explain everything in the texts in terms of a single and unilinear, if not simplistic, system. In the process, as we shall see in particular detail at §3.1.3 infra, the Mahāpaṇḍita of Situ effectively erases much of the overt philological evidence for more than a few significant distinctive categories that the SCP original establishes in terms of its own linguistic analysis and descriptive techniques; and this tendency of this all-important commentator was one that almost literally snowballed in the hands of the Western students
and translators. When, as frequently, we find the Tibetan commentators violating the grammar of the language itself in the process of 'explaining' the statements of the SCP (e.g. on śl. 12, §3.3.5 infra), or even at times making unsupported claims for lexical meanings otherwise totally unattested (e.g. §3.3.5 infra on tshig), it is incumbent upon us to look at their statements with more than ordinary caution—all the more so when, as also all too frequently is the case, we detect them effectively rewriting the original in order to make it say something that it plainly does not, and never did, say (e.g. anent SCP 8, in LDT and GTR, passim.). This we can accomplish only by looking carefully once more at the text itself: what the later commentators claim that it says is never irrelevant, but in the final analysis only what the text itself actually proves to say, in and of itself, is actually significant. When all is said and done, the text must—and almost always can—speak for itself.

2.2 The SCP is a text. From this fact also there depend a number of imperatives that are virtually categorical for its study. Most of these considerations are closely interrelated with those just discussed: once we determine to let the SCP speak by, of, and for itself, by reason of its antiquity, we will no longer be tempted toward overreliance upon the traditional scholastics who have all too frequently regarded it, not as a text, but as a code or a cipher—a series of intrinsically meaningless, or at the least always obscure, statements into which we must somehow insert meaning, as one inserts meaning in the process of deciphering or decoding an arbitrary system of secret writing. To follow the Tibetan commentators blindly into this gambit is to do them and their erudition less justice than their often considerable achievements and commendable energy normally deserve.

Over and above these considerations, the basic fact of the essential textuality of the SCP in its turn imposes at least three consequential contingencies upon our studies. Since the SCP is a text, it has internal structure—by definition, since all texts do. Since it is a text, it not only has structure, it also has rule ordering, of which we shall have more to say below, but which for the moment may adequately be understood as directing attention to the fact that the statements of the SCP occur in a certain and fixed, but not necessarily arbitrary order vis-à-vis one another. Part and parcel of the fact of textual structure is that, as a consequence, individual parts of the whole stand in a fore or aft relation to one another; and it will be one of the particular tasks of §3 infra to study and if possible explain the implications of this ordering of its rules for a better understanding of the linguistic analysis inherent in the SCP. Finally, since the SCP is a text, it has its own history. A text is not an abstraction (though it may of course deal with more than one variety of abstraction): it is an entity that exists in time, and hence it has history—but this lasts brings us back full circle to §2.1 supra, i.e. to the essential fact that the SCP is old.
2.2.1. The internal structure of the SCP is a concept carefully to be distinguished from the various varieties of extrinsic structures, or structurings, that the later commentators have frequently imposed upon it, in their well-intentioned but not always equally well-informed attempts at explication. A parallel may very well be drawn with the concept of 'grammar' in the abstract. The internal structure of the text is the only relevant framework in terms of which the text may either be described or explained, even though that framework is frequently anything but obvious, and hence frequently must itself be discovered in the process of our analytic study of the text. In this it provides a precise parallel to the grammar of any language, in the larger sense of that term, understanding grammar as that which exists in and as part of any given language, where it awaits discovery by the linguist. In these same terms, the generally irrelevant extrinsic structuring that the commentators would impose upon the text from the outside parallels, e.g., the Greek- and Latin-based European grammars that inept linguists still frequently attempt to foist off upon languages of totally different structures. If our understanding of either is to advance, the structure of a text, like the structure of a language, must always be left to speak for itself.

Probably the most striking examples of this variety of largely irrelevant extrinsically-imposed structuring are provided by the two commentaries translated by Schubert, the late recasting by Rol-pa'i ro-do-rje (1717-1786) of the relatively early work by Dharmapālabhadra, Chos-skyoṅ-bzaṅ-po (1441-1528), and the very late commentary of Dbyaṅs-can grub-pa'i ro-do-rje. In both instances, the extrinsic structurings that these commentators imposed upon the SCP have if anything been thrown into larger-than-life relief by Schubert's painstakingly literal translations, which leave most of the technical terminology in Tibetan, while at the same time maneuvering the commentators' systems of number-marked extrinsic structurings into a position of even greater visibility than that which they enjoy in the originals that Schubert was rendering. The result is that the student of Schubert's translations, valuable though they still are, and indeed the remarkable accomplishments that they were for their time, will most likely be inclined to believe that the extrinsic structurings which he elevated to such a prominent place in his versions are of cardinal importance for an understanding of the SCP itself (which is true enough, but not in the sense in which the reader of Schubert's translations will take it), and also that these extrinsic structurings somehow reflect the internal structure of the SCP itself (which is not true at all, in any sense).

The net of extrinsic structurings that the great commentary of the Mahāpaññita of Situ throws about both these two early treatises is at once rather more sophisticated than anything known until his time, and by that same token rather more difficult to evaluate; it also has, as we might expect from its author's enormous evidence of erudition, much to teach us today, de-
spite the equally obvious necessity for never following it blindly. Most convenient for inspecting the extrinsic structurings involved in the Situ commentary is the form in which its schema is recast in the concise epitome of Dharmabhadra; and the schema of this epitome may in turn most usefully be consulted in the meticulous and always conscientious translation of Inaba, especially in his overall presentation of pp. 314-16. This, along with Inaba’s Japanese translation, p. 317 ff., is particularly convenient for confronting with Inaba’s critically edited text of the Dharmabhadra epitome of the SCP, in his Furoku, pp. 1-44; the reader will wish to compare both with the proposal in §2.3 infra for a thematic division of the SCP (in the sense of Cardona 1969.3) into several parts according to the text’s internal marking of its own internal structure. These, it will be found, do not always or necessarily differ too strikingly from the extrinsic structurings imposed by the Situ commentary; but by the same taken, the two also do not always coincide by any means; and when they do not, their lack of congruence is frequently of critical value for an understanding of our text.

For example, we shall see below (and we have already discussed in LDT in some detail) how SCP šls. 1-6 constitute a śiva-sūtra-like prolegomenon to the SCP, and we have also touched upon the internal relationship of these six ślokas among themselves (a relationship further detailed in §2.3 infra). This is to be contrasted with the Situ commentary’s ordering of these six: the Mahāpaññita takes šls. 1-6 together as a set, to be sure, but he also places śl. 1 on one level as coeval with šls. 2-6 on another, an arrangement that seriously compromises our understanding of the grammatical-analytic functions of the statements concerned. Similarly with the second major portion of the SCP (our ‘II’); here the Mahāpaññita resolutely imposes an extrinsic ordering on šls. 7-23 that would see in šls. 7-17 “eight particles and case suffixes undergoing morphophonemic alternation” (rjes-hjug la ltos-pahi phrad rnam-dbye . . . brgyad, text ed. Inaba, p. 14, §II.A.2a, translation Inaba, p. 329, §233), as against, in śls. 19-23, “six free particles not undergoing morphophonemic alternation” (rjes-hjug la ma-ltos-pahi phrad rañ-dbañ-can . . . drug, text p. 26, §II.A.2b, translation, p. 345, §260). But unexplained, indeed unmentioned, in this variety of extrinsic structuring is why, e.g., śl. 17, which treats the morphophonemically invariant vocative case marker, is found in the particular location within the SCP where it is, or why the terminal enclitic -Qo of śl. 7 (LDT §3.1.1 with note 42) is taught at the beginning of this section, not to mention a host of parallel problems.

2.2.2 The grammar of the SCP, like all grammars taking shape within the Indic tradition, is in effect a set of rules that teach the morphological formation and syntactic meanings of specific linguistic forms; but as a consequence of its structure (§2.2.1) it also follows that the statements of the text possess rule order, i.e. there are principles of basic significance to the text’s descrip-
tion and analysis that determine how different parts of the grammar are interrelated and also why certain rules appear where they do. These principles are not always, indeed only rarely, set forth explicitly within the grammar itself; like 'grammar' in the larger sense, these too are mostly designed in such a fashion as to await discovery by the user of the text.

In the case of Pāṇinī, the extremely covert presentation of the grammar's rule ordering has tended to obscure much of the system until fairly recently; even such exemplary students of the text as "Renou . . . did not discuss in detail how different sections of the grammar are related and why certain rules appear where they do" (Cardona 1976.188, §II.1.5.2a), while as late as Fowler 1965 less informed students of the problem could still call into question the very existence of rule order in the grammar. Now we know better. We realize that Pāṇinian grammar not only involves order in its application of rules, but also is built upon an extremely sophisticated system of decision-making procedures that permit the user to select the proper rules and apply them correctly when the order of rule application is not the same as the external order of the rules in the grammar, while a given rule can require for its interpretation information available only from rules appearing later (Cardona 1976.191; 1970 passim.; Sag 1974). So subtle indeed is this particular aspect of the Pāṇinian grammatical tradition that even the major later Indic commentators, Patañjali included, appear to have become involved in early misunderstandings of the subject, particularly in their explanations of the proper procedure to be adopted by the user where two rules in a grammar appear to conflict, eventually even proposing that in such a situation one must apply the rule that will yield the desired results, i.e. that only prior knowledge of the correct results will allow one to apply the rules correctly in the first place (Cardona 1970, passim. but especially p.61)—hardly a high recommendation for any grammar. Fortunately, our Tibetan treatises by no means approach their Indic models on the score of the complexity and subtlety of their rule ordering; nevertheless, the concept as a whole is important to keep in mind while reading our texts, since if even in a somewhat attenuated form it nevertheless does play a significant role in their structure and presentation.

2.2.3 Finally, because the SCP is a text, and because it is old, it embodies history along with its structure and rule order. Our present text does not represent a unitary composition executed by a single hand at a single point in history: the complex background that may be recovered for our received version of SCP śl. 8 (already explored in detail in LDT and GTR) is a representative case in point. To read śl. 8 correctly, i.e. as it was intended to be understood at the time of the incorporation of its now-lost Urtext into our received version of the SCP, it is necessary to take cognizance of the historicity of this fragment. This historicity was necessarily a closed book to the traditional Tibetan commentators. In part this was because they lacked access to material now
available to us, e.g. in the case of śl. 8, to the Old Tibetan MSS explored in our previous contributions cited supra; in part also this was because they believed that both the SCP and RKHP were the product of a single hand at a single point in history. In part also it derives from the essentially different view of the nature of time and history that they inherited from the Indic world view. We shall see below (§3.3.5) how, when we are fortunate enough to have documentary attestation for what must be close to the first source for a given SCP statement—a statement that otherwise we now have only in a later, re-worked form—divergent and misleading readings are all that can result so long as we approach the SCP without the benefit of historical perspective. Questions of internal historicity are also involved in the necessary restoration of received śl. 20 from its traditional location within the text (§ 2.3). All these issues depend upon the fact that the SCP has its own history, which in turn comes back full circle to the issue of the SCP’s textuality.

2.3 At this point it is appropriate and useful to summarize the discussion thus far by means of a highly abbreviated but otherwise complete schematic breakdown of the internal structure of the SCP, correlating the traditional śloka numbers, which are of virtually no analytic or linguistic significance, with the several major and minor subordinate segments into which the text itself divides. These traditional śloka numbers appear at the extreme left of the schema in §2.3.1. Arabic superscripts on śloka numbers indicate the first, second, third etc. lines of each traditional śloka. Roman ‘I’, ‘II’, and ‘III’, immediately to the right of the traditional śloka numbers, and connected to them with right-handed curved brackets (}), are the major subordinate segments already described in broad outline (LDT §3.1.1). Next, to the right of these I, II, and III, is a three-fold breakdown of each of these major segments. For both I and II, (a) cites the overt internal syntactic indicators that provide the primary structural markings within the text itself identifying these elements. ‘‘The earlier translators [and it might be added, sometimes also (though less frequently) the Tibetan commentators as well] customarily ignored these indications of internal structure, even though they are essential to identifying the rule-ordered presentation that is central to the text’s analysis’’ (LDT §3.1.1 and note 42). These markers are generally examples of the terminal enclitic -Qo, but not exclusively, since yin, min, and mi srid also play their parts in the system.

For both I and II, (b) further breaks down the major segment, marking subsections with arabic numbers (I1, I2, etc., cf. LDT §3.1.2 and note 47). Left- and right-directed arrows (←, →) mark non-contiguous rule ordering where, for reasons to be discussed later, directly associated referant and referrand statements (e.g. śls. 13 and 8) are structurally displaced from one another.

For I, (c) briefly describes the content, resp. the linguistic function of the portions marked with right-handed curved brackets (}). For II, (c) serves a dif-
ferent function: here it rewrites the morphophonemic-process statements of the text in succinct form, to permit easy reference to and convenient identification of the forms taught in each section except for sls. 24 and 25 where (c) is again, as with I, content-explanatory. In these rewritings the symbols + and → have their usual linguistic values; on the processes that they indicate, cf. LDT passim., but especially §3.1.3. The reordering proposed for the position of traditional sl. 20 to follow instead sl. 23, indicated by the vertical arrow ( ↓ ), has textual as well as internal-structural authority; see Inaba, ed. Dharmabhadra, p. 28 note 7.

Finally, for III no further subdivision is at present possible, and accordingly none is here suggested. Earlier (SGTT, p. 8b) we held that these ślokas constituted “a late non-grammatical accretion to the SCP;” now it rather appears that III, while to be sure essentially non-grammatical and non-descriptive, is nevertheless not necessarily any later than the rest of that text, and even though “this largely didactic III is thus not intimately concerned with the technical-linguistic concerns of I and II, it nevertheless contains cross-references to I (in sl. 283), and to II (in sl. 285)” (LDT p. 188, §3.1.2 with notes 46 and 47). III is essentially concerned with the tantristic view of the non-identity of sgra and don, roughly ‘words, phrases, linguistic convention, linguistic meaning’ versus ‘propositional content, reference, referent; purpose of a speech-act, utterer’s intention, etc.’— in brief, ‘convention’ as against ‘intention’ (Steinkellner 1978; Broido 1983); it remains to be studied in the necessary detail, in the light of the recent studies just cited. In the meantime, it is to be noted that this same sgra-don dichotomy is relevant to the reading of sl. 8 (LDT note 15), another indication that while III is in one sense or another an accretion to the SCP, it is by no means either irrelevant to or unintegrated into the remainder of the text. See table 2.3.1.

3. Of particular significance for revealing many of the critical aspects of text structure and rule ordering in the SCP is this treatise’s presentation of the case-suffix system for the Tibetan noun, a topic that can only be approached in the light of the preliminary considerations already explored in §1 and §2 supra. This is also a topic that can, for the present at least, only be treated in broad outline, since its fuller exploration will eventually involve many more details than the present study can possible introduce; accordingly, §3 will emphasize in particular those problems in the SCP’s presentation of case that essentially focus around questions of terminology in the original and of translation in later Western and Japanese studies.

3.1 Mhvyt., CCXI, ed. Sakaki 4738 sqq. introduces the canonical Tibetan translations for the seven Indic cases, presenting the forms in question in the usual Indic order (I, nom., II, acc., III, instr., IV, dat., V, abl., VI, gen., VII, loc.). But unlike the SCP, the Mhvyt. does not propose Tibetan translations for the names of the cases, another of the several indications that these
2.3.1 Schema of the SCP

(a)  

\[\begin{array}{l}
\text{śl. 1)} \ldots \text{ho /} \\
2 \ldots \text{ho /} \\
3 \\
4 \{ \\
5 \ldots \text{min /} \\
6 \ldots \text{šes par bya /} \\
7 \ldots \text{yin /} \\
8 \\
9 \\
10 \\
11 \\
12 \\
13 \{ \\
14 \ldots \text{ho /} \\
15 \ldots \text{yin /} \\
16 \ldots \text{no /} \\
17 \ldots \text{yin /} \\
18 \\
19 \{ \\
20 \ldots \text{no /} \\
21 \\
22 \\
23 \\
24 \\
25 \{ \\
26 \\
27 \\
28 \\
29
\end{array}\]

(b)  

\[\begin{array}{l}
1^1 \} \\
1^2 \} \\
I^3 \rightarrow \text{śl. 2}^1 \} \\
I^4 \rightarrow \text{śl. 2}^2 \} \\
I^5 \} \\
I^6 \} \\
I^7 \} \\
I^8 \} \\
I^9 \} \\
\end{array}\]

(c)  

\[\begin{array}{l}
\text{śiva-sūtra} \\
\text{glosses to śiva-sūtra} \\
\text{negative prescriptions to I}^{1-4} \\
-(C)Co. \\
-su, -ru, -du, -na, -la \\
-Ci → -k(y)i \\
-k(y)i + s \\
-k(y)[a] + ň \\
-ste \\
-Cam \\
-nas, -las \\
kye! \\
ni \\
da + ň → dañ \\
d + e → de \\
g[a] + ň → gañ \\
puliṅga → p / m / b \\
strīliṅa → ma, mi \\
deletion metris causa \\
& negative prescriptions \\
\text{don ≠ sgra}
\end{array}\]
two texts are hardly representative of a unitary tradition (cf. *SGTT*, p. 45-6 on the āli, kāli question). Also unlike the SCP is the *Mhvyt.*'s overt listing of the nominative, where the SCP hews more closely to the Indic norm on this score, making no particular provision for teaching the specific forms and functions of the nominative as such (Cardona 1974 passim. on the silence of the Indic tradition on the notion of grammatical subjects).

The SCP names for the cases, or rather more precisely, the SCP translations of the Indic designations for the case functions that it adopts for its descriptions of the semantic-syntactic functions of the Tibetan case-suffixes, have been studied in admirable detail by Inaba, Excursus to §5, pp. 14-15, where he contrasts the SCP terms with their Indic originals as reflected, even if at second-hand, in Pāṇini, the *Kātantra*, and the *Candra-vṛtti*. Inaba's study, with its convenient table (p. 15), shows dramatically the way in which the SCP draws eclectically from diverse horizons of the Indic tradition: unfortunately however it does not address the cardinal issue of the absence of theSCP case terms from the *Mhvyt.*, nor does it concern itself with those cases where translations in the *Mhvyt.* suggest equivalents for the SCP terms that at least ostensibly are difficult to account for within the materials that Inaba does cite (e.g., śl. 11 byed pa po = kāraka, at *Mhvyt*. 4677, cf. §3.3.3 infra).

The SCP begins its account of the case-suffixes at śl. 8. This portion of the text, as already explored in considerable detail (cf. *GTR, LDT*), is an early fragment that described pre-Written Tibetan forms for the acc., dat., and loc. It is noteworthy, however, that while this fragment is pre-WT, it is not of course pre-Indic, i.e. it hews precisely to the Indic order for the Tibetan case-suffixes that it teaches. In other words, śl. 8 is not only old, it is also an old pre-SCP treatment of the Indic cases vis-à-vis the Tibetan case-suffixes. Most of the special problems and issues confronted in this śloka have been explored in the previous work cited, and may as a consequence be passed over here, except for some necessary consideration (§3.3.1) of the term la sgra = *la śabda under which the text subsumes the five suffixes for the three cases that it teaches. With Indic cases II, acc., IV, dat., and VII, loc., taken care of in śl. 8, cases III, instr., V., abl., and VI, gen., are left (still in Indic order) to be treated. But now the SCP departs from that Indic order, and for good reason. To have taken up III, instr., in śl. 9 would have violated the principle of economy of statement. If the inst. had been presented immediately, and following the Indic order, it then would not have been possible for the description to exploit the partial formal similarity between the Tibetan gen. and instr. case-suffixes. But neither the gen. nor the instr. could have been incorporated into śl. 8 (either in the form in which we now have this early fragment, or in its putative original redaction), because later on both would require statements for the alternations sustained by their initials that are impossible elegantly to incorporate into the patterns of śl. 8. But once the gen. has been described, then the
instr. is compendiously dealt with in terms of simple affixation of -s (*LDT*, note 6), hence śls. 9,10 (where the traditional numbering into two ślokas is without meaning), and śl. 11. The interpolation of śl. 12 into the treatment at this point also follows directly from considerations of morphophonemic descriptive economy, because of its initial alternation (on the other problems of śl. 12, §3.3.5 infra). Similar considerations of descriptive economy explain both the interpolation and ordering of śl. 13 and śl. 14; the treatment of case resumes with śl. 15,16 (again the traditional numbering for these two is without meaning), which deal with V., abl., now the sole remaining canonical Indic case to be treated. The *SCP* presentation of case thus concludes with śl. 17 on the voc., a passage that at the same time provides a transition to the next thematic subject of *SCP* II, where from śl. 18 on the text deals with larger syntactic relationships marked by such particles as *ni*, etc.

In order to survey the data concerned in the *SCP* presentation of case in terms of the principal concerns of the present paper, the schema immediately following, which displays relevant materials from *SCP* śl. 8 through śl. 18, will be useful, particularly because it shows the original terminology employed by the *SCP* in these matters as well as how that terminology has frequently been overlooked by the Western translators, or altered and skewed by the Tibetan commentators. In this schema the ➔ restatements are to be understood as already described for the schema of the entire *SCP* displayed *supra*. In the (partial) citations of the *SCP* in the left column, small capitals direct particular attention to the case terminology of this portion of the treatise, which will be further discussed in §3.3. The original Indic case-system congruities of this portion of the *SCP* are indicated in the middle column, enclosed in curved brackets ({}). The right column displays two types of data: samples of the ways in which the *SCP*’s original statements on the Tibetan case-suffixes are recast in a sample from the more important Tibetan commentaries, with S = the commentary of the Mahāpañḍita of Situ, as found in the epitome by Dharmabhadra (ed. Inaba), Z = Za ma tog by Dharmaṇa (1441-1526), ed. Laufer, *Sitzungsberichten der philos.-philolo. u. hist. Classe der kgl. bayer. Akademie der Wissenschaften zu München*, 1898, 519-94, and R = Dbyaṅs-can grub-pahi rdo-rje, ed. Schubert, *MSOS* Jhg. 31, 1928, plus translations cited from Bacot’s version of the *SCP* ślokas isolated from their commentary, in his *Les ślokas grammaticaux*. . . , pp. 76-79. See table 3.2.

3.3 From this second schema we are at once able to see (a) that the *SCP* employs three different terminological constructs in its presentation of Tibetan case, and (b) that the later commentators, as well as the Western translators following them, have consistently obscured this originally differentiated system, the former by misleading (or at the very least, unauthorized, because undocumented) paraphrases, the latter most frequently by simply lumping to-
3.2 Schema of the SCP on case

8.1-3:\( \rightarrow (s)u \)  
4-5:\( \rightarrow (r)u \)  
6-7:\( \rightarrow (d)u \)  
8:\( \rightarrow na, -la \)

9: las dañ ched dañ rten gnas dañ

10: de ŋid tshe skabs LA SGRA yin

9.1-2: \( \rightarrow -k(y)/g'i \) \{ VI gen. \}

10.1-4.5½: \( \rightarrow -k(y)/g/is \) \{ III, instr. \}

.5½: ... ḡrel baḥi SA

11.1: \( +s \rightarrow -k(y)/g/is \) \{ VII loc. \}

.2: byed pa po ru ſeses par bya

12.1: \( -i + ŋ \rightarrow -k(y)/g/añ \)

.2: tshig rgyan gnis dañ sdud par ḡgyur

13.1-3: la sgra - u + te \( \rightarrow \) stē

.4: de ni lhag dañ bcas paño

14.1-2½: \( -Ca + m \rightarrow -Cam \)

.2½: ḡbyed sdud yin

15.1-3½: \( na, la + s \rightarrow nas, las \) \{ V, abl. \}

.3½: ḡbyuṅ khuṅs SA yin te

16.1: dgar dañ sdud pāhan de bžin no

17.: gañ miṅ brjod pāhi dañ po ru kye sbyar ba ni bod pa yin \{ voc. \}

18.1-2: \( n + i \rightarrow ni \)

.3: dgar dañ bsnam pāhi TSHIG tu ḡgyur

{ II acc. \}
{ IV dat. \}
{ VII loc. \}
{ place \}
{ time \}


S: ... gyi sgra yin pas rnam dbye drug ...

Z: ... ḡrel baḥi sgra

R: ... rnam dbye drug pa ḡrel sgra

B: ... En leur ajoutant \( i \), on exprime la relation.

S: ... byed pa poḥi sgra bṣad pa ... 

~ ... sa ...

R: ... rnam dbye gsum pa byed sgra ... B: (En ajoutant le dixième suffix à ces particles,) On saura que l’on exprime l’agent.

S: ... Ø. B: ... On a les deux particules ornementales et l’augmentatif.

S: ... lhag ma dañ bcas pahi sgra.

B: ... On obtient la particule continuative.

S: ... sdud pahi sgrar ḡjug pa yin no.

B: ... On a la particule alternative.

S: ... kyi sa yin. B: ... On a les de provenance, Pour comparer et pour inclure.

S: ... bod pahi sgra. B: La particule kye est vocative.

S: ... ni sgra. B: ... Devient particule d’opposition et d’intensité.
gether all the terminological refinements of the original under the all-purpose rendering ‘particle(s)’. Just as we now take seriously the terminological variations in Pāṇini (cf. §1.3.3 supra), so also must we be prepared to take seriously the analytic-descriptive categories of the SCP presentation of case, in the form in which these specific categories are exemplified in the lexical differentiation of its original terminology.

3.3.1 As in so many other aspects, śl. 8 again shows its older historical status qua text in its employment of the term sgra = sabda in order to designate the four Tibetan case relations, equivalent to three Indic cases, and the five Tibetan case-suffixes, that this śloka teaches. The Situ commentary does not tamper with this terminology, and (probably as a result) Bacot’s translation is unexceptionable.

3.3.2 But the same can hardly be said of śl. 10 and śl. 15. These passages preserve another, and a different, and also almost surely an ancient, Tibetan grammatical term sa, which appears to have fallen out of use almost immediately after the period of composition of the SCP. As a consequence this term sa soon baffled the commentators, who universally resort to unauthorized and unsubstantiated paraphrase in order to explain it. The Za ma tog’s substitution of sgra for this difficult term in śl. 10 is early testimony to the difficulty of the problems that the scholastics encountered with this word; S and R pass on the same bold paraphrase in their turns. At śl. 15 the Situ commentary appears to keep the original form, without gloss or explanation, but it is significant that the var. lects. noted in the critical edition by Inaba of the Dharmabhadra epito- ome to this passage in effect reduce the reading to zero. We must also note in passing that S and R generally introduce the Indic case-numbers, e.g. rnam dbyed drug, etc., even though these play no part in the SCP case presentation as such, and are also surely anachronistic, since they reflect the late commentators’ secondary acquaintance with the Indic grammatical tradition; this system of case-numbers is also a representative example of an entirely extrinsic set of rule ordering externally imposed upon the text, and hence essentially irrelevant to its explication.

It is not particularly difficult to understand why the commentators have thus obviously had to struggle with this term sa, or why it so quickly dropped from their purview—this thanks in large measure to their efforts—within the Tibetan grammarians’ tradition. Overriding all other difficulties was that of its meaning. Tib. sa generally translates Buddhist Skt. bhumi ‘step, degree, stage’ (Edgerton, BHS Dict., pp. 410b-411a), or sthāna ‘point, matter, subject’ (ibid., p. 610a); but neither of these words appears to be attested as a grammatical term with reference to case forms or case relationships anywhere in the Indic tradition (while at the same time the phonetic sense of sthāna as ‘position of articulation’ is also surely irrelevant to the SCP’s employment of sa).
Among the translators, only Inaba has attempted to grapple with this *sa*, rendering it regularly with Japanese *ari kata* ‘the way (it, something) is, ought, or should be’ (Inaba p. 335 to s.l. 10, and p. 342 to s.l. 15). As a translation, this rendering is by no means clear, nor does Inaba ever share with us his reasons for settling upon it; and *ari kata* does not actually appear to have anything in common with the sense of *sa*. Nevertheless, his rendering does at least have the virtue of consistency, as well as signalling that the Tibetan original here employs a distinctive if difficult term. Perhaps Inaba’s fairly obscure rendering of *sa* in these *SCP* passages is to be viewed in the light of his elsewhere (§ 11, p. 25 ff.) translating *gnas*, which he takes to be equivalent to *sthaṇa*, also with Japanese *ari kata*, notably in the title of a still virtually unstudied grammatical treatise apparently dating from the second half of the eighth century, where the eight case relationships are called *gnas brgyad*. Bacot totally avoids the issue, and *sa* has no overt reading or equivalent in his version of either s.l. 9-10 or s.l. 15. Accordingly, it is small wonder that *sa* as a term finds no place in Bacot’s *Index des termes grammaticaux*, where it should (but does not) appear at p. 91; nor is it to be found in Inaba’s *Chibeto-go sakuin*, p. 9 (ff. p. 4 of his edition of Dharmabhadra’s epitome), even though he regularly translates it as *ari kata*; similarly it is missing from Schubert, *Anhang. Verzeichnis der tibetischen grammatischen Fachausdrücke (Gleichzeitig grammatisches Sachregister)*, pp. 52b-53a, *MSOS* Bd. XXXII.

But fortunately, we are able to make considerable headway in explaining this largely neglected and otherwise fairly obscure *sa* by means of reference to the Pāṇinian terminology, which proves directly to clarify s.l. 15 and at the same time, if only by indirect implication, also to throw light on s.l. 10. For its description of the syntactic-semantic relationship of the ablative case-suffixes, *SCP* s.l. 15 uses the expression *ḥbyuñ khuṇs sa* ‘an original, or source-place (*khuṇs-sa*) out of which something emerges, is taken, or is withdrawn (*ḥbyuñ-ba*), cf. *ḥbyuñ-khuṇ = chu-mig* ‘a well, spring’ and *ḥbyuñ-khuṇs-kyi khams* ‘a mineral’, Jäschke, *Dict.*, p. 398a, with the last entry cited from Csoma! Given the context of the passage in which it is found, this *ḥbyuñ khuṇs sa* may hardly be understood as other than a Tibetan calque upon the Pāṇinian description of the relationships of the ablative case forms of Sanskrit that employs *apāḍāna* ‘taking away, removal, ablation’, so that *apāḍāna* is the technical term ‘‘chez P de la rection casuelle (kāraka) représentée par un point fixe (dhruva) duquel on s’écarte (apāya)’’ (Renou, *Terminologie grammaticale du sanskrit*, p.48, with more on *dhruva* at p.169). (Unfortunately the Sakaki index to the *Mhvyt*. appears to have a misprint at p. 12 for its entry *apāḍāna*).

This equivalence has in part already been noticed in general terms (e.g. Inaba, p. 15, where the term *ḥbyun-khuñ* of *SCP* s.l. 15 is aligned with *apāḍāna* from Pāṇ. 1, 4,24 and 2,3,28 together also with *Kātantra* 2,4,19);
what has not been accounted for until now (and what is missing from Inaba’s table, loc. cit.) is the role of the SCP’s sa in rendering Pānini’s dhrvā ‘the fixed point (from which the ‘departure’ of the ablative takes place)’ (Monier-Williams, Dict., p. 521c). Especially when we understand that dhrvā is ‘fixed, firm, constant, immovable (e.g. the earth)’ (ibid., p. 521b), we are able to understand both how and why it has found itself rendered in the SCP by Tibetan sa. (On dhrvā see also Chakravarti 1930.270-74: ‘the word ... does not necessarily mean an absolutely motionless thing, but generally what remains more or less unaffected in the course of separation’.) Mhvyt. 7285 has dhrvā = brtan-pa ‘firm, steadfast’, but without any hint of the term’s linguistic applications; nor do any of its translations for sa point in that direction. Nevertheless, in view of the extraordinary correspondence in all items of detail between hbyun khuṇs sa on the one hand and the Pānini’s description of the ablative relationship in terms of apadāna and dhrvā on the other, there can remain little question of the correctness of the confrontation here proposed: SCP hbyun khuṇsa = apadāna, and SCP sa = dhrvā. This proposal is additionally substantiated by a significant passage in the commentary of Blobzaṅ tshul-khrims (1845-1915), ed. Beijing 1957 (SGTT, p. 40); his paraphrase of SCP šl. 15 as hbyun bahi gnas sam khuṇs gtoṅs sa (p. 79) indicates that he too recognized the Pānini’s apadāna and dhrvā in the Tibetan expression at issue.

In turn, it also appears fairly safe to speculate that it was from this originally quite literal rendering of Pānini’s dhrvā that, later in time but earlier in the received text of the SCP, the term sa found its way into the description of the genitive in šl. 10.11 By means of this terminological employment, our received text of the SCP now in effect hints at one of the special features of rule order in Indic grammars as understood and explained by the post-Pāninians: when two rules conflict, that one takes precedence that is stated later in the grammar (Cardona 1970). Here the issue is less one of rule-conflict than of rule-intelligibility; and the principle may itself be rephrased to require that when two obscure statements follow in sequence, that one is to be used as the basis for exegesis that comes later in the grammar. For a full understanding of SCP šl. 9-10, it is necessary to let the language of the later šl. 15 take precedence over the otherwise obscure language of the earlier passages. This rule order feature serves to integrate šl. 9-10 closely with šl. 15, and this in turn additionally benefits the user of the grammar since it thus emphasizes the essentially interpolative character of šls. 12, 13, and 14, which interrupt the SCP’s presentation of case for the reasons already clarified supra.

In effect, then, we find only one overt term for case forms in the SCP, in the oldest textual stratum as reflected in šl. 8 which has sgra = śabda. Another surely ancient (but clearly subsequent) stratum, seen in šl. 9-10 and šl. 15, has sa, but this is not a term for specific case forms, but rather an equivalent for
dhrūva, as employed in Pāṇinian descriptions of specific case relationships. The later Tibetan scholastic tradition conflated these two, losing sight of sa in the process, and also obscuring the original differentiation that obtains between these two in the SCP itself; the Western translators have incorporated this conflation, further obscuring the issue in the process. All this is particularly unfortunate because it has had the net effect of concealing one of the most characteristically Indic features of the linguistic analysis and description of the SCP, i.e. its fairly meticulous differentiation between specific semantic characterizations associated with individual case-form usages, and the so-called kāraka categories, a topic of wide implications for the understanding of both these two early Tibetan grammatical treatises, and one to which we are now in a position to turn our attention.12

3.3.3 No topic in their systems and theories is more involved, nor has any been more subtly elaborated by the Indic grammarians, than that of the kārakas; none also has been the subject of as much misunderstanding and controversy—much of both continuing even today—on the part of modern, and especially Western, students of these texts. Under the circumstances, we can here hardly aim to do more than touch upon the broadest outlines of the topic, hoping (even if perhaps in vain) that in the process we will at least demonstrate the overall relevance of the kārakas and their rules to a satisfactory reading of this particular portion of the SCP, and in particular for the recognition of the special role that kāraka formularizations play in this portion of our text.

The most useful general introduction to the topic and its bibliography is to be found in Cardona 1976 (III.1.5.5c.1, pp. 215-22), which contains, inter alia, the following key descriptions and definitions: “[in Pāṇini’s grammar] some affixes are introduced on condition that kārakas are to be denoted . . . The notion of kāraka is basic to Pāṇini’s derivational system. A kāraka is a thing viewed in relation to an action, in the accomplishment of which it plays a given role” (215). Further, “there has been considerable discussion regarding the precise status of these kāraka categories. In 1893, Whitney . . . reacting to Liebich’s dissertation (1886-87) in a typically acerbic manner, nevertheless made an important comment. Though Whitney could not fathom why Pāṇini proceeded as he did, still he noted appositely that the kāraka categories ‘are not an independent product of his [Pāṇini’s] logical faculty, but simply a reflection of case forms’ . . . ’” (216-7). This last is a reference to Whitney 1893.166 (in the reprint in RSG, pp. 166-84), and in particular to the following opinionated passage: “Pāṇini does not take up the cases as forms of nouns, setting forth the various uses of each, after our manner; he adopts the vastly more difficult and dangerous method of establishing a theoretical list of modes of verb-modification by case, or of ideal case-relations (he calls them kāraka, ‘factor’ or ‘adjunct’), to which he then distributes the cases . . . Any-
thing more crude or unphilosophical than this could not well be imagined." Cardona argues convincingly that those who would advance the view that "the position held by some modern theorists, that grammatical relations are universal, is Pāṇini's position too", are actually misrepresenting the notion of the kārakas: instead, "Pāṇini set up his kāraka categories in order to set up conditions under which affixes—both post-verbal and post-nominal—would be introduced, so that, far from having nothing to do with syntax or the derivation of correct Sanskrit utterances derived by Pāṇinian rules, the kāraka rules are intimately related to Pāṇini's syntactic rules" (Cardona 1976.218). Even in 1893, the same year as Whitney's remarks, and in a reply to the same, Böhtlingk had put the same point quite neatly: "Kāraka ist nicht jede <<case-relation>>, sondern nur die Beziehung eines Nomens zu einem Verb um . . ." (1893.186 in the reprint in RSG, pp. 185-92), adding as a dramatic aside, "Mit dieser kāraka-Theorie, die schwierig und gefährlich genannt wird, ist Wh. nicht einverstanden. Die Schwierigkeit und Gefährlichkeit derselben hat aber den kühnen, originellen und genialen P. nicht abgeschreckt" (loc.cit.). In a word, "Pāṇini's kāraka . . . categorization serves as an intermediary between semantics and grammatical expressions derived by rules of the grammar" (Cardona 1976.220).

All this holds quite as valid for Tibetan, as we find the language treated in the first grammatical treatise, as it does for Sanskrit as reflected within the system of Pāṇini. Just as in Pāṇini, so also in the SCP (and as we hope to show later elsewhere, in the RKHP as well), we have to reckon with the fact that the theme of one of the "several main parts" of the grammar is "the syntactic rules which serve to derive verbal and nominal forms through affixation conditioned in part by the expression of defined syntactico-semantic categories" (Cardona 1969.3). But in order usefully to explore the full implications of these syntactico-semantic categories for a reading of the SCP, we must first concern ourselves with the way in which the later scholastic tradition that has grown up about this text has all too frequently obscured an important third terminological category that the SCP employs, along with sgra and sa, in its presentation of case. This third category is the zero ('Ø') that the text utilizes in lieu of either sgra or sa, hence the Ø of šls. 11, 12, 13, and 14.

Like the overall concept of the mathematical zero itself, the employment of zero elements in linguistic analysis and description is of course to be recognized as a hallmark of the Indic intellectual tradition; that the employment of the zero in the SCP presentation of case is involved and subtle is, accordingly, less surprising than the way in which the original employment of this well-known descriptive device in the text has generally been overlooked by the later tradition. Indeed, in their treatments of the ślokas cited, the commentators have generally been even more misleading than in the cases where they have, e.g., paraphrased sa by sgra, etc., since in supplying overt terms (e.g.,
the Situ commentary, using both sgra and sa for śl. 11, R using sgra for id., etc.) they are not merely paraphrasing something found in the original, they are instead actually mutilating the text as they (and we) have it, since in effect they replace nothing (Ø) with something (sa or sgra).

Bacot’s translation is admirable at śl. 11, where his impersonal “On saura que l’on exprime l’agent” deftly renders, at least by implication, the Ø of the original. But unfortunately Bacot immediately thereafter totally abandoned this careful (and correct) approach to his text, and from śl. 12 through śl. 14 he regularly renders all the Øs of the SCP by interpolating “la particule, les particules”, even though nothing overt corresponding to these renderings is to be found in the text. Inaba is rather more meticulous on this point. His Japanese translation of śl. 11 (Inaba p.336) is less literal than Bacot’s, but it has the virtue (along with his śl. 13 (p.339) and his śl. 14 (p.341)) of avoiding the unauthorized interpolation of words meaning ‘particle’ or of any other overt, and here extraneous, grammatical terms. Inaba’s translations of the ślokas are sometimes heavy with questionable bracketed additions, but at least they avoid overt mutilation of the original on the present score. Even at śl. 12, where Inaba unfortunately falls victim to reproducing Bacot’s reading more or less intact, he manages to avoid the “les [deux] particules” of the French version that he is placing under contribution (Inaba, p. 337).

What is actually at issue in the four Øs of SCP śls. 11-14, and as a consequence what has also until now been obscured by the Tibetan tradition and the Western and Japanese translators alike, is that single refinement of grammatical analysis and description that is of cardinal importance for a reading, much less for a translation, of the SCP. This same refinement being a commonplace of all the Indic grammars, it is hardly unexpected to find it in the first Tibetan grammatical treatise; in a word, we have here to reckon with the general categories of the kārakas and the kāraka rules. In essence, it is for the kārakas, as opposed to and contrasted with the nominal case-suffix forms proper, that the SCP here employs its Øs.

3.3.4 In the examples that they cull in order to gloss śl. 11, the later commentaries make it clear that they have always understood the fashion in which the kāraka relationship of karana “instrumental” taught in this passage applies equally to the two well-known WT constructions with -k(g)/y/is that are quite obviously different both semantically and syntactically, i.e. those in which a noun with this case suffix appears as agent (in the sense of ‘instrument’) of an intransitive verb, and those in which a noun with the same case suffix appears as the (so-called ‘logical’) subject of a transitive verb, where however it is still always in a sense also instrumental (thus, Dharmapala, in Inaba, text p. 20, translation p. 336).13 The intricate intersections that obtain between the originally Indic, Pāṇinian-based teachings of the instrumental kāraka relationships on the one hand and those evolved by the Tibetan grammarians on the other,
in order to make it possible for them to accommodate the WT constructions with \(-k(g)y/is\), are too extensive to be treated here: they are exemplified in the similarities, but also in the differences, between e.g. *paraśur vrksam chinatti* (Cardona 1976.219) on the one hand and *gris gcod-pa* (Jäschke, *Dict.*, p. 76b) on the other; and *inter alia* they will eventually provide materials for the future investigation of yet another enormous area of linguistic analysis and description where the Tibetan masters brought to bear upon their borrowed Indic intellectual heritage the full force of their frequently surprising powers of invention and innovation. To paraphrase Böhtlingk, for all its difficulties and dangers, the *kāraka* theory terrified the intrepid, original and brilliant author(s) of the *SCP* no more than it had Pāṇini and his school: both were willing to undertake the risks to which Whitney alluded in order to explore the complexities of this system, because of the compendious fashion in which this same scheme ultimately facilitated and refined their linguistic analysis and description. Under the circumstances, surely we today can at least dare to be equally brave.

3.3.5 The rationale for the textual, resp. structural interpolation of śl. 12, which teaches the forms and meanings of *kyañ, hañ, yañ*, so that it immediately follows śl. 11, is easily understood in terms of descriptive economy: by this particular ordering of the rules of its grammar, the *SCP* is able to discharge its duties with respect to the forms in question without the necessity for otherwise and in some other place recapitulating the morphophonemic statements required to account for their initial alternation. This then explains why the account of *kyañ* etc. intrudes into the text’s presentation of the case suffixes and of their grammar at this particular point in the treatise; but exactly what it is that the *SCP* has to say about the syntactic meaning of these particular forms, once they have been taught, is somewhat less easy to comprehend.

The difficulties of this śloka have given rise to a considerable amount of largely irresponsible exegesis in the Tibetan schools, most of it no more than sheer speculation; see the careful and useful accounts of the views of the various commentators in Inaba, pp. 215-9, §148.2. What is most significant in all this is that, e.g., the Mahāpaññita of Situ and his epitomist (in Inaba, p. 21), uncharacteristically do not interpolate any extraneous grammatical terms into their paraphrases of the *SCP* at this point, for once remaining faithful—if only after their fashion—to the Ø of the original’s *tshig rgyan gnis dañ sdud par ḡgyur*.

Unfortunately, the translators, Inaba included, have not been equally fastidious. Inaba here writes *joji* (‘particle, suffix’, p. 337), uncritically following Bacot, who had earlier rendered this with “On a les deux particules ornementales et l’augmentatif” (p. 77). With the usual advantages of hindsight, we now can see that much damage has been done by an otherwise innocent note by Bacot, who wrote, “*tshig rgyan ornement du discours*, est à peu
près synonyme de *tshig phrad* morphème’’ (p. 27, note 1). This is yet another example of the unwarranted assumption of specious synonymity which so frequently, as here, plays havoc with the precise terminological distinctions of the original text; and indeed, Inaba (p. 216) cites this same passage by Bacot as his source and sole authority.

Together with this problem of specious synonymity, the reading and interpretation of this śloka also confront us with two other questions earlier alluded to (§1.3.2), both involved with the reasons why the highly elaborated views of the later Tibetan scholastic authorities are difficult to entertain intact, for all their evidence of wide reading and retentive memories, for the simple reason that their opinions fly in the face not only of the grammar but also of the attested lexical meanings of the forms as they appear in the text concerned. Indeed, the problems of śl. 12 are so numerous as to merit compendious treatment elsewhere; for the time being we can here do no more than point out the gist of the problem.

In its syntax, the general reading of the schools, reflected also in the available translations, is unlikely in the extreme, particularly in its treatment of both *gṇis* and *daṅ*. Just as there is no word in the original that would correspond to, or account for, the translators’ ‘particules’, resp. *joji*, so also the *gṇis* in this śloka can hardly, from its location within the syntactic structure of the original, have been intended (as all the commentators would have it) to qualify *tshig-rgyan* (with the ‘-’ *sic* ‘and’ *sdud-par*.

On the lexical level, we here confront one of the most difficult of the Tibetan grammatical terms, *tshig*. Bacot’s note (cited above), with *tshig rgyan* as ‘ornement du discours’, surely pointed in the correct direction; but unfortunately, after this good beginning, he then immediately departed from that approach and unwarrantedly assumed synonymy with *tshig-phrad*. On *tshig*, an important beginning has now been made in Simonsson 1982a.537, where he discusses ‘whether it corresponds to the *pada* of the Buddhist philosophical speculation or to the verb-centered *vākya . . .* of the Pāṇinian tradition.’’ Here Simonsson is returning to an earlier concern, first expressed in his *ITS*, p. 242 (cited *SGIT*, p. 14, note 87), relating to the overall problem of the precise meaning of *tshig*, along with a number of other basic but still most imperfectly understood Tibetan grammatical terms.

At any rate, and despite the Herculean efforts of the schools, the text of śl. 12 remains a laconic enigma. But as we pointed out two decades ago (now in *SGIT*, pp. 15-16), it is an enigma that is rendered at least somewhat less enigmatic when we compare the received text of this śloka in the *SCP* with §20 of the *Sgra-sbyor bam-po gṇis-pa*, *ITS* p. 255. This comparison (full details of which are available in the works cited) does not solve all the problems of this text; but at least it makes it clear that the *SCP* passage is best, indeed, solely, to be understood as a highly condensed paraphrase of the content of the *Sgra-
sbyor bam-po gnis-pa passage, “or of some other third and presently unknown text affiliated with the SSBP passage or closely resembling it, and that as might have been expected, what the text gained in elegance and conciseness in the course of being restated it lost in clarity” (SGIT, p. 16). The comparison also demonstrates the sense in which the tshig rgyan gnis (sic! and not tshig-rgyan, gnis . . . , as the commentators would have it) is to be taken: the ‘two’ elements or entities being described are, in Simonsson’s terms, tshig (gi phrad) ‘the particles of discourse’, and rgyan (lta bu) ‘the so-called ornamentals’, i.e. the syntactic or lexical situations in which it is necessary to understand (or, for the SSBP, to translate) a combination of two or more morphemes literally but also with full attention to the semantic role of each of the constituent elements, as against those other situations where this is unnecessary: “man begnügt sich damit, den Sinn des Kernwortes wiederzugeben” (ITS, p. 256). In other words, as we might well have guessed, the SCP after all is a text; and as such, it has its own history, qua text.

4. “The interpretation of Pāṇini is possible only with the help of commentaries, which does not mean that one should not make special efforts, as difficult as that may be, to get away at times from those commentaries’” (Renou 1969.486, §9). Similarly, the interpretation of the SCP is possible only with the help of the later commentaries; but nevertheless—and as we have hoped to demonstrate in the present contribution—this hardly entitles us to overlook the language, grammar, and structure of our text if or when doing so becomes the price of following the later commentators.

Not the least of the many exciting future prospects for these studies now opened up for us by Simonsson are his suggestion that “the Tibetan theory of grammar is founded on two sources, the Pāṇinian vyākaraṇa and the speculations on language as they are to be found in the buddhistic texts on dogmatics (e.g. Abhidharmakośa by Vasubandhu)”, as well as his hint that “[t]his duality proves to be the reason for certain difficulties in the Tibetan arsenal of grammatical concepts” (1982b.287). The entire question of the precise nature and exact dimensions of the innovations that were surely wrought upon the massive structure of Indic grammatical science and linguistic speculation in the course of its transmission within the Buddhist schools is one that today is anything but well understood. Renou claimed to be able to detect but few genuine ‘innovations’ in the grammar of Candragomin (1936, §3); nevertheless, even this long-standing, well-known study hardly rules Simonsson’s far-reaching speculations on this topic out of question, it simply shows us once more how much still remains to be done along the lines of assessing the ultimate impact of Buddhist thought upon Indic grammatical science: this also (to borrow Renou’s own words) “does not mean that one should not make special efforts, as difficult as that may be . . . ”
In the course of such an assessment, an account (still largely to be written) of the linguistic description and grammatical techniques of the SCP and RKHP must necessarily play a major role; and before the more narrowly Buddhist aspects of this question can adequately be grasped, we must first of all place our control of the larger Indic facets of these texts on a more stable philosophical ground than that upon which it has until now reposed: hence our present concern with text structure and rule ordering in the SCP, the two being without question the most essentially Indic aspects of this or any other grammatical treatise.

We have already had occasion to cite Whitney 1893 supra, but there within a context that might well leave the impression that the master Indologist of New Haven had nothing of value on these questions to teach us today: that would be both unfair and misleading. Even given all his difficulty in grasping the essential spirit of Indic grammatical science, Whitney was nevertheless able to write in conclusion, "I am fully persuaded that anyone who should master the Hindu grammatical science without losing his head, who should become thoroughly familiar with Pāṇini and escape being Pāṇini-bitten, would be able to make exposures of the weaknesses and shortcomings and needless obscurities of the grammar on a scale hitherto unknown" (Whitney 1893, cited RSG, p.184). Mutatis mutandis, this may even serve as an epitome of our present goal, and of the aim of this paper: we are fully persuaded that anyone who should master the Tibetan grammarians and their science without losing his head, who should become thoroughly familiar with these texts and escape being bitten by the later commentators, will be able to make exposures of the strengths and merits and many still only partially comprehended subtleties of their grammars, on a scale hitherto unknown.

NOTES

1. Alexander Csoma de Körös, Enumeration of historical and grammatical works to be met with in Tibet, Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, 7 (1838), Part II, pp. 147-152.
2. Other abbreviations for frequently cited works:
3. But for the traditional approach to these question, see most recently also Narkyid 1983.
4. GTR, passim., and also our remarks in Journal of the Tibet Society 1, 45-62, 1982.
5. This point is further explored in LDT, passim.
and RKHP, and his point is well taken; the tradition of referring to the statements in these two
texts as slokas urgently calls for reassessment.
7. We employ the conventional numbering for the statements of the SCP throughout, even
though these clearly have no relation to the content and structure of the text itself, because they
facilitate reference to various texts and editions already employing them.
8. The text translated by J. Schubert, Tibetische Nationalgrammatik (Leipzig, 1937), is a late
epitome of the original; of much greater value are the quite early commentaries of Dharmapālab-
hadra (1441-1526), Tōhoku-zōgai 7071, 7072, which have been translated by Inaba in the Ōtani
Gakuhō 54:1, 1974, 37-51, and 58:4, 1979, 13-31 (unfortunately however without the original
Tibetan being included).
9. Translated by J. Schubert, MSOS, Jg. 31, 1928, and Jg. 32, 1929.
10. The text and translation that form such an important part of the original edition of Inaba
were unfortunately not included in the second reprinting of his Bumpo-gaku, Kyoto, 1966.
11. My thinking on this issue was considerably clarified by a conversation with Dr. Kurt
Keutzer during the Bloomington Symposium.
12. SGTT, p. 121 sqq., is to be corrected.
13. But Inaba, p. 15, §§5, and p. 195, §141.2, when he takes byed pa po as ‘karti-karaṇa’
(punctuation sic!) is not to be followed literally.

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Notes on Csoma de Kőrös’s Translation of a Tibetan Passport

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In 1833, Kőrösi Csoma Sándor published a two-page article in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, entitled “Translation of a Tibetan Passport, dated A.D. 1688.” The basis of this article was an engraving of a document found in Thomas Hyde’s Historia Religionis Veterum Persarum, first published in the year 1700. Regarding this document, Csoma noted that “...at the time of its publication, no European was able to decipher the characters.” Csoma found that the document was written in “...the small running-hand of the Tibetans...”; that is to say, the cursive (dbu-med) script. Csoma’s article gives his transcription of the entire text, together with his footnoted translation of it. Perhaps prompted by the scarcity of Thomas Hyde’s work even in his own time, Csoma, in his two-page article, quoted entirely the 13 lines of information about this document found in that work. Curiously however, as will be seen in the course of this paper, even though Csoma quoted Hyde verbatim, he apparently chose to ignore what Thomas Hyde had to say about the document itself.

Turning to the transcription of the engraving given by Csoma in his article, only in one place did he question the orthography of the original text. He transcribed that entry as stahur-gyi; but, immediately after that Csoma inserted the following: “(? Lhahur-gyi).” The lack of any graphic similarity in cursive Tibetan between the writing of stahur and Lhahur piqued my curiosity regarding the actual appearance of the original graphs, and particularly as to why Csoma would choose to substitute Lhahur-gyi, which he translated as “Lhahori...”, for stahur-gyi, which he did not mention in his translation or footnotes at all.

Fortunately for my curiosity and the purpose of this paper, the microfilm collection in the main library of the University of Washington contains a copy of the first edition of Historia Religionis Veterum Persarum by Thomas Hyde, [Note about the significance of the paper and the author's role in the conference.]

† This article is the last publication by Professor Wylie, as it was also the last paper he read at a conference. He passed away before being able to complete the revision and annotation. Professor Roy Andrew Miller kindly located the manuscript, and sent it, along with an explanation of the sad circumstances (for which see the Notes to this paper), to the editor for inclusion in the present volume.
S.T.D. \(^7\) Thanks to modern technology, it has been possible for me to have made a photocopy, as well as a 35mm slide, of the original document in Hyde’s work.

A comparison of Csoma’s transcription of the text with the actual engraved inscription revealed that he misread the orthography of the original document eight times. Six of his misreadings are of minor importance since the correct reading would only enhance the quality of the translation without changing it substantively. The remaining two misreadings are of crucial importance since they relate to the identity of the person to whom the passport was issued. \(^8\)

Of course, such emendations to Csoma’s transcription will necessitate revision of his translation of the passages in question. However, rather than discuss these separately and out of context now, they will be dealt with in an appropriate place in the course of this paper.

On the other hand, since the time of Körösi Csoma Sándor, much has been published about Tibetan official documents in general, and official seals and inscriptions in particular. \(^9\) Consequently, there are places in which Csoma’s transcription of the original text is correct; but, his translation of it needs to be updated in the light of such documentary studies. Due to space restrictions on the text of this paper, a complete translation of the original passport inscription, with all revisions noted, is relegated to a footnote. Only those important and interesting revisions of the translation, whether based on updated data or on emendations of Csoma’s transcription, will be noted here.

The opening phrase of the inscription, *chos 'khor dpal gyi lha sa nas*\(^1\), is repeated almost verbatim in the closing line of the main text; that is to say: *chos 'khor chen po dpal gyi lha sa nas bris*. Csoma’s translation of these two phrases is curious. He wrote: “From the noble (city) Lhassa, the circumambulating race of religion.’’, and “Thus has been written from the noble Lhassa, the great religious race . . .”\(^10\) His “circumambulating race of religion” and “the great religious race” are Csoma’s equivalents for *chos 'khor* and *chos 'khor chen po*; but, these are simply direct Tibetan translations of the Sanskrit *dharmačakra* and *mahādharmačakra*. The opening phrase of this passport, dated in 1688, is identical to the opening phrase of another passport, dated in August, 1732. In that case, the phrase was translated by Professor Luciano Pettech by: “Dalla nobile Lhasa Ruota della Legge . . .”\(^11\) which he footnoted with the explanation that: “Ruota della legge (*dharmačakra*) ha qui il significato di perimetro sacro.”\(^12\) It would appear the “Noble Lhasa, the Wheel of the Law” had become a common epithet in official documents about the turn of the 18th century.\(^13\)

The first emendation to Csoma’s reading of the inscription would change his transcription of “drag, zhan Lhahi mi-rje” to read: *drag zhan lha sde mi sde*. His translation of “noble, ignoble lords (or masters) of men; . . .”
would then be revised to read: "... noble, ignoble [i.e., strong, weak]... monastic communities, lay communities;".

Csonka's somewhat verbose rendering of the term hBrog as "... dwellers in tents in the desert;" can be simplified to "Nomads." His translation "... collectively, charged to perform some business of small or great importance:" should be revised to read: [elders], "... subjects, all those charged with the responsibility of civil and military affairs ...".

The second emendation of Csonka's transcription is one of the most significant points in this paper. Csonka misread i wang na can of the original document and transcribed it as "It'hang-na-chan." Such a misreading brings under question his translation of that entire passage which reads: lha sa phun tshogs lcang lo can gyi 'gron po mgo dkar i wang na can mi bzhig. Csonka's translation of this passage reads: "These four foreign (or travelling) persons residing at Lhasa, lcang-lo-chan, Mohammedans of It'hang-na ..."

Putting aside his "Mohammedans of It'hang-na" for the moment, the rest of Csonka's translation is not only uninformative, it violates a cardinal rule of Tibetan grammar. The lengthy discussion to justify this statement must be relegated to a footnote; suffice it to say here that the Lcang-lo-can family was very powerful and politically involved in Tibetan history at the time this passport was issued. A more correct translation of this passage would read: "These four, guests of Phun-tshogs Lcang-lo-can (in) Lhasa."

Let us return now to Csonka's "Mohammedans of It'hang-na." As noted earlier in this paper, Csonka quoted verbatim all that Thomas Hyde said about the passport in question; however, Csonka then chose to ignore what Hyde actually said about the document itself. Perhaps Csonka rejected Hyde's information as being incorrect on the grounds that Hyde had proved his ignorance of the Tibetan language by saying that it was read from right to left. Csonka bluntly refuted that statement in a footnote, saying: "This is of course a mistake ..." However, it appears that what Thomas Hyde said about the document was based upon reliable, albeit secondary, sources of information.

For example, although Csonka refers to the document only as a "passport", Hyde precisely notes that it was a passport or a letter of safe-conduct. The document in question was indeed a 'letter of safe-conduct.' As has been shown elsewhere, a Tibetan lam-yig was not in any sense of the geo-political use of the word a 'passport.'

Thomas Hyde, S.T.D., explained that he obtained the original document from a friend, John Evans, S.T.D., who had returned in recent years from India. Presumably John Evans was as ignorant of the language of the passport, otherwise he could have told Thomas Hyde that one read it from left to right. It seems logical, therefore, that whatever Hyde wrote about the document in question, he based it upon information he obtained from his friend, John Ev-
ans, who in turn got not only his information, but the document in question itself, directly or indirectly from the very person to whom it was issued.

If this assumption is valid, then the identity of the person to whom the passport was issued can now be discussed. Hyde states that the passport, or letter of safe-conduct, was given in recent years to one "... Chogja Ouanni (i.e., Domino Joanni), mercatori Armeno . . ."\footnote{25} Hyde parenthetically equated Chogja Ouanni with Domino Joanni, that is to say "Master John." This name corresponds to the I-wang-na of the Tibetan document. The vowel i in the Latin form of the name is a sign of the dative case: dative because the document had been given to the merchant named John.\footnote{26}

According to Hyde, the name Ouanni (= Joanni) was preceded by another term of reference, which he latinized as Chogja and defined in Latin as Domino. In the original Tibetan document there is also a term of reference preceding the name I-wang-na (= John); but that term of reference is mgo-dkar, a proper Tibetan compound.

In his transcription (not in his translation), Csoma footnoted this term as follows: "The name mGo-dkar (properly white-headed, but rendered by me, above, by Mohammedans) formerly was applied in Tibet both to the Mohammedans of India and to the Europeans. But of late the Tibetans have commenced calling the Europeans by the name of Philing-pa . . ."\footnote{27} The problem of the ethnic and cultural reference of the term mgo-dkar has been mentioned in various studies.\footnote{28} Suffice it to say here that Csoma's assumption that the term referred to "Mohammedans" in this Tibetan passport is not valid.

There is ample evidence in Tibetan official documents, dated a half-century after the passport in question here, that the term mgo-dkar ('white-headed') was not used for "Mohammedans", but for Europeans of a different religious persuasion. As just one example, in a letter dated 1741 and attributed to the great Pho-lha-nas,\footnote{29} it states (in part): btsun pa'i rigs kyi ga bu ji ni zhes pa'am mgo dkar bla ma 'di rnams . . ..\footnote{30} Professor Luciano Petech translated this as: "... detti Cappuccini dell'ordine monastico oppure Lama teste-bianche . . ."\footnote{31} Such documentary evidence that mgo-dkar was used to identify European fathers of the Catholic faith justifies our setting aside Csoma's wrong assumption that the term referred to "Mohammedans" in the passport.

Let us now turn to the term of reference given by Thomas Hyde preceding the name Ouanni; that is to say, the term Chogja. Thanks to my colleague Professor Michael Loraine, the Persion scholar, I learned that the title, latinized by Hyde as Chogja, but pronounced Hoja, is an old loan-word into Armenian from the Persian Khwaja, a secular title signifying someone of prominence, that is to say a "lord" or "master."\footnote{32} Again, Thomas Hyde must have relied on verbal information from his friend, John Evans, that the
Armenian merchant was called Chogja (=Hoja), since the passport itself refers to the merchant as Mgo-dkar ("white-headed"), or a European Christian. The use of the title Chogja (=Hoja) for an Armenian merchant of the Christian faith must not be confused in this case with the use of the same title, Khōjā, from the Persian, to identify a caste of Indians converted in the 14th century to Islām from Hinduism, most of whom in time became Muslim followers of the Aga Khan.

Although he was incorrect, Csoma’s assumption that the passport in question was issued to "Mohammedans of It’hang-na” helps explain his interpolation of the text when he misread the original as being “stahur-gyi.” As noted earlier, this is the second of the two misreadings by Csoma of basic importance to this paper. Since his misreading meant nothing to him, Csoma suggested it be emended to (?Lhahur-gyi), which he then translated as the name Lahore in the genitive case. Since Csoma was convinced that the merchants involved were Muslims, it would be logical that they had a connection with Lahore, then the capital of the Punjab, the Muslim region of India in the time of Kőrösi Csoma. Nevertheless, Csoma’s translation: “. . . having nothing for their defence except some Lahori-weapons . . .” cannot be accepted as correct.

The original text reads (in part): rta’ur gyi [= rta ’ul gyis] mtshon gang spyi’i sar rog rtan du gang ’gro las. (Two additional emendations to Csoma’s transcription are included in this passage: sar for his par; rtan for his nyan.) A more correct translation of this passage would read: “. . . wherever they go, always assist them there with whatever [they need], with compulsory horse [transport] as the [principal] example.”

The final emendations to Csoma’s transcription noted in Appendix C are of minor importance and will be dealt with only in a footnote here.

Before putting Csoma’s translation of the Tibetan passport behind us, his translation of the term mdun-sa as “the senate-house” raises a question. In translating mdun-sa, literally “place in front,” as “the senate-house”, Csoma seems to be unaware of the political circumstances prevailing in Lhasa in the year 1688. The passport in question was issued during the period between 1682 when the 5th Dalai Lama died, and 1697 when the 6th Dalai Lama was publicly enthroned in the Potala palace. During this period, Sangsrgyas rgya-mtsho was the Regent (sde-srid) and in charge of governmental affairs. There was no “senate-house.” Here, mdun-sa, the “place in front,” might be translated as the “secretariat.”

In closing this preliminary paper there is just time to mention that mysterious aspect of Csoma’s translation of the so-called “passport,” that is to say, the black square-figures at the end of both the transcription and the translation which bear the simple legends: “A square seal.” It was my curiosity about the nature of that seal which originally prompted me to undertake the writing
of this paper. When I began, I had no idea that I would find far more to re-
search and write about than just the square seal at the end of Csoma’s con-
tribution. Csoma himself made no comment on the seal nor did he indicate
whether or not it even contained an inscription.

As can be seen from the photo reproduction of the passport itself, the seal
was not imprinted on the document in the proper, vertical position. The col-
umns have been impressed horizontally on the passport so that the top of the
seal actually faces to the right. I have no explanation for this apparent mistake
in applying the seal.

Moreover, as can be seen from the photographic enlargement of the seal
(see Appendix B), the inscription appears, at least at first glance, to be written
in the traditional 'Phags-pa Script. However, upon closer examination, one
sees that the vertical blank spaces that separate the columns of a 'Phags-pa in-
scription are broken by various lines that cross over the blank space and hook
onto letters in the next column. Moreover, except for a few, none of the letters
in this seal inscription actually resembles traditional 'Phags-pa letters, whether in the documentary or monumental form.

Unable to decipher the seal inscription whatsoever, I consulted my old
friend, Professor Emeritus Nicholas N. Poppe, who, after carefully examin-
ing the photo enlargement of the seal, informed me that the script was not
'Phags-pa Script, in spite of its general appearance to be so; and that the in-
scription was neither in Mongolian nor Manchu.

Needless to say, much time has been spent trying to make sense out of this
seal. Time permits me only to note briefly here what is discussed at some
length in footnotes; that is to say, that this seal (along with its four columns of
mysterious inscription) is not unique among Tibetan seals. In 1915, E.H.
Walsh published a photo reproduction of a seal, with an inscription in five
columns, which he described as being the “Larger seal of the Regent of Lhasa
on a permit granted to the Capuchin Monks at Lhasa in the year A.D.
1741.” Unable to decipher the inscription of that seal, Walsh noted that “It
appears to be in old Mongolian seal character, or an imitation of it.”

That same seal is reproduced in Il Nuovo Ramusio and Professor Luciano
Petech said that he had been unable to decipher the inscription. He noted that
Professor Paul Demiéville had excluded it as being in Chinese, and that Dr.
Walter Fuchs had ruled out the possibility that it was in either Mongolian or
Manchu. Professor Petech concluded that footnote with the scholarly re-
mark: “La questione rimane aperta.” I believe that the same remark might
well serve as an open conclusion to this preliminary study of Körösi Csoma
Sándor’s translation of a Tibetan passport, dated A.D. 1688.
NOTES

[Shortly after Turrell V. Wylie accepted his invitation to participate in the Bloomington Conference honoring the birth of Csoma, he learned, from a routine X-ray examination, that he suffered from an inoperable malignancy, for which, soon after the New Year’s 1984, he began a grueling series of chemotherapy and neutron radiation treatments. As a consequence, virtually all the work that he was able to do on this paper was conducted despite enormous physical difficulties; and perhaps only those of us who were privileged to see Terry frequently during his last months knew how great an effort this work cost him, even while we also realized how much it meant to him to be able to continue with his Tibetan studies, particularly at such a time. It also required great physical courage for Terry to undertake the trip to Bloomington; but few of those present when he read his paper on the afternoon of April 18, 1984 probably even realized how much effort all this cost him; nor would he have wished them to.

At the Bloomington meetings Terry pointed out that he had not yet been able to write out the forty-six footnotes for which numbers appear in his text; these footnotes, he told us on several occasions, "would be much longer than the paper itself." He hoped to be able to complete these footnotes after he returned to Seattle. But tragically enough, this was not to be allowed him.

On June 18, 1984 Terry wrote Christopher Beckwith, explaining that his deteriorating physical condition had made it impossible for him even to look at the paper, and asking that he be given some extra time, if possible, in which to finish his contribution to the Conference volume. Characteristically, he added, in that last letter, "Never before have I had to ask for special consideration on such a deadline, but then I have never had cancer treatments before either." Terry undertook his final course of therapy on June 26, but between then and his death on August 25, 1984 he was never again strong enough to be able to return to his scholarly work.

The text of Terry’s paper printed here is that of the typewritten draft that he prepared to read at Bloomington. Upon returning to Seattle he had placed it in a folder labelled “Passport”, where it was found after his death. Into this same folder Terry had also meticulously placed copies of the correspondence concerning the Bloomington conference and his travel arrangements, together with several later letters dealing with the study; but there was no trace of the footnotes in the folder, nor has his wife Sharrie been able to locate them among Terry’s other papers.

What a few of these notes might have consisted of may perhaps be conjectured. Note 1 probably would have given the further citation details of the JASB reference, Vol. II, 1833, pp. 201-202. Note 2 (or Note 7?) most likely would have cited the relevant section on the 1700 Historia religionis veterum Persarum of Thomas Hyde (1636-1703) from Michael Aris, "‘A Note on the Resources for Tibetan Studies at Oxford,’” Bodleian Library Record Vol. X, No. 6, May 1982, pp. 369-370; Terry had received a reprint of this article from Aris after returning to Seattle, and he had placed it in the same folder as his manuscript. In Note 32 I am certain that he had intended to cite, inter alia, Paul Pelliot, “Le Ḥōja et le Sayyid Ḥusain de l’Histoire des Ming,” TP, Vol. XXXVIII, Livr. 2-5, 1948, 81-292, especially Pelliot’s etymological epitome of the several forms going back to Pers. ḫwājah (‘ aficionado’ howo-tchô est en chinois la transcription régulière du titre musulman de Ḥōja < persan ḫwājah, ‘maître’ < malais kōjah); c’est aussi le „Coca” de Marco Polo, „coya” de Marignolli, ghoya en persan et coia en turc dans le Codex Cumanicus (éd. Kuun, 105; Grönbech, Koman. Wörterbuch, 198); cf. aussi Yule, Hobson-Jobson, 234”; and he had discussed this reference before we went to Bloomington, and it interested him particularly because the Tibetan version of the form in the passport text had escaped even Pelliot’s far-reaching etymological net.

It is particularly unfortunate that Terry was never able to return to writing his footnotes, since his own complete retranslation of the passport was, as his text puts it, one of several things to be "relegated to a footnote." He had decided to do this in order to ensure that his oral presentation would not exceed the precise amount of time allowed him at the Bloomington meeting. Only
those of us who knew Terry well realized how carefully he always prepared the public reading of a paper, and especially how concerned he was never to run even a minute over the time allotted him on a program. Even in Bloomington, and as ill as he was, he had spent several hours the night before he gave his paper rehearsing and timing his presentation.

In the same folder, there were copies of two letters concerning the passport which Terry had received in May and June from Braham Norwich, who had also attended the Bloomington meetings. Since there seems to be little question but that some of the material in these letters would also eventually have found its way into the footnotes, I will cite two relevant passages here:

(1) In a letter of May 21, 1984 Norwich reported as follows on the views of Tsepon W. D. Shakabpa, with whom he had, in the meantime, discussed Terry’s paper: “Tsepon said first 1) there is no meaning for the seal stamped sidewise, except that it was an error made by the attendant who stamped it. 2) the seal is Gyurme Namgyal’s, who was the chief administrator of Tibet during the seventh Dalai Lama. This of course cannot be the case, since the document was published prior to that period. What it means to me is that the official seal of that post did not change much if at all with the change of the person in charge.”

(2) In a letter of June 5, 1984 Norwich again wrote, as follows: “Tsepon W. D. Shakabpa has just written to me to clarify the identification of the permit, so I hasten to quote the pertinent material for you. The travellers were residing at Changlochan. Earth Dragon year coincides with the western year of 1688 as the latest year it could be, in order to be published in 1700. The seal, on closer examination, is that of Sdesrid Sangsrgyas-Rgyamtscho. He has a record of that seal in his home in Kalimpong. The lettering on the seal is not Mongolian. It contains the letter ཆ which is definite proof that the seal belonged to Sdesrid Sangsrgyas Rgyamtscho.”

Under these circumstances, it has seemed best to publish Terry’s last paper just as he was forced to leave it, tragically inachevé. Its incomplete form cannot but continue to serve as a vivid reminder of how much we all lost when he was so suddenly taken away; but it will also always remind us of the strength and determination, combined with his customary and constant concern for the feelings of others, with which he persevered in his Tibetan studies until the very end. RAM]
APPENDIX C

The eight misreadings of the Tibetan cursive inscription by Csoma de Kőröss and their emendations are charted below. Note that the first column gives the number of the line in the original document in which the orthography in question is to be found. The second column gives the transcription by Csoma, using italics as he did to mark prefixed consonants. The third column gives the emended reading as per the orthography of the original document. [Note that these transcriptions are according to Turrell V. Wylie, “A Standard System of Tibetan Transcription.” Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies. 22 (1959): 261-7.] The readings given in the third column were independently corroborated by my Tibetan colleague, Geshe Nawang Nornang (University of Washington), who supplied the suggested emendations given in square brackets [ ] in the last column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Original</th>
<th>Emended</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Lhahi mi-rje</td>
<td>lha sde mi sde</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>It’hang-na-chan</td>
<td>i wang na can</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>stahur-gyi (Lhahur-gyi)</td>
<td>rta’ur gyi [ = rta ’ul gyis]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>par rog nyan-du</td>
<td>sar rog rtan du [rtan = gtan]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>hgol-du</td>
<td>’gal du</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>nyan ma byed</td>
<td>rtan ma byed [rtan = gtan]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The emended translation of these passages will be given in the appropriate places in the course of this paper.
APPENDIX D

Csoma de Kőrös’s Translation of the Passport

'From the noble (city) Lhassa, the circumambulating race of religion. —To those that are on the road as far as Arya Dèsa or India, to clerical, laical, noble, ignoble lords (or masters) of men; to residents of forts, stewards, managers of affairs, to Mongols, Tibetans, Turks, and to dwellers in tents in the desert; to ex-chis (or el-chis, envoys, or public messengers, vakifs or ambassadors, &c.) going to and fro; to keepers and precluders of bye-ways (or short-cuts); to the old (or head) men, collectively, charged to perform some business of small or great importance; to all these is ordered (or is made known). These four foreign (or travelling) persons residing at Lhassa, Ichang-lo-chan, Mohammedans of It’hanga-na, after having exchanged their merchandize, going back to their country, having with them sixteen loads on beasts; having nothing for their defence except some Lhahorí-weapons, — do not hinder, rob, plunder, et cetera, them; but let them go to and fro in peace.

Thus has been written from the noble Lhassa, the great religious race, from the senate-house of both ecclesiastical and civil affairs, in Sa-hbrug* (in the year of T. ch. 1688). On the day of the month. (These dates are wanting.)

Note.—There is no Tibetan joined with them. They have about a man’s load of victuals wrapped up in a bundle; with that there has been made an increase (of packages), but let them go in peace.'

[Note: In this reprinting of Csoma’s translation, bold-face type indicates Csoma read the Tibetan correctly, but the translation needs updating or revising; wide-spaced type indicates those places where Csoma misread the original Tibetan cursive inscription and the translation must be changed.—TVW]
THOUGHT
Une polémique sur l’authenticité des Bka’-thaṅ
au 17e siècle*

ANNE-MARIE BLONDEAU

L’intérêt d’Alexander Csoma de Körös ne semble pas s’être porté sur Padmasambhava, ni sur les ouvrages relatant sa vie. Il ne le cite qu’occasionnellement, par exemple dans sa traduction du bstan-rtsis du Vaidūrya dkar-po,1 et les quelques explications qu’il fournit en note sur le personnage ne sont que le reflet de l’opinion tibétaine traditionnelle.2 Il paraît même ne pas avoir établi le lien entre les Thaṅ-yig ou Bka’-thaṅ et Padmasambhava puisque, dans l’analyse sommaire qu’il fait de la littérature tibétaine, ces textes sont signalés avec la seule explication: “‘written advice or instruction’.”3

Cette lacune dans l’oeuvre de Csoma de Körös s’explique aisément car, pour longtemps encore, l’école Rñin-ma-pa devait être négligée par la tibétologie au profit des Gsar-ma-pa et notamment des Dge-lugs-pa. Quant à la biographie de Padmasambhava, elle n’apparaissait représentée que par les deux Bka’-thaṅ du quatorzième siècle, Gser-phreṅ et surtout Šel-brag-ma, faute de connaître l’ensemble de la littérature biographique et polémique consacrée à Padmasambhava.

J’ai parlé ailleurs4 de la classification tibétaine des biographies de Padmasambhava en mñal-skyes, naissance ordinaire par la matrice, caractéristique de la tradition des bka’-ma, et brdzus-skyes, naissance miraculeuse, propre à la tradition des gter-ma. Ce sont ces dernières biographies, qui portent le nom générique de thaṅ-yig ou bka’-thaṅ, qui ont soulevé doutes ou questions chez les Gsar-ma-pa, entraînant de la part des Rñin-ma-pa des réponses en défense de leur tradition. Questions et réponses s’inscrivent dans le schéma classique des textes successifs d’attaque (dgag-pa) ou de questions (dris-pa) et de réponses aux attaques (dgag-lan), aux controverses (rtsod-lan), aux questions (dris-lan). C’est l’une de ces réponses polémiques qui sera présentée ici, le Bka’-thaṅ dris-lan, Réponse aux questions sur les Bka’-thaṅ, de Rtse-le Rgod-thsaṅ-pa sna-tshogs raṅ-grol, alias Rtse-le rig’-dzin, qui figure dans le Gsuṅ’-bum de cet auteur.5 Malheureusement le texte des attaques (qui pourrait n’existerait que sous forme manuscrite, voir plus loin) auxquelles il répond

* Je veux exprimer ma reconnaissance à mes maîtres et amis Dge-lugs-pa, Dvags-po Rinpoche, Yontan Gyetso, Ngawang Dakpa, qui m’ont fait partager leur tradition orale et m’ont aidée à éclaircir bien des points du texte.
ne nous est pas parvenu et, comme c’est souvent le cas, on doit se contenter de le reconstituer approximativement d’après les citations qu’en fait Rtse-le rig-dzin.

1. Les protagonistes.

Le premier volume du Gsuṅ-’bum renferme une autobiographie de Rtse-le rig-dzin écrite à l’âge de soixante-dix ans, ainsi qu’une Histoire des trois monastères de Rtse-le (dans le Dvags-po) qui étaient sous sa juridiction. Page 198 de son Autobiographie, Rtse-le rig-dzin renvoie pour plus de détails à un Rnam-thar chen-mo écrit par Rje-btsun mchog-sprul chen-po bzaṅ-po’i žabs, mais cette biographie reste inconnue pour l’instant.


Celui-ci, dès son enfance, a des visions de sa vie antérieure et il n’est intéressé que par la vie religieuse. Malgré la résistance de ses parents qui n’avaient pas d’autre enfant, il entre dans les ordres à six ans à Thaṅ-brog: c’est le troisième Dpa’o sprul-sku, Gtseug-lag rgya-mtsho dga’-ba’i dbyaṅs (1567-1633), de passage dans ce monastère, qui accomplit la cérémonie d’offrande de ses cheveux, lui donne des enseignements et le nom de Karma rig-dzin rnam-par rgyal-ba.

Jusqu’à onze ans, il reçoit des enseignements de maîtres variés, dont le gter-ston Rig-dzin rtsal qui reconnaît en lui une réincarnation de Vairocana. Il a aussi plusieurs visions, y compris de Zaṅs-mdog dpal-ri. Mais à onze ans, en 1618, le précédent abbé de Rtse-le meurt et, parce que l’on a reconnu en l’enfant la réincarnation de Mtshuṅs-med bstan-dzin rdo-rje, le nom de Lama et la responsabilité des monastères lui échoient: il doit renoncer à la vie contemplative à laquelle il se destinait pour se consacrer aux devoirs de sa charge. Il s’en plaint amèrement tout au long de son Autobiographie; vers trente ans, il abandonnera même ses charges, découragé parce que ses moines ne veulent pas renoncer à l’usage du chaṅ, et jusqu’à la fin de sa vie il fera de longs séjours dans des ermitages. Mais ses maîtres l’exhortent à reprendre ses activités pour le bien des êtres, et sa vie s’écoule entre monastères et ermitages.

L’autobiographie s’arrête à l’âge de soixante-dix ans (1677), et l’on ne sait pas à quelle date Rtse-le rig-‘dzin est mort. D’ores et déjà, on peut constater qu’il est le contemporain du Cinquième Dalai Lama (1617-1682) qui le tenait en haute estime.9 On va voir que c’est le Cinquième Dalai Lama qui, en fait, se trouve au coeur de la polémique entre Rtse-le rig-‘dzin et son adversaire.

Celui-ci n’est nommé dans le Bka’-thañ dris-lan que sous le sobriquet de Lama Rme-ru-ba, ou Rme-ru-ba chen-po. Les Dge-lugs-pa de nos jours s’accordent pour reconnaître sous ce sobriquet Brag-sgo rab-’byams-pa Phun-tshogs rgyal-mtshan, contemporain et disciple du Cinquième Dalai Lama avec qui il était très lié. Mais c’était un Dge-lugs-pa de stricte obédience, qui n’avait que méfiance à l’égard des Rňiñ-ma-pa et surtout des gter-ma. Il entretenait de ce fait des rapports ambigus avec le Dalai Lama; la tradition orale a gardé le souvenir de railleries et de plaisanteries échangées à ce sujet entre Brag-sgo rab-’byams-pa et le Dalai Lama.10 Celui-ci le qualifie à plusieurs reprises dans ses écrits de rto-g-ge-pa, “intellectuel”, avec la connotation péjorative que l’on sait.11 Dans sa liste des ouvrages polémiques sur les tantra (gsaň-sňags sun-’byin), Kлоň-rdol bla-ma inclut deux textes de Brag-sgo rab-’byams-pa dirigés contre les Rňiñ-ma-pa, dont l’un est consacré aux interpolations que l’on trouve dans le Mani bka’-’bum.12 Bien que la controverse
avec Rtse-le rig-'dzin ne soit pas expressément mentionnée par Kloṅ-rdol bla-
ma, il est sûr néanmoins que Brag-sgo rab-'byams-pa en est l’instigateur:
outre la tradition orale Dge-lugs-pa qui affirme même qu’il a rédigé ses
attaques en partie contre le Cinquième Dalai Lama,\(^\text{13}\) on en trouve une preuve
dans la biographie de Tson-kha-pa écrite par Rgyal-dbaṅ chos-rje.\(^\text{14}\) Dans un
assez long passage où il réfute les prophéties contre Tson-kha-pa attribuées à
Padmasambhava\(^\text{15}\) (mais apocryphes pour lui), Rgyal-dbaṅ chos-rje cite à
plusieurs reprises les ouvrages polémiques de Brag-sgo rab-'byams-pa, et en
particulier "les questions et réponses polémiques entre le savant Brag-sgo
rab-'byams-pa et Sna-tshogs raṅ-grol", où ce dernier a lui-même reconnu
qu’il y avait eu beaucoup d’interpolations dans les \(\text{Bka}'-\text{thaṅ}\) depuis la date de
leur découverte. On verra que c’est effectivement un point que Rtse-le rig-
’dzin concède à son adversaire. En préambule à sa réfutation, Rgyal-dbaṅ
chos-rje expose longuement les raisons qui l’ont incité à répondre aux
attaques contre Tson-kha-pa, qui pourtant ne mériteraient que le silence du
mépris. L’une d’elles est que, bien que Brag-sgo rab-'byams-pa ait déjà réfuté
ces attaques (dans une biographie de Tson-kha-pa qu’il a écrite),\(^\text{16}\) son œuvre
est restée manuscrite et n’est donc pas connue du grand nombre. On peut
supposer par conséquent que ses "Questions sur les \(\text{Bka}'-\text{thaṅ}\)" n’ont pas fait
l’objet non plus d’une édition xylographique, ce qui expliquerait que le texte
ne nous soit pas parvenu.

On peut se faire une idée de son contenu à travers le résumé qu’en donne
Sum-pa mkhan-po,\(^\text{17}\) où l’on retrouve la plupart des questions traitées par
Rtse-le rig-'dzin, parfois dans un ordre différent. Ce résumé permet de
constater que Rtse-le rig-'dzin a esquivé certaines attaques embarrassantes par
leur précision. Mais Sum-pa mkhan-po introduit un élément nouveau: il
conclut ce passage en indiquant que ces attaques contre les \(\text{Bka}'-\text{thaṅ}\) ont été
portées par Rgya-ma rab-'byams-pa et Brag-sgo rab-'byams-pa. Si l’identité
de l’adversaire de Rtse-le rig-'dzin trouve ainsi une confirmation sup-
plémentaire, il apparaît qu’un autre texte du même type, et probablement très
proche, existait. On va y revenir.

En ce qui concerne le titre ou sobriquet: Bla-ma Rme-ru-ba, donné par
Rtse-le rig-'dzin à Brag-sgo rab-'byams-pa, je n’en ai pas trouvé l’explica-
tion. Il est probable qu’à l’époque de la polémique, Brag-sgo rab-'byams-pa
avait en charge le monastère de Rme-ru qui était devenu Dge-lugs-pa sous le
troisième Dalai Lama.\(^\text{18}\)

2. \textit{Le contexte de la polémique.}

Elle s’incrit dans la longue tradition des attaques contre les Rñin-ma-pa
depuis le onzième siècle, dont la liste dressée par Kloṅ-rdol bla-ma, ou les ci-
tations qu’en fait Sum-pa mkhan-po, fournissent un bon échantillon. Les cri-
tiques s’adressent le plus souvent, on le sait, aux tantra rñin-ma-pa et surtout au Rdzogs-chen. Les doutes émis sur la personne de Padmasambhava sont moins fréquents; ils portent essentiellement sur la durée de son séjour au Tibet, les contradicteurs des Rñin-ma-pa s’appuyant sur les données du Shi-bzèd pour se demander comment, si Padmasambhava n’est resté que trois ans (ou quelques mois) au Tibet, il aurait pu accomplir tous les exploits que lui attribuent ses fidèles. Dans les textes rñin-ma-pa eux-mêmes, les contradicitions entre les versions bka’-ma et gter-ma de la biographie de Padmasambhava sont relevées. C’est ainsi par exemple, que Taranātha explique clairement qu’il préfère s’en tenir à la version bka’-ma confirmée par le Shi-bzèd.19 Mais, jusqu’à Brag-sgo rab’-byams-pa et Rtse-le rig’-dzin, il ne semblait pas y avoir eu d’analyse critique détaillée des Bka’-thaṅ. Pourtant, le passage du Dpag-bsam ljon-bzaṅ cité plus haut indique très nettement qu’il existait au moins deux textes critiquant les Bka’-thaṅ, celui d’un Rgya-ma rab’-byams-pa et celui de Brag-sgo rab’-byams-pa, la formulation même de Sum-pa mkhan-po laissant supposer que leur contenu était presque identique, celui de Rgya-ma rab’-byams-pa ayant probablement servi de base à Brag-sgo rab’-byams-pa.20

Cette hypothèse est pleinement confirmée par un passage de l’Autobiographie du Cinquième Dalai Lama, le Dukula’i gos-bzaṅ, qui en même temps jette une lumière nouvelle sur la controverse.21 Ce passage se situe entre les années 1672 (chu-byi) et 1674: “J’avais déjà vu autrefois un morceau d’attaques portées contre les Bka’-thaṅ par le dge-bṣes de Gser-mdog-can,22 Rgya-ma Btsod-gtun ron-pa’i rab’-byams-pa, qui rassemblait les contradictions relevées sur la chronologie (de Padmasambhava), et où étaient citées beaucoup de fautes textuelles, selon la compréhension d’un intellectuel (qui était la sienne). Mais il n’y avait ni ouvrage ni auteur qui y aient réellement répondu. Parce que Rmi-ru (sic) bla-ma, comme un enfant qui répète après un vieillard, a écrit un texte manuscrit qui le condensait, certains comme Rdo-rje-brag sprul-sku Rin-po-che23 ont écrit une réponse, et quelques-uns se préparent encore à le faire. Mais, du fait qu’ils n’ont établi aucune concordance entre les chronologies des Thaṅ-yig, quelques fautes se sont glissées (dans leurs réponses) et, bien qu’ils aient réellement répondu, cela ne va pas loin. Quant à ce que Rtse-le sprul-sku appelle ‘réponse polémique’, plutôt que de donner ainsi raison (à son adversaire), il aurait probablement mieux valu qu’il dise: ‘Nous les Rñin-ma-pa, nous sommes hérétiques!’” [A] Le Cinquième Dalai Lama entreprend alors de fournir sa propre réfutation: reprenant l’un des arguments de Rtse-le rig’-dzin, il note l’existence de nombreuses discordances dans les textes relatant la vie du Buddha, selon qu’ils appartiennent au Mahāyāna ou au Hinayāna. Puis il relève dans la littérature canonique et dans les traditions gsar-ma-pa des exemples d’incongruité, ou des contradictions, que tous acceptent cependant
sans discussion. Il conclut en invitant ironiquement les Rñañ-ma-pa à s’adonner à la construction des mdoṣ, sans gaspiller davantage l’encre et le papier, puisqu’aussi bien ils ne sont pas seuls en cause, les attaques de Brag-sgo rab’-byams-pa portant aussi sur la statue du Jo-bo et le Bka’-gdams glegs-bam, unanimement tenus pour authentiques par les Dge-lugs-pa, les Sa-skya-pa, et les Bka’-brgyud-pa.

Le jugement porté par le Cinquième Dalai Lama sur la Réponse de Rtsé-le rig’dzin paraît bien sévère à nos yeux; curieusement, c’est Rtsé-le rig’dzin qui fait figure de Rñañ-ma-pa “éclairé”, à côté de l’obstination du Dalai Lama à justifier même les points contestables de cette tradition. Par ailleurs, il n’explique pas la raison de cette soudaine floraison de réponses aux critiques de Brag-sgo rab’-byams-pa. Or, dans le colophon de sa Réponse, Rtsé-le rig’dzin, avec les protestations d’incompétence et d’ignorance usuelles, déclare qu’il n’a écrit cette réplique aux attaques du Bla-ma Rme-ru-ba que pour ne pas désobéir à l’ordre du “Guide excellent . . . du gouvernement religieux et politique auspici eux et vertueux”, paraphrase qui ne peut désigner que le Cinquième Dalai Lama. On est ainsi en mesure, semble-t-il, de reconstituer l’histoire de la polémique: Brag-sgo rabs’-byams-pa, irrité par la prédilection du Dalai Lama pour les Rñañ-ma-pa, a utilisé l’attaque antérieure contre les Bka’-thañ écrite par Rgya-ma rab’-byams-pa, pour composer un nouveau texte dont il a probablement soumis le manuscrit au Dalai Lama. Celui-ci, à son tour, a dû demander aux maîtres rèñ-ma-pa qu’il respectait, dont Rtsé-le rig’dzin, d’y répondre. C’est probablement au fait que cette controverse s’est déroulée sous le patronage du Dalai Lama et parmi ses proches, que l’on doit le ton courtois et plein de considération pour l’adversaire employé par Rtsé-le rig’dzin, ton assez inhabituel dans ce genre de polémique.

Une chose est surprenante alors, c’est que Rtsé-le rig’dzin ne souffle pas mot du Cinquième Dalai Lama dans son Autobiographie. Peut-être rangeait-il leurs relations dans le domaine intellectuel et non dans le domaine spirituel qui, on l’a dit, était le seul qui l’intéressait? On peut relever qu’au long de son autobiographie, il ne parle pas de ses propres écrits; il mentionne seulement ceux qu’il a composés à la demande de ’Ja’-tshon rèñ-po pour défendre ou éclairer des gter-ma liturgiques.

3. Le Bka’-thañ dris-lan.

C’est un texte de 37 folio, qui porte comme titre complet: “Réponse aux questions posées au sujet du Rnam-thar chen-mo du précieux maître Padma, appelée Eclaircissement du sens ultime”. Il est divisé en dix-huit questions qui, souvent, se subdivisent en plusieurs sujets. Selon le schéma habituel de ce genre littéraire, Rtsé-le rig’dzin cite d’abord les paroles de son opposant, puis il les réfute: en les discutant d’abord pour en montrer l’absence de
fondement, puis en concluant parfois par un raisonnement par l’absurde ou une plaisanterie qui ridiculisent son adversaire.\textsuperscript{27} L’auteur explique les critères qui ont guidé le choix qu’il a opéré parmi les critiques présentées, et la méthode qu’il a suivie:\textsuperscript{28} bien que les questions du Bla-ma Rme-ru-ba portent de manière dispersée sur de nombreux sujets, il a rassemblé sous une seule rubrique les questions qui relevaient d’un même sujet; il a négligé celles qui provenaient d’une lecture erronée, ainsi que celles qui portaient sur des passages falsifiés des Bka’-thaṅ. (Ceci n’est pas tout à fait exact car il en discute plusieurs). Quant aux questions argumentées de citations du Tripiṭaka et notamment du ’Dul-luñ sde-bzi etc., il ne peut qu’en prendre acte en se réjouissant de la science de son adversaire!

Dans le corps même du texte, Rtse-le rig’dzin note à plusieurs reprises qu’il condense les questions, car il est vieux et écrire le fatigue. Ainsi, comme le laissait supposer le résumé de Sum-pa mkhan-po, le texte de Brag-sgo rab’byams-pa devait être beaucoup plus développé. En outre, en bon polémiste, Rtse-le rig’dzin n’en a sans doute extrait que les passages qu’il pouvait réfuter aisément. En un cas au moins (question n° 6, quatrième citation), il se montre de mauvaise foi, en confondant son adversaire par la juxtaposition de deux citations d’histoires qui devaient se trouver, dans l’original, placées dans des contextes différents.

Comme il apparaît vite à la lecture, les Bka’-thaṅ critiqués par Brag-sgo rab’byams-pa sont les deux gter-ma du tibétain: Šel-brag-ma découvert par O-rgyan gliṅ-pa, et Gser-phren découvert par Saṅs-rgyas gliṅ-pa. Sur plusieurs points Rtse-le rig’dzin donne raison à son adversaire, en reconnaissant que les passages incriminés sont des interpolations apocryphes introduites dans ces Bka’-thaṅ, qui restent pour lui parole véridique de Padmasambhava, après leur découverte. Mais il reproche à son adversaire comme à ses contemporains riin-ma-pa de s’appuyer sur ces textes douteux plutôt que sur le seul Bka’-thaṅ indubitablement authentique, le Saṅs-gliṅ-ma de Naṅ-ral Ni-ma ’od-zer (1124 ou 1136-1192), dont lui-même a examiné le manuscrit original et qui n’a subi aucun remaniement.\textsuperscript{29}

L’ordre des questions du Bla-ma Rme-ru-ba suit plus ou moins celui de la lecture des deux Bka’-thaṅ d’O-rgyan gliṅ-pa et Saṅs-rgyas gliṅ-pa dont, on le sait, le déroulement des chapitres est étroitement parallèle.\textsuperscript{30} Parfois, tout en réfutant la critique, Rtse-le rig’dzin avoue ne pas avoir retrouvé dans ces ouvrages le passage incriminé: je n’ai pas eu plus de chance que lui en ces cas. Le fait de suivre de manière cursive la lecture des Bka’-thaṅ entraîne une certaine dispersion des questions. On peut alors regrouper en quatre thèmes d’infégal importance:

1. La personne de Padmasambhava, sa biographie et sa chronologie (préambule, questions 1, 2, 6, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17).
2. La doctrine (questions 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 18: début).
3. Des histoires insérées dans les Bka’-thain (du 14e siècle, mais qui ne se trouvent pas dans le Zaïns-gliṅ-ma: questions 7, 8, 9, 12).

Le texte n’est pas daté mais Rtsé-le rig’-dzin a dû l’écrire vers la fin de sa vie puisqu’il se décrit comme un vieillard aux cheveux blancs, presque aveugle, et l’on a vu qu’il arguait de sa fatigue et de son grand âge pour éluder ou résumer certaines questions. Il a sans doute été composé aux environs de 1672-1673, date à laquelle le Cinquième Dalai Lama fait état de la controverse et le mentionne.

En dehors même des circonstances historiques de sa rédaction, le Bka’-thain dris-lan présente un intérêt certain. Rtsé-le rig’-dzin n’est pas le premier à vouloir réhabiliter l’ensemble des traditions rниn-mа-pа concernant la biographie de Padmasambhava. Avant lui, Sog-bzlog-pa en particulier les avait rassemblées dans sa Biographie du Maître, et avait répondu en partie aux critiques émises ou aux doutes soulevés. Sur plusieurs points: la durée du séjour de Padmasambhava au Tibet, etc., l’argumentation ne fait que reprendre celle de Sog-bzlog-pa dont, on l’a vu plus haut, Rtsé-le rig’-dzin avait reçu la transmission des œuvres complètes. Cette argumentation renvoie le plus souvent les incrédules à la nature omnisciente et toute-puissante de Padmasambhava en tant que buddha. Pour un exposé global des contradictions relevées dans les différentes versions de la vie de Padmasambhava, la biographie écrite par Sog-bzlog-pa est bien supérieure au Bka’-thain dris-lan; mais l’intérêt de celui-ci est ailleurs: Rtsé-le rig’-dzin se trouve confronté à des questions précises sur des phrases et des épisodes tirés des Bka’-thain; même si sa réponse ultime est souvent celle de la foi, il accepte au préalable de discuter le point de vue de son adversaire, étyant fréquemment ses arguments d’exemples et de citations irréfutables pris chez les Gsar-mа-pа. L’analyse reste certes incomplète et parfois décevante, mais ce texte, unique survivant peut-être de la polémique qui a agité la cour du Cinquième Dalai Lama, fournit la seule étude critique relativement détaillée des Bka’-thain que je connaisse à ce jour.

A travers ce texte, la personnalité très attachante de Rtsé-le rig’-dzin se révèle également. C’est un homme pieux et sincère, savant dans les diverses traditions du bouddhisme tibétain et rompu à la dialectique, critique à l’égard de sa propre école qui, selon lui, charrie nombre d’erreurs dues à l’ignorance, au manque d’instruction de ses adeptes, ou à un désir forcené d’exalter Padmasambhava et ses enseignements. D’une humilité non-feinte, il est en
même temps plein d’humour, comme la lecture du résumé ci-après permettra peut-être d’en juger.

4. Traduction résumée du Bka’thaṅ dris-lan³²

Préambule. Au début de son texte, le Lama Rme-ru-ba cite correctement une stance de louange adressée à Padmasambhava par Rdo-rje gdan-pa l’Ancien, alors qu’il se trouvait au charnier Bsil-ba-tshal.³³ Mais il dit que cette stance est adressée au siddha Pravakara. Sans doute avait-il un texte fautif car il faut lire Padmakara. Or ākara en sanskrit est l’équivalent de ’byuṅ-gnas et donc Padmakara, avec le sandhi, est rendu en tibétain Padma ’byuṅ-gnas.

Question 1. On dit de Padmasambhava qu’il est né de la matrice (mīnal-skyes), et aussi qu’il est né miraculeusement (brdzus-skyes); il y a donc divergence. On dit aussi, au moment où il a rejeté le monde (rab-tu byuṅ-ba), que son nom est Padma ’byuṅ-gnas; puis que son nom secret est Padma-sam-bha-va et son nom de moine (rab-byuṅ) Śākya seṅ-ge: il y a donc aussi divergence.

La naissance la plus connue et la plus couramment admise est la naissance miraculeuse. Mais s’il s’agissait seulement de cela, il n’y aurait rien d’extraordinaire car cette naissance entre dans les quatre genres de naissance des êtres. La naissance miraculeuse de Padmasambhava est particulièrement sainte parce qu’elle résulte d’un rayon lumineux issu de la compassion de tous les buddha, dont ’Od-dpag-med, rayon qui s’est concentré au coeur d’un lotus au centre du lac de Dhanakoṣa. Ceci n’est pas reconnu seulement par les vieux Rṇīṅ-ma-pa stupides qui font des louanges pleines de parti-pris, mais c’est prophétisé par le Buddha lui-même dans tous les sūtra et tantra. On trouve ces prophéties en dehors même des tantra rṇīṅ-ma-pa, par exemple dans le Lha-mo Dri-ma med-pa’i mdo, le Gsāṅ-ba bsam-gyis mi-khyab-pa’i mdo, le Gtum-po las rgya-mtsho’i rgyud. (Citations de ces textes, annonçant la venue de Padmasambhava à Kośa en Oḍḍīyāṇa).³⁴

Par ailleurs, pour les êtres qu’il ne pouvait convertir par une naissance miraculeuse, il a manifesté une naissance par la matrice; il naquit comme fils du roi d’Oḍḍīyāṇa Manusīta, et il fut appelé Dhana-rakṣita.³⁵ Ses parents ne voulant pas qu’il se consacre à la religion, il décida d’employer des moyens terribles: il tua le fils d’un ministre et fut expulsé. Ordonné par l’Abbé Śākyabodhi, il fut appelé Śākya seṅ-ge.

Bref, Padmasambhava n’étant pas un être ordinaire, il faut accepter qu’il ait manifesté toutes les sortes de transformations nécessaires pour convertir les êtres. Si on le considère comme un individu ordinaire, on ne pourra jamais voir l’étendue de ses vertus: c’est exactement comme pour les buddha. Quant à ses noms, il n’y a que ceux-ci: Padma ’byuṅ-gnas, en sanskrit Padmakara,
nom qui lui a été donné par Indrabhūti parce qu’un lotus naissait à chacun de ses pas;36 son nom d’entrée dans les ordres, Śākya sen-ge; son nom au Zahor quand il fut le chef de cinq cents pandits, Padma sam-bha-va, c’est-à-dire Padma-las skyes, ce nom se référant à sa naissance.

Question 2. On trouve toutes sortes de récits contradictoires sur la durée du séjour de Padmasambhava au Tibet: cent-vingt ans ou, parce que Khri-sroṅ lde-btsan a été obligé de lui demander de partir à cause des calomnies des ministres, six ans ou trois ans, ou dix-huit mois, ou trois mois. Comment serais-je capable d’examiner ce qui est juste ou non?

Ce que vous dites est vrai, certes, mais il faut rappeler ce qui a été dit précédemment: il est impossible à un individu ordinaire de prendre la mesure des actes des buddha. Par exemple, autrefois, la durée pendant laquelle le Buddha a exposé le Dam-chos Pad-dkar, qui était d’une matinée, est apparue, par ses capacités miraculeuses, comme étant de cinquante kalpa intermédiaires. Ainsi, comment pourrions-nous appréhender la bénéédiction parfaitement pure des buddha, qui fait d’une seconde un kalpa, et d’un kalpa une seconde?

Aux yeux de la majorité des gens, Padmasambhava étant venu au Tibet, il a exécuté le rite de soumission du sol (sa-'dul) à Bsam-yas, et il a accompli deux fois le homa destiné à soumettre les lha-srin. Mais les ministres pécheurs ayant mis obstacle à la troisième fois, il a seulement donné ses enseignements à chacun de quelques disciples prédestinés, dont le roi. Il a aussi été empêché par les ministres pécheurs de transformer les marécages du Tibet en prés, etc. Ne prenant qu’une poignée d’or parmi les richesses que lui offrait le roi, il partit escorté de deux ministres jusqu’au col de Guṇ-thaṅ. En route, il pétrifia d’un regard les meurtriers envoyés par les mauvais ministres et, s’envolant de Guṇ-thaṅ la-thog, il partit vers le Sud-ouest. Tout cela, c’est ce que l’on trouve uniquement dans les Sba-bzad, développé et résumé.37

Mais les Sba-bzad n’ont été composés par le roi et les ministres que selon la vérité relative (kun-rdzob) et non en sens ultime (īnes-dag). De la même façon, les douze actes du Buddha sont considérés de manière différente par les Hinayānistes et les Mahāyānistes, qui seuls ont accès au sens ultime. Pour les Hinayānistes, ils ne voient le Buddha que comme un être à convertir ordinaire: (il doit passer par des myriades de renaissances, etc.).

Ici aussi, il faut s’appuyer sur les paroles authentiques de Padmasambhava que l’on trouve dans les gter-ma qui n’ont pas été remaniés. Selon eux, Padmasambhava est resté au Tibet cent onze ans, et on ne trouve rien d’autre. Cependant, en Inde, une année correspond à six mois tibétains; donc, si l’on compte à la tibétaine, cela fait cinquante-six ans. Si l’on accepte la version du Sba-bzad selon laquelle il ne serait resté que quelques mois, on se demande comment il aurait pu parcourir tout le Tibet, bénissant les lieux de réalisation.
et cachant des trésors. En réalité, les Tibétains ordinaires ne l’ont pas vu, mais il est resté au Tibet (dans ces lieux de méditation) et, finalement, il a renouvelé la consécration des temples, etc. Puis, accompagné jusqu’à Guñthaṅ par le roi, les ministres, les sujets, il leur a donné prophéties et enseignements; le dixième jour du mois du singe, il s’est envelopé vers Rña-yab giṅ, accompagné par les dpa’-bo et dākiṅ. Cela même est la version comprise en sens ultime.38

**Question 3.** Vous dites: “Si dans ce paradis Sukhāvatī, le nom même de l’élément espace est inconnu, à plus forte raison cela englobe toute matérialité”, et “Si l’on doit y renaitre miraculeusement d’un lotus, c’est contradictoire avec l’affirmation que le nom même de naissance et de mort y est inconnu”, et “Je me demande s’il y a une manière de mourir par la force de la compassion et du voeu, et s’il y a une mort soumise au temps (dans ce paradis)?”, et “Des expressions telles que: ‘dans ce paradis ne résident que des Ārya’, et ‘c’est un champ de buddha uniquement’, c’est inconcevable!”

Vous êtes très savant en sūtra et tantra, et vous connaissez le Bde-ba-can žin-bkod-kyi mdo, etc. dans le Bka’-gyur. De plus, ce sujet traité au début des Bka’-than39 se retrouve exactement identique au début du Lo-rgyus (chen-mo) du Testament du Dharmarāja Sṛoṅ-btsan, mieux connu de nos jours sous le nom de Maṇi bka’-bum. Si vous n’ajoutez pas foi aux récits des Rniṅ-ma-pa, il vous est impossible de ne pas croire le Sṛoṅ-btsan bka’-bum. Bien que vos paroles ne soient destinées qu’à mettre à l’épreuve les vieux rniṅ-ma-pa décrépis, je vous répondrai comme je le comprends.

Quand vous dites: “Si dans ce paradis il n’y a pas d’espace, à plus forte raison toute matérialité”: d’une manière générale, on énumère les paradis des cinq Jina, à l’Est Mṇion-dga’, au Sud Dpal-Idan, à l’Ouest Bde-ba-can, au Nord Las-rab grub-pa, au Centre Stug-mo bkod-pa. Mais les paradis sont expliqués comme “champs du sambhogakāya qui brillent d’eux-mêmes” ou comme “champs d’émanation de la compassion (des buddha).” Les premiers sont des champs tout à fait purs, où brillent spontanément les cinq jñāna; donc, en dehors des bodhisattva ayant atteint la dixième Terre, et de ceux qui maîtrisent totalement les deux stages de la méditation (bskyed-rim et rdzogs-rim), nul ne peut en avoir l’expérience. Quant aux seconds, ils sont le produit de la conjonction de la compassion des Jina avec l’enchaînement prédéterminé des causes et des effets pour les êtres soumis aux cinq poisons. En réalité, il n’existe rien, monde créé, samsāra et nirvāṇa, qui ne soit dans les champs des trois corps de Buddha. Bde-ba-can étant un paradis pur, quand les Bka’-than disent qu’en dehors du dharmadhātu, le nom d’espace y est inconnu, cela signifie que les cinq éléments, dont l’espace, et les éléments internes: chair, sang, chaleur, souffle etc., y sont inconnus. Quant à “espace”, cela signifie celui de soleil, lune etc., qui n’existe qu’en fonction de la production
des causes et des effets. Votre citation de l’*Anuttaratantra* (sur la non-existence des éléments) est juste, mais elle ne s’applique pas à ce paradis.

(Suite de la démonstration, avec d’autres éléments de la description de Sukhāvatī: oiseaux qui y chantent, etc. Il ne s’agit pas d’éléments appartenant au monde phénoménal; il faut transposer, ce ne sont que des émanations de la compassion des buddha du plan transcendant: ye-śes thugs-rje’i sprul-pa).

Sur les contradictions entre “vie et mort y sont inconnues” et “on y renaît sur un lotus”, et “il n’y a dans ce paradis que des Ārya” et “il n’y a que des buddha”, Rtse-le rig-dzin renvoie son adverse à une citation du *Bde-ba-can smon-lam*, énoncé par Avalokiteśvara: “Dans ce champ excellent, il n’existe même pas le nom de mauvaises renaissances, êtres vivants, *asura* et *yama*. Là, il n’existe pas de femmes ordinaires. Il n’existe pas de gestation dans la matrice. Il n’y a que des espèces qui naissent miraculeusement de fleurs *padma* en joyaux.” Et aussi: “Tous les êtres qui résident dans ce champ n’éprouvent aucune souffrance telle que maladie, etc.”

Ainsi, puisque les êtres dont les souillures du *karma* et des *kleśa* ne sont pas purifiés, et dont le mûrissement des fruits des deux accumulations (*tshogs-gnīs*) et du vœu n’est pas parfait, ne peuvent voir ce paradis, pourquoi ceux qui sont des savants et des saints accomplis (sous-entendu le Lama Rme-ruba) ne peuvent-ils concevoir ce qui est énoncé par les *buddha*?

**Question 4. Il est dit que le cakravartin Bzañ-po mchog a été émané pour soumettre les êtres très orgueilleux. Affirmer que dans ce paradis il n’y a pas d’êtres souillés par les *kleśa* est contradictoire avec le fait qu’il y ait des orgueilleux. Et aussi, il est dit que le roi Bzañ-po mchog régnait sur les quatre continents: je n’ai jamais vu de rapport de similitude entre Sukhāvatī et Uttarakuru, etc.**

**Les *Bka*-thaṅ** disent exactement cela⁴⁰: Amitābha a émané Bzañ-po mchog pour soumettre les esprits orgueilleux et violents des rois etc. dans le monde (*jig-rten khams*), mais ils ne disent pas qu’il y avait à Sukhāvatī des êtres orgueilleux et violents. Quant aux quatre continents, les mondes qui sont les champs de conversion des trois Corps de Buddha sont innombrables, dans les dix directions et les quatre temps: ils subissent sans fin apparition, existence, destruction, vide (*dus-būśi*); il n’y a aucune certitude donc, sur le fait que les quatre continents du roi Bzañ-po mchog étaient les mêmes que ceux de notre monde actuel. Le Buddha dit que dans chaque atome de poussière d’un paradis, il y a un nombre infini d’autres paradis: sauf pour ceux qui sont munis de l’œil de Connaissance (ye-śes), notre esprit enfantin ne peut en prendre la mesure. En outre, Bzañ-po mchog est une émanation; nous sommes incapables de concevoir les actes d’une émanation.

**Question 5. Les affirmations selon lesquelles le Buddha Śākyamuni est venu en ce monde quand la durée de vie humaine était de quatre-vingts ans, et**
les buddha des trois temps sont passés par la porte de la matrice, et Katâyāṇa a été le disciple-serviteur (ñe-gnas) du Buddha, seraient-elles dues à des fautes de scribe?

En dehors de l’affirmation selon laquelle Śākyamuni a vécu quatre-vingts ans, je n’ai vu dans aucun écrit rniṅ-ma-pa qu’il est venu en ce monde quand la durée de vie était de quatre-vingts ans. Je n’ai pas entendu parler non plus de récit selon lequel Katâyāṇa aurait été le disciple-serviteur du Buddha. Il est vrai que, parfois, son nom apparaît comme disciple-serviteur, mais la contradiction n’est pas grande.

Quant à la phrase: “Les buddha des trois temps sont passés par la porte de la matrice; pendant des kalpa incalculables ils ont amassé l’accumulation de mérites, etc.”, Padmasambhava l’a prononcée dans le chant qu’il adressait à Khri-sroṅ lde-btsan, et il était probablement mécontent de l’attitude orgueil- leuse du roi qui ne voulait pas le saluer (en premier). Et (il est vrai que) les buddha des trois temps, bien qu’ils aient atteint la bodhi dans un passé infini, ont montré la manière de prendre toutes sortes de naissances . . . ; c’est la façon d’enseigner le Dharma de tous les buddha: veuillez vous référer aux jātaka de notre Maître. Dans ce cas précis, il ne vous est pas agréable d’entendre Padmasambhava dire qu’il est un buddha; mais pour ses disciples, de nombreuses paroles du Buddha l’affirment, et attestent qu’il est un Refuge justifié.

Dans cette même question, vous dites que par la suite, les Bka’-thaṅ divisent en cinq les quatre qualités incommensurables: amour, etc. (tshad-med-pa bīi).

Je n’ai pas cherché dans quelle partie cela se trouvait mais, de la même façon, on cite six pāramitā et dix pāramitā, et dans le Mdo bskal-bzaṅ le Buddha énonce cent vingt pāramitā. Mais là-dessus, en dehors de ceux qui sont très familiarisés avec le Bka’-’gyur, il est difficile de trancher.

Question 6. Si l’on considère les prophéties du Dbus-’gyur luṅ-bstan-gyi mdo, et du Bla-med don-rdzogs ’dus-pa’i rgyud, Padmasambhava est né huit ans après le nirvāṇa du Buddha; (selon les Bka’-thaṅ), il est resté sur le trône cinq ans et à Bsil-ba tshal cinq ans, ce qui fait dix ans; ensuite, étant allé en présence d’Ānanda, il a été ordonné. Sauf si il n’a pas respecté les règles du Vinaya, je me demande si il est possible qu’il ait été ordonné sans avoir l’âge requis?

Il existe des données différentes sur le nombre d’années énoncé par les prophéties pour la venue de Padmasambhava. Il y a certes quelques prophéties disant: “Après que je sois passé dans le nirvāṇa, lorsque deux fois quatre ans se seront écoulées”, mais la plupart s’accordent et annoncent seulement douze ans. Citations du Mya-ṇān ’das-kyi mdo et du Dbus-’gyur luṅ-bstan gyi mdo annonçant la naissance de Padmasambhava en Oḍḍīyāṇa douze ans après
le nirvāṇa du Buddha: tous les gter-ma authentiques et non remaniés disent la même chose. Il y a dans les Paroles du Buddha (bka') et les śāstra beaucoup d'affirmations divergentes sur l'année de la naissance du Buddha et celle de son nirvāṇa; mais pour la majorité des récits rníin-ma-pa, le Buddha est passé dans le nirvāṇa en l'année feu-coq (me-bya) et, en l'année terre-singe (sa-sprel), Padmasambhava est né: je pense que c'est le sens même des douze ans dont parle le Buddha.42

Vous dites: Les histoires que l'on trouve dans les Bka'-than racontant que Padmasambhava est entré dans les ordres auprès d'Ānanda, qu'il a rencontré l'Arhat Madhyāntika, que celui qui lui a rasé la tête est Kāśyapa l'Ancien, et qu'à cette occasion il a questionné Ānanda sur les sūtra, sur l'histoire etc.43 ces histoires ne se trouvent pas dans les autre gter-ma qui sont des sources fiables et non falsifiées.

Ces histoires, je les ai entendues raconter par beaucoup de savants et saints gsar-ma-pa et rníin-ma-pa. Mais moi, vieillard stupide, j'ai regardé beaucoup de rnam-thar développés et résumés de Padmasambhava. En particulier, bien que j'ai examiné très soigneusement le manuscrit même du gter-ma de Mña'-bdag Myañ, appelé Rnam-thar Zaïns-glin-ma, je n'y ai trouvé seulement que le récit suivant: à l'époque où il est entré dans les ordres, il avait passé cinq ans sur le trône, cinq ans à Bsil-ba tshal, longtemps dans les charniers de Dga'-ba'i tshal et So-sa-glin etc., où les jñāña-ḍākini lui ont conféré des initiations, et où il a lié par serment toutes les ḍākini du plan karmique et mondain. Ensuite, bien que tous les domaines du savoir aient brillé spontanément dans son esprit, pour provoquer la confiance des êtres à convertir ordinaires, il montra la manière d'apprendre les écritures, les calculs astrologiques, la médecine, la rhétorique et la dialectique, les arts. Puis, dans la grotte de Dañḍa au Zahor, il entra dans les ordres auprès de l'ācārya Prabhañhasti, très connu sous le nom de Śākyabodhi, et il reçut le nom de Śākya señ-ge. Comme son crâne rasé était plus brillant qu'un diadème, pour empêcher que les êtres ordinaires, ne pouvant concevoir ce phénomène, aient des pensées erronées, il se fabriqua un chapeau jaune safran (ṇur-smig-gi dbyud-zva). Et aussi, aux trois disciples du nom de Śākya: (lui-même) plus Śākyamaitri (et Śākya bṣes-gñen), Prabhañbasti conféra enseignements et initiations du rnal'-byor yo-ga.44

Ce récit est absolument sûr. Mais, bien que les enseignements des tantra anciennement traduits soient merveilleusement profonds, la plupart des individus ne les méditent pas et ne les pratiquent pas, la tête tournée par des rituels de circonstance pour assurer leur subsistance, et une infinité de rituels mineurs. Demeurant dans l'état de maîtres de maison (religieux mariés), ils n'approchent pas tant soit peu des sūtra et des tantra, nuisant ainsi à la doctrine rníin-ma-pa. De ce fait, nombre de Gsar-ma-pa, savants et stupides, rejettent les enseignements rníin-ma-pa et ceux qui les pratiquent hors de la
doctrine du Buddha. Les raisons de ceci, c’est qu’on a trafiqué par des fabrications personnelles, en amalgamant, déformant, réduisant, augmentant, la parole excellente et sans souillure du deuxième Buddha, Padmasambhava. C’est comme de la poudre d’or jetée à l’eau, ou du santal vendu comme charbon de bois! Ainsi, de nos jours, il ne se trouve personne pour enseigner et écouter les gter-ma anciens dépourvus de falsifications ultérieures, tandis que les hommes stupides et pleins de créduilité détruisent la Doctrine en suivant des gter-ma nouveaux, des gter-ma qui n’en sont pas, des semblants de gter-ma, qui éclatent comme champignons sur un pré! Devant cela, je ne peux que verser des larmes et me taire, faute de moyen pour l’empêcher.

Pour revenir au coeur de notre propos: ce qui, de nos jours, est très connu sous le nom de Padma bka’-thain, ce sont les gter-ma d’O-rgyan glin-pa et de Sâns-rgyas glin-pa, l’un en vers, l’autre en prose. Bien qu’à l’origine, ils soient sans conteste les paroles mêmes de Padmasambhava, il est sûr que dans l’intervalle, des impudens stupides y ont ajouté des “paroles de village” (langage vulgaire, gрон-tshig), et des mélanges et falsifications fabriqués par eux-mêmes. De la même façon, bien que le Bka’-thain sde-lha soit un gter-ma authentique d’O-rgyan glin-pa, quand on examine tout le sens des mots, il ne ressemble pas à un gter-ma digne de foi. On y trouve que le Précieux Âcârya a eu un fils, que celui-ci était hostile au Dharma, que l’âcârya Dpal-dbya’ins était le fils du Guru, etc., toutes histoires qui ne figurent pas dans les instructions de Padmasambhava. On y trouve aussi beaucoup d’incompatibilités, telles que les histoires de gens postérieurs à l’époque, par exemple Skor-thuṅ sеs-rab(?). C’est pourquoi, moi et d’autres, nous ne le tenons pas pour vrai.

Ainsi, bien que les bénédictions dispensées par ces paroles de Padmasambhava existent, malgré leur falsification, il est difficile de tenir les histoires qu’elles racontent pour des sources fiables. C’est pourquoi il est inutile de répondre en détail sur cette question d’Ânanda. Cependant, puisque Padmasambhava a écouté à ce moment-là l’enseignement de nombreux maîtres, il ne serait pas impossible qu’il ait reçu celui d’Ânanda; mais je n’ai pas vu d’autre source là-dessus. De même pour Kâśyapa et Madhyântika. Mais il ne faut pas non plus s’arrêter à ce qui nous apparaît comme un anachronisme, car nous ne pouvons pas prendre la mesure des actes des buddha et des siddha, puisqu’ils ont tout pouvoir sur le temps, et la capacité de produire des émanations en nombre inconcevable.

En outre certains, selon leurs capacités et leur destin propre, voient les mêmes paroles et les mêmes actes du Buddha de manière différente. Par exemple, lorsque le Buddha manifesta le grand miracle de Šrâvasti (cho-’phrul chen-po), aux yeux des Hinayânistes cela dura un jour, aux yeux des Mahâyânistes un demi-mois; et tandis que les individus ordinaires virent le Buddha ne prêcher que les trois Roues de la Loi (’khor-lo gsum), pour les êtres exceptionnels il exposa l’Avatamsaka, le Kâlacakra, et une multitude

Pour revenir au sujet, l’histoire de Padmasambhava demandant des explications sur le Vinaya à Ānanda: il s’agit sans conteste d’un mélange entre les Paroles propres du Buddha et les sāstra ultérieurs, mélange qui manifeste l’erreur de ceux qui l’ont commise. C’est, par exemple, comme ceux qui écrivent Mgo-sa ’dul-baʼi mdo,47 ne sachant pas que le sanskrit ghoṣā est l’équivalent de “mélodie” (dbyaṅs): c’est seulement un signe de stupidité. Mais à quoi bon examiner les altérations introduites par des sots! Ainsi qu’il est dit: “Les chemins de l’erreur sont sans limite; c’est pourquoi on ne poursuivra pas plus avant ici”.48 Par ailleurs, il y a beaucoup de traditions différentes sur la manière d’envisager les quatre-vingt quatre mille dharmaskandha et, encore plus que les Véhicules ordinaires, les tantra innombrables, qui peut les mesurer?

Vous dites: On lit dans les Bka’-thaṅ que, les paroles du Buddha ayant été mises par écrit, cela représentait cinq cents charges de l’éléphant Rab-brtan. Cela est beaucoup, ou cela est peu; c’est pourquoi je pense que ce ne sont pas les paroles de l’Ācārya (Padmasambhava).

Que, à partir du troisième concile, les paroles du Buddha aient existé sous forme écrite, c’est l’opinion courante partagée par les Gsar-ma-pa et les Rniṅ-ma-pa. Mais pour quelques textes particuliers, il n’y a pas de certitude (sur leur date. Exemples prouvant qu’au temps du Buddha même, des parties de son enseignement existaient déjà sous forme écrite).

(Vous dites:) En ce qui concerne l’explication (des Rniṅ-ma-pa) selon laquelle toutes les paroles du Buddha (qui n’ont pas été révélées) restent sous forme de “trésors”: en dehors de celles qui ont été laissées comme support de la foi dans les divers domaines des êtes à convertir (dieux, etc.), il n’y a rien qui ressemble à la cache de “mines de trésors” (gter-kha) comme chez les Rniṅ-ma-pa. De toute manière, si le Buddha a laissé des sûtra (non prêchés
par lui de son vivant), ils ont tous été diffusés depuis. Et aussi: Il n’est pas question non plus (dans les écrits canoniques) de chose semblable à la nécessité de gter-ston différents pour chaque texte. Et encore: Toutes les paroles du Buddha n’existent pas au complet, non seulement au Tibet, mais en Inde même. Par exemple la Prajñāpāramitā qui, en cent fois dix millions de śloka se trouve au pays des gandharva, en cent fois cent mille au ciel des Trente-trois, et dont un peu de la fin de celle en cent mille est resté au pays des nāga. Ainsi, la plupart des sūtra traduits en tibétain ne représentent qu’un morceau.

Ce que vous dites est tout à fait vrai.\footnote{49}

Vous dites: Quelle est cette façon de parler d’Abhidharma antérieur et postérieur (goṅ ’og), en divisant l’Abhidharma en trois?

Il apparaît que c’est une manière de parler très répandue de nos jours, qui considère comme premier Abhidharma les paroles mêmes du Buddha; comme Abhidharma médian les œuvres des Arhats; et comme Abhidharma postérieur les œuvres de Vasubandhu et de son frère (Asaṅga).

Vous dites: Quelle est cette expression qui dit: “Trois fois l’ennemi (s’est levé) contre l’Abhidharma”?

Récit (identique à celui de Bu-ston)\footnote{50} des trois attaques Tīrthika contre les monastères et de la destruction des textes par le feu. Alors que la doctrine d’Abhidharma était sur le point de disparaître, à la suite de son veau de restaurer la doctrine, la bhikṣuṇī Prasanna-sīlā mit au monde Vasubandhu et Asaṅga.

Vous dites aussi: (selon les Bka’-thaṅ), lorsqu’on veut reconnaître un texte de l’Abhidharma-piṭaka, on le reconnaît à l’hommage du traducteur à Mañjuśrī.

Cela, je ne l’ai absolument pas vu (dans les Bka’-thaṅ). (Suit une explication sur le fait que, en dehors de la classification classique en trois piṭaka, on en trouve de très sophistiquées, avec sūtra du Vinaya, vinaya du Vinaya, abhidharma du Vinaya, etc., la même subdivision se retrouvant pour chaque piṭaka. Allusion aux discussions des maîtres tibétains sur le contenu des piṭaka). Mais l’important est que chacun de ces textes, par la compassion du Buddha, purifie, convertit, et fait mûrir les êtres. Et nous, plutôt que de nous torturer l’esprit à faire des distinctions subtiles, il vaut mieux nous contenter de celles qui ont été établies par les grands maîtres d’autrefois: il est plus important de mettre les textes en pratique.

Question 7. Dans les chapitres des Bka’-thaṅ sur le Zahor, il y a des histoires contradictoires, telles celle de Mandārava qui, ne voulant pas obéir à l’ordre de son père de se marier, est enfermée par lui avec cinq cents suivantes menacées de mort si elle s’échappe ou se suicide. Mais la suite raconte que, n’ayant pas de viande pour le roi, on l’envoie seule au marché pour en acheter: le début et la fin de l’histoire ne s’accordent pas. Et quand
on explique que le roi régnait sur tout le Zahor, qu’il avait cinq cents épouses, sept cent vingt ministres de l’intérieur et de l’extérieur, il est improbable qu’on n’ait pas trouvé de viande pour lui; improbable aussi, puisqu’elle avait tant de suivantes, qu’on ait envoyé seule une princesse chérie en acheter. Alors, qu’est-ce que ça veut dire?51

En général, les grands rois indiens étaient certes extrêmement riches mais, chaque nuit, ils avaient l’habitude de se rendre chez l’une de leurs épouses, à tour de rôle, où ils prenaient leur repas; cela inclut probablement de la viande. Dans le cas présent, Mandârava ne se trouvait pas parmi ses cinq cents suivantes, mais chez sa mère. Celle-ci, manquant de viande, ne se fia pas à un serviteur mais envoya sa fille. Cela, c’est le sens général. Mais la signification cachée, c’est de montrer, puisque seul un être prédéfini peut obtenir la chair d’un brahmane sept-fois-né (comme brahmane), l’enchaînement des causes et des effets qui a amené la rencontre de la chair du brahmane sept-fois-né avec le roi muni d’un bon karma et prédéfini, et Mandârava qui est une jñânu jûêûîni. En dehors de cela, à quoi bon se demander à quel moment cela s’est passé? Ce fut au moment nécessaire.

Question 8. Lo. que Mandârava demanda à l’Âcârya: “Dans ses vies antérieures, où mon pére a-t-il trouvé?” Padmasambhava répondit que son père, étant né comme fils de brahmane et entré dans les ordres, tua beaucoup de soldats tirthika pour protéger le vihâra. A cause de ce karma où se mêlangeaient la vertu d’avoir protégé le vihâra et l’impiété d’avoir tué les soldats tirthika, il prit naissance dans les ordres destinés. Donc, alors qu’il est dit que même le Bouddha ne connaît pas le no. des renaissances dans le samsâra qui n’a pas de commencement, vous autres, racontez qu’il y a des naissances originales (ex nihilo) pour les êtres, s’ils le souhaitent aussi que le samsâra a un début et une fin?

A cette occasion, Padmasambhava ne raconte pas la totalité des renaissances du roi Gtsug-lag-dzin dans le samsâra qui est sans commencement, mais seulement celles qu’il prit dans les diverses destinées depuis qu’il était né comme fils de brahmane. Que, en général, il y ait ou non des naissances ex nihilo pour les êtres, comme je ne suis pas doué de prescience, je n’en ai rien à dire; je vous prie d’en discuter avec ceux qui soutiennent qu’il y a de telles naissances. Bien que les autres êtres ne puissent savoir le nombre des renaissances dans le samsâra qui n’a pas de commencement, (si on dit que le Bouddha ne le sait pas non plus), cela ne revient-il pas à dire que le Bouddha n’est pas omniscient? Nous ne soutenons pas que le samsâra a un début et une fin; cependant, pour ceux qui ont atteint la bodhi, le samsâra n’est-il pas fini?

Question 9. Il y a cette légende (gtam-brgyud) de l’homme affamé qui avait perdu sa vache, et du Bon-po qui avait perdu son gong, quand Padmasambhava résidait dans le charnier Bde-chan-gdan. Mais, en dehors de la doc-
trine inventée des Bon-po qui est d'implantation récente au Tibet, il n'apparaît dans aucun récit ou écrit canonique qu'il y avait des Bon-po en Inde.

Cette histoire ne se trouve, en dehors des Bka'-thaṅ,\textsuperscript{52} dans aucune autre histoire des Rñīṅ-ma-pa; et sur la manière dont les Bka'-thaṅ ont été falsifiés, j'ai parlé plus haut. Cependant, bien que tous soient d'accord pour reconnaître qu'il n'y avait pas de gens appelés Bon-po en Inde, l'origine du Bon est le Žaṅ-žuṅ: Žaṅ-žuṅ et Cachemire étant l'un à côté de l'autre, de ce fait, bien qu'il n'y en eût pas à l'origine (au Cachemire), il n'est pas sûr que les Bon-po ne s'y soient pas répandus par la suite. De la même façon, bien que généralement on ne reconnaît pas l'existence de Bon-po au Népal, il existe des histoires comme celle de G.yu-thog Yon-tan mgon-po obligé de rivaliser de magie avec un Bon-po népalais. Je me demande si de telles histoires n'ont pas pu arriver en Inde même?\textsuperscript{53}

Quant à ce que vous dites sur la nouveauté du Bon au Tibet, avant que la doctrine du Buddha n'apparaisse au Tibet, le pays tout entier était sous l'emprise du Bon. Son origine, c'est Ston-pa Gšen-rab qui est né à 'Or-mo luṅ-riṅ (sic) au Žaṅ-žuṅ et qui, à part la taille et la couleur d'or, avait toutes les marques d'un buddha. A la Grande montagne du Bon (Bon-ri chen-po) du Koṅ-po, dans les quatre directions, il a manifesté des actes semblables aux douze actes du Buddha, et il y a laissé de nombreuses empreintes de ses pieds de la taille d'une coudée, il a fait jaillir des sources dans le bas des vallées, etc. Dans le Bon, il y a le Bon exotérique (phyi) et le Bon ésotérique (naṅ). Le Bon exotérique, ce sont de nos jours les Bon-po de village qui pratiquent le Véhicule du Gšen des apparences (snaṅ-gšen), et qui propitient les lha-'drel de ce monde: c'est pourquoi il faut le rejeter lorsqu'on embrasse Refuge et vœux bouddhistes. Au Tibet autrefois, comme les Tīrthika en Inde, ils faisaient des sacrifices de cerfs, de yaks, de moutons. Au temps de Khri-sroṅ Iše-btsan, Šāntarākṣita et Padmasambhava, ils ont été supprimés. Seuls ont été conservés les rituels qui écartent les apparitions trompeuses de ce monde, pour lesquels on a substitué l'usage de fabriquer ces animaux en pâte et en argile. Quant au Bon véritable des causes et des fruits (rgyu-'bras), bien qu'il s'y trouve de nombreux traits des doctrines et réalisations pures des sūtra et tantra bouddhiques, la plupart des traditions gṣar-ma-pa refusent d'inclure Bon et Rñīṅ-ma dans la doctrine du Buddha. Il y aurait beaucoup à dire sur les causes de cela, mais je ne ferais que me fatiguer et gâcher encre et papier si je poursuivais, (car vous ne voudriez pas entendre mes raisons)!

**Question 10. Il est expliqué que, lorsqu'un buddha vient en ce monde, une fleur d'udumbara nait. A cette occasion, il est dit que si il nait dans la caste des ksatriya, la fleur est blanche; si c'est dans la caste des brahmanes, la fleur est rouge; dans la caste des vaisya, la fleur est jaune; dans celle des**
šūdra, la fleur est bleue; et que Padmasambhava étant de caste brahmanique, la fleur était rouge. Alors que dans toutes les Paroles du Buddha et dans tous les śāstra, il n’est jamais question d’autres castes que celles de kṣatriya et brahmane pour la naissance d’un buddha, vous devez avoir (d’autres) sources canoniques pour cette tradition qui est la vôtre?

Si vous racontez de telles histoires qui ne se trouvent pas dans les récits rñin-ma-pa connus, est-ce parce que vous êtes doué de prescience? Ou, comme dans la vision pure des rêves, êtes-vous allé à Rña-yab glin où vous avez entendu l’enseignement de l’Ācārya? Selon nos propres récits, un buddha ne naît que dans les castes des kṣatriya et des brahmanes. En signe de l’extrême rareté de la venue d’un buddha dans le monde, une fleur d’udumbara apparaît au moment de la naissance de ce buddha, qui se fane quand il approche du nirvāṇa: cette façon de dire est identique chez les Gsarma-pa et les Rñin-ma-pa. (Quant à sa couleur), on peut la déduire d’après la tradition orale (gtam-brgyud) sur le parivrājaka Subhadra4 dans laquelle, si il n’est pas question de la couleur de la fleur, si l’on prend en considération la traduction de udumbara par dmar-mchog (rouge excellent), elle devait être rouge. Quant à Padmasambhava qui serait né dans la caste des brahmanes alors qu’il s’agit de sa naissance miraculeuse (brdzus-skyes), qui le dit? Dans les récits rñin-ma-pa, il est dit qu’un udumbara naquit dans le lac de Dhanakośa, mais il n’est pas précisé que la naissance de Padmasambhava eut lieu sur un udumbara5, et bien qu’il soit dit qu’il y avait dans ce lac des lotus de toutes sortes de couleurs, il n’est pas précisé non plus si celui sur lequel il est né était rouge. Particulièrement, je n’ai entendu dire que par vous que c’était une fleur rouge parce que Padmasambhava était de caste brahmanique.

Dans les récits rñin-ma-pa, il est dit que lorsqu’un gter-ston naît, une fleur d’udumbara naît, et que selon leur caste la couleur est différente. À cela aussi quelques savants gsar-ma-pa tardifs ont fait objection en disant: ‘‘Si, en dehors des buddha, un udumbara devait naître pour des gens comme les gter-ston, pourquoi ne naîtrait-il pas pour tous les śrāvaka, pratyekabuddha, bodhisattva et grands saints? Ce ne sont encore que des récits mensongers des Rñin-ma-pa!’’ Ce n’est pas que les gter-ston soient plus éminents que les autres; mais les gter-ston authentiques provoquent la fin du samsāra pour beaucoup d’êtres prédestinés, au moyen des textes profonds du Vajrayāna qu’ils extraient, textes qui font atteindre l’état de buddha en une seule vie. En signe que leur venue est comparable à celle d’un buddha en ce monde, une fleur d’udumbara apparaît. Mais il n’est pas dit que cette fleur naît dans le pays des gter-ston: elle naît dans des endroits tels que le lac de Dhanakośa, etc., si bien que les êtres ordinaires ne peuvent en avoir connaissance.

**Question 11.** Vous faites beaucoup d’objections aux paroles de Padmasambhava: ‘‘Je ne suis pas un buddha seulement de nom, je suis un buddha qui a
obtenu les quatre fruits d’un śramaṇa (dge-sbyoṅ)”, parce que leur sens ne vous plaît pas.

D’une manière générale, comme je vous l’ai déjà dit, il y a beaucoup de falsifications dans les Bka’-thang, et affirmer que Padmasambhava a obtenu en réalité les fruits de śrāvaka, d’arhat, ou non, je ne le ferai pas: Dans notre tradition, nous sommes sûrs que le précieux Guru est un nirmanakāya qui, rassemblant en lui seul la compassion de tous les Jina de toutes les directions et de tous les temps, soumet les êtres de l’époque de dégénérescence de la Doctrine. Ce n’est pas le fait de notre entièrement stupide dans nos propres désirs, mais ce sont les prophéties du Buddha lui-même. Il s’en suit qu’il n’y a pas à soupeser si il a parcouru la voie graduelle des êtres ordinaires, en obtenant ou non de manière patente les fruits de śrāvaka, pratyekabuddha . . .


Il s’agit de l’histoire des vies antérieures et des voeux de Śantarākṣita, Padmasambhava et Khri-sroṅ lde-btsan, manifestée devant les disciples ordinaires. 56 Si, dans cette histoire, on n’appelle pas “règle du Vinaya” le rejet des vices, comment nommera-t-on la règle (tshul-khrims) du voeu de rejet des conduites mauvaises (ñes-spyod sdom-pa)? Bien que les dieux ne possèdent pas au complet les enseignements de pratimokṣa, Indra demeurant comme guide des dieux-bodhisattva, Brahma et Indra étant les servants des mille buddha du Bhadrakalpa, ne donnent-ils pas à leurs propres disciples les conseils qui les écarteront de la voie de l’erreur, et ne leur montrent-ils pas la voie de la vertu? Les récits rniṅ-ma-pa relatent aussi la manière dont les six Muni (thub drug) font le bien des êtres dans les six gati 57 mais, comme il est difficile pour vous autres de le concevoir, je n’en parlerai pas. En outre, si le Mahā-shāvira Panthaka, avec un entourage de neuf cents Arhats, réside au ciel des Trente-trois pour protéger la doctrine du Buddha, est-ce que sa compassion ne l’entraîne pas à enseigner aux dieux ce qui est la Voie et ce qui ne l’est pas?

Question 13. Vous n’êtes pas content de l’explication selon laquelle Padmasambhava est plus saint que le Buddha par cinq caractéristiques; et non seulement vous, mais la plupart des savants gsar-ma-pa. Vous dites tous d’une seule voix: “Alors que dans le Lokadhātu les buddha n’ont pas d’égal, et qu’il est impossible que quelqu’un les surpasse, les Rniṅ-ma-pa sont vraiment vantards et impudents!”

Ce n’est que le plaisir de quereller avec des paroles injurieuses les malheureux Rniṅ-ma-pa parce que, autrement, (vous Gsar-ma-pa, vous dites): “Corps qui est la réunion de tous les buddha, nature en-soi détentrice du
vajra, etc.58; et aussi: “Le Lama est le Buddha, le Lama est le Dharma, le Lama est le Saṅgha, le créateur de tout est le Lama”; et encore: “Les buddha de mille kalpa et les Lamas sont le support”59, etc. Des citations comme celles-là, il y en a des multitudes, vous le savez bien, et chaque école manifeste sa foi envers ses maîtres comme les Rñīn-ma-pa le font envers Padmasambhava. En outre, le Buddha lui-même a exalté Padmasambhava en disant qu’il surpassait les buddha par cinq caractéristiques, et ce ne sont pas des fabrications rñīn-ma-pa. Dans le Mya-nan ’das-kyi mdo il est dit: “... Cette émanation de moi est plus sainte que les autres émanations, dans les trois temps: sans connaître vieillesse ni décrépitude, elle a l’apparence d’un jeune homme...; elle vainc d’elle-même, sans obstacle, les quatre Māra...; elle soumet tout le Jambudvīpa... Cet être fortuné ne connaît ni naissance ni mort... Pourquoi? C’est parce qu’il est Amitābha lui-même.”

A cette occasion avez-vous regardé un texte fautif, ou vos humeurs vous sont-elles montées à la tête? Vous pensez que tshe-gcig sāns-rgyas theg-chen ston60 veut dire que Padmasambhava a obtenu l’état de buddha en une vie, mais ce n’est pas cela: il est particulièrement saint parce qu’il enseigne les profonds tantra qui font devenir buddha en une seule vie et un seul corps.

Vous dites aussi: L’Ācārya, par rapport aux buddha, étant devenu buddha en une seule vie, ce qui fait sa supériorité c’est qu’il est Mgon-po ’Od mi’gyur-ba Tshe-dpag-tu med-pa en personne. Ne comprenant pas le lien qui existe dans cette citation authentique, vous dites: Puisqu’il est Tshe-dpag-med en personne, il n’est pas capable de surpasser les autres nirmāṇakāya: ceux qui suivent la carrière progressive des bhikṣu ne deviennent pas buddha en une seule vie.

Bien que vous opposiez de la sorte de nombreuses réfutations, en fait, vous ne connaissez pas la distinction entre Mgon-po ’od mi’gyur-ba et Tshe-dpag-med. En ce qui concerne Tshe-dpag-med, vous avez l’air de penser qu’il est un buddha qui a parcouru la voie graduelle des êtres ordinaires. N’est-ce pas un peu le rabaisser? Dans la tradition rñīn-ma-pa, Mgon-po ’od mi’gyur-ba est le Dharmakāya Kun-tu bzañ-po ’od mi’gyur-ba, grand ancêtre (spyi-mes chen-po) de tous les buddha, pensée de tous les buddha des trois temps, Corps du plan noméal (ye-śes-kyi sku) qui couvre tout, infini d’où est issue la nature en-soi (gnas-lugs) pure depuis les origines de phénomènes illusories, Grande Félicité immuable. De sa propre splendeur, il émane Rdo-rje ’chaṅ et tous les buddha, tels que les sambhogakāya des cinq Familles, etc. Tous les mandala des Jina des dix directions, et la succession des mille buddha du Bhadrakalpa venus dans le monde des hommes, ne font qu’un avec le Dharmadhātu du plan noméal. De ces buddha, on expose seulement la manière dont ils ont produit des émanations conformes aux circonstances, aux pays, aux époques, des êtres qu’ils devaient convertir, mais on ne soutient pas qu’ils ont suivi la voie graduelle vers l’Éveil des individus ordinaires. Et si
vous demandez: “Que veut dire ce qui est répété dans un nombre infini de sūtra: ‘D’abord, il produisit la pensée de bodhi; au milieu, pendant trois kalpa incalculables, il accumula des mérites; à la fin, il atteignit l’état de buddha au moyen de ses douze actes’?” Ceci est à comprendre au sens relatif (dran-don), pour montrer aux êtres à convertir ordinaires: “si vous faites ceci, il arrivera cela”; par exemple, cela s’applique à notre Maître Śākyamuni seul.

Comme le Buddha primordial, le Dharmakāya Kun-tu bzaṅ-po, couvre tout sans exception: les paradis des dix directions, le samsāra et le nirvāṇa, il couvre de ses émanations tous les paradis du monde créé (snaṅ-srid-kyi ziṅ-khams); en particulier, il émane de la spendeur même de sa Connaissance Rnam-par snaṅ-mdzad gaṅs-chen mtsho, et de sa compassion, le nirmānakāya Śākyamuni, faisant ainsi le bien des êtres du Petit et du Grand Véhicules, selon leurs capacités. Ainsi qu’il est dit: “Sans bouger du Dharmakāya, il a manifesté toutes sortes d’émanations et de naissances; il a transmigré du ciel Tuṣita . . .”61 Bien qu’il y ait de semblables citations, en nombre incalculable, montrant les manières d’agir infinies de tous les buddha, il est inutile que de pauvres abrutis comme nous fassent des citations à un dge-bṣes comme vous! Et le vieil homme que je suis ne pourrait pas supporter la fatigue de les écrire; c’est pourquoi je ne poursuis pas.

Pour ces raisons, alors que Padmasambhava est, comme le Buddha Śākyamuni, l’un des buddha venus convertir les êtres dans les temps de dégénérance, ceux qui disputent sur sa naissance de la matrice et sa naissance miraculeuse, qui ne sont qu’apparitions pour l’océan de foi de ses disciples, ceux qui objectent qu’il n’a pas obtenu les fruits de l’Arhat, qui demandent si il est devenu buddha en une vie ou non, et ceux qui affirment tout cela, sont comme un enfant qui veut contester l’étendue de l’espace. Et aussi bien ceux qui s’y opposent que ceux qui soutiennent jusqu’à l’épuisement le sens contenu dans les mots des Bka’-thāṅ falsifiés, se fatiguent sans raison. Ce qu’il faut considérer comme l’essentiel d’une certitude, ce sont les paroles du Buddha: “Ne vous basez pas sur le sens relatif, basez-vous sur le sens ultime”, et: “Ne vous basez pas sur ce qui est muni de dharma, basez-vous sur le Dharma”, et: “Ne vous basez pas sur les mots, basez-vous sur le sens.”62 Voilà ce qui est important.

**Question 14. Il est dit (dans les Bka’-thāṅ): “Lorsque le Guru Padma rgyal-po se rendit au Parc de plaisance (skyed-mo tshal), les quatre Grands Rois furent ses serviteurs; les lha et les klu lui présentaient des offrandes, à commencer par les sept joyaux royaux (rgyal-srid sna-bdun): la roue d’or à mille rayons, etc.”63 Cela n’est pas vrai, parce que ce sont les joyaux d’un cakravartin, et il n’y a pas de cakravartin à l’époque Rtsod-Ldan. Cela apparaît encore comme des louanges excessives et inconvenantes proférées par des sots.**
Vous avez raison: dans le kalpa Rtsod-lidan un cakravartin n’apparaît pas, et quand Padmasambhava est venu pour enseigner les tantra, il n’y avait pas de cakravartin. Mais ici, il s’agit d’un geste d’hommage, au moyen de toutes sortes de choses particulièrement saintes offertes par les lha, klu, etc. qui gouvernent le monde, envers les êtres excellents, émanations des buddha et bodhisattva. Pour les Grands Étères ultérieurs aussi, au moment de leur naissance, de leur mort, de leur atteinte de la siddhi, de leur prédication, les lha, klu, dpa’-bo, dākiṇī, qui gouvernent le monde, produisent toutes sortes de miracles: pluies de fleurs, arcs-en-ciel etc., mais nous ne voyons pas les lha, klu etc., de nos yeux qui ne supportent pas leur éclat. Comment le pourrions-nous? Il y a encore un autre argument: pour convertir les êtres, les buddha prennent la forme de cakravartin comme, par exemple, lorsque le Buddha invité avec son entourage par Sumāgadhā dans la ville de Pundravardhana, arriva avec des apparitions miraculeuses variées, et que l’Ārya Rāhula vint sous l’apparence d’un cakravartin.64 En outre, puisqu’il n’apparaît pas de cakravartin dans l’époque Rtsod-lidan, et qu’il n’est pas convenable même d’offrir les rgyal-srid sna-bdun, êtes-vous mécontent de ce que, dans toutes les écoles, lorsqu’on offre le mandala on offre les rgyal-srid sna-bdun? Veuillez y penser!

**Question 15. Il est dit qu’après avoir abandonné le trône, l’Ācārya alla d’abord à Bka’-skyon brag-phug en Inde où, ayant pratiqué pendant sept jours la réalisation du Vajradhātu, il obtint la réalisation.**65 Et ensuite, quand il demanda à Prabhañhati les enseignements du rnal-’byor yo-ga, celui-ci dit: “Sans avoir reçu l’initiation, on n’est pas un récipient convenable pour l’explication des tantra.”66 Si Padmasambhava demande alors l’initiation, à qui l’a-t-il demandée pour la précédente réalisation? Et aussi, si il a obtenu la siddhi après avoir pratiqué la réalisation à Bsil-ba-tshal etc., qu’avait-il besoin de réaliser la siddhi de longue vie dans la grotte Maratika?67 Bref, des histoires incompatibles comme celles-là, il y en a beaucoup!

Il faut vous rappeler une fois de plus que le Guru n’est pas un être ordinaire. D’abord, quand il est né sur le lotus, tous les Jina s’étant rassemblés lui ont conféré initiation et bénédiction, ce qui était une initiation bien suffisante. Si vous ne pouvez concevoir qu’il ait atteint la réalisation en sept jours à Bka’-skyon brag-phug, dans les rnam-thar de nombreux saints de l’Inde et du Tibet il y a des récits similaires: que dire alors de l’Ācārya qui est un nirmāṇakāya! De nos jours, la plupart des individus, Gsar-ma-pa et Rñin-ma-pa, propitient en réclusion pendant vingt-et-un jours, etc., leurs yi-dam particuliers. Les signes de réalisation qui leur apparaissent ne sont-ils pas autant de signes de la propitiation de ces dieux? Quant aux paroles de Prabhañhati, elles ne s’adressaient pas à Padmasambhava seul, mais aussi aux deux autres bhikṣu du nom de Śākya. Ce n’est d’ailleurs pas à cette seule occasion du rnal-’byor
yo-ga que Padmasambhava a montré la manière d’écouter l’enseignement des tantra et commentaires, mais en de nombreux autres lieux et circonstances, et auprès de nombreux maîtres (énumération); et ce n’était pas seulement pour le rnal-'byor rgyud-kyi yo-ga, mais pour un nombre infini d’enseignements des trois yogatantra.

De même pour l’obtention de la siddhi de longue vie: bien que le Guru, étant libéré de vie et mort, n’ait pas eu besoin de pratiquer cette réalisation, il a montré la manière de le faire, pour le bénéfice des êtres à venir, et il a demandé au Mgon-po Tshe-dpag-med en personne les tantra, sādhana et instructions de la longue vie. Il n’était pas seul: Mandarāva a obtenu aussi un corps immortel et, sous le nom de Ma-cig Grub-pa’i rgyal-mo, elle est une grande bienfaitrice pour les êtres, y compris les Gsar-ma-pa chez qui elle est connue comme Tshe-sgrub Grub-rgyal-ma.68

Vous pensez par ailleurs: "Après avoir fini d’obtenir la Réalisation, qu’est-il besoin de faire la réalisation de longue vie?" Dans la tradition rniin-ma-pa, il y a des catégories différentes de siddhi: phyag-rgya chen-po, tshe-la dbang-ba, lhun-gyis sgrub-pa, rnam-par smin-pa . . . , mais comme ce sont des appellations particulières aux Rniin-ma-pa, votre oreille serait trop petite pour les entendre (vous ne voudriez pas écouter), et je ne poursuis pas.

Question 16. Il est dit que Šâkyamuni étant allé en Chine, il prêcha l’enseignement des causes et des fruits des vertus et des péchés, mais personne ne l’écoute et, méprisé, triste, il revint à Grdhračuṭa; et il est dit aussi que Padmasambhava lui-même, regardant depuis Grdhračuṭa où était son champ de conversion, le vit clairement, comme une image dans un miroir.69 Cela encore veut signifier que Padmasambhava dépasse le Buddha; et faire un tel récit où la capacité de sa compassion est épousée, et où il ne connaît pas le domaine des êtres qu’il doit convertir, c’est grandement mépriser le Buddha!

Certes, Padmasambhava connaissait le domaine et le temps des êtres à convertir par lui, mais personne, en dehors des Tīrthika, ne dit que le Buddha ne connaissait pas le domaine et l’époque des siens. Parce qu’il savait que le temps de les convertir n’était pas venu, il dit précisément: "Profond, calme, dépouvu d’activité, lumineux, incomposé . . . "70; et aussi, pour détourner les moines d’une conduite soumise aux tentations, il montra la manière d’entrer en réclusion à ‘Bar-ba’i phug.71 Ainsi, il n’y a rien que le Buddha ne couvre de sa connaissance.

En ce qui concerne ce qui était ou n’était pas dans son domaine de conversion: en dehors de ses paroles à Avalokiteśvara lui assignant le Tibet, et à Maṇjuśrī lui assignant la Chine, le Muni allant lui-même en personne en Chine, cette histoire ne se trouve dans aucune parole du Buddha, ni dans
acunun śāstra. Ce récit des Bka’-thaṅ, il faut le considérer comme n’étant pas les paroles authentiques de Padmasambhava.

**Question 17.** Vous examinez de manière très minutieuse le moment où Khri-sroṅ lde-btsan a invité l’Ācārya, l’époque de la construction de Bsam-yas, etc. L’essentiel de vos objections est: **Le roi étant mort à cinquante-six ans, est-il dit réellement que Padmasambhava a régéné pendant douze ans, ou non? Au temps du prince héritier (lha-sras), est-il resté au Tibet longtemps ou peu de temps? Quand on a construit Skar-chuṅ Rdor-dbyins lha-khaṅ, en a-t-il fait la consécration, ou non? Lorsqu’est survenue la controverse entre subitistes et gradualistes, que faisait-il? Etc.**

Bien que toutes vos questions soient liées et développées, comme je suis un vieillard qui doit écrire avec des yeux qui deviennent aveugles, je compte mes mots et je ne suis capable que de résumer le sens de vos objections. Voici ma réponse:

Sur ces sujets, les désaccords sont très nombreux dans les rgyal-rabs, chos-'byuṅ, et autres écrits réputés de ce genre; je ne sais pas quelle est la tradition digne de foi. Dans les Bka’-thaṅ eux-mêmes, il est difficile de distinguer ce qui est authentique de ce qui est interpolé. Cependant, si l’on prend en considération les gter-ma dignes de foi, non falsifiés, la plupart relatent ceci: Khri-sroṅ lde-btsan naquit l’année du cheval (rta-lo); à dix-sept ans, la pensée du Dharma naquit en son esprit; il invita l’Abbé Šāntaraksita qui commença la fondation de Bsam-yas, mais les lha-'drel nuisibles s’y opposèrent. Selon la prophétie de l’Abbé, Padmasambhava fut alors invité. Il arriva au début de l’année du tigre (stag-lo) et il fit le rite de soumission du terrain (sa-'dul); la construction commencée en l’année du lièvre (yos-lo) fut achevée en cinq ans. Les fêtes de consécration durèrent pendant douze ans. L’Ācārya lui-même résida pendant dix ans à Bsam-yas et à Mchims-phu où il traduisit les textes, amena à la délivrance les êtres qui en étaient dignes, et, pour le reste il résida dans les lieux de méditation (sgrub-gnas) du Tibet. Donc, au moment où survint la controverse, l’Ācārya n’était pas là. Celui qui devait éclaircir la doctrine des subitistes et des gradualistes était, selon la prophétie de Šāntaraksita, Kamalaśīla. Invité, celui-ci soumit le Hva-śaṅ et réimplanta la Doctrine telle qu’elle était auparavant. A cause des ministres, Padmasambhava ne put donner au roi l’initiation qui devait affermir sa vie comme soleil et lune, ni l’eau de longue vie. Le roi s’étant repenti, Padmasambhava allongea sa vie de treize ans: au lieu de mourir à cinquante-six ans, il mourut à soixante-neuf. L’aîné de ses trois fils, Mu-ne btsan-po, monta sur le trône; il accomplit des actes remarquables tels que l’institution du Mdo-sde mchod-pa et l’égalisation des biens entre les riches et les pauvres, mais la Reine-mère, très mauvaise, l’empoisonna. Le deuxième fils, Mu-tig btsad-po, connu aussi comme Mu-ri btsan-po, Zu-tse btsan-po etc., appelé par le Guru: Legs-pa’i
blo-gros, étant jeune, on ne savait pas si il serait apte ou non à être roi. On s’accorda sur le fait que, si on le mettait à l’épreuve, ce serait bien (sad-nas legs-pa); et comme il se tenait la tête redressée, il fut connu comme Sad-na legs ‘jiṅ-yon. Il monta sur le trône à treize ans. Il construisit Skar-chuṅ dgu-thog Rdor-dbyin-kyi lha-khaṅ, et son épouse Naṅ-chuṅ-ma construisit Yar-lun Btsan-thaṅ-gi gtsug-lag-khan\textsuperscript{72}: l’Ācārya fit la consécration des deux. Le dernier fils, Mu-rum btsan-po, alias Lha-sras Dge-mgon, appelé par l’Ācārya: Lha-sras Dam’dzin, étant d’un grand courage, partit comme chef des armées pour soumettre les ennemis des quatre frontières; il les réduisit tous à son pouvoir mais, finalement, comme punition pour avoir tué le fils d’un ministre, il fut expulsé pendant neuf ans au pays de Koṅ-roṅ (où maintenant encore il y a des toponymes l’évoquant). Il y construisit des citadelles et des temples, organisant ainsi les présages qui en feraient les sièges de sa future renaissance, Saṅs-rgyas gliṅ-pa. Lorsqu’il revint d’exil, les Sna-nam-pa qui le haïssaient dès avant, effrayèrent son cheval et il mourut d’une ruade.

Mu-tig btsan-po étant très jeune, il demanda à l’Ācārya en qui il avait une foi vive, d’innombrables conseils sur ce qu’il devait faire: en cela seulement, et en exagérant, on peut dire que l’Ācārya a gouverné.\textsuperscript{73} Sous le règne de ce prince, il est resté trois ans environ au Tibet. Des cinq fils de ‘jiṅ-yon, l’aîné Rgyal-sras lha-rje, à qui Padmasambhava a donné prophéties et enseignements, et Lhun-grub, moururent jeunes. Le prince Gtsan-ma entra dans les ordres. Comme Glaṅ-dar-ma ne convenait pas comme roi, Khri Ral-pa-can fut mis sur le trône: tout cela s’accorde avec la plupart des autres histoires et de toute façon, quand le prince Mu-tig était jeune, l’Ācārya partit au Sud-ouest.

**Question 18. Au moment de la conversation entre Khri-sroṅ lde-btsan et Padmasambhava, celui-ci parle de ya-thog riṅ-mo et de ma-thog riṅ-mo, mais il dit ma-thog thuṅ-nu, ce qui n’est pas conforme à l’expression usuelle.\textsuperscript{74}**

Ce que vous dites ne peut venir que d’un texte fautif. Mais si ce n’est pas une erreur textuelle, la pensée de Padmasambhava est, probablement, que pendant le ya-thog riṅ-mo, la taille, la longévité, les mérites des êtres augmentant, on appelle cette période “longue” (riṅ-mo); tandis que dans la période de déclin, tout diminue, d’où l’expression “courte” (thuṅ-nu). A part cela, il n’y a pas discordance avec l’expression classique de l’augmentation et de la diminution de la longévité.

Dans la suite de cette question, vous dites aussi: *Si l’on se fie aux prophéties suivantes: “Il n’est pas allé en Inde, le nommé Kun-sniṅ lo-ca”, et: “Tous les savants moines du Tibet seront transportés aux frontières”, et: Noir à l’intérieur, blanc à l’extérieur, comme une barbe d’orge (sñe-ma) et*
une conque blanche”, et plus loin: “Une loi nouvelle apparaîtra, liée aux Hor comme patrons et à leur chapelain”, il s’agit de mauvaises prophéties désignant Sa-skya pan-chen. Comment est-ce possible?

Cela, c’est dû à des erreurs textuelles dans les Bka’-thaṅ, que quelques imbéciles ont commentées de travers. Pourquoi cela: Le seul nom de Sa-paṅ est Kun-dga’ rgyal-mtshan, il n’est pas appelé Kun-dga’ sñin-po; quant à Sa-chen Kun-dga’ sñin-po, il n’est pas connu comme lotsava. En ce qui concerne la prophétie: “Les savants moines du Tibet seront transportés aux frontières” à l’époque où les Sa-skya-pa et les Mongols étaient liés, en dehors des propres lamas de Sa-skya qui se rendirent successivement chez les Mongols puis en Chine comme chapelains, de quelle manière tous les autres savants moines du Tibet y sont-ils allés? Bref, quand on trouve dans les autres gter-ma prophétiques les mots prononcés (par Padmasambhava) à cette occasion, ils sont ainsi: “Il n’iront pas en Inde, mais tous se diront lotsa(va). Tous les savants moines du Tibet vagabonderont aux frontières.” C’est une prophétie qui annonce que beaucoup de moines savants du Tibet prendront le nom de lotsava sans pratiquer leur propre religion, et que beaucoup, sans aller en Inde, vagabonderont dans les pays frontaliers comme le Népal, et en tireront leur renommée.

Comme les gens du Tibet auront une apparence extérieure paisible et qu’ils montreront un semblant de religion, mais qu’à l’intérieur leurs pensées ne seront pas bonnes, la prophétie dit: “ceux qui sont blancs à l’extérieur, noirs à l’intérieur”, et elle prend comme métaphore la sue (du-kha’i sñe-ma) sur le fond d’un pot; il ne s’agit pas des trois hiérarchies Sa-skya-pa. Et quel sens y aurait-il à rapprocher les mots “conque blanche” et “barbe d’orge”? De tels contresens, qui sont nombreux, entraînent beaucoup de gaspillage dans les enseignements religieux.

Il y a cependant beaucoup d’autres prophéties annonçant, comme en cette occasion: “Dans six à sept générations royales, parce que tous les Tibétains voudront être réputés comme lotsava, ils courront en Inde et au Népal, comme la chaîne du métier à tisser (sans interruption). Tous, cherchant leur propre gloire, auront en eux haine et esprit de rivalité tourbillonnant comme le vent. Les pandits indiens, avides d’or, fabriqueront des enseignements selon le désir de chaque Tibétain. Tous le tantra et textes doctrinaux réputés, tels le Tripiṭaka, ont été complètement traduits à présent. Quant aux tantra et instructions particuliers, ils demeurent dans les trésors secrets des dākinī, en Oddiyāṇa etc.; seuls des êtres saints, des siddha, en sortiront quelques-uns. La doctrine véritable ne restera implantée que peu de temps à Bodhgaya: se répandant comme l’eau à l’Est de l’Inde, au Cachemire, au Népal, on fabriquera des tantra apocryphes à partir de chaque traduction, et jusqu’à la moindre petite instruction sera contrefaite; on citera ces faux selon son bon plaisir. Comme les Tibétains stupides aiment la nouveauté, ils ne compren-
dront pas l’enseignement des causes et des caractéristiques (rgyu mtshan-ñid); ils se montreront partisans et partiaux envers les lotsava de leur propre tradition. Bref, pour une seule et même doctrine, il y aura beaucoup de chefs.”

Quant à cette prophétie disant: “(Les Sa-skya-pa) se feront les guides, l’armée mongole viendra au Tibet”, elle ne se trouve pas seulement dans les Bka’-thai, mais également dans beaucoup d’autres prophéties des gter-ma. Lorsque le Guru lui-même, en route vers le Sud-ouest, arriva en face de la montagne Glañ-ru du Gtsang, il dit: “En cet endroit, dans l’avenir, un monastère appelé Sa et une lignée de sept incarnations de Mañjuśrī apparaîtront, qui diffuseront la doctrine du Buddha. Mais, parce qu’ils se feront les guides des Mongols destructeurs, ils ne seront pas de grands bienfaiteurs pour tout le Tibet.” Cette façon de parler, on la trouve dans la plupart des biographies de Padmasambhava.

Toutes les prophéties qui existent ne peuvent pas être authentifiées avec certitude comme étant les paroles de Padmasambhava; mais si, en s’appuyant sur les erreurs que l’on relève dans de faux gter-ma, on conçoit des vues fausses et du mépris pour tous les gter-ma véritables et pour les paroles authentiques de Padmasambhava, il faut savoir que cela entraînera un rejet général de la Doctrine.

(Vous objectez aussi): Dans les Bka’-thañ, il est dit: “De même, deux gter-ston n’apparaitront pas au même moment”; et, pour étayer cette affirmation: “Comme roi des bêtes de proie, une seule lionne des glaciers; comme roi des oiseaux, un seul grand garuda planant dans l’espace; comme roi des fleurs, un seul udumbara.”

Des affirmations comme celle-là, on en trouve beaucoup, mais il ne faut pas les prendre pour des paroles de Padmasambhava. Parce que, non seulement deux gter-ston peuvent apparaître en même temps, mais il est même arrivé qu’il en apparaissa quatre ou cinq à la fois. Ceux-ci, parfois, se rendaient mutuellement service et avaient des liens karmiques qui les unissaient. Mais il y en eut aussi quelques-uns qui, n’étant pas d’accord, avaient de la haine les uns pour les autres; il est probable que ce sont certains de ceux-ci qui ont fabriqué de telles prophéties. Les Rnīñ-ma-pa non plus, ne peuvent se satisfaire de ce qui est pure stupidité!

En résumé, tous les kalyāṇamitra des autres écoles, orgueilleux de leur tradition, tiennent pour non-Dharma tous les tantra rnīñ-ma-pa et les textes du Rdzogs-chen, et ils méprisent tout ce qui porte le nom de gter-ma. Quant aux Rnīñ-ma-pa, même les philosophes ne fondent pas fermement la compréhension de leur propre doctrine. (Les autres), sans avoir la capacité mentale de pratiquer le stage d’évocation et celui de résorption (bskyed-rim et rdzogs-rim), ils déclarent “nous sommes des tantristes.” S’adonnant toute leur vie à la viande, au chañ, aux femmes, aux rituels de village, ils se vantent
d’appartenir à la tradition rṣiṇi-med-pa et à la lignée de Padmasambhava! Tout ce que je vois chez les autres et chez nous, me confirme que nous sommes bien dans le temps du déclin de la Doctrine; cela me fend le coeur, mais je n’ai pas d’autre ressource que de me taire.

Vous dites textuellement: *Pour venir à l’aide de ce que je n’avais pas compris (dans les Bka’-thai)*, et de ce que je ne savais pas, je n’ai trouvé de preuve dans aucun autre rnam-thar (de Padmasambhava).

Vous lancez ainsi beaucoup d’accusations d’insultes mais, d’une façon générale, un individu ordinaire pourrait-il mesurer les vertus contenues dans un seul pore de la peau d’un buddha? C’est inconcevable. Dans ce cas précis, à quoi bon vouloir uniformiser des rnam-thar qui apparaissent différents selon le destin des disciples à qui ils s’adressent? (Exemples de manifestations différentes des Buddha, y compris Šākyamuni, selon leurs interlocuteurs). Padmasambhava étant un nirmāṇakāya, qui accorde ses méthodes aux êtres à convertir, disputer à perde haleine sur les différentes opinions concernant ses naissances, de la matrice et miraculeuse, sur les concordances et discordances au sujet de ses noms et actes en Inde, sur la durée plus ou moins longue de son séjour au Tibet, ce n’est qu’une cause de fatigue et un signe de sottise. Il faut se mettre dans l’esprit que les lieux qu’il a parcourus et les appartenances qu’il a prises sont en nombre inconcevable. L’essentiel a été dit par le grand Acārya lui-même dans le Žal-chems rin-chen gser-phreṅ:80 “Moi, Padmasambhava, je suis venu pour le bien du Tibet. Au moyen de transformations j’ai soumis tous les êtres nuisibles, sans exception. J’ai établi sur la voie de la délivrance beaucoup d’êtres qui étaient munis d’un bon karmā. Par mes profonds trésors, le Tibet sera rempli de siddha. J’ai rempli cols, vallées, montagnes, rochers, sol, de l’empreinte des sabots de mon cheval; j’ai béni tous les lieux de méditation, sans exception. J’ai organisé les moyens et les présages, pour que le Tibet soit heureux longtemps. Par des émanations ininterrompues, je protégerai les êtres. Mais, bien que je sois un grand bienfaiteur des Tibétains, ils ne se souviendront pas des mes bienfaits.” Et: “Dans l’avenir, quelques hommes aux vues fausses et perverses, sans réflexion mais orgueilleux de leur science apprise, se glorifiant eux-mêmes et méprisant les autres, diront que moi, Padmasambhava, je ne suis pas resté longtemps au Tibet. Certains diront un mois, d’autres un demi-mois, ou encore dix jours. D’autres encore: ‘Il a fondé Gser-gyi rdzoṅs (?) et est retourné en Odḍiyāna.’ Ce n’est pas vrai: je suis resté cent onze ans. Il n’y a pas un arpent du Tibet, aux frontières, au centre, vallées, ravins, que je n’ai foulé de mes pieds. Si j’ai protégé pendant longtemps, ou non, le Tibet par ma compassion, si vous avez l’esprit conscient, ayez confiance!” Et: “Dans l’avenir, quelques idiots arrogants diront: ‘Padmasambhava le jeune (chuṅ-ba) est venu au Tibet; Padmasam-
bhava l’aîné n’est pas venu au Tibet.’ Mais il n’y a pas d’aîné et de cadet: il n’y a que moi-même . . . ’’ Ces paroles, nous y croyons de tout notre coeur.

**Colophon.** Ainsi, bien qu’il y ait beaucoup de sujets abordés dans vos questions, ceux qui revenaient sans cesse sur eux-mêmes, je les ai résumés en un seul. Certaines questions portaient sur des textes fautifs, et certaines sur des falsifications introduites par des imbéciles dans les Bka’-thāṅ; celles-là, comme elles ne méritaient ni réponse ni publicité, je les ai laissées. J’ai répondu franchement, selon ce que je comprenais être la vérité. Quant aux questions où vous exposiez en détail la nature véritable du Tripiṭaka, et en particulier du ’Dul-luṅ sde-bzi, en prenant à témoin les paroles du Buddha et les śāstra authentiques, celles-là, en dehors de vous offrir mon admiration, que dire?

Je vous demande de bien vouloir supporter les plaisanteries que, misérable poussière, j’ai faites parfois pour vous amuser. Surtout, moi qui suis un homme des confins barbares, je n’ai jamais reçu, approfondi, étudié, les textes canoniques, et j’ai parlé stupidement, comme cela me venait; c’est pourquoi je demande pardon du fond du cœur aux saints et savants kalyāṇamitra tels que vous, pour toutes les erreurs que vous pourriez trouver, dues à une incompréhension ou une mauvaise compréhension de ma part.

Certains aussi, parmi les Rñiṅ-ma-pa, penseront: ‘‘Alors que l’on adresse des critiques aux Bka’-thāṅ, faire soi-même chorus avec ceux qui les méprisent, en disant qu’il y a des falsifications dedans, à quoi cela rime-t-il?’’ Je leur répondrai: tromper autrui au moyen de mensonges et d’erreurs, d’une manière générale ce n’est pas correct. En particulier, enseigner ce qui n’est pas le Dharma, mais un mensonge des Lamas et une contrefaçon de la Loi sainte, est cause de destruction pour les enseignements anciens et postérieurs. Moi-même, ce que je ne savais pas, je l’ai laissé de côté; pour ce que je savais, et comme je le comprenais, j’ai dit franchement que ce qui était, était, et ce qui n’était pas, n’était pas. Si, au lieu de cela, on parle de manière fausse, on accumule une grande masse de pêchés. Tandis que, si l’on dit les choses comme elles sont, on se fait le serviteur du Dharma. Et, de même que le Cintāmaṇi plongé dans un marécage perd toutes ses vertus, mais lavé, placé au sommet de la bannière, honoré d’offrandes et de prières, accorde la réalisation de tous les désirs, ainsi ai-je composé ce texte en langue vulgaire (’bel-gtam) qui purifie la religion d’ajouts et souillures impures.

Je ne me flatte que d’avoir présenté une faible réponse à vos questions, pour purifier d’ajouts apocryphes la parole sans souillure du pur Buddha Padma Ṙgyal-po; mais mon intelligence et mes connaissances sont limitées. Qui espérait un beau discours qui réjouisse les savants, de la part d’un vieil homme stupide dont les forces sont épuisées? Moi-même je suis épuisé de la fatigue seule d’écrire! Depuis l’enfance, à cause du mauvais nom de ‘‘réincar-
nation’’ qui m’a été attaché, Je n’ai pu que produire des paroles de vœu et de transfert des mérites, des rituels pour procurer richesses et nourriture, mais je n’ai pas eu la chance de pratiquer d’autres actes. Ma vie est près de s’achever, comme le soleil déclinant derrière les montagnes de l’Ouest. Je n’ai plus de dents, et ma tête est plus blanche que conque. Alors que la force de mes cinq sens est épuisée, qu’intérieurement je n’appréhended pas le sens ultime, pourquoi écrire ce lent discours semblable à la trace d’un vers? J’ai cependant pris sur mon sinciput le bon fardeau qu’est l’ordre du guide excellent (rnam-'dren mchog) des grands monastères qui affermissent la prospérité du gouvernement religieux et politique (chos-srid), et j’ai écrit ce texte.

(Voeux pour que les mérites qui peuvent exister dans cet écrit, s’unissant à tous ceux qui ont été accumulés depuis le commencement des temps, soient transformés en une masse pure et parfaite; et pour que lui-même, renaisant toujours en un lieu où se développent sūtra et tantra, fasse le bien des êtres).

Cette réponse aux questions du Lama Rme-ru-ba chen-po a été écrite par le vieux moine śrīma-pa appelé Padma legs-grub,81 dans l’ermitage de Sgrub-sna qui se trouve à côté du coude vers la droite de la rivière Gser-ladan.

NOTES


2. Ibid., p. 193 note 5: “This is the first record of Padma Sambhava’s incarnation, who, in the 8th century after Christ, was again born, in a miraculous manner, out of a lotus or water-lily, at O’dheyan, in the western part of India, as a celebrated Guru. Upon an invitation by Khrisrong déhu tsan, the king of Tibet, and a great patron of Buddhism, he visited that country in the beginning of the 9th century, and remained there for many years; he wrote several works, that are still extant under his name. His memory is greatly respected in the present day by the Tibetans, who call him Urgyen Rinpocché, and the most ancient religious sect in Tibet, after his name, is called Urgyenpa, followers of Urgyen.”

3. Ibid., p. 180, n° 18.


5. Le Gsu-h‘bum a été publié deux fois: par Sanji Dorji en 5 volumes, Delhi 1974; à Gangtok, 1979, en 8 volumes, cette dernière édition étant beaucoup plus complète. Dans les deux éditions, le Bka’-thain dris-lan se trouve au volume 3, pp. 397-491 éd. de Gangtok, pp. 271-343 éd. de Delhi que l’on suivra ici.


Ce texte, ainsi que l’Autobiographie de Rtsa-le rig’dzin, mériterait une étude plus approfondie. Ils fournissent nombre de renseignements inédits sur l’histoire politique et religieuse du Köṅ-po et du Dvags-po du 15e au 17e siècle, sur l’organisation des monastères et les liens qu’ils entretiennent avec les laïcs, sur la volonté de réforme qui se fait jour chez les Rniṅ-ma-pa au 16e siècle, et sur la profonde symbiose qui existait entre Rniṅ-ma et Bka’-brgyud, au moins dans ces provinces.


10. Par exemple, Yontan Gyatso rapporte qu’un jour, Drug-sgo rab-byams-pa vint en présence du Dalai Lama, un bâton passé dans sa ceinture (en dérision du phur-bu que portait le Dalai Lama). A la question de celui-ci il répondit: “Il semble qu’il faille porter cela pour jouer de vos faveurs!” Une autre fois, controversant avec le Dalai Lama sur l’authenticité des gter-ma, il lui déclara qu’il n’était vraiment pas difficile d’être un gter-ston. Le Dalai Lama le mettant au défi, il lui annonça qu’à telle date, il découvrirait un trésor. Dérochant en cachette une statuette appartenant au Dalai Lama, il l’enterra et, au jour dit, la remit au jour.


15. Ed. de Sarnath, pp. 341 sq.


20. Cf. n. 17. Sum-pa mkhan-po conclut son résumé des critiques (p. 395): de-la Rgya-ma rabs-byams-pa dain Drug-sgo rab-byams-pa sogs-khyis dgag-pa cuṅ-zad byas-pa. Si sogs n’est pas ici une figure de style, cela voudrait dire qu’il existait d’autres textes similaires?


23. Rdo-rje brag rig-'dzin Padma phrin-las (1641-1717). C’est peut-être cette réponse même qu’a retenue Kloň-rdol bla-ma (v. n. 12) quand il cite comme texte polémique de Brag-sgo Phuntshogs rgyal-mtshan et la réponse de Rdo-brag-pa Padma ‘phrin-las’, auxquels il ajoute des notes (mchan) rédigées par Phur-bu lcogs Byams-pa, le tout comportant 84 folio. Dans les ouvrages de Padma phrin-las publiés à ce jour, je n’ai pas trouvé trace de cette réponse.

24. F. 36b: bkra-sis dge-legs chos-srid-kyi ... rnam-'dren mchog.


27. Le Pr. Christopher Beckwith m’a fait remarquer que ce plan était celui-là même que suivaient les yig-cha, soulignant ainsi la parenté de méthode dans l’apprentissage de la dialectique, comme dans les controverses écrites et orales.

28. Colophon, f. 35a-35b.


31. Slob-dpon saṅs-rgyas g尼斯-pa Padma ‘byun-gnas-kyi rnam-par thar-pa Yid-kyi mun-sel zes bya-ba, pothi, sans lieu ni date d’édition.

32. Dans ce résumé, les citations textuelles de Brag-sgo rab-byams-pa apparaîtront en italiques. Retrouver les références exactes des passages des textes cités par Rtse-le rig-'dzin aurait exigé des recherches approfondies qu’il ne m’a pas été possible de mener; on voudra bien m’en excuser.


34. Les prophéties tirées de ces textes et de quelques autres, (v. par exemple question 6), forment le “stock” où puisent les Rniṅ-ma-pa depuis le 14e siècle au moins, pour prouver que le Buddha avait annoncé la venue de Padmasambhava. Elles sont liées aux prophéties sur Avalokiteśvara. Mais quelques recherches préliminaires dans le Bka’-’gyur ne m’ont pas encore permis de localiser ces prophéties, ni de retrouver tous les textes cités. Ces prophéties sont rassemblées, pour la plupart, dans le chapitre 11 des Bka’-thaṅ Šel-brag-ma et Gser-phreṅ.

35. Rtse-le rig-'dzin suit ici une source différente des Šel-brag-ma et Gser-phreṅ (chap. 9), où le nom du roi est Gtsug-phud rigs-bzaṅ, celui de son fils Šantaraksita ou Rakṣantara.


38. V. Sog-bzlog-pa, op. cit., p. 110.


40. Chapitre 2 des Šel-brag-ma et Gser-phreṅ.

41. C’est le début du chant fameux: ha che na btsan, que Padmasambhava entonne pour convaincre le roi de le saluer le premier; Šel-brag-ma, chap. 61; Gser-phreṅ, chap. 57.
42. Parce qu’il y a douze ans entre ces deux années. L’intention de Rtse-le rig ’dzin n’est pas claire: veut-il suggérer qu’un laps de temps plus long s’est peut-être écoulé entre le nirvāṇa du Bouddha et la naissance de Padmasambhava?

43. Šel-brag-ma, chap. 26 à 28; Gser-phreṅ, chap. 22 à 24.

44. Rtse-le rig ’dzin résume ici le deuxième chapitre du Zaṅs-gliṅ-ma. L’édition de Kon’ sprul présente une variante sur le nom de la grotte: Brag-dmar bya-khyuṅ, située en Inde; et l’épisode du chapeau n’y figure pas.

45. La même argumentation est déjà développée par Dpa’o Gtsug-lag phreṇ-ba, v. A. M. Blondeau, “Analysis of the biographies . . .”, p. 50 n.2.

46. Je n’ai pas trouvé la source de cette histoire.

47. Non identifié.


49. De toute évidence, Rtse-le rig ’dzin a malicieusement rapproché ici deux passages contradictoires du texte de Brag-sgo rab’-byams-pa.


51. Šel-brag-ma, chap. 38; Gser-phreṅ, chap. 34. Cette histoire ne se trouve pas dans le Zaṅs-gliṅ-ma.

52. Šel-brag-ma, chap. 43; Gser-phreṅ, chap. 39.

53. En réalité, cette histoire ne se trouve que dans le Šel-brag-ma, intercalée à fin du chapitre 30 (correspondant dans le Gser-phreṅ au chapitre 26). L’explication de Rtse-le rig ’dzin, pour intéressante qu’elle soit, semble témoigner d’une connaissance superficielle du Bon: l’histoire, de style populaire, me paraît devoir être rattachée aux affirmations bon-po sur l’existence d’un Bon indien. Si son exposé du Bon reste conventionnel, en revanche Rtse-le rig ’dzin manifeste un jugement sans parti-pris sur les Véhicules supérieurs du Bon, résultat sans doute des enseignements bon-po qu’il avait reçus et de la lignée de réincarnations à laquelle il était rattaché.

54. Religieux hindouiste qui a été le dernier converti du Bouddha sur son lit de mort. Ne pouvant supporter la mort du Bouddha, il lui demande de passer dans le nirvāṇa avant lui.

55. Bien que l’udumbara soit un figuier, les textes tibétains le prennent très souvent pour une espèce de lotus.

56. C’est le récit d’origine du stūpa Bya-rut kha-šor (Bodnath), à partir de deux larmes d’Avalokiteśvara transformées en deux déesses: Šel-brag-ma, chap. 35; Gser-phreṅ, chap. 31.


58. saṅs-rgyas thams-cad ’dus-pa’i sku / rdo-rje ’dzin-pa’i ho-bo-ñid. Yontan Gyatso m’indique que c’est le début d’une célébre prière dge-legs-pa qui se poursuit: dbon-mchog gsum-gyi rtsa-ba / bla-ma nrams-la gus phytag-’tshal.

59. Cette citation et probablement la précédente sont tirées du Mgur-’bum de Milarepa. (Information de Yontan Gyatso).

60. Toute cette discussion s’appuie sur le chapitre 11 des Šel-brag-ma et Gser-phreṅ, consacré aux prophéties annonçant la venue de Padmasambhava.

61. Citation du Rgyud bla-ma. (Information de Yontan Gyatso).

62. Citation des paroles du Bouddha énonçant les quatre points d’appui sûrs, et les quatre à rejeter (rton-pa bzhī dahn mi-rton-pa bzhī), dans le Mdo-sde dgo’ns’-grel (bkA’-gyur, éd. Suzuki, n° 774), chap. 7. (Information de Yontan Gyatso).

63. Épisode qui se trouve au début du chap. 21 du Šel-brag-ma, 17 dans le Gser-phreṅ.


65. Šel-brag-ma, chap. 22; Gser-phreṅ, chap. 18: prologue du séjour de Padmasambhava à Bsil-ba tshal.
66. Šel-brag-ma, chap. 26; Gser-phreṅ, chap. 22.
67. Šel-brag-ma, chap. 44; Gser-phreṅ, chap. 40.
69. Début du chap. 35 dans le Šel-brag-ma, 31 dans le Gser-phreṅ.
71. Je n’ai pas trouvé la source de cet épisode.
74. Je n’ai pas retrouvé ce passage qui devrait se situer aux chapitres 96 du Šel-brag-ma et 93 du Gser-phreṅ: Exposé sur le développement et le déclin de la Doctrine.
75. Il s’agit de la prophétie annonçant Ra-mo šel-sman, dans le chapitre des prophéties sur les gter-ston: Šel-brag-ma, chap. 92; Gser-phreṅ, chap. 89, où le texte correspond à la version donnée par Rtse-le rig’-dzin.
76. Je n’ai pas localisé cette prophétie.
77. Ibid., prophétie concernant Guru Chos-dbaṅ.
78. Cette prophétie ne semble pas provenir des Bka’-thaṅ Šel-brag-ma et Gser-phreṅ.
79. Aux chapitres 94 du Šel-brag-ma et 91 du Gser-phreṅ, qui développent longuement cette affirmation, en l’étayant de citations de textes canoniques.
80. Je n’ai pas identifié ce texte. La dernière prophétie se retrouve sous forme abrégée à la fin des chapitres ci-dessus (n. 79).
81. Nom de Rtse-le rig’-dzin.
བོད་སྲིད་མཐའ་ཁོ་ན་བདེ་བཞི་བཞིགས་་མ་སྟེན་མདོ་ན་དེ་བཞི་བཞིག་ལྗེན་བཞུང་་དག་པ་དག་ཟླ་སྤྲུལ་བཞིང་་དག་པ་དག་ཟླ་སྤྲུལ་

དགོས་པའི་དཔེ་ན་བཞྲག་བཞི་བཞི་ཀྲུང་དེ་ན་ཆོས་དཔེ་ཐ་དབྱིབས་་དག་པ་དག་ཟླ་སྤྲུལ་

བདེ་བཞི་བཞིག་ལྗེན་བཞུང་་དག་པ་དག་ཟླ་སྤྲུལ་

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བཙོ་ཆེན་པོ་ཞི་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་མི་རྣམ་རྐྱུན་

བདེ་བཞི་བཞིག་ལྗེན་བཞུང་་དག་པ་དག་ཟླ་སྤྲུལ་

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བདེ་བཞི་བཞིག་ལྗེན་བཞུང་་དག་པ་དག་ཟླ་སྤྲུལ་

བཙོ་ཆེན་པོ་ཞི་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་མི་རྣམ་རྐྱུན་
Dualism in Tibetan Cosmogonic Myths and the Question of Iranian Influence

PER KVAERNE

It is generally supposed that a number of cultural elements, including certain religious ideas, have entered Tibet at some point of time from Iran, or, more vaguely, from the "Iranian world."

However, the facts have been—and are—elusive. It is not a question of a massive and easily distinguishable influence, as is the case with the cultural influence emanating from India or China. On the contrary, it is a question of disparate elements which may, moreover, have been transmitted indirectly and reached Tibet at different times.

The need to formulate more precise questions when discussing the "Iranian influence" should, therefore, be emphasized. Instead of speaking, in a general way, of "Iranian" elements, we should start asking questions such as: at what historical time did the element in question reach Tibet—before the establishment of the national dynasty in the 7th century AD, during the dynastic period, or possibly even after the disintegration of the Tibetan empire in the 9th century? From what part of the Iranian world did the transmission take place: from Persia itself, or from Central Asian centres such as Khotan? Perhaps the transmission was indirect—through Kashmir, or China, or through the Uighurs? Again, the Iranians themselves may only have transmitted influences the sources of which lie further west—say, in Mesopotamia or in the Byzantine empire. And what is meant by "origins" anyway? Certain ideas, for example those connected with the nature and function of the king, are important in the history of Iranian culture and have assumed specific forms in the various Iranian empires; nevertheless they have their ultimate source in the civilizations of the ancient Near East.

If we assume that an Iranian influence, in one form or another, has been present in the course of Tibet's history, two criteria should be insisted on: we should only accept instances of such influence which are reasonably certain because they are specific, and which have been transmitted in a way and at a time which can be reasonably well established. Although there doubtless are others, I will limit myself to pointing out two instances which seem to me to be particularly well documented and which possess these two criteria.
The first concerns *Tibetan medicine* and has been dealt with by Christopher I. Beckwith in his article “The Introduction of Greek Medicine into Tibet in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries” (Beckwith 1979). As pointed out by R.A. Stein as early as 1962 (Stein 1962:40), Tibetan historians, starting with Dpa'-bo gtsug-lag 'phreng-ba (16th century), inform us that among the physicians attached to the court in the royal period was a certain Ga-le-nos. This is obviously the greek Galenos. While this name probably refers to the medical *tradition* of Galenos rather than to a particular person, there is no doubt, as Beckwith concludes, “that at the Tibetan court the Greek medical tradition was sufficiently well known to be esteemed more highly than either the Indian or the Chinese tradition” (Beckwith 1979:301). However, how was a Greek medical tradition transmitted to Tibet? Ga-le-nos is said to have originated from “Khrom in Stag-gzig,” “Khrom or Stag-gzig,” or simply from “Ta-zig.” While Khrom ultimately is derived from “Rome” and should, strictly speaking, designate the Byzantine empire, Stag-gzig indicates Iran or the Muslim Caliphate. However, the two terms tend to be confused in Tibetan as well as Chinese tradition. It therefore seems likely that the direct source of the Greek medical tradition in Tibet was Iranian. This is supported by the title of the successor of Galenos at the Tibetan court, which is given as Bi-jî. This obviously non-Tibetan word may quite reasonably be taken as a rendering of Sogdian *Być*, “physician.” It would seem that this Bi-jî came to Tibet via China (Beckwith 1979:303), which is not surprising since “Persian or Arab doctors could be found not only in Ch’ang-an, the T’ang capital, but in nearly every port of China” (Beckwith 1979:297).

The other instance I want to mention is the use of the *lion* in Tibetan myth and ritual. R.A. Stein has pointed out that during the eighth century several elements of the Iranian New Year rites, including the lion dance and what he calls “the mythology of the lion” travelled from Iran to Turkestan—Samarkand, Kucha, Turfan—and thence to China and Tibet (Stein 1972:60, 218-219). Once again, we have specific historical evidence: from the beginning of the ninth century Chinese sources report that the Chinese army on the Tibetan–Chinese border not far from Ch’ang-an was entertained by a lion dance performed by what were probably Sogdians (Demiéville 1952:206 n.2). As a symbol of power, the lion is of Mesopotamian origin; transmitted via Iran, Turkestan, and China it became the national symbol of Tibet, a country in which the actual animal is unknown.

These instances of Iranian influence, which would appear to be reasonably certain, have two traits in common: firstly, they were transmitted via China (and not, as far as can be seen, through—for example—Western Tibet) in the period of the Tibetan empire, and, secondly, they only marginally concern religious ideas.
However, it is precisely in the sphere of religious ideas, and not least that of mythology, that various authors have taken an Iranian influence for granted. In Tibetan cosmogonic myths, i.e. myths which relate how the world came into being, we regularly find an opposition between light and darkness, good and evil, often personified as two demiurgic figures, a Lord of Light whose creation is good, and a Lord of Darkness whose corresponding activity is harmful. In other words, we find a dualistic scheme which cannot fail to call the well-known Iranian dualism to mind, and I would like to devote the rest of my paper to this particular question.

I hasten to confess that I have myself until recently been among those who have brought an “Iranian connection” into play in order to explain such myths (Kvaerne 1981). However, I have had good company. As early as 1949, Giuseppe Tucci wrote a chapter in Tibetan Painted Scrolls entitled “The Origin of Mankind and some Iranian Influences” (Tucci 1949:730-731), in which, having given a résumé of a cosmogonic myth to which we shall return, he concluded that “the parallelism with Iranian ideas concerning the creation of the god of evil and the good god is so evident that we need not dwell upon it.” In 1970 he returned to the same myth in his Die Religionen Tibets (Tucci 1970, quoted from Tucci 1980:214) stating: “Other, clearly older, elements indicate perceptible influences of Iranian beliefs, especially, it would seem, those of Zurvanism.” He also suggests the way such influences were transmitted to Tibet: “These came about either through contacts with Central Asiatic peoples, through the intermediary of Manicheism, which was widespread in these regions, or later on, through the influence of the Uighurs” (Tucci 1980:271 n. 5).

In 1975, Helmut Hoffmann emphasized the Iranian element in Tibetan religion, particularly the Bon religion (Hoffmann 1975). “The Bon religion seems to have been a rather primitive animism, but by the time Zhang-zhung was incorporated into the new Tibetan empire the religion must have undergone certain changes connected with the adoption of ideas from Iran and India. This is not surprising since the western Himalayan districts were at all times open to the neighbouring Iranian peoples (as shown, for instance, by the Sogdian Nestorian inscription in Ladakh) . . . ” (Hoffmann 1975:102, my italics). He further states that “The great journey of gShen-rab to convert Tibet and adjacent countries is a replica of Padmasambhava’s conversion of the demons and spirits of Tibet, which in turn may have been inspired by Manicheism, a rather powerful religion in Inner Asia at that time” (Hoffmann 1975:103). He suggests that the use of divine pentads in Bon as well as in Buddhism “probably originated from Manicheism where the equivalent of the Primordial Buddha, the “Father of Greatness” or “Father of Light,” also has five spiritual sons which emanate form him” (Hoffmann 1975:106). Turning specifically to Bon cosmogonic myths, Hoffmann considers the influence of
Iranian religion to be "especially evident" (Hoffmann 1975:107). He, too, refers to the same myth that Tucci had presented, and concludes: "This myth is obviously a replica of primordial events as described in the documents of Zurvanism and Manicheism" (Hoffmann 1975:107).

In an excellent presentation of Tibetan religion published in 1976, Anne-Marie Blondeau likewise speaks of a type of Bon cosmogony that "reflects Zurvanistic influences probably transmitted by Manicheans installed in Central Asia" (Blondeau: 1976:313), and refers to myths of the same kind as that discussed by Tucci in 1949 and 1970. Finally, Samten G. Karmay, discussing a different Bonpo cosmogonic myth (but one which likewise has a dualistic structure) states that "what is certain is the Iranian influence of duality" (Karmay 1975:195).

In other words, an Iranian influence or element has generally been taken for granted in the case of Tibetan cosmogonic myths, in particular those with a clearly dualistic structure. Anticipating my conclusion, I would hasten to assert that we are in no position to exclude such an influence. It seems to me, however, that this influence has acquired, starting with Tucci's work in 1949, the status of an established truth, and it in the justification of this that I would like to question.

I would suggest that there are at least three weak points in this theory:

1. In contradistinction to names and terms of which the Chinese or Indian origin can be ascertained with absolute certainty, no name or term of Iranian origin has so far, to the best of my knowledge, been conclusively identified in Tibetan mythology. This point should be stressed, for the Mongolians do have such borrowings, e.g. the name of the chief of the 33 tengri, viz. Qormusta, who was very early recognized as identical with the Iranian Ahura Mazda (Heissig 1970:353). I admit that a possible exception might be the name Yesmon rgyal-po, "King Yemön," the primeval being born from the cosmic egg according to e.g. the Rlang po-ti bse-rú (Tucci 1949:632; Macdonald 1959:438), whose name and extraordinary beauty call to mind "King Yima the glorious" (Yima xšaēθa), the first man according to Iranian mythology.¹

2. Secondly, other possible sources of influence have a claim to serious consideration—above all, Indian traditions of a dualistic kind, focussing on the struggle between devas and asuras, gods and demons, both as collective, anonymous groups, and as individual, mythologically elaborated figures. At the moment I can do no more than simply point this out. We should note, however, that in Tibetan mythology antagonistic forces often emerge from one or several cosmic eggs, and that the theme of cosmic eggs is present not only in Iranian and Middle Eastern mythology (as pointed out by Hoffmann 1975:108), but also in Indian mythology (to which Hoffmann likewise refers).

On the other hand, R.A. Stein has also emphasized, in connection with certain mythological texts among the Tun-huang documents, the importance of
the model furnished by the Chinese concept of Yin and Yang (Stein 1971:505). However, we must keep in mind that this dualism does not imply the same kind of competitive struggle that is characteristic of Iranian dualism, but rather a complementarity and balance between two cosmic forces.

3. The third and perhaps most serious weakness is that there is no consensus as to what type of Iranian influence should be postulated. We have already seen that it has been suggested that Zurvanistic ideas might have been transmitted by Manicheism to Tibet (Tucci, Blondeau); other have stressed a direct Manichean influence (Hermanns 1965:130-131); Zoroastrianism has also been mentioned (Karmay 1975:194). In fact, the material does not seem to admit a closer identification of the precise type of Iranian influence we might be dealing with.

The basic problem, then, is that an Iranian element, even if we suppose that it actually is present in Tibetan mythology, remains extremely vague. It cannot be determined when it took place, nor where, nor how, nor what type of Iranian milieu it emanated from.

At this point I would like to mention a recent experience I had in following a lead which I thought might enable me to establish precisely such an element of specificity.

My attention was caught by the cosmogonic myth in the Klu-'bum (fol. 106a-108a of the Derge edition) which has been translated by Ariane Macdonald (Macdonald 1959:441-446). This is the very myth concerning which I have earlier quoted Tucci and which has been referred to by Blondeau. Following the translation of Macdonald (who does not invoke an Iranian influence or origin for the myth) we have the following sequence of events:

First there is a state of unstructured, unmanifested chaos. It is not emptiness, however, nor is it absolute non-existence, for the world already exists, but in a non-manifested condition of unmoving potentiality. There is thunder, lightning, rain, and frost, but not distributed according to the seasons. There are rivers, but they do no run; there are houses, but they have no openings; there are wild animals, but no one to hunt them; there are gods as well as demons, but they have no power as there is no one over whom their power may be exercised. There is food, but no one to eat it.

The myth then goes on to say that thereafter two lights, a "white" and a "black," arose, apparently of themselves, and from these two lights, after several transformations, two creators appeared, one good and the other one evil, who set about creating the world in which we live.

Now, returning to the idea of a non-manifested, potential existence, I unquestioningly accepted the translation to which I have just referred, and I even
paraphrased it in an article published in 1981 (Kvaerne 1981:251). Moreover, it later occurred to me that this idea of potential existence was a highly specific idea, one which would not be likely to arise simultaneously in several places. If an Iranian connection could be found at this point, we would, I felt, be treading on firm ground. To my mind an Iranian parallel immediately presented itself: the orthodox Zoroastrian cosmological doctrine according to which the world has come into being in two distinct stages, styled, in Pehlevi, mēnēk and gētik respectively. There is no need to enter into the subtleties of Zoroastrian theological speculation, nor into the discussion carried on by Iranologists concerning the proper understanding of these two important terms. We may, however, in a general way follow the interpretation of the Swedish Iranologist H.S. Nyberg when he states the ‘Creation is simply doubled. From the cosmogonic point of view, the cosmic stage styled mēnēk is prior to the gētik stage. All things exist in an embryonic or mēnēk stage before realizing themselves in the gētik stage. When our world assumed its present form, the universe was already there. All the universe had to do was to change its aspect: that which only existed in an invisible and hidden state became manifest’ (Nyberg 1931:36).

I was very pleased with what I thought was a rather clever discovery on my part. Unfortunately, this euphoric condition did not last long. Having obtained a copy of the Tibetan text,² I had the opportunity of reading the passage in question with the learned Bonpo scholar Tenzin Namdak during a visit to the Bonpo monastery in India in March 1984. Tenzin Namdak strongly emphasized the following point: the text actually describes not a transition from potential existence to manifested, structured existence, but a transition from a condition of non-existence or voidness, in which none of the phenomena mentioned exist in any form, to a state of existence in which all things—beneficial as well as harmful—come into being. Furthermore, he insisted that this transition from non-existence to existence—and not an opposition between light and darkness, good and evil, etc.—is the basic theme in all cosmogonies in Bonpo texts, although he did point out that once the world is created it usually is according to a dualistic scheme in which darkness and evil are associated with ‘non-existence’ and light and goodness with ‘existence.’

It might of course be objected that with all due respect to Tenzin Namdak’s learning, his interpretation is precisely that: an interpretation of an early text in the light of later philosophic ideas. The fact remains, however, that when the text is scrutinized more closely, his interpretation appears to be preferable to that of Macdonald. I will illustrate this by means of a few examples (‘M’ is Macdonald’s translation; ‘T’ is Tucci’s; the last translation in each case is my own):
Klu-'bum fol. 106a:

dang-po ci-yang mi-srid-pa-las/ srid-pa de-la yod bya-ste/

M: "D’abord, la création n’était pas créée. C’est cette création qu’on appelait ‘existence’.

T: "In the beginning, existence did not exist"

From primeval, absolute non-existence there (arose) existence, that which is called ‘being’.

gzung-du yang med/ dngos-po dang mtshan-ma yang med/ de-la yod dang med-pa gnis-ka mtshan-ma bzung-du med-pa-las srid ces bya-ste/ yod-pa dang snang-ba thams-cad de-nas srid-pa-las!

M: "Il n’y avait rien de tangible. Il n’y avait ni réalité ni signe. Comme (ce monde) ne possédait ni caractère d’existence, ni caractère de non-existence, on l’appela ‘le monde en puissance’ et tout ce qui existe, tout ce qui est visible en est sorti."

T: "there was nothing which could be perceived as existent and there was no appearance of which one could say that it was or that it was not’’

There was nothing that could be perceived, there was no substance or characteristic, in it the two characteristics of being and non-being could not be perceived—(yet) from it (arose) that which is called ‘existence’. Being and all visible things came into existence from that (primeval non-existence).

dus de-tsam-na nam-zla dus-bzhi rtag-tu mi-’gyur/

M: "À cette époque, les quatre saisons ne se distinguaient pas."

T: "... nor the rotation of the seasons were yet known."

At that time, the four seasons did not continually change (as they do now—the reason being that at that time neither the seasons nor anything else existed).

rdob dang ri-rnams kyang ’gul-zhing ideg-pa yang med-do/

M: "Il y avait bien des pierres et des montagnes, mais elles ne se déplacaient pas, ne s’ébranlaient pas."


As for stones and mountains, there was neither quaking nor trembling (because they had in fact not yet come into existence).

*khang-khyim dang rtsig-pa dang yar-ba yang med-do/

M: "Il y avait bien des maisons avec des murs, mais ils n’étaient pas déployés."

T: "there were no houses, no huts"

Houses, walls, and ruins (?) did not exist.

*dab-chags dang ri-dags bshor-zhing gsod-pa yang med-do/

M: "Il y avait bien des oiseaux et du gibier, mais il n’y avait (personne) pour les tuer à la chasse."

There was no hunting and killing of birds and game (because birds and game had not yet come into existence).

'dre zhes bya-ste ’gal-ba byed-pa yang med-do/

M: "Il y avait bien ce qu’on appelle des démons ’Dre, mais ils ne pouvaient pas faire opposition."

T: "no bad influence caused by demons infested the earth"

There was no opposition (to the gods) by those called demons (since neither gods nor demons had come into existence).

These examples show that the translation which I have suggested, and which I believe corresponds to Tenzin Namdak’s understanding of the text, implies a rather different ontological first condition of existence than that implied by Macdonald’s translation, whereas Tucci, as we are now in a position to affirm, had understood the text correctly. This particular understanding of the text does not in itself leave the possibility of an Iranian influence out of the question, but the call for specific, reasonably certain proof of such an influence remains unanswered.

At this point in our discussion it is perhaps in order to emphasize that dualism is a phenomenon which has a wide occurrence in the history of religions. Here as elsewhere, *similarity cannot in itself establish a genetic relationship*. We should hesitate to postulate a borrowing or diffusion of ideas even if we
can pinpoint specific ideas which are held in common; we should also be able to establish how, when, and where the transmission of the ideas or elements in question has taken place.

As for the idea of dualism in cosmogonic myths, it is a well-known fact that we find the idea of an evil opponent of the good creator-god throughout large areas of Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Central and North Asia, and North America (Bianchi 1975:155-158). In Asia, this idea is found in particular among Altaic and Mongolian peoples. Often creation is regarded as the work of two brothers, the older being the evil creator, while the younger is the good creator—god (Lot-Falck 1976:965). Sometimes the evil creator, assimilated with the Christian devil, is believed to have damaged the good creator’s creation by introducing elements like disease, death, etc. (Harva 1938:114).

The basic question, which has been formulated very well by Jacques Duchesne-Guillemin (Duchesne-Guillemin 1970:634-635, see also Bianchi 1975:155-158), is the following: is this “Eurasian dualism” the result of diffusionistic borrowings from Iran, or is, on the contrary, Iranian dualism in its historical forms the result of a development from a common pre-historic substratum?

Several authors have firmly opted for the diffusionist theory, one of the most prominent being Mircea Eliade, who regards dualistic beliefs among Altaic peoples as an “evident” case of syncretism with Iranian ideas (Eliade 1970:104). He also includes Tibet in this movement of religious ideas: “Iranian religious ideas and cosmological concepts have been propagated towards Northwest India and Tibet as well as towards Central Asia and Siberia” (Eliade 1970:109). A more guarded stance is taken by Ugo Bianchi, who speaks of “a possibility, indeed a probability, of the existence of profound Manichaean as well as Zoroastrian influences (or even of Russian folklore, also of Bogomile origin)” in Central Asia (in which he does not, as far as I can gather, include Tibet) (Bianchi 1975:157).

On the other hand, Manabu Waida has recently suggested a different formula for understanding North Asian dualism: “... human life is viewed as a kind of battleground where good spirits and evil spirits are engaged in ongoing fights for existence. It is hardly surprising that the people of Central Asia and Siberia have, in general, been receptive to the message of the Iranian religions colored by a dualism which depicts the setting of human history as a battleground between the opposing forces of good and evil” (Waida 1983:235).

In other words, what Waida suggests is that there is a dualistic substratum in North Asian religions which at a certain point of time was reinforced by contact with Iranian religions. This would appear to be an attractive alternative to the diffusionistic theory of Eliade and others, and a possible model for understanding Tibetan dualistic myths. However, here too we encounter seri-
ous difficulties, above all the fact that our sources regarding the religion of the traditionally non-literate peoples of North Asia are recent, being for the most part found in the ethnographic literature of the last century and the early part of this century. Hence we do not know what the religious beliefs of these peoples were in, say, the thirteenth, much less in the seventh or eighth centuries. Moving closer to Tibet, Mongolian and old Turkic religion is, of course, known from fairly old sources. Thus the earliest inscriptions of the ancient Turks date from the seventh and eighth centuries AD, in other words from a period contemporary with the emergence of Tibet on the historical scene, but in the case of the Turks the problem is that their ancient inscriptions contain no trace of dualistic concepts—on the contrary, what we find is a belief in a high god, the Sky (Tengri), and a large number of secondary gods associated with him (the Earth, the Mountains, the Water, the Springs, Rivers, etc.) (Roux 1981:511).

Do we then dare to draw any conclusions? One conclusion is perhaps that it is still too early to make definitive and general pronouncements in the field of Tibetan cosmological myths. There is a vast material awaiting study, containing innumerable problems of chronology, textual affiliation, and interpretation. There is the still enigmatic question of the nature and origin of the Bon religion, in the texts of which so many of these myths are found.

It is worth noting that the instances of Iranian influence which appear to be reasonably certain (noted at the beginning of this paper) date from the time of the Tibetan empire and do not concern mythology, whereas the documents which do contain dualistic mythologies—and which have been considered to be Iranian by Tucci, Hoffmann, and others—are of a later date. The Tun-huang documents (at least as far as their contents have been published so far) do not seem to contain myths characterized by cosmogonic dualism. The chronology of the sources would thus seem to argue against an early Iranian influence on Tibetan mythology, and a later influence—say, post-11th century—would in every way appear to be problematical. As for the early period, we now know—thanks to the research of R.A. Stein and Geza Uray—that Manicheism was known to the Tibetans in the 8th century, but this knowledge seems to have been only indirect, through Chinese sources (Stein 1980; Uray 1983). There is no indication that there ever were Manicheans in Tibet, nor definite proof that Tibetans came into direct contact with Manicheans in China or Central Asia.

The possibility of a development within the native tradition of Tibetan mythology (including cosmogonic myths) should perhaps be considered more seriously. I would suggest that we should not exclude the possibility that the dualistic ideas which are found in the Tun-huang manuscripts and which are of a Chinese “yin-yang” type might have been transformed into a dualism of an “Iranian” type without the help of outside influence. At the moment we can
hardly do more than consider this as one possibility among several others. Still, even if we take such a development of dualistic cosmogonic myths as a working hypothesis, we are unable at present to say what social circumstances or general development of ideas could have led to such a process. And we are left with the fact that the Tibetan Bonpos, for perhaps a thousand years, have been unanimous in claiming, on the authority of their sacred texts, that Stag-gzig—i.e. Iran in one sense or another—is the holy land from which their religion spread.

NOTES

1. Another example—which might be quite significant—is the element mu-cho found in the name of Mu-cho-Idem-drug, one of the disciples of Ston-pa Gshen-rab. H. Hoffmann has suggested that this might be a rendering of Sogdian mōzāry (mwek) (Hoffmann 1938:358). Later he abandoned this identification (Hoffmann 1940:172), but finally reaffirmed it (Hoffmann 1961:96).

2. I thank Anne-Marie Blondeau for kindly sending me a copy of the relevant folios from the copy in the Migot collection in Paris.

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Illusion Web—Locating the Guhyagarbha Tantra in Buddhist Intellectual History

DAN MARTIN

Dedicated to the Master of Taoist Studies, Professor Judith A. Berling, for the inspiration; Professor Christopher I. Beckwith for raising the questions; Dr. Michael L. Walter and other members of the Kun Byed studies seminar for supplying the background; to Professor Emeritus Helmut H. Hoffman for everything.

INTRODUCTION—THE REALM OF DHARMAS

He who knows well the interdependent origination equally knows the Void.
He who knows not the interdependent origination will not comprehend the Void.¹

The work from which this statement is extracted is an Old Tibetan translation from the Chinese which was not preserved in the Tibetan canon. Nevertheless, the idea that Mahāyāna replaced the interdependent origination (rten-'byung/pratītyasamutpāda) of the Elder Vehicle with their notion of the Voidness (Stong-pa-nyid/Sūnyatā) has long been an axiom of Japanese Buddhism.² I will not be speaking so much of Voidness, but of its close synonym, “Realm of Dharmas” (Chos-kyi Dbyings/Dharmadhātu) as the Mahāyāna equivalent of interdependent origination. This I will do less on philosophical grounds³ and more by way of tracing the continuity and development of the literary images of the Web and the Palace which show, perhaps better than any philosophical argument, that the Buddhist thinkers themselves perceived the essential identity of the two conceptions. Thus, while my approach may be primarily literary and my aim broadly hermeneutical, I have done my best to keep the analysis grounded in a sense of historical development.

THE WEB AND THE PALACE IN THE BRAHMA WEB SUTTA

Such a study ought properly to begin with the general Indian background, but I have restricted myself to internal Buddhist developments. So, the proper
place to begin is the Pāli canon. In the very first sutta contained in the Long Discourses (Dīgha Nikāya), called the Brahma Web (Brahma Jāla), we find discussions of ‘wrong practice,’ ‘wrong views’ and the interrelationship between the two, primarily. Part of the sutta may be summarized as follows (The Buddha Himself is narrating):

At the dissolution of the world, most of the world’s inhabitants rise to the Ābhassara (‘Od-gsal/Ābhāsva) Realm. After a long time, when the world begins to reform, an empty palace (gzhal-med-khang/vimāna) makes its appearance in the empty sky. A single being, by force of its karma, dies in the Ābhassara Realm and is born in the empty palace of Brahma. He is very lonely and wonders why others should not join him there. Then, by force of their karma, other beings are born in the palace. The first inhabitant believes that it was his own wish (smon-pa) that brought the other beings into existence. He thinks himself their father, lord, maker (byed-pa-po), originator (‘byin-pa-po) and origin (‘byin-byed). The other beings begin to believe him. They think that he is eternal and unchanging while they themselves are impermanent and unstable.

The bulk of the sutta is devoted to various non-Buddhist theories about the origins of things. The discussion (of 62 heretical views) concludes with the Buddha’s declaration that those who hold to these sorts of fixed views, such as the view that Brahma created the world, are caught in the web of their own speculations. These speculations trap them in the interconnections of the twelve-fold chain of interdependent origination.

The Pāli and Sanskrit word Jāla will be returning again. It has a very broad significance, representing any object with a large number of holes. It may mean ‘lattice work,’ ‘lace.’ and ‘web’ as well as ‘snare,’ ‘trap,’ or ‘net.’ In this context it clearly means ‘trap’ and the title could have been translated the Brahma Trap. It is primarily a subjective-based ‘trap’ due to erroneous presuppositions which in turn bind us to the objective ‘trap’ of interdependent origination. This objective trap is such because we, unlike the Buddha, do not perceive that it is a trap.

THE MAHĀYĀNA DEVELOPMENT

The truth as perceived by the Buddha (i.e., the objective sphere as experienced by the Buddha) is the truth of interdependent origination. But perhaps the most basic content of His revelation is the Noble Fourfold Truth and especially the fourth member, the Truth of the Path, which claims to make the Buddha’s experience accessible to His followers. So, before entering into the Mahāyāna, it is essential to touch on the reasons why the Mahāyāna believed
it could offer a Superior Vehicle (Mahāyāna) for traveling down the Buddha’s Path. The Mahāyānists cite many reasons, but the contrast between hearers (Nyan-thos-pa/Śrāvaka) and Bodhisattvas (Byan-chub-sems-dpa’) provides the dialectic edge. The Hearers, according to Mahāyāna, experience at the end of their Path only the Voidness of the subjective ‘person,’ whereas the Bodhisattva also experiences the Voidness of the constituents of the objective sphere, the dhammas. This is because Hearers strive to purify themselves only from the obscurations (sgrīb-pa/āvarana) caused by affective emotions (nyon-rmongs/kleśa) without also overcoming the obscurations due to ‘knowables’ (shes-byā/jñeya), meaning dhammas. So, while the Hearer can only hope to achieve the State of Freedom (Thar-pa/Mokṣa) characterized by release from affective emotions, the Bodhisattva achieves, in addition, the State of Omniscience (Thams-cad Mkhyen-pa/Sarvajñā). 7 ‘Omniscience’ here means that there are no obscurations due to knowable objects, not necessarily ‘Omniscience’ in the sense that Christians apply the word to their conception of God.

It may be well argued that this model of the Hearer does not really apply to Theravāda ideals known from the Pāli canon. I have already shown how the ‘trap’ of the Brahma Web Sutta pertains to both the subjective and objective spheres. I would suggest that the Mahāyāna dialectic was developed at a time when some schools were tending to over-objectivize, materialize and even eternalize the dhammas. I think especially of some of the Abhidhamma Schools (Vaibhāṣika and Sautrāntika as known to Tibetan literature) and the Sarvāstivādins. The permanence of the interdependent origination itself was not an issue since it is a principle and not a thing, but the idea of the permanency of the dhammas threatened to make Buddhism a form of materialism against the older idea that the phenomenal world exists only in a state of interdependence with the view on the ‘self.’

From the eighteen dhātus of the Abhidhamma Schools, the Mahāyāna chose the word Dharmadhātu (Realm of Dhammas) to express their views on the nature of the objective sphere. In the context of the eighteen dhātus, it meant the objective sphere corresponding to the sixth sense, which is ‘thought.’ The development in meaning of the word Dharmadhātu has been dealt with in the works cited and need not detain us.

TOWARD A HISTORICAL CONTEXT FOR THE GUHYAGARBHA

The next step in our reconstruction ought logically to be the Mahāyāna sūtra called the Buddha Avatamsaka which, even though it did not inspire a special school in Tibet like it did in China, Korea and Japan, was still frequently quoted there. However, it is an alarmingly vast and complex body of scripture which cannot be disentangled here. I will be returning to it later on to show how some aspects of its message may be applicable for excavating the
intellectual content of the Guhyagarbha Tantra. Before turning to the
Guhyagarbha itself we must ask, ‘What is the Gaheyagarbha? What impor-
tance has it had in Tibetan religious history?’ The latter is easily answered.
Its importance is demonstrated by the vast body of commentarial literature it
has inspired over at least the last thousand years. In more recent times, it had a
special place in the curriculum of the Nyingma ‘university monastery’ Mink-
droling (Smin-grol-gling) among others, and the history of its early transmis-
sion is, to a large extent, the history of the Nyingma tantras in general.

It is harder to define exactly what the Guhyagarbha is. For this, it must be
placed in the general framework of Nyingma thought and historiography. Al-
though it threatens to (and will) take us far afield, still it is a background for
critical study. This is sadly necessary because of the traditional lack of credi-
bility that the Nyingma tantras have been held in by some scholars from other
schools of Tibetan Buddhism, an attitude that has been uncritically adopted by
some non-Tibetan scholars. I suggest that the Nyingma traditions on the
Guhyagarbha, above all, warrant as much or as little credibility as the trad-
tions on any of the New Tantras (Rgyud Gsar-ma).

The Guhyagarbha is classified among the six Vajrayāna Vehicles of the
Nyingma as Mahā-yoga:

Outer Capability Tantras (Phyi Thub-pa’i Rgyud)

4) Kriyā (‘Ritual’).

5) Ubbaya (‘Both’ Kriyā and Yoga. Sometimes called Upa-yoga, or
   ‘Near Yoga’ and also, less correctly, Upāya-yoga).

6) Yoga (‘Meditation’).

Inner Method Tantras (Nang Thabs-kyi Rgyud)

7) Mahā-yoga (‘Great Yoga’: bskyed, ‘generation’ stage meditation).

8) Anu-yoga (‘Subsequent Yoga’: rdzogs, ‘completion’ stage meditation).

9) Ati-yoga (‘Supreme Yoga’: Rdzogs-chen, ‘Great Perfection’).
   (a) Sem-sde (‘Mental Class’).
   (b) Klong-sde (‘Receptive Centre Class’).
   (c) Man-ngag-gi-sde (‘Precept Class’).
      (1) Khregs-chod (‘Breakthrough’).
      (2) Thod-rgal (‘Crossover’).

The last three (7-9) Vehicles are all Yoga Tantras, the Sanskrit prefixes indi-
cating degrees of ‘greatness.’ This is clear from Guhyagarbha commentaries
where the three are glossed as ‘great,’ ‘great-great’ and ‘great-great-
great’ respectively. These three divisions of Inner Method Tantras have of-
ten been identified by various teachers with the Father, Mother and Non-dual Tantras of the Anuttara-yoga class of the New Tantra schools’ classification.

Within the Mahā-yoga canon, the Nyingma distinguish eighteen classes (sde bco-brgyad) which I will list shortly. The source is a fairly recent one, but then a work by Jñānamitra which is listed in the Ldan-dkar-mar catalogue speaks of the eighteen classes (sde chen bco-brgyad) mentioning only two titles: 1) Sarvabuddhasamāyoga (no. 3 below); 2) Guhyasamāja (Guhyas-sa-
manytsa, no. 9 below). This text must date from around the beginning of the ninth century and would therefore be close to the time of Amoghavajra (see below). Where possible I have given the location for each of the indicated tantras in the two available reprints of the Rnying-ma Rgyud-'bum (1973 & 1982), the Vairocana Rgyud-'bum and the Peking and Derge Kanjurs.

A. BODY (sku)


2) Glang-po Rab Chur Zhugs-kyi Rgyud (The Best Elephant Entered the Water Tantra).

3) Sangs-rgyas Mnyam Sbyor-gyi Rgyud (Buddhas’ Equal Union Tantra). 1973 vol. 16, pp. 163-273 (10 chaps.). Tr. by Vajrahāsa and Rma Rin-
chen-mchog with the help of four commentaries. 1982 vol. 16, pp. 273-366 (23 chaps.). Tr. by Smṛtijñānakīrti. Peking Kanjur, no. 8 (chaps. not clearly numbered, but same work as the 10 chapter version above). Peking Kanjur, no. 9 (23 chaps.). Tr. by Smṛtijñānakīrti and revised by Gzhon-nu-grags-pa. This is the Sarvabuddhasamāyoga mentioned above.

B. SPEECH (gsung)

4) Dbang-chen 'Dus-pa’i Rgyud (Great Power Gathering Tantra). 1973 vol. 24, pp. 224-328 (35 chaps.). Tr. by Rakṣasiddhi and the Tibetan Kukurāja. Text established by Snubs Sangs-rgyas-ye-
shes. 1973 vol. 32, pp. 181-216 (13 chaps.). Tr. by Padmasambhava and Vairocana. Both of the above are Dbang-chen (Hayagrīva) Tantras.

5) Gcig-las 'Phros-pa’i Rgyud (Emanated from the One Tantra). This text may bear some relation to Peking Kanjur, no. 2032 (vol. 46).
6) Zla Gsang Thig-le’i Rgyud (Secret Moon Spot Tantra).
   *1973 vol. 16, pp. 375-543 (6 chaps.).
   Peking Kanjur, no. 111 (chapters not numbered). Tr. & rev. by Rinchen-bzang-po.
   See also Blue Annals, p. 102.*

C. MIND (thugs)

7) Ri-bo Rtsegs-pa’i Rgyud (Stacked Mountain Tantra).
   *1973 vol. 6, pp. 323-349 (21 chaps.).
   1982 vol. 19, pp. 181-213 (21 chaps.).
   Vairocana Rgyud-bum vol. 8, pp. 213-239 (21 chaps.).*

8) Rtse Gcig Bskul-ba’i Rgyud (Encouraging One-pointedness Tantra).
   *1973 vol. 8, pp. 559-569 (13 chaps.).
   1982 vol. 9, pp. 896-906 (13 chaps.).*

9) Gsang-ba ’Dus-pa’i Rgyud (Secret Gathering Tantra).
   *1973 vol. 17, pp. 2-177 (18 chaps.). According to the colophon at the end of chapter 17, it was translated by Vimalamitra and Ka-ba Dpal-brtsegs. Acc. to colophon at end of chap. 18, tr. by Buddhaguhya and ’Brog-mi Dpal-ye-shes and later tr. by Rin-chhen-bzang-po & Śraddhākaravarman.
   This is the well known Guhyasamāja Tantra (Peking no. 81). It is the Fifteenth Assembly of the Tattvasamgraha according to Amogha-vajra (see below).*

D. QUALITY (yon-tan)


11) Nam-mkha’ Mdzod-kyi Rgyud (Sky Treasury Tantra).
   *1973 vol. 13, pp. 499-591 (18 chaps.).*

12) Dpal Mchog Dang-po’i Rgyud (First Supreme Lord Tantra).
   This is the Sixth Assembly of the Tattvasamgraha (see below).*

E. ACTIVITY (’phrin-las)

1973 vol. 19, pp. 2-199 (24 chaps.).

14) Sgron-ma ’Bar-ba’i Rgyud (Blazing Lamp Tantra).
1982 vol. 12, pp. 467-491 (4 chaps.).

15) Karma Ma-lye Sing Rgyud (=Las-kyi ’Phreng-ba; Karma Rosary Tantra).
1973 vol. 17, pp. 470-627 (9 chaps.). Tr. by Dharmaśriprabha, Vimalamitra and others. Text checked and established by Rma Ratna-abkra (=Rma Rin-chen-mchog?).
1982 vol. 19, pp. 579-785 (9 chaps.). Name of the establissher of the text given as Ratna-a-grags.

F. OTHER (gzhân)

1973 vol. 19, pp. 395-422 (42 chaps.).
Peking Kanjur, no. 458 (41? chaps.). Detailed commentary, no. 4717 (42 chaps.).
Derge Kanjur, vol. 98 (Rnying Rgyud Kha-pa), pp. 597-621 (40 chaps.).

1973 vol. 12, pp. 560-626 (34 chaps.).

18) Sgyu-’phrul Dra-ba Le’u Stong-phrag Brgya-pa’i Rgyud (Illusion Web Hundred Thousand Chapter Tantra).
This section was divided into the Eight Sections of Illusion (Sgyu-’phrul Sde Brgyad) by Vimalamitra (Zur-’tsho, Zur, vol 1, p. 15.6 and also vol. 3, p. 251.5) as follows:

.1) Sgyu-’phrul Gsang-ba’i Snying-po (Illusion, Heart of Secrets).
1973 vol. 14, pp. 1-61 (22 chaps.).
1982 vol. 20, pp. 152-218 (22 chaps.). Tr. by Vimalamitra and Jñānakumāra.
Peking Kanjur, no. 455.
Derge Kanjur, vol, 98 (Rnying Rgyud Kha-pa), pp. 220-263 (22 chaps.).
This is the Guhyagarbha Tantra. Full Tibetan title is: Dpal Gsang-ba Snying-po De-kho-na-nyid Nges-pa.

.2) ’Jam-dpal Sgyu-’phrul Dra-ba Chen-mo (Great Mañjuśrī Illusion Web).
1973 vol. 15, pp. 97-118 (14 chaps.).
1982 vol. 21, pp. 326-349 (14 chaps.).


.3) *Sgyu-'phrul Brgyad-pa (Eight Chapter Illusion).*
1973 vol. 14, pp. 549-571 (8 chaps.).
1982 vol. 20, pp. 580-609 (8 chaps.).

.4) *Sgyu-'phrul Bla-ma (Lama Illusion).*
1973 vol. 14, pp. 572-638 (13 chaps.).

*Peking Kanjur*, no. 460.
*Derge Kanjur*, vol. 99 (Rnying Rgyud Ga-pa), pp. 1-68 (13 chaps.).

.5) *Le Lag (=Le Lhag; Appendix).*
1973 vol. 14, pp. 415-549 (33 chaps.).
1982 vol. 20, pp. 417-580 (33 chaps.).

.6) *Sgyu-'phrul Bzhi-bcu-pa (Forty Chapter Illusion).*
1973 vol. 14, pp. 317-415 (46 chaps.).
1982 vol. 20, pp. 218-327 (46 chaps.).

.7) *Lha-mo Sgyu-'phrul Dra-ma (Goddess Illusion Web).*
1973 vol. 15, pp. 2-96 (13 chaps.). Tr. by the Indian Teacher Līlavajra (Sgeg-pa'i-rdo-rje) and Rma Lo-tsā-ba Rin-chen-mchog.

*Peking Kanjur*, no. 459.
*Derge Kanjur*, vol. 99 (Rnying Rgyud Ga-pa), pp. 1-68 (12 chaps.).

.8) *Sgyu-'phrul Brgya-bcu-pa (i.e. Brgyad-bcu-pa; Eighty Chapter Illusion Web).*
1973 vol. 14, pp. 67-317 (82 chaps.).
1982 vol. 21, pp. 2-326 (82 chaps.).

*Peking Kanjur*, no. 457.
*Derge Kanjur*, vol. 98 (Rnying Rgyud Kha-pa), pp. 396-596.
See also *Blue Annals*, p. 153.
There are several reasons why we should entertain the idea that these tantras, including the ones commonly understood to be New Tantras, actually existed in Tibetan translation before the Second Propagation (which began in the late 10th century). The first is simply that the tradition has it so. This puts the weight of proof squarely on the shoulders of those who would say they are not Old Tantras. The second reason is that a link has been discovered between the eighteen tantras of the Tattvasamgraha class known from a Chinese work (Taisho, no. 869) by Amoghavajra (705-774 A.D.) and the eighteen Mahā-yoga tantras of the Nyingma. Kenneth W. Eastman, whose research is, unfortunately, only available to me in the form of an abstract, says, "... I demonstrate the affinities of these two collections and conclude that they represent the same canon of religious texts."17 It will be seen in notes included in the list above that I have only been able to establish three texts as shared by both collections (nos. 3, 9 & 12) and this based on a secondary source.18 This needs more investigation.

That, of course, can only establish the contemporaneity of a classification of tantras in China which would make the existence of the actual tantras in Tibetan translation seem more probable. It definitely cannot prove their existence (some of the tantras in Amoghavajra’s list were apparently never translated into Chinese). Therefore, the third and perhaps most important reason for increasing credence is the presence of no. 9, the Guhyasamāja Tantra; no. 18.2, the Mañjuśrīnāmasaṅgīti; and a commentary on no. 16, the Upāyapāśa, along with a few related Mahā-yoga texts and even two Ati-yoga works among the Stein documents from Tun Huang. The Stein manuscript of the Guhyasamāja Tantra (Poussin, no. 438) is unfortunately missing both the title page and part of the colophon (due to damage of the final folio). What is significant is that it contains only seventeen chapters and the title given in the colophon does not contain the element, "Guhyasamāja" (Gsang-ba ’Dus-pa) but reads as follows:

*De-bzhin-gshegs-pa Thams-cad-kyi Sku dang/ Gsung dang/ Thugs Gsang-zhi ng // Rab-tu Gsang-ba zhes-by-a-ba’i Rtog-pa Chen-po’i Rgyal-po.*

Compare this to the colophon title following chapter 17 in the Rnying-ma Rgyud-stub (1973, vol. 17, p. 152):


Then compare both to the corresponding colophon title in the Peking Kanjur (vol. 3, p. 199-2-3):
De-bzhin-gshegs-pa Thams-cad-kyi Sku dang Gsung dang Thugs-kyi Gsang-chen Gsang-ba 'Dus-pa zhes-byas-ba'i Rtag-pa'i Rgyal-po Chen-po.

Since the Stein manuscript is not available to me for comparison, I am unable to draw any conclusions. A comparison of random parts of the text in the Nyingma version and the Peking version showed many variant readings in both wording and syntax. It remains to be seen if elsewhere, as in the colophon title, the Nyingma version is closer to the Stein manuscript than the Peking. This will be an important task. A Guhyasamāja commentary by *Lilavajra (see below) was translated by Śrītīrīnānakīrtī (Peking, no. 3356) and two other Guhyasamāja works by the same author are in the Tanjur (Peking, nos. 2276, 4791). Lilavajra is most famous for his commentaries on the Guhyagarbha, especially his word-for-word commentary called shortly, Spar-khab.

There are three examples of the Mañjuśrīnāmasaṅgīti in the Stein collection. A cursory comparison of the two Nyingma versions with the translation in the Peking Kanjur (see 18.2 above) showed that the Nyingma preserve what must be an earlier translation. A comparison of the few passages from the Tun Huang version provided in the catalogue (Poussin, no. 112.2) yielded three places where the wording of the Tun Huang text differs significantly from the Peking. In these same passages, the Nyingma versions closely agree.

Table I

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<tr>
<th>Peking Kanjur (vol. 1)</th>
<th>Tun Huang</th>
<th>Rnying-ma Rgyud-'bum (1982)</th>
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<tr>
<td>smon-lam ye-shes rgya-mtsho-sté// (p. 119-4-1)</td>
<td>bsam-pa'i ye-shes rgya-mtsho-sté//</td>
<td>bsam-pa'i ye-shes rgya-mtsho-sté//</td>
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<tr>
<td>thabs chen byed-pa chen-po-sté// (119-4-1)</td>
<td>mkhas-pa chen-po thams che-ba//</td>
<td>mkhas-pa chen-po thabs che-ba//</td>
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<td>dpag-med sangs-rgyas-sprul-pa-yi//</td>
<td>sangs-rgyas-kyi sprul-pa'i sku//</td>
<td>sangs-rgyas kun-gyi sprul-pa'i sku//</td>
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<tr>
<td>sku ni bye-ba 'gyed-pa-po// (p. 121-3-2)</td>
<td>bye-ba dpag-myed 'byed-pa bo//</td>
<td>byed-pa dpag-med 'gyed-pa-po//</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note also that the Stein manuscripts, like the Nyingma versions, all omit the Ye-shes-sems-dpa'i Don Dam-pa (Jñānasattvasya Paramārtha) from the title. There is a commentary by Lilavajra translated by Śrītīrīnānakīrtī (Peking
Kanjur, no. 3356) and a commentary by Vimalamitra translated by Jñānakumāra (Peking Kanjur, no. 2941). A study of these commentaries should show what version of the text they had available to them. The absence of a large portion of the Peking text also shows that the Nyingma school is giving us a more primitive version of the tantra, since it appears that the Stein manuscript is also lacking this portion.

The only other lengthy tantric work in the Stein collection is a commentary on the Upāyapāśa Padmamāla (Poussin, no. 321), no. 16 above. It is a Mahāyoga tantra with many affinities (ex., the Samādhi and Reflection Mandalas) with the Guhyagarbha and Guhyasamāja tantras. This also should be investigated.

If I may only summarize the results of my research on the other tantras in my list which are in both the Peking Kanjur and Rnying-ma Rgyud-'bum, but lacking in the Stein collection (i.e., nos. 3, 6 & 12), it was only in the twenty-three chapter version of the Buddhas’ Equal Union Tantra (no. 3) that there were found to be differences which seem to indicate a significant reworking of the text. Since the Nyingma version omits the revisor’s statement, it is possible that the Nyingma preserve the unrevised translation of Smṛtijñānakīrti. But Smṛtijñānakīrti worked in Kham province during the early years of the Second Propagation, making this translation almost too late to be called a Nyingma tantra.19

If only to suggest another avenue for comparative research, one may easily see from the Stein manuscripts that the earlier Tibetans had a different system (or, rather, had no system) for transcribing Indian words. This is seen especially in book titles, mantras and personal names. I suspect, but cannot prove, that this state of affairs existed until after the time of Emperor Ralpacan’s language standardization in the early ninth century. A good example is the name of the Old Tibetan translator Jñānakumāra, the first syllable of which is, intriguingly, spelled Gnya’ (rather than Dznyā) in several Tanjur colophons (ex., Peking, nos. 4765, 4769). Compare the spelling of Jñānagarbha in Stein manuscripts: Gnya’-na-gar-ba.20 By looking at the transcription of the long dhāraṇi near the end of the Manjuśrīnāmasaṅgiti in the Nyingma versions and comparing it with that of the Peking version, the contrast is unmistakable. A similar trend toward standardization is perhaps discernible in western scholarship on Tibet.

There are three Indian Masters who each wrote several commentarial works on the Guhyagarbha and who are all said to have been present in Tibet during the time of Emperor Khri srong lde brtsan (756-797 A.D.). Vimalamitra was a younger contemporary of Buddhaguhya and Lilavajra. Table II is offered as a tool for establishing contemporaneity of various Buddhist teachings. Note that the names of Buddhaguhya (Sangs-rgyas-sbas-pa) and Vimalamitra (Byema-la-mu-dra)21 occur in Stein manuscripts (Poussin, nos. 594, 688).
## TABLE II

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<td>Durgatipariparipṛcchā</td>
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<td></td>
<td>439, 440</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dhyānottara</td>
<td>3495</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paṭala</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alchemy</td>
<td>464 (tr.)</td>
<td></td>
<td>437.1?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (not classified above)</td>
<td>3284, 3324, 3687, 4528, 4581, 5309, 5439, 5449, 5693</td>
<td>2413, 4545</td>
<td>5306, 5334</td>
<td>5917</td>
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<td>Guhyagarbha</td>
<td>4722, 4731, 4736, 4738, 4761, 4762</td>
<td>4718, 4738, 4741, 4744, 4745, 4748, 4763, 4768</td>
<td>456 (tr.), 4724, 4725, 4729, 4732, 4738, 4746, 4747, 4755, 4759, 4764, 4765, 4769, 4772, 4774 (tr.), 4776, 4777, 4780</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Here is a list of the Tibetan-born translators who worked with each of the three Indian Masters in order of frequency, according to the colophons to the *Peking* works contained in the chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BUDDHAGUHYA</th>
<th>LILAVAJRA</th>
<th>VIMALAMITRA</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mañjuśrīvarman</td>
<td>Bsod-nams-rgyal-mtshan</td>
<td>Gnyags Jñānakumāra</td>
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<tr>
<td>(= 'Jam-dpal-go-cha)</td>
<td>Rdo-rje-grags</td>
<td>Rin-chen-sde</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bran-ka Mu-ti (-ta)</td>
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<td>Surendrākaraprabha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dbas Mañjuśrī</td>
<td>(= Mañjuśrīvarman?)</td>
<td>Nam-mkha'-'skyong</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ye-shes-snying-po</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nam-mkha' (= Nam-mkha'-'skyong?)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the chart it is apparent that the most prolific Indian writers on the *Guhyagarbha* did not share very many other interests. It is important to note that the *Subāhupariprcchā*, which tradition calls a Yoga Tantra (*Peking*, no. 428), was translated into Chinese by Śubhākasimha in 726 A.D.\(^{22}\) He also translated the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* in 724 A.D.\(^{23}\) The *Uṣṇīṣavijāyā* was several times translated into Chinese. It was translated into Tibetan by Jinamitra, Surendrabodhi and Ye-shes-sde (*Peking*, no. 198). It is certainly not inconceivable that the other texts and deities were in existence in the last half of the ninth century when these three Indian Masters were apparently active. There is one additional Indian Master who wrote only one commentary, but a very long and important one. His name is *Śūryasimhaprabha*\(^ {24}\) but he is an obscure figure, apparently a contemporary of Vimalamitra.

**THE GUHYAGARBHA TANTRA**

Now it should be possible to turn to the subject at hand with a somewhat firmer grasp of the historical and literary milieu with which the *Guhyagarbha* probably did enter Tibet. The colophon of one edition states that there were five ‘translations’ in all; three of them with the help of Indian Masters and two without. The first was by Buddhaguhya and Vairocana, the second by Padmasambhava and Gnyags Jñānakumāra, and the third by Vimalamitra and the two Tibetans Rma Rin-chen-mchog and Gnyags Jñānakumāra. There were two proofs of the translation after the Second Propagation by Thar Lo Nyima-rgyal-mtshan\(^ {25}\) and the author of the *Blue Annals* 'Gos Lo-tsā-ba Gzhonnu-dpal (1392-1481). The *Peking* and *Derge* editions give no translation information in their colophons. The *Rnying-ma Rgyud-'bum* (1982), as noted, gives only the names of Vimalamitra and Jñānakumāra. If asked, 'Gos Gzhonnu-dpal would have shown you his own rather tattered Sanskrit manuscript; also, the Kashmiri Pandit Śākyasrībhadra found a Sanskrit text of the tantra at Samye.\(^ {26}\)
Of the Eight Sections of Illusion (no. 18, my list), the Guhyagarbha (18.1) is by all accounts the most important, the other seven being mostly (excepting 18.2 and 18.7) variations on a theme, containing countless parallel passages. Rdo-rje-gzi-brjid lists four sections of Illusion Web: 1) Vajrasattva Illusion Web, 2) Vairocana Illusion Web, 3) Goddess Illusion Web and 4) Marījuṣrī Illusion Web, but it is difficult to know which texts he had in mind. Still, the name by which the Guhyagarbha is frequently named, Illusion Web, may remind us of the Brahma Web Sutta and, I think, with good reason. Lo-chen Dharmaśri draws out the associations of the Tibetan words Sgyu-'phrul Dra-ba, as follows:

1) Illusion(s) (sgyu-ma) are the elements that appear as illusion.  
2) Projecting ('phrul-pa) are mental factors (phung-po/skandha).  
3) Web (dra-ba) is the connectedness of cause and result.

And further:

1) Illusion is insight (shes-rab), objective Realm (Dbyings) and Voidness (Stong-pa-nyid).  
2) Projecting is method (thabs), Awareness (Rig-pa) and Self-engendered Total Knowledge (Rang-byung-gi Ye-shes).

Here we find the classic polarity symbolism of Buddhist Tantra which signifies above all, "the web of the grasped and the grasper" (bzung 'dzin dra-ba), the interrelatedness (the causal interdependence) of the objective and subjective spheres. In the Le Lag (no. 18.5) it says,

Everything that appears in the illusion is nothing other than the Realm of Dharmas . . . Since everything is the unsupported (mi-dmigs-pa) Suchness, it is all the Gesture (Phyag-rgya) of the indivisible Dharma-kāya.

The Dharma-kāya is the ultimate value of the subjective sphere while the Realm of Dharmas, as the totality of knowables, represents the ultimate value of the objective sphere. In terms of the Path and Goal, the Dharma-kāya represents the 'subject' devoid of the afflictive emotions due to the mistaken views of 'personhood' which falsely color the perception of objects. It is characterized by Total Knowledge (Ye-shes/Jñāna). The Realm of Dharmas represents the 'object' of Total Knowledge; the totality of the constituents of apparent existence in space and time, devoid of the false coloring, the obscurations due to knowables. Nondualistically conceived, Total Knowledge and Realm of Dharmas are the two aspects of the ultimate experience of contemplative union (zung-'jug).

As we turn to the first chapter, we must be aware that this tantra entitled Secret Source of All Sūtras and Tantras: Suchness Uncompromisingly Pre-
sented represents itself to be nothing less. The first chapter is partially paraphrased here with many details omitted:

At the time these words were spoken, the Completely Enlightened Buddha, the personification (bdag-nyid) of the Vajra Body, Speech and Mind of all Tathāgatas of the ten directions and the four times, was in None Higher (ʼOg-min), a Buddhafield without centre or circumference (mtha’ dang dbus med-pa). There, within a shining Total Knowledge Wheel of immeasurable land, was the Palace (Gzhal-yas-khang/Vimāna) of Blazing Total Knowledge Jewels. Its extent was completely uncut in the ten directions. Because its qualities extended beyond measure, it became square. It was decorated with further projections of Total Knowledge Jewels. The pinnacle was completely encircled by the Total Knowledge of the Single Reality, all the mandalas of the Awakened Ones of the ten directions and four times in a state of undifferentiation . . . There was neither inside nor outside as everything was inside.

Inside were five thrones. On a naked lotus and jewelled cushion sat a form without front or back, a face shining through everything, everywhere shining (kun-tu snang-ba) in the various bodies, speeches and minds.

On the five thrones sat the Tathāgatas Consciousness King, Mental Impression King, Cognition King, Reflexive Response King and Form King. They embraced all the Realm of Dharmas in a nondual way with their Queens Realm of Shining, Realm of Solidity, Realm of Pliability, Realm of Warmth and Realm of Vibration.

Then the Great Awakeners Vajra Sight, Vajra Hearing, Vajra Smelling and Vajra Tasting with their Queens Visuals, Audials, Olfactions and Gustations; the Great Awakeners Vajra Seer, Vajra Hearer, Vajra Smeller and Vajra Taster with their Queens Past, Present, Present Continuative (ʼHappeningʼ) and Future; the Great Suppressors Vajra Touch, Vajra Toucher, Vajra Tactiles and Vajra Touch Cognition with their Queens Not Eternal, Not Ended, Not Self and Not Classified—and others abided in an assemblage both impossible to verbalize and nondual. This nonduality was as that of a sesame seed and its oil . . .

This chapter lays the groundwork for all the discussions contained in the remainder of the tantra. This is the literal meaning of the chapter title (gleng-gzhi/nidāna). Thus the text is self-consciously providing us with a tool for its interpretation. For my purposes, I would like to underline two major themes: first, the imagery of the Vimāna, the Palace of Blazing Total Knowledge Jew-
els; and, secondly, the interplay of the subjective Realm (Vajra Realm/Vajradhātu) and objective Realm (Realm of Dharmas/Dharmadhātu) as embodied in the imagery of the Kings and Queens, respectively, within the Vimāna. The explication takes us back to the Cause Vehicle of the Mahāyāna in the time Vajrayāna, the Result Vehicle of Mahāyāna, was developing.

THE PALACE AND WEB IN THE AVATAMSAKA SŪTRA

*The Avatāmsaka Sūtra* (Sangs-rgyas Phal-po-che), a collection of separate sūtras, provides sufficient acreage for aeons of analysis. Parts of it are very old. We know that the *Gaṇḍavyūha Sūtra* (Sdong-pos Bkod-pa), the most important for our purposes, was translated into Chinese in the T’ang dynasty, in its most extensive form, in 798 A.D.; the earliest translation was done in 420 A.D. A Tibetan translation was done during the reign of Emperor Ralpacan (before 835 A.D.). The Japanese scholars have already demonstrated the importance of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* as a source of inspiration for the most important tantras of the Shingon School, the Vairocanābhisambodhi Sūtra and the *Tattvasamgraha*. I have decided to see if this approach holds good also for the Guhyagarbha.

The *Gaṇḍavyūha* is a complex sūtra, but with a basic plot which may be simply outlined:

1) The Buddha preaches to an assembly of Hearers and Bodhisattvas (including Maṇjuśrī).
2) The main character Sudhana (nor-bzangs) goes to hear the preaching of the bodhisattva of Wisdom, Maṇjuśrī, and conceives the Thought of Enlightenment (Byang-chub-sems/Bodhicitta).
3) Maṇjuśrī tells him to seek teachers (dge-ba’i-bshes-gnyen/kalyāṇamitra) and so he sets out to visit one another until he has studied with a total of fifty-two.
4) He meets the Bodhisattva of Love (Maitreya) at the Tower ‘Heart Decorated with Ornaments Shining Everywhere’ (Khang-pa Brtsegs-pa Rnam-par Snang-mdzad-kyi Rgyan-gyis Brgyan-pa’i Snying-po/ Vairocanavyūhālamkāragarbho Mahākūṭāgara).
5) Finally, Wisdom (Maṇjuśrī) sends him to Total Good (Samantabhadra).

There are two places in the sūtra where the Palace image takes on a special significance. The first is at the very beginning: The Buddha entered into the samādhi called “Stretching Lion Samādhi” (Seng-ge Rnam-par Bṣgyings-pa/ Siṃhaviṣṇumbhita) which was “inconceivable, because equal to the sky, with
ornaments shining everywhere in all creatures." No sooner had he settled into this samādhi than

A multistoried Palace with great ornaments spread out without centre or circumference, and a victory banner of indestructible adamant (rdo-rje/vajra) completely ordered the grounds. A web of all the kings of jewels spread out everywhere filled with individual flowers of various jewels uniformly arranged.

The Great Hearers (Nyan-thos-pa/Śrāvaka) Śāriputra, Maudgalyāyana, Mahākāśyapa, etc., did not see the Buddha’s power, blessing, miracles and perfectly pure land. These were the unimaginable objective spheres (yul) of the Bodhisattvas. Even though they were present, they did not see these things because they are not action-spheres of Hearers, but of Enlightened Ones. They did not cultivate the Eye of Total Knowledge (i.e., they had wrong ideas about dharmas!). Their imaginations were small (dmigs-pa chung-ngu) and so they did not have the samādhi which would have allowed them to be entered by the vast blessings of the Buddha. They are like the hungry ghosts (yi-dags/pretas) who go thirsty even though they live by the river Ganges since they perceive the river as dry or filled with ashes.

To say that the Hearers did not cultivate the Eye of Total Knowledge is the same as saying that they did not accumulate the knowledge (shes-pa) that would counteract the obscurations due to knowables (dharmas) and result in Total Knowledge (Ye-shes/Jñāna). Without this Total Knowledge, they were unable to see what the Bodhisattvas could see, the Realm of Dharmas here embodied in the imagery of the jewelled Palace and jewelled Web.

The ‘mandala’ of the Gaṇḍavyūha Sūtra was not yet a mandala just as the ‘mantras’ were not yet mantras and ‘everywhere shining’ was not yet Vairocana. The ‘mandala’ was the circle of light rays issuing from the Total Knowledge Body (Ye-shes-kyi Sku) of the Tathāgata which illumined all things. ‘Everywhere shining’ was a quality of the Tower of Maitreya (=Realm of Dharmas) which was entered by Sudhana as the culmination of his search for truth. This is why the Chinese retitled the Gaṇḍavyūha, ‘Entering the Realm of Dharmas.’ If ‘everywhere shining’ was not yet a particular Tathāgata, still, his special Total Knowledge is present in the Tower Episode, the Total Knowledge of the Realm of Dharmas. Likewise, ‘mantra’ (sngags) appears only as an adjunct of medical practice.

Clearly the Gaṇḍavyūha and the rest of the Avatamsaka sūtras were not yet tantra, but they certainly could have provided inspiration. Consider the following statement in the Gaṇḍavyūha in the light of polarity symbolism:

Oh noble son! Skillful Means (Upāya) is the father of Bodhisattvas.
The Perfection of Insight (Prajñā) is the mother.
and, on the following page,

The mental factors (phung-po/skandha) are known as ‘illusion.’ . . .
The objective spheres (khams/dhātu) and sense bases (skyê-mched/ āyatana) are understood as of the nature of the Realm of Dharmas.\(^{53}\)

This does not by any means exhaust the many facets of the Gaṇḍavyūha that could have inspired the nascent Vajrayāna. I would also look here for the origin of the term ‘vajra’ itself. And just as intriguing is the idea that the different names for the Ādi-Buddha, Samantabhadra (Kun-tu-bzang-po) of the Nyingma tradition and Mahāvairocana of the Japanese tradition may both stem from this very text.\(^{54}\) In connection with this, a few comments on some later East Asian traditions should not be out of order.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS IN EAST ASIA

The same Web imagery became extremely important to the Hua-yen followers of the Avatamsaka Sūtra in China and their counterparts in Korea, the Hwaōm School, and the Kegon School in Japan as an illustration of the interpenetration of universal and particular\(^{55}\) which finds frequent expression in the Gaṇḍavyūha, for example: ‘The Tathāgatas can see the reflection of the entire Realm of Dharmas in a single, extremely subtle mote.’\(^{56}\) At one point the Buddha displayed his miracles by plucking a hair from the Tathāgata’s foot. The hair became a single web of light in the Realm of Dharmas in all directions.\(^{57}\) The famous metaphor of the jewelled Web is too well known to treat here. I ask the reader to read about it in the new book by Thomas Cleary, Entry into the Inconceivable.\(^{58}\)

The Hua-yen made the connection between Realm of Dharmas and interdependent origination explicit by forming a compound of the two terms. This compound may have been coined by the second Patriarch Chih-yen (602-668 A.D.).\(^{59}\) But, as Robert Gimello points out, the interdependent origination was considered less as a ‘model of continuing bondage’ and more as a liberating vision.\(^{60}\) It is the objective sphere of the Buddha Himself which is available to all since it ‘shines everywhere.’

The first Korean Patriarch of the Hwaōm School, Üisang (625-702), already had laid out the Dharmadhātu in the form of a diagram called the ‘Ocean Seal’ after the name of the samādhi experienced by Sudhana when he entered the Tower of Maitreya and perceived the interpenetration of universal and particular. This diagram was quite famous also in China. In the twenty-eighth verse of his auto-commentary on the Seal, he says,

One adorns the Dharmadhātu,
Like a real palace of jewels.\(^{61}\)
The Hua-yen even developed, on the basis of the Avatamsaka, a theory of the Path-conceived-as-web where every particular moment of the Path interpenetrates with the whole of the Path such that the Goal is present at the outset and the outset is present at the time of the Goal. The moments in the Path to Enlightenment exist only in a state of interdependence. I suggest that such ideas must be behind the Vajrayāna’s claim to bring results without accumulation causes, the reason why Vajrayāna is called the Result Vehicle (’Bras-bu’i Theg-pa).

When the founder of Japanese Vajrayāna, Kūkai, returned from China in 806 A.D., he brought with him two charts; one of the Realm of Dharmas (the Garbhakośadhātu Maṇḍala, or Taizokai) representing the objective sphere, and another of the Realm of Vajra (Vajradhātu or Kongokai) representing the subjective sphere of Buddha. At some point previous to this, perhaps hundreds of years earlier, the typical mandala had taken on the architectural features of the Palace with moats full of threatening elements and graveyards; and four gateways, each with their turgid and fear-inspiring protective deities, contrasting with the peacefulness and pure colors of the inner sanctuary. With these roughly contemporary developments in East Asian Buddhism as a backdrop, we may return to the scene-setting chapter with a clearer idea of the Buddhist nature of the drama taking place in the Guhyagarbha

THE PALACE IN THE GUHYAGARBHA COMMENTARY
BY SŪRYASIMHAPRAHBA

Sūryasimhaprabha’s commentary begins with the life of Gautama Buddha, explaining, incidentally, the reason why Mahāyoga tantras are able to speak of thirteen Bodhisattva Levels (Sa/Bhūmi). After the Buddha reached the tenth Level, he formed a Dharma Body (Chos Sku/Dharmakāya)—the eleventh Level, from which the Perfect Assets Body (Longs-spyod Rdzogs Sku/Sambhogakāya) and Manifestation Body (Sprul Sku/Nirmāṇakāya) made their descent—the twelfth and thirteenth Levels. The Guhyagarbha calls these: 11) Kun-tu-'od, 12) Padma-can, and 13) Yi-ge-'khor-lo-tshogs-chen.

Then he tells the story that, while the Buddha was practicing austerities at the Nairāṇjanā River, his Total Knowledge Body went to the Buddhahfield None Higher ('Og-min) and emanated a Teacher to preach the classes of the Tattvasamgraha and other yogic Mahāyāna scriptures to Vajrapāṇi on the peak of Mount Meru (Ri-rab). Later, Vajrasattva came to the mansion (khangs-bzangs) of the sleeping King Indrabhūti in South India. King Indrabhūti woke from his dreams to see Vajrasattva standing there in a mandala of light. Vajrasattva gave him the secret initiations and taught him the secret tantras, including the Guhyagarbha.
Two hundred and eight years after the Buddha’s enlightenment, Kukurāja, a monk and sādhaka (grub-pa-po), was preaching to his followers who were dogs by day and goddesses by night. He had the Dpal ’Phreng Dam-pa, the Guhyasamāja, and Guhyagarbha tantras in his possession, but did not understand them. He searched daily for their meaning and at night he wound himself in pure cloth and put himself in a jewelled box. Finally, he had a dream where his house became the house of Vajrasattva. He understood the tantras. When he woke up, Vajrasattva was no longer there, but he sat himself down to write his commentary on the Dpal ’Phreng Dam-pa. Now that he was able to teach Tantra, his problem was to find someone capable of receiving these teachings. So, he searched in a state of contemplation, finding King Indrabhūti. The history ends with the statement that, according to the writings of Orgyan, “Indrabhūti had died by that time. So he gave the teachings to his son Shākya-pu-ti.” Shākya-pu-ti transmitted the teachings to his daughter ’Gu-na-de-byi (Guṇādevī?). “Of them it is also said, ‘Their audience was a thousand and a thousand flew (’khor stong stong ’phur).’”

Then the commentator immediately moves on (p. 2-1-4) to the subject of the five Perfections (Phun-sum-tshogs-pa Lnga) that “go at the head of all tantras.” The first two of these will become important for our later discussion. The five he lists are:

1) Teacher (Ston-pa).
2) Place (Gnas).
3) Transmission (Rgyud).
4) Compiler (Sdud-pa).
5) Audience (’Khor).

Other sources have different lists of the Five Perfections, most including the Time when the teachings were give. Here he discusses the Five Perfections according to the Lesser Vehicle, the Sūtra Vehicle (i.e. Mahāyāna); the Kriya, Yoga and Mahā-yoga Tantras. These are the identifications he gives for the Mahā-yoga Tantras:

1) Teacher—Total Good (Kun-tu-bzang-po).
2) Place—the two lands of None Higher, that of Nature (Rang-bzhin) and that of Awareness (Rig-pa).
3) Transmission—the first words of all the sūtras and tantras which guarantee their authentic transmission, the “Evaṃ mayā śrutam ekasmin samaye.” (The opening words of the Guhyagarbha are a little different. He will discuss this point later.)
4) Compiler—Vajrapāni.
5) Audience—Samaya (sattva), Vajra (sattva), etc., Goddess, Supreme Bliss (Bde Mchog), etc.

Then, after a long discussion of the necessity (dgos-pa) for the tantra and the necessity for that necessity (dgos-pa’i yang dgos-pa), Sūryasīṃhāprabha
is at last ready to begin his explanation of the twenty-two chapters of the *Guhyagarbha* according to his guru's precepts (p. 3-2-3). He says that while other tantras begin with the question of a personage in the audience and then the Teacher's response, this is not so in the present case. Because, for the purpose of this tantra, the Teacher is absolutely indistinguishable from the opportunity (gnas-skabs, "moment" in the Path to Enlightenment) of the Nature (Rang-bzhin) Great Perfection, there is no distinction between questioner and Teacher.

Then the commentator runs through an outline of the twenty-two chapters and comes back to the beginning (p. 3-5-7) to explain why the opening words which show the Perfection of Transmission, are different from the usual. The *Guhyagarbha* begins, "At the time of the teaching of these words . . ." ('di skad bshad-pa'i dus-na) instead of the almost universal, "These words (were) at one time heard by me" ('di skad bdag-gis thos-pa dus gcig-na). He notes (4-1-3) that in this tantra there is no 'hearing' (thos-pa) because there is no 'self' (bdag) and goes on to explain that the use of these words would have violated the spirit of the tantra, but further, that we should accept this explanation as only the finger pointing at the moon and not the moon itself (4-2-2). This may be an important part of the elephant, but such small statements of the *Guhyagarbha* are only indicators of the real 'elephant' it is trying to present us with in a fuller picture—the Nature Great Perfection in which all the dharmas are from the very beginning buddhaized. He then says that *all* of the other words that *are* included in the opening statement are also, in the ultimate analysis, incompatible with the teachings of the tantra.

But then he re-analyzes the same words according to their deep significance (4-3-8). The original Sanskrit word *Evaṁ*, which is the first word of all sūtras and tantras, is divided into two syllables, *E* and *Vam*:

\[
E = \text{triangle/place of origin of the Dharma/dharmas (chos)/the womb of the Total Good Female (Kun-tu-bzang-mo)/the lotus of the mother.}
\]
\[
Vam = \text{the nature of the Vajra Lord Total Good.}\]

These are further identified with the *Place* of the teaching and the *Teacher* respectively, the first two of the Five Perfections previously discussed. Then the remaining parts of the opening statement are likewise identified with the last three Perfections.

The *Teacher*, Samantabhadra, is discussed (pp. 5-1 to 6-1). He is identified with the Vajra Body, Speech and Mind of all the Tathāgatas of all time and space together with the bodies, speeches and minds of all creatures of all time and space. He is equivalent to the Dharmakāya (5-1-2, ff.). Līlavajra gives very interesting explanation of Total Good in his commentary to the words which open the second chapter of the *Guhyagarbha*:
BHAGAVAN PRODUCER VAJRA MIND TOTAL GOOD . . . 69

The MIND (yid) is the owner of both temporal conceptualizing and Total Knowledge and is therefore the PRODUCER (byed-pa-po) of both samsara and nirvana. Because completely critical people will see this and assert that the mind is itself a product of causes and conditioning, it is further specified as VAJRA mind; ‘Vajra’ because what is not compounded is neither produced nor destroyed. Since the Thatness (Denyid) appears by itself without looking for it, it is all just Total Knowledge and there is nothing that is considered to be expendible. That is why it is called TOTAL GOOD.70

Those words from the second chapter are immediately followed by a description of the feminine counterpart of Total Good:

. . . ENTERED INTO THE QUEEN PRODUCTS DHARMAS TOTAL GOOD WOMAN.71

But Śūryasiṃhaprabha’s commentary continues (p. 6-2-7):

When it says, ‘(the Teacher) dwells in the land of None Higher which is without centre or circumference,’ it is speaking primarily on the extent of the objective sphere Realm of Dharmas.72

The actuality of the Dharmadhātu is what is meant by ‘Palace’: “Because it is the actuality of the Realm of Dharmas, it is called ‘Palace.’” (11-5-7)73 “Because the Dharmaity is by nature pure, so all the special ornaments, like shapes placed near to a crystal, are unobscured and clear.” (12-2-3)74 The Palace is “without inside or outside since all is inside,” says the first chapter of the Guhyagarbha. Śūryasiṃhaprabha explains this with the simile of the crystal and the images reflected within it (8-1-1).

This should be sufficient to establish the basic messages behind the imagery. The other details of the symbolism, the meaning of the four doors, etc., I have glossed over here and in my paraphrase translation. These architectural symbols have already been dealt with elsewhere.75 But before leaving the commentary, I would like to mention a few points relevant to my earlier discussions. In the first section of the commentary (as summarized above) only five other tantras are directly cited. They are: 1) The Tattvasamgraha, a Yoga Tantra, on p. 4-4-8, etc. 2) The Mahāvairo-canābhisambodhi, which this text calls an Ubbaya (Gnyi-ga) Tantra, on pp. 5-3-6. 8-1-4, etc. 3) The Byi-ma-ha-dza-la Tantra which I cannot yet identify, pp. 10-1-7, 11-2-1. 4) The Guhyasamāja, a Mahā-yoga Tantra, p. 6-4-5. I would also like to point out his treatment of the eighteen dhātus (p. 7-1-6) and of the sixty-two heretical views (p. 11-2-2) which, as we know, originated in the Brahma Web Sutta.
‘FIRST WORDS’ AND A LATER DEVELOPMENT IN CENTRAL ASIA

Just as the most important word of the Hebrew scriptures for the medieval Kabbalist was the very first word of Genesis, so, I suggest, was the first word of the sūtras considered in the very beginning of Vajrayāna. By unlocking the mysteries of this single word, it was believed that all the words of the revealed scripture would yield their hidden messages. In turn, all these hidden messages could be reintegrated back into the first word because, in an arational but still somehow sensible manner, the revealed scripture which contained all that it was necessary to know for the believer was identified with the universe in such a way that each and every letter of the scripture represented something particular in the universe, something that had to do with a special quality of the letter itself; the way it reverberated when spoken, a numerical value assigned to it, the associations of the words in which the letter was contained, etc. This is the magical power of sound as it is religiously, and not just literarily or magically conceived. It supports, affirms or underlies, however one may wish to phrase it, the entire realm of religious thought in each respective culture—Taoist, Islamic, Christian, Judaic, etc.—where it has taken root. To some degree this feeling is still present when we read or hear poetry. We need to experience this attitude a little in order to appreciate what is happening in the figure reproduced below.

The diagram is taken from the late Gelukpa author Klong-rdol Bla-ma (1719-1794).\textsuperscript{76} It is meant to illustrate the union of E as the Place of the teaching with Vam, the Teacher. Its ultimate literary source is a passage in the Mañjuśrīnāmaśāṅgīti,\textsuperscript{77} a passage which was alluded to in the first nine syllables of the second verse of the Central Asian Kālacakra Tantra. This is made clear by the author of the Vimalaprabhā\textsuperscript{78} and all subsequent Kālacakra commentators. A charting of all the various correspondences integrated in the figure would be subject for a full-blown dissertation on the truly astounding cosmology presented in the Kālacakra, something scholars and the world at large have rarely found the courage to face, but which could enormously illumine our knowledge of, for instance, the history of science. The same sort of integration lies behind the Shingon’s use of the letters A and Vam in their two mandalas when they are represented as the Dharma-mandalas, where these letters represent Mahāvairocana in the objective and subjective spheres respectively.\textsuperscript{79}

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR OTHER APPROACHES

With all that said and done, it seems that I have said and done very little. One may receive the impression that Mahāyāna and its younger brother Vajrayāna are essentially conservative entities. If so, that is exactly what I had
The Six Empty Spot Letters
(The Place of the Teaching)

The 29 consonants of Means and the 18 vowels of Insight joined together form E-VAM in Vartula script. Vartula also denotes the extremely subtle conjunction of Thought and Breath.

The Five Letters of the Great Void
(The Buddha as Teacher)
hoped to say in answer to the scholars with visions of yoginis dancing in their heads or with suspicions of alien religious ideas creeping in. I don’t deny the existence of sexuality and heterodoxy in Buddhist tantras. I only think that these aspects that are likely to provoke prurient and scholastic interest have so far blinded western science to the vital Buddhist issues that inspired Vajrayāna’s emergence. If I have answered few of the pressing concerns of historically-minded scholars, I have still tried carefully to keep the idea of historical development in mind. If I have not managed to formulate a clear typology of Realm of Dharmas, etc., for the literary critics, it is partly because of the ‘progressive’ nature of the sources. For example, in the higher reaches of Rdzogs-chen thought, the Dharmadhātu loses its relation to the objective sphere and becomes absolutely synonymous with Bodhicitta.80

I believe this general approach will also throw light on that most dazzlingly transcendent of all Nyingma tantras, the All Making King (Kun Byed Rgyal-po).81 It is true that All Making (Kun Byed) is an epithet of Brahma; not the Brahma of the Hindus, however, but rather the Brahma of the cosmic trap in the Brahma Web Sutta, a trap which, it must be remembered, can at the same time be a liberating vision—the Buddha’s own vision, in fact. To the sophisticated and uncompromisingly presented (nges don) vision of Rdzogs-chen, the mistaken appearances (’khrul snang) of the world and the unmistakable appearance which is beyond the world (mya-ngan-las-'das) are indistinguishable in terms of the substantiality (ngo-bo-nyid) of their respective dharmas.82 This is the truly strange realm of thought in which the All Making King, the Awareness Self-dawned (Rig-pa Rang-shar) and other Ati-yoga tantras move. It is a context in which serious assertion of the existence of a creator god has been a priori ruled out. But it is, after all, not so far removed from the realm of thought of the Vajra Cutter Sūtra, “Void is form. Form itself is void.”

If I may close with the questions that opened the present inquiries, I think that a study of the development of the thirteen (and sixteen) Bodhisattva Levels and the Nine Vehicle concept will further refine our sense of the Guhyagarbha’s place in Buddhist history. Both the Levels and the Vehicles have gradually increased in number over time. The case of the Vehicles is most easily traced. The Mañjuśrīnāmaśaṅgīti and most of the Mahāyāna sūtras have three. The Avatamsaka Sūtra hints at five and its Hua-yen followers definitely listed five. The Guhyagarbha has five and its commentarial literature quickly developed nine. The Bonpo have nine. The Taoist alchemists in the Sung period spoke of thirteen. In the latter four cases, the final and ultimate Vehicle was called the Supreme Single Vehicle, either directly or indirectly going back to the Lotus Sutra for the inspiration.83 This is the sort of thing I would consider pressing research if we are ever to be able to feel historical in the face of the tantras.
NOTES


2. Perhaps the most clear statement may be found in Kiyoga, *Gedatsukai* (pp. 52-55). But see also Takasaki, ‘Dharmatā’ (p. 914 ff., 918); Kawada, ‘Dharmadhātu’ (p. 863); Grosnick, ‘The Understanding of “Dhātu”’ (p. 31).

3. This has already been done in the works cited in note 2.

4. For some works on the *Brahma Jāla*, see the index to Hastings, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*. A summary of the sutta by Bandula Jayawardhana may be found in Malalesekera (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Buddhism* (vol. 3, pp. 310-311). For my summary I have relied on both the English translation in Bennett, *Long Discourses* (vol. 1, pp. 13, 46 ff.) and the Tibetan translation in the Kanjur (Peking, vol. 40, no. 1021) called the *Tshangs-pa’i Dra-ba’i Mdo*. The East Asian scholars seem to be confused as to the origins of this sutta, some saying it is a Chinese product of the fourth century. Perhaps the Chinese and Japanese versions differ significantly from the Pāli, but I have been able to find no clear statement on this point. The Tibetan translation seems identical to the Pāli version. See also de Groot, ‘The Code of the Mahāyāna in China’; Warder, *Indian Buddhism* (pp. 141-150); Weller, ‘Das Brahmatalahātra.’

5. The full text is given in Tibetan text B (Peking, vol. 40, no. 1021, p. 287-2-1 ff.).

6. This is the upper level within the Second Dhyāna (Bsam-gtan Gnyis-pa) within the Form Realm (Gzugs-kyi Khams) in the cosmology universal to Buddhists. Another sutta in the *Dīgīka Nikāya* tells how all the beings in this world period descended from the Clear Light Realm and how society subsequently evolved (Warder, *Indian Buddhism* p. 158 ff.).

7. See Sopa, *Practice & Theory* (pp. 118, 127) where this seems to be a special tenet of the Cittamātrins and Yogācārayā-svātāntrikas. The Prasāṅga approach, however, differs only in subtle details (*ibid.*, p. 140 ff.). and these statements may, therefore, be considered universal to Mahāyāna.


9. For these, see Buddhaghosa, *Path of Purification* (p. 552); Conze, *Buddhist Thought* (p. 95); Stcherbatsky, *The Central Conception* (p. 7 ff.); Takasaki, ‘Dharmatā’ (p. 916 ff.); Kawada, ‘Dharmadhātu’ (p. 859 ff.); O’Brien, ‘A Chapter on Reality’ (pp. 245-6, notes).

10. In the preceding note, especially Kawada and Takasaki. O’Brien (*op. cit.*, p. 247, note) insists on two meanings of ‘Dharmadhātu.’ One is the plurality of dharmas; the other, an equivalent of Suchness (Tathātā). This apparent ambiguity needs to be kept in mind, but I suggest that these two meanings are frequently merged. A total picture of the dharmas may be equivalent to the apprehension of Suchness, Voidness, Dharmatā, etc.

11. A work by Herbert Guenther on the *Guhyagarbha* is in press at the time of writing. Outside the Tibetan language, little scholarship on the subject has been done, but see especially Ruegg, *Life of Bu-ston* (p. 68) and Karmay, ‘A Discussion’ (p. 148). Csoma de Kőrös was, incidentally, the first European to recognize the existence of this tantra.

12. For example, ‘Jam-dpal-dgyes-pa’i rdo-rje, ‘*Gsang ‘Grel Phyogs Bcu’i Mun Sel-gyi Spyi Don: ‘Od-gsal Snying-po’*’ (p. 214). This is a subcommentary to one of the three *Guhyagarbha* commentaries by Klong-chen-pa. For Vehicles, see Tsuda, ‘Classification of Tantras’ and Zhe-chen Padma-mam-rgyal, *Snga’-gyur Thdag Dgu’i Tshogs Bshaw*. The fact that Mahā, Anu-, and Ati-yoga were considered sub-classifications of Yoga by various teachers is discussed in the early commentary by Rong-zom-pa, *Rgyud Rgyal* . . . (p. 58.2 ff.). My outline omits the mysterious *Yang-ti* and *Spyi-ti* categories of Ati-yoga.

13. The story of how the teaching of the Mahā-yoga tantras became known among men: The Lord of Ceylon (Lang-ka’i Dbang-po) wrote the words of the tantras with lapis lazuli ink on golden paper. The king of a kingdom neighboring the kingdom of Za-hor called A-par-tha-mu (Khetsun Sangpo, *Biographical Dictionary*, vol. 1, p. 944) whose name was King Dza had seven
dreams. In the fifth dream, a transparent boy made of dark jewels without inside or outside fell on the top of his palace like a meteor depositing many volumes of books written with lapis lazuli on gold. In the sixth, he dreamed that countless gods, goddesses, Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and sages praised the volumes and circumambulated them. In the seventh, he received a prophecy from the clouds promising that he would receive the teachings contained in the books. After telling others of his dreams, he went to the top of his palace and found the books exactly as they had appeared in his dreams. (Paraphrased from Zur-'tsho, Zur, vol. 1, pp. 8-12). The human lineage then had both a ‘close’ (nye) and ‘distant’ (ring) transmission. Close transmission: Kukurāja (Ku-ku-ratsu), King Indrabhūti (In-dra-bu-ti), Sing-nga Uparāja (U-pa-ra-tsa), his daughter Gomasala (Mgo-ma-sa-la), Buddhaguhya and, finally, Vimalamitra. Distant transmission: Gomasala (above), Śākyasūtrin (Shakya-su-tri), Thub-pa Dza-ha-shi, Vajrahāsa (Rdo-rje-zhad-pa), Hūṃkara (Hūṃ-ka-ra), Hūṃkaravajra (Hūṃ-mdzad-ro-re), Brahmin Śūrya (Nyi-ma), Tīg-nagar-pa, Buddhaguhya and, finally, Vimalamitra (Zur-'tsho, Zur, vol. 1, p. 15). This should be compared to the variant Mahā-yoga lineages found in Nga-dbang-blo-bzang-rgya-mtsho, Thob-yig (vol. 2, pp. 363.3 ff., 374). The story of how Kukurāja was invited by King Indrabhūti (King Dza) to come and give the initiation relevant to the Mahā-yoga texts has been told by Kanaoka in the article, ‘Kukurāja.’ He extracts from the Prajñāpāramitā commentary by Jñānamitra (early 9th century? See Padma-dkar-po, “Chos-byung”’, p. 313.2; Khetsun Sangpo, Op. cit., vol. 1, pp. 900, 906 ff.) a story of how Kukurāja initiated the King of Za-hor into the teachings of the Buddhhasamarāyoga Tantra (no. 3 on my list below) and the other Mahā-yoga tantras. Kanaoka makes the mistake of confusing Kukurāja (author of Peking, nos. 2536-2543, all Buddhhasamarāyoga texts) with Kukurupāda (Ku-ku-ri-pa) who taught to Marpa the Great Illusion (Mahāmāyā) Tantra (author of Peking, nos. 2499-2503 and perhaps also 3233-3234). This Great Illusion Tantra, like the Hevajra and Kālacakra tantras, is strictly a Second Propagation phenomenon.

Tārānātha reports that the Guhyasamājā, Buddhhasamarāyoga and Māyājāla tantras appeared in the period of the Brahmin Rāhulabhadra (Sgra-gcan-'dzin-bzang-po). See Tārānātha, History of Buddhism (pp. 102-3); Khetsun Sangpo, Biographical Dictionary (vol. 1, 249-250, 550-1, 571-2; vol. 3, pp. 26-7). There are several teachers by the name Rāhulabhadra, one of the others belonging to the Śūdra caste. If, as it seems, this Rāhulabhadra is the one who taught Nāgārjuna (Warder, Indian Buddhism, pp. 374-5; Blue Annals, pp. 35, 344), then Tārānātha is claiming an early date indeed for these tantras!


15. Kanaoka (p. 467). See also note 13, above.


17. Eastman, ‘The Eighteen Tantras’ (p. 96).


19. See Kang-dkar Tshul-khrems-skal-bzang, Byams Zhus Le'u'i 'Phros Don (pp. 38-40), a recent work with footnotes. Therein the Tun Huang text of the Guhyasamājā is discussed. Mr. Kang-dkar concludes that we should now consider it an ‘Old Translation,’ defining that as any translation done up to and including the translating activities of Śrītīrānākirti. This is the definition I have settled for in this paper. It should be remembered that the only point of controversy is
the validity of the Nyingma Inner Method Tantras (i.e., the Mahā-, Anu- and Ati-yoga Tantras) and not the Old Translation of sūtras and Outer Capability Tantras which were all accepted into the Kanjur. Within the 250 year period in which Old Tantra translations could have been going on, it will be very difficult to accurately determine what happened when.

20. It was suggested by Professor D. Seyfort Ruegg of Seattle (Bloomington: April, 1984) that this transcription may reflect an actual Middle Indian pronunciation. If so, the development may be described as a shift away from phonetic representation toward true transliteration. For Gnya’-na-gar-ba, see Yamaguchi, A Catalogue (pt. 2, p. 75). See also the peculiar spellings of Vimalamitra’s name in the following note.

21. See Walter, “The Role of Alchemy” (p. 188, no. 46), where this eccentric spelling for Vimalamitra’s name is discussed. Walter has translated parts of an alchemical cycle connected with the Mahā-yoga tantra denoted by no. 10 of my list—which is most likely the tantra found in Rnying-ma Rgyud’-bum (1973, vol. 18, pp. 449-567). See Peking (no. 464; vol. 10, pp. 167-2 to 174-5) for the work on which his study is based. I believe that the form of the name of Vimalamitra found in the Tun Huang document as well as another spelling, Ba-ye-ma-la-mu-tra, represent native Tibetan ‘readings’ of the name, probable dating from early times. Both forms are discussed in a recent Nyingma history by Ngag-dbang-blo-gros (Chos-b’byung Ngamtshar Gtams-gyi Rol Mtsngo, vol. 1, p. 239.7 ff.). There are often said to have been an earlier and a later Vimalamitra in Tibet and there was also one who probably never went to Tibet (Warde, *Indian Buddhism*, p. 472).


26. Roerich, *ibid.* (pp. 103-4).

27. Rdo-rje-gzi-brjids is the name with which Klōng-chen-pa signed all of his Guhyagarbha works. See Rdo-rje-gzi-brjids, “Dpal Gsang-ba’i Snying-po De-kho-na-nyid Nges-pa’i Rgyud-kyi ‘Grel-pa: Phyogs Bcu’i Mun-pa Thams-cad Rnam-par Sel-ba’” (p. 10). Tibetan text C. An index/history to the Rnying-ma Rgyud’-bum by ’Gyur-med-tshe-dbang-mchog-grub of Kaṭ-thog written in 1797 quotes from the Guhyasamāja commentary by the Indian teacher Viśvamitra in which the first and other chapters of the Guhyagarbha are cited. This Guhyasamāja commentary has long been put forward by Nyingma apologists as a proof of the existence of the Guhyagarbha in India. This needs investigation. See Rnying-ma Rgyud’-bum (1973, vol. 18, p. 448.1); Roerich, *Blue Annals* (p. 103).

28. I would provisionally identify Klōng-chen-pa’s four sections as follows: 1) No. 18.1 on my list (and possibly others). 2) Peking, no. 102. 3) no. 18.6 on my list. 4) no. 18.2 on my list. The words “Illusion Web Tantras” occur in a Stein ms. (Poussin, no. 332). It is also the name of a Vairocana Tantra (Peking, no. 102, commentary—no. 3336) and what appears to be a Theravāda sutta (Peking, no. 954). In the text of the just mentioned Vairocana Tantra, Vairocana is addressed as “Illusion Web” (Peking, vol. 4, p. 194-9-8). Samantabhadra is already cast in the role of Ādi Buddha (p. 150-1-2) even though this ought to be a tantra of the Carya or Yoga classes. “Illusion Web” appears in the long list of epithets of Maṇjuśrī in the Maṇjuśrīnāmasaṅgiti (Raghu Vira, ed., *Kālacakra-Tantra and Other Texts*, pt. 1, p. 34, verse 161).


30. See Buddhaghuya’s work Lam Rnam-par Bkod-pa (Peking, no. 4736; vol. 83, p. 106-2-5). According to Rong-zom-pa, Rgyud Rgyal . . . (p. 38.3), the view which identifies the objective and subjective spheres as the external and internal pratityasamutpāda belongs to the
Yogacarins and the yoga practitioners among the Madhyāmika followers (mal-'byor sbyor-ba'i Dbu-ma-pa-dag).

32. Takasaki, ‘Dharmätā’ (p. 910).
33. This rendering is according to the explanation of Sūryasimhaprabha (Peking, no. 4719; vol. 83, pp. 2-5-1 ff.).
34. Compare the use of this phrase in the Gaṇḍavyūha in citation below. The phrase “Realm of Dharmas without centre or circumference” occurs many times in the Gaṇḍavyūha (for example, Derge Kanjur, vol. 38, = Phal-chchen Nga-pa, p. 582.2).
35. All the commentaries identify the “deities” with well known Buddhist deities. For example, the five Tathāgatas are the usual five Tathāgatas; the “Great Awakeners Vajra Sight,” etc., are Kṣitigarbha, Akāśagarbha, Avalokiteśvara and Vajrapāni, and so on.
36. I suspect that these unusual “four times” are derived from a phrase frequently employed in the Gaṇḍavyūha to express the usual idea of “three times.” See, for example, Derge Kanjur (vol. 38, = Phal-chchen Nga-pa, p. 623.2): `das-pa dang ma-byon-pa dang/ da-ltar byung-ba'i sangs-rgyas thams-cad kyang ‘di-las byung-ngo/.
37. The same simile is used in an identical context in the opening chapter of the Guhyasamāja Tantra (Peking, no. 81) and also in the opening chapter of the Vairocanābhisambodhi Sūtra (Tsuda, ‘A Critical Tantrism’, p. 198).
38. Rgyu’i Theg-pa as contrasted to ‘Bras-bu’i Theg-pa, means the sūtra approach of accumulating causes in order to get the desired result. The Diamond Vehicle claims to obtain results through the results themselves.
40. Ibid. (p. 435).
41. Kao, ‘Avatamsaka Sūtra’ (p.437). But note that Padma-'phrin-las (Bka'-ma Mdo Dbang, p. 39.6) says that it was translated by Mkhan-po Bodhisattva (Sāntirakṣita) and Ye-shes-sde. This would place it in the reign of Khri-srong-lde-btsan. Students of Hua-yen will find the editor’s colophon by the monk Bkra-shis-dbang-phyug found at the end of the version in the Derge Kanjur (vol. 38, = Phal-chchen Nga-pa, pp. 723-5) very interesting. He notes that different Tibetan translations have different numbers of volumes (bam-po). Some tell of a 130 volume version. The Tshal-pa Kanjur version has 115. The Ldan-dkar-ma catalogue gives 127. He says that Surendrabodhi and Vairocanarākṣita used the Chinese versions of Byang-chub-bzang-po (?Buddhabhadra?, lived 359-429) and Dga’-ba (?Śikṣānanda?, lived 652-710). He mentions a Hwa-shang Thu-thu-zhun whom we ought to identify as the first Hua-yen Patriarch Tu Shun (558-640) and notes that one Dbus-pa Sangs-rgyas-'bum (Khetsun Sangpo, Biographical Dictionary, vol. 3, p. 502) studied the Avatamsaka with the Hwa-shang Gying-ju (?). Then he gives a partial lineage for the Indian transmission saying that Ba-ri- Lo-tsā-ba studied it with Rdo-rje-gdan-pa (Vajrāsana-pāda). Mchims Brtson-seng and Rje-btsun Sa-skya-pa Chen-po also received the Indian transmission. He says that he based his own edition on the Tshal-pa Kanjur, noting that most copies are full of archaisms (brda-myin) and many times there are old and new words mixed together. Finally, note that parts of the Tibetan Avatamsaka are in the Stein collection (Poussin, nos. 130-148, etc.).
42. There are clear summaries in Cleary, Entry into the Inconceivable (pp. 4 ff...) and Warder, Indian Buddhism (pp. 424-429).
43. Derge Kanjur (vol. 37, = Phal-chchen Ga-pa, p. 556). Tibetan text G.
44. Ibid. (p. 556). Tibetan text H.
45. Ibid. (p. 579).
46. Ibid. (p. 582).
47. Ibid. (p. 584).
48. Ibid. (pp. 185-6).
50. Derge Kanjur (vol. 38, = Phal-chen Nga-pa, p. 616.7). “He entered into the Total Knowledge of the Realm of Dharmas.” Tibetan text I.
51. Derge Kanjur (vol. 37, = Phal-chen Ga-pa, p. 191; vol. 38, = Phal-chen Nga-pa, p. 550).
52. Peking (vol. 26, p. 313-4-4). See also Cleary, Entry (pp. 7-8). Tibetan text J.
53. Peking (vol. 26, p. 313-5). For full citation, see Tibetan text K.
54. See Kabese, ‘Adi-Buddha’ (p. 219) for a discussion. Tibetologists will be inclined to view his explanations as a little too Japancentric.
56. Derge Kanjur (vol. 37, = Phal-chen Ga-pa, p. 559). Tibetan text L.
57. Derge Kanjur (vol. 37, = Phal-chen Ga-pa, p. 106.6-.7).
58. Especially pp. 66-68. Perhaps no one has explained the general conceptions of Hua-yen in more elegant English than Francis H. Cook, Hua-yen Buddhism.
60. Ibid. (p. 17).
62. Ibid. (p. 190).
63. Note 34, above.
64. Kiyota, Gedatsukai (pp. 61, 65).
66. Peking (no. 83; vol. 83, pp. 1-1-1 to 70-3-7). The title is Dpal Gsang-ba’i Snying-po Dekho-na-nyid Nges-pa Rgya-cher Bshad-pa’i ‘Grel-pa. The author’s name is given as Nyi-ma’i-seng-ge’i’od. See Roerich, Blue Annals (pp. 108, 158) where his name is given in the forms Nyi’od-seng-ge and Nyi-ma’i’od-kyi-seng-ge. Unless otherwise noted, the page & line numbers given in parentheses in this section refer to Suryasimhaprabha’s commentary. The name also appears as Nyi’od-seng-ge in Rnying-ma Rgyud’bum (1973, vol. 36, p. 363.3) and Lo-chen Dharmasri, Collected Works (vol. 3, p. 215.3). For want of a better theory, I would identify this Suryasimhaprabha with the Suryaprabha who authored Poussin, no. 607 and/or the Simhaprabha who translated the Kun Byed Rgyal-po together with Vairocana (Karmay, ‘A Discussion’, pp. 148-50).
67. Tibetan text M.
68. Substitute Mahavairocana for Samantabhada and you have the Shingon definition of Teacher.
69. Tibetan text N.
70. Lilavatija, Dpal Gsang-ba’i snying-po’i ‘Grel-pa: Rin-po-che’i Spar-khab (p. 35.4). Tibetan text O.
71. Tibetan text P.
72. Tibetan text Q.
73. Tibetan text R.
74. Tibetan text S.
75. Wayman, ‘Symbolism of the Man dala-Palace.’
77. Raghu Vira (ed.), Manjusri-nama-saṅgiti (p. 69, verse 144).
78. Peking (no. 2064; vol. 109, pp. 140-4-4 ff.).
79. See illustration in Anesaki, Buddhist Art (plate xvi).
80. This point is clearly made in the first chapter of the Chos-dbyings Rin-po-che’i Mdzod and its autocommentary by Klong-chen-pa.
81. Studies on Kun Byed Rgyal-po are imminent. I have seen one by Eva Dargyay (Calgary) in manuscript, soon to be published. Samten Karmay (Paris) has also promised a study. I personally
disagree with the idea that Shaivism, etc., are at all necessary for understanding the *Kun Byed*. It seems to be a ‘schorlarization’ of the polemical position that the *Kun Byed* is non-Buddhist, a position that should not be taken as a starting point for a critical hermeneutic.

82. See ‘Gṣang Snags Rdo-rje Theg-pa’i Tshul-las Snang-ba Lhar Bsgrub-pa’” in Rongzom-pa, *Selected Works* (pp. 125-151) where this argument is given in detail.

83. Here I must acknowledge the contribution of Taoist lore-master Judith A. Berling (Bloomington). She has dealt with the thirteen Vehiciles of Taoist inner alchemy meditation in her work, *The Syncretic Religion of Lin Chao-en* (pp. 101-103). A statement in the *Lotus Sūtra* is cited in support of Rdzogs-chen by Zhe-chhen Padma-mam-rgyal in his *Snags-gyur Theg Dgu’i Tshogs Bshad* (p. 58.2). Full citation in Tibetan text *T*. In my opinion, attempts to trace the development of the five Tathāgata imagery have not been too successful, but see Matsunaga, ‘A History of Tantric Buddhism.’

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POSTSCRIPT

At the time of writing, I did not have available to me the study by Ronald 
Davidson on the Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgiti contained in Tantric and Taoist Stud-
ies in Honor of R.A. Stein (edited by Michel Strickmann), vol. 1, pp. 1-69. 
On pages 6-7 (note 18) he gives the correct Sanskrit form of Sgeg-pa’i-rdo-rje 
as Vilāsavajra (not Līlāvajra, although this has been the form used in previous 
scholarship).

Some of the recent works of Kenneth Eastman (which he kindly sent to me) 
have traced Guhyagarbha and related material in the Tun-huang documents. 
Many of Eastman’s works are unfortunately not yet published. On the basis of 
much more detailed textual study, he has been able to take some of the con-
clusions advanced here much further than I was able to do.
[A]

[BO]

[BO]

[BO]
ཉིས་མི་ཚུན་པར་ཉིད་ཐོས་བརུན་ཞིག་གི་མིང་ག་བཙན་ནས་
དེ་བསམ་བེད་ཐོག་པའི་ཞིག་གི་མིང་ག་བཙན་ནས་
གླེང་གི་ཕྲིན་་དབང་གིས་པ་ལ་་ཐོག་པར་
ཁྲིམས་
ཅད་དེ་བརྙན་པོ་བཤད་པ་མཐའ་གནོད་སློབ་ཁྲིམས་

ངས་མོ་ལོངས་པ་ཐོག་པར་དགེ་རེ་ཆེན་བཙན་ནས་
ཞིག་ཕྲིན་་དབང་གིས་པ་ལ་་ཐོག་པར་
མི་མདོར་མི་མཐུན་ལྡན་ཀུན་འཛན་སི་སློབ་དབྱོན་
སྤྲུ་བོ་འཇིག་རིང་གི་སིི་མི་ལོངས་ཉོན་མོ་ངན་
ཞིག་གི་མིང་ག་བཙན་ནས་

བཤད་པཞི་བསམ་བེད་ཐོག་པར་
ཁྲིམས་

སྐུད་ལོངས་པ་ཐོག་པར་དགེ་རེའི་བཙན་ནས་
ཞིག་གི་མིང་ག་བཙན་ནས་
བོད་ཡིག་ཡང་། ཚུག་གིས། བོད་ཡིག་ཡང་། བོད་ཡིག་ཡང་།
པོན་པོ་དྲི་བཅད་པའི་བློ་གཉིས། སྐབས་དགོན་པ། སི་བུ་མ།
ཐོག་མི་ཆེན་པོ་དི་ཤུགས་པའི་ཤེས་པར་འགྲེམ་སི་བུ་མ།
པར་གཉིས་དཔག་པ། བོད་དཔོན་དུ་ཞེས་པའི་སྐད་ཆེ།
འབྲེལ་བསྐལ་བི་ཆེས་བཞི་བཟང་བཞིན་ནས་བཟོ་མ་ན།
[Q]
དེ་ཡང་བོད་ཡིག་ཡིན། ཅིག་དེ་ན་གཞི་ཆེན་པོ་དམངས་ཅན་
དང་ནང་དཔེ་རིང་རིམ་པོ་ཆོད་པ་དེ་ཞིག་མི་བཟོ་ན།
ཕུན་ཚོང་བཤད། ལོ་གཞི་ཤེས་པ་བཞི་བཟང་པོས་
བཟོ་མ་ན། དེ་ཡང་ཞིག་དུ་ཤེས་པའི་
ཞིག་དུ་ཤེས་པའི་སྐད་ཆེ།
ཅི་མེད་པའི་ལེགས་བཟོ་ན།
བོད་དོན་རྣམ་གྲྭ་རི་བོད་སྐུ་མཐོང་བུ་བཞུགས་བསྐུར་...
དོན་ལྷོ་བཤེས་པ་མོ་ཚིག་ཡི་བཅོ་བ་བསྐོར་.....
དུས་གཞི་ལ་བཤད་དགེ་དེ་ཐུབ་གཞུང་པའི་ཐོབ
མ་དྲི་བཤེས་བཤེས་བདུན་གཞི། །དོན་བཤེས
དེ་ཚིག་ཐེ་ལུ་བཤད་དགེ་དེ་ཐུབ་གཞུང་པའི་ཐོབ
དེ་ཚིག་ཐེ་ལུ་བཤད་དགེ་དེ་ཐུབ་གཞུང་པའི་ཐོབ
......[I]
ཆོས་ཀུན་དབང་གི་ལེགས་བདེན

[II]
ཨེ་བོ་དོན་ལུ་ཕལ་ལམ་སྐུ་ལྷད་རྡོ་རྡོར་རླུང་ལྷེའི་སྙིང་དཔེ་དཔེ
སུམ་གཞི། །བཤེས་ཀུན་དབང་བད་བཤེས་དི་ལས།
[K]

དེ་དོན་བཤད་དུ་མཐོང་དབྱིབས་ཀྱི་ཐོན་ཞིབ་བཟིང་ལྟར་སོགས་ད་
དེ་དོན་དུ་དབྱིབས་བཟིང་ལྟར་སོགས་ད་

[L]

དེའི་ཐོན་ཞིབ་ཐོན་ཞིབ་བཟིང་ནི་གྲུ་གཉིས་པོ་

[M]

དེ་དོན་གྱི་ཐོན་ཞིབ་བཟིང་ད་

ཀོན་ཐོན་ཞིབ་བཟིང་ལྟར་སོགས་ད་
སོགས་གསར་བོད་ཀྱིས་དེ་ཡོད་དུ་བཟོ་བཟོ་ཤེས་པར་རྒྱུས་རབས་བདེ་བཟོ།

[0]

ིན་ཇི་སྤྲིང་གི་ཐོབ་པར་བཞི་སྲིད་ཀྱི་ཐོབ་པར་དུ་ཤེས་པ་དེ་བ། དེ་བདེ་བཟོ།

[N]
རྟེན་མཁྱེན་མི་རླུང་དྲུ་བཤད་ཀྱི་གུང་ཁྲིམས།

[Q]

dགེས་མིན་གྱི་དྲང་དོན་ཐར་མི་དེ་བུ་གྱུ་བྱུགས་མེད་པའི་དགེ་
གེ་སྦྱོང་བོ་། ལྷ་དམིགས་གྱི་མཚོན་ཁྲིམས་པ་
བཟུང་ཤིས་པོ་ཡོད།

[R]

སོང་གི་རླུང་བ། དཔེར་བོ་ལས་ཐ་བབ་པ་ལ་།

[S]

སོང་གི་ནང་བིན་གྱིས་དབྱིབས་པའི་ཐུབ་པ་
བདུན་པར་ཐམས་ཅད་། སུག་གི་རྣང་ངག་བུ་
ཐད་ཆགས་པོ་། བོད་ལྡན་བར་བ་ཡིན།
བདེན་པར་བཟོ་བོག་བོད་ཀྱི་སྲིད་པ་དྲུག་པ་ལོ་བོར་བས་བྱས།
གཞི་གཅིག་གཞི་གཅིག་གཞི་གཅིག་བྱི་མེད་པ་ཁྲད་པར་འཁོར་བ།
དེ་བ་དེ་ཟོ་ཏེ་བྲང་གི་ཡིན་པར་བོད་ཀྱི་ཚགས་མེད་དོ།
ིར་གམ་ཤཱུ་ཐོད་ཀྱི་ཐོགས་ཐོགས་བོད་ཀྱི་དོན་དུ་འཐོད་དོ།
དེ་བ་དེ་ཟོ་ཏེ་བྲང་གི་ཡིན་པར་བོད་ཀྱི་ཚགས་མེད་དོ།